

## Acts 17:16-34 - Part 4

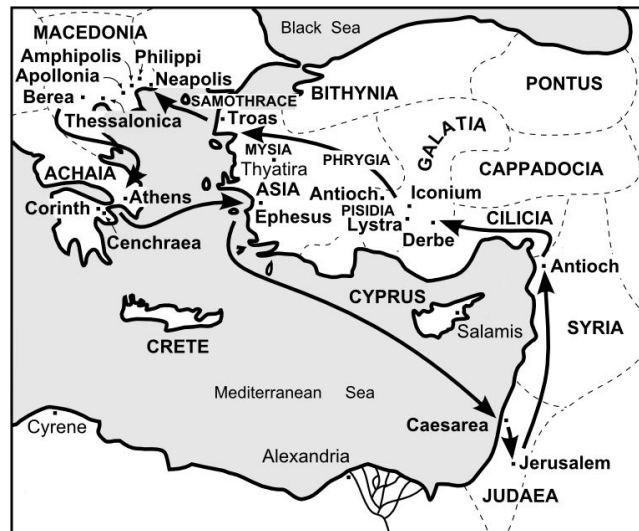
EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 8-2-17

### IV. The Apostle to the Gentiles (12:25-21:17)

- A. The first missionary journey (12:25-14:28)
- B. The Council of Jerusalem (15:1-16:5)
- C. Mission in Macedonia (16:6-17:15)
- D. Paul in Athens (17:16-34)**
- E. Corinth and Ephesus (18:1-19:41)
- F. More about Ephesus (20:1-21:17)

### What Paul Said (vv. 22-34)

- V. 22 - Began with courtesy
- V. 23a - The anonymous altar = his point of contact
  - Began with their own admission of ignorance
  - v. 23b - Bold claim to enlighten
    - Imagine a Jew teaching the Athenians! (cf. I Cor. 1:18-31)
  - Special revelation ALWAYS controls general revelation
- Proclaimed the living and true God in 5 ways
  - God is the Creator of the universe (v. 24)
    - Defies both Epicurean and Stoic worldviews
      - Continuity vs. discontinuity
      - Gen. 1:1 - HUGE worldview statement
  - God is the Sustainer of life (v. 25)
    - Not dependent upon creation, creation is dependent upon him
    - Paganism = a ridiculous reversal of roles
  - God is Ruler of all the nations (vv. 26-27)
    - Every nation is under his ultimate, permissive control
    - V. 27 = his ultimate purposes
      - “Groped for him” = a blind man groping and fumbling around
      - Cf. Rom. 1:20-23
      - “He is not far from each one of us”, it is we who are far from him.
  - He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of human beings (vv. 28-29)
    - Quotations
      - “in Him we live and move and exist” - Epimenides (6th C.)
      - “for we also are His children” - Aratus (Stoic, 3rd C.)
    - Paul was \_\_\_\_\_ of the culture



- God is “father” of all human beings with regard to his relationship as Creator
    - God is only the Father of those who are in Christ in terms of redemption
      - Special revelation controls and contextualizes whatever “truth” of general revelation can be found in the world’s religious and philosophical systems.
    - Idolatry localizes, confines, domesticates, and tames God in order to bring him under our \_\_\_\_\_.
  - God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world (vv. 30-31)
    - Begins and ends with \_\_\_\_\_ with the authority and boldness of an apostle.
    - Both ignorant AND \_\_\_\_\_
      - Acts 14:17 - “He did not leave Himself without witness”
      - Overlooked such ignorance in the past = his forbearing mercy
      - Now calls all people to repent
    - God’s judgement (v. 31):
      - \_\_\_\_\_ - no one will escape it
      - \_\_\_\_\_ - God will judge all people rightly
      - \_\_\_\_\_ - the day is set (though not disclosed) and the judge has been revealed.
        - Resurrection = God’s vindication of his Son as judge and lord
        - All nations were created from the first man (Adam), all nations will be judged by the last Adam
- The response
  - V. 32 - some sneered (probably the Epicureans) and some wanted to hear more about it later (probably the Stoics)
  - V. 33 - the hearing came to an abrupt conclusion
  - V. 34 - “some men joined him and believed”
    - Dionysius the Areopagite - known from history as Athens’ first Christian bishop and martyr

### How Paul Challenges Us

- We lack the depth and power of Paul’s motivation
- Divine jealousy has not stirred with us
- He saw > felt > spoke → it began with his eyes
  - Verbs in vv. 16, 22, 23 do not mean “looked at,” but “observed” or “considered”