



Paul's Missionary Travels

A Bible Study Series for the Locked Down Days

In this series of seven Bible Studies, we are exploring Paul's missionary travels. These studies have been inspired by two events - firstly some time in prison (!) as a prison chaplain and second by spending Lent reading Steve Chalke's excellent new book on Paul - *The Lost Message of Paul* (SPCK 2020). Have we misread Paul? He thinks so. I tend to agree. To get through to Paul, we need to read Paul through the lens of his life and then look at our life. Maybe these studies will help you do that. Good luck and send me any work or comments on these studies. Consider them a correspondence course for lockdown.

Rev Gary Crellin - Vicar of Old Hills Malvern Parishes

Your Study of Paul in weekly parts! No binder included!

- 1 Paul's First Missionary Journey**
- 2 Conflict in the Church**
- 3 What Must I Do?**
- 4 An Unknown God**
- 5 Companions in Ministry**
- 6 In the Name of Jesus**
- 7 Paul's Farewell**

Week 4

An Unknown God Acts 17



Only a few years ago, Christians in the West could assume that most people they met belonged to a church or at least based their lives on Christian values. Today, Christians in the West face a wide variety of religious beliefs and practices that often have little in common with Christianity. The world's major religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, are making inroads as are a variety of cults, New Age philosophies, occultic activities and even traditional paganism. How do we cope with a world that knows or cares so little about the truth of Jesus Christ? Paul left us a helpful model when he visited the world center of pagan philosophy and religion-Athens.

1. What kinds of ideas or beliefs do you meet as you try to communicate the gospel in our modern world?

2. Read Acts 17:1-34. In this chapter Paul works with three cities and three different cultures. Compare and contrast Paul's ministry in Thessalonica and Berea. (What approach did he take? How was his message received by the people? What kinds of results did he have?)

3. In Thessalonica and Berea, as in most places, Paul makes his contacts in the synagogues and speaks almost exclusively from Scripture. How is his ministry in Athens different?

4. How do the people respond to his teaching in Athens?



5. In his lecture in Athens Paul mentions "the objects of your worship." What are some of the objects of worship for people in our culture? How does the message of Christ speak to these objects of worship?

6. In Athens Paul begins to tell them about the living God, with an inscription from one of their altars - "to an unknown god." What in our culture could you use as a starting point to share the gospel?



7. Paul varied his approach to people depending on their culture and situation. He was ready to start his message from where they were. What different kinds of approaches are needed today?



8. Though Paul approaches people differently, the key points of his message remain the same. Identify these (vv. 3, 18, 24-28, 30-31).

9. What ways might you be tempted to compromise the message of the gospel as you communicate it to certain people?

10. How do you need to better prepare yourself to effectively communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to those to whom God has called you to minister?



For this is what the Lord has commanded us:
"I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation
to the ends of the earth."
Acts 13:47

Use the next page for your own thoughts or notes:

Personal Journaling and Notes for Reflection