



Journey to Mars Hill: The
Power of Resurrection
Part 1

Acts 17



Why Mars Hill?

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- In Greek mythology, the god of thunder was called Ares.
 - The Areopagus means hill of Ares
 - Mars is the Roman name for Ares
 - So the Areopagus is also the hill of Mars, or Mars Hill.
 - There are many lessons in the book of Acts that chronicles the establishment of the early church.
 - Paul's journey to Mars Hill and message there are very instructive for us
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The Scene of the Action: Acts Chapter 17: 1 – 9 (NIV)

17 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said. ⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

⁵ But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.^[a] ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” ⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹ Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

The Scene of the Action: Acts Chapter 17: 10 – 15 (NIV)

¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹² As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

¹³ But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. ¹⁴ The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. ¹⁵ Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

The Scene of the Action: Acts Chapter 17: 16 – 21 (NIV)

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

The Scene of the Action: Acts Chapter 17: 22-28 (NIV)

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’^[b] As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’^[c]

The Scene of the Action: Acts Chapter 17: 29-34 (NIV)

²⁹ “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” ³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Responding To Fulfill A Word From God

The Word From God That Paul Received: Come Over to Macedonia To Help Us.

To Fulfill Words that We Receive – As Illustrated by Paul:

- Do What We Know To Do
- Go To The Places and The People that Are Most Likely To Be Receptive and Where We Can Build A Team.
- Cultivate the Gift With Passion
- For Paul This Meant Going To the Synagogue

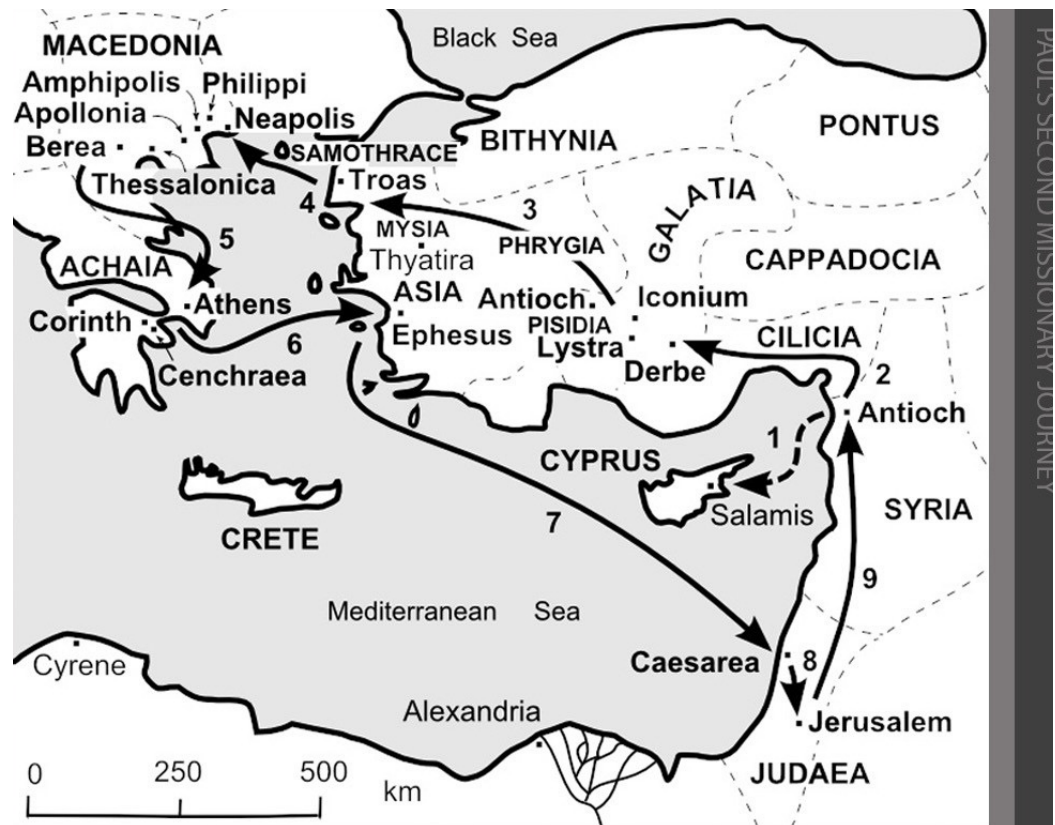
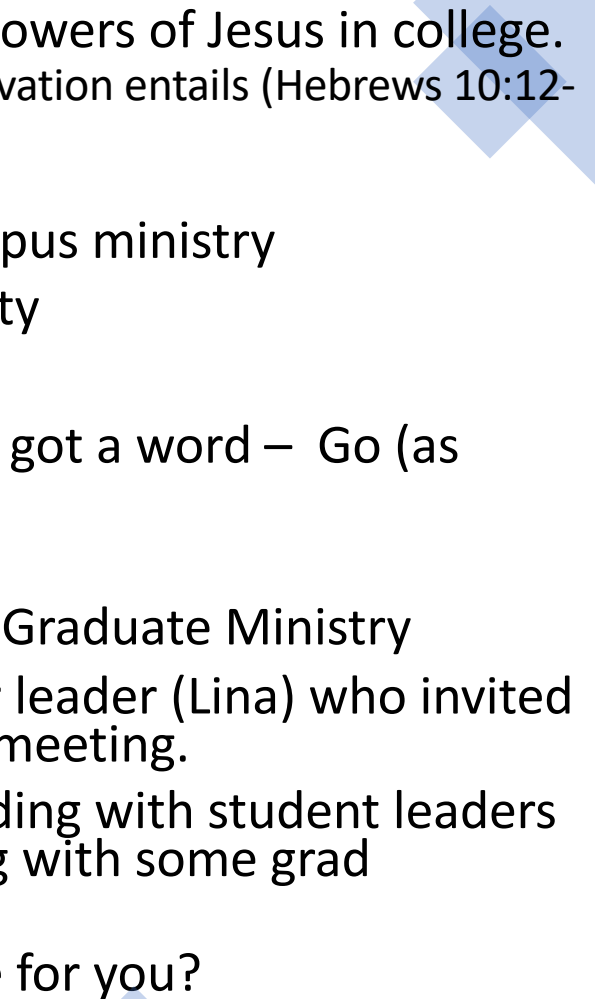






