

LESSON 16 – ACTS 17:16-18:17
NOVEMBER 16, 2016

OVERVIEW

- . At Athens – Acts 17:16-34
- . At Corinth – Acts 18:1-17

AT ATHENS – ACTS 17:16-34

- . Conditions at Athens – Acts 17:16-21
 - . Pagan idolatry
 - . More statues in Athens than the rest of the old Greek empire combined
 - . The statues were of the many gods they worshipped
 - . The center of intellectual curiosity and philosophical debate
 - . The Areopagus was located in Athens and represented the heart and soul of Greek philosophical debate
 - . Socrates himself debated here
 - . During Paul's time there were two popular Greek pagan thoughts on the meaning of life
 - . Epicureans – Believed that pleasure was the chief aim of life
 - . Stoics – aimed to live according to nature and asserted that man's fulfillment was in being virtuous
 - . The Areopagus was a place where man could go and explore all kinds of philosophy
 - . There was this underlying belief that through intellectual curiosity man could eventually arrive at truth
 - . Paul was deeply saddened by what he saw during these early days in Athens
 - . There was emptiness in this Greek quest for intellectual curiosity
 - . In a sense he saw them pursuing a deeper meaning for life that they weren't getting in their everyday experience
 - . The loftiest heights of culture in Athens were accompanied by the lowest abyss of depravity
 - . Paul sensed the underlying misery of meaningless existence that prevailed in Athens

- . Paul first visits and preaches at the Jewish Synagogue
 - . Paul talked about how the Messiah of the Old Testament was Jesus of Nazareth
 - . The Jews listened to him but were not moved

- . Paul then moved in to the marketplace and entered in to conversations with the philosophers and their disciples
 - . These philosophers had an insatiable intellectual curiosity and delighted to indulge in every idle speculation
 - . On the one hand they were open minded to the new thoughts put forth by Paul
 - . Yet, they were more interested in debate than in actually embracing truth

- . Paul invited to speak at the Areopagus
 - . Paul starts by establishing common ground – Acts 17:22-23
 - . “I see that in every way you are religious”
 - . Through their many statues and temples they are attempting to honor and worship their gods
 - . He then gently attempts to hit at the heart of their insecurity and source of emptiness
 - . He references the statue they have erected to the unknown god
 - . He then challenges this thought with the good news that he is here to talk about that God which has now made Himself known
 - . He introduces them to the basic foundation upon which Christianity stands Acts 17:24-28
 - . There is one living, personal God that is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and of everything within it
 - . God is the true source of all life and is not far from any of us
 - . He has revealed Himself to us, through a select group of people
 - . Through His Word He has revealed who is and more importantly what He isn’t
 - . God’s aim in creating us is that we would seek after Him and find Him because He is not far from any of us
 - . Through God’s law man came to realize that though we were being called to Him (by living in a Holy state) we were falling short of God’s will
 - . He then talked about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and how we could receive redemption through our faith in Christ
 - . Paul emphasizes that the crux of the Gospel and individual faith is in the bodily resurrection of God’s appointed “Man”, Jesus Christ
 - . Some of those in attendance that day mocked him
 - . Most were courteous but equally skeptical and suggested another time
 - . His talk didn’t stir up any angry opposition
 - . In truth, their emphasis on intellectual curiosity and willingness to discuss and debate anything made them dumb to truth

- . In the end Paul eventually leaves Athens never to return
 - . He leaves a place that had little interest in what Paul had to say
 - . Unlike most of the places he visited, his exit from Athens was peaceful with almost no hostility

