

Questions on Mars Hill

Acts 17

- 2nd Journey: 49-52AD
- Parable of the Sower – Luke 8:15 – “good and honest hearts” on prime display in early part of chapter.

1. Thessalonica – v. 1-9

- 1: day’s journey [30mi] to Amphipolis, capitol of district where Philippi located; almost another day’s journey to Apollonia; 30mi more to capital of Macedonia [Thess.]
- Named after Alex. the Great’s sister, sided w/ Rome, “free city,” autonomous, could mint own coins, major rival of Ephesus & Corinth
- 2,3: 1st 3wks of stay; note the **verbs**: reasoned, explained, proved, proclaimed. Prove: from OT, the Messiah had to suffer & rise again, then prove JC = Messiah.
- Giving evidence: GK *lay alongside*; qt. OT, lay JC facts next to.
- 4: joined P&S; sm. # Jews, lg. # Gentiles; wives of leaders of the city joined
- From 1&2 Thess. we learn they preached a lot [1Th. 1:6, 2:2,14], performed miracles [1:5], and loved them [2:7-8]
- 2 obedient there: Aristarchus [20:4] & Secundus [27:2]
- 5: angry Jews found those ready for mischief; Jason [stayed in house, v.7] was attacked, prob. a Chr. [Rm. 16:21]; people: *dēmos*/democracy
- 6: P&S not at home; complaint meant to be derogatory, actually a compliment!
- Turn upside down: fishing term of turning boat over to scrape bottom, make repairs to boat. Jews didn’t realize sin turned the world upside down and the Gospel was turning it right side up!
- 7: Jews should’ve choked on this: Claudius = enemy [18:2]; 2 charges *in absentia*: 1. causing trouble 2. claimed JC a king, rival to Caesar
- 8: ignorance and prejudice triumphed
- 9: pledge: similar to posting bond

2. Berea – v. 10-15

- 10: 50mi W, at foot of Mt. Olympus

- 11: Berean Jews more noble-minded than Thess. Jews – Lk. notes their character. Thess. demonstrated how Gospel should be **preached**; Berea demonstrated how Gospel should be **received**.
- 4 great qualities: 1. Reception 2. Diligent
3. Cautious 4. Loyal
- 12: some [Thess] vs. many [Berea]
- 13: those causing trouble continued to follow P
- 14,15: tried to send P as far away as possible; Athens S part of Greece called Achaia. Silas & Timothy stay behind to help new Chr.

3. Athens – v. 16-34

- 1st time P has been on his own in one of the most influential cities of the world; some want to call this stop his biggest failure – not so; it was a success as the Gospel was preached. God gives increase, 1 Cor. 3:5-9.
- 16: much of Athens' glory in the past; greatest thinkers lived there; democracy born there; greatest university; ideas spread over.
- 5mi inland from port, P saw Acropolis [high city], Parthenon; upset by vile worship: "the ugliest of error, spiritual pornography, ignorance of the soul." Roper
- 17: reasoning – GK debating
- 18: Epicureans followed GK philosopher Epicurus [340-270BC], "Pursuit of pleasure" absence of pain and suffering
- Stoics disciples of Zeno [c340-265BC], name from Gk word *stoa*, porch, used in ref. to Solomon's porch; fate determined all things
- Idle babblers: compound *seed + picker*, one who took ideas from many sources and formulated a worthless hybrid philosophy
- 19,20: aroused curiosity, taken to Areopagus, from Ares, GK god of war, + hill [=Rm god Mars]
- P may have stood where Socrates stood & was tried for perverting the accepted religion
- 21: editorial note: P has perfect opportunity
- 22: 10 verse sermon, one of greatest preached; very religious, demon fearers – too superstitious
- 23: ignorance: *one who does not know yet*
- Unknown god: *trad* plague swept through, offered to all gods but to no avail, until they made this altar; out of respect to not leave any out

- 24,25: P reminds us to start where people are, not where you want them to be. He wanted to tell them about JC, but he needs to tell them about God.
- [points in sermon, I. God] [A] God made all things; [B] God made all men; how much do you need God? Take a deep breath; He enabled
- 26: from one man: med. sci. has proven this to be true; [C] God controls all things, Dan. 2:21
- 27: [II. What Man Must Do] [A] Man must seek God, Dt. 4:29, Nt. 7:7-8, Heb. 11:6; the “Unknown God” has revealed Himself!
- 28: P qt. 2 poets, Epimenides, c.600BC, & Aratus, c.310BC – showing the people they listened to believed what he was saying
- 29: how we worship God is always based on our concept of God
- [2] Man must worship correctly. How could the inferior (man) create the Superior (God)? Godhead: GK *Theios*, 2 Pet. 1:3-4
- 30: [III. Man Must Repent (Conclusion)] Winked at, overlooked. If what P said was true, the superstitious worship of the Athenians was wrong & they needed to change.
- 3rd time P used GK word for ignorance: 1. in calling God unknown, they admitted their ignorance of Him, 23; 2. they worshipped Him in ignorance, 23; 3. God tolerated their ignorance in the past – but no more excuse, 30, Rom. 1:20
- Repent: turn from idols and turn to God, 1 Thess. 1:9
- 31: told about past, now tells of future: Epicureans thought life as road to extinction, Stoics thought life was a path to be absorbed by a lifeforce. P announced life is a journey to judgment seat of God!
- Now introduces Jesus as the One through which judgment came
- 32-34: 3 responses: 1. mocked [NASB sneer]; 2. waited [like Felix, 24:25, the most dangerous game to play with God]; 3. believed
- Dionysius: member of court, *trad* became elder of church in Athens; street named after; Damaris: female; Others also there

Lessons:

1. Thessalonica: preaching the truth will upset individuals who don't want to change.
2. Berea: we should always check every passage preached to make sure it is the truth.
3. Athens: know your audience and start evangelizing where they are – and take them to where they need to be!

October 27, 2024 AM Arlington church of Christ

© 2024 Justin D. Reed
Post Office Box 292 · Woodbury TN 37190
justinreedbible.com · justinreedbible@gmail.com