

## Paul—Acts 17:1—18:22

### Idols in Athens; 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey Completed; 3<sup>rd</sup> Journey Begun

#### I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

- 01. 17:10... And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea**—“This was, no doubt, a very humbling experience for Paul and Silas - to be forced to flee from the face of the enemy, but for the sake of Jason and the others, it was without doubt the way of discretion. Paul was leaving behind a very young congregation, and his concern for the brethren is expressed well in his first letter to them, written from Corinth less than a year later, as far as we can determine” [Harold Littrell, *A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, p. 243]. Cf., 1 Th 2:18; 3:11; 3:6-10).
- 02. 17:11... more noble**—“The term 'noble' (*eugenes*) is the basis for the English name, 'Eugene.' Etymologically it means 'well born.' It came to signify, however, a noble-minded person, i.e., one who had high intellectual and ethical traits. It suggests one who is open to the evidence” [Wayne Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles: From Jerusalem to Rome*, p. 216].
- 03. 18:10... for I have much people in this city**—“In a prospective sense there were many in Corinth who would obey the gospel if they had opportunity. They could become the people of God by hearing, believing, repenting of their sins, and being baptized into Christ. There were much people, not yet saved, but who would accept the gospel when they heard it. This should have been encouragement enough for Paul” [H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*, p. 289]. ||||| “...the Lord called persons who were then unbelievers, and perhaps idolaters, his people. This would *accord* with the Calvinistic idea that God's people are a certain definite number whom he has selected, many of whom are yet unconverted. **But it can not prove this doctrine**, because it admits of rational explanation upon another hypothesis. He knew that these people would yet believe and obey the gospel, and he could, therefore, with all propriety of speech, call them his by anticipation. Such is no doubt the true idea” [J.W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*, p. 227, Emphasis mine, DRL].
- 04. 18:17... Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him**—There seems to be a textual problem here with the ASV and later versions not including the word GREEKS, based upon certain manuscripts. I prefer the Majority Text (KJV, NKJV) reading, which does contain the word GREEKS. Here are three interesting ideas about the beating of Sosthenes: (1)“For once, the heart of the unconverted multitude was with the apostle, and so indignant were they at the unprovoked attempt to injure him, that when it was fully exposed, they visited upon the head of the chief persecutor the very beating which he had laid up for Paul. Sosthenes was most probably the successor of Crispus, as chief ruler of the synagogue, and may have been selected for that position on account of his zeal in opposing the course which Crispus had pursued. The beating which the Greeks gave him was a riotous proceeding, which Gallio, in strict discharge of his duty, should have suppressed. That he did not do so, and that Luke says, 'Gallio cared for none of these things,' has been generally understood to indicate an easy and yielding disposition, which was averse to the strict enforcement of the law. This, however, is inconsistent with the promptness of his vindication of Paul, and his indignant dismissal of the accusers. I would rather understand it as indicating a secret delight at seeing the tables so handsomely turned upon the persecutors, prompting him to

let pass unnoticed a riot, which, under other circumstances, he would have rebuked severely. The rage and disappointment of the Jews must have been intense; but the rough handling which their leaders experienced admonished them to keep quiet for a time” [McGarvey, p. 228]. (2) “The Greeks had reasons for being hostile to Sosthenes, they were venting general hostility toward Jews on him, or they may have been angry with his unsuccessful attempt, as leader of the Jews, at prosecuting the case against Paul” [*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1667]. (3) “The ‘they’ who took hold of Sosthenes and began to beat him are not identified, but the context strongly indicates that *they* were either officers or soldiers who were with the governor. ... There is no suggestion that any of Paul’s friends, supporters, and/or converts were there; and had they been, it would not have been good Christian conduct to beat Sosthenes, even though he had tried to get Paul punished and imprisoned - possibly banished from the province” [Harold Littrell, *A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, p. 261].

