

PART 21: TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

ACTS 17:1-15

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MAIN IDEA

Paul's second missionary journey continues. Luke briefly records Paul's stops in Thessalonica and Berea, and both stories give us some important lessons about how to receive and teach the Scriptures.

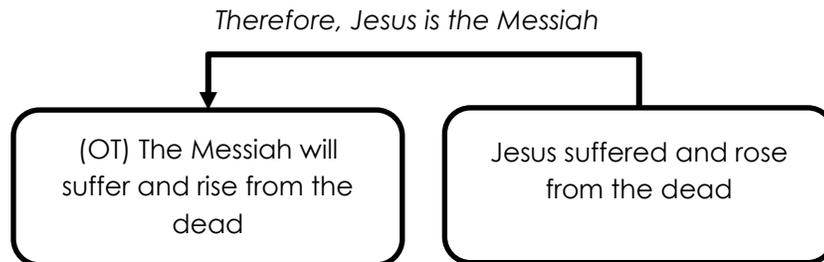
I. THE WORD TAUGHT AND RECEIVED IN THESSALONICA (17:1-9)

A. The city of Thessalonica

- Thessalonica was a flourishing commercial harbor town and Macedonia's capital city located about 100-miles from Philippi.
- Paul and his friends probably stayed in Thessalonica for several months.
- Though most converts must have been Gentiles, even pagan idolators, Paul again went first to a Jewish synagogue.

B. Paul's logical presentation of the gospel (17:1-3)

- First, he reasoned the Jews from the OT Scriptures, explaining and proving that the expected Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.
- Second, he proclaimed Jesus, that is to say, he told the story of Jesus of Nazareth, his birth, life, and ministry, his death, and resurrection
- Thirdly, he identified this Jesus as the Messiah (Christ).



C. The reaction against Paul (17:4-9)

- Some Jews and Gentiles accepted the gospel, but other jealous Jews rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city.
- Looking for Paul they went to Jason's house and dragged him and some other believers before the city officials saying they were stirring up trouble and defying Caesar's orders by proclaiming another king, called Jesus.

II. THE WORD TAUGHT AND RECEIVED IN BEREIA (17:10-15)

A. Paul and Silas sent to Berea (17:10a).

- To protect Paul and Silas, Thessalonian believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea as soon as it was dark,
- Berea was about 50 miles southwest of Thessalonica.

B. The gospel was received well in Berea (17:10b-12)

- As was his custom, Paul went first to the Jewish synagogue.
- These Jews, whom Luke calls the Bereans, were of more noble character (more open-minded)¹ than the Thessalonians.
- They combined receptivity with critical questioning because they received the gospel message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.
- Since then, the adjective "Berean" has been applied to people who are verify what they are taught by carefully examining the Scriptures.

¹ (Stott 274)

- Many of the Jews believed, as did a number of prominent women and many Greek men.

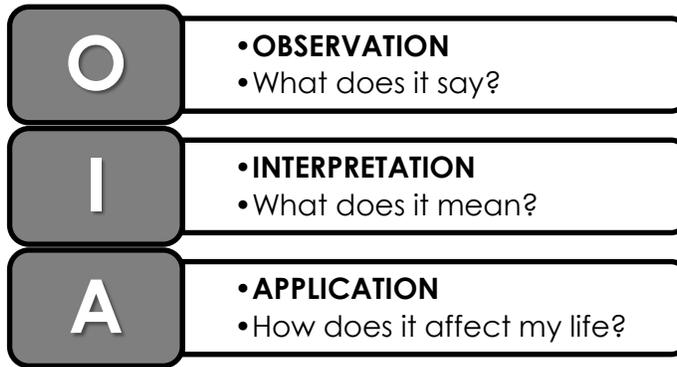
C. Jews from Thessalonica pursue Paul (17:13)

- At the same time, when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the gospel at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

D. Paul quickly escorted to Athens (17:14-15)

- The believers did not wait and risk another public outbreak this time but immediately sent Paul to the coast while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea.
- The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens, presumably by sea, a voyage of more than 300 miles.
- Paul instructs these believers to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as they can.

III. HOW TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES LIKE THE BEREANS



Step 1 is observation: In this stage you want to ask yourself, “What do I see?” In a sense you want to be like a detective, looking for what is in the text. The more time you spend in observing the Bible text, the less time you’ll need to spend in the next stage.

Step 2 is interpretation: In this stage you want to ask yourself, “What does the Bible text mean?” Your goal here is to discover the author’s intended meaning (A.I.M.). This method of interpretation is based on the historical-grammatical method which is a Christian hermeneutical method that strives to discover the Biblical author’s original intended meaning in the text.

Step 3 is application: Finally, you want to ask yourself, “How does the Bible text affect my life?” Studying the Bible to satisfy one’s intellectual curiosity is not enough. It must produce a change in your life. It must have relevancy.