

1) READ ACTS 17

2) LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE

A) SEARCH THE VIVE STUDENT MINISTRY ON YOUTUBE

B) CLICK THE ACTS 17 MESSAGE

3) CHECK OUT THE MESSAGE POINTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AT THE END

BONUS

VISIT YOUTUBE AND SEARCH PAUL IN ATHENS FULL DOCUMENTARY ON ACTS 17 BY PDX OUTREACH



BACKGROUND | CONTEXT

THE THESSALONIANS ACT MUCH LIKE THE PEOPLE OF ANTIOCH AND ICONIUM. SOME BELIEVE THEIR MESSAGE (ACTS 13:48-52; 14:1-7), BUT OTHERS NOT ONLY RUN THE MISSIONARIES OUT OF THESSALONICA, THEY ALSO FOLLOW THEM TO BEREIA AND CHASE THEM OUT OF THAT TOWN, AS WELL.

ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS CRIMES IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE WAS TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO ANY KING BUT CAESAR (17:7)

AS A RESULT, PAUL IS RAN OUT OF TOWN AND LANDS IN ATHENS AND THIS IS WHERE THE MAIN STAGE IS SET FOR ACTS 17.

PAUL ENTERS ATHENS AND IS DEEPLY TROUBLED BY THE FALSE IDOLS HE WITNESSED.

HE THEN GOES HEAD TO HEAD WITH SOME OF THE WISEST PHILOSOPHERS OF THE DAY TO BOLDLY PREACH THE GOSPEL AND TO TELL THEM ABOUT THE ONE TRUE GOD.

UNDERSTANDING ATHENS HISTORICALLY IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING ACTS 17 SPIRITUALLY.

FOR FURTHER STUDY CHECK OUT BIBLE REF & SEARCH ACTS 17

ACTS

BACKGROUND | CONTEXT

ATHENS: THE CULTURAL CENTER OF GREECE. ATHENS WAS HOME TO THE MOST RENOWNED PHILOSOPHERS IN HISTORY,

INCLUDING SOCRATES, PLATO, AND ARISTOTLE, WHO WAS ARGUABLY THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PHILOSOPHER OF ALL. TWO OTHER SIGNIFICANT PHILOSOPHERS TAUGHT THERE: EPICURUS, FOUNDER OF EPICUREANISM, AND ZENO, FOUNDER OF STOICISM—TWO OF THE DOMINANT PHILOSOPHIES IN THAT DAY (17:15)

ATHENS: A CITY THAT WAS FULL OF IDOLS. ATHENS WAS ALSO THE RELIGIOUS CENTER OF GREECE—VIRTUALLY EVERY DEITY KNOWN TO MAN COULD BE WORSHIPED THERE. PAUL VIEWED ATHENS AS A CITY OF LOST HUMANITY, ALL DOOMED TO A CHRISTLESS ETERNITY BECAUSE OF RAMPANT PAGAN IDOLATRY. (17:16)

EPICUREANS WERE MATERIALISTS—THEY DID NOT DENY THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, BUT THEY BELIEVED HE DID NOT BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE AFFAIRS OF MEN. WHEN A PERSON DIED, THEY BELIEVED HIS BODY AND SOUL DISINTEGRATED.

STOIC PHILOSOPHY TAUGHT SELF-MASTERY—THAT THE GOAL IN LIFE WAS TO REACH A PLACE OF INDIFFERENCE TO PLEASURE OR PAIN.

THE ATHENIANS WERE SUPERNATURALISTS—THEY BELIEVED IN SUPERNATURAL POWERS THAT INTERVENED IN THE COURSE OF NATURAL LAWS. THEY AT LEAST ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXISTENCE OF SOMEONE BEYOND THEIR ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND WHO HAD MADE ALL THINGS.

**FOR FURTHER STUDY CHECK OUT
BIBLE REF & SEARCH ACTS 17**

ACTS

MAIN POINTS

FALSE IDOLS ARE FALSE.

FALSE IDOLS IN OUR WORLD SHOULD TROUBLE US.

JESUS IS THE ONE TRUE GOD.

STAND ON WHAT IS TRUE & DON'T BE SWAYED.

IT TAKES BOLDNESS IN OUR FAITH, WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER & KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD TO GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH THE WORLD.



ACTS 17:1-3 NLT

PAUL AND SILAS THEN TRAVELED THROUGH THE TOWNS OF AMPHIPOLIS AND APOLLONIA AND CAME TO THESSALONICA, WHERE THERE WAS A JEWISH SYNAGOGUE. 2 AS WAS PAUL'S CUSTOM, HE WENT TO THE SYNAGOGUE SERVICE, AND FOR THREE SABBATHS IN A ROW HE USED THE SCRIPTURES TO REASON WITH THE PEOPLE. 3 HE EXPLAINED THE PROPHECIES AND PROVED THAT THE MESSIAH MUST SUFFER AND RISE FROM THE DEAD. HE SAID, "THIS JESUS I'M TELLING YOU ABOUT IS THE MESSIAH."



