

Acts 17:1-15 “Second MJ -Thessalonica and Berea” 9/15/2024

Intro & Review:

This occurs during Paul’s second missionary journey.

Amphipolis, Apollonia and Thessalonica were all cities on the main east-west Roman highway called the “Egnatian Way”. They were about a day apart when traveling on foot.

I. V1-9 At Thessalonica... (see the two letters that Paul wrote them.)

V2-3 Paul “reasoned with them from the Scriptures” that “Christ had to suffer” (Ps. 22; Is 53; Zech 12:10, 13:7) and that Jesus “is the Christ”. The book of Hebrews may be such a reasoning. Many scholars believe that it was such a sermon as this that Paul routinely gave and was recorded by Luke.

You’ll note firstly that he is using evidence to make his case. He is telling them about who Jesus was and what He did. He is showing them that the Scriptures predicted who He was and how Jesus fulfilled prophecy. Paul was using evidence to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah, or Christ. That is to say that I believe we have Biblical precedent for evidential apologetics. Reasoning and evidence.

There are two primary kinds of apologetics, evidentialism and presuppositionalism.

As much as I love presuppositional apologetics, and I DO love presup..., the Biblical model includes reasoning with people from where they are. With Jews, Paul used the Jewish Scriptures. Next week, we will see that he takes a different approach with a completely gentile audience. This is called contextualization. Contextualization is when you take the value system of the audience you’re speaking to and relate the truth of Christianity to it in a compare and contrast way. It assumes that you understand the people you are engaging with and it assumes that you are keenly astute in your grasp of the Scriptures. This is a theme that we will pick up again in a few moments.

The presup guys will retort that even if you give evidence, the lost will not believe it. To that I say, the elect will. Secondly, Paul provides an example of this behavior and if it was good enough for him, I think we’re good. Thirdly, by the logic of “they won’t believe it” neither will they believe the presuppositional argument either, even though it is a superior and perhaps even airtight argument. Use all the tools in the toolbox, so that by all means possible to save

some. Now, I don't like some of the modern evidentialist's theology, but that doesn't mean that their data is corrupt or that we shouldn't use this method.

-Repeated theme of jealousy by the Jews v5. We've seen this before all the way back in 5:17; and just a few chapters ago in 13:45

-V7 Jesus is the king!

Read Psalm 2 & 110.

Psalm 110 is the most quoted chapter in the NT. This idea is the most emphasized identity of Jesus in the NT. Most people today want to talk about Jesus in their own terms. They make Him out to be whoever they want. If they want a go easy kind of guy who accepts them for who they are without putting any demands on them, then they create some kind of dope smoking, hippie Jesus that just wants everyone to "go easy man..." If they want someone to calmly stroke their hair and tell them that everything is going to be alright, then they have some lamb petting, soft eyed, guy that is effeminate and never has a harsh word. The question is not what do we want Him to be, but how does the Bible portray Him. What is the primary version of Christ that we see? Does he say "let the little children come to me"? Yes! Does He say that He has come to heal up the broken hearted? Yes! But those things are the exception.

The most repeated theme of the NT is that He is King, and not just King of the Jews, but King of the World. He is the Judge that pays the price for His people's sins. He is the King that whipped death, the devil and hell. He is the King that ascended on high and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is the King that rules and reigns even now. He is the King that is coming again to judge the living and the dead. He is the King that we will all stand before and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the He is Lord, to the glory of the Father.

Unless and until we understand that Jesus is first King, we will not understand the Gospel. The gospel is not the great news that Jesus loves us and has a wonderful plan for us. The gospel is an announcement that the King has come. The gospel is what Paul says in 1Cor 15:3-6, which is probably one of, if not the first creed of the church. In our modern church culture, we have it backwards. We start with the love of God and hardly ever talk about judgement or lordship. The Bible says that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" Prov 1:7. We should emphasize what the Bible emphasizes and start where the Bible starts. If Jesus isn't LORD, then He can't be the savior. If He is not your Lord, king, master, ruler, then he isn't savior either. This is not some works-based salvation, it is a simple recognition of who Jesus is in the first place and rightly ordering our lives to bend our knee and submit ourselves to Him. If He is not Lord of all, He is not savior at all.

