



Sunday Morning, November 7, 2021 » Pastor Josiah Kagin

Message Title: Sightseer or Soul-winner

Message Text: Acts 17:16-34

Introduction:

When Paul came to Athens, there was no group of believers. There was no followers of Christ in his age group to fellowship with. There was no church assembling in a home or building in town to sing praises to Christ and grow in His grace. There was no Wednesday children's Bible club, youth group or nursery. There was no pastor faithfully preaching the Word and caring for people. It was a dark, idolatrous city that had great influence in the Greek world. It was filled to the brim with the worship of every god but God. Paul's actions give us a pattern for engaging a pagan society.

1. He _____ their Real Need (16)

DEFINITION—WAITED: to stay in one place and anticipate

A. His _____ their Idolatry (16c)

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

DEFINITION—SAW: to see with attention.

Note: Athens was the center of culture, education, fine arts, and political influence.

DEFINITION—WHOLLY GIVEN: filled up, covered over

QUOTE: Petronius, a contemporary writer at Nero's court, says satirically that it was easier to find a god at Athens than a man. —JFB

B. He was _____ in His Spirit (16b)

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him...

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sermon notes



DEFINITION—STIRRED: to be provoked (positive or negative)

QUOTE: It was not that he valued marble statues less, but living men more. He is not the weak but the strong man who regards immortal souls as transcendently more important than fine arts. Paul did not consider idolatry picturesque and harmless, but grievous. —Arnot

Lamentations 3:51 Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.

Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

John 4:35 ...behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

2. He _____ Opportunities (17-18)

A. He _____ to the People (17)

Acts 17:17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

DEFINITION—DISPUTED: discourse; to broach

SYNAGOGUE — the Jewish house of Worship and Prayer

MARKET — the economic center of Athens, the Agora

Matthew 28:20 ...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Luke 14:23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

B. He _____ them Personally (18)

Acts 17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

EPICUREANS — They taught that pleasure was the chief end of human existence. (JFB) Their philosophy was grounded in experience, not reason. They were almost atheistic. (Wiersbe) They attempted to free people from the idea of the gods, the afterlife, and the fear of death. (FSB) They believed that the world was formed by a fortuitous concourse of atoms and was not created, not even formed by divine power. (Lenski)

STOICS — The Stoics were materialistic and almost fatalistic in their thinking. Their system was built on pride and personal independence. Nature was their

god, and they believed that all nature was gradually moving toward a great climax. —Wiersbe

PAULS MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE—JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION (18)

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

3. He _____ the Living God (19-34)

Acts 17:19–23 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing) 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

MARS HILL/AREOPAGUS: This was the name of a location and also of the civil and religious council that met there.

NOTE: Paul knew his audience. He did not start with the Old Testament as he would do with a Jewish audience. He politely noted that they were *very religious* and began with who God was.

A. He is the _____ (24-25)

Acts 17:24–25 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

B. He is the _____ (26-29)

Acts 17:26–29 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

God designed that through the duration and tensions of nations and governments, men would seek the Lord.

C. He is the _____ (30)

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

DEFINITION—WINKED: patient

DEFINITION—REPENT: a change of mind that results in a change of direction and action

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

D. He is the _____ (31)

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

NOTE: Both Stoics and Epicureans had a concept of right and wrong. Paul asserts that a true sense of right and wrong comes from the Creator. —FSB

Conclusion

Acts 17:32–34 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

QUOTE: When he landed in 1848 there were no Christians here; when he left in 1872 there were no heathen. —said of John Geddie

Question to Consider—Am I a sightseer or a soul winner?



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