

# The Acts of the Apostles

The Journey – 2020  
Jim Hoffman

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## Prayer Requests

- May peace reign in America.
- Connie Miller – Praise
- Joe and Mercy – Praise and Help
- Terry Torok – biopsy swollen lymph nodes +

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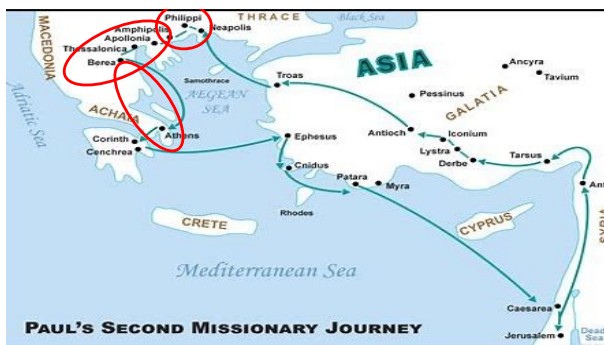
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48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 15:36
49 AD	Paul in Philippi	Acts 16
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens	Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 - 23
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 26
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:11

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- As Paul moves throughout Athens he sees the tension between these two schools of philosophical thought.
- The Stoics resting in their self-restraint and the Epicureans relishing in their unrestrained pursuit of pleasure.
- Generally speaking these two “brands” are easy to see in our friends, and family members – it is easy to label this one as “Stoic” and the other as “Epicurean”.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Sometimes Stoics can be confused with Christians because they are not out partying or spending gobs of money on lavish trips and expensive toys.
- Epicureans are the party types who would rarely be misconstrued to be Christians – their lifestyles just do not harmonize with biblical standards.
- Both philosophies fall short of Christianity – One has no restraints and the other no joy.

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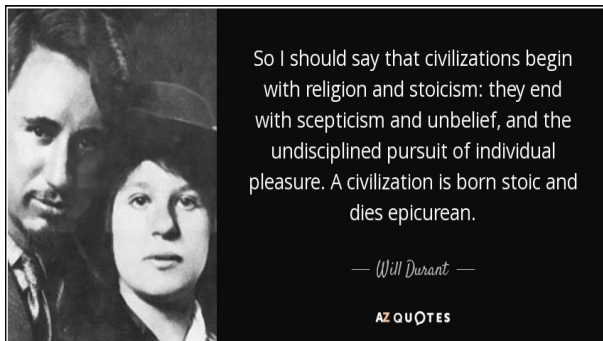
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So I should say that civilizations begin with religion and stoicism: they end with scepticism and unbelief, and the undisciplined pursuit of individual pleasure. A civilization is born stoic and dies epicurean.

— Will Durant —

AZ QUOTES

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- From **“the Learning Mind website** - We need a philosophy of life to be able to do this (get through life) and should have the aim of minimizing suffering and gaining fulfilment. If we do this, we may be able to live a meaningful life. In a progressively secular society, people may settle on the conclusion that life is meaningless. This is, in a sense, true, and completely understandable. But we should not despair at this bleak sentiment; rather we should recognize that it is up to us to find that meaning – to try and fill the lack. **There is no real purpose to our existence other than the purpose that we bestow on ourselves.** There is a universal struggle to accomplish this objective, but there are no universal guidelines as to how to acquire it.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **Acts 17:27** **“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.”**
- The purpose of God in creation was to have a people who would forever praise and glorify Him!
- The world has been ordered towards the pleasure of God and he has been and is orchestrating the fulfillment of His will in the salvation of men.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Even the fall of man was part of his sovereign plan for when we see who we were and what it is like to be lost we become even greater “praisers” of him!
- If we did not understand the eternal dread of a Christless eternity our praise for him would not be what it is today.
- Said another way – how grateful are we that he sought us and found us before our own grave overtakes us?

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Is it not odd that when we think about why we exist that most people start with some reason that puts undue importance on themselves?
- We seem to start with the supremacy of man when it would seem from scripture that we should start with God.
- **“God created us for this: to live our lives in a way that makes him look more like the greatness and the beauty and the infinite worth that he really is.”** John Piper

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- When we consider it is the plan of God that we find him, but only a few will, we begin to understand the blinding power of sin.
- God has arranged the universe to be a proper stage for mankind to find him – we must grope because we are blind, but he is ever presently there.
- Creation, the scriptures, the testimony of believers, and constant calls of the Holy Spirit draw us to him.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Let's look at verse #27 again – it appears to me we have another proof text that sin did not take God by surprise because it's written as though man starts out lost.
- **Acts 17:27** "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".
- It is assumed in the text that we are separated from God and need to grope around for him.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Remember that God is never in a reactive mode where he has to wait and see what men will do and then react to our actions. (He, not us, sets the table)
- He didn't have to wait to see if men would sin before he could plan for a Savior. (Revelation 13)
- When Adam sinned – having perfect foreknowledge of the problem God also had perfect foreknowledge of the remedy.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- I know that speaking of the sovereignty of God makes some people nervous to know that God has necessarily ordained and preapproved of all that happens.
- But the overwhelming power and sovereignty of God ought to comfort us rather than bother us as though we have suddenly been dethroned as our own God.
- Given the immensity of our problems and the length of eternity we should rejoice that God reigns over all!

