

# 2nd Missionary Journey

## Part 4

Acts 17:14-34; - Athens.



# **Second Missionary Journey. Antioch in Syria to Jerusalem.**

**ACTS 15:36; to 18:22;**

**Around A.D. 50 to 54.**

**40 months.**

**2,800 miles.**



**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey so far:-**  
**Acts 15:36 Antioch in Syria to Berea 17:13;**



**2nd Missionary Journey.**  
**Acts 15:36; to 18:22;**

**Paul, Barnabas & Silas plus other evangelists.**

**Barnabas & John Mark.**

**Paul & Silas**

**Tarsus**

**Derbe**

**Lystra**

**Iconium.**

**Antioch.**

**Troas**

**Philippi**

**Neapolis**

**Amphipolis**

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**Athens. Paul is distressed by the extent of idol worship. He preaches about Jesus and the resurrection. Some oppose him. Others become believers, including a man named Dionysius and a woman named Damaris. Acts 17:14-34;**

**2nd Missionary Journey. Acts 15:36; to 18:22;**

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**Berea**

**Thessalonica**

**Athens**

**Antioch**

**Corinth**

**Cenchrea**

**Fair Havens**

**MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

**Caesarea**

**Salamis**

**Parga**

**Attalia**

**Lycia**

**Miletus**

**Ephesus**

**Smyrna**

**Rhodes**

**Patmos**

**Cos**

**Crete**

**Achaia**

**Aegean Sea**

**Samothrace**

**Mysia**

**Bithy**

**Phrygia**

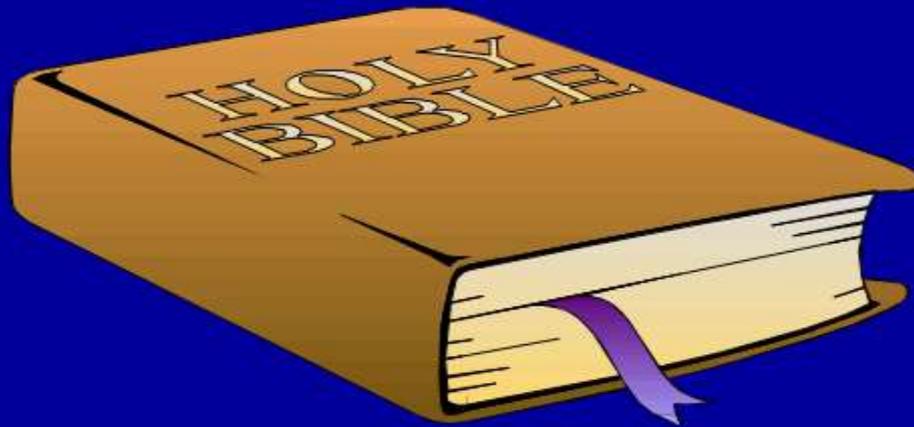
**Thrace**

**Bithy**

**Acts 17:14;** “Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there.”

**Matthew 10:23; Acts 9:25; Acts 9:30;**  
Again, we see that they are protecting Paul from these evil men, and they did it by sending Paul away to the sea.

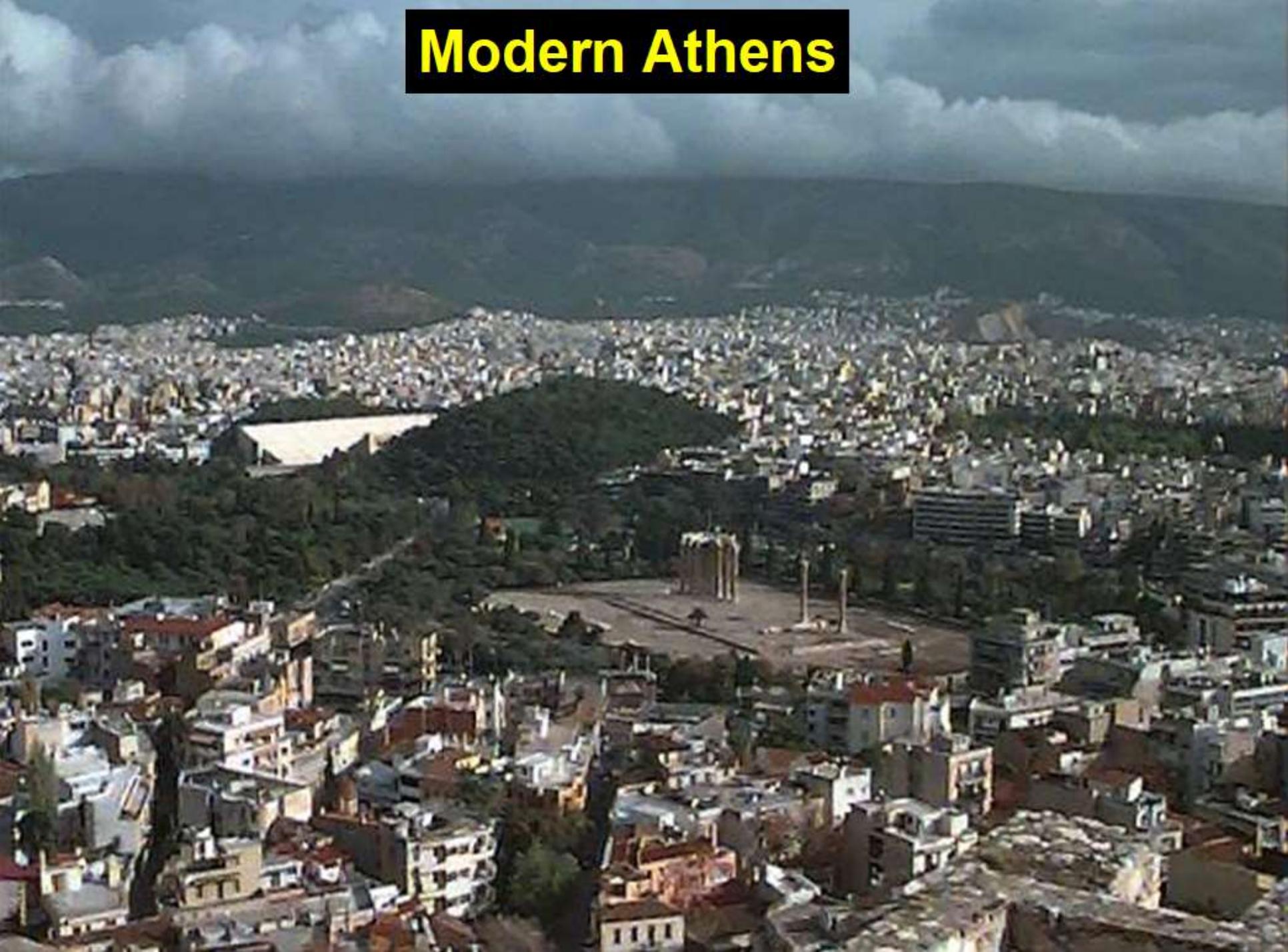
**Why not have Paul stay and face the agitators?**



**Sometimes Christians are left in the face of danger  
sometimes not.**

**How should staying or leaving be decided?**

# Modern Athens



**Acts 17:14;** “Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there.”

**Timothy and Silas remained in Berea.  
It seems that the anger coming from these men  
was directed towards Paul.**

**Many of these men, if possible, were committed  
to killing Paul and to halting  
the preaching effort being made in that region.**

**What Paul was teaching, according to them, was  
just blasphemy and someone needed to stop him.**

**Acts 17:14;** “So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.”

**Paul has to stay one step ahead of those who want to shut him up. Paul is always the one they are after.**

**Silas and Timothy can safely stay in Berea until they are ready to leave.**

**Paul does not like to be alone. He sends word by those who escorted him to Athens for **Silas and Timothy to join him soon.****

**They, however did not join him in Athens but much later in Corinth.**

# Ancient Athens – An Artist's Concept.



**Acts 17:15;** “So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.”

**Paul is now arriving to the city of Athens, in Greece.**

**Athens, “the eye of Greece,  
the mother of art and eloquence.”**

**Athens was the most celebrated city in Greece, and was distinguished by its military talents, learning, eloquence, and politeness of its inhabitants.**

**It was founded by **Cecrops** as an Egyptian colony, about 1556 years before the Christian era.**

**It was called Athens in honour of Minerva, who was chiefly worshipped there, and to whom the city was dedicated.**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Paul is waiting for Timothy and Silas and while he waits, he’s looking around and notices that the whole city is given to idols.**

**Paul’s spirit was provoked. But why? Can he overlook sin? Can he not pay attention and do what he was supposed to do?**

**The preaching of the gospel involves the removal of sin from those to whom the gospel will be preached.**

**Paul is “provoked” even though he is in a pagan continent. Men were not created to worship idols nor to practice sin, but rather to serve God. Exod 20:1-4; Deut 5:7; 6:14; 4:15-19;**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Paul's interest was aroused. But in what way?**

After all, Athens was then - as it is today –  
**an INTERESTING CITY.**

There is no doubt that in those days it was a much more splendid city than it is today, because  
**TODAY tourists and scholars go to Athen to see the RELICS of a glorious BY-GONE age.**

Many of the building which today are shells - ruins – stood in all their glory when Paul visited the city.

**ATHENS of HIS time had a splendour going back 4 HUNDRED YEARS to the time when the great philosopher Socrates HAD STOOD ON MARS HILL.**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Paul ignored its history and its architecture and its art** - all the magnificent sculptures - Why! Athens was the HOME OF ART! **Yet Paul IGNORED all this.**

**He ignored its SCHOLARSHIP** - remember that Athens was the centre of Philosophy, even though he DID come into contact with some of their Philosophers - Stoics, and Epicurean.

In fact, **Paul was UTTERLY INDIFFERENT** to all the things that other travellers were so enthusiastic about.

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Only 50 years later,** a Greek writer **PAUSANIAS** followed Paul to Athens, and wrote 6 volumes about Greece, spending more time writing about Athens than about any other city.

He wrote about its **TEMPLES** and its **STATUES**, and he lovingly described how they were made of marble, gold, silver and wood.

And yet when **PAUL** summed up his **OWN** reaction, **he said, "its FULL of IDOLS!"**.

**This made ERNST RENAN, the French unbeliever and writer SO ANGRY, that he said:-**  
**"The ugly little Jew abused Greek art by calling the statues IDOLS."**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**You see, Paul was not impressed  
by the things which impressed others.**

He was disturbed because everything  
about **Athens REEKED OF DEATH AND DECAY.**

Someone has said that, at that time,  
these men of Athens were trading on  
the memory of achievements not their own

**In other words, ATHENS WAS LIVING IN THE PAST  
and it was a DEAD PAST.**

**Everything about the city was either dead or dying.**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Paul was not a tourist in the city, but one who has come to preach the gospel of Jesus. Paul has not come to the city to take pictures nor to see how talented they were in making and creating idols.**

**Paul is sad and his spirit was moved** with indignation upon seeing all of the lies that these people were subject to. The idolatry of this city bothered Paul and idolatry should still bother us.

**People worshipping what is not the real God of heaven and earth.**

**2 Peter 2:8; Genesis 6:9; Luke 2:25;**

**How many of us feel this same zeal like Paul did?**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Moses. Exodus 32:19-20;**

**Phinehas. Numbers 25:6-11;**

**Elijah. 1 King 19:10, 14;**

**Jeremiah. Jeremiah 20:9;**

**What about you and I? Do we compromise  
the truth or do we teach the right thing  
regardless of the consequences?**

**1 John 5:21;**

**Idolatry is destroying many Christians today  
and we must feel the zeal that Paul showed  
while waiting in the city of Athens.**

**1 Cor 10:7, 14; 2 Cor 6:17;**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

## **We are Christians in a Pluralistic World.**

**Old Pluralism.** = People have the right to believe what they want and practice their own religion.

**New Pluralism.** = We must affirm that **all ways are equally valid we should not challenge others beliefs.**

**-Why reject Greek religion?**

**Dionysus:-**

**“The liquid fire in the grape.”**

**“the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal.”**

**“All the mysterious and uncontrollable tides which ebb and flow in the life of nature.”**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**Dionysus worship** involved wild, drunken sex orgies.

- Ritual prostitution was common
- Later became the Roman god Bacchus.

### **Dionysus Worship Critique:-**

- Your Idol Doesn't exist.
- Your Worship is immoral.
- Your Idol Cannot save.
- It Can't even promote fertility or ferment wine.

