

Fact Sheet for **“What Can I do with This?”**
Acts 17:1-15

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Illustration

Sherlock Holmes – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
His work has entertained generations, and it has not grown old.

But, it is nothing like the Bible where there is always more to see and more to apply. This portion of Acts is history. There is no elaborated theology. Why did God include this? How would you apply it? Let's begin with a very brief look at some items in the passage.

ESV ¹ Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."

Jesus is the Christ!

⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

These would have been Greeks who believed in the God of the Hebrew Scriptures.

⁵ But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking 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."

Those who opposed Paul deliberately phrased their words to the civil authorities so as to arouse their sympathies against Paul and Silas.

⁸ And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. ⁹ And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

If there was further trouble Jason and the rest would lose their money.

¹⁰ ¶ The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.

It was by night so as not to alert those who opposed them.

¹¹ Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

This is why churches and other groups take on the name "Berean."

¹² Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. ¹⁴ Then the brothers

immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

Application

Now, let's take a good look at the various players. Think about their actions, their reactions, their responses, their motivations, their standing before God.

Paul

Went to Synagogues at Thessalonica and Berea

Silas and Timothy

Remained for a time

Luke (notice "they" not "we")

The civil authorities at Thessalonica

Those at Thessalonica

The Jews who joined Paul and Silas

Many devout Greeks

Several leading women

The Jews who opposed Paul

They stirred up the wicked rabble

They even pursued Paul in Berea

Jason

The people of Thessalonica

The brothers

Those at Berea

The Jews in general

More noble – "Berean" (v. 11)

Many Jews believed

Several women of high standing and men believed

The brothers

The people of Berea

God (*Don't miss Him in this passage!*)

Not mentioned in this passage

Other than "the word of God" (v. 13)

Remember Paul's Damascus Rd. experience (Acts 9:15-16)

Macedonian call (Acts 16:9-10)

Election (1 Thess. 1:4)

God protected Paul

God directed when, where, and how the gospel
was spread

God oversaw the recording of these events by
Luke for future generations

Consider Paul's thoughts in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. These were part of Paul's initial preaching to them, his approach to them, and his later words to them.

1:6, 8; 2:11-12; 3:2; 4:1-3, 9-12, 13-18; 5:2-3, 12-22

2 Thess. 2:1 & 2 – The coming judgment for those who do not believe

All in all there is a wealth of illustrations from Paul's interaction with the Thessalonians. There is wonderful theology. There are ample thoughts from God for us to apply.

The Bible is so much richer than the best authors of our day. There is always something new to find, to ponder, to learn about God and His will for us, and to apply.