

- A Study In Acts -

**Chapter Seventeen – Second Journey of Paul Continued**

**ACTS 17:11-15:**

From Philippi, Paul will travel to **Thessalonica** and preached to the Jews and devout Greeks in the synagogue with good success. The unbelieving Jews would stir up a mob and attempt to bring Paul and his traveling companions out to the people. This would be unsuccessful; however, it forced the brethren to send Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea**.

Please use the map

In this lesson, we will look at Paul's work in the Gospel in Berea.

**Text #1:**

**Acts 17:11-12** “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.* <sup>12</sup> Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.”

**First**, as Luke records a difference between these in Berea to those in Thessalonica; this is not a comparison between those who believed the Gospel, but to the citizens in these perspective cities and the universal difference between their willingness, as a whole, to receive the word (the Jews in each synagogue).

**Second**, their willingness to receive the word with all readiness is not a commentary on their willingness to be gullible, as we see in their diligent efforts to put what is delivered to the test!

Their fair-mindedness is born in the willingness to hear without prejudice, then take the information to the work of the metallurgist (the testing for purity – truth).

**Third**, this demands that we recognize that God wants us to use our intellect in the reception, discernment, and acceptance of His Divine will. Paul will shortly write back to the Thessalonian Christians that they should likewise develop this same technique for all that has come to them from Paul, note:

**1 Thessalonians 5:21-22** “Test all things; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil.”

This stands to this very day as one of the purest Christian pieces of evidence that exist. Our God demands that we examine His word, evaluate its truth, and once the truth is known, give ourselves to Him willingly. How sad it is for those who claim to believe; yet, never invest the time to prove and test what they have committed themselves to! They miss so much of the

foundations that bring joy, hope, and faith beyond description. This very same sad behavior in many, also describes why there is so much apostasy today.

**Fourth**, the standard that these Christians used for the testing process was the scriptures from the Law of Moses and the Prophets (as this was all that was available to them at this time). Paul was able, as he has been in many other places, to show from the Old Law that Jesus was the Christ of God (see **Acts 13:16-41** – his first recorded sermon in Antioch of Pisidia included six direct quotes from the Old Law, Psalms, and the Prophets, as well as much of Israel’s history where promises were made). Jesus Himself, after His resurrection, would open the minds of His chosen disciples and reveal to them all that had been said of Him from the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Him – **Luke 24:44**.

So, we see that there was ample material to use to establish the truth of Paul’s teaching concerning Jesus as the Christ (and this is commentary on how the Law is a schoolmaster, or tutor to bring us to Christ – **Galatians 3:24**). When they were able to establish that Jesus was the Christ, all the instruction in obedience to the Gospel would be given the same credibility, which is the by-product of the schoolmaster, or tutor; note:

**Galatians 3:25-27** “**But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

**<sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”**

**Fifth**, the result of fair-mindedness and the honest use of given intellect results in submissive and willing hearts, which was the case in **verse 12**.

**Text #2:**

**Acts 17:13-15** “**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. <sup>14</sup> Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. <sup>15</sup> 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.”**

The Jews responsible for the trouble in Thessalonica followed Paul to Berea and brought the trouble there. This forced the brethren to send Paul away, after the same pattern in Thessalonica. They brought Paul to a ship going to Athens, and some of them went with Paul.

Luke records that Paul left behind both Silas and Timothy, and we learn from Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians that Timothy stayed in Thessalonica – **1 Thessalonians 3:1-2**. Their remaining behind would serve to establish these congregations; it also may be noteworthy to remember that Luke remained behind in Philippi, thus all three of these congregations Paul is leaving behind in Macedonia will be left with those who can build them up.

**Athens:** This is the once famous capital of Attica (one of the ancient Greek states) and one of the two primary cities in the Roman named province of Achaia (Corinth was actually the capital of

the province at this time). The city was named for the patron goddess Athene and the city centered round several hills but primarily a rocky hill called Acropolis. Athens was about four miles inland from the sea (Since Paul traveled to Athens by boat from Berea and thus it is likely that he entered the city through its large port of Piraeus.

The port was originally built in the 5th century BC and still thrives today. In ancient times Piraeus was connected to Athens by the Long Walls, two parallel walls 600 feet apart).

The city consisted of about 250,000 year-around residents and was still the seat of Greek art, science, and philosophy and was the most important University City in the ancient world. We will speak more about this when we talk about Mars Hill and the Areopagus in the next lesson.

Here, on the map, you can see the advantage of Paul coming to Athens by sea instead of overland.



**Next: "The Areopagus!"**