## II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **The Period of the Church.**

## III. Summary.

In these two chapters we read about the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys of Paul. Verse 2 of chapter 17 tells us that Paul had a customary approach he made when coming to some new city. He would first go to the synagogue. At Thessalonica Jews who did not accept the gospel opposed Paul’s work. At Berea there were those whom all of us ought to follow in that they searched the Scriptures and accepted those things which were in agreement with the Scriptures. At Athens Paul preaches to the educated elite of the day and preached the same message he preached everywhere else. Some mocked, some put off obedience, some believed (17:32-34). In chapter 18 we find Paul in Corinth, a very wicked city. He stayed with Aquila and Priscilla because of their common trade of tent making. We read of the conversion of Crispus—and yes, the Bible does say that Crispus was baptized (1 Corinthians 1:14); he was not saved by faith ONLY. Again Paul’s message is rejected by the Jews and he moves on to the Gentiles. Paul had another vision in Corinth and was assured by the Lord that there would be a good harvest of souls in this city (18:10). Paul was brought to the judgment seat of the deputy of Achaia by unbelieving Jews, however, their case was thrown out of court (18:15-16). The Greeks beat Sosthenes (see note above). Paul preached for 18 months in Corinth (18:11), then returned to Antioch, going through Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem, after which he goes out again on to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (18:23). At the end of the chapter we are introduced to Apollos and his work.

## IV. Outline.

1. Paul establishes the church at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4).
2. Unbelieving Jews oppose Paul’s teaching by stirring up a mob (5-9).
3. Paul and Silas are sent to Berea where they found a NOBLE people (10-12).
4. Thessalonican Jews come to Berea to oppose Paul (13).
5. Paul is sent away to Athens (14-15).
6. The heathen environment of Athens stirs up Paul with an understanding of their need for the truth (16-21).
7. Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill (22-31).
8. Paul’s listeners respond in various ways to his preaching (32-34).
9. Paul comes to Corinth and stays with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3).

10. Paul reasoned and persuaded in the synagogue (4-5).
11. Paul's message is rejected and he goes to the Gentiles (6-11).
12. The Proconsul refuses to condemn Paul (12-16).
13. Sosthenes is beaten by the Greeks (17).
14. Paul returns to Antioch via Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem (18-22).
15. The Beginning of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (23).
16. Aquila and Priscilla teach Apollos the way of God more perfectly (24-28).

## V. Questions.

### True or False

01. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul is described in this chapter as ELOQUENT and MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ Aquila and Priscilla were in Corinth because they had grown tired of Rome.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter 18 records Paul having another vision.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ All of the Athenians mocked Paul's preaching.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul and Timothy became separated for a while at Berea.

### Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. \_\_\_\_\_ The woman whom Paul convinced through his preaching at Athens was: (a) Dionysius; (b) Priscilla; (c) Damaris.
07. \_\_\_\_\_ Who is used for supporting testimony to one of the statements Paul makes in his Mars Hill sermon: (a) Isaiah; (b) a Greek poet; (c) Solomon.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ Who stirred up the people at Berea: (a) the silversmiths; (b) the Stoics; (c) the Epicureans; (d) the Jews of Thessalonica.
09. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul listed some things that God gives, which of these are NOT part of that list: (a) life; (b) rain; (c) breath; (d) all things.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ How did Athenians spend their time: (a) lighting candles; (b) telling or hearing some new thing; (c) at the games.

### Fill in the Blanks

11. \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ was the serious flaw mentioned by Luke in his description of Apollos.
12. When Paul found Aquila, he was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (compass directions) of his place of birth.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ mightily \_\_\_\_\_ the Jews, and he did so \_\_\_\_\_, using the \_\_\_\_\_ to show that Jesus was the Christ.
14. Paul told the Jews at Corinth that their \_\_\_\_\_ would be upon their own \_\_\_\_\_.
15. In Gallio's judgment Paul was not guilty of \_\_\_\_\_ or of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Each Question is worth 3.3 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week's handout*

**ANSWERS to Acts 16 Questions...** [(1) True, Acts 16:28-39; (2) False, Acts 16:6-7; (3) False, Acts 16:32; (4) True, Acts 16:10; (5) False, Acts 16:17; (6) d, Acts 16:1-2; (7) b, Acts 16:33; (8) d, Acts 16:30; (9) b, Acts 16:10; (10) c, Acts 16:25; (11) E, Acts 16:3; (12) A, Acts 16:7; (13) C, Acts 16:19; (14) H, Acts 16:19; (15) Acts 16:14.]

## VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **AND PAUL, AS HIS MANNER WAS, WENT IN UNTO THEM, AND THREE SABBATH DAYS REASONED WITH THEM OUT OF THE SCRIPTURES...** (Acts 17:2-4). Paul teaches us MUCH about personal evangelism in the method he used at Thessalonica, which was his usual *modus operandi*.
  - 1) It is NEVER enough just to erect a building and expect those with different beliefs to come to us. We must GO TO THEM!
  - 2) When we go, what we should do is REASON.
    - 1- The word in Greek is *dialegomai*.
    - 2- We can see in our English word DIALOGUE a likeness to this Greek word.
      - 1] Webster defines it as—**interchange and discussion of ideas, esp., when open and frank, as in seeking mutual understanding or harmony.**
      - 2] This is QUITE different from a MONOLOGUE—a long speech by one speaker, esp., one monopolizing the conversation.
    - 3- Maybe we are not as effective in our efforts to evangelize because we must more MONOLOGUES rather than DIALOGUES.
  - 3) We must notice that Paul was PERSISTENT in presenting the truth and seeking mutual understanding in that he did so for 3 Sabbaths.
  - 4) His source of authority was the SCRIPTURES.
    - 1- Before anything will be accomplished in our efforts to convert others we will have to have agreement concerning the SOURCE of AUTHORITY.
    - 2- These Jews accepted the OT Scriptures as the word of God and Paul could use the prophecies contained therein to lead them to Christ (cf., Lk 24:25-27).
  - 5) A part of Paul's reasoning involved OPENING.
    - 1- Thayer says this word is used figuratively to speak of EXPLAINING the Scriptures.
    - 2- Paul knew they accepted the Scriptures as God's word, but that they had not properly understood many of the prophecies of the Messiah which those Scriptures contain.
    - 3- His intention was to EXPLAIN, to help them properly understand.
  - 6) Another part of Paul's reasoning included ALLEGING.
    - 1- Thayer explains this word's usage here as—TO SET FORTH (from one's self) or to explain.
    - 2- Barnes says—**maintaining that it must be so.**
  - 7) That which Paul opened and alleged as he reasoned with these Jews was the DEATH, BURIAL, and RESURRECTION of Jesus, and that He is the Christ.
2. **...THESE THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN ARE COME HITHER ALSO** (Acts 17:6). What a COMPLIMENT! The apostles and early Christians took seriously the Great Commission (Mk 16:15-16) and their commitment and dedication led to great things (cf., Col 1:23).
3. **THESE WERE MORE NOBLE** (Acts 17:11). Their NOBILITY comes from two attributes—
  - 1) They were RECEPTIVE. They had not closed their minds to truth. They were indeed truth-seekers.