AT CORINTH – ACTS 18:1-17

- . Conditions at Corinth
 - . Whereas Athens was the cultural center of Greece, Corinth was the commercial center
 - . Located on a land bridge between the eastern and western Seas, it was at the heart of the commerce of the area
 - . It was a large, prosperous population area that put a high premium on materialism
 - . There was also a lot of corruption, complacency and self-sufficiency
 - . It was also a city filled with sensual lust
 - . Nearby, on the Acropolis, was the temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love
 - . The Acropolis was served by more than a thousand prostitutes who lived in luxurious dwellings around the shrine
 - . Corinth was such a place of immorality that “to corinthianize” was to practice immorality
- . Companion in Corinth – Acts 18:2-3
 - . Almost immediately Paul found lodging and companionship with a Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla
- . Continued ministry at Corinth – Acts 18:4-11
 - . Paul begins teaching in the synagogue every Saturday
 - . At long last Silas and Timothy hook back up with him
 - . They report on the growing, thriving church at Thessalonica
 - . This good news gives Paul great joy and fills him with energy
 - . Soon the Jews at Corinth begin to push back on Paul’s message
 - . Because of the strong Jewish opposition, Paul leaves the synagogue and goes next door to the home of Justus where he focuses on the gentiles
 - . Paul’s ministry at the home of Justus grows and includes Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue next door
 - . Christ speaks to Paul one night and fills him with encouragement and resolve
 - . Christ tells him continue to preach boldly and that Christ will be there to protect him
 - . Paul’s resolve, amongst conflict allowed him to preach at Corinth for eighteen months, his longest time anywhere

- . A new Roman Proconsul inspires the Jews to try to silence Paul
 - . When Gallio became the Roman Proconsul, the Jews seized Paul and dragged him before Gallio charging him with preaching a new religion, which was forbidden under Roman law
 - . Gallio was so numb and uninterested he simply dismissed the charge and told the Jewish people to handle it
 - . The Christians were so inspired by this that they rose up against the Jewish establishment
 - . They turned against Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue and beat him in front of Gallio
 - . Gallio showed no concern
 - . The real irony was that Sosthenes went on to become a believer
- . Paul stays on in Corinth for over a year and a half and becomes quite close to the church
 - . Later he writes two beautiful letters to the church warning them not to fall back in to their own ways and encouraging them to remain strong

NEXT LESSON: DECEMBER 7, 2016 – I THESSALONIANS

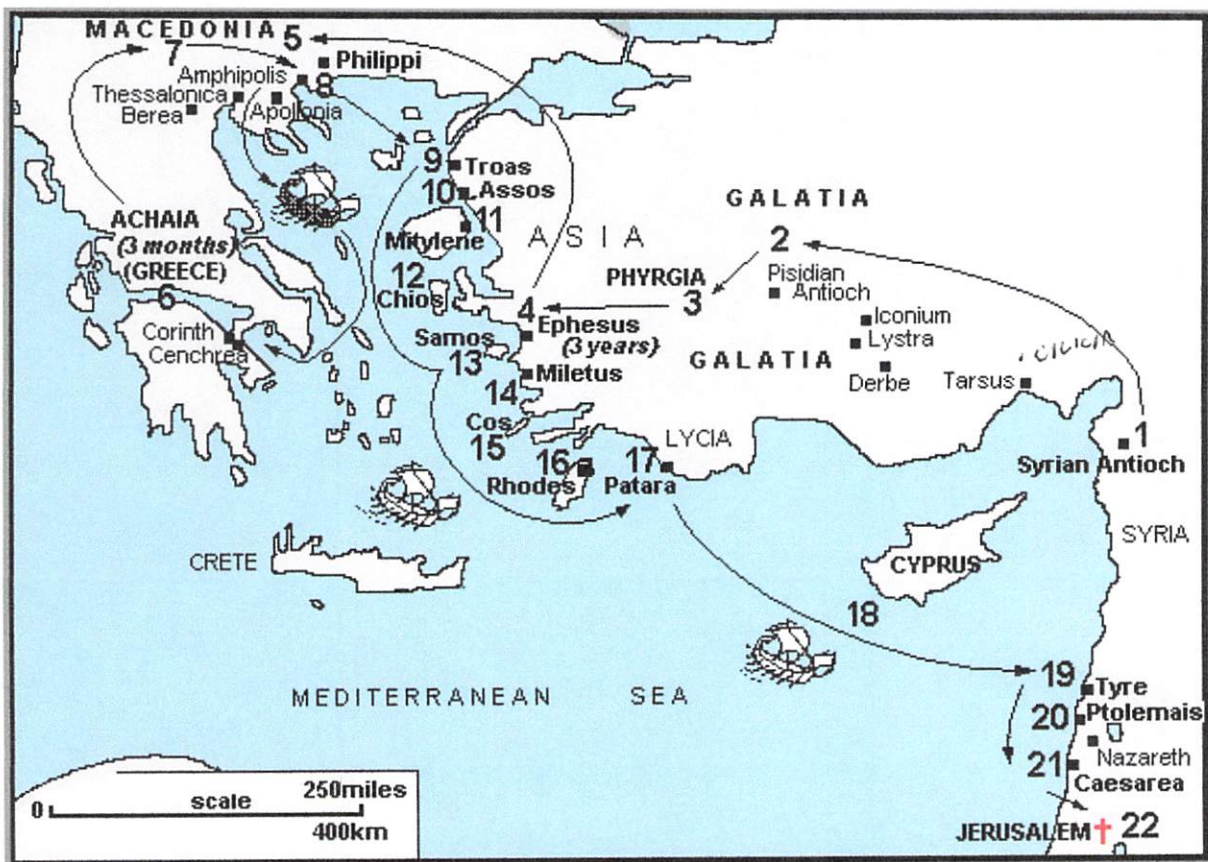
ACTS of the APOSTLES With people, places, definitions, map

