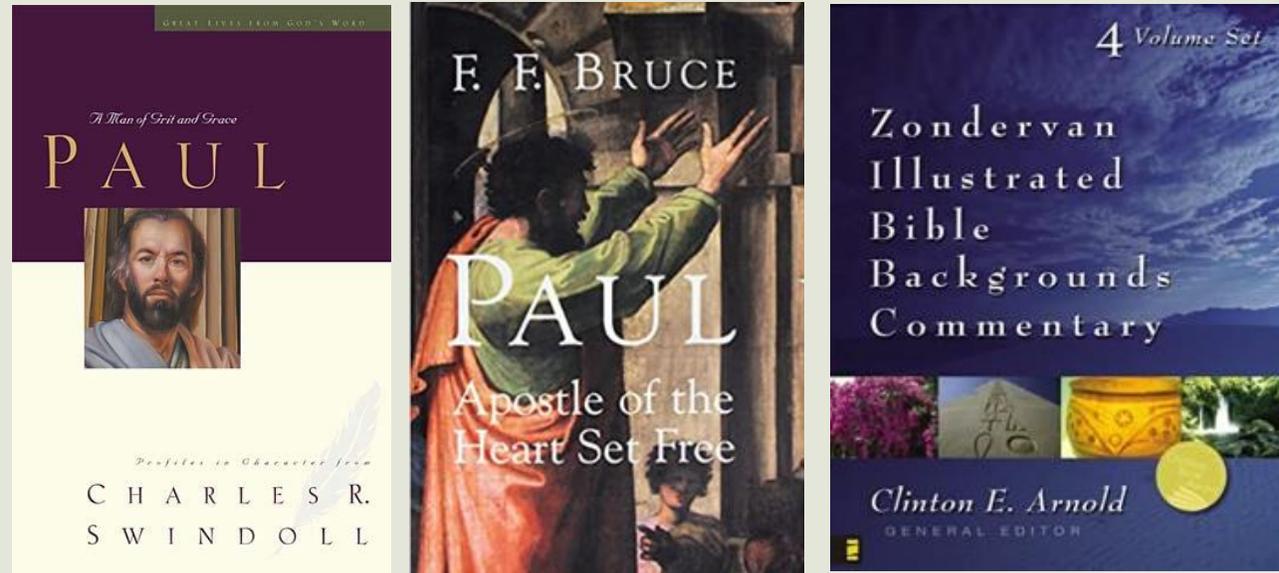
The background is a dark grey chalkboard with various white chalk sketches. On the left, there is a large sketch of a microscope. Above it is a globe of the Earth. In the bottom left, there are sketches of books and a cross. In the bottom right, there are sketches of a percentage sign, an exclamation point, and a right-angle symbol. The text is centered on the board.

Paul – Lesson 10

New Testament Studies

CBC B&B Sunday School
June 18, 2023

Source Material



Companion Sources

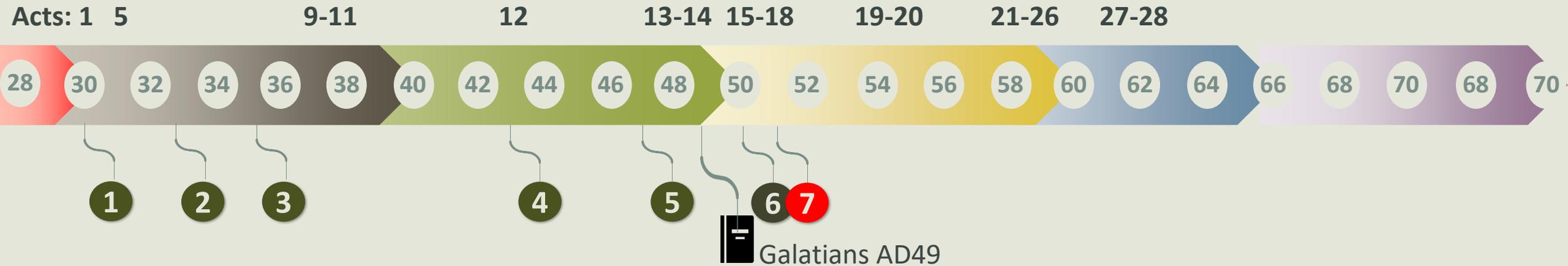
Lesson 10 Intro...

- Acts 16:11-40 (~ AD 51):
 - Paul was in Philippi, where he evangelized to a wealthy business woman, a demon-possessed slave girl, and a Roman guard
 - His act of saving the demon-possessed slave girl caused him to be jailed, which also allowed him to evangelize to the jailed prisoners, as well as to the Roman guard
 - Paul (and Silas) could have avoided jail had they disclosed their Roman citizen status, but they chose to conceal it to pursue more evangelism opportunities to the Gentiles.

Acts 16:11-40 [NASB]

The Art of Evangelism

Chronology of Acts / Life & Ministry of Paul



1 Ascension – Acts 1
Pentecost – Acts 2
Apostles before Sanhedrin – Acts 5

2 Stoning of Stephen – Acts 7

3 Paul's Conversion – Acts 9

4 Paul to Antioch – Acts 11

5 Paul's First Missionary Journey – Acts 13-14

6 Jerusalem Council – Acts 15

7 Paul's Second Missionary Journey Begins

Acts 17 Evangelism

- Evangelism in three cities, starting in three synagogues, to three types of audiences:
 - The Uncivilized (Thessalonica)
 - The Noble (Berea)
 - The Confused (Athens)

Acts 17:1-4 [NASB]

¹ Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.

