

***Journey Through Acts***  
***“The Work Of The Word”***  
***Acts 17:1-15***

**Introduction:**

1. As We Continue In Our:
  - ***Journey Through Acts:***
    - Tonight - We Begin In Acts 17:
      - So - Please Turn There In Your Bibles With Me!
      - Acts 17!
    - Where - We Are Following:
      - The Apostle Paul:
        - Along With His Missionary Companions:
          - On Their Second Missionary Journey!
2. So Far - This Second Mission Trip:
  - Took Them Back To:
    - The Churches Which Were Founded:
      - On The First Missionary Journey:
        - To The Region Of Southern Galatia:
          - And The Churches Likely Addressed In The Letter Of Galatians - Which Is Also, Quite Possibly, The Earliest Book Of The New Testament!
    - Then - After The Holy Spirit Prevented:
      - Paul & His Team:
        - From Heading Due-West Into Asia:
          - Or Due-North Into Bithynia:
            - God Directed Them To Make The First Foray Of The Gospel:
              - Into Europe!
        - And - In The City Of Philippi:
          - God Used Paul To Bring Three Completely Different Kinds Of People:
            - Into The Church!
              - Like Lydia, The Possessed Damsel, And The Prison Guard!
        - Proving That The Gospel:
          - Can Reach The Hearts Of:
            - Anyone At Anyplace And At Anytime!
              - Whether Their Hearts Are:
                - Impressionable!
                - Imprisoned! Or:
                  - Completely Ignorant!
3. Well - Even Though There Was:
  - A Great Triumph For The Gospel There In Philippi:
    - It Didn't Take Too Long For It To Turn Into:
      - Trouble & Travail Once Again!
        - And So - As We Left Off Last Week:
          - In 16:39-40 - The Missionaries Were Strongly Encouraged To “Depart Out Of The City!”
          - And So - They Left!
4. And So - Acts 17 Begins In This Way:
  - 17:1 - “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews!”
    - **Here Is A Map Of Their Journey To Thessalonica:**
      - Which Was About 100 Miles Away From:
        - The City Of Philippi!
          - We Will Notice - That The Distances Between Towns & Cities Will Grow Greater - As The Gospel Continues Its March “Unto The Uttermost Parts Of The Earth!”
    - For Some Reason - Our Missionaries:
      - Did Not Stop In The Other Two Towns Mentioned In This Verse:
        - Perhaps Because There Was Little Or No Jewish Witness There - Or - Perhaps They

Were Still A Little To Close To Philippi:

- And They Would Become Part Of The Philippian Church's Mission Field!

- Today - Thessalonica:

- Is The Second Largest City In Greece:

- With Over 1 Million Inhabitants In The Metropolitan Area!

- And Most Of The Remnants Of:

- Its Ancient Past - Lies Directly Under:

- The Modern City!

- There Are Some Exceptions To This:

- Including Some Impressive Ruins Uncovered:

- Near The Center Of The City!

- **Here Is A Picture Of The Agora /** Marketplace Of Ancient Thessalonica!

- You Can See Modern Buildings Surrounding What Was Once The Location Of Their Bus Station!

- **Here Is A Picture Of The Roman-Style Amphitheater:**

- Also Located In The Center Of The City!

- So - It Was Not Too Far From These Ancient Ruins - Where 17:2 Picks Up:

- 17:2-10 "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, / 3 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. / 4 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. / 5 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. / 6 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; / 7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. / 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. / 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. / 10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews!"

- Here's Another Example Of The Pattern:

- That Has Become All-Too Familiar:

- For The Apostles & Those Early Christian Missionaries!

- From A Period Of Triumph For The Gospel:

- To A Period Of Trial & Travail:

- For Its Messengers!

- And This Time - Paul & Silas Had To Flee Under The Cover Of Darkness!

- But - Instead Of Continuing To Travel:

- On The Major Roman Road:

- That Connected The City Of Thessalonica To The Outside World:

- They Took Another Road To The Village Of Berea Instead!

