

## **"All Religions Are NOT the Same"**

Acts 17:16-34, ESV

**Introduction:** Secular America would have you believe that there are many ways to God, that all religions are the same. Further, the pervasive, secular sentiment is that God does not care which way you choose to get to Him, so long as you are religious. This, in my view, is a damnable lie. Religion distorts God's revelation of Himself. Religion is man's effort to fashion a god to his own liking. This morning's text is crucial. Paul is in Athens—a city of affluence, a city overflowing with false objects of worship; a city considered the intellectual epicenter of the Roman world. It was in Athens that men gathered to muse about philosophy, poetry, politics, and religion. One ancient writer said it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens.

### **1). THE ATHENIAN PERSPECTIVE (v. 16-21).**

- A. Athens was a city full of **idols** (v. 16).- Athenians were deeply religious, having many **objects of worship**.
- B. Paul reasoned with **Jews [synagogue]** and **devout persons [in the marketplace]** (v. 17).
- C. **Epicureans**- believed the primary goal in life was to seek **happiness** and pleasure- philosophy of materialism and despair; they believed that the "gods" did not get involved in the affairs of men
- D. **Stoics**- placed **thinking** above feeling and tried to live in harmony with nature and reason; they denied one's desire for pleasure. The Stoic perspective promoted pride and self-sufficiency.
- E. Generally, the Athenians were **religiously curious** people (v. 18-21, 22).

### **2). THE PAULINE PERSPECTIVE (v. 22-31).**

- A. Paul preached **Jesus** and the **resurrection** (v. 18). Why this relentless emphasis? The person & work of Jesus are authenticated by the resurrection.
- B. God can and desires to be **known** (v. 23). **Reveals** Himself in nature, Scripture, and JESUS.
- C. God does not live in **temples** made by man (v. 24).
- D. God does not need anything, since He is the **source** of life, our breath, everything (v. 25).
- E. God is **sovereign** over ALL things- nations, men, history, salvation (v. 26).
- F. In God we **live** and **move** and have our **being** (v. 28).
- G. The Divine being is not like **gold**, **silver**, or **stone**, a figment of one's art or imagination (v. 29).
- H. **Commands** universal **repentance** (v. 30) before He judges the world through His resurrected Son (v. 31).

### **3). THE MODERN PERSPECTIVE (v. 32-34).**

- A. Some **mocked**.
- B. Some wanted to **know more**.
- C. Some joined Paul and **believed** (v. 34).

**Application:** People will always be incomplete without a personal, saving relationship with Jesus. You must make your choice- sneer, want to know more, or will you now yield your life to the risen Savior?! All religions are NOT the same. There is but ONE way to God...through Christ. False gods, futile idols, the grand pursuits of this earthly life will not lead you to God. The heart of Paul's message was that God, who has revealed Himself in creation, has now commanded all to repent, for everyone must give an account to Jesus Christ who God raised from the dead.