II. V10-15 At Berea...

(T)hey were “examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”

Sola Scriptura

WCF chapter 1 contains our understanding of what the Scriptures are and how we are to relate to them. They outline for us the authority of the Bible and it alone for faith and practice. The last paragraph of chapter one says “The supreme judge by which all controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient Writers, Doctrines of men, and private Spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.” WCF 1:10

Ecclesiastical (or church) and Parenting

Ecclesiastical: We construct our worship services around the word. We pray the word, read the word, sing the word, preach the word, obey the word. It is a Bible saturated service. We don't just do whatever we want. We are careful to follow it's commands and cautious to stay heed it's warnings. This is why we almost exclusively sing the Psalms. It's not just because we like them, although we do. It's not because that is our preference. It's because Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 says to do this.

By way of short excursion here, let me say that the most repeated commandment in the Bible and certainly in the book of Psalms itself is the “Praise the LORD.” Praise means loud. Praise is never quiet. Praise means that you must open your mouth and let lots of air through your vocal cords. I know that some of us have trepidation about our singing voices. Nevertheless, the Bible says to make a joyful noise. If noise is all you have, let it fly. Obey God. Stop with the anemic, halfhearted, scared, milquetoast mouthing of words. Sing with gusto. Stand up straight. Hold your music up high in front of your face. Open your mouth wide. And sing. Sing loudly. Praise the LORD! Praise your God!

Turn with me to Psalm 100. **READ PSALM 100**

The Bible commands us to sing loudly, gladly with joy knowing that He is LORD and He is good, now and forevermore! Men, sing like men. Don't be scared. If you need to learn the tunes and listen to them ahead of time. Do it! If you need to watch a youtube video on how to sing, DO IT. But for Christ's sake, SING! Obey God.

Concerning parenting... Men, your children should be read, taught and prayed the Scriptures consistently. It is your job. Mom, as his helper, it is your job to help him, encourage and

support this endeavor. Come along side him and reinforce what is being done. Kids, consume the Bible. Eat it, drink it, read it, sing it, love it.

Starting in January, we will make a push for people to read through the Bible in a year. I'm letting you know now in October. Get ready. You can do it. It takes 60-70 hours to read through the entire Bible in a year. If your kids are JH age, they can read through the NT. If they are HS or older, they can join us as adults. This is not some sort of slavish thing but it is something that if you've never done, you absolutely need to do. Be a Berean. How can you search the Scriptures if you've never even read the Scriptures? We do this in our house. Shayla has been great to spread this practice to her family and others. The Spirit of God uses the word of God. The Spirit will never remind you of something you've never read. Get it in you. There's more we will say about this but for now, get ready. Get a copy of the Scriptures that you want to use. Get a pen, pencil and notebook. I use three pens and a pencil. Be a Berean. Let your family be like the Bereans.

Application and Conclusion:

1. How well do you know your audience? What are their values? Why is this important?
2. Is there any obvious area of your life that is obvious disobedience to King Jesus? How do you know?
3. How well do you know the Scriptures? When is the last time you read through the Bible? When are you studying the Scriptures with others?

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank you that Jesus is indeed the King. Cause us to obey Him and be led by the Holy Spirit. Make us diligent to know and love the Scriptures. Let us not be people with just a sentimental understanding of You and the Bible, but instead help us to be firmly established in and by Your word. Help us to walk in the light as you are light. Let us treasure Your word in our hearts that we might not sin against You. Let it be said of us as it was with Paul and his companions, that these men are upsetting the entire world. Let it also be said of us that like the Bereans, we daily search the Scriptures. And now, as we take the Lord's supper, we remember the death of the Lord Jesus, that He gave His life as a ransom for many. In His name we pray, Amen.