

The Book of Acts Study Notes

CHAPTER 17

The Uproar in Thessalonica

- ❖ Vs. 2-3: As was his manner (custom)
 - Paul first went to the synagogue and preached Christ crucified – 1 Cor. 1:23
 - Note what Jesus did – Luke 4:16
- ❖ Vs. 4: Some Jews, many God-fearing Greeks and chief women believed and joined
- ❖ Vs. 5: But the unbelieving Jews...
 - Just as it is today, those who should have the most appreciation for Christ are often the slowest or last to receive what Christ has done for us all...
 - They were envious because of the conversions happening – Acts 5:17; 13:45
- ❖ Vs. 6-7: Attacked and persecuted Jason
 - Acknowledged the power of the Gospel – turned the world upside down – Acts 16:20
 - Accused Jason because they knew he had received (welcomed) them
- ❖ Vs. 7: The Clash of Kingdoms – Jesus vs Rome – Daniel 3:18; Neh. 2:19, 6:5-10; Acts 4:19-20

Paul and Silas at Berea – Ministry to the Fair-Minded (vs. 10-15)

- ❖ The Bereans were more open. Why? Because they checked the Word for themselves
 - noble: eugenes: fair-minded, generous, free from prejudice
 - Searched the scriptures daily – not a Sunday opening of the Bible but a daily search of scriptures – 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:14-; Luke 24:44; Mat. 22:29; Prov. 30:5
- ❖ Vs. 13: The cycle continues – Acts 17:5; 16:19-21; 14:19; 14:2; 13:50
 - The Jews from Thessalonica heard and came to stir up trouble in Berea
- ❖ Vs. 14: Paul sent away instead of fighting – Mat. 10:23

Paul at Athens (vs. 16-21)

- ❖ Vs. 16: Paul's spirit was stirred while he waited
 - Waiting does not mean that we don't watch
 - His spirit was provoked by what he saw – a city full of idols
- ❖ Vs. 17: He disputed (reasoned) with them
 - In the synagogue of the Jews and with the devout persons (Gentile worshippers)
 - In the market daily with those there
- ❖ Vs. 18 Certain philosophers
 - Epicureans: The *Epicureans* pursued pleasure as the chief purpose in life, and valued most of all the pleasure of a peaceful life, free from pain, disturbing passions and superstitious fears (including the fear of death). They did not deny the existence of gods, but believed that they had nothing to do with man.
 - Stoics: The Stoics believed that everything was god, and god was in everything. So they believed that all things, good or evil, were from god and so nothing should be resisted, and

they believed there was no particular direction or destiny for mankind. They were unmoved by joy or grief.

- They called Paul a babler (spermológos: seed-picker): one who hung around others in the marketplace getting scraps from their information but not having any depth of their own; it was considered a synonym for an undisciplined plagiarist (The Preacher's Commentary)

❖ Vs. 19-21: Questioned

- They wanted knowledge so they asked the one preaching...
- Vs. 20: Truth is strange to their ears
- Vs. 21: They were always looking for something new

Paul on Mars' Hill (vs. 22-34)

❖ Too superstitious (deisidaimonesteros: religious)

*"That Athens was indeed a **religious** city was well attested by the fact that it was reputed to have more idols in it than men!"* (Believer's Bible Commentary)

- Made everything an idol – 1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:21; Lev. 19:4; Psa. 16:4; Col. 3:5
- What does the Bible say about real religion? James 1:27, Deut. 10:12; Micah 6:8; Rom. 14:17; Col. 2:8; 2 Cor. 3:6

❖ Vs. 23: you learn where people are by observing their devotions (sebasma: whatever is religiously honored; an object of worship)

- An altar to the Unknown God
 - Worship ignorantly – John 4: 21-24; Isa. 1:2-3; Roman. 10: 1-3; 1 Thes. 4:3-5

❖ Vs. 24-29

- Vs. 24: God made everything – Acts 14:15 and is Lord of heaven and earth – Mat. 11:25
 - He does not dwell in temples made with hands – Acts 7:48-50; 2 Chr. 2:6
- Vs. 25: not worship with men's hands – doesn't need our help being God – Isa. 42:5; Isa 59:1
- Vs. 26: **ALL NATIONS ARE OF ONE BLOOD** – of one man's blood – Gen. 1:26; Deu. 32:8
- Vs. 27: Seek Him because He is not far - Rom. 1:20; Jer. 23:23-24; Psa. 34:18
- Vs. 28: In Him we live, move, have our being – Titus 1:12

"These two quotations Paul uses from Greek poets are attributed to Epimenides the Cretan [600 BC] (who Paul quotes again in [Tit 1:12](#)) and Aratus [310 BC]." (Believer's Bible Commentary)

- Vs. 29: The Divine Nature of God can't be made – Isa. 40:18-19; Exo. 20:4

❖ Vs. 30: God is not winking anymore – Acts 14:16

- It's time to repent – Tit. 2:11-12; Luke 24:47

❖ Vs. 31 – Day of Judgement appointed – Psa. 9:8, 96:13; John 5:22,27; Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:16; Mat. 25:31-36

The Response (vs. 32-34)

- ❖ Some mocked, other wanted to hear again
- ❖ Vs. 34: Some believed and gave to him
 - Dionysius was a member of the Athenian high council