

## Acts 17:1-34

**“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. 4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief woman not a few. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. 10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. 14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. 15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. 16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met**

with him. 18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preacheth unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areaopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*? 20 (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 I declare unto you. 24 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; 26 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. 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 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. 32 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."

## *Introduction: Paul's Strategy Was To Hit The Major Metropolitan Areas*

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“Now we’re told here, as he moves on, it says now they leave Philippi, **“when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:”** (verse 1) so now you want to see this, they’re here in Philippi, between here and Thessalonica is 100 miles. [see [https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls Second Mission Map/](https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls%20Second%20Mission%20Map/) ] It is about 33 miles to Amphipolis, which is in the middle somewhere, Apollonia is another 30 miles, and then it’s 37 miles past that to Thessalonica, so this is a hundred mile journey they’re making on foot. Ah, Philippi, Amphipolis is about here, Apollonia is about there, and there’s Thessalonica. Thessalonica is the capital of Macedonia, Thessalonica is a large metropolitan area, it’s wealthy, there’s trade, it’s near the water. And Paul, by this time, is developing a philosophy with missions, of passing by the smaller rural areas and getting to the metropolitan areas. He’s realizing *‘If we can get to the large population bases and we plant healthy churches, then they’ll send out missionaries to Amphipolis and Apollonia, they’ll reach the lesser areas.’* And for several thousand years the philosophy of the Church was to get to London, to get to New York, to get to the major metropolitan areas, and I think we desperately need to get that philosophy of missions again, we need get ahold of Philadelphia, God needs to give us Philadelphia, and New York, and Washington D.C. and San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, we need to go back. It was David Livingston that popularized the mission work going to the more remote areas, because the world was enthralled with him, everybody read his book, and here he had gone into Africa, and he had reached so many in very obscure areas, the people were amazed with that. And I don’t think that we should stop doing that [see <https://unityinchrist.com/missionstatement.htm>], but we need to get back, the Communists understood, you get to the metropolitan areas, you get to the universities, you get to the campuses, you get to these areas, and that’s where you win people.

Organizers understand that, anybody at a grass roots level doesn't want to get to Oshkosh in the middle of nowhere, they want to get to New York, they want to get to Philadelphia, get to a metropolitan area. And Paul it seems at this point, we're going to follow him, now he's going to go past Amphipolis, Apollonia to Thessalonica, he's going to be there for awhile. Then fleeing, he's going to go to Berea, then he's going to go to Athens, it's a huge metropolitan area, then he's going to go from Athens to Corinth, which is even larger, then he's going to go to Ephesus, the major metropolitan areas, and finally end up in Rome of course, but have a huge impact as he makes these journeys. So, at this point it tells us, he's taking what's called the Engarion Way, and it was paved, it went all the way from Philippi all the way north, you could go all the way to Rome on the Engarion Way, it was a paved road, they had street lights, I mean, you're at Rome's best as you're starting to travel through these areas. You know, it tells us that Jesus Christ came forth, in Galatians, **"in the fulness of time,"** the fulness of time in God's decision-making process was when Greek was the language that covered the civilized world, and there was not a better language to write the New Testament in. It's when Rome had subjected the whole Mediterranean with roads, with trade, with laws and so forth, and it gave opportunity for the Gospel to spread, and now these two traveling. And I don't think they're moving too fast, they've been chained, they've been beaten, no doubt they're still sore, they're moving on the Engarion Way, past Amphipolis and Apollonia on to Thessalonica, and it tells us there here.

### *Paul In Thessalonica*

So, as they journeyed they went through these towns, and they came to Thessalonica, this is a hundred mile walk by the way, just imagine that, sore as can be, hiking 100 miles, **"where was a synagogue of the Jews:"** that's what Paul's looking for, a synagogue of the Jews, **"and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,"** (verse 2) it was his typical practice, and it's strategic [to see that strategy, see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>], **"went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this**

**Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ [Messiah].” (verse 2b-3)** It was the place he wanted to start, because they owned the Scripture. You know, it seems that Paul here in Thessalonica, and he'd have a greater open door when he was in Berea, he comes and he begins to talk to them about the things of the Lord, and he's using the Scripture to do that. They're open, not offended the first week. He's a rabbi, he's of the Sanhedrin, he's of the School of Gamaliel, and it's a privilege for him to be all the way there in a synagogue in Thessalonica, they listen to him, he's reasoning with them, not fighting. It's going to tell us in the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse that he's opening and alleging that Christ, which is Messiah to them, we read “Christ” all the time, ***‘that Messiah had to suffer, and then rise again from the dead,’*** ***“and this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ, Messiah.”*** And the Jews are struggling with that, because to them Messiah was someone who was to come in power, and to subdue the kingdoms of the world, Rome in particular, and let every Jew sipping wine under his fig tree, to put bread in everybody's hand, and money in everybody's bank account, bless the nation of Israel, and let Jerusalem become the capital of the world, that's who they're looking for. And they're struggling with the concept of a Messiah, just as John the Baptist did, ***‘Are you the One to come, or should we look for another?’*** because John the Baptist had failed expectations, as many of us do with the Lord sometimes when he does something we don't understand why he'd do it that way. Because John the Baptist said ***‘This is the One, his winnowing fork is in his hand, even now the ax is laid to the root of the tree,’*** and so forth, he saw Jesus as one who would be powerful, you know, ***‘gathering his grain into the threshing floor and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire,’*** and so forth. And then *he* was trying to put together the full picture. And these Jews were listening saying, *‘We don't understand, a suffering Messiah? He was beaten by the Romans, he was put to death? and then he rose again on the third day?’* and Paul no doubt added to that story, that he would be King of king and Lord of lords, because down in verse 7, the accusation they bring against Paul and Silas is they're talking about another king, and it's *hederon*, another kind of king, not the same kind of king, a different kind of king than Caesar, and he was talking about a different king and a different kingdom. One of the important things, if you're a student of Scripture, with this section, in Thessalonica, is that Paul reasoned with them for three sabbath days, it says they reasoned together, God's call in Isaiah 1:18 is ***‘Come, let us reason together,’*** they went back and forth, they said