Illustration From Campus Ministry

- Rocklyn and Eva became followers of Jesus in college.
 - Good to reflect on all that salvation entails (Hebrews 10:12-14)
 - What's your story?
 - Cultivated a passion for campus ministry
 - Volunteering with InterVarsity
 - Initially Placed at Harvard
 - After about 5 years, Rocklyn got a word – Go (as Volunteer Ministers) to MIT
 - Did What We Knew to Do:
 - Met with a leader (Kevin) in Graduate Ministry
 - He introduced us to another leader (Lina) who invited us to share at a large group meeting.
 - That led to relationship building with student leaders of primarily undergrad along with some grad students.
 - What next steps make sense for you?
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Illustrations From Another Personal Areas of Interest

- Music
 - Love music and have a passion to use music to build people up and help them understand God's word. Make up little songs for myself to memorize scripture and for children's church. Felt the Lord called me to take it to another level.
 - Did What I Knew to Do:
 - Called an experienced musician (Bil).
 - Submitted to his critique
 - Got rid of half my first song
 - Wrote a new verse and chorus
 - Took his advice to heart to have one central theme in each piece of music – which impacted future songs
 - Got connected to other music professionals: a producer and vocalists
 - Felt impressed to develop a music video for one song.
 - Did What I Knew to Do:
 - Called an experienced developer and producer of music videos (Elijah). Shared my vision for a video that included dancing.
 - That led to a collaboration to produce the video
 - Engaging in Prayer – that God will develop the music ministry and use the music to be a blessing to others
 - What next steps make sense for you?
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Hebrews 10:12-14 (NIV)



¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

- Christ died for our sins past, present, and future!
- Salvation is not dependent upon us doing everything right all the time
- Salvation is by grace through faith
- Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)
- ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.



In Thessalonica

Paul spent 3
Sabbath Days in the
Synagogue

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- That means 2 weeks in the Synagogue, but a longer time in Thessalonica altogether.
 - Sabbath runs from just before Sunset on Friday to an hour after Sunset on Saturday
 - So if for example he started on Friday 1st, that's one Sabbath, Friday the 8th, one week would be 2 Sabbaths, and Friday the 15th, two weeks would be 3 Sabbaths.
 - He spent time with them explaining and proving that....
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The Messiah had to Suffer and Rise from the Dead.

- Why? To Rescue The World From Sin and Death. To Demonstrate that Christ is King.
- Isaiah 53: 4-6
 - Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.
 - ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
 - ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- The Message is Relatable and the Message Has Power
- We've all been impacted Sin and Death – Cases in Point – Experiences with Sickness, Losses of Love Ones, Our own sin, Societal issues of injustice, violence, lack of access to health care, housing, education – Everything that hinders us from fulfilling all that God has crafted and created us to be.
- Christ's resurrection is the victory over sin and death

Acts 13:30-38

³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. ³² “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

““You are my son;
today I have become your father.”^[b]

³⁴ God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,
“I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.”^[c]

³⁵ So it is also stated elsewhere:

““You will not let your holy one see decay.”^[d]

³⁶ “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. ³⁷ But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

³⁸ “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

Sharing

Discuss what it means to be rescued from sin and death.

What kind of work or activities are you excited about?

What words or direction has the Lord spoken to you?

What do you know to do as next steps?

What places and people are potentially most receptive and will allow you to build a team?