

Episode: Acts Series No. 13

Narrator: Paul

Primary Scriptures: Acts 17-18

Story Summary: The second part of the Second Missionary Journey

Location: Roman Empire; Athens, Corinth

Time: 30 AD Jesus crucified and resurrected; Pentecost; Holy Spirit arrives
46 AD Paul's "famine visit" to Jerusalem; First Missionary Journey starts
48 AD Council at Jerusalem; Start of Second Missionary Journey
51 AD End of Second Missionary Journey

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Acts 17:21-23; 18:3, 24-26, 28

Modern readers often think of biblical Greece and Macedonia as the same country. In general, however, it's more accurate to think of biblical Macedonia as being the northern part of modern Greece, and biblical Greece as being the southern part of modern Greece. The second part of the Second Missionary Journey began when Paul left Macedonia and entered Greece.

Paul's first stop in Greece is a famous tourist stop now, just like it was then. When Paul entered Athens, he surely must have been disappointed. What was once a magnificent city had greatly deteriorated both in its infrastructure and its intellectual vitality.

The Golden Age of Athens was about 480-404 BC. During this time, Athens was a leading city-state, had a strong military, built massive temples and public buildings, and led the world in philosophy and art. Rome defeated Greece in 146 BC at the Battle of Corinth. From that point on, Rome sacked the country and reduced it to a shadow of its former self.

Paul's second stop in Greece was Corinth. Corinth had been a great rival of Rome before Rome destroyed it in 146 BC. Understanding its geographical importance, Rome rebuilt Corinth in 44 BC and made it a provincial capital.

In Paul's time, Corinth was an active trading center, well-known for providing all earthly pleasures to its many visitors and sailors. Corinth's many social excesses would wend their ways into the church and cause problems that Paul would have to address for many years.

In Corinth, Paul made close friends with two people who would greatly affect the growth of the Christian Church. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers, like Paul. Paul took the opportunity to influence the people he worked with. It seems like he had matured when it came to building and maintaining relationships.

Discussion Questions:

1. When Paul arrived in Athens, it was only a shabby shell of its former grandeur. How long had it been since the Golden Age of Athens?
 2. Why was Corinth an important city?
 3. What couple did Paul meet in Corinth? Where had they previously lived? What would their previous residence qualify them to do?
 4. What was Paul doing in Corinth before Timothy arrived with funds?
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1. Several hundred years. Athens was at its height around 480-404 BC and had declined since then. 2. It controlled both ports at the ends of the Isthmus of Corinth connecting the Peloponnese peninsula with mainland Greece. Crossing the Isthmus greatly shortened the travel to Rome. 3. Priscilla and Aquila. Rome. Go back to Rome and start a church. 4. Working as a tentmaker with Priscilla and Aquila. After Timothy arrived with money, Paul could probably afford to preach and teach on a full-time basis.

Application Questions:

1. Paul used his intellect and knowledge of Greece to begin his discussions with the Athenians. He was prepared by being educated. How can you prepare yourself to share the Gospel?
2. Paul used his job and skills to make disciples of Priscilla and Aquila, a couple that would work with Paul for many years to come. How can you use your job to make disciples? Do you always have to make a gospel presentation or can you begin by living a Christian lifestyle?
3. The Athenians' religious beliefs were influenced and created by the culture in which they lived. In what ways have your own beliefs been similarly influenced? How does Christianity differ from this cultural creation? How is it the same?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Priscilla and Aquila lived in the party capital of the world. How were they able to maintain their good marriage in that environment?
2. How can you follow Priscilla and Aquila's example of being obedient to God and resisting temptation in your own life?
3. The philosophies of Greece were found empty and wanting. Can any philosophy have meaning if it leaves out God? If the universe is a summation of random events as many teach, how can it have meaning or purpose?