

Acts 17 Paul in Thessalonica

Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And according to Paul's custom, he visited them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a significant number of the leading women. 5 But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and they attacked the house of Jason and were seeking to bring them out to the people. 6 When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also;

7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." 8 They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. 9 And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.

Paul in Berea

10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these people were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. 12 Therefore, many of them believed, along with a significant number of prominent Greek women and men.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds. 14 Then immediately the brothers sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. 15 Now those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left.

Paul in Athens

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he observed that the city was full of idols. 17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be present. 18 And some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers as well were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What could this scavenger of tidbits want to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? 20 For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean." 21 (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)

Sermon on Mars Hill

22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects. 23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

24 The God who made the world and everything that is in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His descendants.' 29 Therefore, since we are the descendants of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and thought. 30 So having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now proclaiming to mankind that all people everywhere are to repent, 31 because He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead.

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to scoff, but others said, "We shall hear from you again concerning this." 33 So Paul went out from among them. 34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character?

1. For three weeks Paul reflected on God's word to the Jews in the Synagogue.
2. Paul focuses on his scripture understanding regarding Christ's need to suffer and die, in order to be able to save the lost.
3. He then identifies the Christ as being Jesus, the one they crucified!
4. Some Jews accepted and believed the message of Paul, even some God fearing Greeks turned to God.
5. There were some leading women of the city that turned also. Who were these leading women?
6. Others, motivated by jealousy -Jews, with the help of a mob, set the city into uproar. Why?
7. They hunted them down like bandits on the run, Jason who had taken them in as guests, was arrested by the mob and paid for his freedom.
8. Now the accusation that this mob used to create a problem for the team, was the word Paul used when he called Jesus another King.
9. In order to safeguard Paul and his companions they got them out of the city of

Thessalonica and went to Berea.

10. In Berea the people had greater etiquette, they were open minded and open to the possibility of new things.

11. Many Greeks were saved along with the Jews, until the mob came, hounding them down.

12. Most of the team, including Paul, left Berea and went to Athens. Timothy and Silas stayed – why?

13. In Athens Paul's spirit provoked him. What do you think this means?

14. Paul is surrounded by idols and Gods of worship and an empty space known as 'the unknown God'.

15. In Athens these intellectuals were evaluating Paul and his message. They embraced what he was preaching and want to hear more.

16. Everything was going fine until Paul started preaching Jesus and the resurrection, some of the Greeks lost interest.

17. Some invite Paul into their arena to ask him some more questions, as they want to know more.

18. What does the statement mean 'to have strange things in your ears'?

19. Paul's ability to connect is incredible - finding common ground to enable him to express his message.

20. What is it to worship in ignorance?

21. Who was this unknown God?

22. He links creation with the creator and identifies this unknown God as being the one he worships.

23. Do you believe God gives life to everyone?

24. Do you believe that we all came from Adam?

25. Do you believe that God is not far from all of us?

26. Do you live, move and have your being in God?

27. Paul conveys that God is not limited within a stone object or structure.

28. God wants all of us to repent – what does this mean to you?

29. Does God know when he will judge the world?

30. The raising of Jesus from the dead is evidence of who God is and what God does.

31. The thought of the resurrection caused some to mock and laugh.

32. Others still wanted more. Are you such a person? Do you want more of God active in your life?

33. What does it mean to sincerely turn to God?