Acts 17:1-4 [NASB]

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Acts 17:5-9 [NASB]

⁵ But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. ⁶ When they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also; ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." ⁸ They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. ⁹ And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.

The Uncivilized in Thessalonica

- Reasoned (conversation) using Scripture (17:2)
 - Audience was familiar with Scripture
- Unpersuaded acted out of jealousy, rather than on merits (17:5)
 - Not the message, but out of jealousy of the attention
 - Jealousy breeds incivility; recruited “wicked men”, incited a mob
- Casualties include guilt by association (17:7)
 - Jason acting according to custom of the day, hosting visitors
- Post Bond / Pledge = arrest warrant for Paul (Acts 17:9)

Acts 17:10-15 [NASB]

¹⁰ The brethren **immediately** sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men. ¹³ But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds. ¹⁴ Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ Now those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left.

*Map used by Permission – Standard Bible Atlas

Paul's Second Missionary Journey



Acts 17:10-15 [NASB]

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The Noble in Berea

- Reasoned (conversation) using Scripture (17:11)
 - Audience was familiar with Scripture, and examined accordingly
 - Persuaded many Jews as well as prominent Gentiles (17:12)
- Jews from Thessalonica became the obstacle (17:13)
 - What was Paul's crime (??)
 - Jealousy breeds immorality
- Conceived a plan to avoid further confrontation (17:14)
 - Silas and Timothy would stay in Berea, leading these Jews to believe Paul is still in the city
 - Paul would be secretly escorted out of the city to Athens
 - Silas and Timothy would join Paul later.

*Map used by Permission – Standard Bible Atlas

Paul's Second Missionary Journey



Acts 17:16-18 [NASB]

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. ¹⁷ So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing *Gentiles*, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. ¹⁸ And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,” —because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

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“What happens when we die??”

Acts 17:19-21 [NASB]

¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? ²⁰ For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.” ²¹ (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)

The Confused in Athens

- City full of idols
 - honors all kinds of deities (17:16)
 - people fear all kinds of gods (17:17)
- Influenced by schools of philosophers (17:18-19)
 - Epicureans – effectively atheist
 - Stoics – effectively pantheist
 - Others (17:28)

How do you define a God???

Acts 17:22-26 [NASB]

²² So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. ²³ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘**TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.**’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

Acts 17:27-31 [NASB]

²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' ²⁹ Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. ³⁰ Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, ³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:24-31

- TO AN UNKNOWN GOD: **HOW DO YOU DEFINE A GOD?**
 - He must be the Creator (17:24)
 - He must be the Originator (17:25)
 - He must be Sovereign and Relational (17:26)
 - He must be Relational, Knowable (17:27)
 - He must be the Source (17:28-29)
- About this God, and why you should care (17:18)
 - **What happens when you die?** (17:30-31)

Acts 16:11-40 [NASB]

Class Discussion –
How do we evangelize?

Paul's Art of Evangelism

Paul's approach to evangelizing to people who are confused:

- He first familiarizes himself with the surroundings (17:16-17)
- He then looks for opportunities to speak to them about their curiosity and confusion (superstition and ignorance) (17:18-20)
- He addresses the root of their confusion to catch their attention (17:18)
- Given the opportunity to speak, he starts '*where they are*' in their beliefs (17:22-23)
- He uses '*their familiar*' to introduce to them the unfamiliar ('TO AN UNKNOWN GOD' 17:23)
- He shared the gospel message in plain language that they would understand (17:24-29)
- He ends with where he started (17:30-31)

****Spirit provoked Paul to act (17:16)**

Principles I

- **The Art of Evangelism focuses on the need for Certainty –**

Paul was speaking to a wide audience of confused people, from those who accepted their confusion as norm and simply dealt with it, to those who promoted more confusion (i.e. philosophers). Confusion coupled with superstition breeds uncertainty. Paul wanted the audience to overcome this uncertainty about who the One True God is, and also about what happens after they die. When we evangelize to an audience that does not know God, we ought to keep it simple and promote the need to be certain about what they believe; especially about God, and about death.

Principles II

- **The Art of Evangelism focuses on the Audience –**

As controversial as this may sound, the Holy Bible is not the first thing we should bring out when we evangelize. Paul did not talk about the Mosaic Law or of the Oral traditions, or quote the Old Testament, or discuss the theology of salvation with this audience. These are not the things that someone who knows nothing about God would care for. To them, the Holy Bible is just another book. Paul spoke to this audience in a language that they would understand. He starts where they are in their belief, and he connects the dots for them to bring them towards the Gospel. To focus on the audience means that we have to know where they are – what they believe – and talk to them starting from that point. Many times, this will require research and knowledge into the backgrounds of their belief – as Paul demonstrated in Athens.

Principles III

- **The Art of Evangelism focuses on the Ultimate Question –**

The ultimate question to pose in evangelism is “What happens after you die.” This was the challenge to the people in Athens, which led Paul to address it head on. The response – both in Paul’s days as will also be today, will always be mixed because people are set in their belief, and the Truth always challenges us to question what we believe. Paul was wise to focus on this issue. In evangelism, somehow, we should aim to bring this topic up and then let the Holy Spirit guide the discussion forward (17:32)

Questions