

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 17

Searching the Scriptures

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 2:15 (See also 3:15,16)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I. Introduction

- A. Currently Studying the book of the Acts of the Apostles.
- B. This is a verse-by-verse study with the following presuppositions:
 1. The Bible (what you hold in you hand, the King James Bible) IS the word of God from cover to cover preserved WITHOUT ERROR.
 2. That no Scripture is of any private interpretation:
 - a. No one can dictate to you what something "means."
 - b. If a thing is "so" (i.e., true), then it is "so" by its virtue of being clearly "so." In other words, it can be proven in a court of law any time. None of this "I have a vision from the Lord" stuff!
 - c. You are told not to believe everyone, but to "check 'em out."
 - d. You therefore are responsible for finding the "truth" and living by it.
 3. Welcome therefore to a Bible Believing Church!
- C. So far we have covered:
 - 1 **The Church Commissioned** - The Ascension of Jesus
 - 2 **The Church Empowered** - The Day of Pentecost
 - 3 **Christianity Meets The Need** - The Invalid Man Healed
 - 4 **How To Stand-Up For Christ** - Handling Persecution
 - 5 **Staying True!** In Spite of Sin in Christian's Lives
 - 6 **Delegating the Work** - Choosing Deacons
 - 7 **Learning the Lessons of History** - Stephen's Attack on Religion
 - 8 **The Church Expanding** - Saul Begins His Persecution
 - 9 **The Conversion of Saul** - Saul on the Road to Damascus
 - 10 **Cornelius Meets Christ** - Peter Tells Cornelius About Christ
 - 11 **The First Christians** - The Birth of the Church at Antioch
 - 12 **The Church Learns to Pray** - Peter escapes death due to prayer
 - 13 **God's Call to Service** - Calls Paul and Barnabas to evangelise
 - 14 **Suffering while Serving** - Doing God's will is going to be hard
 - 15 **Settling New Testament Salvation**
 - 16 **The Second Missionary Journey**

IV. Lesson - Acts 17

A. The Trouble With Thessalonians (17:1-9)

1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy leave Philippi and head into a city called Thessalonica
2. They head straight for the _____ - place of Jewish worship.
3. Paul _____ with the Jews - draws conclusions, proves, uses their heads as he "opens" (unlocks) and "alleges" (challenges) their minds
 - a. Based upon the written _____ (not signs and wonders).
 - b. Proving that _____ (Messiah) must _____ (Isa 53) **first** before He can reign. The Jews overlooked the need for a Saviour.
 - c. Proving He must have risen from the dead (Daniel 9:25,26).
 - d. Proving that _____ is the Christ!
4. Only a few Jews end up getting saved. Why?
 - a. The Thessalonians did not check out what Paul said in the Scriptures - they only sat and listened, but did not search!
 - b. So few people get saved today because they have neither the desire, nor the energy to check things out-information overload!



Paul's Second Gospel Journey - Europe!

5. But a lot of Gentiles get saved - usually do - they love the truth!
6. Yet, comes the trouble - Unbelieving Jews
 - a. Driven by _____ - a problem (Pr 27:4; Mt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45)
 - b. The unbelieving Jews set the city in an riot against the Gospel
 - c. Time to move on - sometimes, it is not possible to reach a group of people, and you may have to just move on - very sad!
7. Notice the testimony that these few Christians had - "*These that have turned the world **upside down!***" They weren't ruining it, they were making it back right-side up again!
8. Notice that it was not an event over in China, or somewhere, far off, but it had come to their town! Oh, may it come to Blarney, and Mallow, and Cork, and Dublin, and every town and village!!!