**IT IS ALL FALSE!**

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

**The city was filled with IDOLS-so-called GODS.**

One scholar has said that there were so many gods in Athens that it was easier to find a particular man than to find a particular God.

**PAUSANIAS** reported that there were altars to all kinds of gods. To Rumour, Shame, Beneficence, Philosophy,- there were gods and altars celebrating every human emotion you can think of.

There were gods who were jealous, lustful, cruel; the ancient Greeks not only made gods out of MEN and IDEAS, but out of FEELINGS and EMOTIONS.

**Acts 17:16;** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

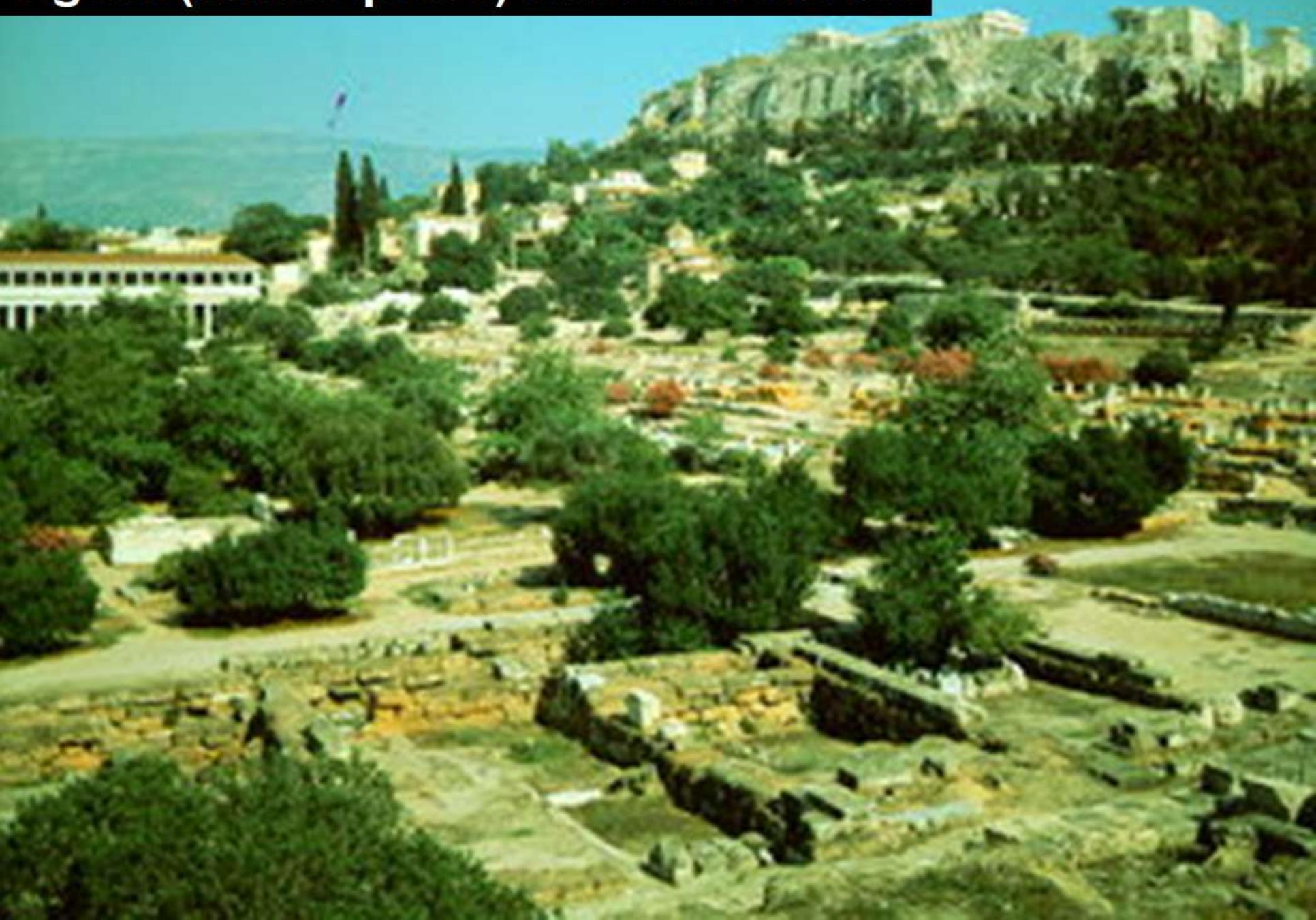
**The traveller Pausanias also verified the N.T.,**  
because he records that there were  
**ALTARS to unknown gods.**

Now, Paul stumbled across one of these,  
and it aroused him so intensely that he had  
to make a comment. It provoked him so much.  
And, of course, we can understand why.

After all, he was a JEW and, even before he became  
a Christian he had been brought up to consider  
idolatry as possibly the most serious sin  
that a man could commit.

**The LAW** said, “**you shall not make  
to yourself any graven image.**”

# Agora (Marketplace) Ancient Athens.



**Acts 17:17;** “Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.”

As he did everywhere else, Paul teaches in the synagogue. He spends his days in the large marketplace **reasoning about Jesus** with anyone who will listen.

Paul is trying to help them make sense of the gospel of Jesus. 17:2-4;

**“in the market.”**

In the forum. It was not only the place where provisions were sold, but was also a place of great public interaction.

In this place, the philosophers were often found engaged in public discussion.

**Acts 17:17;** “Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.”

**Athens was noted as a centre of philosophy.**

**Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus were just a few of the famous philosophers who had taught here.**



**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

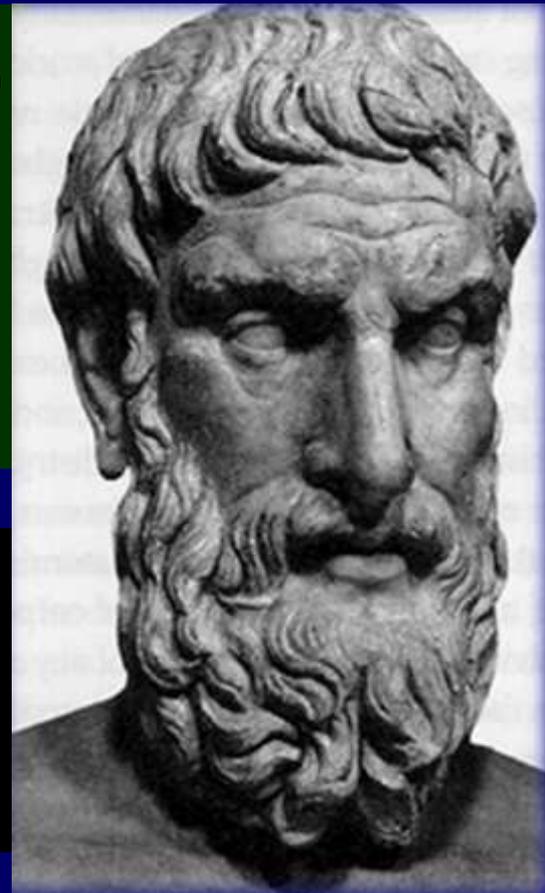
**“And certain EPICUREAN”**

**Who are these or what is this?**

**Epicurus of Samos. (341-270 BC)**

These were the followers of **Epicurus**, who acknowledged no gods except in name, and absolutely denied that they exercised any government over the world or its inhabitants;

The chief good consisted in the gratification of the appetites of the senses.



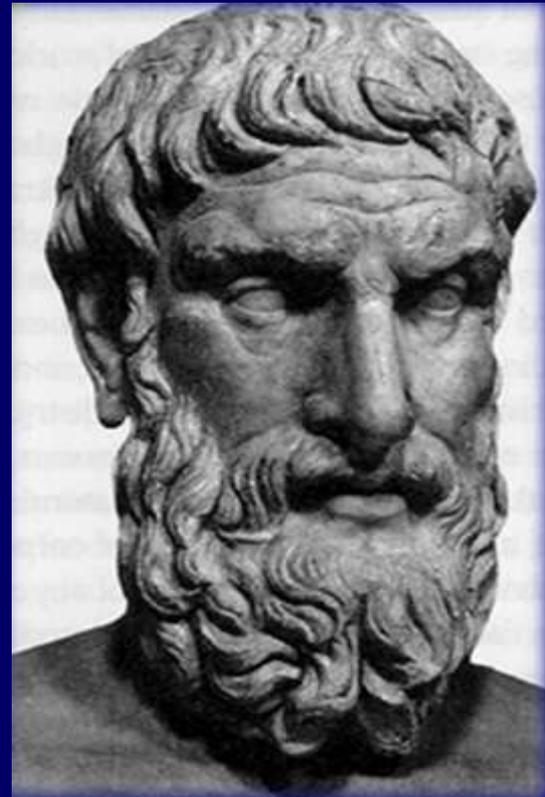
**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**1. They denied that God created the world.**

**2. They denied God’s providence.**

**3. They said that the soul  
is material and  
is destroyed at death**

**4. Their motto was  
“Eat, drink, and be merry.”**



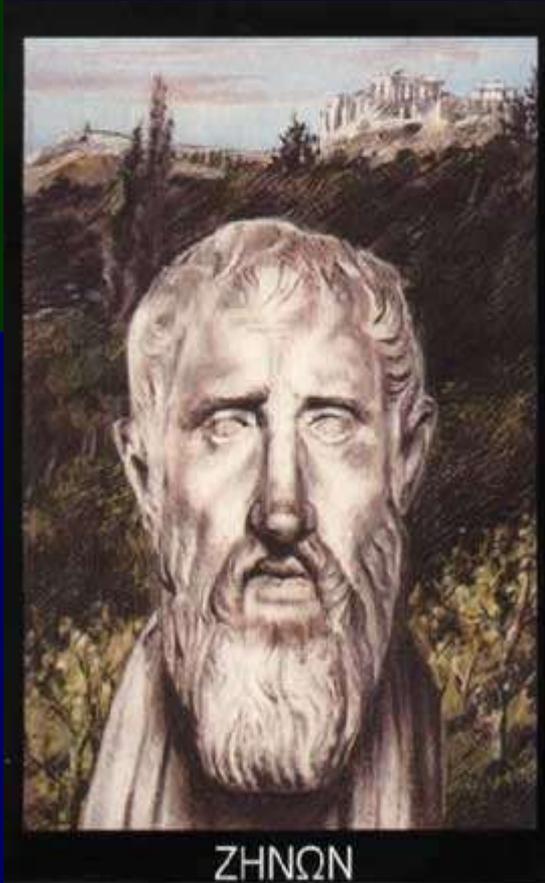
**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**“certain STOIC.”**

**Who are these or what is this?**

**ZENO**, the founder of the **Stoic sect**, was born in the isle of Cyprus, about thirty years before Christ. His disciples were called Stoics

**These did not deny the existence of the gods; but they held that all human affairs were governed by fate.**



**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

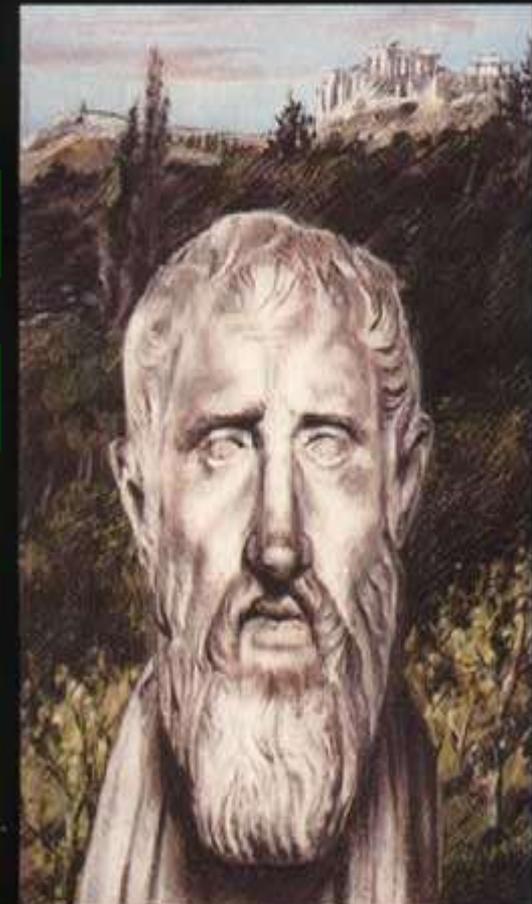
**1. The existing universe is God.**

**2. That the soul dies.**

**3. Virtue has its own rewards.**

**4. Vice has its own punishment.**

**5. Their motto was “Deny Self.”**



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**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**Seneca the Roman Historian, said that they taught  
“that any good and wise man  
was equal to Jupiter himself.”**

