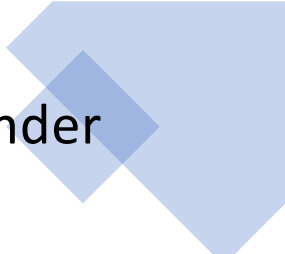



Journey to Mars Hill: The
Power of Resurrection
Part 2

Acts 17



Why Mars Hill?

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- In Greek mythology, the god of thunder and war 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. 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.

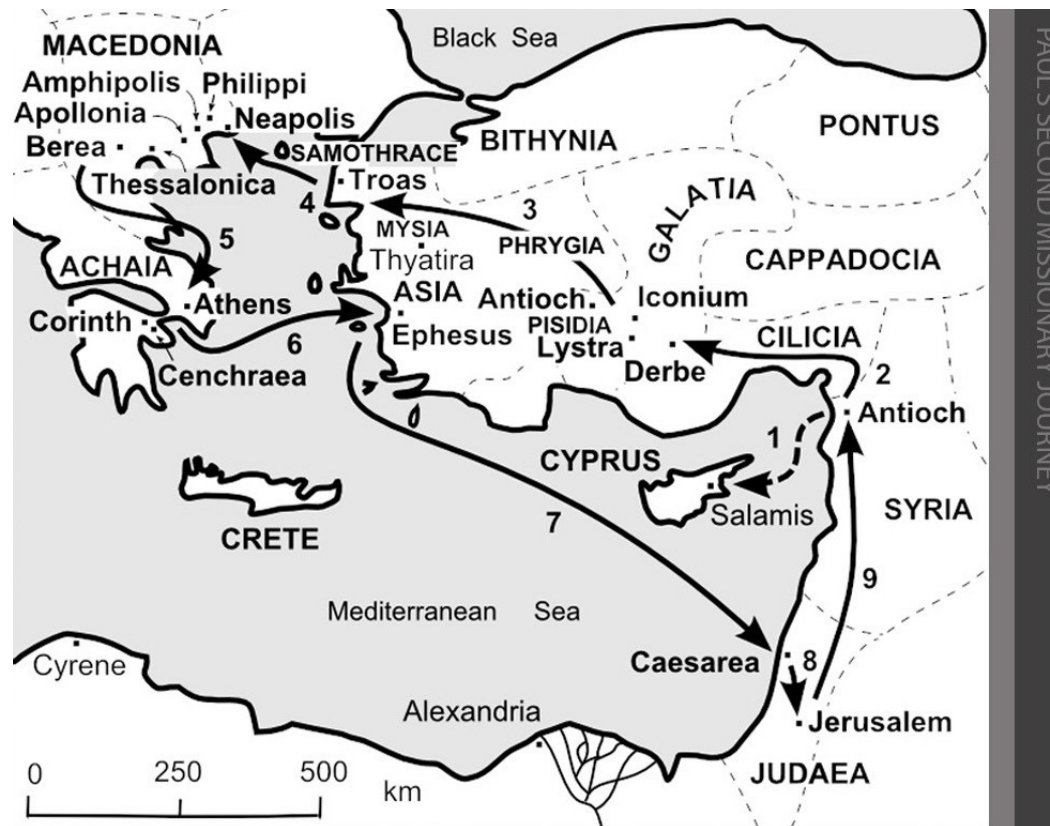
Dealing with Opposition

Imagine what Paul had to deal with.

Trouble followed him from Thessalonica to Berea.

That's a distance of about 45 miles.


People went out of their way to try and disrupt him.






Hebrews 12:1-13

Hebrews 12:1-13
New International Version



12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ⁴ In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”^[a]






Hebrews 12:1-13 (continued)

⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰ They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

¹² Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³ “Make level paths for your feet,”^[b] so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.



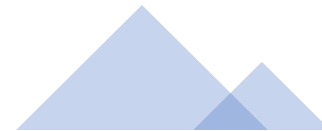



James 1:2-4

James 1:2-4
New International Version

Trials and Temptations

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, ^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.



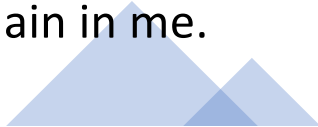


John 15:1-4

John 15:1-4
New International Version

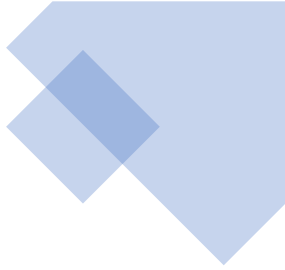
The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

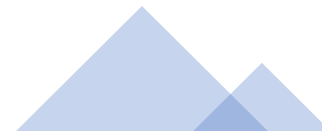


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Proverbs
17:17

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Proverbs 17:17
New International Version
¹⁷ A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a time
of adversity.





Words of

Encouragement:

Friendship is a part
of the Kingdom
Remarkably, There
is Joy in the Midst
of Trials.

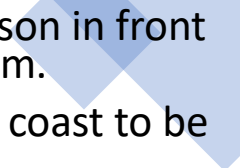

Hardship

Disciplines us as
children of God

Opposition Can

Position us for

what God wants to
do next.

- 
- When they didn't find Paul, the Thessalonians dragged Jason in front of the officials. As followers of Jesus, we operate as a team.
 - Friends sent Paul and Silas away to Berea and later to the coast to be brought to Athens.
 - The Berean were of more noble character because of their eagerness and because they examined the scriptures to see if what Paul said was true. They were seekers of the truth
 - Have you ever been surprised by what the word of God actually said? Has it ever been a challenge to accept what the word says verses what you had been previously taught or thought the word said?
 - Paul had a more receptive audience in Berea than in Thessalonica. But the Lord used opposition to move him on to Athens where he would deliver one his most powerful speeches.
 - The Lord prunes us – takes us from a place of fruitfulness to even greater fruitfulness.
 - This process can be painful, but it accomplishes something in us.
 - It also positions us for the next work God has for us.
 - Have you been comfortable in a place that seems fruitful but God is calling you to something new?
 - Personal examples
- 

Are You In a Period of Waiting?

Observe While You Wait.

- Paul waited for his companions to join him in Athens.
- While he was waiting, he noticed that the city was full of idols.
- That disturbed Paul and propelled his conversations in the marketplace and ultimately his speed at Mars Hill.
- What disturbs you is a clue to the work you're called to engage in.

Sharing

- What are some things that you have learned from studying God's word or participating in Bible Study that have been a surprise to you or that you have struggled to accept?
- Discuss how friends can help us in our journey.
- Discuss how we can have joy in the midst of trials.
- Discuss how opposition or trouble can move you to a new place of fruitfulness.
- What disturbs you? What problems are you passionate about seeing resolved?