Part 5 of 6, chapters 18:23b-21:15

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Map - Paul's Third Missionary Journey, returning to Asia Minor and Greece c AD53-58

Map Key: 1. Paul's Third Journey as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Also in text in [red square brackets]



PAUL STARTS HIS THIRD JOURNEY; APOLLOS ARRIVES IN EPHESUS; HE IS TAUGHT BY PRISCILLA & AQUILA, AND CROSSES TO ACHAIA

Acts 18:23b-28 - (After spending some time in Syrian Antioch [1], Paul starts on his Third Missionary Journey, and ...) proceeded to visit systematically throughout Galatia [2] and Phrygia [3] (two large areas in which Paul must have spent quite a few months), putting new heart into all the disciples as he went.

Apollos speaks powerfully at Ephesus and Corinth

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

A.D.	Biography of St. Paul.	Cotemporary Events.
36	(?) St. Paul's conversion [supposing the 3 years of Gal. i. 18 Judæically reckoned]. See p. 827, and note (B.) below.	
37	(?) At Damascus.	Death of Tiberius and accession of CALIGULA (March 16).
38	(?) Flight from Damascus [See p. 827] to Jerusalem, and thence to Tarsus.	
39	(?) During these years St. Paul preaches in Syria and Cilicia, making TARSUS his head-quarters, and probably undergoes most of the sufferings mentioned at 2 Cor. xi. 24-26, viz. two of the Roman and the five Jewish scourings, and three shipwrecks. See pp. 87 and 98, and note on 2 Cor. xi. 25.	
42	(?) He is brought from Tarsus to Antioch (Acts xi. 26), and stays there a year before the famine.	Death of Caligula and accession of CLAUDIUS (Jan. 25), Judæa and Samaria given to Herod Agrippa I.
43	(?)	Invasion of Britain by Aulus Plautius.
44		Death of Herod Agrippa I. (Acts xii.) [see note (A.) below.] Cuspius Fadus (as procurator) succeeds to the government of Judæa.
45	He visits Jerusalem with Barnabas to relieve the famine.	
46	At ANTIOCH.	Tiberius Alexander made procurator of Judæa (about this time).
47	At ANTIOCH.	
48	His 'First Missionary Journey' from Antioch to Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe,	Agrippa II. (Acts xxv.) made king of Chalcis;

APPENDIX III.—continued.

