

Acts of the Apostles 17:14-34 __ Lesson 41

Paul Goes to Mars

1. Acts 17:14-17 – Athenian Idolatry

- a. Paul went to Athens alone for the sake of the Thessalonians – 1 Thess 3:1
- b. Silas and Timotheus catch up with Paul in Corinth – Acts 18:5
- c. Athens was erudite, multicultural, pluralistic, progressive, artistic, philosophical
- d. Idolatry = temples, false religions, false worship, false ideas of god = ignorance
- e. Idols are dumb, dead, vain, temptation and snare, work of the flesh, covetous – 1 Cor 12:2, 1 Thess 1:9, 1 Cor 8:5, 1 Cor 10:13-14, Gal 5:20, Eph 5:5, Col 3:5
- f. *“disputed...[everwhere]”* – Jews, devout persons, and in the marketplace

2. Acts 17:18-21 – Philosopher Encounter

- a. There were already debates on the table that Christians want to continue
 - i. Epicureans – flourishing/pleasure as ultimate pursuit, free will, YOLO, carpe diem, materialistic, sensational
 - ii. Stoics – Virtue and rationality as ultimate pursuit, fate, whatever, que sera sera, pantheism, cerebral – both mistook creature for the Creator
- b. Paul says about philosophy & worldly wisdom → Col 2:8-10, and 1 Cor 1:19-20
- c. His response is to preach Christ crucified to them – 1 Cor 1:21-24, 3:18-19
- d. *“know...what these mean”* – curiosity of the strange and new is not a good start

3. Acts 17:22-23 – Superstitious – “I perceive”

- a. *“too superstitious”* – not very religious, God fearing, overly religious, b/c... Ac 25:19
- b. 17:23 → They sacrificed to the “unknown god” out of fear of the unknown spirits
- c. *“superstition”* false religious beliefs held out of ignorance, blindness, fear Eph 4:18
- d. *“devotions”* – The only time the word is used it is by pagan idolaters

4. Acts 17:24-29 – Ignorance about God – “I declare”

- a. God does not dwell in man’s temples – one in Jerusalem, and many in Athens
- b. God is not worshipped with man’s hands – sacrificial system in and out of Israel
- c. God made all men of one blood → racism dies here, as does national privilege
- d. God’s purpose in creation is so that we would seek and find him
- e. God is living, moves, and has a being (Rom 1:20), so are we...
- f. Godhead is not like unto the creation nor things made by us (Al anyone?)

5. Acts 17:30-34 – Judgment and Resurrection- “I preach”

- a. *“but now”* – the manifold wisdom of God is revealed in Christ
- b. *“repent!”* – a change of mind from prideful ignorance to knowledge of the truth
- c. 17:31 – Why? Judgment day, and the Judge has come – John 5:22, Rom 14:9-10
- d. They wanted to keep talking, but “Paul departed” from the idolatry – 2Cor 6:15-17
- e. Some “clave” but not many of the world’s wise heed God’s truth -1Co 1:22-27, 3:18