

FALL QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2015

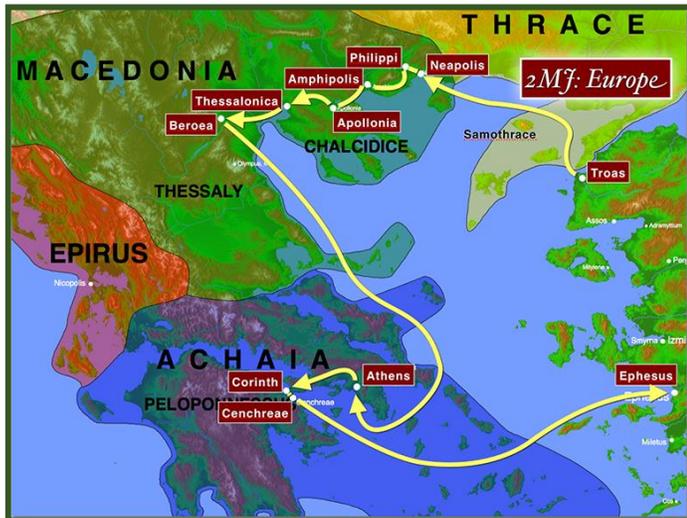
THEME: ACTS – EXPOSING GOD’S CHURCH COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

UNIT ONE – “The Gains of their Actions”

UNIT TWO – “The Pains of their Actions”

UNIT THREE – “The Fame of their Actions”

“THE RESULTS OF REAL PREACHING IN THREE CITIES OF MACEDONIA”



Sunday School Lesson No. XII, November 22, 2015

Rev. Frank A. Davis, III - Pastor-Teacher

Lesson Text: Acts 17:1-4, 10-12, 22-25, 28

Required Reading: Acts 17:1-34

Memory Text: Acts 17:23, “For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.**”

Reliable Resources: Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Libronix Electronic Library; Precepts for Living (UMI), Word Search 9 and 10 Electronic Library; MacArthur Study Bible; Thirty Amazing People in the Bible by Dr. David Jeremiah; The Book of Acts by E. C. Gillentine; The Book of Acts in 24 Lessons by E. L. Bynum;

George Brooks Preaching Commentary

INTRODUCTION

“Do you ever wonder why some people come to Christ and others do not or why some churches grow numerically and others plateau or decline? There are, of course, many reason that might be offered. Usually, the first person to get the blame for limited church growth is the pastor. After all, if he were doing his job, more people would be saved – at least, that is what some church members believe.

Both ordinary Christians and church leaders often wonder why their efforts to witness or otherwise spread the gospel seem to be ineffective. This is especially disconcerting when we hear of great revivals occurring in other parts of the world. We then begin to wonder what we might be doing wrong.

But when we examine the evangelistic work of Paul, we discover that the response to the gospel was not the same in all places. If that was true for the greatest missionary of the early church, we cannot expect things to be different in our world.” Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator.

Anticipated Power Points:

- **City-Wide Crusade in Thessalonica. Acts 17:1-9**
- **Consecrated Converts in Berea. Acts 17:10-14**
- **Conference of Religious Concerns in Athens. Acts 17:15-34**

LESSON OUTLINE

I. A City-Wide Crusade in Thessalonica. Acts 17:1-9

Beloved, our lesson this week opens with Paul and his companions visiting the city of Thessalonica. This city was named by King Cassander in honor of his wife. He was a successor to Alexander the Great. Now upon departing Philippi, Paul and Silas extend their farewell and thanks to Lydia and her household to travel to the city of Thessalonica. Upon reaching this city, they begin to minister the Word at the Jewish synagogue. Let us note the results of real preaching there.

A. vss. 1-4 – Positive results of their real preaching.

Three weeks of ministry as they reasoned from the scriptures. “*The entrance of God’s Word gives light...*” Psalm 119:130. Paul did what he always did, he stood on the four-fold testimony of I Corinthians 15:1-8 – Christ Died, was Buried, Risen, and Manifested Alive after His resurrection.) The scriptures bear these truths as crucial. Positive results were manifested by those who received the truth and aligned themselves with Paul and Silas for Jesus Christ. (Read I Thessalonians 1:6-7)

B. vss. 5-9 – Negative results of the city-wide crusade.

Wherever the Gospel is preached, there will be “naysayers” who reject its truth and will even rally others to join in the fight to stop it. Remember Mark 16:16 and John 10:10 and be wise. Jesus Christ gets all the glory!

