

Comments About Acts 17

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 17.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Overview of Paul's travels

As we entered into Acts 13, we began reading about Paul's missionary journeys. According to some Bible commentaries, the trips can be categorized in the following manner.

- First missionary journey—Acts 13:1 until Acts 14:28
- Second missionary journey—Acts 15:36 until Acts 18:22
- Third missionary journey—Acts 18:23 until Acts 21:16
- Trip to Rome—Acts 21:17 until Acts 28:31

Preaching in Thessalonica

Paul and Silas went to Thessalonica.

- It was Paul's custom to go to the synagogue and to reason with the audience from the Scriptures (verses 1-2).
- Paul explained that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead (verse 3). He taught: "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."
- Many of the devout Greeks joined Paul and Silas (verse 4).

Assault on Jason's house

Paul and Silas had to deal with adversaries who formed mobs.

- Some of the envious Jews formed a mob to attack the house of Jason to get Paul and Silas (verse 5).
- When the mob did not find Paul, they dragged Jason from his home (verse 6).

Acts 17:6-7—"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. Jason has harbored them, and

these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.’ ”

Ministering at Berea

- The brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea (verse 10).
- The audience in Berea was more fair-minded than the audience in Thessalonica (verse 11).
- The Jews from Thessalonica came to stir up the crowds (verse 12), so the brethren sent Paul away to Athens (verse 13).

Teaching in Athens

- Paul noticed that the city of Athens was given over to idols (verse 16), and he talked with people in the synagogue and in the marketplace (verse 17).
- Paul talked with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (verses 18-21).
- Paul gave an insightful talk about the “unknown God” and the resurrection of Christ from the dead (verses 22-31).

Here are some excerpts.

Acts 17:22-23—“Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 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.’ ”

Acts 17:30-31—“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 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.”

- When the people heard about the resurrection of the dead, some mocked and others wanted to hear more (verse 32).