- Berea Was About 45 Miles Further West:

- Of Thessalonica - **And Here Is A Map That Shows:**

- It Further Inland - And Away From The Normal Routes Of Travel!

- It Has Been Noted That:

- The City Of Thessalonica:

- Was A City On The Highway:

- And Was A Good Place To Be Seen & Known! But:

- The Town Of Berea:

- Was A Town On The Byway:

- And Was A Good Place To Hide & Get Lost!

- **Here Is A Picture:**

- Of The Modern Town Of Berea:

- Which Today Has A Population Of About Just 70,000!

- The Small Size Might Have Been One Of The Reasons:

- Why Paul & Silas Escaped There:

- By Night - But - When They Got There:

- Listen To What They Found!

- 17:11-12 - "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. / 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few!"

- Another Triumph For The Gospel:

- In That Town On The Byway!

- But - Even Though This Is The Only Place In Our Bibles Where We Read About This Church In Berea:

- The Bereans Still Commemorate & Celebrate The Time When The Apostle Paul Visited Them With The Gospel!

- **Here Is A Memorial Known As:**

- The Altar Of St. Paul - Which Purportedly Has:

- Three Of The Original Steps From The Jewish Synagogue - Upon Which Paul Stood When He First Proclaimed Christ To Them!

- I Like What G. Campbell Morgan Once Wrote About The Noble People Of Berea:

- "Often The People And The Churches About Which Least Is Said Are The Mightiest!" And - The Most Noble Churches Are Those Who "Get Their Bibles Down, And Say, Is this Man Right?"

- But - Once Again:

- That Triumph Will Also Turn Into Trouble:

- As We See In:

- 17:13-15 - "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. / 14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. / 15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed!"

- **Athens Was About 600 Miles Away:**

- From Berea - And Paul - For The First Time:

- On This Journey - Was Alone:

- Without The Companionship Of His Fellow-Laborers!

5. But - Before We Move On:

- To Athens - And See What Paul Finds:

- In That Capital Of Worldly Philosophy:

- I Would Like For Us To Return:

- To Thessalonica & To Berea:

- To See What God Used To Begin The Churches In Those Two Cities!

- In Both Places:

- As We Can See From:

- Both 17:2 & 17:11 - Paul Preached From & God Used:

- "The Scriptures!"

- According To 17:2-3:

- In Thessalonica:

- For "Three Sabbath Days" - Paul "Reasoned With Them Out Of The Scriptures, Opening And Alleging, That Christ Must Needs Have Suffered, And Risen From The Dead!"

- This Means That:

- He Used The Old Testament Scriptures:

- To Show The Jews The Truth About Their Messiah!

- He Probably Used:

- The Same Passages, Prophecies, And Proofs That Jesus Did:

- When Jesus Met With Those Two Disciples On The Road To Emmaus - When

- Luke 24:27 - "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself!"

- Paul Walked The Jews:

- Through God's Plan Of Redemption:

- From The Old Testament To The New!

- He Used The Scriptures!

- And God Blessed His Word! But Also:

- According To 17:11:

- In Berea:

- The Jews Were Described As - “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!”
- Paul Probably Used The Same Method:
  - Of “Opening And Alleging” / “Explaining And Proving” The Truths Of The Gospel:
    - And So - The Bereans Were Directed To “Search The Scriptures” To See If “Those Things” He Said “Were So!”
    - And They Were!
- Because He Used The Scriptures!
- And God Blessed His Word!

6. In A Special Way:

- God Has Promised To Bless:
  - The Faithful Preaching & Teaching & Study:
    - Of His Word - In The Proclamation:
      - Of The Gospel!
      - And In The Verses We’ve Just Read, I Think That We Can See Why!

