

# THEMISTOCLES

Hello class. Today I'm gonna talk about a very important but for ordinary people almost forgotten man. This is a man who actually defended democracy. So does anyone know about who am I talking about.

Tell me has anyone of you ever heard for spartan king Leonidas. (yes). Ok my speech isn't about him but it's about a man who was connected to the events at the battle of Thermopylae. Did anyone ever hear for a man called Themistocles (no). Believe me or not, both of those men fought at the battle for Thermopylae and they both played a huge part in it.

But let's start at the beginning. Themistocles was a citizen of Athens and he was born in 524 BC. He was a general and a politician who rose during the early years of Athenian democracy. His first major role was at the battle of Marathon where Athens fought Persians in 490 BC. There he was one of the generals and Athens were victorious.

But even after the victory Athens weren't safe because Persian king Xerxes the Great (Xerxes) promised revenge to Athens. Themistocles was sure that Persians would attack again. At that time Athens discovered a lot of silver and Themistocles convinced them to spend that money for building a navy.

10 Years after the battle of Marathon Persians attacked again. This time they fought at Thermopylae. And this is when nowadays people think there were only 300 Spartans who were led by king Leonidas and they fought hard and brave. But the Spartans weren't the only one who fought. Actually the majority of soldiers were Athens (around 4000) then Thespians (about 700) and only 300 Spartans.

And the battle was fought at the sea as well. Actually Themistocles was in charge of Greek defense at sea. He didn't even lose there. But when the ground forces were defeated he had to go back to Athens. There they decided to evacuate Athens and Persians burned it to the ground. Athenians sailed to the island of Salamis where Themistocles with a great tactic defeated Persians who had to go back to Persia.

And then people ask themselves why is this man one of the most important persons of all time. The answer is simple. If he hadn't won, Persians would defeat Athenians and there would be no democracy. And besides that there is a big possibility that he was the one who suggested to meet Persians at the Thermopylae.