

Sunday, February 15, 2026 | Missio Dei

Week 10 | Acts 17:10-15 | “Evangelism 101, Pt. 2”

READ: Acts 17:10-15 (ESV)

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

This passage teaches us **five** things about evangelism:

Takeaway #1: Where populations are **densest**, evangelistic opportunities are **greatest**, and the practice of prayer is **chiefest**.

Takeaway #2: A gospel presentation—**patiently** conveyed, **reasonably** relayed, and **scripturally** staged, with the **crucifixion** and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ on full display—is the basis for gospel transformation.¹

Takeaway #3: A Christian’s **witness** is a **costly** business.

Vs. 10 – Given the hostility in Thessalonica, the believer sent “Paul and Silas” under cover of darkness, “**to Berea**.” This city was situated 46 miles south of Thessalonica on the foot of Mount Bermius.² And once they arrived, as was their habit, “**They went into the Jewish synagogue**.”

Vs. 11-12 – Luke says, “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

¹ Google Gemini assisted with the rhyming scheme, but the content is mine.

² Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), [2:402](#).

so.” And, as a result, “Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.”

Takeaway #4: Nobility is equal parts eager posturing **toward** God’s word and exercised proficiency **with** God's word.

Psalm 1:1-2 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his **delight** is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates **day and night**.” And the writer of Hebrews says that those who can stomach spiritual meat—those who are mature in the faith—are those who “**have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil**” (He 5:14). **In evangelism, we’re always looking for the noblest of people: those who receive God’s word joyfully and study it daily.**

The Bereans were adept at interpreting Scripture, as is known today as hermeneutics. FF Bruce defines hermeneutics as “the interpretation of the [biblical] text in such a way that its message comes home to the reader or hearer.”³ We do not allow our own interpretations inform the Bible (eisegesis); we allow it to inform us (exegesis). We do not change a text to say whatever we want; rather, we bring ourselves under God's word and allow it to change us. The Bereans were gifted Bible interpreters who didn't simply take Paul's message at face value. They knew that if the apostles were truly sent by God, this new revelation wouldn't contradict the old revelation they already had in their hands—i.e., the OT.

Following their example, believers must know how to “examine” the Scriptures so that they can distinguish between a fraud or a friend in the pulpit. Admittedly, hermeneutics is a complex topic. And time does not permit me to do a thorough overview of it. For those wishing a more in-depth study, **see *Grasping God’s Word*** by J. Scott Duvall and J. Dantel Hays. It's a one-stop shop for learning to interpret the Bible, and it even includes a helpful DVD.

Nevertheless, though you may never become proficient at hermeneutics, every believer, no matter their education or age, can and should know the basics of bible interpretation. And a helpful acronym comes from Dr. Frank Turek of *Cross Examined*: **S.T.O.P.**

S – What’s the contextual/historical *situation* of the text?

Every Bible college student or seminarian knows that *context is king*. If a person is to apply the Scriptures to their immediate context, they must first understand the passage's immediate context and its historical setting.

³ Bruce, F. F., “**Hermeneutics**,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, edited by D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, and D. J. Wiseman, 3rd ed., (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 467.

EXAMPLE: Matthew 7:1, “Judge not, that you be not judged,” is *not* a wholesale prohibition of judgments but judgmentalism. Phil. 4:13, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me,” is not a wholesale validation of ambition but contentment.

T – What ***type*** of genre is this text?

Think of the Bible not as a single book written in one uniform genre, but as a library—a collection of many books, written in a wide variety of genres. In the Scriptures, there’s everything from historical narratives to legal codes to poetry to biographies to personal letters to apocalyptic literature and many more. It is imperative that we’re aware of the genre we’re reading, or we’re bound to misapply the Scriptures.

EXAMPLE: The Book of Proverbs is a book of *proverbs*—i.e., time-tested sayings—not *promises*. One need only read Job, someone who epitomized the Book of Proverbs, to know that just because you do everything right doesn’t guarantee that everything will go right.

O – Who’s the intended ***object*** of the text?

The Bible wasn’t written to you but for you. This means we must be aware of the intended audience of a text if we’re to properly understand and then properly apply the intended application. Yes, it is good to see God speaking directly to us as we read the Scriptures, but we must never ignore who he spoke to first.

EXAMPLE: Jer. 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” Can a Christian claim this today? Yes, albeit in a far more *generalized* sense than the intended object of the text—i.e., Israel during the Babylonian captivity. Pressing it further, goes beyond the bounds of proper biblical interpretation.

P – Is the text ***prescriptive*** or descriptive?

When we read the Scriptures, we must acknowledge whether a text is telling us to do something or simply describing something. Otherwise, we’ll fall into an incidental fallacy. As we read, we’re observers. Take it all in but only apply the most important things.

EXAMPLE: The “Fleece” Fallacy (Jud 6), The “Single Life” Fallacy (1 Cor. 7:7), The “Vow of Poverty” Fallacy (Lu 18:18-30).

Vs. 13-14 – Word got back to the unbelievers in Thessalonica that Paul and his companions were in Berea. Rather than leave it, they came and began “[agitating and stirring up the crowds.](#)” And, once again, “[the brothers immediately sent Paul off.](#)” But this time, two things were different: first, he traveled “[on his way to the sea.](#)” and, second, “[Silas and Timothy](#)” remained in Berea. Luke likely accompanied Paul as he was brought, 200 hundred miles south to “[Athens.](#)”⁴

Once in Athens, Paul commanded that “[Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible,](#)” and we're told his guide “[departed,](#)” returning to Thessalonica.

Paul was beaten in Philippi and then moved on to Thessalonica. Once in Thessalonica, he faced opposition and then moved on to Berea. Then, in Berea, he was run out of town, having to travel hundreds of miles to Athens just to get away from an angry mob. And, as we'll see next week, while in Athens, Paul will be as committed to evangelism as he's always been. Indeed, nothing in the text indicates that Paul was deterred by all the opposition.

Takeaway #5: [Great](#) evangelists have the [gospel](#) in their souls and [grit](#) in their bones.

Rom 5:3-5 says, “[We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.](#)”

In light of the resurrection, Paul said, “[Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain](#)” (1 Co 15:58).

After the Hall of Faith, the writer of Hebrews concludes, “[Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God](#)” (He 12:1-2).

Believers have every reason in the world [not](#) to quit.

⁴ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, [Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1–2 Thessalonians](#), ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), [37](#).

Soli Deo Gloria

Video Description:

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Last week, Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke traveled a hundred miles west to the capital of Macedonia, Thessalonica. While in that thriving metropolis, the gospel was preached, and some received it while others rejected it. And through that passage, we were given a crash course in evangelism. Paul’s ministry methodology gives a roadmap for all those who desire to share the gospel.

Today, this gospel fellowship travels to Berea, where they’ll meet a far nobler people than those in Thessalonica. And through their example, we’ll learn the importance of biblical hermeneutics, or the skill of interpreting the Bible. Though not every believer will be a pastor or theologian, each Christian must know how to read the Scriptures. Doing so ensures they can tell friend from foe in the pulpit.

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