

Acts 17:1-15

- **HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE...**

- Know the enemy...

- Paul and Silas were going to spend some time in PRAYER...
- A slave girl who was possessed by a spirit of DIVINATION [πύθων] began to follow them...
- For days she shouted - these men teach a way [one of many] to get to God...
- Paul turned and said to the SPIRIT - in the name of Jesus come out...
- Because he recognized WHO the enemy was - there was VICTORY - **Ephesians 6:12**

- Prison ministry...

- The MASTERS of the girl were NOT happy [could no longer make money]
- They had Paul and Silas brought before the LEADERS of Philippi...
- Their accusation was they were ROMAN - and Paul and Silas were JEWS [antisemitism]
- The LEADERS had the men BEATEN and thrown into PRISON...
- At midnight - Paul and Silas were praying and PRAISING God [expecting God to do something]
- FIRST - the other prisoners were LISTENING to them [powerful witness]
- SECOND - there was an earthquake and all the doors opened and their chains fell off...
- When the jailer woke up - he ran in and fell down before them - what must I do to be SAVED...
- He and his whole house - put their faith in Jesus - and were BAPTIZED!

- **1ST - THE SYNAGOGUES... vs. 1-4**

- 1st - Relatable Ministry... vs. 1-2

- Skipping cities... vs. 1
 - Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia!
 - Paul and company left PHILIPPI and passed through TWO cities...
 - AMPHIPOLIS [surrounded by the sea] - about 50km from Philippi...
 - APOLLONIA [belonging to Apollo] - about 50km from Amphipolis...
 - Both cities were along the main Roman road that ran through Greece [Macedonia]
 - Both were LARGE cities [about the size of Philippi] - LOTS of people that needed the Gospel...
 - Paul likely stopped in these cities - as they were about a days walk apart...
 - But Paul did NOT preach in either one of them - he continued onto Thessalonica...
 - THESSALONICA - meaning VICTORY [νίκη] over the Thessalians [Θεσσαλῶν]
 - The half-sister of Alexander the Great was named Thessalonike...
 - To commemorate the victory of Philip II [father of Alexander] over the Thessalians!
- Familiar... vs. 1-2
 - They came to Thessalonica - where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

- Then Paul as his custom was - went in to them!
 - THESSALONICA was a very LARGE city - it had a population of around 100 thousand...
 - It also had a SYNAGOGUE [the suggestion is the other two cities did not]
 - Paul had a CUSTOM [ἔθος] of going into SYNAGOGUES [seen TEN times in Acts]
 - FIRST - he could relate BEST to the people there because he was also a JEW...
 - SECOND - the people there KNEW the Word and Paul could reason [διαλέγομαι] with them...
 - THIRD - gentiles around the SYNAGOGUES were INTERESTED in God...
 - Paul used this to reach an audience he could CONNECT to and was EAGER to listen!
 - It is NOT realistic to think we can share the Gospel with EVERYONE [eight billion people]
 - But we can reach SOME - the question is WHO do we share with...
 - We will be the most effective on reaching those whom we relate to...
 - We should look for those who are interested in hearing about the Gospel!
- Spreading the message...
 - **I Thessalonians 1:8** – “From you the word of the Lord has sounded forth - not only in Macedonia and Achaia - but also in every place... so that we do not need to say anything.”
 - That does not mean Paul did NOT care about the other TWO cities...
 - Those who received the message in THESSALONICA had a huge impact...
 - They would go on to spread the message ALL around [Amphipolis and Apollonia]
 - Paul had the Gospel - but did not know their culture or traditions...
 - The LOCAL believers were much better equipped to share than a STRANGER like Paul!
 - As we reach out to with the Gospel to those we relate best to...
 - They then reach those they relate to – helping spread the Gospel to the whole world!
- 2nd – Three Weeks... vs. 2
 - For three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures!
 - Paul reasoned [διαλέγομαι] with them for THREE Sabbaths [church services]
 - This likely means he was teaching in the SYNAGOGUE for THREE consecutive Saturdays...
 - After that he spent a MORE time outside the SYNAGOGUE teaching the gentiles...
 - But it is possible [if unlikely] Paul ONLY spent THREE weeks total in Thessalonica ...
 - If that is the case it is AMAZING – it means Paul established a church in THREE weeks...
 - A HEALTHY church he went on to write TWO letters to – **I and II Thessalonians!**
 - We are about to celebrate our FIFTH year [not week] anniversary...
 - It would seem IMPOSSIBLE for a church to be established in such a short time...
 - But NOTHING is impossible for God – and He is NOT limited by our ideas!
 - It is easy to get caught up in METHODS – thinking we know how God works...
 - Forgetting that He does NOT limit Himself to our ideas – He likes to BREAK the mold...
 - So rather than TELLING God how to get things done – we need to be ASKING...
 - How does He WANT to do it – that is when AMAZING things take place!