ACTS 17:4-6 NLT

4 SOME OF THE JEWS WHO LISTENED WERE PERSUADED AND JOINED PAUL AND SILAS, ALONG WITH MANY GOD-FEARING GREEK MEN AND QUITE A FEW PROMINENT WOMEN. 5 BUT SOME OF THE JEWS WERE JEALOUS, SO THEY GATHERED SOME TROUBLEMAKERS FROM THE MARKETPLACE TO FORM A MOB AND START A RIOT. THEY ATTACKED THE HOME OF JASON, SEARCHING FOR PAUL AND SILAS SO THEY COULD DRAG THEM OUT TO THE CROWD.



ACTS 17:6-7 NLT

6 NOT FINDING THEM THERE, THEY DRAGGED OUT JASON AND SOME OF THE OTHER BELIEVERS INSTEAD AND TOOK THEM BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL. “PAUL AND SILAS HAVE CAUSED TROUBLE ALL OVER THE WORLD,” THEY SHOUTED, “AND NOW THEY ARE HERE DISTURBING OUR CITY, TOO. 7 AND JASON HAS WELCOMED THEM INTO HIS HOME. THEY ARE ALL GUILTY OF TREASON AGAINST CAESAR, FOR THEY PROFESS ALLEGIANCE TO ANOTHER KING, NAMED JESUS.”



ACTS 17:8-9 NLT

8 THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY, AS WELL AS THE CITY COUNCIL, WERE THROWN INTO TURMOIL BY THESE REPORTS. 9 SO THE OFFICIALS FORCED JASON AND THE OTHER BELIEVERS TO POST BOND, AND THEN THEY RELEASED THEM



ACTS 17:10-12 NLT

10 THAT VERY NIGHT THE BELIEVERS SENT PAUL AND SILAS TO BEREA. WHEN THEY ARRIVED THERE, THEY WENT TO THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE. 11 AND THE PEOPLE OF BEREA WERE MORE OPEN-MINDED THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA, AND THEY LISTENED EAGERLY TO PAUL'S MESSAGE. THEY SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAY AFTER DAY TO SEE IF PAUL AND SILAS WERE TEACHING THE TRUTH. 12 AS A RESULT, MANY JEWS BELIEVED, AS DID MANY OF THE PROMINENT GREEK WOMEN AND MEN.



ACTS 17:13-15 NLT

13 BUT WHEN SOME JEWS IN THESSALONICA LEARNED THAT PAUL WAS PREACHING THE WORD OF GOD IN BEREA, THEY WENT THERE AND STIRRED UP TROUBLE. 14 THE BELIEVERS ACTED AT ONCE, SENDING PAUL ON TO THE COAST, WHILE SILAS AND TIMOTHY REMAINED BEHIND. 15 THOSE ESCORTING PAUL WENT WITH HIM ALL THE WAY TO ATHENS; THEN THEY RETURNED TO BEREA WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR SILAS AND TIMOTHY TO HURRY AND JOIN HIM



ACTS 17:16 NLT

16 WHILE PAUL WAS WAITING FOR THEM IN ATHENS, HE WAS DEEPLY TROUBLED BY ALL THE IDOLS HE SAW EVERYWHERE IN THE CITY.



ACTS 17:17-18 NLT

17 HE WENT TO THE SYNAGOGUE TO REASON WITH THE JEWS AND THE GOD-FEARING GENTILES, AND HE SPOKE DAILY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE TO ALL WHO HAPPENED TO BE THERE. 18 HE ALSO HAD A DEBATE WITH SOME OF THE EPICUREAN AND STOIC PHILOSOPHERS. WHEN HE TOLD THEM ABOUT JESUS AND HIS RESURRECTION, THEY SAID, “WHAT’S THIS BABBLER TRYING TO SAY WITH THESE STRANGE IDEAS HE’S PICKED UP?” OTHERS SAID, “HE SEEMS TO BE PREACHING ABOUT SOME FOREIGN GODS.”



ACTS 17:19-21 NLT

THEN THEY TOOK HIM TO THE HIGH COUNCIL OF THE CITY. "COME AND TELL US ABOUT THIS NEW TEACHING," THEY SAID. [20] "YOU ARE SAYING SOME RATHER STRANGE THINGS, AND WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT." [21] (IT SHOULD BE EXPLAINED THAT ALL THE ATHENIANS AS WELL AS THE FOREIGNERS IN ATHENS SEEMED TO SPEND ALL THEIR TIME DISCUSSING THE LATEST IDEAS.)



