

STUDY GUIDE

for the week of 11/3-11/10
Acts 17:10-34



WHATS THE STORY?

Paul and his companions meet the studious Bereans, before Paul goes ahead to Athens. Here, Paul speaks at the Areopagus about then “unknown god”, honing in on their interest in gods from all places and cultures to teach them about God and his Messiah, Jesus.

LECTIO DEVINA

Prepare: Find a calm and quiet place to read and absorb the passage.

Read: Read through the passage. Listen for any words or phrases that jump out and listen for what God has to say.

Reflect: Try to understand what God could be saying to you through this passage.

Respond: Journal or pray to God, communicating about what you think God was telling you through Scripture.

Rest: Spend time contemplating, allowing God to work.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to study Scripture as a community?
- How do we teach people about Jesus while respecting their culture?



FAMILY STUDY

Discuss: Have you ever talked to someone about Jesus? How did it go?

How are the gods of the philosophers and the Christian God different?

How did Paul appeal to the philosophers?

A Deeper Look

Chapter 17 begins with the group of travelers hiding and escaping to Berea under the cover of night. Following their usual pattern, they first went to the local synagogue to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Luke adds a note that the Berean Jews were willing to study their Scriptures and be open enough to hear Paul out. Even though it challenged their preconceptions, many of them saw that Jesus was the kind of Messiah the Old Testament writings and prophets were describing. Along with the Berean Jews, some Greek men and women also came to believe in the resurrected Jesus Messiah. Some from Thessalonica heard where Paul ended up and continued their opposition by following them there and stirring up controversy. Paul left to the coast but Timothy and Silas remained in Berea.

Seemingly, Paul's plan was to hang out in Athens until Timothy and Silas were able to join him, but he got side-tracked by his concern for the Athenians' worship of other gods. He spent all of his time the local synagogue and the local marketplace talking about Jesus the Messiah to Jews, God-fearers, and Roman citizens. He struck up a conversation with some philosophers from two different philosophical schools. Because it was probably the first time they heard about the Jewish Messiah, they weren't sure what he was talking about at first. They had some interest in what he was saying, and brought him to a meeting of the minds at a place called the Areopagus, where philosophers and city officials held their meetings. They introduced him and asked him to expand on the "strange ideas"(v20) he was talking about in the marketplace. Seizing his opportunity, Paul began with attempting to connect with them by saying that he can see their enthusiasm for religion. He then refers to their altar "to an unknown god"(v23); he points out to the philosophers and religious individuals that they still don't know for sure if they have covered all their bases when it comes to worshipping each and every god. Paul's main argument is that the God who created everything would not have the necessity of temples and worship.(v24-25) God made everything and everyone, and even the time in which they lived so that we might reach out to Him and live in His salvation. He ended with Christ's resurrection which some poked fun at, but others grew interested in. Those who were interested in the resurrection of Christ followed Paul and became believers.