

Acts 17:16-34 **Athens – Sermon on Mars Hill** (Second missionary journey continued)

Paul waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy to come from Berea [Acts 17:14-15]

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. 17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

Invitation to the Areopagus

18 Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? 20 For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." 21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Altar to the Unknown God

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

God of Creation

24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that 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 have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

Appointed Day of Judgment – by Jesus Whom God raised from the dead

29 "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Mockers – Believers

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Paul waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy to come from Berea [Acts 17:14-15]

✚ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when **he saw that the city was given over to idols.** Therefore **he reasoned in the synagogue with the**

Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. [Acts 17:16-17]

- ✧ Paul left Silas and Timothy in Berea when he was taken from Berea to Athens to escape the threat of the unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica who had come to Berea and stirred up a mob against Paul. [Acts 17:13-15]
- ✧ When Paul arrived in Athens, he sent for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed from Berea. [Acts 17:15]
- ✧ While Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive, he toured the city and saw that it was given over to idols. Being a Greek city, they worshipped all the Greek gods and even allowed for one unknown to the Greeks.
- ✧ As was his custom, Paul went into the Synagogue of the Jews on the Sabbath and reasoned from Jewish Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. [Acts 17:2-3]
- ✧ Those who heard him speaking the Gospel of Jesus included both Jews and Gentiles who were there to worship the God of Israel.
- ✧ Paul also went into the marketplace daily and reasoned with anyone who happened to be there, Jew and Gentile alike, telling them about Jesus and the resurrection. [Acts 17:18]
- ✧ The Gospel of Salvation through Jesus the Messiah is reasonable and in agreement with the Scriptures of the Jews.

Invitation to the Areopagus

- ✧ Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "**What does this babbling want to say?**" Others said, "**He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,**" because **he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.** And they took him and brought him to the **Areopagus**, saying, "**May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.**" For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. [Acts 17:18-21]
- ✧ In the marketplace Paul encountered Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who expressed interest in his new doctrine regarding Jesus and the resurrection, so they brought him to the Areopagus so they all could hear this new message.
- ✧ The **Areopagus** was a place of assembly on Mars' Hill (the hill of Ares, the Greek god of war) where the philosophers of Athens, both local and foreigners met to discuss new concepts that came along. Steps were cut in the rock leading to the summit where rock-hewn benches were located for their gathering.
- ✧ The Areopagus is over 300 feet high NW of the Acropolis (Citadel) of Athens.
- ✧ The people gathered at the Areopagus spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing. [Acts 17:21]

Altar to the Unknown God

- ✧ Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "**Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;** for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, **the One** whom you worship without knowing, **Him I proclaim to you:** [Acts 17:22-23]
- ✧ The people of Athens were not very different from most people today.
- ✧ They worshipped things made by the hands of men, as well as people they held in high esteem, yet there is an inner voice telling us that there is a God greater than all and the One we need to worship as evidenced by their altar to the Unknown God.
- ✧ Paul began his address by speaking of things they were familiar with, and from there he led them to the knowledge of the God of Creation, the God of Israel.

God of Creation

- ✠ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' [Acts 17:24-28]
- ✧ God who created all things is **Lord of Heaven and Earth**.
- ✧ God does not dwell in temples made by the hands of mankind.
- ✧ God is not worshipped by things man can do as though God needed anything.
- ✧ God gives breath to all things.
- ✧ God has made every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth from one bloodline.
- ✧ God has determined each nation's appointed time and the boundaries of their dwellings.
- ✧ God's purpose for the nations is that they should seek Yehowah in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him.
- ✧ However, God is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Without God we would not exist.
- ✧ Even some of the Greek poets of Athens had said that, for we are also God's offspring.

Appointed Day of Judgment – by Jesus Whom God raised from the dead

- ✠ **"Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.** Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." [Acts 17:29-31]
- ✧ Since we are the offspring of God, it is foolish to think we can fashion god with human hands out of gold or silver or stone, as many do for the idols they worship.
- ✧ In times of ignorance, before God revealed Himself in Messiah Jesus, God overlooked Gentile idolatry.
- ✧ After Jesus came to reveal the truth of God, it is revealed that God has appointed a day of Judgment for the world.
- ✧ God's judgment will be in righteousness by Jesus Whom God has ordained.
- ✧ God gave assurance of the Day of Judgment by Messiah Jesus when God raised Jesus from the dead.

Mockers – Believers

- ✠ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. [Acts 17:32-34]
- ✧ The usual reaction to the message of resurrection is mocking because it seems so incredible.
- ✧ God usually has a remnant of people with open hearts who are interested in the promises of God because they realize that God is able to do anything He says.
- ✧ Resurrection can be found many times in Jewish Scriptures, and is therefore completely believable.
- ✧ So some men joined Paul desiring to hear more about the resurrection.

✧ Some of those who received the message and wanted to learn more are named in the text.
[\[Acts 17:34\]](#)