'Come back next Saturday, we want to hear more,' and how long did the questions go into the day? They said 'Come back next Saturday, we want to hear more,' three weeks, they didn't just throw him out, they dialogued, there was an openness there, the world didn't know about, they're discovering Jesus Christ, there wasn't a prejudice there is today, and they for three weeks reasoned with him, out of the Old Testament, the Scriptures, there wasn't a New Testament at this point [what are some of the prophecies Paul must have revealed to them out of the Old Testament? see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm>]. Paul will write to Timothy and say **'You've known the Scriptures from a child,'** it's the Old Testament, **'which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.'** The Old Testament is sufficient enough to lead someone to salvation, that's what Paul says. So he's reasoning with them about those things, and he must have spoken to them on the other side of the argument, saying, **'yes, he will also fulfill these other verses, he's going to be the King of kings, he's going to be the Lord of lords,'** [see [https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming\\_4.htm](https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm)] because when you read 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, which are his earliest letters, written to a church that's only three weeks old in the Lord, he ends the first chapter in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians by saying **'You've turned from idols,'** it tells us many Greeks were saved, **'to serve the Living God, to wait for his Son from heaven, to save us from the wrath to come,'** he speaks of the fact that Christ is coming again. [Comment: Paul was refining his message of the Gospel of Salvation, which would end up including five major points, as he ends up giving in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15, the whole chapter: see <https://unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>] At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter he says **'What is our joy, our crown, our rejoicing, are not even you, at the coming of our Lord and Saviour?'** at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter [of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians] he talks about the return of Jesus Christ, **'even the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'** In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians he said **'I would not have you be ignorant brethren, concerning those who sleep [have died in the Lord], that you sorrow not as with others who have no hope, for this we believe that since Jesus came and died, he's going to return again, those that have gone on to be with him he's going to bring with him, and you who remain you will be caught up to be with the Lord, therefore comfort one another with these words.'** The 5<sup>th</sup> chapter he said **'You have no need that I write**

**unto you regarding the times and seasons, you yourselves know perfectly well the Day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night.'** 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians is all about the return of Christ. 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians he warns them, that if they don't watch, there's a deception coming, the antichrist will come. Listen, this is a brand new baby church. And Paul made sure they were well instructed in the doctrine of the return of Jesus Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings, they were well instructed in regards to the deception of the antichrist, that would come on the world. Don't let anybody ever tell you as a young Christian prophecy is not an important subject, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ is not important to you. You know, people say *eschatology prophecy, it doesn't produce fruit in your life, new Christians don't need that,* that's baloney, the Bible says **'anybody who has this hope purifies himself, even as he is pure.'** If you have the hope of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ, and you really believe that, it should affect how you live, today, this evening and tomorrow. If you're **really** living in expectancy, you're not going to be living in open sin. If you're really living in expectancy, and you do sin, you'll be quick to repent and make sure your heart is right with the Lord. And the doctrine of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming is essential to us. **'As often as we break this bread and we drink this cup, we do show forth the Lord's death, until he comes.'** It's part of every communion, it's essential to us. So Paul here no doubt instructed them in depth in regards to these things. **"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbaths days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,"** and here's his method, **"opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."** (verses 2-3) now we studied this, this morning, we did it in depth, we gave some statistics that I think are pretty staggering, "opening" means to thoroughly open, the only other place it's used in opening Scripture is in Luke 24 I think verse 32 it says **"Did not our hearts burn within us when he opened to us,"** it means "to thoroughly open, thoroughly disclose." "Alleging" is a word that is made up of two Greek words, it means "to place alongside of." So what Paul's method was, as he reasoned with them out of the Scripture, is he would thoroughly open a verse, and then he would lay it alongside of the reality of Jesus Christ, **'though thou Bethlehem, though thou be little amongst a thousands of Judea, out of thee shall come he whose going forth has been from everlasting,'** and he would say to them, **'Hey look, he was born in Bethlehem, that's what the prophets said,**

*even the Magi when they came, the scribes told them, Yes, he'd be born in Bethlehem, that's why Herod slaughtered the innocents...Behold I send my messenger before thy face, ya, John the Baptist, he came, he fulfilled that, the whole area was in hysteria,'* and he would go back and forth, he would thoroughly open a verse to them, and then he would lay it alongside of the truth of the life of Christ, that was reasoning with them, they were listening, they were looking at those things. [Comment: one of my first pastors gave a sermon, whose notes I put together into this study, which do exactly the same thing. As a matter of fact, on this website I use it as an example of how Paul witnessed to these Jews and *God-fearing Gentiles* within each synagogue he entered into. To see how Paul did this, see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm>] He **“opening and alleging, that Christ [Messiah] must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.” ‘Messiah’** **“And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout [God-fearing] Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief woman not a few.” (verses 3-4)** So some of the Jews believed, of the devout Greeks who were devoted there [obviously in the synagogue], a great multitude, and of the chief woman, not a few. So we have this interesting picture. Look, over in chapter 20, you don't have to turn there, I'll read it to you, it says there in verse 4, those that are with Paul of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, those are two names we'll come to know, evidently they are saved at this time, listening to Paul, a great multitude of the Greeks, the devout Greeks are saved, Aristarchus and Secundus become part of the men that work with him, that are faithful to him at this point in time. 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians again, and there's so much in Thessalonians that reflects along these things. Paul says, when he was there evidently making tents, he said, **‘you remember, brethren, our labour and travail, for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God,’** and then in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, because he wrote to the Thessalonians telling them about the coming of the Lord, they were quitting their jobs, standing around looking up in the air, Paul said **‘No, no, no, no, yes he's coming, but you have to occupy until he comes, don't retire standing around looking up at the sky waiting for him to come.’** In 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians chapter 3 he said **‘For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we behaved**

*not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for nothing, but wrought with our labour and travail, night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you, not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us, for even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man should not work, neither should he eat.'* So evidently he was there, plying his trade of tent-making, even though it was for such a short period of time. We do know again the church in Philippi sent some support to him, that's mentioned more than once. But Paul there with this church, and interesting again, just maybe it's interesting to me, I love this, he says, ***"For this cause also, thank we God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God, which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe."*** Paul said these Thessalonians, ***'When we reasoned with you, when you listened, you didn't receive the word that we spoke as the word of man, you received it actually as the very Word of God,'*** he says, ***'which it is,'*** and then he says ***'which works effectually in those of you who believe.'*** That has not changed. If you hold the Word of God in high regard, it is effective in your lives. One of the problems in the Church today, there's a huge part of the Church that has a shallow view of the Word of God, they hold it in light esteem, which opens them up for all kinds of aberrations. Wherever the Word of God is held in inerrant, Paul will say to Timothy in his swan song before he signs off, ***'That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, all Scripture is God-breathed.'*** It doesn't just say that God used a human vessel, or spoke to a human vessel, it says that the human was only the instrument in his hand, and God through the instrument, to the page that the very words are breathed of God, the very words, under inspiration, we believe that, it's the very Word of God. And Paul said to the Thessalonians, ***'You received it that way, and it effectually works in the lives of those who believe.'*** The Word of God is powerful, it's alive, sharper than any two-edged sword. Peter will say to us who believe who were born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, which is the Word of God, that a new birth took place through the power of the Word of God. Jesus said ***'Father, we pray for them, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth,'*** that the Word of God has power to work in our lives effectually and set us aside, sanctifying us, that it never returns to God void, that it makes us clean. You can go through