- 2) They were SEARCHERS OF SCRIPTURE. They did not automatically accept what some teacher might come along and teach them. They did as John warns us to do in 1 John 4:1.
4. **...THEY CAME THITHER ALSO, AND STIRRED UP THE PEOPLE** (Acts 17:13). It seems there are always some who are not content except when stirring up trouble.
5. **...WHILE PAUL WAITED FOR THEM AT ATHENS, HIS SPIRIT WAS STIRRED IN HIM** (Acts 17:16). Does it ever bother YOU to look around and see ungodliness and wickedness in control of so many souls???
6. **THEN CERTAIN PHILOSOPHERS ... HE PREACHED UNTO THEM JESUS, AND THE RESURRECTION** (Acts 17:18). Whether Paul was with uneducated peasants or highly educated philosophers his message NEVER changed, it was: CHRIST CRUCIFIED.
7. **...TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. WHOM THEREFORE YE IGNORANTLY WORSHIP, HIM DECLARE I UNTO YOU** (Acts 17:23). Paul had to search hard, but he was able to begin his sermon to these Athenian philosophers on some common ground.
8. **...BUT NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT...** (Acts 17:30-31). Paul was NOT so concerned about offending his listeners that he held back in delivering God's commands. he was not ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16). He used tact, but he also presented the message of judgment in a forceful and clear way.
9. **AND HE REASONED IN THE SYNAGOGUE EVERY SABBATH, AND PERSUADED THE JEWS** (Acts 18:4). Paul did not just present the facts of the gospel and then leave it to them to accept or reject. Paul knew the souls of these Jews were at stake. Paul knew about the TERROR OF THE LORD, and this knowledge led him to be as persuasive as he possibly could be (cf., 2 Cor 5:11).
10. **...PAUL WAS PRESSED IN THE SPIRIT...** (Acts 18:5). The attempts to persuade that Paul was involved in were from the heart and greatly affected him.
11. **...I AM CLEAN: FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO TO THE GENTILES** (Acts 18:6). Although Paul put forth enormous effort to convert the Jews, when they rejected the gospel he did not allow this to discourage him to the point of quitting. He went on to others who might be more receptive.
12. Lessons from: *Treatises of Luke*, by Frank L. Cox. LEARN...
- 1) That centers of vice should be invaded by the messengers of Christ. it is the Father's will that sinners of all kinds, even the vilest, should hear the gospel, which is God's power to save the believer. While in wicked Corinth, Paul preached to thieves, to drunkards, to fornicators, to adulterers, to extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). In our evangelistic efforts, do we avoid such characters?
  - 2) That the sinners who hear the gospel, believe the gospel, and are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus are saved from sins; they are washed, they are forgiven, they are sanctified; they are also added to God's family, which is His church (Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2).
  - 3) That it is a good sign when forces of worldliness are aroused. it shows that the power of the gospel is felt, that the church is militant. The devil does not make ado over a negative personality or a sleeping congregation.

**VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.**

A A W F H C R I E J L C M B V B H X J U  
 I S V S H E O L E W D I M G V H M D W H  
 U Z M M E A C N C L A V E X V A D D N A  
 P A O B A P L R S A Q U I L A U Q U S O  
 F R C A P P I L I O Y Q Z G R H C U M W  
 N O K S O Y R C E S R I A S Z U T F D X  
 U P E E L W R H U G P T C Q H W E H O Y  
 E E D R L G E O M R I U E H E P T T C B  
 B C A U O U J P L T E N S D M I V V D C  
 B B C H S F R F O G J A G V D I I R R X  
 I M I H T T T O S K O P N W E R C M K C  
 B O N R C N N X V R Y H S S N T A M R E  
 F Y O J D Z I H B S C W O S O E E C R A  
 I X L N I L A R X J N J M B S L R W T E  
 X M A D X K G F O U P E C Q A B E Y O I  
 L F S E R Z A Q R C O C H T E O B D G W  
 S L S U N K N O W N G O D T R N Z E B E  
 A J E K J C L S T O I C K S A N L R V O  
 G J H P P R I S C I L L A W P G S O W J  
 J Q T U L F S V T X E U G H S L Z E A F

*[The words (or word locaters) listed below are to be found in the text of our lesson. They also are found in the puzzle above. This is just one more way to reinforce what you have studied from the text. Why not read the whole verse where the word is found one more time as you do the puzzle? Thank you for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. Let's desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow (1 Pet 2:2). DRL]*

**Acts 17—18**

Thessalonica, 17:1  
 reasoned, 17:2  
 alleging, 17:3  
 consorted, 17:4  
 lewd, 17:5  
 baser, 17:5  
 Berea, 17:10  
 noble, 17:11  
 Athens, 17:15  
 Epicureans, 17:18

Stoicks, 17:18  
 Unknown god, 17:23  
 mocked, 17:32  
 again, 17:32  
 clave, 17:34  
 Corinth, 18:1  
 Aquila, 18:2  
 Priscilla, 18:2  
 Crispus, 18:8  
 Apollos, 18:24