

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 19TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

REASONING WITH THEM (ACTS 17:1-9) "THEY CAME TO THESSALONICA"

Thessalonica was a large port city with a diverse population of nearly two hundred thousand that was a three-day walk (100 miles) from Philippi. It was the capital of Macedonia and is still a large, thriving city today.

- Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece and is the co-capital of the country with over one million in population today.

"WENT INTO THE SYNAGOGUE"

For three weeks, Paul "reasoned with them from the Scriptures." The word used for "reasoned" is where we get the word dialogue, meaning that Paul explained the Scriptures with clarity and simplicity, even opening the door for questions.

- In a fallen world, **there are people who will not listen to reason and act unreasonably.**

"EXPLAINING AND PROVING"

Paul worked, **"proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead."** Paul used OT scripture to point to who Christ is and what He had done for them.

- There was a favorable response from some of the hearers.** A multitude of "God-fearing Greeks" and many prominent Jewish women joined Paul and Silas.

"BROUGHT TOGETHER SOME WICKED MEN"

The Jews who were not persuaded became jealous, gathered a mob, and incited a riot.

- The angry mob **attacked the house of Jason since they could not find Paul and Silas.** It seems as if Jason was a Believer who welcomed Paul and Silas into his home to stay with him while they were in the area.

"STARTED A RIOT IN THE CITY"

This would have all transpired after 50 A.D., when **the Edict of Claudius expelled Christians from Rome** because of the constant riots disputing the Pax Romana.

- The mob dragged Jason and others before the city officials, claiming that **the men who had caused trouble all over the world were now in the city and Jason had shown them hospitality.**

TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

The wicked men in the marketplace gave an unsolicited compliment to the effectiveness of God's work through Paul and Silas by saying, **"These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too."**

- May it be said of us that, like "these men," this church has **radically impacted our city and world to where nothing seems the same.**

"SAYING THAT THERE IS ANOTHER KING—JESUS"

The crowd and city officials were upset by the fact that this group of Christians had disrupted the peace and spoken out against Caesar, so they took a security bond from Jason and released them.

- This bond was different than what we see in our legal system. **Jason paid a bond guaranteeing the missionaries' departure.**

STRANGE NEW TEACHING (ACTS 17:10-21)

ARRIVING IN BEREA

Under the cover of night, Paul and Silas left Thessalonica for Berea, not wanting to bring more trouble on the Believers there, especially Jason who had put up the security bond.

- In verse 11, Luke contrasts the people of Berea and those in Thessalonica, claiming that the Bereans were of **"more noble character."**

"THE PEOPLE HERE WERE OF..."

Though a generalization, Luke was saying that the people of Berea were more open-minded. They were more **willing to set aside their religious, political, and social prejudices to receive Christ.**

- Many people today will never take hold of an identity in Christ because we are **unwilling to loosen up our grip on things that we were never meant to find our identity in.**

"EXAMINED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY"

They were of a more noble character, since they **"received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."**

- We should have an **eagerness to hear the word**, but we should also **test what we are hearing to verify that it is biblical.** Are we using the word of God to match up claims about the Word of God?

"THEY CAME THERE TOO"

Luke says that Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea to hinder the work that was being done, so to protect Paul, they sent him to Athens.

- It appears Paul had intended on waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens; however, he was compelled to speak after witnessing **"that the city was full of idols."**

THE INTELLECTUAL AND IDOLATRY CAPITAL

Athens was the beautiful cultural and intellectual epicenter of Greece. Paul saw all the beauty of Athens, yet he was depressed by the magnitude of idolatry he saw there.

- We can do build-outs and construct some beautiful buildings, but that does not guarantee that God is pleased with what happens inside of them.**

"THE EPICUREAN AND STOIC PHILOSOPHERS"

Members of two of the schools of philosophy there came to debate Paul and his teachings.

- The Epicureans** held that pleasure was the chief purpose of life. They denied the idea of life after death and divine providence. **The Stoics** focused on living harmoniously with nature, believing that everything was god and god was in everything.

A NEW TEACHING

Paul was invited to speak at the Areopagus, which was the name of a hill and the formal name of the court that met there. The Greeks loved the opportunity to discuss new ideas and to be introduced to new thought.

- It was the novelty of Paul's preaching that got him an invite to speak, not a genuine pursuit of truth.

THE SERMON ON MARS HILL (ACTS 17:22-34) "I SEE THAT YOU ARE EXTREMELY RELIGIOUS"

The Greeks would put up altars to unknown gods to cover all the bases, so Paul used the altar to *agnostō theō* as an object lesson to introduce them to the one true God who was unknown to them.

- They worshipped in ignorance because **God has made Himself known** through what He has created (Romans 1:20).

PAUL KNEW THE WORLDVIEW OF HIS AUDIENCE

Every statement Paul made was **a calculated contradiction of the beliefs held by the people of Athens.**

- There is one God. He does not live in things made by hands; He doesn't lack anything or need to be served by our hands; He made all people and has given them all things; He is not far from us.

SEEING OUR REBELLION

In v. 28, Paul uses two quotes from Greek poets to build a bridge to his pagan audience, showing that even their words communicated biblical truth.

- Paul, using their worldview, wanted them to see that as His offspring, we are **responsible for knowing God, rejecting the wrong ideas about Him, and being accountable if we dishonor Him.**

SEEING HIS GRACE

As Paul brought the message to a close, he told the Athenians how God had overlooked the times of ignorance, meaning He had patiently held back His wrath. But a time of judgment would come. As an act of grace, **God provided a Savior and now requires everyone to repent of their foolish ways.**

- The Savior was killed and resurrected and will one day return to judge the world.**

"SOME PEOPLE JOINED HIM AND BELIEVED"

It seems as if the ones who ridiculed Paul outnumbered the ones who wanted to know more. There were only a few who joined Paul and believed. We don't have any additional information about Dionysius and Damaris, nor do we know of a church plant in Athens.

- Paul's address was not a failure. **Ministry is successful if even only one soul is saved.**

ARE WE LIKE THE BEREANS...

- Do we have a desire for God's Word?
- Do we see the value in examining the Scriptures? Not just once but a daily, diligent study of God's Word?
- Where do we get our theology from? Do we search the Scriptures for truth, or have our "itching ears" sought other avenues in the pursuit of truth (2 Timothy 4:3)?

...OR THE ATHENIANS?

- In all of their intellect, they were unable to see the truth presented to them.
- Are we deceived into thinking we can add God to a pantheon of other gods?
- They only cared about discussing ideas and hearing the next new thing.
- Do we come into this place, hearing the Word without ever applying it and sharing it?

CLARITY AND SIMPLICITY

- Are we willing to have a dialogue and not a debate with unbelievers?
- Are we opening the Scriptures up to them with clarity and simplicity, but also with sincerity?
- Are we able to provide persuasive evidence of who Jesus is and what He has done for us?