and see all of the remarkable things attributed to the Living Word of God. And Paul says these Thessalonians, ***‘when they listened to us, they didn’t receive what we had to say to them as the word of man, but they actually received it as the Word of God, which it is,’*** Paul says, ***‘and it effectually worketh in those that believe.’*** So we have this multitude coming, believing, of the chief women not a few. We’ve come to the 5<sup>th</sup> verse, and I sure wanted to get further than that, but that will be next Sunday night, I hope the Rapture happens first, and if not, let’s pick up in verse 5. Read through all of 17, because this will give us time to get to Athens, and to look at the scene there, and there are some great things I think about our own culture, some things to take note of, and I think in Corinth, everything gels for Paul in his philosophy of ministry, we watch him growing actually, and gathering together his philosophy of ministry, and I think it congeals in Corinth in an incredible way. So, read ahead, let’s have the musicians come, we’ll sing the last song, you can trust the Word of God. Again, have a translation, the Living Bible is not a translation. If you like to read a paraphrase, great, The Message is not God’s message, please, it’s a pathetic paraphrase. If you enjoy it, read it, but have a translation. Ah, New American Standard, a little wooden, but it’s a translation. NIV, if you’re NIV-positive, that’s fine, the King James, a great translation, the New King James, the English Standard Version, there are some great translations. Get a translation that a team of people worked on to give you what God said, because every word is God breathed. So, again, I don’t want somebody giving me what they think God was trying to say, no dynamic equivalents for me, just give what he said and let the Holy Spirit straighten the rest out as I read it. Just tell me what he said. I want to know that, and that’s what God wants me to know [applause]. Let’s stand, let’s pray, because it’s effectual, it works in us. Right?

### *Non-Believing Jews In Thessalonica Make Trouble For Paul & Silas*

Chapter 17...I’m trying to figure out where it was exactly where we left off, and I’m going to back up to verse 5, I’m not sure about how far actually we journeyed, but in Thessalonica, has a great multitude of men and women who believed, and we sometimes wonder about the size of these churches here, it says **“a great multitude”** in

Thessalonica came to the faith, **“But the Jews” verse 5 “which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.”** evidently where Paul and Silas were staying, possibly where this new house-church which may have been, **“and sought to bring them”** Paul and Silas, who weren't there **“out to the people.”** **“And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;” (verse 6)** That's a great description of what we're supposed to do, only we're supposed to turn the world right side up, it's already upside down. And **“These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus.” (verse 7)** that there is another king, *heteros, another of a different kind*, indeed Jesus is a King of a different kind than Caesar is. Jesus said his Kingdom is not of this world, we are 20 years after Calvary now, and the world is being turned upside down. **“And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.” (verses 8-9)** they took money from him, some kind of a peace-bond, a promise that he would not let this turn into an uproar again.

### *Paul & Silas Come To Berea*

**“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.” (verse 10)** So, we have Paul and Silas, they're way up here at Philippi, then to Thessalonica, now to Berea, you see this is probably a 50-mile journey up here, on your map, Philippi, Thessalonica and then to Berea right there [see [https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls Second Mission Map/](https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls%20Second%20Mission%20Map/) ] And Berea, far enough away, it wasn't under the jurisdiction of Thessalonica, Thessalonica is the capital at that point of Macedonia. So they come then to Berea, and look what it says in **verse 11, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”** Paul and Luke tell us that they

were more noble, it has the idea they were higher-born, they're nobility, they're ascribing something to them, not saying physically that they were higher born, but there is something about them that was more noble, and he says, what it was, was not that they just believed, and said 'OK, *tell us what you want,*' but that they went and searched the Scripture, there was a fairmindedness about them, to see if the things that Paul was saying were true. That is always your responsibility, is never to believe what I say, never to believe what anybody who stands up here and says. It is your responsibility, we have the same Book, we have the same homework, we have the same Dictionary here, we have the same Guidebook. It's always your responsibility to search the Scripture to see if those things are so. If I start to talk about meeting in the parking lot and waiting for the Mothership to come down, you just tar and feather me and throw me outa here. And if it's not in here [probably holding up his Bible], and one thing that you should have learned all these years, coming, sitting under the Word, is this is our final authority for faith and practice in the church, right here. So, Paul, this is a dream for him, because when he was in Thessalonica it said he taught them, and then it says that he was "Opening" verse 3, "and alleging" he was opening the Old Testament, and then he would say "this Berea, it says there, they searched the Scripture. So Paul must have said '**ok, this is the life of Jesus, born in Bethlehem,**' and they must have then gone back on their own and searched the Scripture, looked through the Scrolls, is this really happening, is it exactly what the prophet said, and daily then they're searching the Scripture to see if those things are true. Paul no doubt not insecure, Paul's not saying '*Oh boy, they don't trust me.*' He's saying '**This is great, this is the way it should always happen.**' And of course the Bereans are an example to us down through history. You have the Berean Bookstore, you have the Berean Call ministry, you have the constant challenge to be Bereans, this group of folks become famous throughout Church history because of this attitude, they were willing to go and to search the Scripture to see if those things are true, there's great security by the way for us. They searched the Scripture with all readiness of mind, daily, to see whether those things were true. This did not become the Paul the Apostle personality cult, we're never to elevate a personality above the Word of God, anybody should be under the scrutiny of the Word itself, as you yourself study. So Paul loved this, that they were more noble. **"Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."** (verse 12) so there is

a good number there in Berea. **“But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.” (verse 13)** So angry were the Jewish leaders at Thessalonica that they followed Paul all the way to Berea. **“And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.” (verse 14)** we’re not told how long he was in Berea, and it’s the last we here of them, really. **“then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.”** Philippians 4, verses 15 and 16 tells us about that. They stayed at Berea with this fledgling church, to continue to minister to them and to talk to them.

## *Paul Goes To Athens*

Now, some scholars feel this is just a simple description of the fact that they took Paul then from Berea to the coast, from here somewhere down along the coast, no doubt probably going past Mount Olympus where Homer named all of the gods being there, the scenery was remarkable no doubt. Others feel that it says here, that they sent away Paul to go “as it were to the coast,” that they wanted to give the impression to the Thessalonians that were persecuting him, that he was going by sea, and then they actually took the overland route. We have no hard and fast information about that. So certainly I would imagine by the time they get to the southern part of the land there, they would have taken the route by sea. **‘They sent away Paul as it were to go by the sea, Silas and Timotheus abode there still.’ “And they that conducted Paul brought him to Athens:” (verse 15a)** now that’s a 200-mile journey. Well, if your going from Berea, up here, all the way down here, you sail inside of this island [Euboea], around here, you come around the bottom of the coast, and come up then to Athens there. And as you pulled into Athens, just a remarkable display would be before your eyes. [log onto <https://unityinchrist.com/ezra/ezra5.html> and scroll to the chart just above the paragraph title “*Secure Supply-Lines to the South, Scorched Earth to the North*” for a map that encompasses the route Paul must have sailed, passing down along the large island of Euboea, traveling along with the island to their left or port side, and

exiting into the Aegean Sea and taking a sharp right heading toward Athens harbour.] As they came around into Athens, the city would lay in front of them, it was slightly elevated, the Acropolis was in view [up on top of a hill, I've seen it coming into Athens harbor on my submarine in '68/69], I mean, just the view of what took place there must have been incredible [it is, even today, as seen entering the harbor]. Placideus was there within 50 years of Paul the apostle, he wrote six volumes on Greece, and he gave more print to Athens than anything else. But Placideus was there as a tourist, he was there and walked the streets of Athens and was in awe of what he saw. Paul will ride to Athens as an evangelist, not as a tourist, and he is appalled with what he sees, there is a great difference. So, here they're conducting Paul to Athens, with Silas and Timotheus staying behind in Berea. Paul, we know his eyesight is bad, they're getting him out of town [in Berea], he needed folks to go with him to no doubt get him unto his destination safely. And that's a large commitment in those days, it was a 200-mile journey here to bring him to Athens. **“and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.” (verse 15b)** then those that took Paul to Athens departed to go back to Berea.