- 3rd - The Word... vs. 3
 - The Christ... vs. 3
 - Explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead.
 - And saying: This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ!
 - In those THREE Saturday [Sabbath] teachings...
 - Paul opened the Bible [διανοίγω] - the Old Testament...
 - Showing [παρατίθημι] - the MESSIAH [Χριστός] had to suffer and rise again from the dead...
 - Proving that Jesus whom he preached - is [present] the CHRIST [Χριστός]
 - The Jews KNEW the Old Testament - they read it EVERY week...
 - But they had MISSED the plan of God - they did not understand the purpose of the MESSIAH!
 - The Rejection...
 - **Psalm 118:22** - "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."
 - The Jews rejected Jesus – because they were looking for the wrong kind of SAVIOR...
 - They wanted someone to save them from ROME not their SIN...
 - This is the MOST quoted verses from the OLD Testament [six times]
 - Jesus is the stone that the builders REFUSED – **Mark 12:10** – **Acts 4:11** - **I Peter 2:7**
 - There is a principal of Bible interpretation – important TRUTHS...
 - If Jesus said [Gospels] – the Disciples taught it [Acts] – and the Epistles explain it [I Peter]
 - Then what is being stated is a VERY important TRUTH in the Bible!
 - Amazing...
 - **Psalm 118:23** - "This was the LORDs doing. It is marvelous in our eyes."
 - The CROSS was not the idea of MEN – it was the PLAN of God from the beginning!
 - When Jesus was crucified – the plan was still a MYSTERY – **I Corinthians 2:7-8**
 - But it did not stay a MYSTERY – THREE days later He rose from the grave...
 - And everyone MARVELED – because they saw the PLAN...
 - God came down to DIE – and pay our DEBT – so we could LIVE!
 - The Day...
 - **Psalm 118:24** - "This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."
 - A very famous verse – often sung – often quoted...
 - But it is not referring to TODAY – it is talking about THE day [הַיּוֹם]!
 - The DAY Jesus came and died – to take away the SIN of the world...
 - The DAY that all of our HOPE rests on – the DAY when the DOOR to heaven opened...
 - Therefore – we will REALLY [cohortative] rejoice and be glad because of THIS day!
 - Salvation...
 - **Psalm 118:25** - "Save now - I pray - O LORD. O LORD - I pray - send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD."
 - I pray [אָנאָ] – a compound of LOVE [אַהֲבָה] and PLEASE [נָא]
 - LORD please LOVE us and SAVE us now [הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא]
 - BLESSED is the one who comes [Jesus] in the name of the LORD!
 - This was the CRY of the crowds on PALM Sunday – **Matthew 21:9**
 - As Jesus came riding down the Mount of Olives on a Donkey...
 - They laid out the coats and palm branches and cried out – HOSANNA!
 - Because Jesus was the one who did LOVE us - and came to SAVE us...