B. The Treasure at Berea (vss 10-14)

1. Straight to the synagogue again! They are not ones to give up easily!
2. These were more "_____" than those at Thessalonica because:
 - a. They had a "_____ of mind." Eager, hungry, willingness, open-mind - not numb of mind!
 - b. They "_____ the _____." They KNEW them already, but needed some prodding, to get them to put 2 and 2 together! Get people to know more and more ABOUT this Book, and God guarantees that more and more people will get saved!
 - c. They searched the scriptures "_____!" Paul taught them everyday he could (Cf Lk 22:53; Acts 2:46,47; 5:42; 16:5)
3. This time _____ believed! Our attitude towards the **BOOK** always makes the difference!
4. But look who's coming! Those unbelieving Jews - religious zealots!
5. Time to move on again. That's Ok - there's more fish (Mt 4:19)

C. The "Tough One" - Athens (vss 14-34)

1. Paul's spirit is "stirred" within him - because of the _____!
2. Athens was the headquarters for:
 - a. Western Philosophy (see Colossians 2:8)
 - b. Science (see 1 Timothy 6:20)
 - c. Worship of **Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle** - they taught that man evolved from animals - that we could bring about a "golden age" through education, and reform - that science was the search for god! *They are still searching* (SETI, NASA, ESA, etc)
 - d. Epicurians - "_____ is the highest good"
 - e. Stoicks - "_____ is the highest good - but _____ is undefinable!"
3. Paul goes first to the _____ - where he can build on some foundation!
4. Then, out to the market - basically, Paul goes anywhere there was someone who would listen.
5. Paul is invited to "speak" at Mars' Hill. He is not hiding his actions! Preaches the "Mars' Hill Address," or "*Just-in-case Religion*"
 - a. Paul **prepares** his audience - i.e., gets them lost. Doesn't joke with them, "relate" to them, or encourage them! He _____ them by God's Book (1 Cor 1:23)! The cross judges us all!
 - 1) They are _____ in **ALL** things. All highly educated people are superstitious!
 - 2) They are _____ when it comes to worship - Blind leaders of the blind - made allowances that *maybe* you missed Him!
 - 3) They are _____ - can't make up their mind! Education makes people idolaters! They end up worshipping "Man," themselves, their achievements, their progress, potential, etc
 - 4) They are _____ - always having to have something NEW!
 - b. Paul **magnifies** God - i.e., points them in the right direction. He even uses some of their own well known poets to show it is not "something new" he was preaching!
 - 1) God is **the** Creator of:
 - a) This planet and the entire universe they worshipped.
 - b) All things on this planet.
 - c) All life - all humans have the SAME _____!
 - d) You! (*No room for evolution*)
 - 2) God is _____ of His creation - this universe is IN Him!
 - 3) God cannot be _____ - made into idols!
 - 4) God made you the way you are (did away with all psychiatrists), where you are with all the troubles you may have so that you would _____ Him and find Him, and so be saved by Him! That does away with all the professional mental health people in one clean shot! You are where you are because that is where God wants you, and it really is best!
 - c. Paul offers an invitation for everyone listening to repent!

- 1) Calls **all** men to repent, because **judgement** day is coming!
 - 2) Declares that _____ will be the Judge. Not Mary, or Joseph Smith, or Allah, or ANYONE else!
 - 3) Cries out for people to seek the Lord while He may be found
6. The Results (17:34)
- a. "Slim pickings" here at Athens. Why? (See 1 Corinthians 1:26)
 - 1) Rejection and ridicule - "some mocked" (17:32)
 - 2) Postponement and indecision - "we will hear thee again" - they never did!
 - 3) Acceptance - "some believed" (17:34)!
 - b. Nevertheless, the preaching of the word always bears fruit.

V. Conclusion - A Review of the Principles:

- A. Getting a person to deal with Scripture is the soul-winners primary goal when dealing with people.
- B. A Christian should "search the Scriptures daily" in order to know what is right and wrong.
- C. Every Christian's goal should be to have a testimony of "turning the world upside-down!!!"
- D. Learn how to deal with different people in different ways - know who you are witnessing to.
- E. Ask God for boldness like Paul had when witnessing.

IV. Study Questions