	Biography of St. Paul.	Cotemporary Events.
49	and back through the same places to ANTIOCH.	Cumanus made procurator of Judæa (about this time).
50	St. Paul and Barnabas attend the 'Council of Jerusalem.' [See pp. 821-828, and note (B.) below.]	Caractacus captured by the Romans in Britain; Cogidunus (father of Claudia [?], 2 Tim. iv. 21) assists the Romans in Britain.
51	His 'Second Missionary Journey,' from Antioch to Cilicia, Lycaonia, Galatia,	
52	Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and CORINTH.—Writes 1 <i>Thess</i>	Claudius expels the Jews from Rome (Acts xviii. 2).
53	At CORINTH. Writes 2 <i>Thess</i> .	The tetrarchy of Trachonitis given to Agrippa II.; Felix made procurator of Judæa. [See note (C.) below.] Death of Claudius and accession of NERO (Oct. 13).
54	(Spring)—He leaves Corinth, and reaches (Summer)—Jerusalem at Pentecost, and thence goes to Antioch. (Autumn)—His 'Third Missionary Journey.'—He goes To EPHESUS.	
55	At EPHESUS.	
56	At EPHESUS.	
57	(Spring)—He writes 1 <i>Cor</i> . (Summer)—Leaves Ephesus for Macedonia. (Autumn)—Where he writes 2 <i>Cor</i> , and thence (Winter)—To CORINTH, where he writes <i>Galatians</i> .	
58	(Spring)—He writes <i>Romans</i> , and leaves Corinth, going by Philippi and Miletus (Summer)—To Jerusalem (Pentecost), where he is arrested and sent to Cæsarea.	
59	At CÆSAREA.	Nero murders Agrippina.
60	(Autumn)—Sent to Rome by Festus (about August). (Winter)—Shipwrecked at Malta.	Felix is recalled and succeeded by Festus [see note (C.) below].

APPENDIX III.—continued.

A.D.	Biography of S. Paul.	Cotemporary Events.
61	(Spring)—He arrives at Rome.	Embassy from Jerusalem to Rome, to petition about the wall [see note (C.) below].
62	At ROME. (Spring)—Writes <i>Philemon</i> , <i>Colossians</i> , <i>Ephesians</i> . (Autumn)—Writes <i>Philippians</i> .	Burrus dies; Albinus succeeds Festus as procurator; Nero marries Poppæa; Octavia executed; Pallas put to death.
63	(Spring)—He is acquitted, and goes to Macedonia (Phil. ii. 24) and Asia Minor (Philem. 22).	Poppæa's daughter Claudia born.
64	(?) He goes to Spain. [For this and the subsequent statements, see Chap. XXVII.]	Great fire at Rome (July 19), followed by persecution of Roman Christians;
65	(?) In Spain.	Gessius Florus made procurator of Judæa. Conspiracy of Piso, and death of Seneca.
66	(Summer)—From Spain (?) to Asia Minor (1 Tim. i. 3).	The Jewish war begins.
67	(Summer)—Writes <i>1 Tim.</i> from Macedonia. (Autumn)—Writes <i>Titus</i> from Ephesus. (Winter)—At Nicopolis.	
68	(Spring)—In prison at Rome. Writes <i>2 Tim.</i> (Summer)—Executed (May or June).	Death of Nero in the middle of June.

NOTES ON THE CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

NOTE (A.)—Date of the Famine in Acts xi. 28.

We find in Acts xi. 28, that Agabus prophesied the occurrence of a famine, and that his prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of Claudius; also, that the Christians of Antioch resolved to send relief to their poor brethren in Judæa, and that this resolution was carried into effect by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. After relating this, St. Luke digresses from his narrative, to describe the then state ('about that time') of the Church at Jerusalem, immediately before and after the death of Herod Agrippa (which is fully described Acts xii. 1-24). He then resumes the narra-