**This is a similar idea to that found  
in Mormonism today.**

**Both these sects agreed  
in denying the resurrection of the body;  
and the Epicureans  
did not believe in the immortality of the soul.**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**PAUL CERTAINLY AROUSED THEIR CURIOSITY!**

They (encountered) **TOOK hold of him**,  
that expression usually indicates  
**an action which was NOT altogether friendly.**

They took him to that little rocky mound  
which is situated just below the **ACROPOLIS.**

The place where the **COUNCIL of ARES**  
held its meetings out in the open-air

**That council was the most influential  
and the oldest - in Athenian history.  
And it had a good deal of authority.**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**One of the things it did was to require anyone who came to Athens to teach, Had to appear before this council.**

**A great many DID come, because Athens was proud of its reputation as the centre of learning.**

**It was quite common for men to come hoping to find fame and fortune as scholars and teachers in the city.**

**Therefore they had to appear before the council, to explain what they were teaching, The council would then judge their qualifications to teach.**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**What will this babbler say? The word **spermologos**, which we translate **babbler**, signifies, literally, a collector of seeds, and is the “**name of a small bird that lives by picking up seeds on the road.**”**

**The epithet came to be applied to persons who collected the sayings of others, without order or method, and spoke about them among their companions in the same way.**

**The application of the term to prating, empty, impertinent persons, was natural and easy, and hence it was considered a term of reproach and contempt, and was sometimes used to signify the vilest sort of men.**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

They were implying that **Paul was an eclectic philosopher**, picking up elements of his philosophy from many sources, much as a bird hunts everywhere for seeds and eats them.

Others said, “**He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods.**” The literal idea of what they are saying is that they were proclaimers of strange or foreign demons. This was strictly forbidden, both at Rome and in Athens.

They are just supposing that this is the case, not that Paul was actually doing this.



**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**A foreign god would be any god not in the Greek or Roman pantheon. They were familiar with the Egyptian gods, but Jesus was a new god to them.**

**They regarded Jesus as a god who had a demon, because they regarded all men who made themselves gods as having demons. (Mark 3:22;)**

**Paul had preached to them Jesus, who had lived a while in the world as a man, and that he was God manifest in the flesh, confirmed by His resurrection.**

**This was strange to them and a new doctrine.**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babblers want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

The **stumbling block** of the gospel **for the Jews** was **“a suffering Messiah”** and **for the Greeks** it was **“the resurrection.”** (I Cor 1:18-25;)

A personal, bodily afterlife did not fit into the Greek understanding of the gods or mankind. They asserted a divine spark in every person, trapped or imprisoned by a physical body.

Salvation for them was deliverance from the physical and re-absorption into an impersonal or semi-personal deity.

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?“ Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,“ because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

## **Was the resurrection true?**

**It was Predicted** (foretold) **By The Old Testament Prophets.** - Psa 16:8-11; (Acts 2:25-28; 29-32;)

(Such a teaching meant the Christ would suffer & die something unthinkable in the Jewish mind.  
Acts 17:2-3; (3:18); Matt 16:21-22;)

**It was Promised By Jesus.** (Matt 27:63;)  
John 2:18-22; 11:25; Matt 16:21;

**It was Proclaimed** (declared.) **The Deity Of Christ.**  
Rom 1:3-4 (John 10:30-36;). Phil 2:5-11; -  
Knees bow, not to a dead man,  
but to the living Christ, our Lord!

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

## **JESUS RESURRECTION:-**

**Defeated Satan.** Gen 3:15; Acts 2:23-24; Heb 2:14-16;

The devil, who had the power of death,  
was defeated by Christ's death.

(and subsequent resurrection).

2 Tim 1:10; - He abolished death. (John 11:25-26;)

**Is The Foundation Of The Gospel.** 1 Cor 15:3-5;  
Without it, there is no "good news." Lk. 24:17-24;

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

**His resurrection is The Basis Of Our Hope.**

**1 Cor 15:12-19;** The early Christians claimed that **in the Risen Christ, the Glory of Yahweh** was made manifest in a new and unexpected way.

It revealed the dawn of a **'new creation.'**  
**The church, new relationship and a new hope,**  
that **'in Christ' everyone could reliably expect**  
**his or her own resurrection from the dead."**

**1 Cor 15:52-57; - Glorious expectation.**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

## **MEMORIALS TO THE RESURRECTION:-**

**The Lord's Supper:- Matt 26:26-29;**

**1. Christ's promised participation with His disciples in the Supper implies His resurrection. Without it, He could not do so!**

**2. 1 Cor 11:26; - Proclaim His death**

**"till he come."**

**(Can only "come" if He is now alive!)**

**Acts 17:18;** “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?“ Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,“ because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

## **MEMORIALS TO THE RESURRECTION:-**

**The First Day Of The Week:- Acts 20:7;**

1. On it He was raised. - Mk 16:1-2, 9;
2. On it His exaltation was announced.  
- Acts 2:32-33, 36;
3. On it His disciples gather to worship Him .  
Acts 20:7;



**View of Athens from the Areopagus.**

**Acts 17:19;** “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?”

**If a tabloid newspaper had been printed in Athens it would have had a large circulation.**

**These philosophers and many others had slaves to do their menial tasks. So they could spend all their time hearing and discussing the latest news and gossip.**

**They also liked to argue. The Areopagites, or members of the Areopagus had regular meetings to hear and discuss the latest ideas.**

**Their meeting place was on top of the hill of Ares above the city. The Roman name for Ares is Mars.**

# Hill of Ares. (Mars Hill.)



**Acts 17:19;** “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?”

The term **Areopagus** means the **hill of Ares**.  
(The god of war.)

In the golden days of Athens, it was the philosophical forum of this renown intellectual city.

This was no judicial trial, but an open city forum.  
This is a sample of Paul’s preaching to pagans,  
as 13:16ff was to God-fearing Gentiles.

We are grateful to the Holy Spirit for preserving these synopses of Paul’s messages.

**Acts 17:19;** “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?”

**Here I think is a lesson for us  
when talking to people about Jesus.**

**Often we are over awed by what we see in people  
perhaps the way they dress the houses they live in  
the cars they drive the holidays they go on.**

**Yet on a spiritual level we need to realise that we  
are on an equal footing, we can talk to people about  
Jesus without allowing their external attributes  
or life style to keep us in awe.**

**Acts 17:19;** “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?”

**We see here that just because we may not like what we see about some people that does not give us the right to abuse them.**

**Jesus with the woman by the well could easily have said I don't want to talk to you, your living with a man your not married to!**

**Both Jesus and Paul find a way to begin where the people are and then lead them to talk about spiritual things.**

**Acts 17:19;** “And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?”

**We need to work at building bridges not walls,  
we need to learn to accept people  
where they are and not ignore them.**

**just because we don't like the way they dress  
or the way they talk or the way they live.**

**We need to find the area of their lives  
where they admit to an unknown God  
and from there lead them to Jesus.**

**We need to strive to reveal the beauty of Jesus  
to the world in which we live.**

**Acts 17:20;** “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears.  
Therefore we want to know what these things mean.”

**Notice that the criteria of these people  
was not to find the truth but some thing new.**

**Here is the difference between intellectual curiosity  
(v. 20-21) and revelation. God has made us curious.  
(Eccl 1:8-9,18; 3:10-11;), but  
human intellect alone cannot bring peace and joy.**

**Only the gospel can do this! Paul discusses  
the difference between human wisdom  
and God’s revelation in I Cor 1-4;**

**Acts 17:20;** “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears.  
Therefore we want to know what these things mean.”

**The people in Athens were not interested  
in the gospel of Jesus but just  
in hearing and repeating new things.**

**Not only the Athenians but also the foreigners  
were busy looking for new things.**

**They want to hear what new things  
Paul is bringing to them!**

**The question is:  
WILL PAUL SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY?**



**Acts 17:22;** “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;”

Paul is standing in the midst of the Areopagus, that is where many of their great men had stood.

“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;” Is Paul being sincere? Is he telling the truth when he calls them religious?

This is literally “to fear the gods (demons).” This can mean in a **negative sense, “superstitious,”** as in the King James Version. Or in a **positive sense, “very precise in the practice of religious detail.”** (NKJV. 25:19;)

These men had an intellectual curiosity and respect for religious matters, but only within certain parameters. (Their traditions.)

**Acts 17:22;** “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in **all things** you are very religious;”

**They were dedicated in ‘ALL’** Notice the number of times in this sermon that Paul uses the inclusive “all” or phrases that parallel it.

1. “**all respects.**” v. 22; /
2. “**all things.**” v. 24;
3. “**all life and breath.**” v. 25;
4. “**all things.**” v. 25;
5. “**every nation.**” v. 26;
6. “**all the face of the earth.**” v. 26;
7. “**each one of us.**” v. 27;
8. “**we.**” (twice.) v. 28;
9. “**all everywhere.**” v. 30;
10. “**the world.**” (lit. The inhabited earth.) v. 31;
11. “**all men.**” v. 31;

**Paul’s good news was that God loved all humans and has provided a way for them to know Him and be forgiven of their sin.**

**Acts 17:22;** “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;”

**Greek historian Pausanias** said  
“that there were more idols in Athens  
than in all the rest of Greece combined.”

“Likely Paul would have seen idols virtually  
everywhere he went.” Peoples New Testament.



**Stone Altar found at Athens**

**Acts 17:22;** “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;”

**The Athenians were indeed very religious they had an altar to every god they had ever heard of.**

**All other altars were named and dedicated to a particular god. But this one altar to an unknown god provided Paul an opportunity to tell them about his God.**

**I’m sure these philosophers had heard about the God of Israel. But like so many in the ancient world, they thought this God belonged only to a small country at the far end of the Mediterranean Sea.**

**22;** “Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.;

**23**“For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:-”

**“TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.** Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.” <sup>57</sup>

22; “Paul then stood up in the

**Carefully studied  
their culture.**

pagus and said:

**Discovered**

23 “For as I wal

**Common ground.**

**looked carefully at your objects  
of worship, I even found  
an altar with this inscription:-”**

**“TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what  
you worship as something unknown  
I am going to proclaim to you.”** <sup>58</sup>

**Acts 17:23;** “for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:-

**TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, the

One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you;”

***TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.*** Acts 17:16-31;

**God is Unknown to many!**

**“The God that I serve.”** Rom 10:1-3;

**“Brothers, I pray to God that the Jewish people will be saved; that is my heart's desire.”**

**“I tell you the truth, they have much enthusiasm for God, but they don't understand!”**

**They don't understand that Christ has died to make them right with God. Instead they are trying to make themselves good enough to gain God's favour by keeping the Jewish laws and customs, but that is not God's way of salvation.**

**Acts 17:23;** “for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:-  
**TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, the  
One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you;”

***TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.*** Acts 17:16-31;

**God will not send me to Hell!** Matt 10:28;  
Do not be afraid of those who kill the body  
but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather  
who can destroy both body and soul in hell.

**Acts 17:23;** “for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:-

**TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, the

One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you;”

**God does not care what church I join!**

**Matt 16:15-18; Eph 1:22-23; 4:4-6;**

15. He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16. Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**"

And I tell you, you are Peter, [Petros]}  
and on this rock [petra]} **I will build My church,**  
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

“God has put all things under His feet and **made Him** the supreme **Head of the Church.** His community **is Christ's body.** It is the totality of Christ; He completes everything everywhere.” Eph 1:22;

**Acts 17:22;** “for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:-

**TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, the

One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you;”

**It does not matter to God how I worship!**

**John 4:23-24; Matt 15:8-9;**

“But a time is coming when the true worshippers will worship the Father with **true spiritual worship;** for indeed the Father desires such worshippers.

God is spirit, and those **who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**”

“These people say they honour me, but their hearts are far away.

Their worship is worthless, for they teach their man-made laws instead of those from God.”