### *What Was Athens Like? Paul Is Shocked By Its Idolatry*

**“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.” (verse 16)** Listen, Paul arrives at Athens, three to four hundred years after Athens was at its zenith. Athens is in its decline, as basically Rome is also, at this point in time. This, no doubt, is still a university city, the Romans left Athens to be a “free city.” Though they ruled the world with an iron fist [except for the Empire of Parthia, their mortal enemies], they had so much respect for Athens and the Greeks, that they allowed Greek culture, Greek philosophy, Greek science to fill the Roman world, they promulgated it, made sure that took place. But it has seen its day. Listen, Paul no doubt being raised as a Hellenist Jew in Tarsus, would have been familiar with so many of the philosophers, Herodotus, Euripides, Socrates, Plato, all of them in Athens. From Aristotle, we receive philosophy, logic, physics, biology, ethics. Political science, Demosthenes, Pericles, Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras. Aristarchus giving us astronomy and geometry.

Archimedes, science and hydrostatics. The epicureans and stoics were still there at that point in time. We get from them rules of running a library, law, democracy, establishing a parliament, so many of the things that nations are established on today came from these thinkers, this was an era in human history really unmatched in many ways, and even the medical things that were developed there, Luke had to get his medical license, in the Roman Empire, to be a doctor, to travel and to be licensed throughout the Empire, it was Greek medicine, and it probably wasn't until the 1800s that some of that really started to be improved upon. So, this was a remarkable, remarkable time in human history, and God used it greatly, it says of Christ **“that he came into the world in the fulness of time,”** and he came into the world when there was a language, Greek, that was sufficient to communicate the New Testament of God, the New Covenant, that we hold in our hands today. So this was a very remarkable time, developed under the providence of God. But Paul is there now when Athens is in its decline. There were at this time at least 3,000 temples and altars in Athens. One scholar said there were 30,000 statues or idols, with 3,000 temples and altars. And Paul, as he looks around Athens, it says **‘was stirred in his spirit.’** That word “stirred” is a medical term, doctor Luke uses it to describe, because Paul told him how he felt, as the Spirit guides doctor Luke he writes it down, it's a verb only used twice in the New Testament, it's used here, where it says that he “was stirred,” literally it was he was “being enraged,” is what it says. The other time the verb is used is in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 13, the love chapter, where it says **“love is not easily provoked,”** that's our word there. So here, it's translated “stirred” and it means “being moved to rage,” it is used “love is not easily provoked, driven to anger.” You know what it's like to be provoked. The noun form we find in Acts 15, where it says **“the contention between Paul and Barnabas was so great they divided.”** it's that word. Something happens in Paul's spirit here, and it's described as, his rage is building up, he's becoming enraged, he's angry. He's walking through Athens. No doubt, he had not been there, he had been raised to about 13-years-old in Tarsus, and then he had been sent to Jerusalem, where he had been in the School of Gamaliel. Now he walks into Athens, and he had studied Greek culture, he was a Hellenist, he was a brilliant man, a brilliant communicator, and he looks around at this place he had read so much about, and he sees it totally filled with idolatry, and he's enraged. And again, not enraged at the Athenians, but he's enraged I believe at Satan. In

every altar gave Paul the sense that man has an innate need for God. Every temple screamed out loud to Paul that every man has a capacity to worship, and as Paul saw that, he saw what Satan is using to deceive them, given over totally to a pantheon of immoral and debauched gods, Athens had lost its glory by this time, and it says Paul is **“stirred in his spirit, seeing the city wholly given over to idolatry.”** It says **“Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons,** [“the devout persons” are within the synagogue, so these are *“devout God-fearing Gentile”* worshippers] **and in the market daily with them that met with him.” (verse 17)** we hear nothing of whether that’s successful or not, because no doubt these Jews had become content, separated from the world that was around them, surrounded by idolatry, they somehow became insulated and it seems were not sharing any news of the True God. So he argues in the synagogue and with the devout persons. And then it says **“and in the market daily”** the agora, into the market, to have agoraphobia, it’s a fear of the market, fear of going out into public. He went into the agora, the market daily with them that met with him. A group of people were starting to gather every day and listen to the things that Paul was saying. [We’re going to see here, that Athens, the high-minded intellectual capital as it were of the world, the center of modern education which was even admired by Rome, was an atmosphere which was not at all receptive for receiving the Gospel, they were only receptive to hearing it as some new philosophy to be debated about, but not received for what it was. Even the Jews and *God-fearing Gentiles* within the synagogue at Athens had been infected with the intellectual attitude prevalent in Athens. As a result, no real churches were established by Paul in Athens. As Paul would bring out in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:26-29, the most productive fishing grounds for the Gospel wasn’t amongst the highly intellectual, educated, or the strong of this world.]

### *Who Were The Stoics & Epicureans?*

**“Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some said, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.” (verse 18)** so he encounters, first it’s the common

people, and then of the schools of philosophy, the Epicureans and the Stoics come. You know, that's important to me, yesterday I sat and I read through from early in the morning to late at night a stack of books like this, going over it again, the Greek culture in Athens and all of the philosophy. And one of the things I was struck with as I looked at this, is the Epicureans and the Stoics, Epicurus over 300 years before this, said that the greatest purpose of man is pleasure, the greatest pursuit of mankind is pleasure. Now, Epicurus, though if you understood, was what he said was far more noble than what Paul was seeing in Athens at this point in time. Because when he said that [300 years before], he said to sit quietly with your family, to live in simplicity and tranquility is pleasure, to live the guarding life, to live away from the madness, to live in the simple things of life in simplicity and tranquility, that was the pursuit of pleasure [according to Epicurus]. By the time Paul comes to Athens over 300 years later, it is the pursuit of sexual fulfillment, it is the pursuit of drunkenness, it is the pursuit of every foul thing that anybody in their mind could associate with pleasure [kind of like our society today, isn't it?]. Zeno, the founder of the Stoics, you know, if you say someone is stoic, is they're quiet, reserved. The Stoics were pantheists in the sense they believed that the earth contained the soul of God, that God was in the rocks, God was in the trees, God was in everything. But God was detached, God really didn't care, so he was a fatalist in that sense. But what he believed, was the pursuit of man, the greatest pursuit of man was virtue. [So what I'm seeing is that the actual beliefs and teachings of Epicurus and Zeno were not bad in and of themselves, and healthy philosophies to be held and embraced by society. What these two philosophies devolved into was corrupt and unhealthy for society as a whole.] The Epicureans from Epicurus said the greatest pursuit of man is pleasure, but he described that in very high form, and then the Stoics under Zeno, Zeno said the highest pursuit of man is virtue, and what he decided that was, is the way you react to the world around you. If something great happens to you, you shouldn't get overjoyed, if something terrible happens to you, you shouldn't get sad, that you should be able to be stoic in relating to the world around you, without emotion, maintaining a virtue and so forth. But that goal was so high for human beings without the enablement of God, many of the Stoics by this time committed suicide, in fact two of the major Stoics in Paul's day had committed suicide, they became fatalists, they had no ability to live up to any standard of virtue. Now, that's important to you and I, and I shared it this

