



Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Lesson 41 – Acts 17

People — Who is involved?

Paul, Silas, and Timothy - preachers
Jason – resident of Thessalonica who served as host to the evangelists
Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens
Dionysius and Damaris – believers in Athens

Places — Where does it happen?

*Amphipolis – a district capital in Macedonia
33 miles SSW of Philippi*
Apollonia – 27 miles SSW of Amphipolis
Thessalonica – 35 miles west of Apollonia
Berea – 45 miles WSW of Thessalonica
Athens – capital of Attica in Achaia, 195 miles SSE of Berea

Pearls — What information will help me to understand better?

- Vs 1 – Thessalonica was the seat of the proconsul. It was a senatorial province with a population of between 20,000 and 100,000. It was called “the mother of all Macedonia.”*
- Vs 10 – Berea was located off the Via Egnatia, the main road south to Achaia. Berea is Veria today.*
- Vs 11 – The Jews (not the brethren) in Berea were more fair-minded than the Jews in Thessalonica.*
- Vs 16 – The magnificent Archaeological Museum of Athens houses many artifacts from this period.*
- Vs 18 – Epicureans followed the teachings of Epicurus (341-270 BC). Thought gods were removed from life on earth, thus not to be feared; what is good is pleasurable; evil is defined as pain.*
- Vs 18 – Stoics followed Zeno (340-265 BC). Their name came from “stoa,” a place where Zeno taught. They were pantheists. They believed in self-discipline, self-sufficiency, and obedience. Good and evil were associated with moral and ethical responsibility and self-denial.*
- Vs 18 – The word “babblier” referred to birds that pick up seeds; thus a scavenger for scraps.*
- Vs 19 – The Areopagus was the “Hill of Ares” (Greek), or “Mars Hill” (Latin). A council met there to try crimes and regulate city life, education morality, and foreign cults and philosophical teaching. It was on the lower side of the Acropolis, a hill on which the Parthenon was prominent.*
- Vs 20 – This language does not imply that Paul was on trial but he was interrogated.*
- Vs 22 – Apparently the philosophers had gathered to hear Paul.*
- Vs 27 – God is beyond the world (not limited by restraints of physical existence); but He has chosen to provide for man and have relationship with all human beings in Christ (not far from us).*
- Vs 28 – In the true God: “we live” (we exist through his sustained providence); “move” (choose to do things through His providentially provided opportunities); and “have our being” (are who we are).*
- Vs 31 – Our confidence in the gospel rests on Christ’s having been raised from the dead.*

Perspectives – What may I learn from this chapter?

- 1. The mark of fair-mindedness is searching the Scriptures to determine if what one hears is true.*
- 2. The living, spiritual God is very different in substantive ways from physical, man-made idols.*
- 3. The assurance of the gospel lies in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*