ACTS SERMON SERIES – Additional Study Notes and Exegesis

MAKE IT A HABIT

November 22, 2027
Sermon Series – The Book of Acts
ACTS 17:1-10

BIG IDEA
Faithful witness grows from a practiced rhythm: enter, open Scripture, explain Christ, invite response, and keep going.

"As was his custom … he reasoned with them from the Scriptures."
ACTS 17:2 (NIV)

READ THE MOVEMENT

The passage at a glance

Acts 17:1-10 moves from practiced proclamation to public pressure to continued mission.

1 The gospel is opened from Scripture • vv. 1-4

- Paul enters the synagogue in Thessalonica, his normal point of contact with people who know Israel's Scriptures.
- Across three Sabbaths, he explains, and sets evidence before the hearers; this is patient engagement, not a slogan.
- The message is specific: the Messiah's suffering and resurrection were necessary, and Jesus is that, Messiah.
- The hearers divide, yet a multiethnic and socially varied community begins to form around Christ.

2 The gospel exposes rival loyalties • vv. 5-9

- Jealous opposition recruits a mob and targets Jason's home when Paul and Silas cannot be found.
- The charge is politically sharp: the missionaries announce Jesus as a king whose claim outranks Caesar's ultimacy.
- Jason and other believers bear financial and civic consequences for receiving the messengers.

3 The gospel keeps moving • v. 10

- The believers protect Paul and Silas and send them to Berea under cover of night.
- The missionaries do not abandon their calling; on arrival they again enter a synagogue.
- Opposition changes the location of witness, but it does not cancel the mission.

TRACE THE SERMON THREAD

- → What repeated action in verse 2 makes the title "Make It a Habit" concrete?
- → Where do you see truth, response, resistance, and perseverance?
- → What remains unchanged when circumstances change?

EXEGESIS

A practiced, Scripture-shaped witness

Acts 17:1-4

What Luke emphasizes

- Strategic presence. Thessalonica has a Jewish synagogue, so Paul begins where the biblical story is already known and discussed.
- Repeated practice. Three successive Sabbath meetings mark sustained contact; the text presents witness as a rhythm, not an isolated burst.
- Reasoned ministry. Paul converses from the Scriptures, making connections that hearers can examine rather than demanding blind assent.
- Christ-centered content. The controlling claim is not self-improvement but the necessity of the Messiah's suffering and resurrection.
- Persuaded people. Jews, God-fearing Greeks, and prominent women join Paul and Silas; the gospel crosses religious, ethnic, and social lines.

"Make it a habit" is more than attendance

- Go where people are. Paul's custom takes him into a real community and a real conversation.
- Open the Word. Scripture supplies the framework, evidence, and vocabulary of his witness.
- Name Jesus. Biblical explanation reaches its goal when Jesus is proclaimed as Messiah.
- Allow response. Persuasion is offered; hearers are not manipulated, and the outcome belongs to God.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

- → What regular rhythm places me under Scripture before I try to explain it to others?
- → Can I state the gospel as clearly as Paul does here?
- → Who is already within my relational "synagogue" - a place where honest conversation can begin?

EXEGESIS

When faithful witness meets resistance

Acts 17:5-9

Read the conflict carefully

- Jealousy drives the opposition. Luke contrasts reasoned engagement in verses 2-3 with agitation, recruitment, and mob action in verse 5.
- Hospitality becomes costly. Jason's welcome makes his home a mission base, but it also makes him and nearby believers visible targets.
- The accusation mixes distortion with truth. The missionaries are not chaotic rioters, yet their message does announce a world-reordering King.
- Jesus' kingship reveals the issue of allegiance. His lordship does not authorize lawlessness; it denies every earthly ruler the place that belongs to Christ alone.
- Posting bond likely secures release while placing pressure on the believers to prevent further disturbance; the newborn church bears a public cost.

Theological insight

- The gospel brings peace with God, but it may disturb arrangements built on pride, envy, fear, or false ultimacy.
- Opposition may target the body when it cannot reach the preacher; therefore, mission is never a one-person enterprise.
- Christian courage is neither aggression nor retreat: believers tell the truth, absorb cost, and use wise means to preserve life and mission.
- The question underneath the riot remains: Who is King - Caesar, the crowd, the self, or Jesus?

DISCERN THE PRESSURE

- → What rival loyalty becomes threatened when Jesus is treated as King?
- → How can a church support households that take visible risks for the gospel?
- → Where must courage be joined with prudence rather than bravado?