- He would go to the CROSS and pay the price for our sins...
- The plan of God from before time began - that was written in His Word - **Revelation 13:8**

○ 4th - The Women... vs. 4

- Some of them were persuaded - and a great multitude of the devout Greeks.
- And not a few of the leading women joined Paul and Silas!
- Some of the people were [passive] CONVICTED [πειθω] by the WORD...
- And - [not translated] they CAST their lot [προσκληρώω] with Paul and Silas [chose sides]
- Those who believed included DEVOUT [worshiped God] Greeks...
- Including a LOT of WOMEN - a number of whom were very influential [πρωτος]!
- The FIRST person to believe in the city of Philippi had also been a WOMAN - Lydia...
- In fact WOMEN played a key role in the spread of the gospel in the early church!
- No less so today - it is often the WOMEN who first respond to the Gospel...
- WOMEN seem to be more in tune - open - to responding to Jesus...
- A common statistic - the whole world over - more WOMEN than men attend church...
- But it should not stop there - ladies share the Gospel with your husbands and sons!

● 2ND - CHOOSING CHURCHES... vs. 5-9

○ 1st - Envious... vs. 5

- The Jews who were not persuaded became envious took some evil men from the marketplace.
- Gathering a mob they set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason.
- And sought to bring them out to the people!
- The Jews who [active] REJECTED [πειθω] the WORD...
- Became jealous of the response of the people to the Gospel...
- There were MORE people who CHOSE [προσκληρώω] the church of Paul - than their church...
- So they hired some EVIL [πονηρός] men from the market [ἀγορά] to stir up a MOB [imperfect]
- But when they could not find Paul - they went to the house of a man named Jason...
- Presumably this is where he was meeting after leaving the SYNAGOGUE!
- It is disheartening how churches tend to attack each other...
- They are very territorial - this is THEIR city - THEIR area...
- Yet we are supposed to be working together - bringing people to Jesus...

- If someone wants to start a church across the street – we should help them...
- Praise God if there are THOUSAND churches – all working hand in hand to reach the lost!
- 2nd - Upside down... vs. 6-9
 - Right side up... vs. 6
 - When they did not find them they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city.
 - Crying out: These who have turned the world upside down have come here too!
 - When they could NOT find Paul and company...
 - They instead DRAGGED [imperfect] Jason and a few brothers before the leaders [πολιτάρχης]
 - They accused Jason and the believers of turning the world upside down [ἀναστατόω]!
 - We live in a world that is UPSIDE down – a world that has REJECTED God...
 - When it is a crime in many countries to PRAY - or bring a BIBLE into school [USA]
 - But where homosexuality – and abortion are protected by the Law!
 - **Isaiah 5:20** - “Woe unto them that call evil good - and good evil.”
 - We live in a world where evil is good - and good is evil...
 - Which is why we go preaching the message of Jesus to turn the world right side up!
 - Guilty by association... vs. 7
 - Jason has harbored them!
 - HARBORED [ὑποδέχομαι] - to take by the hand...
 - The Jews accused Jason of taking Paul into his homes...
 - Jason would NOT have gotten in trouble if he had NOT been helping...
 - But because he wanted to hear about Jesus – he ended up being ARRESTED!
 - Standing up for Jesus is far from a guarantee that life will be easier - **I Peter 4:12**
 - In fact it often means that we are going to face EXTRA challenges...
 - But they are worth it – because in the end we know we win!
 - Another King... vs. 7-9
 - These are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar - saying there is another king - Jesus.
 - And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.
 - So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest they let them go!
 - The accusation was that ALL [πᾶς] the BELIEVERS were on the WRONG side [ἀπέναντι]
 - They were NOT following the RULES [δόγμα] of the Caesar...
 - And they were saying [present] there is ANOTHER [ἕτερος] King - Jesus...
 - This was a very serious crime - considered TREASON – and was punishable by DEATH...
 - So it UPSET the crowd and the LEADERS [πολιτάρχης] when they heard it...
 - But Paul was nowhere to be found – and there was NO way to prove the charge...
 - So Jason and the believers posted BAIL [ἱκανός] – and were released!
 - This was NOT the first time the Jews had rejected God as their king...
 - Israel had rejected God as their King – demanded a man [Saul] rule them - **I Samuel 8:7**
 - Again at the crucifixion of Jesus they said they had NO king but Caesar - **John 19:15**
 - Now again the Jews were rejecting a perfect God – and chose a flawed man!
 - **Romans 6:16** – “Whatever we choose to obey becomes our master.”
 - In life we are going to be a SERVANT to someone – the question is WHO...
 - We can choose to trust in this WORLD – and we become a SLAVE to this world...
 - If we run to the WORLD for answers – we are LIMITED to their solutions...
 - But if we choose to TRUST in Jesus – He can do far more than ANYONE in this world!