morning, a bunch of statistics I'm not going to share it this evening, but here's what we have to take note of. 300 years ago, our forefathers, believing that each of us had inalienable rights, that were ours through a Creator, the pursuit of wellbeing, of happiness, of freedom, liberty, that we were to live with dignity, with a Judeo-Christian ethic. Not Judeo-Christian theology or doctrine, but a Judeo-Christian ethic, of cleanness and uprightness and freedom. [These are many of the rights and standards laid out in the theocratic nation of Israel found in the Law or Torah of God given to Israel by God through Moses in Exodus 20-24, and five of the Ten Commandments are found within the Constitution of the United States in some form or other.] And in 300 years, we have done to that what the Epicureans did to Epicurus, they have taken what he said, the pursuit of pleasure, the simple life, living in tranquility, and they turned that into the pursuit of every sexual fulfillment, drunkenness, and in 300 years we have taken the freedoms that our forefathers tried to ensure for us, and we've turned them into freedoms for every sexual deviate, for every kind of sexual practice, for every kind of drug and alcohol. Today I feel we should pray for our policemen, because every perpetrator becomes the victim, and they have to go through so much red tape to avoid being sued, just to enforce the law that they're frustrated. Now we're giving terrorists, you know, *'Now you have the right to remain silent, you have the right to an attorney,'* just the world has gone crazy, look at the world around us, look at the world we're living in, look at the paper, look at what's going on. We've taken the freedom our forefathers tried to give us, and we've perverted it, and we've turned it loose, and we've turned into a kind of liberty they never dreamed of. I wish that Washington and Madison and Jefferson and some of them were here to go on CNN and Fox News and tell us what the original intentions were, it would do a world of good I think, for one day anyhow [before they got stoned to death after being called bigots and terrorists]. ***But we live in the midst of Athens, that's why it's important.*** We live in the midst of the same conditions. And God gives us a picture of the great apostle in the midst of this.

### *Paul's Encounter With The Stoics & Epicureans*

These Epicureans and these Stoics, when they encounter him, they say **"What will this babler say, other some, He seemeth to be a**

**setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus,**” there is in the male gender, **“and the resurrection.”** it’s Jesus and Anistosis in the feminine gender, they thought he was talking about a male and female deity, because they didn’t know anything about the resurrection, they knew nothing about it, they said he was **“a setter forth of strange gods”** plural, and their word is *“demonion”* which is “demon,” which is used 60 times in the New Testament, 54 times it’s “demons” in the Gospels and the Book of Acts, and they said **‘he’s setting forth these strange gods,’** they called them *“demonion”* which was just gods of the underworld, they weren’t demons the way you and I would think about it, or as they would in Jerusalem with the Jews and so forth. They said **‘setter forth of strange gods, what’s this babbler going to say to us?’** Now, it’s a derogatory term, “babblers” *“spermologost,”* and it means “a seed picker.” They say *“This guy’s a seed picker, a bird going around picking us seeds, and as he picks up seeds, he’s building some phony philosophy that we’ve never heard before, he’s this garage-sale plagiarism, you know, he’s going around, picking up this here, picking up that there and turning it into something.”* They called him a babblers, here the Epicureans and the Stoics. They had completely defeated, they had destroyed everything that Epicurus and Zeno ever tried to communicate, and they’re calling the greatest orator that probably ever lived, Paul the apostle, a seed picker. So when you go to share Christ with relatives and friends and the people you work with, don’t be upset if they call you a seed picker, ok, a babblers, you’re in good company. Because Paul the apostle, in a very demeaning way they said **‘What does this seed picker have to tell us? and others say, No, no, he’s setting forth this new strange thing we never heard of, this Jesus and the resurrection.’** And it says then to us, **“And they took him,”** now that’s not by force, this seems to be friendly in the grammar, **“and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.” (verses 19-20)** Now, the Areopagus, it’s made up of two words, Mars Hill is the idea from Latin, *Areopagus* from the Greek, it’s the same place. Areopagus is Mars Hill. The Areopagite is a judge, back in the days of Epicurus and Zeno, 300, 400 years before this, in fact set of thrones for judges goes back almost 600 years before Christ, they were almost considered gods. And there were 24 at that time, I believe at this time there were only 12, but the Areopagus was a hill next to the Acropolis. The Acropolis

when you pulled into the harbor of Athens, you saw it elevated way above, 1,000 foot above anything else, and on the Acropolis the Parthenon was there, you can still see that today, just remarkable scene, and the hill adjoining it was Mars Hill, or the Areopagus, and they would bring people there and make them stand before the judges. Now it was done in a friendly way here. But Socrates had stood there before the Areopagus, and given his philosophy, and they had asked him to commit suicide because they believed he was influencing young people the wrong way. Some of the greatest thinkers that had ever lived stood there, and now God Almighty has the greatest thinker of the age, far and above Homer or anybody else, Paul the apostle, standing in front of these judges seated at Mars Hill, along with all of the people that are gathered, to hear what he's going to say. Man how I would have loved to have been there, I wouldn't have understood, it would have been Greek to me, but how I would have loved to have been there, where we have the English translation and hear in detail the things that Paul had to say. And he was fluent in Greek culture, fluent in the Greek language, he was speaking their language. So they bring him there to the Areopagus, and it says, Luke tells us through the Spirit, **“(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.)”** I mean, who were the seek pickers? They were the seed pickers. They didn't have MTV, they didn't have media, they didn't have iPhones, they didn't have the Internet, they couldn't watch the Sixers, they couldn't watch the playoffs, everybody went to the Areopagus to hear some new thing, some new philosophy that was being set forth, they spent their whole lives coming up with the latest and greatest. It's hard to believe any culture would be like that, doesn't it? And they're there to hear a new philosophy, a new poet, something new being said. Again, Karl Marx said *“If I want to bring down a nation to its knees, don't give me the politicians, don't give me the scientists, give me the poets and the musicians, if you give me the poets and musicians I will have a nation.”* And what power of course there had been, but it had been in its decline for several hundred years at this point in time. So he goes to stand there.

