

**Acts 17: At Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens**

**I. Beginning of the Church at Thessalonica (vv. 1–9)**

- A. The gospel was preached based upon the Scriptures
  - 1. Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead
  - 2. Jesus is the Christ
- B. A riot ensued — the Jews gathered bad characters
  - 1. The Jews used some underhanded schemes
  - 2. The disciples were branded as those who caused trouble all over the world

**II. In Berea (vv. 10–15)**

- A. The Bereans were of more noble character than Thessalonians
  - 1. Eagerly received the message
  - 2. Examined the Scriptures daily
  - 3. Checked if the words spoken were true
- B. The attack of the enemy led to the expansion of God's work — the other side of the leading of the Holy Spirit

**III. Paul Alone in Athens — the Birthplace of Rationalism (vv. 16–34)**

- A. Challenged by the knowledge of this world (vv. 16–21)
  - 1. Athens being full of idols was the consequence of worldly knowledge
  - 2. Debating with philosophers — who represent two sides of the human nature: “self” and “happiness”
    - a) Epicureans: the greatest good is that people may pursue pleasure — fallen into a state of indulgence
    - b) Stoics: the greatest good is through self-improvement or being self-sufficient — fallen into a state of asceticism
  - 3. Preached the good news about Jesus and His resurrection
  - 4. Vanity of worldly knowledge — do nothing but talk and listen
- B. Paul's message: To proclaim the God who was unknown (vv. 22–34)
  - 1. God is the Lord over heaven and earth
  - 2. Man is created by God — “from one man he made every nation of men”
    - a) the meaning of our existence is that we may seek God
    - b) God is not far from us — no need for speculation
    - c) should not treat man-made idols as God — “we are all His offspring”
  - 3. God set Jesus Christ to judge the world with justice
    - a) all people should repent
    - b) the proof is in the resurrection
  - 4. Three different responses: Some sneered, some wanted to hear more, and some believed