● **3RD – STUDY THE BIBLE... vs. 10-15**

○ **1st – Double check... vs. 10-12**

▪ **More noble... vs. 10-11**

- Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.
- When they arrived they went into the synagogue of the Jews.
- These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica.
- In that they received the word with all readiness.
- And searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so!
- Paul and Silas were rushed out of the city by NIGHT - for their own safety...
- When they came to the city of Berea [75km west of Thessalonica]
- They AGAIN went [imperfect] into the SYNAGOGUE of the Jews...
- But the Jews here were more NOBLE [εὐγενής] compared to Thessalonica...
- In that they received the Word [τὸν λόγον] with ALL [πᾶς] excitement [προθυμία]
- And SEARCHED [ἀνακρίνω] their Bibles daily to find out if the message was true [optative]
- It made them more NOBLE because they did NOT just accept what they were told...
- They CHECKED the Bible to VERIFY the message – make sure that it was correct!
- Just because a pastor says sometime – does NOT mean it is right...
- Every time we hear a Bible study - we need to VERIFY it!
- Too often men believe what they are told - because they are looking to a person...
- We should NOT just accept the words of anyone - no matter who is teaching...
- If we ONLY know what the preacher has told us – then our faith is in his words...
- But if we seek the Bible for the answers – then our faith is in the Word!

▪ **Many believed... vs. 12**

- Therefore many of them believed.
- And also not a few of the Greeks - prominent women as well as men!
- THEREFORE - many people CHOSE [active] to BELIEVE [πιστεύω]
- From the Jews - as well as MANY gentiles [including influential women and men]
- Because when people are willing to SEARCH the Bible – it brings REVIVAL!
- **Romans 10:17** – “Faith comes by hearing - and hearing by the word of God.”
- The reason why people do NOT believe – is because they are NOT reading their Bible...
- The moment we are willing to open our Bible and look for Jesus – we find Him...
- It is through His Word we get to know the God who created us...
- And we find out His plan to save us – so we can be with Him in eternity in heaven!

○ **2nd - Not Afraid... vs. 13-15**

▪ **Standing strong... vs. 13**

- When the Jews from Thessalonica learned the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea.
- They came there also and stirred up the crowds.
- When the Jews from THESSALONICA heard Paul was preaching in BEREIA...
- They came and began to cause trouble – stirring up [σαλεύω] the crowds against Paul...
- Paul had been BOLD in Philippi - BOLD in Thessalonica - and now BOLD in Berea...
- ALL the time his life was in DANGER - he was beaten – thrown in prison...
- But Paul was NOT intimidated – because he knew what he was fighting for...
- He was giving the only message that could save people from eternity in Hell!
- If we are convinced people are going to hell if they do NOT believe in Jesus...
- No peer pressure - no ridicule - nothing would keep us from sharing!
- We know the mystery of life - we know there is only one way to heaven...

- **Knowing the truth - how could we hold back from telling others - Jeremiah 20:9**
- **Waiting... vs. 14-15**
 - Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away to go to the sea.
 - But both Silas and Timothy remained there.
 - So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens.
 - Receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed - they departed!
 - The believers in Berea hurried Paul by SEA - to the city of ATHENS...
 - Silas and Timothy were able to stay behind [ὑπομένω] to encourage the NEW believers...
 - But Paul sent word to them to come to him [subjunctive] in Athens as quickly as they could!