

# Paul Preaches in Athens I

5-17-2020

## Acts 17:22-34

**Introduction:** After being chased out of Thessalonica & Berea for preaching the good news about Jesus, the apostle Paul spent a few days in the city of Athens. While waiting he did a little sightseeing. Paul came to Athens as a sightseer and became a soul winner. Paul did not purpose to evangelize these Gentiles, but he could not help but do so when he was deeply stirred in his soul over their rampant idolatry. Paul's speech becomes a model for how to witness to the educated post-Christian mind, even as it spoke to Theophilus and his fellow seekers with their first-century pre-Christian minds; proclaiming the Gospel with Integrity (17:16-21)

### I. Paul at Athens.

1. Athens, it was said of Athens: a “wealth of mentality.”
2. The city was, “wholly given to idolatry.” All Paul could see was sin and superstition.
3. Paul's, “spirit was stirred within him.” “He was greatly distressed.” niv
  - a. When we look at the condition of the world today, how do we react?
  - b. Paul's response to the idolatry in Athens is instructive for us because we are living in an increasingly pagan environment.

### II. The law of connection - John Maxwell

1. Paul was effective in Athens.
  - a. Effective soul winners *connect* before they *expect*.
  - b. Connection precedes decision.
  - c. Paul started where they were. When we speak about Jesus, we must understand our audience well. Paul found some common ground with his listeners.
  - d. We must demonstrate compassion but avoid a judgmental spirit.

### III. The sermon.

1. The creative power of God. v.24
2. The spiritual character of God. v.25 (James 1:17).
3. The universal Brotherhood of man. v.26
4. The overruling providence of God. v.26
5. Man's need of God. v. 27
6. The Universality of the presence of God. v. 27
7. That God Himself is the source of all Life. v. 28
8. A challenge to the sermon; repent. v. 30

### IV. God's purpose: “that they should seek the Lord.” v. 27

1. God's purpose in arranging time and place so providentially for men and women's well-being.
2. God is close and personal.

### V. The mixed response.

1. Some mocked, sneered, scoffed. v. 32
2. Some hesitated. v. 32 The Stoics seem to respond to Paul with jaded curiosity.
  - a. Paul will encounter such exercises in procrastination again. 24:25; 26:28
  - b. Those who delay commitment must watch out lest they procrastinate all the way to the judgment seat of Christ.
3. Some believed. v. 34
  - a. God desires the same believing response from those that hear the gospel today.