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

**God has revealed Himself in the world of created things. Which means, that contrary to what some of them thought,**

**The world is NOT AN ACCIDENT!  
It is the result of DESIGN And to have design you must have a DESIGNER - and a designer IS A THINKER AND A THINKER IS A PERSON.**

**Furthermore because He is the CREATOR  
He WAS not created.**

**On the contrary, HE CREATED MAN.  
And THAT is the great different between the gods THEY worshipped and the God whom Paul served.**



This anomaly has been called  
**“The Mountains of Creation.”** (Hubble)

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

**Acts 17:26;** “And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.”

They could immediately see that the God Paul described was very different from any of their other gods.

**He is the Universal God Who created all things.**

**They already sensed this:- Rom 1:19-20;  
A God who creates ALL  
must be adequate to have done so.**

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

**He is bigger than the universe.** He is inside and outside it. No one can make an adequate representation of Him. And **they must not think He can be confined in a temple.**

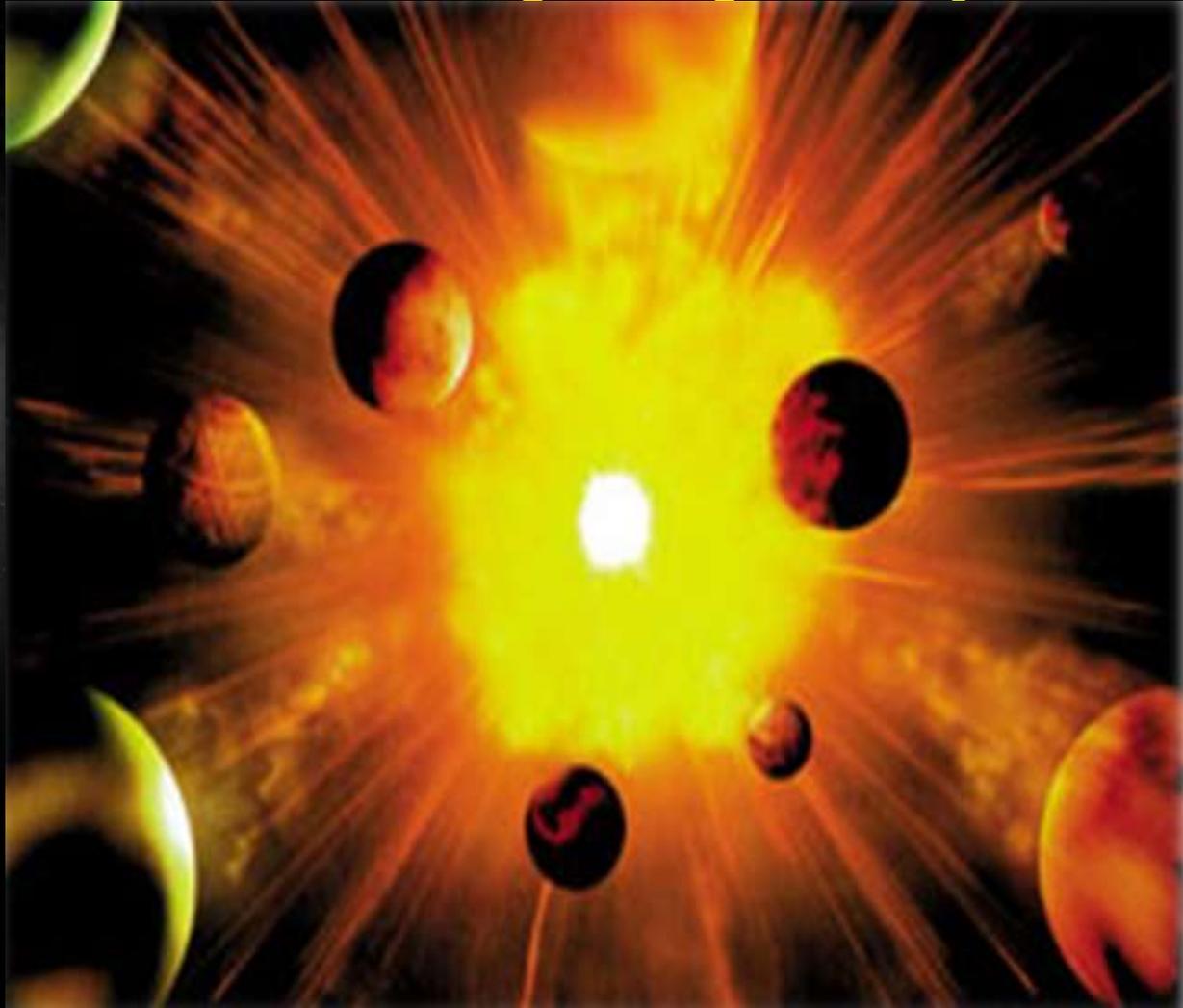
Paul expresses the Self-sufficiency, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and eternity of God as well as His love and providence for His creatures.

**They had never known a god like this. To them He really was the Unknown God.**

**The transcendence of God.**

**Acts 17:24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.**

**Who Created all, God or the "big bang theory?"**



**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

## **GOD IS THE CREATOR OF ALL!**

**Paul says:-**

**There is NO Sun god.**

**There is NO Moon god.**

**There is NO Star gods.**

**There is NO Sea god.**

**There is only ONE God.**

**Paul is teaching from:-**

**Gen 1:1-2; Psalm 104; 146:6; Isa 42:5;**

**WHY do WE believe what the Bible says?**

**FAITH comes by hearing and**

**hearing by the word of God. Rom 10:17;**



**I believe this bus had a creator!  
The world is far more complex than this bus.**

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

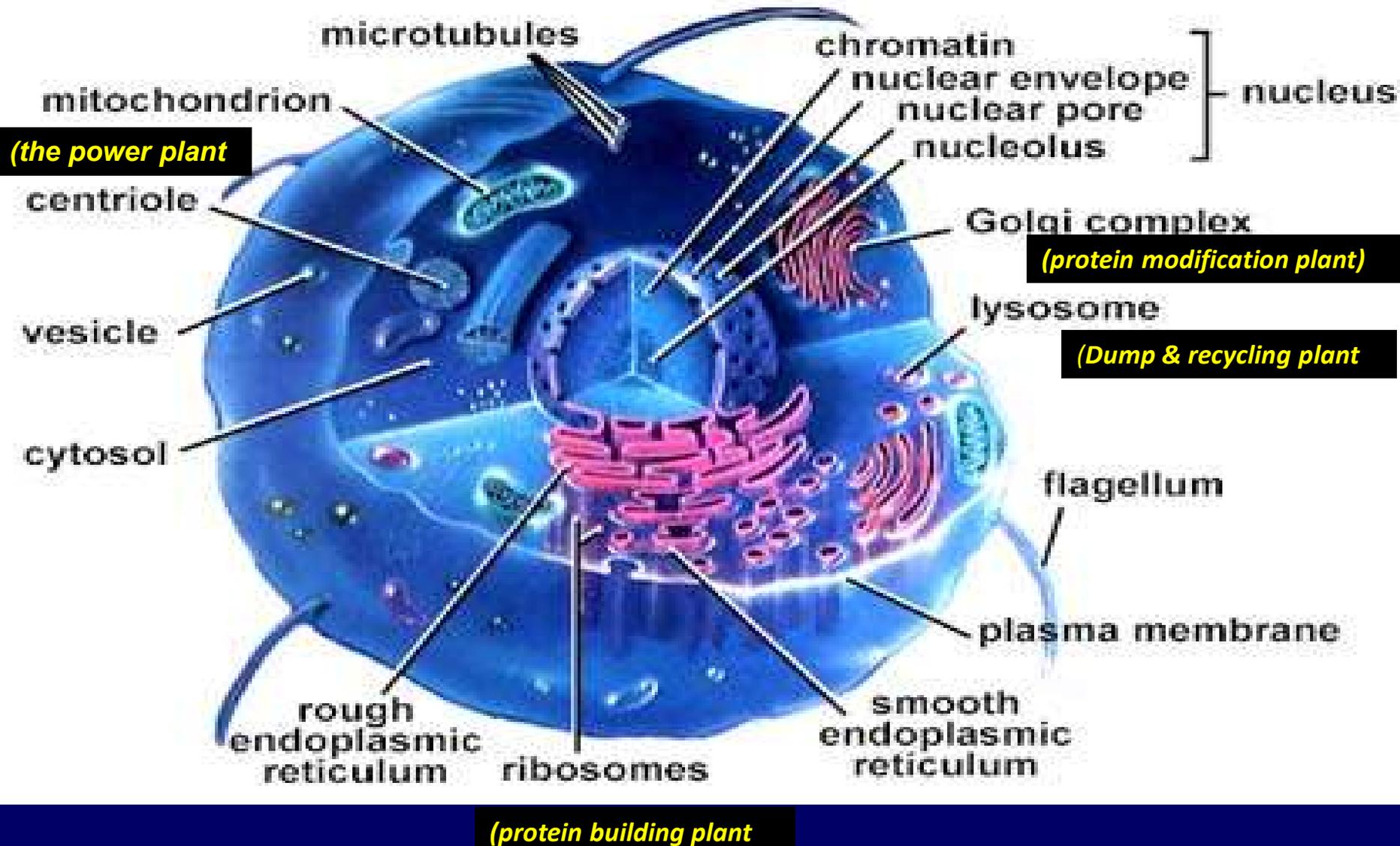
**Many Christians say why bother discussing whether God exists or not.**

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Pet 3:15;)**

**Isaiah 44:24; “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who makes all things...”**

# Self-organization or evidence of Design?

## A cell magnified a 1000 million times



**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

**“Only Over 5 million non-flying parts in Boeing 747**

**A human body is composed of over 250 different kinds Of cells (red blood cells, white blood cells, muscle cells, fat cells, nerve cells, etc.**

**Billions of non-living parts!”**

**The cilia propel certain cells like oars on a boat.**

**They are a microbiological engine whose purpose is mobility.**

**Every part has to be there for it to propel the cell.**

**Let alone the fact that the cilia know where to propel the cell to.**

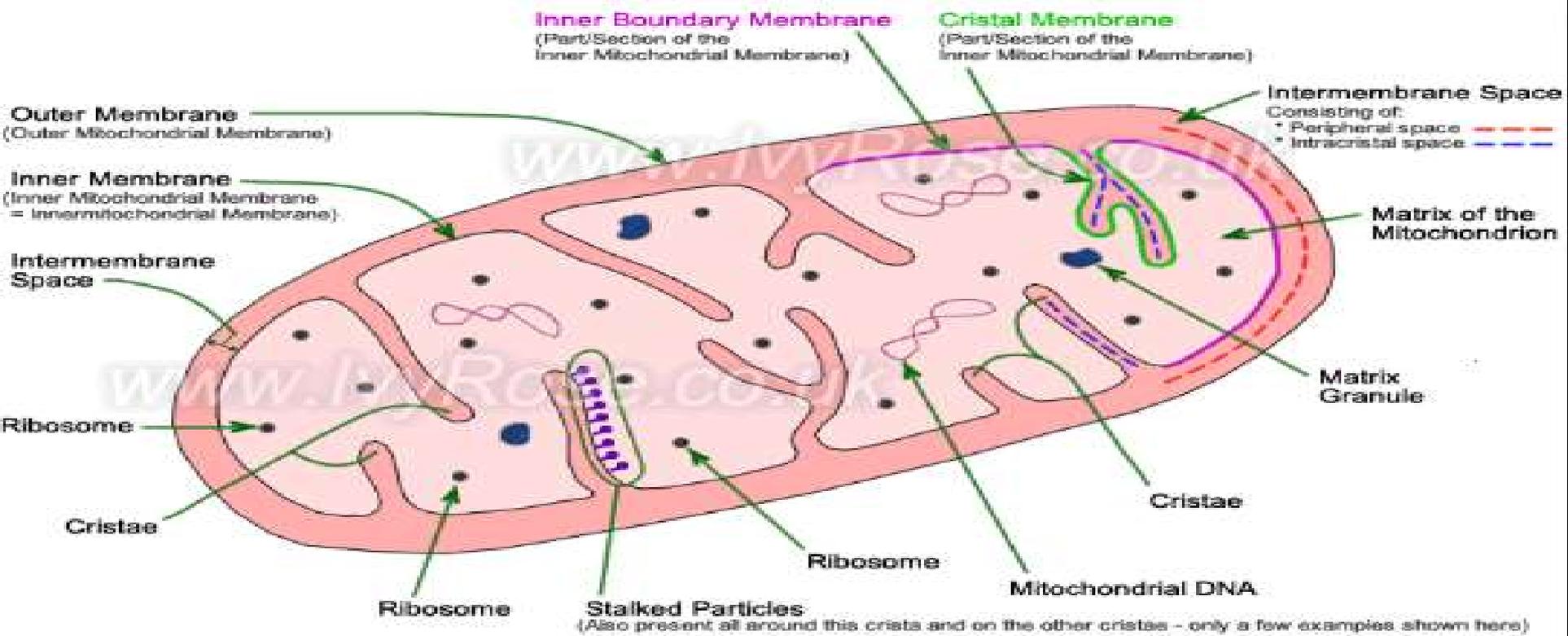


Diagram of a Mitochondrion: Copyright IvyRose Ltd., 2012.



