
The Acts of the Apostles II
The Gospel Preached in Europe
Acts 17:1-34

- I. MISSIONARY WORK IN THESSALONICA (Acts 17:1-9) (see map of Paul's 2nd missionary journey)
 - A. Preaching in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4)
 - i. The place of preaching (Acts 17:1)
 1. To the Jew first (Acts 13:45-46)
 2. In the synagogue (Acts 9:20; Acts 13:5; Acts 14:1; Acts 18:7-8, 19)
 - ii. The power of preaching (Acts 17:2-3a)
 1. Reasoning (Acts 24:25; 1 Peter 3:15) – to support with reasons
 - a) Reason (verb) – defined: early 14c., *resunmen*, "to question (someone)," also "to challenge," from Old French *raisoner* "speak, discuss; argue; address; speak to," from Late Latin *rationare* "to discourse," from *ratio* "reckoning, understanding, motive, cause,"
 - b) Paul's manner of reasoning (Acts 18:4, 19; Acts 24:25)
 2. Opening (Luke 24:31-32, 45-46) – to reveal; make known
 3. Alleging (only Biblical usage) – to declare positively; affirm; to declare before a court or elsewhere.
 - iii. The person of preaching (Acts 17:3)
 1. His passion (Acts 1:3)
 2. His resurrection (Acts 2:31-32)
 3. His identity (Acts 2:36)
 - iv. The purpose of preaching (Acts 17:4; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24) – the salvation of souls
 - B. Persecuted in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9)
 - i. The source of opposition (Acts 17:5; Acts 14:19)
 - ii. The message of accusation (Acts 17:6-7; cp. Acts 6:9-14)
 1. Confusion (Acts 17:6; Acts 5:28; Acts 16:20; cp. John 12:47-48)
 2. Anarchy (Acts 17:7; Acts 16:21; cp. John 19:12; John 15:20)
 - iii. The restoration of order (Acts 17:8-9; Acts 19:35-36)

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To the Greek Also Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey

II. MISSIONARY IN BEREIA (Acts 17:10-14) (see map of Paul's 2nd missionary journey)

- A. The Resumption of Paul's Preaching (Acts 17:10)
 - i. Leaving the strife of Thessalonica
 - ii. Coming to the synagogue of Berea
- B. The Reception of Paul's Preaching (Acts 17:11-12)
 - i. They received the word (Acts 17:11a; Matthew 13:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
 - 1. As those more noble (Proverbs 9:9) (noble – *"worthy of honour or respect"*)
 - 2. With readiness of mind (1 Peter 5:2)
 - ii. They searched the scriptures (Acts 17:11b; John 5:39)
 - 1. On a daily basis (Psalm 90:12)
 - 2. In a search for truth (Jeremiah 29:13)
 - iii. They believed the gospel (Acts 17:12)
 - 1. Of the Jews
 - 2. Of the Greeks (Romans 1:16)
- C. The Resistance to Paul's Preaching (Acts 17:13-14)
 - i. The pursuit of the trouble makers (Acts 17:13)
 - ii. The departure of the preaching apostle (Acts 17:14)

III. MISSIONARY WORK IN ATHENS (Acts 17:15-34) (see map of Paul's 2nd missionary journey) – (Good possibility around the time 1st and 2nd Thessalonians written). (See postscripts in 1 Thessalonians 5:28 & 2 Thessalonians 3:18)

- A. Paul's Introduction to Greek Culture (Acts 17:15-21)
 - i. Left in the city of Athens (Acts 17:15)
 - 1. Brought there from Berea
 - 2. Sent for Silas and Timothy
 - ii. Stirred by the sight of great idolatry (Acts 17:16)
 - 1. His spirit stirred within him (Psalm 119:136; Matthew 23:37-39)
 - 2. A city wholly given over to idolatry (Isaiah 2:7-8; Psalm 115:1-8)

Note: Athens is considered the cradle of Western Civilization.