## *Paul's Address To The Athenians On Mars Hill*

Verse 22 begins to tell us about his address to the Athenians. Now listen, he is sensitive, he is not trying to run them off, he makes appeal to them through things they understood, he quotes two of their own philosophers, poets to them. He is trying to be as it were, current. Now look, there's a lot of "quote-unquote" church philosophies of ministry that try to use the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Acts to kind of jam relevancy down our throat. Paul knew nothing of that. Paul didn't sacrifice a Biblical truth in this situation. It wasn't saying '*Paul was trying to be cool, so he talked their language.*' Paul never sacrificed the truth, he's going to talk to them about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the need of repentance, the fact that there's a judgment day coming when everybody's going to give account. That's really cool, I think. But he's going to do it, he's trying to integrate, he's not trying to isolate, you know. He's going out there to do the Work. Again, remember in the first chapter we're told to wait in Jerusalem until you're endued with power, to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Remember the Lord told the Church to go into the whole world [cf. Matthew 28:18-20], sometimes we forget and think he called the whole world to go to church. That's not what he said, we're not going to sit here and reach the world [see <https://unityinchrist.com/missionstatement.htm>] We come here, we're fed [spiritually], you know, when Paul tells us in Ephesians 4 that God's given *Charis*, he's given Grace to the Church [greater Body of Christ now], and that Grace has come to the Church by the means of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and then teaching-pastors, to equip the saints for the ministry, for the work of the ministry, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. You know the fellowship we have here, the ministries we have going on, there should be an equipping in your lives, but the bottom line for you and me is, as we look at Philadelphia, as we look at the greater Delaware Valley, are our hearts stirred? Is there something in us that becomes agitated and angry, when we think of how many are going to hell around us. Is there something in us that becomes aggravated, when we think of how the truths of Christ and God's Word are being destroyed and mocked all around us? Is there something in us that refuses to be settled, knowing that that there are many women that are going to hell forever? That's the question. Paul is affected here because his heart was burning, his spirit was stirred within him. And no doubt it is with genuineness and great passion he begins to share this to these Athenians, these supposed great thinkers that are gathered around him. [Within the greater

Body of Christ there are various interpretations about what Hell is, to read about some of these, see <https://unityinchrist.com/plaintruth/battle.htm>] He says this to them, **“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.” (verse 22)** that’s the King James, the NIV does better, it says “very religious” I believe there, some translations say “very reverent.” Weiss in his translation, the Greek professor from Moody, said “you are very divinity-fearing,” that’s an interesting idea. What Paul is going to say to them is, **‘As I walked around the city, and I saw everything, I perceived that you people have a reverential attitude towards the spiritual realm, that you’re divinity-fearing, you have all of these altars and so forth.’** He said **‘I know you’re that way, because I saw an altar that said “To the unknown god.” You are so conscientious about the spiritual, you’re afraid that there might be a god out there that got missed, so you made him an altar so he’s not offended, you don’t have to worry about him having a bad hair-day or something.’** So Paul says **‘I perceive that people here in Athens are very reverent,’** it’s not *‘you’re a bunch of superstitious knuckleheads,’* it’s not what he’s saying. He’s opening the door here to share the truth with them, **‘You’re very reverent, you have a reverential awe, a reverential fear of divinity, you’re sensitive to that.’** **“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.” (verse 23)** “your devotions,” the different places of worship. **“TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”, “THE AGNOSTOS THIOS”** (in Greek). Now he’s setting things up, they’re fallen down, he’s setting things upright as he’s moving. They said before, **‘This man seems to be a setter forth of strange demion, demons, strange gods.’** Paul says **‘No, I see an altar to the Agnostos, the Unknown Theos, God, One God.’** And he said **‘And it’s this God that you worship, ignorantly he says, him declare I unto you.’** Now he does an interesting thing, he says **“him”** literally **“set I forth unto you,”** because they said in **verse 18, ‘that he seems to be one whose setting forth of strange gods.’** Paul says, **‘No, I’m setting forth’** he uses the same phrase, **‘is this God, this Theos, not demion, this Theos that you don’t know.’** Paul is saying **‘This is the One True Living God,’** as you and I set forth again the Living God in the culture we live in. We don’t have to be afraid to say **“Our God is not other gods, Our God is not Allah, our God is not Krishna,**

**our God is not Buddha, our God is not a hundred other gods, our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he is Jehovah, the Great I AM.**” And he says here, **‘that he’s setting forth the Unknown Theos, singular, One God, and that you are setting him forth, the One that you’re worshipping ignorantly, the Agnostos, I want to tell you who he is,’** and they’re listening, he’s on their ground at this point in time. He says, **“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth,”** and look what he does, **“dwelleth not in temples made with hands,” (verse 24)** he stole that from Stephen, you can check Acts 7:48, where Stephen made an impression on him. He says, **‘he made the heavens and the earth, and he dwells not in temples made with hands,’** the Parthenon is right in front of him, all of the great temples of Athens are standing right there, and he says **‘Let me tell you about this Unknown God, this God is the Creator, he made everything, the heaven, the earth, the Constellations, the stars, and he can’t dwell in buildings!’** Down come all of the temples in Athens in one verse, one sentence, all of the temples are laying on the ground. He says this, **“neither is he worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (verse 25)** All of the altars were just torn down, all of your sacrifices, everything you can give to him, he doesn’t need anything, he’s made everything, he doesn’t need anything, seeing **“he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things”** he doesn’t need anything of you. Listen, that’s an important concept for you and I to understand, because there are people in the Church [greater Body of Christ, other denominations] that are telling us consistently *‘That we need to give, because God’s ready to file Chapter 11, he can’t get a bailout from Washington, he’s mishandled the finances of the Kingdom, and the Kingdom’s going under, and you need to bail out the Kingdom, you need to give and give and give.’* Paul said he doesn’t need anything, he made everything. Jesus in **Matthew 7** said **‘to look out for false prophets, who inwardly are ravening wolves.’** That word “ravening” is the word “extortion,” it’s used five other times in the New Testament, and every other place it’s translated “extortioning.” They are false prophets, they have sheep’s clothing on the outside, but inwardly all they care about is getting in your wallet is what Jesus says, they’re extortioners. Paul says **‘he doesn’t need anything from us, he doesn’t need anything, he created the Universe, he’s not worshipped with men’s hands, not at least as though he needed anything.’**

## *The Athenians Believed That They Were the Master Race*

Paul just tears down all of their altars, **“seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he 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; (verse 26)** Please understand what this verse is saying. Because the Athenians believed that they were a Master Race. They believed they were more evolved than other people. They called everyone else who didn’t speak Greek “barbarians.” Paul just tore down the temples of false worship, the sacrifices of false worship, and the altars of false worship, and now he tears down this whole idea of the Master Race that Darwin and Marx and Hitler took hold of. Listen, if you are a Darwinian, if you believe in Darwin’s Theory, of evolution [and we’re not talking about Theistic evolution, where God may have been switching genetic gene switches to “evolve Creation according to his designed, which geneticist know is entirely possible] understand this, you have to understand all of the implications of doing that. This following excerpt is from a letter written by Charles Darwin in 1881, he was a bigot, he was prejudiced. *“The more civilized so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish...in its struggle for existence. Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world.”* Charles Darwin. In his book *“The Decent of Man,”* he speculated *“at some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate or replace the savage races throughout the world.”* He additionally subtitled his Magnum Opus [book] *“The Preservation of Favoured Race In The Struggle For Life.”* Huxley, I won’t even read to you some of the things he said, Thomas Huxley, he was a great disciple of Darwin. Adolf Hitler’s philosophy that Jews were sub-human, that Arians were supermen led to the extermination of 6 million Jews, and in the word of Sir Arthur Keith, a militant anti-Christian physical anthropologist, he said *“The German Fuhrer, as I have consistently maintained, is an evolutionist. He has consistently sought to make the practices of Germany conform to the theory of evolution.”* Karl Marx, the father of Communism saw in Darwinism the scientific and sociological support for an economic experiment