**Bacterial Flagellum.**

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

**Do you know what the most efficient motor known to man is? I am not speaking about the mouth.**

**The **bacterial flagellum** propels the cell like an outboard motor on a speed boat only it is more advance. It rotates at an amazing 10,000 rpm.**

**It can stop spinning on a quarter turn and instantly rotate the other way. Where does it get its energy? It appears to get energy from acid which flows through its membrane.**

**Further, it screams intelligence as it knows where it is going. What would a speedboat be doing if it didn't have someone directing it?**

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

## **Well who controls the bacterial flagellum?**

**How did it get this information? How did it become so sophisticated? Yet, without any one of these components (the filament, hook, etc.) it doesn't go anywhere.**

**This system is only about 1/10,000ths of an inch and yet it has all of this fine tuned technology. With all our technology we have not been able to create something that is advance as it is!**

**Doesn't it then suggest that something more advance than us created it?  
Is not God the rational answer?**

**“God Is.”**

**Many are Sceptical!**

**“I don’t know whether God exists.”**

**“Who is God, anyway?”**

**“I just don’t ‘get it’ about God,  
the Bible and Christianity!”**

**“Why does God care about me?”**

**“Why should I care about God?”**

# **Most Have Some Concept of God.**

**Ancient Athens – Acts 17:16, 22-23;**

**Popular ideas of God include:-**

**An all loving, never condemning, ecumenical God.**

**A vengeful, murderous God of the Muslim extremists**

**Then, some refuse God – Rom 1:28;**

**God is not defined by man – Jer 10:23;**

**Who is God?**

**How would you introduce God to someone?**

**Why would God care about me?**

**Why should I care about God?**

**Acts 17:24;** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

**Understand God:- “By Faith.”**

**Evidence. Heb 11:1-6;**

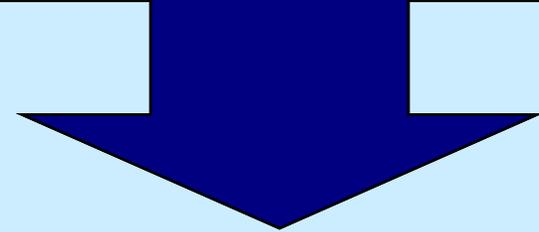
**To Come to God, one Must:-  
Believe God exists. (“God is.”)  
Believe God rewards  
those who diligently seek Him.**

**“God Is”**



**Romans  
1:20;**

**SEEN IN  
THE COSMOS**  
*(things that are made)*



**Clearly Shows God's  
Invisible Attributes.**



**POWER & GODHEAD.**

**“God Is”**



**Romans  
1:20;**

**SEEN IN  
THE COSMOS**

*(things that are made)*

**Order & Design  
An Intelligent,  
Creative Maker.**

***Psalm 19:1;  
Acts 14:15-17;***

**Acts 17:24; “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”**



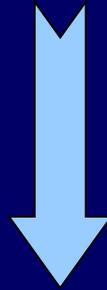
# EVIDENCE FOR FAITH.

(World God created.)

(Word He revealed.)

*God Is*

*God  
Rewards*



**Power, Presence & Purposes.**

**HEBREWS 11:6;**

# Does God Exist?

**GENESIS 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."**

**Absolute belief in God is Essential to Salvation.**

Psalm 14:1; “The fool has said in his heart  
there is no God. They are corrupt,  
they have become abominable works.”

**Hoping God exists is Just as Foolish!**

**Hoping God exists is Not a Sufficient  
Foundation for your Faith!**

**Faith in God is required for your Salvation.**

**Absolute belief in God is Essential to Salvation.**

Heb 11:1; “**Faith** is the substance of things hoped for **the evidence of things not seen.**”

**True faith is based on evidence.**

Evidence not seen  
**does not mean NO evidence.**

Rom 10:17; “**Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.**”

**Many reject the evidence because it is written!**

# Did George Washington really exist?

## How do we know?

**We have written evidence.  
Historians tell of him.  
Important documents  
were signed by him.  
Letters were written to him.**



**The letters in the scrap book  
were written by George Washington.**

**Without Faith it is impossible to please God.**

**“You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him. Heb 11:6;**

**Without Faith it is impossible to please God.**

To the **Nation of Israel.** Isa 43:11-12;

**"You are My witnesses,** "declares the LORD,"  
And My servant whom I have chosen, So that  
you may know and believe Me and understand  
that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed,  
And there will be none after Me.

**"I, am the LORD,  
And there is no saviour besides Me."**

**"Whenever you have thrown away your idols,  
I have shown you my power. With one word  
I have saved you. You have seen me do it;  
**you are my witnesses that it is true."****

# **Absolute belief in God's Son is Essential to Salvation.**

**“I told you that you would  
die in your sins.**

**If you don't believe that I AM,  
you will die in your sins.”** John 8:24;

**"For God did not send the Son  
into the world to judge the world,  
but that the world  
might be saved through Him.** John 3:17;

## **EVIDENCE OF GOD AND HIS SON.**

**He was WITH God from the beginning!**

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**He was in the beginning with God.**

**All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” **John 1:1-3;****

# **The Scientific Argument!**

For every effect there is a sufficient cause.

**“For every house is built by someone,  
but the builder of all things is God.”**

**Hebrews 3:4;**



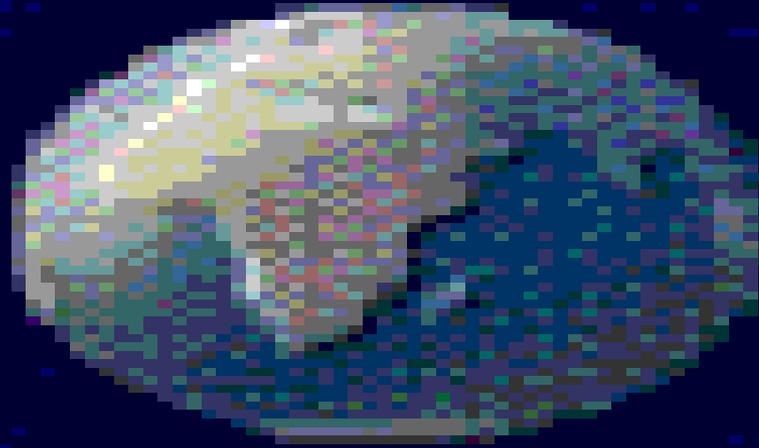
**A house cannot build itself!**

**The Physical Universe could not just happen.**

**It must have an intelligent Designer / Builder.**

**ROBERT INGERSOL - ATHEIST!**

**“WHO MADE THE WORLD?  
NOBODY IT JUST MADE ITSELF!”**



**IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED  
THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH. Gen 1:1;**

# The Teleological Argument!

There is **PURPOSE** to the design of the Universe.

No **BIG BANG, LITTLE BANG, or NO BANG.**



**The Universe is a BIG BULLETIN BOARD  
that declares there IS a CREATOR!**

# **The Teleological Argument!**

**The Universe shows Intelligent Design.**

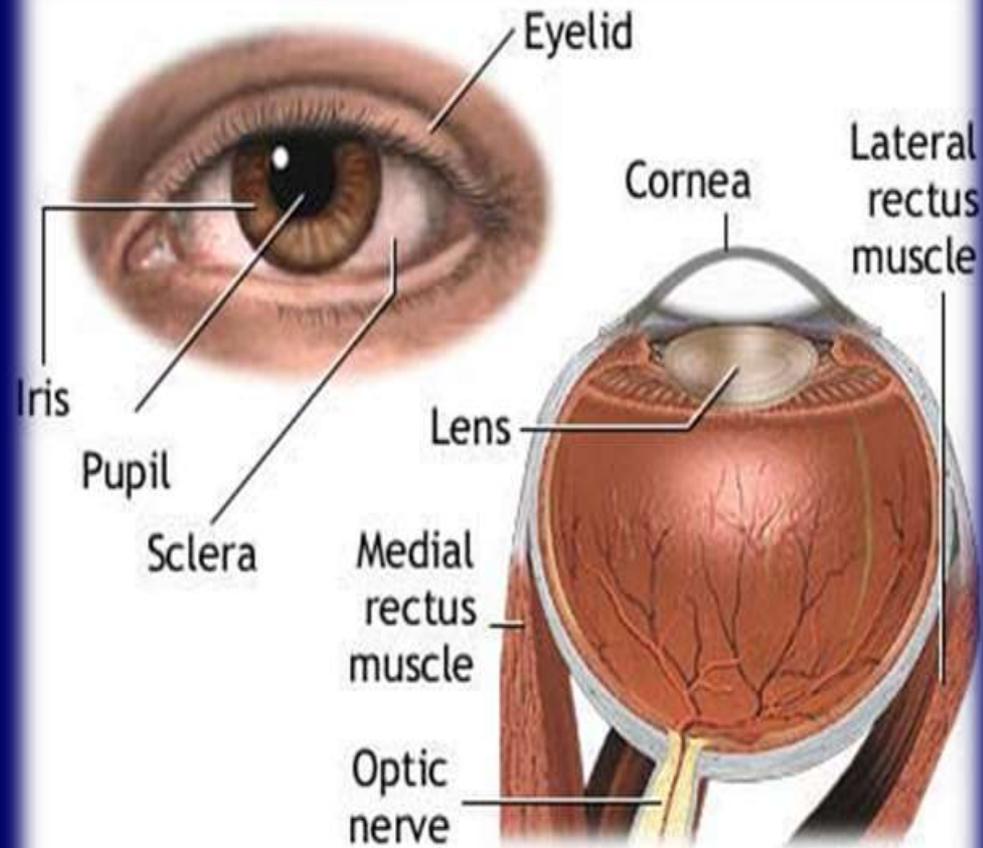
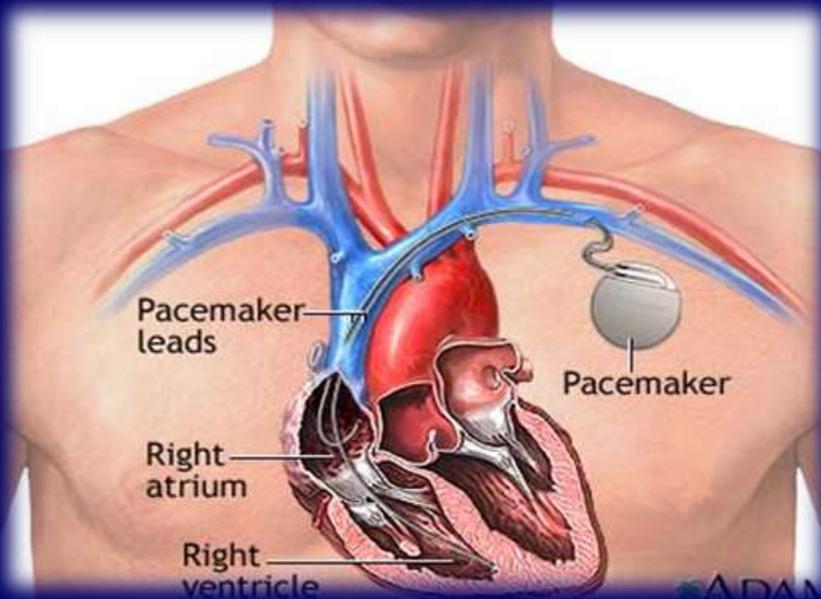
**The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
they are a marvellous display  
of His craftsmanship.**

**Since earliest times men  
have seen the earth  
and sky and all God made,  
and have known  
of His existence  
and great eternal power.  
So they will have no excuse  
when they stand  
before God at Judgment Day.**



# THE HUMAN BODY!

**SHOWS  
INTELLIGENT DESIGN!**



**The MORAL Argument!**  
If man is just a product  
of blind chance and evolution?

When did **MORALITY** originate?  
When did MORAL qualities develop?