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- iii. Disputed concerning the gospel (Acts 17:17; Acts 20:20-21)
 - 1. In the synagogue [places of worship]
 - 2. With devout persons [private places]
 - 3. In the market place [public places]
- iv. Meeting with the philosophers (Acts 17:18)
 - 1. The Epicureans [philosophers of pleasure] (Luke 12:15-21)
 - 2. The Stoics [philosophers of sternness] (Colossians 2:23)
- v. Brought to Areopagus (Acts 17:19-21)
 - 1. Inquiring of the new doctrine
 - 2. Desiring to hear some new thing (Proverbs 24:21)

Note: The Character of Worldly Philosophy (Colossians 2:8)

- 1. Idolatrous (Acts 17:16)
 - 2. Sensational (Acts 17:21)
 - 3. Superstitious (Acts 17:22)
 - 4. Ignorant (Acts 17:23)
- B. Paul's Sermon on Mar's Hill (Acts 17:22-31)
- i. Their ignorance of the true God (Acts 17:22-23)
 - 1. Ignorant in their superstitions (Acts 17:22)
 - a. The basis of their religion (Jeremiah 10:2)
 - b. "*Superstition*" – Etymology: early 13c., "false religious belief; irrational faith in supernatural powers," from Latin *superstitionem* (nominative *superstitio*) "prophecy, soothsaying; dread of the supernatural, excessive fear of the gods, religious belief based on fear or ignorance and considered incompatible with truth or reason,"
 - c. "*Superstition*": religious belief or practice founded on the unknown and mysterious. False religion or false worship. (Acts 25:19)
 - 2. Ignorant in their devotions (Acts 17:23a)
 - a. The objects of their religion (Romans 1:21-23)
 - b. "*Devotion(s)*" - Etymology: circa 1200, *devocioun*, "profound religious emotion, awe, reverence," from Old French *devocion* "devotion, piety"

- c. *"Devotions"*: The state of being dedicated, consecrated, or solemnly set apart for a particular purpose. External religious duties; objects of religious worship.
 - d. An altar to the "unknown god"
 - 3. Ignorant in their worship (Acts 17:23b)
 - a. The practice of their religion (John 4:22)
 - b. The willingness of their ignorance (2 Peter 3:5)
 - ii. The Power of the True God (Acts 17:24-28)
 - 1. God's independence from man (Acts 17:24-25)
 - a. No need for man's temples (Acts 17:24; Isaiah 66:1-2)
 - i. He is Creator
 - ii. He is Lord
 - b. God's desire to fellowship with man and receive his worship (Acts 17:24)
 - i. To be worshipped in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)
 - ii. His Spirit to indwell the believer (John 14:17)
 - c. No need for man's worship to be the True God (Acts 17:25; Job 22:2; Job 35:6-7)
 - i. The giver of life (John 11:25)
 - ii. The giver of all things (James 1:17)
 - 2. Man's dependence on God (Acts 17:26-28)
 - a. The creation of man (Acts 17:26a)
 - i. One blood (Genesis 3:20)
 - ii. All nations (Genesis 10:32)
 - b. The limitations of man (Acts 17:26b)
 - i. The times appointed (Job 14:5)
 - ii. The bounds of habitation (Deuteronomy 32:8)
 - c. The need of man (Acts 17:27)
 - i. To seek the Lord (Jeremiah 29:13)
 - ii. To find the Lord (Romans 10:6-8)
 - d. The life of man (Acts 17:28; Job 12:10; Proverbs 20:24)
 - iii. The Nature of the True God (Acts 17:29-31)
 - 1. A personal God (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:19-20)
 - a. Greater than His offspring
 - b. Greater than His creation (Romans 1:23)
 - 2. A demanding God (Acts 17:30)

- a. Past leniency (Acts 14:16)
 - b. Present accountability
- 3. A judging God (Acts 17:31)
 - a. The day of judgment (Romans 2:16)
 - b. The man of judgment (John 5:22)
- C. Athenian Reaction to the Gospel Message (Acts 17:32-33)
 - i. The Scoffers (Acts 17:32a)
 - ii. The Doubters (Acts 17:32b-33; Acts 24:25; Revelation 21:8)
 - iii. The Believers (Acts 17:34)