



Lesson 22 – Berea and Athens

Based on Acts 17:11-34

Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke were out on Paul's second missionary journey about mid-way. They landed in Greece, at Philippi, we pick up the journey here on their way to Berea. They had been jailed in Philippi, would have been beaten in Thessalonica, but they couldn't be found, and now were secreted out to Berea.

1) Where does our lesson begin today?

Acts 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto _____: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

2) What did Paul have to say about them?

Acts 17:11-12 These were more _____ than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures _____, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

The minds of the Bereans were not narrowed by prejudice. They were willing to investigate the truthfulness of the doctrines preached by the apostles. They studied the Bible, not from curiosity, but in order that they might learn what had been written concerning the promised Messiah. Daily they searched the inspired records, and as they compared scripture with scripture, heavenly angels were beside them, enlightening their minds and impressing their hearts.

3) What did Paul teach about having the light?

Romans 2:15-16 Which shew the work of the law written in their _____, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall _____ the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

All will be judged according to the light that has been given. The Lord sends forth His ambassadors with a message of salvation, and those who hear He will hold responsible for the way in which they treat the words of His servants. Those who are sincerely seeking for truth will make a careful investigation, in the light of God's word, of the doctrines presented to them.

4) Was everything peace and joy for the four men at Berea?

Acts 17:13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and _____ the people.

The unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica, filled with jealousy and hatred of the apostles, and not content with having driven them from their own city, followed them to Berea and aroused against them the excitable passions of the lower class.

5) What did they recommend to Paul?

Acts 17:14 And then immediately the brethren sent _____ Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

Paul's hasty departure from Berea deprived him of the opportunity he had anticipated of visiting the brethren at Thessalonica.



6) What had God promised Paul earlier?

Acts 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee _____
unto the Gentiles.

Persecution followed the teachers of truth from city to city. The enemies of Christ could not prevent the advancement of the gospel, but they succeeded in making the work of the apostles exceedingly hard. Yet in the face of opposition and conflict, Paul pressed steadily forward, determined to carry out the purpose of God as revealed to him in the vision at Jerusalem.

7) What happened with Paul?

Acts 17:15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto _____: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

On arriving at Athens, the apostle sent the Berean brethren back with a message to Silas and Timothy to join him immediately. Timothy had come to Berea prior to Paul's departure, and with Silas had remained to carry on the work so well begun there, and to instruct the new converts in the principles of the faith.

8) Was Paul impressed with Athens?

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to _____.

The city of Athens was the metropolis of heathendom. Here Paul did not meet with an ignorant, credulous populace, as at Lystra, but with a people famous for their intelligence and culture. Everywhere statues of their gods and of the deified heroes of history and poetry met the eye, while magnificent architecture and paintings represented the national glory and the popular worship of heathen deities. The senses of the people were entranced by the beauty and splendor of art. On every hand sanctuaries and temples, involving untold expense, reared their massive forms. Victories of arms and deeds of celebrated men were commemorated by sculpture, shrines, and tablets. All these made Athens a vast gallery of art.

As Paul looked upon the beauty and grandeur surrounding him, and saw the city wholly given to idolatry, his spirit was stirred with jealousy for God, whom he saw dishonored on every side, and his heart was drawn out in pity for the people of Athens, who, notwithstanding their intellectual culture, were ignorant of the true God.

9) What did Paul say about his first few days there later on?

1 Thessalonians 3:1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens _____;

In this great city, where God was not worshiped, Paul was oppressed by a feeling of solitude, and he longed for the sympathy and aid of his fellow laborers. So far as human friendship was concerned, he felt himself to be utterly alone. Obstacles that were apparently insurmountable presented themselves before him, making it seem almost hopeless for him to attempt to reach the hearts of the people.

10) Did he give up?

Acts 17:17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market _____ with them that met with him.



His principal work in Athens was to bear the tidings of salvation to those who had no intelligent conception of God and of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. The apostle was soon to meet paganism in its most subtle, alluring form.

11) Hearing of him, who sought him out?

Acts 17:18-19 Then certain philosophers of the _____, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of _____: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto _____, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

The great men of Athens were not long in learning of the presence in their city of a singular teacher who was setting before the people doctrines new and strange. Some of these men sought Paul out and entered into conversation with him. Soon a crowd of listeners gathered about them. Some were prepared to ridicule the apostle as one who was far beneath them both socially and intellectually.

They, and all others who came in contact with him, soon saw that he had a store of knowledge even greater than their own. His intellectual power commanded the respect of the learned; while his earnest, logical reasoning and the power of his oratory held the attention of all in the audience. His hearers recognized the fact that he was no novice but was able to meet all classes with convincing arguments in support of the doctrines he taught. Thus, the apostle stood undaunted, meeting his opposers on their own ground, matching logic with logic, philosophy with philosophy, eloquence with eloquence.

12) At the Areopagus, What did they ask him?

Acts 17:20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our _____: we would know therefore what these things mean.

In that hour of solemn responsibility, the apostle was calm and self-possessed. His heart was burdened with an important message, and the words that fell from his lips convinced his hearers that he was no idle babler.

13) What did He tell them?

Acts 17:22-23 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE _____. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

The people were carried away with admiration for Paul's earnest and logical presentation of the attributes of the true God, of His creative power and the existence of His overruling providence.

14) What followed?

Acts 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, _____ not in temples made with hands;

15) What did he add to that?

Acts 17:26-27 And hath made of one blood all _____ of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be _____ from every one of us:



Pointing to the noble specimens of manhood about him, with words borrowed from a poet of their own he pictured the infinite God as a Father, whose children they were.

16) What did he tell them about the Almighty?

Acts 17:28-29 For in him we _____, and _____, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his _____. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

17) What does God do in our ignorance?

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God _____ at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

In the ages of darkness that had preceded the advent of Christ, the divine Ruler had passed lightly over the idolatry of the heathen; but now, through His Son, He had sent men the light of truth; and He expected from all repentance unto salvation, not only from the poor and humble, but from the proud philosopher and the princes of the earth.

18) What did Paul add to that?

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will _____ the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given _____ unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

19) How well was he received?

Acts 17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some _____: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

Among those who listened to the words of Paul were some to whose minds the truths presented brought conviction, but they would not humble themselves to acknowledge God and to accept the plan of salvation. No eloquence of words, no force of argument, can convert the sinner. The power of God alone can apply the truth to the heart. He who persistently turns from this power cannot be reached.

20) Were Paul's efforts fruitless?

Acts 17:34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and _____: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

The words of the apostle, and the description of his attitude and surroundings, as traced by the pen of inspiration, were to be handed down to all coming generations, bearing witness of his unshaken confidence, his courage in loneliness and adversity, and the victory he gained for Christianity in the very heart of paganism.

21) How will the Gospel be received?

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish _____; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are _____;

The strength of those who love and serve God will be renewed day by day. The understanding of the Infinite is placed at their service, that in carrying out His purposes they may not err. Let these workers hold the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end, remembering that the light of God's truth is to shine amid the darkness that enshrouds our world.

Can you see that service needs fortitude?

Do you want to be able to stand when things are tough?

When is the time to let go of the chains that hold us?