that eclipsed even the carnage of Hitler's Germany. His hatred of Christ and Christianity led to the mass murder of multiplied millions worldwide. Karl Marx so revered Darwin that his desire was to dedicate of Das Capital to him. It should be noted that Darwinian Evolution is not only racist, it is also sexist. Under the subheading of *"The Difference of Mental Powers of the Two Sexes,"* I hope you get mad, girls, especially if you're a Darwinist Darwinist, *"The Difference of the Mental Powers of the Two Sexes,"* Darwin attempted to persuade followers *"that the chief distinction in intellectual powers of the two sexes is shown by man's attaining a higher eminence in whatever he takes up, than can women, whether requiring deep thought, reason, imagination, or merely the use of the senses and the hands, we may also infer that the average of mental power in man is above that of women."* So are you *'I don't believe all that stuff, I just believe we came from monkeys.'* I'm sorry, that doesn't make you sound much smarter. Interesting that the writer of this article says *"In sharp contrast with evolutionary dogma, Scripture makes it clear that humanity is created in the image of God,"* and he quotes Acts 17:29, where we are right now, that in fact **"God has made of all nations one blood."** Everybody in this room is a relative, everybody in this room started with Adam, and everybody in this room got off the boat with Noah, everybody. Everybody in this room, whatever your race, whatever your culture, we are brothers and sisters, genetically, DNA, it is undeniable. And Paul says, this whole idea of the Athenians as a Master Race is something that does not agree with the One True Living God, **"he 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;" (verse 26)** Listen, interesting, here's some of the poetry by Karl Marx, who was a devout Darwinian theorist and wanted to dedicate some of his writing to Darwin, one of his poems called *"The Fiddler"* goes like this, *"The hellish vapours rise, they fill the brain, Till I go mad and my heart is utterly changed, See this sword? the prince of darkness sold it to me."* Karl Marx. Here's one of his most famous, it's called *"O Leunammi"* Leunammi is Immanuel backwards, Immanuel, God with us. Leunammi, the name of this poem. *"For he beats the time, and he gives the signs, ever more boldly I play the dance of death, they are also O Leunammi, O Leunammi, the name rings forth like death, rings forth until it dies away in a wretched crawl, stop, I got it now, it rises from my soul as clear as air, as strong as my bones, Yet I have power in my useful arms to clench and to crush you, with tempestuous force, while for us both,*

*the abyss yawns in darkness. You will sink down, and I shall follow laughing, whispering in your ears, descend, come with me my friend, Again, if there is something which devours, I'll leap within it, though I bring the world to ruins, the world which balks between me and the abyss, I will smash it to pieces with my enduring curses, I will throw my arms around it, its harsh reality embrace me, the world will dumbly pass away, and then sink down to utter nothingness, perished with no existence that would be called really living. Thus heaven I have fortified, I know it full well, my soul, once true to God, is chosen for hell."* Karl Marx, a devout Darwinist, in love with that theory, because it reduces man to an accident, [I would say Satan wrote that poem, Marx was only the pen in Satan's hand for that one.] it introduces racism and prejudice, and it has been destructive beyond imagination. And we're told today, that we are imbecilic if we believe in Creation, sadly. The truth is, the evidence is on our side, not on theirs. God can't live in buildings made by hands, Paul destroys the Parthenon, everything around them, the temples. God doesn't need anything from us, he tears down all of the altars. He's made of one blood all nations of men, tears down the Athenian attitude of the fact that they are a super race or a Master Race, tears it down. He's made of one blood, that's very specific, because they considered, as Hitler did, their bloodline was more superior. [see <https://unityinchrist.com/Does/Does%20God%20Exist.html>]

*God's Determined The Rise & Fall Of Nations, Empires & People*

Paul says **"he's 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;"** (verse 26) listen, I shared that this morning, what he's saying here is, **'God's determined the rise and fall of nations and people [cf. Daniel chapter 4].'** God has determined the rise and fall of the United States. One of the important things for us to see here, as we look at Paul in Athens, is Paul's struggle in Athens was not to return Athens to its former glory. Paul's burden was to save Athenians. ***Looking at the world we live in, and how soon Christ might come, our challenge today, is not to see America restored to the greatness of its founding fathers, our burden is as the Church in America, is to see Americans saved, not to save America, to see***

**Americans saved.** This nation is filled with people that God loves, and that's sad for me to say, my father was with the Naval Department for over 30 years, I grew up, I loved this nation. This nation has changed, the world has changed, it should be no surprise to us, we know the words of the prophets, we are right on course where the Bible said we would be, and at this point in time the harvest is great, the labourers are few, and our burden needs to be to save Americans, not try to restore America to some past glory. And we should for America, pray for our President, and every day we should be doing that. But our call it to lead men and women from darkness into the light, Paul says here **'God has even set the habitation of the, the bounds of, the habitations of those nations,'** "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:" (verse 27) the idea is, Paul used the word **'that they might actually grope after him, and find him,'** "though he be not far from every one of us:" (verse 27b) That was very different from the Epicureans and the Stoics. You know the **Psalmist** says **'Where shall I go from your Spirit, where can I flee from your presence, if I go up to heaven you're there, if I go down to hell you're there, if I take the wings of the morning, go to the uttermost parts of the sea, behold thou art there.'** **Daniel** says, **'that our next breath' chapter 5 of Daniel 'is in his hands.'** You know, we hear the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, besides John the Baptist, Elijah saying that when he went to seek the LORD, the LORD wasn't in the earthquake, wasn't in the fire, but behold a still, small voice. And Paul says **'God is not far, yes, he's the Creator,'** look, it's what the Psalmist tells us in **Psalm 8, 'O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who has set thy glory above the heavens, and yet out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you've perfected praise.'** **'Lord, you've stretched out the universe with the span of your hand, the heavens themselves can't contain you, but you can teach the heart of a child to sing 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so, and mean it with all of their hearts. When I consider the sun and the moon and the stars, the work of thy fingers, what is man that thou art mindful of him?'** Paul's saying that here. He created everything. **'And he's commanding all men to seek him, if haply they might grope after him, and they might find him,'** he says, **'because he's not far from every one of us:'** "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.” (verse 28)** Now he quotes Epimenides when he says **‘For in him we live and move and have our being,’** and then he quotes Aratus when he says **‘for we also are his offspring.’** I was able to dig up their poems. So Epimenides, his poem, written 600 years before Christ, this was his poem *“They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one, the Cretans always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies. But thou art not dead, thou livest and abidest forever, for in thee we live and move, and we have our being.”* Epimenides here writing this. So Paul says **“for in him”** quoting their own poets, he says **“for in him we live, and move, and have our being;”** and then he quotes from Aratus who wrote about 315 BC, and came to Athens and he learned stoicism from Zeno, writing of Zeus, he said *“Let us begin with Zeus, never O man let us leave him unmentioned, all his ways are full, and all the market places of human beings, the sea is full of him, and so are the harbours, in every way we have all to do with Zeus, for we are truly his offspring.”* Paul is saying, **‘You should understand the things I’m trying to say,’** he’s not lending credence to Greek poets and philosophers, but he’s saying to the Athenians *‘You embraced these things hundreds of years ago, and didn’t balk at them. Now I’m telling you the truth about Him, he says ‘For in him, we live, we move, we have our being,’ he’s applying it to Jehovah, ‘as certain of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring,’* **“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.” (verse 29)** **‘We are offspring of God,’** what he’s saying is that he’s given life to us, he’s not talking about the eternal fatherhood of God, please don’t even go there, that’s not what he’s saying. **“we ought not to think”** this is his point, **“that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art of man’s device.” (verse 29b)** What he’s saying is, if we are his offspring, it’s ridiculous then for us to make idols in our image, when the truth is, we were created in his image. And he’s saying if that’s true, as your own poets say, he’s saying then it’s ridiculous for us to make statues of gold and silver, he’s tearing down all that they have taken for granted for hundreds of years. And he says **“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:” (verse 30)** now what he said was **‘I saw this altar to the Unknown God, whom therefore you ignorantly worshipped, I’m going to set him forth in front of you,’** and now he says in **verse 30, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:”** Now again, that

