

## Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 34 and begin with an opening prayer

*“Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”* (Psalm 34:8,11)

Take a minute to quiet your heart and become aware of the Lord’s presence. Ask God to help you make the connection between His life and yours, between what he is and what you are, between what he does for you and what that enables you now to do for others.

## Acts 17:1-15

**Passage Introduction: The Council at Jerusalem**

Luke has shown us how the gospel matches up against two major opponents: the zealous Jews in synagogues around Turkey and now in northern Greece, and the economic and political forces of the Roman Empire. But there is an entire world of thought which we haven’t yet had on stage. This is the hugely important sphere of the prevailing ancient philosophies. They conditioned how thousands of ordinary people saw the world, what they thought of as reasonable & unreasonable, what they thought about the gods, what they thought human life was for and how best to live it. How would the gospel hold up?

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

**Acts 17:1-15 - 1** 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. “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; 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. **6** And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, **7** and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” **8** When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials

Notes:

were thrown into turmoil. **9** Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. **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. **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.

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2 or 3 things you observe about God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit in this passage?
- What are the results of Paul's preaching? In what sense have Paul and Silas caused "turned the world upside down?"
- Paul "reasoned" with the Jews by giving evidence and arguments for the truth of the gospel. Are you able to do the same? Where do you feel weak? What steps could you take to further improve your ability to do so?

## Key Takeaway:

Choose the verse or truth that is most striking and/or helpful to you today. Paraphrase the thought or verse in your own words.

## Close in Prayer:

Take a few minutes to talk to the Lord about sharing the gospel with other people. Share with him the places you feel weak. Ask him to help you grow in personal evangelism and for opportunities to "reason with others." Entrust to him those opportunities.