



This Jesus is the Christ

Acts 16-17

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Overview: The advance of the gospel is a divine work using human means that occurs with intentional conversations and clear calls for commitment to Christ. Luke provides four examples of conversations that lead to conversions, each with a unique but applicable context. Lydia was a prominent businesswoman who embraced the gospel when her life was going well. The Philippian jailor was a government official who embraced the gospel when his life was falling apart. The Thessalonians were religious but skeptical about the gospel, whereas the Bereans were eager to hear and open to receive the gospel. These four examples provide a framework for how to understand the gospel; who needs the gospel; how to share the gospel; and what to expect from sharing the gospel.

01. The gospel is the good news of how God forgives sinners of all their sins, justifies them by making them righteous, and adopts them as his own children based on the finished work of Christ.

02. The gospel is available for all people regardless of personal success or private failure, and it overrides all other cultural commitments or religious devotion.

03. Those who present the gospel should look for appropriate opportunities, address any objections, expect a response, and trust the Lord with the results.

04. Those who present the gospel will face great opposition from those who reject the Lord but will experience even greater joy from those who receive the Lord.

THIS PROMISE IS FOR YOU AND FOR ALL

1. Consider the contexts of Lydia and the Philippian jailer's conversion. What differences were present in their circumstances that makes their conversion all the more remarkable? Why do outwardly successful people need the gospel? How does failure create opportunities for the gospel to be received? Ask the Lord to help you to recognize similar opportunities to share the gospel.

2. How would you summarize Paul and Silas' evangelistic methodology? (Hint: notice how they looked for opportunities and how they created opportunities). How does Luke contrast the Bereans with the Thessalonians? What does his perspective suggest about being truly open minded? What does Paul's three-week commitment among the Thessalonians suggest about his confidence in the gospel and his trust in the Holy Spirit's work of converting people?

3. If you have experienced the joy of leading someone to the Lord, as well as the pain of someone rejecting the Lord, which of the two would you say has had the greatest impact on you today? Though we cannot quantitatively measure the joy or pain, which of the two would you say we should focus on in order to remain motivated in sharing the gospel?

4. In order to appreciate Paul's work among the Thessalonians, take time to read 1 Thessalonians 1-3. What issues does Paul raise which are related to his forced absence from Thessalonica? What concerns does he have regarding the Thessalonian believers? What examples of joy does Paul provide in light of the news he has received from them?

For Further Reading: Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable* (Zondervan, 2018).

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