

KEY-VERSE

I PETER 5:5b

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God resisteth
the proud,
and giveth grace
to the humble.

Paul's Humility

Paul is a marvelous example of **humility**, the opposite of **pride**. He was an intellectual, highly trained, and came from a noble background. Paul also proved himself a leader among the Jewish religious group called Pharisees.

Yet, when God sent him to minister to the poor, ignorant, or uneducated Gentiles, Paul showed his love and concern for them. God used him mightily, and he never let pride come into his heart and life. He purposely chose to humble himself.

Pride is Satan's greatest tool to keep people from trusting Christ. It is very hard for people who are proud to humble themselves and ask God to save them.

Thus, **pride** keeps many people out of heaven, and their soul is damned forever.

Scripture to read before next Sunday

Acts 18:1-28

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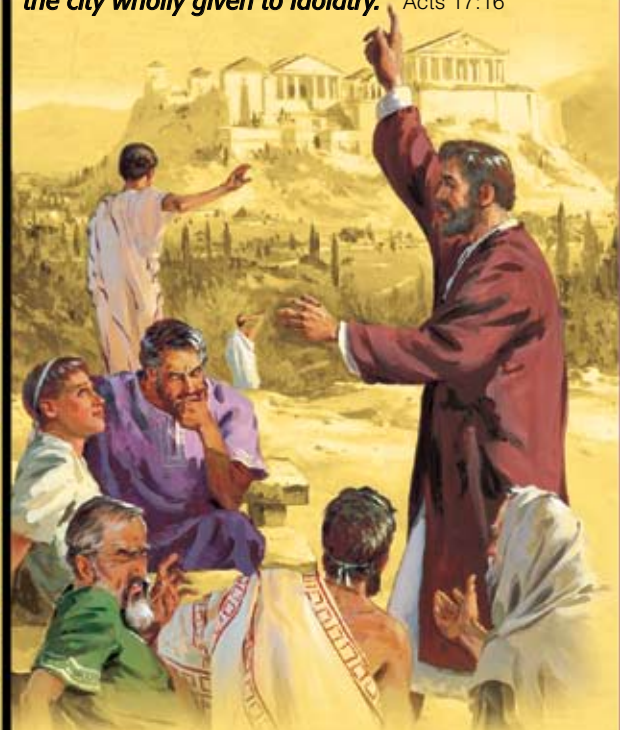
Lesson
5



Acts 17

THESSALONICA/ BEREA/ ATHENS

*"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens,
his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw
the city wholly given to idolatry."* Acts 17:16



Paul's address on Mars' hill—a
Masterpiece of Oratory
of all ages

“Turning the world UPSIDE DOWN”

Unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica accused Paul of “*turning the world upside down.*” This was a compliment to the magnitude of Paul’s work and the gospel’s influence as it penetrated the Roman Empire.

The gospel began making slow and isolated changes. But in a few years, it became a quiet **revolution** against error and **evil**, especially in the world under Rome’s rule, for there Christianity had its greatest impact.

God often works in quiet, almost unnoticeable ways. In time, its effect penetrates a larger dimension than realized; Jesus spoke of it as—“*a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened*”—Matt. 13:33, which describes the church’s growth and impact on civilization.

STUDY Scripture

Bereans were “*more noble*” because they searched the scriptures to see if Paul’s preaching was biblical truth.

R. A. Torrey said, “When you find a word or phrase in the Bible and you wish to know exactly what it means, do not run for a dictionary to get the definition of the word or phrase, for the dictionary was not written by Bible scholars. The thing to do is look up every place in the Bible where that word or phrase is used and interpret its meaning by its usage. The exact meaning of words is seldom determined by etymology; it is determined by usage.”

Adapted

Charles H. Spurgeon said about commentaries: “They are like sheep; they all follow each other.”



Bereans search scripture

ATHENS Intellectualism/Idolatry

For 1,000 years (500 B.C. to 500 A.D.) Athens was the **center** of philosophy, literature, science, and art. It was the home of Pericles, Socrates, Demosthenes, and Plato. It also was the seat of the greatest university in the world and the meeting place of the world’s intelligentsia. Yet, the city was wholly given over to idolatry.

Intellectualism does not free people from idolatry. Today, many intellectuals

resort to Eastern religions, reincarnation, the New Age, the occult, and all sorts of spiritism.

The **Epicureans** in Athens were hedonistic, giving in to all their “fleshly” desires. The **Stoics**, by contrast, believed in great self-control and almost worshiped self-control. Both groups heard Paul speak about the resurrection, and mocked. Intellectualism puffed them up with **pride**.

Paul’s poorest reception was in Athens—with only a few converts.