

SESSION 14: Paul's Second Missionary Journey Continues
To Thessalonica, Berea and Athens
Acts Chapter 17

QUESTION 1: At this point in the second mission journey who accompanied Paul?

Luke appears to have joined Timothy, Paul and Silas at Troas, by C16:11

Timothy appears to have joined Paul and Silas at Lystra.

QUESTION 2: What was the message that was necessary to persuade the Jews in synagogues?

What did the apostles use as the basis for their argument?

QUESTION 3: What was the basis of Paul's argument or presentation at the areopagus in Athens?

QUESTION 4: What was the "trouble" that Paul and his companions were accused? **Vs.6**

QUESTION 5: What trait was found in the Bereans which proved them "more noble?"

QUESTION 6: Consider what Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' may have been in light of C17:V.13?

REMARKS 17vs18 Read the commentary following the text of Chapter 17.

QUESTION 7: What are your thoughts about "apologetics"? When and with whom would you suggest apologetics is effective in presenting the Gospel?

QUESTION 8: What is "Epicurean" philosophy? What are its guiding principles?

QUESTION 9: What is "Stoic" philosophy? What are its guiding principles?

ACTS 17 vs. 1-4 - - In Thessalonica

When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. **2** As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. **(Q1)** "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. **4** Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

5 But other Jews were jealous; (Jealous seems an odd term) so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. **[a]** **6** But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting:

(Q4) "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, **7** and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, **saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.**" **8** When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. **9** Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

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In Berea

10 As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. **(Q 5)** **11** Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message **with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures** every day to see if what Paul said was true. **12** As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. **13** But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. **14** The **believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but**

Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 Those who escorted Paul **brought him to Athens** and then left with instructions for **Silas and Timothy to join him** as soon as possible.

Paul Reasons with the Athenians

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. **17** So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. (Q3) **18** A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (The Jews demand Signs; The Greeks seek Wisdom, – 1Cor.1:17) began to debate with him. Some of them asked, **“What is this babbler trying to say?”** Others remarked, **“He seems to be advocating foreign gods.”** They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, (Mars Hill in Athens remains in ruins but was a splendid area of classic greek architecture where in early times city leaders and philosophers would and the Greek senate met.)“May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? **20** You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” **21** (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. **23** For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. **25** And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. **26** From one man **he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.** **27** God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and **find him, though he is not far from any one of us.** **28** ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’[b] As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’[c] Acts of the Apostles Session 13 1-13-2012 Page S13-3. **29** “Therefore **since we are God’s offspring**, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. **30** In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but **now he commands all people everywhere to repent.** **31** For **he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.** He has given **proof of this** to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” **33** At that, Paul left the Council. **34** Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was **Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus**, also a woman named **Damaris, and a number of others.**

SEE REMARKS NOTATION ABOVE:

1. Philosophers. Do you know any philosophical types? I have found some intellectual types that love

to speculate about concepts and enjoy hearing themselves talk at great lengths about higher thought. Remember, the intellectual mind is outside of the domain where God works. (*Not many wise are called, and, man through wisdom can not know God - the natural man receives nothing from God for they are spiritually discerned.*)

2. Paul deals with the 'logic' of worshiping man made idols.
3. Paul identifies the deity named as the 'unknown god.'
4. Paul talks about the order of creation; establishing humanity; setting forth nations; timing the destiny of nations to rise and to fall.
5. Paul declares that the God we worship requires that we repent and change our minds and purposes to serve Him.
6. Paul declares that at a certain time all men will be judged by *the man who our God has appointed* .

What is epicurean thought?

Epicurus believed that pleasure is the greatest good. But the way to attain pleasure was to live modestly and to gain knowledge of the workings of the world and the limits of one's desires. This led one to attain a state of tranquility (ataraxia) and freedom from fear, as well as absence of bodily pain (aponia). The combination of these two states is supposed to constitute happiness in its highest form. Although Epicureanism is a form of hedonism, insofar as it declares pleasure to be the sole intrinsic good, its conception of absence of pain as the greatest pleasure and its advocacy of a simple life make it different from "hedonism" as it is commonly understood.

What is Stoicism or Stoic Philosophy?

Stoics were concerned with the active relationship between cosmic determinism and human freedom, and the belief that it is virtuous to maintain a will (called prohairesis) that is in accord with nature. Because of this, the Stoics presented their philosophy as a way of life, and they thought that the best indication of an individual's philosophy was not what a person said but how he behaved.[2] Later Stoics, such as Seneca and Epictetus, emphasized that because "virtue is sufficient for happiness", a sage was immune to misfortune. This belief is similar to the meaning of the phrase "stoic calm", though the phrase does not include the "radical ethical" Stoic views that only a sage can be considered truly free, and that all moral corruptions are equally vicious.[1] From its founding, Stoic doctrine was popular with a following throughout Greece and the Roman Empire, including the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, until the closing of all philosophy schools in AD 529 by order of the Emperor Justinian I, who perceived their pagan character as being at odds with the Christian faith.