



ACTS – Living in the Promises of Jesus

Acts 17

Lesson 14

This chapter describes Paul's ministry in three cities and how some of the people in those cities responded to the Word of God. These pictures are snapshots, not murals, for Luke did not give us many details. However, as we study these three different responses, we can certainly see our modern world and better understand what to expect as we seek to witness for Christ today. May we be encouraged both to witness and to be greater seekers of the One in whom *we live and move and have our being*.

OBSERVATION: Read Acts 17

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God, Jesus, and Paul* (and those with him).

Key Words: *God, Jesus, all references to Paul and those with him (Silas and Timothy), believed/persuaded, and Scriptures/word*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used six times in Acts 17. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, was used five times in Acts 17. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times; record the conclusion and what it was based upon.

5. Luke recorded the visits of Paul and Silas to three cities in Acts 17: Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. The response to the gospel varied. Mark the words that reflect this (*some, many, and a great multitude*) in Acts 17:4,12, and 34.



6. As you read of the cities visited by Paul and Silas in Acts 17, retrace their journey using the map.

THESSALONICA: Read Acts 17:1-8

1. Leaving Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia and stopped in the seaport city of Thessalonica. They stopped at the synagogue. What does verse 2 tell us about how long they were there and what they did?

- a. According to verse 3, what did Paul *explain* to them?

- 1.) Regardless of his audience, regardless of how long Paul had walked with the Lord, what was his message? Acts 9:22.

- a.) Why is it important to believe that *Jesus is the Christ* (the Messiah) and we need not look for another?

- b.) The Jews were looking for the Messiah to come as a king. Why was it important for the Christ to:

suffer: (1 Peter 2:24)

rise again: (Acts 13:35,37)

2. According to Acts 17:4, what was the result of their *reasoning*?
 - a. Think back to when you first *believed*. What do you remember as being an important part of the gospel?
3. Acts 17:5 reveals the other side of the reaction of the people. What are we told about those who were *not persuaded*?
4. When *they did not find* Paul and the others, they *dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city*. What was their accusation? verses 6,7
5. In his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul commended the believers in Thessalonica. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3-9 and describe them.
 - a. What lesson can we learn from them?

BEREA: Read Acts 17:10-15

1. Escaping Thessalonica, Paul and Silas went to Berea, and according to their custom, went first to the synagogue. They discovered the Bereans to be more *fair-minded* than those in Thessalonica. According to Acts 17:11, what two things did they do?
2. List some synonyms for the word *readiness*.
 - a. In your own words, describe what it is like to *receive the word with all readiness*.
 - b. How does this speak to you about the attitude you should have when the word of God is being taught?
3. These Bereans did not blindly accept what was being taught. Rather, they *searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*. What value have you personally discovered from *searching* (or studying) *the Scriptures*?
4. How can a person both *receive the word with readiness* and yet, later examine what is being taught?

5. Why is it important that we measure what is being taught to us by the word of God?
6. According to Acts 17:12, what was the result of their comparing Paul's teaching with the Scriptures?
7. The Jews from Thessalonica were not content to simply expel Paul and Silas from their city. When they heard that the word of God was being preached in Berea, what did they do? verse 13
 - a. Refer back to Acts 17:5 and record the emotion of those who were set against Paul and Silas.
 - 1.) What does 1 Timothy 6:3,4 teach us about these kind of men?
8. *Immediately the brethren sent Paul away to Athens. Silas and Timothy remained in Berea. However, Paul soon sent for them to come to him with all speed. Although Paul seems to be the main speaker of the group, he longed for his companions. What does this say to you about the importance of those who come alongside others in ministry?*

ATHENS: Acts 17:16-21

1. It had been said that there were more idols than people in the city of Athens. What was Paul's reaction when he *saw that the city was given over to idols*?
 - a. What do you think it means that his *spirit was provoked within him*?
 - 1.) What *provokes* your spirit?
 - a.) What instruction is given to those *who love the LORD* in Psalm 97:10a?
 2. Acts 17:17 begins with the word *therefore*, revealing what Paul did in response to what *provoked* him. What did he do?
 3. The curiosity of many in Athens was aroused. Why did they think Paul was a *proclaimer of foreign gods*?
 4. Using Acts 17:21, describe how the Athenians *spent their time*.
 - a. Why do you think people, even many Christians, are attracted to *some new thing*?
 - b. Contrast the pastime of the Athenians with that of the Bereans in verse 11.

THE AREOPAGUS IN ATHENS: Read Acts 17:22-34

1. As a result of Paul's teaching he was taken before the Areopagus, the religious council of Athens, to make known the truths he was proclaiming. With what words did he begin his message? verse 22
 - a. Share the wisdom of beginning a message or conversation with positive words.
2. Using Acts 17:24-31, list the statements Paul made about God.
 - a. In what ways is God unlike the gods of the Athenians?
3. Consider verse 27. What does it mean to you that God has done so much because He desires that you *seek* Him?
 - a. Record the promise of Psalm 9:10.
 - b. Notice the word *groped* in Acts 17:27. Describe the action of *groping in the dark*.
 - 1.) Sometimes, when we are searching for Him, it may seem like *groping in the dark*. What reassurance does this verse provide?
 - a.) How is this reassurance helpful to you?
4. *We are His offspring* (verse 28). *Therefore, since we are His offspring, what ought we not to think?* see verse 29
5. According to Acts 17:31, what is the *assurance* that God has given us?
 - a. How does the fact that Christ rose from the dead, give you *assurance* of what God has said and His intentions?
6. Using verses 32,34 record the people's reaction to Paul's message.

REVIEW: Read Acts 17

1. Share something that spoke to you about Paul's time with the:
Thessalonians

Bereans

Athenians
2. Why is it important to think, as did the Bereans, about what we are taught?
3. The Bereans did not simply hear the word being taught, they later searched the Scriptures regarding the teaching. What is the profit of considering a message after it is taught?
4. Paul's spirit was *provoked* when he saw the prominence of idol worship in Athens. What do you think would *provoke* Paul if he came to the United States today?
5. In what ways were you *provoked* to seek God in a deeper way as you studied this chapter?

*"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD,
"And not a God afar off?"
- Jeremiah 23:23*

Observation Worksheet

Acts 17:1-34

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas. ⁵ But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. ⁷ Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king--Jesus." ⁸ And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. ⁹ So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. ¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. ¹⁴ Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed. ¹⁶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. ¹⁷ Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? ²⁰ For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." ²¹ For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. ²² Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' ²⁹ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. ³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." ³² And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." ³³ So Paul departed from among them. ³⁴ However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.