

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
Wednesday Bible Study
Acts of the Apostles – Chapters 17 Part 2
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V. The Thessalonians have a mixed response to the Gospel.

Acts 17:1-3 (KJV) *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*

A. The Gospel makes sense and is the only logical conclusion when we study the Bible. It is not a fantastic made up story or fairy tale. History supports it and scripture explains it.

Acts 17:4 (KJV) *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.*

B. The Gospel still requires a response of belief or non-belief. Acceptance or Rejection. Eternal Life or Eternal Damnation. Heaven or Hell.

Acts 17:5-9 (KJV) *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.*

C. There will always be those who oppose the Gospel for power, prestige/control, philosophy/ignorance in the guise of academia, and prosperity/money.

VI. The Bereans have an open response to the Gospel, but are negatively influenced.

Acts 17:11-12 (KJV) *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.*

A. Take notice again of the inclusion of women all throughout the early church expansion.

Bereans were Bible Studiers!

Acts 17:13 (KJV) *But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.*

B. Saul left Jerusalem to seek out Christians to persecute. The Jews in Thessalonica followed them to Berea to persecute them.

VII. Athens had philosophers and academia who wanted to debate the Gospel as another potential religious option.

Acts 17:18-19 (KJV) *Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?*

Chapter 17 Definitions

A. Areopagus – Council of Mars. Mars (or Ares) was the mythical Greek god of thunder and war.

Epicureans – false world religion who believe

- 1) “lesser” gods exist and don’t care about people or world events.
- 2) personal human **pleasure** is the primary reason and pursuit for living.
- 3) creation was formed by chance (“Big Bang”) and coincidental.
- 4) no life after death, no future judgement. Eat, drink, and be merry.

Stoics – believed in

- 1) Pantheism – everything is god (Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age)
- 2) Ascetisim – any pleasure and emotion is evil
- 3) Fatalism -- feeling uninterested in your relationships, unmotivated at work, uninterested in school, or just feeling empty (Islam and Hinduism)

Unknown God – in Greek is Agnostos Theos. Was not necessarily intended to be the one true God, but a catch-all for their polytheistic superstition.

Acts 17:20-21 (KJV) *For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)*

Verses 22-31 contain Paul’s message to the philosophers at Areopagus.

Acts 17:32-34 (KJV) *And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.*

B. Even within Judaism there were sects that did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (**Saducees**) and those that did (**Pharisees**).

VIII. Corinth included people who chose to both **accept** and **ignore** the Gospel.

A. Paul lived and taught in Corinth with Timothy and Silas for one year and six months.(Acts 18:11)

Acts 18:12-17 (KJV) *And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.*

Did Gallio really not care? Or just not want to pick sides?

Acts 18:22 (KJV) *And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.* This ends the 2nd Missionary Journey in Antioch
Next Week Begin 18:23-28, 19, 20, 21:16