How and why did we develop these qualities?  
Is immorality any worse than Morality?

Who has the right to say what is **morally right**  
and what is **morally wrong**.

# **The MORAL Argument!**

**Evolutionists cannot explain why  
We have moral and spiritual qualities.**

**Man is a religious being  
We will find  
something to worship  
even if it only ourselves.**

## **The MORAL Argument! Acts 17:23-25;**

**"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.'**

**Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.**

**"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;**

**“nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;”**



Romans 2:14-15

When Gentiles, who do not have the law,  
do by nature things required by the law,  
they are a law for themselves,  
even though they do not have the law,  
since they show  
that the requirements  
of the law  
are written  
on their  
hearts.

# WHY DO PEOPLE REJECT GOD.

**“But no, my people wouldn't listen. Israel did not want me around. So I am letting them go their blind and stubborn way, living according to their own desires.” Psa 81:11-12;**

**“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; Rom 1:28-31;**

# **WHY DO PEOPLE REJECT GOD.**

**We want to be free from restraints of responsibility and accountability.**

**We want to be free to do our own thing without thinking of the cost to our selves or others.**

**"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. **John 3:18-19;****

**Acts 17:25;** “Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things..”

**God exists whether we believe in Him or not.  
God's does not need our worship to be God.**

**If God can be God without our worship  
why do we need to worship.**

**Because there has always  
been in us a need to worship  
something or somebody  
even if it is only ourselves.**



**Acts 17:25;** “Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things..”

## **Worshippers used to set offerings of food before the idols of the gods.**

When the feasts held in the idol's temples were finished, the worshippers would leave food offerings on the raised platforms over night, in the thought that they would come and eat to their satisfaction.

In his last two statements, Paul has struck at the theory of the value of temples and at a false theory of religion.

All the pagan religions emphasize what the worshipper must do for the god.

Christianity is distinctive in that it emphasizes what God has done and continues to do for the worshipper. (Compare Paul's statement of God's activities for men in Acts 14:16ff;)

**Acts 17:25;** “Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things..”

**He gives Life, Breath, to ALL things.**

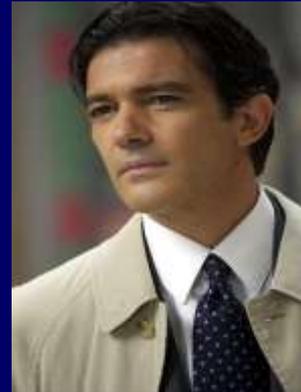
**The point is striking, God made the world,  
(Kosmos, all the universes.)**

**There is only ONE GOD who is:-**

**Supreme, Absolute, All Powerful,  
All Encompassing, Has created the World,  
The universes, Everything in the World,  
including Man and Woman.**

**Acts 17:26;** “And He has **made from one blood** every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.”

**God guides the history of all men and nations.  
This is a phenomenal revelation.**



**All men come from one source, from God Himself.  
All men have the same blood and nature.  
No man or nation is above another.  
All are equal; all stand before God.**

**No one is a favourite of God. God shows no partiality  
to one person over another:-  
to Jew or Gentile, to religionist or heathen.**

**Acts 17:26;** “And He has **made from one blood** every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.”

The Genesis record says God created Adam and then formed Eve (out of a part of Adam), and from this pair have come all the nations of the earth.

This statement of the origin of the human race was in direct opposition to **the Athenians' notion of their own origin as being different from that of other men.**

(Aristotle, Vespasian, 1076; Cicero, ProFlacco. XXVI.)

The Chinese believed and taught, (before blood Genetics proved them wrong,) that they were of a different evolutionary stock from everyone else.

The national pride held by various races (their gods were better than others; their origins were superior to other men's) tended to make the races alien to each other.

**Acts 17:26;** “And He has **made from one blood** every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.”

According to the record in Genesis, the earth was created and made liveable before man was put on it. Then man was given a command to have children and fill up the earth.  
(Genesis 1:28;)

God has so ordered it by His providence, that the descendants of Adam have find their way to all the lands that are habitable on the face of the earth.

**“determined their appointed times.”** This means that God had, in His plan, fixed the times when each nation should be settled, and the rise, the prosperity, and the fall of each nation.

The different continents and islands were not settled by chance alone.

**Deut 32:8;** "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He divided all mankind, He set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

## Dispersion after Babel



**Acts 17:26;** “And He has **made from one blood** every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.”

**God has had a hand in determining how much territory a given nation should include.**

**Remember the book of Joshua.**

**Paul's doctrine is in agreement with the accounts in the Old Testament where it is taught that the Most High had given to nations their inheritance (Deut 32:8; Job 12:23; Psalm 115:16; Daniel 2:21;)**

**Paul insists that God's providence overrules all such natural barriers, as well as war and migration, when He determines how far a nation's boundaries shall spread.**

**The ideas presented in these last few phrases would have been opposed to both Epicurean and Stoic ideas of history.**

**Acts 17:27;** “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

**God has a great purpose for creating men,  
that men might find and know God.**

**Man should never have turned away from God  
and fallen into idolatry. (Romans 1:18-32;)**

**But since man has turned away,  
he desperately needs to seek  
God, to do all he can to find  
God. There are two reasons  
given as to why man  
should seek to find God.**



**Acts 17:27;** “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

**God is not far off. He is near everyone of us.**

**He can be found. How close is God?**

**God is near, it is up to you and I to look for Him  
and to trust all that has promise to us.**

**“If, however, from there you start searching once  
more for Yahweh your God, and if you search  
for Him honestly and sincerely, you will find Him.**

**Deut 4:29;**

**“Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those  
who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek Yahweh and His  
strength, tirelessly seek his presence! Psa 105:4;**

**“Seek out Yahweh while He is still to be found,  
call to Him while He is still near.” Isa 55:6;**

**Acts 17:27;** “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

**Israel had a revelation of God that  
other nations did not have.**

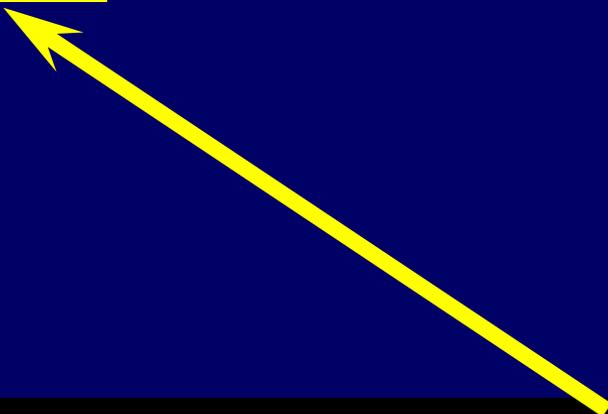
**But all people could reach out for Him and find Him.  
One version says “feel after Him and find Him.”**

**Others versions say:-  
“grope for Him and find Him.”**

**I think this means that those before Christ  
who did not have the Jewish way  
could find God in the best way they had.**

**It was possible for them to believe in God  
and do His will to the best  
of their knowledge and ability.**

**Acts 17:27;** “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though **He is not far from each one of us;**”



**The IMMANENCE  
(nearness) of God!**

**Acts 17:28;** “for in Him we live and move and have our being,  
as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'”

**Here is evidence that God is not far from each of us.  
He has not gone off somewhere a great distance  
away from His creation. He is concerned  
about each individual person in His world.**

**Three verbs **Live, Move, Being**, can refer  
to our absolute dependence on God.**

**Some think they deal with the philosophical ideas of  
Paul's audience? "**live**" speaks of our animal life  
"**move**" speaks of our emotions:- fear, love, hate.  
"**being**" speaks of our intellect and ability to chose.**

**Acts 17:28;** “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.’”

Still a third suggestion is that the **three verbs** speak of **past, present, and future.**

That we **live** at all is His gift;  
that we have the **power to move** now is His gift;  
that we **continue to live** is His gift also.

The Stoics who were pantheists could have lived with what Paul was here saying, but remember that, **pantheism is really a corruption of the ideas of God's omnipresence and His providence.**

**Acts 17:28;** “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”

“As some of your own poets have said”

Paul, born and raised in a free Greco-Roman city had studied the classics of his world as well as the scriptures.

He knew what the great philosophers had taught.

He knew the literature of Greece and Rome.

It was **Aratus (310-250 BC)** who had said, “For we are indeed His offspring,” in line 5 of his poem “**Phaenomena,**” speaking of **Zeus.**

This quotation of the heathen poets would at once quicken the attention of the hearers. This was not an illiterate Jew, but a man of culture, acquainted with the thoughts of their own great poets.

(For other quotations of the Greek poets by Paul, see 1 Corinthians 15:33; and Titus 1:12;)

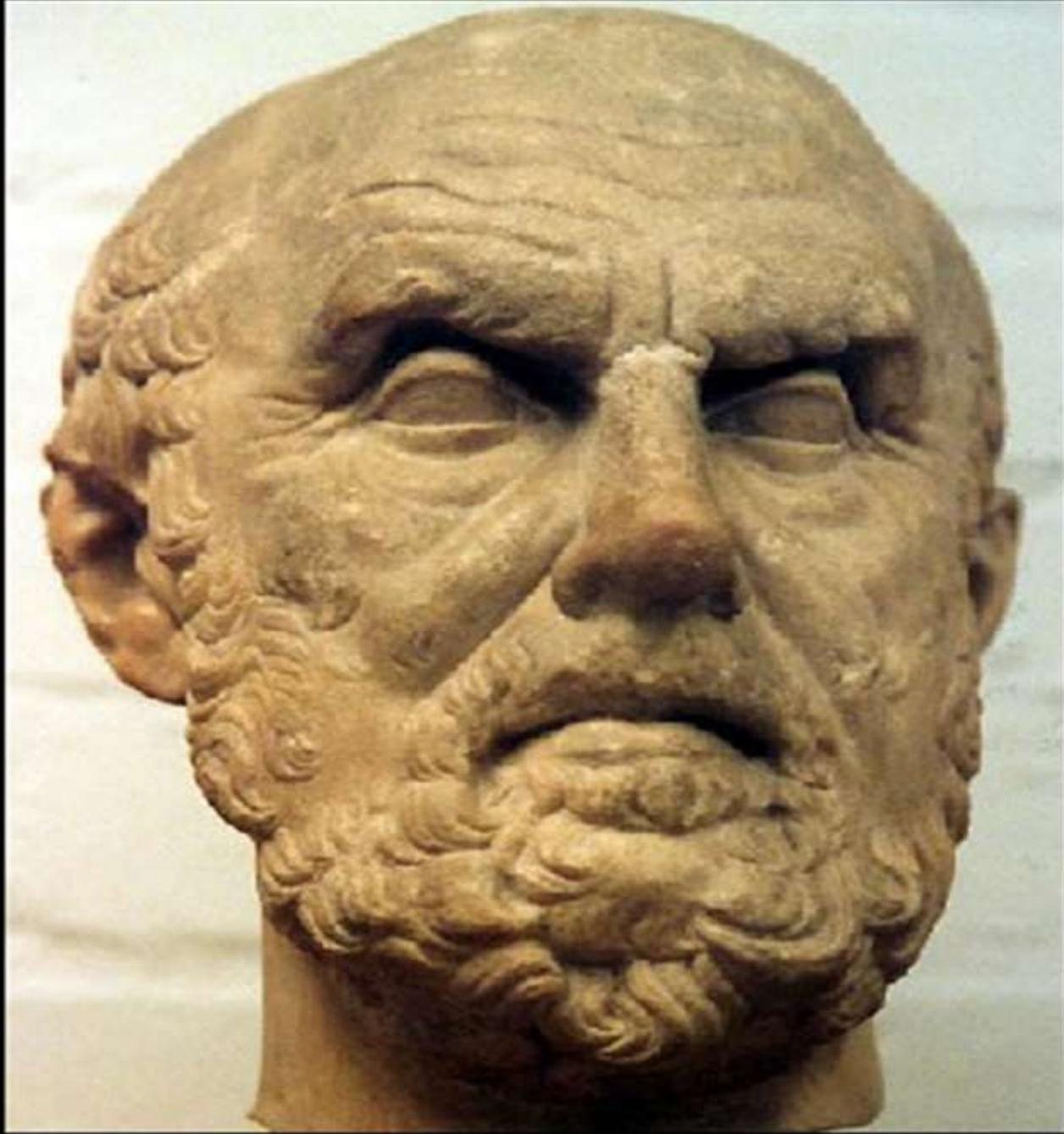
**Acts 17:28;** “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'”

Paul quotes the **Phaenomena of Aratus** not to show how clever he is, but **to show the Athenians that their religion is really idolatry.**

Paul strengthens his argument by quoting from an authority that the Athenians would respect.