ACTS 17:22-23 NLT

SO PAUL, STANDING BEFORE THE COUNCIL, ADDRESSED THEM AS FOLLOWS: "MEN OF ATHENS, I NOTICE THAT YOU ARE VERY RELIGIOUS IN EVERY WAY, [23] FOR AS I WAS WALKING ALONG I SAW YOUR MANY SHRINES. AND ONE OF YOUR ALTARS HAD THIS INSCRIPTION ON IT: 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' THIS GOD, WHOM YOU WORSHIP WITHOUT KNOWING, IS THE ONE I'M TELLING YOU ABOUT.



ACTS 17:24-26 NLT

"HE IS THE GOD WHO MADE THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT. SINCE HE IS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, HE DOESN'T LIVE IN MAN-MADE TEMPLES, [25] AND HUMAN HANDS CAN'T SERVE HIS NEEDS-FOR HE HAS NO NEEDS. HE HIMSELF GIVES LIFE AND BREATH TO EVERYTHING, AND HE SATISFIES EVERY NEED. [26] FROM ONE MAN HE CREATED ALL THE NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH. HE DECIDED BEFOREHAND WHEN THEY SHOULD RISE AND FALL, AND HE DETERMINED THEIR BOUNDARIES.



ACTS 17:27-29 NLT

[27] "HIS PURPOSE WAS FOR THE NATIONS TO SEEK AFTER GOD AND PERHAPS FEEL THEIR WAY TOWARD HIM AND FIND HIM-THOUGH HE IS NOT FAR FROM ANY ONE OF US. [28] FOR IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND EXIST. AS SOME OF YOUR OWN POETS HAVE SAID, 'WE ARE HIS OFFSPRING.' [29] AND SINCE THIS IS TRUE, WE SHOULDN'T THINK OF GOD AS AN IDOL DESIGNED BY CRAFTSMEN FROM GOLD OR SILVER OR STONE.



ACTS 17:30-31 NLT

"GOD OVERLOOKED PEOPLE'S IGNORANCE ABOUT THESE THINGS IN EARLIER TIMES, BUT NOW HE COMMANDS EVERYONE EVERYWHERE TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS AND TURN TO HIM. [31] FOR HE HAS SET A DAY FOR JUDGING THE WORLD WITH JUSTICE BY THE MAN HE HAS APPOINTED, AND HE PROVED TO EVERYONE WHO THIS IS BY RAISING HIM FROM THE DEAD."



ACTS 17:32-33 NLT

WHEN THEY HEARD PAUL SPEAK ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, SOME LAUGHED IN CONTEMPT, BUT OTHERS SAID, "WE WANT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THIS LATER." [33] THAT ENDED PAUL'S DISCUSSION WITH THEM,



ACTS 17 DISCUSSION

Q. WHY WAS PAUL RAN OUT OF TOWN AT THE BEGINNING OF ACTS 17 & FORCED TO GO TO ATHENS?

Q. WHAT WAS PAUL TROUBLED BY WHEN HE ARRIVED IN ATHENS? WHY WAS HE TROUBLED BY THIS?

Q. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE BELIEF SYSTEMS HELD BY THE PHILOSOPHERS IN ATHENS?

Q. WHAT WAS PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE PHILOSOPHERS?

Q. HOW IS CHRIST DIFFERENT THAN THE FALSE IDOLS MANY IN ATHENS WORSHIPPED?

Q. WHAT DID PAUL USE TO REASON WITH FOR EACH PEOPLE GROUP?

Q. HOW DID KNOWING SCRIPTURE HELP PAUL WHEN HE FACED THE WORDLY BELIEF SYSTEMS THAT WERE HELD BY SO MANY?

Q. HOW CAN KNOWING SCRIPTURE HELP US NAVIGATE THROUGH WORLDLY BELIEF SYSTEMS TODAY?



PERSONAL DISCUSSION

Q. WHAT CONVICTED YOU, CHALLENGED YOU, OR STOOD OUT TO YOU PERSONALLY FROM THE MESSAGE OR FROM ACTS 17?

Q. WHY SHOULD FALSE IDOLS TROUBLE US SPIRITUALLY?

Q. DO YOU KNOW GOD'S WORD WELL ENOUGH TO REASON WITH THOSE WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Q. HOW CAN KNOWING GOD'S WORD WELL ENOUGH TO REASON WITH THE WORLD HELP OUR WITNESS TO THOSE WHO DON'T BELIEVE?

Q. WHY DOES IT TAKE BOLDNESS TO FOLLOW CHRIST AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD?

Q. HOW CAN BOLDNESS BE A GOOD WITNESS TO THOSE WHO DON'T BELIEVE?

Q. HOW CAN SUFFERING IN OUR WALK WITH CHRIST BRING GOD GLORY?

Q. DOES YOUR FAITH RESEMBLE A FAITH LIKE PAUL HAD? WHAT CHANGES DO YOU NEED TO MAKE TO HAVE A FAITH MORE LIKE HIS?