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- When people reject the sovereignty of God, they are asserting the sovereignty of themselves.
- For those who want to be the captain of their own ship there are troubled waters ahead.
- God wants to found not only in our salvation, but even more so in our sanctification where he is proven to be the all sufficient God who satisfies every good desire we have.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- We should notice too that God has always had a purpose and an interest in the nations, but that interest will have been served when we get to the new heaven and new earth.
- At that time there will still be ethnicities, but not nations that are separated – we will dwell in harmony celebrating all of the varieties that make up **the** human race.
- Rev 21:26 **They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.** (in Rev 21 the word “nations” is used, but that word can also be translated as “the human family”).

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- The picture in “**perhaps feel their way toward him and find him**” is one of a blind and vulnerable man groping in the dark for hope and help.
- And we also see that it was God who ordained our search for him – of all the so-called gods on Mars Hill there was only one interested in the welfare of men.
- John 9:25 He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that **though I was blind, now I see.**”

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 17:28 **For in him we live and move and exist.** As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 29 And since this is true, **we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.** 30 "God overlooked people's ignorance about **these things** in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. 31 **For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.**" 32 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."** 33 That ended Paul's discussion with them, 34 **but some joined him and became believers.** Among them were Dionysius, a member of the council, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- **"For in him we live and move and exist"**
- Col 1:16b **"Everything was created through him and for him. 17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together."**
- "Any being that I have is transitory. Any being that I have is dependent, it's contingent, it's derived, it's a subset of pure being. That's what the Apostle Paul said to the Athenian philosophers with respect to God: "In Him, we live and move and have our being." Let me put it another way. Without Him, we couldn't live." R.C. Sproul

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- The life we have, now and in the next age, is contingent on God for without him we would not exist now, or ever.
- Paul also speaks of movement – do not think of movement here as merely spatial, but more so as our development.
- God gives us life and then seeks to develop us into creatures who will not just live, but ones who will grow into perfect image bearers of himself.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- John 10:10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. **My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.**
- So the "movement" God wants us to experience is the movement from a being who is ungodly to a godly one.
- In theology we refer to this moving as sanctification which is the moving (changing) of one living an empty self-centered life to a God-centered, satisfying life.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 17:28b **"As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring,' 29 And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone".**
- You have to wonder how it was the "poets" came to the phrase **"we are his offspring"** – did they conclude that on their own or did they hear it from a Jew?
- Paul simply grabs what is true from their own words and uses it to make a point – God is alive!

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Paul tells them to cease thinking about God as some inanimate object that is made by men and then proves its impotence daily.
- Even if these objects are made of the finest and most valuable elements, they are still just man-made objects that have no power.
- He probably wanted to say, "All of you great thinkers, how can you possibly be so dumb"!

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Has it ever crossed your mind that at least one reason mankind has so favored idolatry is so that we can have a god on our terms?
- Meaning that when my needs are met, I do not have to deal with my god, but when they are not, I can easily pull it out and delude myself to some degree.
- This would explain the heathen's coldness towards spiritual things one day and their zeal on another.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- When people pray to their own hand made objects, they prove that idolatry is a religion.
- Idolaters are people of great faith because they must believe something lesser than them can do things greater for them than they can do themselves.
- "Nothing teaches us about the preciousness of the Creator as much as when we learn the emptiness of everything else." Charles Spurgeon

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 17:30 "God overlooked people's ignorance about **these things** in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him".
- So if I remain ignorant of the truth, God will overlook my sin?
- Nope. Paul is telling the Greeks that what had been in pictures and types before (the truth) has now become so manifest that no one is without direct guilt.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- **From Barnes Notes** “we read this insight into Acts 17:30 - We are not to suppose that God regarded idolatry as innocent, or the crimes and vices to which idolatry led as of no importance; but their ignorance was a mitigating circumstance, and he suffered the nations to live without coming forth in direct judgment against them.”
- This is not to say that O.T. people all went to heaven, because even if God didn't count their idolatry against them, those people were disqualified for heaven due to their sin nature.
- Hebrews 12:14 **“without Holiness no one shall see the Lord”**.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 17:31 **“For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead”**
- Jesus Christ will be the judge of all – he will evaluate the Christian at the Bema and sentence the lost at the Great White Throne.
- John 5:22 In addition, **the Father judges no one**. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- **“For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed”**
- But not all people will be judged the same day so in this case a “day” refers to a “time” or an “age” – here we need context.
- Daniel also says something similar and was a little vague as to the timing.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued. 2 **Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.**"

• There is clearly a judgment here in Daniel around people in a book who are rescued (saved) and have everlasting life and others are not in the book who will be shamed and disgraced.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• While there are different appointed days for judging all of the peoples of history there is but one judge and we can know who he is.

• **"and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead"**

• Rom 1:4 and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• "some laughed in contempt" - "others said we want to hear more about this later" – "some joined him and became believers"

• The reaction to the gospel never seems to change much as seen above – **some laugh, some say not now, and some believe.**

• In all likelihood, everyone we know can be classified as a member of one of these three groups.

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The Acts of the Apostles

So who is further from Christ? The one who mocks, or the one who procrastinates?

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Questions

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