

July 8, 2018

“Empowered: The Church on Fire!”

“A Journey through the Book of Acts”

“The Fire Is Spreading – Part Two”

“His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.” Acts 17:27

A. Paul’s second mission trip continues...

“Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.” Acts 17:1



1. There are four mission trips made by Paul referenced in Acts: First Mission Trip, Acts 13-14; Second Mission Trip, Acts 15:36-18:23; Third Mission Trip, Acts 18:24-21:14; and Fourth Mission Trip, Acts 26:30-28:30.
2. The first three journeys all start in Antioch of Syria.
3. The first two end at Antioch and the third journey ends in Jerusalem.
4. The fourth journey begins at Jerusalem and ends in Rome.

“As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near.” 2 Timothy 4:6

B. Cities on the second trip...

1. Thessalonica – a large city of over 200,000. It was a port city with a great diversity of beliefs. It was the seat of the Roman Governor for Macedonia. It was very wealthy but had high unemployment.
2. Berea – a city in northern Greece. It was rather obscure as Paul, Silas and Timothy fled there by night to escape the mobs in Thessalonica. They were very open to the gospel.
3. Athens – Athens was the site of the Parthenon, as it was visible on the Acropolis even before reaching land. It was known as the center of philosophy. It was also a port city and had a great diversity of thought.
4. Corinth – Corinth was the heavily populated Roman capital of Achaia (Greece). Corinth was wealthy as most ships needed to pass through there. It was a Roman colony and citizens were Roman citizens.
5. Ephesus – A prominent city of 100-200,000. It was the site of the governor of the Roman province of Asia.
6. Jerusalem – He went “up” to Jerusalem.
7. Antioch – He went “down” to Antioch!

C. Momentous experiences on the trip...

1. In the synagogues, in Thessalonica, Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures and there were many converts. Some Jews, many God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. In Athens, there were many converts including Dionysius and Damaris.
2. Prominent women are mentioned multiple times in Acts. Luke recorded the place of women in ministry. In a number of these Greek cultures, women were recognized and exercised more freedom than in other cultures.
3. Damaris, in Athens, was a member of the Areopagus (a 100 member ruling city council). She was probably one of the Hetairai, a highly intellectual class of women who associated with judges, statesmen, and philosophers. Women in these circles could even hold public office.
4. Priscilla and Aquila had fled Rome and arrived in Corinth. Paul teamed up with them, traveling to Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were a wife and husband teaching team. They taught Apollos. They were tentmakers and people of the same trade often lived together and ran

shops in the same neighborhood. Women often worked alongside of their husbands as artisans. Priscilla was recognized as the stronger teacher of the team and recognized by Paul as a fellow worker, a term used for pastors and teachers, as referred to Titus and Timothy.

D. Paul in Athens...

“While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city.” Acts 17:16

1. Paul is standing on Mars Hill surrounded by intellectuals of that day.

“He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.” Acts 17:18a

2. The philosophers were open to hear his words.

“Then they took him to the high council of the city. ‘Come and tell us about this new teaching,’ they said. ‘You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it’s all about.’ (It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing the latest ideas.)” Acts 17:19-21

3. He complimented their religious thoughts and found a way to identify with them.

“Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way...” Acts 17:22b

4. He offered an explanation to a question they couldn’t answer. He defined the unknown god.

“He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since He is Lord of heaven and earth, He doesn’t live in man-made temples, and human hands can’t serve His needs—for He has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and He satisfies every need. From one man He created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and He determined their boundaries.” Acts 17:24-26

5. He let them know that this God was knowable.

“His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him—though He is not far from any one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist.” Acts 17:27-28a

6. He even related their own poets to the true God.

“As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are His offspring.’” Acts 17:28b

7. He left them wanting to know more about this God who loved them and had a plan for their lives.

“When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, ‘We want to hear more about this later.’” Acts 17:32

E. Questions to ponder...

1. When is the best time to share your faith?
2. What is the most convincing argument to share?
3. Are there certain times that are better to share with others?
4. What should you judge as success when you share with others?
5. What is the best method to share your faith?
6. What happens if your words are not accepted?
7. Always look for opportunities to share, realizing that the ultimate timing and success belongs to God!

“They stopped first at the port of Ephesus...They asked him to stay longer, but he declined. As he left, however, he said, ‘I will come back later, God willing.’ Then he set sail from Ephesus.” Acts 18:19-21

Want to take this message deeper?

Want to dive deeper in thought and application?

Go to our podcast on iTunes or our website at:

www.cwc.life/dive-deep