\* First - The Scriptures - The Bible:

**1. Reveals The Truth!**

- It Is God’s “Special Revelation” To Man!
  - It Reveals All That We Need:
    - For True Life & Godliness! (1 Peter 1:3)
  - It Reveals:
    - Your Need:
      - Of Salvation!
  - It Reveals:
    - God’s Plan:
      - Of Salvation! And
  - It Reveals:
    - The Person:
      - Of Salvation! And How That:
        - “Jesus . . . Is Christ!” (17:3)
- This Is Why Paul:
  - Preached The Word!
    - Because Without **God’s** Word:
      - There Would Be Now Power In **His** Words!
- And There Was Plenty:
  - Of Evidence & Proof:
    - In The Scriptures:
      - To Convince The Jews:
        - Both In Thessalonica & In Berea:
          - That The Gospel Of Jesus Was The Truth!
- And So - God Blessed:
  - The Work Of His Word!
    - Because It Revealed:
      - The Truth!

\* Second - The Scriptures - The Bible:

**2. Revolutionizes The World!**

- Isn’t This Implied:
  - By The Charges Made Against Paul & The Other Missionaries:
    - By The Thessalonians In:
      - 17:6-7 - “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!”
- The First Charge Against Them Was That:
  - They Had “Turned The World Upside Down!” (17:6)

- It Seems That Already - The Reach Of The Gospel:
  - Had Spread Before The Apostle!
  - And The Reputation Of The Gospel Had Preceded Its Presentation!
- But The World Doesn't Like:
  - To Be Turned "Upside Down!"
  - It Likes Things They Way They Are!
  - It Prefers The Status Quo - Especially When The Status Quo Leaves Them Alone In Their Sin!
- But It Wasn't The Power Of **Paul's** Words:
  - That Accomplished This! It Was:
    - The Power Of **God's** Word!
  - Later - Paul Would Even Write To The Thessalonian Church - "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe!" (1 Thessalonians 2:13)
    - Only God's Word:
      - Can Revolutionize This World Like It Did!
    - Only God's Word:
      - Can Revolutionize Your Heart & Life As Well!
- God Promises To Bless:
  - The Work Of His Word!
- The Second Charge Against Them Was That:
  - They Were "Saying That There Is Another King, One Jesus!" (17:7)
    - To Which Paul & Silas & We Would Even Say:
      - "Guilty As Charged!"
      - But To Them - This Was Treason!
  - But They Failed To Understand That:
    - Jesus **Was** Another King:
      - But Of A Different Realm!
      - Jesus Said - "My Kingdom Is Not Of This World!" (John 18:36)
        - Or - At Least - Not Yet!
- But God Was Using His Word:
  - To Spread The Kingdom Of Christ:
    - In And Through:
      - The Hearts Of Those Who Believed In Him!
    - And So - To You & To Me:
      - It Is Not Treason To Say:
        - "There Is Another King!"
        - It Is The Truth!
  - And God Blesses:
    - The Work Of His Word!
    - Because It Alone Can Revolutionize The World!

\* Third - The Scriptures - The Bible - Is What God Uses To:

### 3. **Redeem Our Souls!**

- Because - Romans 10:17:
  - "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God!"
- It Was Through The Word:
  - That God Wrought Faith:
    - In The Hearts Of The Thessalonians!
      - 17:4 - "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!"
  - God Worked Through His Word!
    - Also:
- It Was Through The Word:
  - That God Wrought Faith:
    - In The Hearts Of The Bereans!
      - 17:11-12 - "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!”

- God Worked Through His Word!
- And:
- It Is Through The Word:
  - That God Works Faith:
    - In Your Heart & In My Heart!
    - Because God Has Promised To Bless:
      - The Work Of His Word!

**Conclusion:**

1. Do You Believe This Truth:
  - About God’s Word?
    - If So - Then Use It!
  - Use It - In Your Walk With The Lord!
    - 1 Peter 2:2 - “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby!”
  - Use It - In Your Witness For The Lord!
    - Because Promises To Bless:
      - The Work Of His Word!
        - Isaiah 55:11 - “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it!”
2. Believe This!
  - God Works Through His Word!

***Grace Baptist Church  
Stephen Elmer, Pastor  
4245 North 200 West  
Greenfield, Indiana 46140  
317-326-2362  
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace  
www.growatgrace.org  
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com***