



ORIGINS (Part 6) - “The Ends of the Earth”

Acts 1:8 NIV

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 17:23-31 NIV

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.’

As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

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.”

Key Points

- God is fully capable of handling His work; our job is to walk with Him and respond to the promptings of His Spirit one step at a time.
- When we move into unfamiliar and uncertain conditions, our tendency is to find familiar things or to grab control by imposing familiar things in an effort to recreate what we have already known.
- We are moving into places where we can see and know God, but it matters how we approach knowing Him.
- God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, but we aren’t. The formation and fulfillment of God’s redemptive promise are revealed in and through the relationships we share as one season gives way to the next and one generation to another.
- The implications of bearing witness are not simply geographic but also generational.
- Worrying has to give way to concern. This subtle shift shapes our souls.
- Worry feeds fear while concern forces a renewed vision.
- It takes no effort to create an adversary, but loving your neighbor takes work.
- It is easier to grow cynical and dismissive than it is to cultivate empathy.
- Repentance is about a return that reorients and moves our lives towards wholeness.

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1.

- Discuss what it means to be a witness to the ends of the earth in today's context. How can we practically apply this directive in our own lives and communities?
- Reflect on the idea that the message of Jesus is meant for people "to the ends of the earth." How does this perspective challenge our understanding of inclusivity and concern for others?
- How did Paul use the altar to the "unknown god" as a starting point to introduce the Athenians to the true God? In what ways did Paul adapt his message to the cultural context of his time?
- How does Paul's proclamation that God desires for people to seek Him and find Him relate to the Athenians' pursuit of knowledge and wisdom?

REFLECT

- Reflect on a time when you felt uncertain or unfamiliar with a situation. How did you respond? Did you seek familiarity or control? How might walking with God have influenced your response differently?
- Discuss the idea that while God remains constant, we are constantly changing. How does this affect our understanding of His promises and our relationship with Him?
- Share about a significant relationship in your life that has revealed God's redemptive promise. How did this relationship shape your understanding of God's character?

RESPOND

- Reflect on a time when worry fed into fear for you. How did this impact your decision-making and outlook? How might concern lead to a renewed vision instead?
- Discuss the challenges of creating a sense of community and neighborliness in today's world. What barriers exist, and how can we overcome them?
- Consider the concept of bearing witness not just geographically, but also across generations. How can we pass down our faith and experiences with God to future generations?
- How do you understand repentance as a return toward wholeness in your life? What areas of your life might need repentance and reorientation towards God?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.