

## **#12 Barrier Breaking Faith**

### Acts 17-18 The Low Road & the High Road

As the second missionary journey continued, at times Paul, Silas & Timothy were received well as respected messengers of the gospel, and at other times it was a very different story and they were rejected and persecuted.

#### **17:1-10 The Low Road in Thessalonica**

**:2** Reasoned from the Scriptures for three weeks to prove Jesus is the Messiah, who suffered for sin and was resurrected from such passages such as Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 16:10; 22:12-18; Acts 2:30-32 Peter addresses the same issue in his sermon at Pentecost; Luke 20:27-38 Jesus on the resurrection; 1 Th. 4:13-18; 5:9-10

**:3** "This Jesus" see 2 Corinthians 11:4; 2 Tim. 2:8. Another Jesus was preached by those who would require circumcision (Gal. 2), adherence to the Mosaic law, baptism or works to be saved. A Christian in Holiness lives purely, righteously and obediently as a testimony to their salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:5). That life is pleasing to the Father.

**:4** Some Jews believed, a large number of God-fearing-Greeks, and leading women See 1 Th. 2:1,13

**:5-10a** Opposition - Jealousy that God would save Gentiles led to a riot and a quick exit by Paul. See 1 Th. 2:15b-3:2 & God's vengeance in 2 Th. 1:3-10

#### **17:10b-12 The High Road in Berea**

**:11** *The people here were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Some accept truth only after great convincing, others eagerly. See John 10:14-16*

The Bereans are often used as examples of true disciples who accept the Word of God. Could Paul have been thinking of the example of the Bereans when he wrote 2 Tim. 2:2,15 & 3:15-17 *What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. <sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth. 3:15-17 <sup>15</sup> and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God<sup>[a]</sup> and is profitable*

*for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

### **17:13-15 Opposition from Thessalonica returns**

Paul leaves and goes to Athens and Silas & Timothy stay to encourage the new believers.

### **17:16-34 A New Opportunity among Philosophers**

**:17-18** A new pattern for ministry - Synagogues and Marketplaces - reasoning & in the synagogues and debates among the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.

*Epicurean and Stoic philosophies. The former, who took their name from their founder Epicurus (341–270 BC), tended to be materialistic in outlook. For them either the gods did not exist, or they were so far removed from the world as to exercise no influence on its affairs. They taught a rudimentary atomic theory, and in their ethics they stressed the importance of pleasure and tranquility. They have often been falsely represented as sensualist in outlook, but in fact they had a lofty view of 'pleasure' and scorned sensualism.*

*The Stoics, founded by Zeno (340–265 BC), took their name from the stoa or colonnade where he taught. They stressed the importance of Reason as the principle which was inherent in the structuring of the universe and by which men ought to live. They had a pantheistic conception of God as the world-soul, and their ethics stressed individual self-sufficiency and obedience to the dictates of duty.<sup>1</sup>*

*The focus of both groups was themselves.*

**:19-21** Their initial response was that Paul was a babbler, and like a bird picking at crumbs. But they wanted to hear something new so Paul obliged them by sharing the teaching about the unknown God.

**:22-29** God is presented as creator of all things and Lord of the nations (:26; Dt. 32:8). God is presented as sovereign over all things and all peoples and does not need to be served. (Ps. 51:16-17) :27 God has revealed himself so that people will seek Him. There is only one race and it is the human race and God is Lord of the nations. :28 *For in Him we live and move and have our being..* God is not static but alive and idols of stone and metal do not represent Him.

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall, I. H. (1980). [\*Acts: an introduction and commentary\*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 300). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**:30-31** God is judge. He is represented not by an idol of stone or metal, but a living resurrected man. The Resurrection becomes the sticking point and point of interest. See 1 Cor. 15:12-20

### **18:1-17 Highs & Lows and the blessing of God's Assurance**

**:1-3** New partners - Aquila & Priscilla. Refugees from persecution in Rome and a shared vocation as tent makers, we find in 1 Cor. 16:19 a church met in their house. We will hear more of their ministry, becoming teachers. Only here and in 1 Cor. 16:19 is Aquila listed first. At other times Priscilla is listed first. Like in Luke 2:16 where it is not Joseph and Mary, but Mary and Joseph. Women are recognized for their leadership role as we saw last week with Lydia. See 1 Cor. 10:11-2; 11:5; 12:12-31

**:4-6** A new low – reasoning and preaching the word led to rejection in the Synagogue. Paul – “From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

**:7-8** A new high – leaving behind those who blasphemed and simply going next door led to many believers who were baptized. Look for the harvest. Jn. 4:35-36

**:9-11** God's Assurance! Paul must have had fear that the city may turn against him again, as in Lystra, Philippi & Thessalonica. God gives assurance and it led to a 1 ½ year ministry. See 23:11

**:12-17** A cold blooded attack did come against Paul led by the Jews. Ironically the anger turned against Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue. The proconsul did nothing to help.

**:18-23** God did protect Paul and he was able to sail away. He was accompanied by Priscilla & Aquilla, whom he left in Ephesus. He continued his mission of strengthening the disciples. Remember 2 Timothy 2:2, 15

**:24-28** Apollos, an eloquent orator is further taught by Priscilla & Aquilla the whole gospel. See a further teaching Col. 1:25-28. He learned well and used well all he had learned. :28 is the basis for the word Apologetics or the defense of the gospel. See Phil. 1:7; 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 1:3.