EXEGESIS

Prudence that keeps the mission moving

Acts 17:10 and the narrative arc

Verse 10 is not an escape from faithfulness

- At nightfall the believers act quickly, practically, and collectively in response to danger.
- Sending Paul and Silas protects both the witnesses and the local congregation after Jason has posted bond.
- Night travel is prudent concealment, not denial of Christ; biblical courage does not require avoidable exposure.
- In Berea, Paul and Silas return to the synagogue. Their method and message continue even when the city changes.

A whole-passage pattern for ministry

- Enter: show up consistently in the places God has given you.
- Open: reason from Scripture so the Bible, not personality, carries the argument.
- Proclaim: bring the story to its center - the crucified, risen, reigning Jesus.
- Gather: receive those persuaded by the gospel into a new, diverse people.
- Continue: When opposition redirects the route, keep obeying the mission.

SERMON BRIDGE **A holy habit is not rigid routine; it is durable obedience that adapts without changing its gospel center.**

FOR THIS SEASON

- → What method may need to change while the message stays the same?
- → Whom should the church protect, send, or support?
- → What would faithful continuation look like after disappointment or resistance?

ORIGINAL-LANGUAGE WORDS

Words that sharpen the passage

Acts was written in Koine Greek; the forms below illuminate Luke's emphasis.

Habit and handling Scripture • vv. 2-3

εἰωθός eiōthos — **custom; what one has become accustomed to doing.** Paul's witness flows from a settled practice, not a last-minute impulse.

διαλέγομαι dialegomai — **to reason, discuss, converse.** The word suggests engaged explanation and exchange, not merely a one-way speech.

γραφή graphē — **writing; Scripture.** Paul's case arises from Scripture, locating authority in God's written revelation.

διανοίγω dianoigō — **to open thoroughly; explain.** The same verb family can describe opened Scriptures or opened understanding (Luke 24:32, 45).

παρατίθημι paratithēmi — **to set beside, place before; demonstrate.** Paul lays the evidence before his hearers so they can see how the pieces belong together.

The gospel and public allegiance • vv. 3, 6-7

δεῖ dei — **it is necessary; must.** The Messiah's suffering is not accidental defeat but part of God's redemptive purpose.

πάσχω / ἀνίστημι paschō / anistēmi — **to suffer / to rise.** Cross and resurrection belong together; Paul proclaims both humiliation and victory.

Χριστός Christos — **Anointed One; Messiah.** "Christ" is a royal, saving title before it is treated as a personal name.

ἀναστατόω anastatoō — **to unsettle, agitate, disturb.** The opponents label the mission disruptive; the gospel does overturn false orders, though not by mob violence.

βασιλεύς basileus — **king.** Calling Jesus King makes ultimate allegiance explicit and places every lesser authority under him.

CROSS-REFERENCES

Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

Read each group around one theme rather than as isolated proof texts.

Habit, Scripture, and formation

- Luke 4:16 - regular synagogue participation was also Jesus' practice; holy routines can prepare us for faithful public ministry.
- Acts 2:42 - the post-Pentecost church devotes itself to apostolic teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.
- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 - Scripture makes God's people wise for salvation and equips them for every good work.
- 1 Peter 3:15-16 - believers give a reason for their hope with gentleness, respect, and a clear conscience.

The Messiah had to suffer and rise

- Psalm 22 - the righteous sufferer's anguish moves toward vindication and worldwide worship.
- Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - the Servant bears sin, is rejected, and is ultimately exalted.
- Luke 24:25-27, 44-47 - the risen Jesus opens the Scriptures around the Messiah's suffering, resurrection, and worldwide proclamation.
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 - Paul summarizes the received gospel: Christ died, was buried, and was raised according to the Scriptures.

Jesus the King

- Psalm 2:6-12 - God installs his King; the nations are summoned to wise, reverent allegiance.
- Luke 1:32-33 - Jesus receives David's throne and an everlasting kingdom.
- John 18:36-37 - Jesus' kingdom is not sourced from this world, yet he openly confesses that he is a king.
- Revelation 19:16 - the returning Christ is named King of kings and Lord of lords.

CROSS-REFERENCES

Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

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A Church Whose Faith Becomes Known

- Acts 1:8 - the Spirit empowers witness from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 - Thessalonian believers receive the word amid suffering and become an example whose faith rings out.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 - Paul recalls bold, gentle, holy, and self-giving ministry among them.
- Philippians 3:20 - the church's ultimate citizenship and awaited Savior are in heaven.

THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

What God is conveying

The passage reveals both the content of the gospel and the character of faithful witness.