**Paul uses the ideas and language of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers who were popular in first century Athens. Yet he does so to refute the commonly held belief in Athens that gods should be worshipped by means of temples, statues and altars.**

Paul uses this line from the poem of Aratus as a part of his message that the people must repent from the idolatry which characterized their lives



**Aratus**

**Acts 17:28;** “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.’”

**Then the apostle argues that the pantheism which the Stoics taught was also a misconception of the true God as He revealed Himself in His Word and through His Son.**

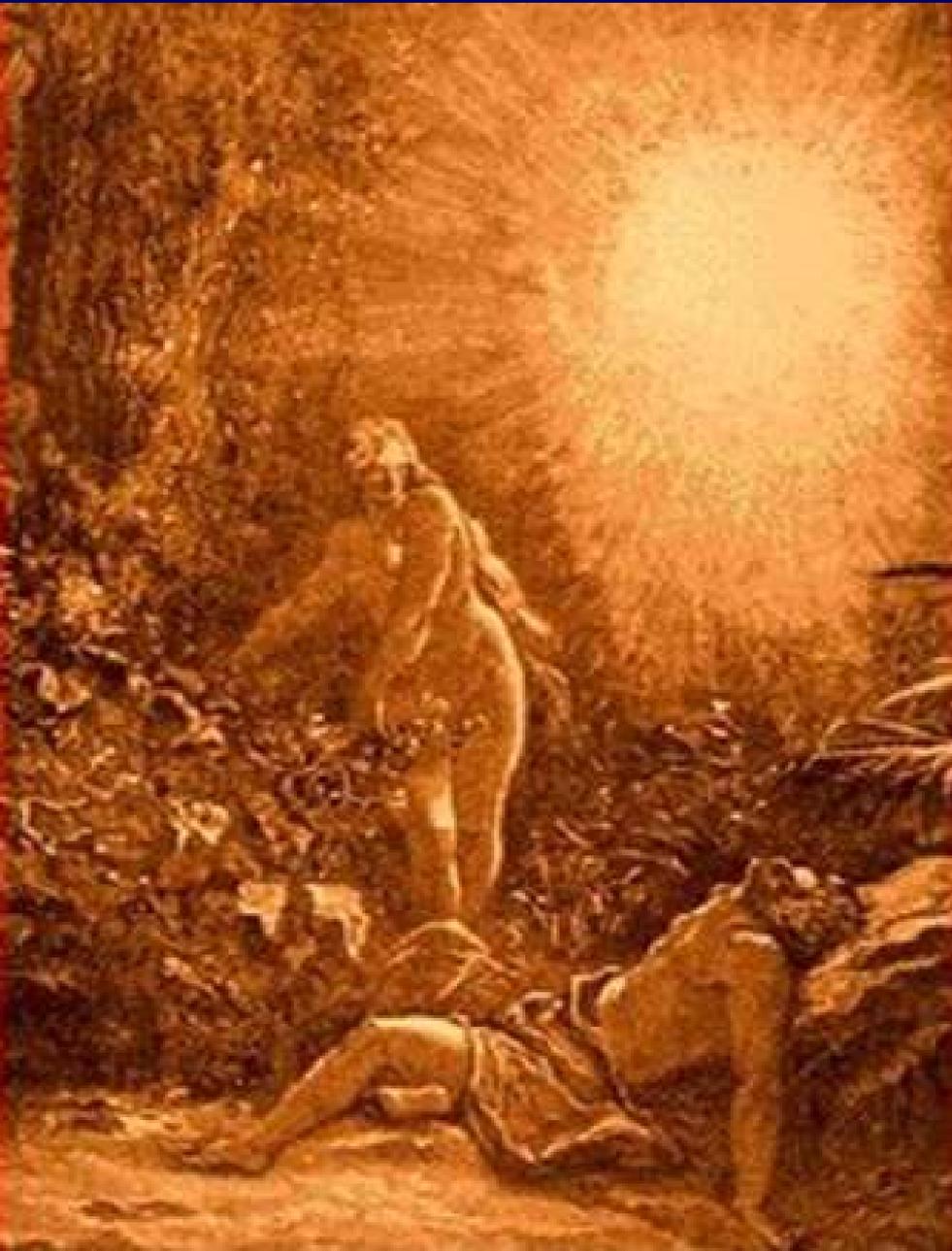
**We are like God since we are His offspring.**

**We have our body from Adam,  
God made his body from the dirt.**

**If man is the offspring of God,  
then something created by man is less than God.  
God is above everything man makes.**

**Therefore, to exalt the works of man's hand  
above God is to degrade  
the exalted position of both God and man.**

**Acts 17:28;** “for in Him we live and move and have our being,  
as also some of your own poets have said, **'For we are also His offspring.'**”



**Acts 17:29;** “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.”

The argument of the apostle is this, **Children resemble their parents**. Since we are God's children, it is absurd to think that God is a stick or stone.

You are not a stick or stone, or gold, are you?

Where did you ever get the idea that God (your father) is a stick or a stone?

**"Divine nature" is neuter in the Greek, and Paul may use this expression in order to get behind all the Athenian of various gods to the real nature of God.**

The Greek here could be translated either **"we ought not think,"** which would be **criticism;** or **"we are not obligated to think."** which would be **an appeal** to the listeners to give some thought to these new ideas presented to them.

**Acts 17:29;** “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.”

**Paul says, knowing that we are God's offspring then we must have the right concepts about God in our mind.**

**Every true Believer must understand that **The Divine Nature is not:-  
GOLD, SILVER, STONES.****

**Let's not get confused, God is not a material thing, God does not grant material things every time we want, many Christians believe that the Lord is the stock market.**



**Acts 17:29;** “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.”

All these materials were used in making images or statues or temples for the at Athens. **Phidias** had made a lavish use of gold for his colossal statue of Zeus.

Very productive silver mines at Laurium (east of Athens) and the marble quarries at Mt. Pentelicus (north of town) supplied the materials , in the idols and temples.

It is absurd to think that the source of all life and intelligence, yes and man too, resembles a lifeless block of wood or stone precious metal.

**Acts 17:29;** “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.”

The latter part of this phrase may be Paul's criticism of the way in pagan societies, in which **human thought** becomes the measure of gods.

Like **Xenophanes**, some 600 years before, Paul has seen how they are made in the likeness of men.

**The Thracians** represented their gods having blue eyes and fair complexions;  
**The Ethiopians** represented their's as flat-nosed and swarthy.  
**"Image formed by art"** speaks of something sculptured.

**Acts 17:29;** “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.”

Even though the Bible says:- Do not think that God is an image, **people continue to make their carved images and pray unto them**, bow down in front of them and praise them as if they were God!



**Acts 17:30;** “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

**These times of ignorance God overlooked.  
Which ones?**



**Acts 17:30;** “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

**Paul says that God will not justify anyone based on ignorance. There is no such thing anymore. It was for the same reason that Jesus said:-**

**Luke 13:3; "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."**

**God now demands that all men repent.**

**There are two reasons why man is to repent.**

**Man is to repent because of his sin and idolatry.**

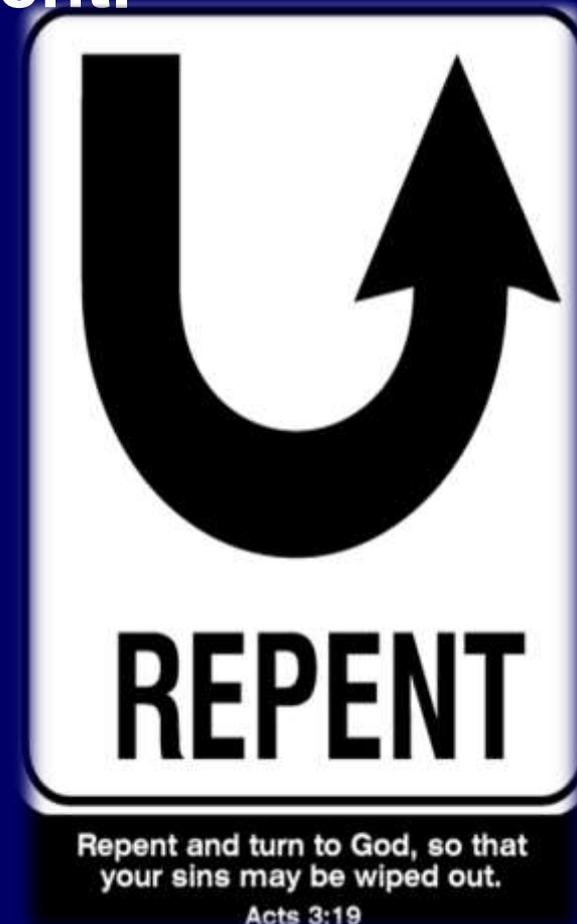
**Man is not to worship idols of any sort, whether invisible or visible, of the mind or of materials, of the imagination or of the world.**

**Acts 17:30;** “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

**To ignore God is a sin.**

**Idols do not command men to repent but the True God Does. God cannot save anyone that is not willing to repent.**

**What does it mean to REPENT?**  
**It means to turn or return to God**  
**and to not follow sin anymore.**  
**It means to hate sin and**  
**not practice it anymore.**  
**Matt 3:2; 4:17; Luke 13:3, 5;**  
**Acts 2:38; 3:19; 26:20;**



**Acts 17:30;** “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

The "times of ignorance" was that long period, before the preaching of the Gospel, when men ignorant of the true God, because they had no written revelation. (Compare God's dealings with the Gentiles in old times. Acts 14:16;)

**"Overlooked"** equals **"looked beyond."** God, when He was giving a partial revelation (Old Testament) to the Jews only, looked beyond to the time when the revelation of His will would be complete (the New Testament) and be made to all (Gentiles as well as Jews.)

What Paul is saying is similar to what Jesus once said, “The servant who knew not his Lord's will, committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will be beaten with few stripes.” (Luke 12:48;)

**Acts 17:30;** “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

Man is to repent because **the days of ignorance are over**. Before now God overlooked man's ignorance, not in the sense of closing His eyes or of condoning man's idolatry.

He overlooked man's ignorance until He could prepare man for the coming of His Son. **In times past He had sent a MESSAGE! NOW He has REVEALED HIMSELF ANEW IN HIS SON.**

**God's Son has come,  
and God demands that all men repent.**

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

For he has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man

He has appointed.

He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Our dependency and His nature both point to judgment.

The RESURRECTION  
is the CENTRAL POINT of the GOSPEL.



**Jesus is coming!**

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**Jesus is coming!**

All men will be in front of Jesus  
because has appointed one day for that.

**When will it be? When Jesus returns.**

God has appointed a day to judge the world.

The word "**appointed**" is significant.