wasn't a strange word to them. **'God is commanding all men,'** they were Greeks **'everywhere, to metanoia, to change the mind.'** And of course they took pride in their thinking and so forth. Paul says **'What God's commanding,'** not suggesting, God's not saying **'O boy, you've tried everything else, why don't you try repentance,'** no, it says **'God is commanding, it's a commandment,'** and it is today, that men repent, *metanoia*, change the mind. **'Your life has been going away from this One True Living God, and God is commanding you to change the mind, because it means life, to change your mind, and take a life that's been going away from God and bring that life to God.'** **'God has commanded'** he says **'that men everywhere should repent:'** here's why, he says, **"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."** (verse 31) the reason it's important for men [and women] to repent, Paul's not cutting them any slack, he says **'because God has appointed a day,'** and he has appointed a day, and that day is closer to us than it was to Paul and the Athenians. **"he hath appointed a day,"** he says **"in the which he will judge the world"** that's going to happen. **'And he'll do it in righteousness, and he's going to do it by that man'** **"whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."** Now listen, Athens had no systematic theology, Athens had no Bible, Athens did not have the same dictionary that we have, same vocabulary, but nothing to define the terms. Athens knew nothing of resurrection, Epicureans and Stoics believed when you die, your soul, your body dissolved, they actually believe, down to atoms, past molecules, very interesting, and that you were just absorbed back into, I don't know, the harmonic convergence or something. [And our physical bodies do decay like that after we die.] Plato wrote there's no hope after death, they had no sure hope. Paul is talking to them about resurrection. They're struggling at this, what he's saying is, **'that Christ died on the cross for our sins, that he's risen again, and that he's commanded men everywhere to repent, that Unknown God, let me tell you who he is, and that one day he's going to judge this world in righteousness, and he wants your hearts to be right with him when that takes place, because there's going to be a resurrection, we're assured of that in that the man he's ordained to do that judgment is one that in fact he has raised from the dead.'** And for them that was a strange idea, that the

physical frame would actually be resurrected. Listen, that's the great truth of what we believe, we don't just believe in some ethereal realm after death, we don't believe we're going to come back as poltergeist, we believe in resurrection, we believe this [he's slapping himself] is getting up again [see <https://unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor15-16.htm>]. Mine's starting to creak a little more, shoulder creaks, my back hurts, it's going to get up at 30 [I hope at 20], that was a long time ago. And I'm 58 now, I remember what 30 felt like, it's gonna get up again, resurrection. What a wonderful hope we have, isn't it? No cancer, no sickness, no tears, no sorrow, the description the Lord gives to us in [Pastor Joe's amplified rendition of] **chapter 21 of Revelation**, as soon as he says **'Behold, I make all things new, the tabernacle of men shall be with God...and he says I will be their God, they shall be my people, I will wipe away all tears from their eyes, there will be no more death, no more pain, no more brokenness, no more curse, no more suffering, everybody's gonna be 30.'** What a wonderful, wonderful thing. **"He hath ordained;"** he says **"whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."** It's the token of our future, of our hope. Look what it says here now. It says, **"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."** (verse 32) And I tend to believe that Paul gave more detail than the quick description that we have here, **"some mocked"** please take note, **"others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."** Down in **verse 34** it says **'some believed,'** this is always the response you're going to get. And if this is the greatest preacher that ever lived, Paul the apostle, and he doesn't see, you know, Peter saw 3,000 saved on the day of Pentecost, Paul doesn't see that, we're not sure if he sees three here. [Difference being he's witnessing to pagan Gentiles who had no prior knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures which proved that Jesus was the Messiah, they weren't well grounded in Old Testament Scripture, and the New Testament didn't exist yet. Paul's witnessing to pagan Gentiles, the two times he did it in the Book of Acts didn't yield hardly anything with converts, and one resulted in disaster as he was stoned.] That has nothing to do with it, the results belong to God [cf. John 6:44], Paul did what God put on his heart, and if God is telling you to share the Gospel with people you just need to do that. You need to have a broken heart for them, you need to be stirred and angered by the loss of life. You know, people are so political, they're angered by the war, they're angered by this, they're

angered by abortion, there's lots of things to be angered by. Let me tell you something, there is a greater holocaust going on around us every day, because men and women are slipping into eternity without salvation, without Jesus Christ, that should be the most disturbing thing going on around us. And we share his love, some are going to mock, if it happened to Paul it's gonna happen to us, some are going to procrastinate *'I'll hear more about that later,'* and some are going to believe. That's the important thing, because Jesus said, ***'What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul, what does it profit a man if he gains the cosmos, the entire universe?'*** [tape ran out, but last two verses, **"So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."** (verse 33-34) [transcript of a connective expository sermon on Acts 17:1-34, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

Audio version:  
<https://resources.ccpilly.org/teachinglibrary.asp?Book=44>

Paul's Second Missionary Trip Map: [https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls Second Mission Map/](https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls%20Second%20Mission%20Map/)

Paul's method of evangelism on his missionary journeys targeted those who understood the Old Testament Word of God, see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>

The Old Testament prophecies Paul used to prove Jesus was the promised Messiah, see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm>

Jesus will come again to judge the world, see [https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming\\_4.htm](https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm)

What is the Gospel?  
<https://unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>

Map of Aegean Sea where Paul sailed from Berea to Athens, click on link below and scroll to just above paragraph title “*Secure Supply-Lines to the South, Scorched Earth to the North*”  
<https://unityinchrist.com/ezra/ezra5.html>

We’re called to go to the world with the Gospel, not to bring the world into church, see  
<https://unityinchrist.com/missionstatement.htm>

The promised resurrection to immortality, see  
<https://unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor15-16.htm>