What God conveys through Acts 17:1-10

- God forms witnesses through repeated devotion. A “custom” can become a channel of readiness when it regularly places us before God and his Word.
- God has spoken a coherent story. The Messiah’s cross and resurrection fulfill Scripture rather than interrupting God’s plan.
- God addresses the mind and the will. The gospel can be reasoned, explained, and demonstrated, yet every hearer must still respond.
- God creates a new people. Those who were persuaded do not merely agree; they join a community that crosses familiar social boundaries.
- God advances his mission through both courage and providential redirection. Pressure can scatter witnesses without silencing the Word.

How the passage points to Jesus

- Jesus is the promised Messiah: the long-awaited Anointed One in whom Israel’s Scriptures reach their saving goal.
- Jesus is the suffering Savior: his cross is presented as divinely necessary, not as the collapse of his mission.
- Jesus is the risen Lord: resurrection vindicates him and turns suffering into the doorway of victory.
- Jesus is the true King: Caesar, culture, and self-rule are exposed as limited and penultimate before his reign.
- Jesus is the center of mission: Paul’s habit, argument, endurance, and destination all serve the proclamation of Christ.

CHRIST-CENTERED SUMMARY **The Christian habit is not merely "read more." It is to keep meeting Jesus in Scripture until his kingship reshapes our witness.**

WORSHIP AND SURRENDER

- Which title for Jesus in this passage do I most need today - Messiah, Savior, risen Lord, or King?
- Where have I separated the cross from the resurrection, or the Savior from the King?
- What part of my life still treats Jesus as important but not ultimate?

POST-PENTECOST RESPONSE

What God wants from believers and the church

The Spirit empowers ordinary disciples to embody and extend the witness of Jesus.

From believers

- Practice Scripture-shaped devotion. Build rhythms sturdy enough to guide action when opportunity or opposition arrives.
- Reason with humility. Know what you believe, show how Scripture leads to Christ, and listen well enough for genuine dialogue.
- Proclaim the whole Jesus. Speak clearly of his suffering, resurrection, Messiahship, and kingship - not a reduced message of private comfort.
- Live with reordered allegiance. Honor rightful authorities while refusing to give any person, nation, party, or desire the devotion owed to Christ.
- Persevere wisely. Expect mixed responses; do not confuse prudence with fear or resistance with failure.

From the church

- Equip the saints to handle Scripture. The church should form people who can open the biblical story and connect it faithfully to Jesus.
- Welcome a diverse body. The gospel gathers people across ethnic, social, gender, and religious-background lines into one fellowship.
- Share the cost of mission. Jason's household shows that hospitality, legal exposure, financial support, and protection are church work.
- Discern when to stay and when to send. The body acts together to preserve people and extend witness into the next place.
- Make Jesus' reign publicly visible. Corporate life should demonstrate an allegiance stronger than envy, fear, status, or civic pressure.

CHURCH REFLECTION

→ Which gospel habit should our congregation strengthen now?
→ Whose faithful service needs practical protection or support?
→ Would our neighbors describe Jesus as the true center of our common life?

SERMON RESPONSE

Prompts for Prayer, Journaling, and Action

Use these to turn study into obedience.

Look inward

- What repeated practice is currently shaping me most - and is it forming me toward Jesus?
- Where do I need deeper biblical understanding before speaking with greater confidence?
- What rival “king” most competes for my trust, time, money, imagination, or fear?
- What faithful action have I postponed because I expected universal approval?

Look together

- How can our church make room for reasoned questions without losing gospel clarity?
- Who, like Jason, is absorbing hidden costs for ministry and needs the body’s care?
- Where is God gathering people unlike one another around the same King?
- What wise redirection could turn present resistance into a new field of witness?

A simple habit for the week

- Read Acts 17:1-10 aloud once each day; notice one repeated action or contrast.
- Write one sentence showing how the passage leads to Jesus’ cross, resurrection, and reign.
- Pray for one person, then begin one respectful Scripture-shaped conversation.
- Tell one believer what you are learning so witness remains shared, not solitary.

Prayer Prompt

Lord Jesus, make me steady in Scripture, clear about the gospel, humble in conversation, courageous under pressure, and faithful to you as King. By your Spirit, form our church into a people who welcome, protect, send, and keep proclaiming you. Amen.

Study sources

Primary text: Acts 17:1-10, New International Version (2011). Full passage intentionally not reproduced.
BibleGateway NIV passage

Greek text and morphology: BibleHub Acts 17 interlinear

Contextual comparison: Acts 2; Luke 24; 1 Thessalonians 1-2; and the cross-references listed above.

Study note: These notes summarize and synthesize the passage for sermon preparation; they are not a substitute for reading the full NIV text in context.

My Sermon Notes

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