**The day of judgment is set, already determined.**

**The judgment concerns righteousness, how men have lived and behaved. Life does not cease at the grave. (Epicureans, the pleasure-seekers.)**

**Nor does life just pass into one large ball of energy with everyone entering into God. (Stoics)**

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**Life is purposeful, which means:-  
It is planned and guided by love and care.  
It is just and righteous.**

**God has now revealed Himself  
in the gospel of Jesus the Christ and has  
given assurance to all people that there will be  
a universal judgment at the end of time.**

**The proof that this judgment is sure to come  
and that Jesus is the man who will do the judging  
was His resurrection.**



**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats." Matthew 25:31-32;**

**"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." Rom 2:16;**

**"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12;**

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

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**"By His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3:7;**

**"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 14;**

**"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev 20:12;**

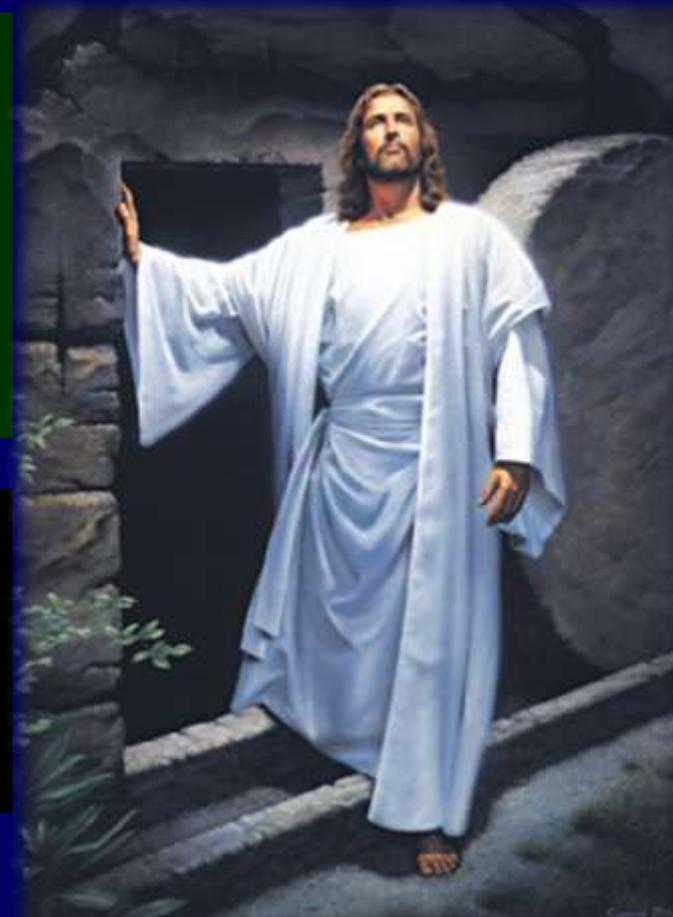
**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**What is the assurance that we have that the Judgement is true?**

**THE RESURRECTION.**

**Jesus appeared  
To some people who  
were chosen and  
appointed to be witnesses.**

**Three points are  
stressed about Jesus'  
resurrection appearances.**



**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**1. God showed Jesus openly,** which means that God set Jesus before people so that He could be visibly, openly, and publicly seen. **God manifested, showed, and set Him forth as the Risen Lord.**

“During the forty days after His crucifixion He appeared to the apostles from time to time, actually alive, and proved to them in many ways that it was really He himself they were seeing.

And on these occasions He talked to them about the Kingdom of God.” Acts 1:3;

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

## **2. Jesus appeared to chosen witnesses.**

The word "**chosen before**", means to be pointed out, **to be designated.**

Before Christ ever arose, **God chose some people to be witnesses of His Son's resurrection.** They were chosen for the very **purpose of proclaiming the resurrection to a world of dying men.**

**“I have told these men all about you. They were in the world, but then you gave them to me. Actually, they were always yours, and you gave them to me; and they have obeyed you.”**

**(John 17:6;)**

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

The witnesses did **"eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead."** They had close and intimate fellowship with Him. (1 John 1:1-4;) John said this for two reasons:-

a) To stress that he and the other witnesses had real contact with the risen Lord. They not only **saw Him**, they **"ate and drank,"** **communed** and **fellowshipped with Him.**

They were as closely associated with Him as persons can be.

**They were true, verifiable witnesses.**

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**b) To stress that Jesus actually arose from the dead. The Person they saw was the Jesus whom they knew. His body was real. It was really Him; His body had been resurrected.**

**Acts 2:23-24; Acts 3:14-15; Acts 4:33;  
Acts 10:39-41; Acts 17:2-3; Romans 1:4;**

**The reason for God to appoint the day of Judgement is that the resurrection of Jesus is a FACT, that no one can deny.**

**Because of the resurrection, we believe that He will return again.**

**Acts 17:31;** “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**God’s nation is now a spiritual one, the church, also called the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven or family of God.**

**Anyone can enter this kingdom through the new birth: Faith, repentance and baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins. (John 3:3-5;)**

**Acts 17:32;** “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”

**Matthew 27:42;** “people, priests and the elders mock Jesus, and shout at Him while He is hanging on the cross: “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”

**2 reactions:- Some mocked.** In particular, they mocked the resurrection. Most either felt that life just ceased at death or else that a person passed into some fluffy cloud, some half-slumber and half-conscious state of being.

**Some put off making a decision.** They were thoughtful, trying to grasp the message and think through the implications, what living a life of righteousness would mean, the great price they would have to pay. They were just not ready to make such a commitment, not yet.

**Acts 17:32;** “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”

**Felix told Paul the same thing  
when he was teaching him. Acts 24:25;**

**“Some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife  
who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him  
speak about faith in Christ Jesus.”**

**“But as he was discussing righteousness,  
self-control and the judgment to come,  
Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the  
present, and when I find time I will summon you.”**

**Acts 17:32;** “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”

**How do we share the good news with people?**

We have to **begin where they are**  
and we need to **be honest** with people

But not in a rude way.



**“Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.”**

**Acts 8:35;**

**“We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”** **2 Cor 4:2;**

**Acts 17:32;** “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”

## **How do we share the good news with people?**

We have to begin where they are  
and we need to be honest with people

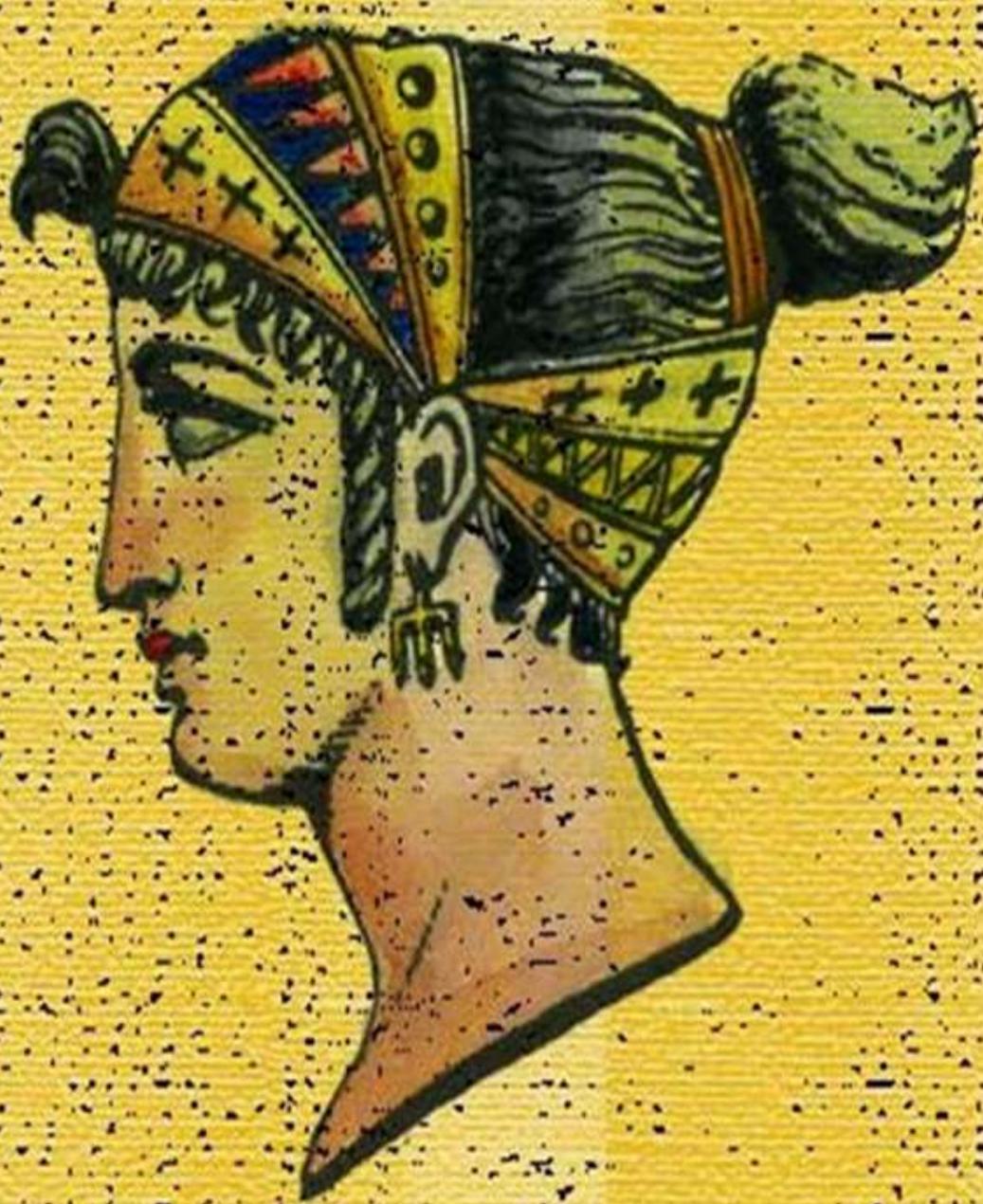
But not in a rude way.



“To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law:- so as to win those not having The law. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”

**1Cor 9:20-22;**

“As we said before, so say I now again, **If any man preach any other gospel** unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.” Gal 1:6-9;



**Ancient Greek hair style – Man and Woman**

**Acts 17:33-34;** “So Paul went out of their midst.

But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them..”

“Paul turned away from them.” He had done his duty and **proclaimed the glorious message of salvation.** Now it was **up to the audience to respond** or not.

“Some believed.” **Dionysius** was one of the judges of the great court of Athens.

**Damaris** was the name of a woman. A woman willing and ready to listen and to obey God’s word. **That is all we know about Damaris.**

There were also others who were saved, but they were unnamed.

**Acts 17:33-34;** “So Paul went out of their midst.

But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them..”

**As with any sermon to a mixed and varied audience,  
the response will also be varied.**

**Some will believe**

**and make the necessary changes in their lives.**

**Some will scoff, some will ridicule the teacher and  
his ideas and some even violently oppose them.**

**We don't choose or decide what God is like.**

**We must come to grips with the God who is there,  
and what He has revealed about Himself  
through His revealed word!**

**God wants us to understand more about Him**

**There is a relationship on offer to us**

**He wants us to grasp hold of that through His Son!**

**Acts 17:33-34;** “So Paul went out of their midst.

But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them..”

There is no record of Paul having established a congregation in Athens, and it is possible that he may have felt that his efforts failed, because:-

When he later wrote to the Corinthians, and that was his next stopping-place,

He wrote, that when he came to them **he determined not to know anything at all among them, EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.**

# Conclusion.

**We are not very far from the Athens of Paul,  
when you think about it.**

**We live in an age when a great many  
so-called intellectual and cultured people  
who believe in RIDICULOUS things.**

**Horoscopes. Astrology. Black magic. Witchcraft.**

**People still worship the goddess  
of the physical - DEMETER.**

**Or the goddess of the intellectual - ATHENS.**

**Or the god of force - ZEUS.**

# Conclusion.

The god of **RUMOUR** has his scriptures  
printed every day!

And there are **altars to SHAME EVERYWHERE!**

The **EPICUREANS** believe only in this life  
and intend to have a good time –  
and make that the aim of life - **are all around us.**

The **STOIC ARE STILL HERE –**  
just as indifferent just as unconcerned as ever.

As Christians, **we should, like Paul FEEL disturbed**  
about what we see around us, and refuse  
to let the world press us into its mould, so that  
we become insensitive to **the error** that fills the world.

# Conclusion.

**This is Paul's second missionary journey, up to now, Paul and his partners have preached the gospel in Europe and established churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and possibly in Athens.**

**He had sent word for Silas and Timothy to come to him in Athens.**

**They do not come in a reasonable period of time, so Paul decides to go on to Corinth.**

**He will write the one of the first letters of the New Testament, his first letter to the Thessalonians from Corinth.**



We  
continually remember  
before our God and Father  
your work  
produced by faith,  
your labor  
prompted by love,  
and your endurance  
inspired by hope  
in our Lord  
Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey so far:-**  
**Acts 15:36 Antioch in Syria**  
**to Athens 17:34;**



**2nd Missionary Journey.**  
**Acts 15:36; to 18:22;**

**Paul & Silas**

**Barnabas & John Mark.**

**Paul, Barnabas & Silas plus other evangelists.**

**Jerusalem**

# **2nd Missionary Journey**

## **Part 3**

### **Acts 17:14-34; - Athens.**

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**Next in the series:-**  
**Corinth to Antioch in Syria. Acts 18:1-22;**