

Acts # 71 “Take a Letter, Berea” *Acts 17:1-15*

The persecution that led to Stephen’s martyrdom resulted in Christianity expanding beyond Jerusalem and Judea just as Jesus predicted.

The preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles was so effective that Antioch replaced Jerusalem as the capital of Christianity.

Antioch was where believers were first called Christians, a title used by the disciples of Jesus themselves although it was first intended to be derogatory.

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The Law did not provide inward righteousness, only a sense of outward righteousness.

Saul, now known as Paul was convinced that Jesus Christ was Israel’s true Messiah who suffered, died, was buried and rose from His tomb on the third day.

We’re not completely sure of the date of Paul’s conversion but we do know it happened while he was headed for Damascus to viciously persecute followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The expansion of the church in Antioch, Cyprus and Galatia prompted the question of the Gentile’s relationship to the Mosaic Law.

The grace-oriented free congregation in Antioch became troubled by busybodies from Jerusalem who bullied them saying: ‘Unless you’re circumcised according to the Law of Moses, you cannot be saved.’

And how could law-abiding Jews and lawless grace-oriented Gentiles fellowship together?

All believers must know that Christianity begins and ends with an expression of faith alone in Jesus Christ alone through grace alone, period.

Leading people to Jesus Christ should always be followed by instruction for the new converts.

The lesson for us is that we live in an ever-increasingly intolerant culture regarding Christianity and our views are rapidly becoming unacceptable; so we are labeled as narrow-minded and non-progressive and it’s getting worse by the day.

Our challenge is to remain on task and not stoop to responding to the charges leveled against us but to constantly provide loving gracious truth which is the only cure for man’s sin-sick condition.

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The Jews in Berea received Paul’s message willingly and they diligently examined the Scriptures to see if he

was telling the truth.

The Gospel is: Who Jesus Christ is, what He has done and how He can be known personally.

Some listened to Paul's presentation of the evidence, became convinced of that evidence and believed it.

Resistance comes from the self-righteous who were set in their ways; those who'd rather follow their tradition and experience than accept a free grace gift from God.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."