II. Consecrated Converts in Berea. Acts 17:10-13

According to verse 10, Paul and Silas were assisted by the true brethren to leave Thessalonica and the house of a brother named Jason. That night, they set their personal course to a city about 30 miles away named Berea. There they found a group of consecrated converts who seriously searched the Old Testament scriptures and were submissive to the truth of the Word!

A. They were sincere converts. vs. 11. (They heard and heeded the scriptures.)

B. They were scripture-centered converts. vs. 11-12 (They loved and lived the scriptures.)

C. The sinful critics still opposed the converts to the Gospel. vs. 13 (The Thessalonian trouble-makers continued.)

(I love David's testimony in Psalm 119:72, 97-98. Read and be blessed.)

III. A Conference of Religious Concerns in Athens. Acts 17:15-34

Now the hell-raisers of Thessalonica continue their tirade and acts of religious jealousy. Now they came to Berea and Paul was sent forth by the Berean brothers by sea, while Silas and Timothy remained among them. Paul, after arriving in Athens, sent word for the others to come to him as soon as possible. Now Athens was the chief city of Greece. It was famous for learned religious, educational and philosophical minds. The city was overwhelmed with signs and monuments of religions and gods.

At the zenith of the city was a place called Mars Hill. It was the most sacred and reputable court of the Gentile world! It is said among the Gentiles that the findings of this court were always satisfactory to the prosecution and the defense. (Read more from Dakes Annotated Reference Bible. N. T. pg. 144, note O.)

A. Paul's concern. vs. 16-17

As Paul waited for his companions, he was stirred by the city's overwhelming practices of idolatry. There were signs of very many false deities everywhere and yet, this was supposed to be the zenith of Gentile intelligentsia. But it was a den of satanic deception.

B. Philosopher's confusion. vs. 18-21

Paul encountered several philosophies and among them were those of the Epicureans who were "disciples" of Epicurus, B.C. 342-271, who, abandoned as hopeless, the search by reason for pure truth (Jn. 18:38); seeking instead true pleasures through experiences.

There was another philosopher named Zeno of Citium, who practiced widely a philosophy called Stoicism. It basically taught that "one should be repressive of emotion and indifferent to pleasure or pain." (Dictionary.com). Note that when the so-called great minds heard Paul's teachings on Jesus Christ and the resurrection, they invited him to come and argue his doctrine before the great council at Mars Hill or the Areopagus.

C. Paul's clarification of Christ. vs. 22-31

Paul's message centered on the following concerning the Athenians' teachings:

"a. They were superstitious (too religious). vs. 22

b. They were ignorant of true worship. vs. 23

c. The Creator God does not dwell in man-made temples. vs. 24

d. He gives life and breath. vs. 25

e. He made man and set the bounds of his habitation. vs. 26

f. He is not far from us. vs. 27

g. He is not to be worshipped through images. vs. 28-29

h. He demands repentance of all. vs. 30

i. He raised Jesus from the dead. vs. 31"

D. Power of choice. vs. 32-34

At the end of Paul's presentation, choices were made.

1. Some rejected his teaching. vs. 32

2. Some requested a return visit of him. vs. 32

3. Some received the message and were saved. vs. 33-34

CLOSING

All of this lesson centers around the results of real preaching in three cities. Amazingly, the most secularly educated had the fewest converts to Christianity. Beloved, remember the words of Paul in Romans 1:16 and Colossians 2:8-10. Please receive Christ by faith and be saved.

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TV Telecast: WHNO TV-Channel 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m.

Looking Ahead:

November 29, 2015

Acts 18:1-11, 18-21

The Sunday School Lesson is taught each Wednesday at noon at Bibleway. All are welcome!

