

RUSSELL SANDERS

7-27-2021

THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 26

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY – PART 12

ATHENS

When it became necessary for Paul to flee Berea to escape violence aimed at him, the brethren escorted him to a port where he took a ship southward to Athens. It was in the Roman province of Achaia, formerly (and presently) known as Greece.

Silas and Timothy remained a little while in Berea to assure that the church would be set in order. However, Paul had instructed the brethren to send Silas and Timothy to join him in Greece, which they did shortly thereafter. (Acts 17:14-34.)

As Paul was awaiting their arrival, he began to survey the city and found it to be almost totally given over to idolatry. However, he did find a Jewish synagogue where he disputed with the Jews and with devout proselytes. He also went every day into the marketplace, where he would find the common people with whom to share the gospel.

Greeks had been known for centuries as philosophers, many of whom are still studied today. Some of the philosophers, particularly the Epicureans and Stoics, heard him preaching Jesus and questioned him as it went contrary to their beliefs and practices.

They invited him to Mars Hill (Areopagus) which was the common meeting place to share and debate various ideas and philosophies. They were curious about this strange new teaching.

Paul had seen altars to many different gods around Athens since the people were very superstitious and religious. He saw one particular one that gave him the ideal opening for his argument for Christ. It had the inscription "To the Unknown God." They wanted to "cover all the bases." Paul used this to tell them of the true God whom they had never known. He preached Jesus to them, but they roused up in mockery when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead.

However, some wanted to hear more on another day and a few of the men believed and followed Paul. Some women also became believers. A new body of believers was established in Athens.

Silas and Timothy who were engaged in organizing the church in Berea, did not get to Athens, so Paul departed westward to the Grecian city of Corinth where they would join him.