



Paul ZEALOUS for the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ > RISEN KING  
Wanted ALL Athens > ALL WORLD > Bow in Confession and Praise

City of Great BRILLIANCE > home of heroes Socrates, Plato, Aristotle

Athens - Roman Empire's INTELLECTUAL METROPOLIS

v. 18 “A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him.”

EPICUREANS = Life is CHANCE – try to ESCAPE & ENJOY LIFE!  
STOICS = FATE is CONTROLLED – you must SUBMIT - ENDURE LIFE!

ATHENS HELD THE GLORIES OF ANCIENT GREECE

Center - Philosophy / Literature / Art / Democracy

Aesthetically Magnificent / Culturally Sophisticated

Morally Decadent / Spiritually Dead

v. 19, 20 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean."

ATHENS TALK RADIO: Craving new ideas / strange ideas / latest ideas

v. 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

Like People GLUED to TV NEWS CHANNELS > Got to KNOW the LATEST

The fear of becoming a ‘has been’ keeps some people from becoming anything.

Eric Hoffer

Paul MORE THAN SIGHT-SEER > Came to Athens as a SOUL WINNER

Europe is looked over by millions of visitors and over-looked by millions of Christians.  
Noel O. Lyons

v. 18 Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.  
WE SAY – Amen! Go for it! Preach it Paul!

They: v. 18 "What is this babbler trying to say?" / Seed Picker / Scavenger Bird

Jesus and the Resurrection = “Jesus”/male "anastasis"/female > Man & Wife?

TODAY some May Say – I Never Heard of that Rock band?

GOOD NEWS of Blessing to Us / May sound like Babble to the Unbelievers  
v. 18 Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods."

1. Strategy

2. Sermon

3. Summary

1. Strategy

a. He went to “the Church” > if it were today, Paul would come to ICF

v. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks

BELIEVERS need to Hear the Good News of God’s Love > Again & Again

SING: “I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest. And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song, ‘twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long”

Weak Christians? / Weak Church? - POOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD  
Be Not Conformed by spirit of this age / But Be Transformed by God's Spirit

Book of Daniel > Time of Crisis - People of God in pagan nation:

...the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

Daniel 11.32

b. He went to the Marketplace > Today > Paul preaching at MEGA Mall

v. 17 “as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there”

AGORA > market, meeting place, center of Public Social Life  
// Shopping Mall – Public Park – Bar & Grill – School Auditorium

Jesus: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."  
Matthew 5.14

DARED to ENTER the Public Square > Message of God’s Eternal Kingdom

NOT AFRAID OF ATHENIANS > More AFRAID FOR them  
Ex. MADDIE’S 1<sup>st</sup> Trip to Bar > INVITED by Fried been PRAYING FOR

LAST WORDS LUKE TELLS US ABOUT PAUL > house prison in Rome  
Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Acts 28.31

c. He went to the Areopagus > Today: Find this radical in the Akimat

v. 19 “Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus”  
// Highest Seat of Government – Courthouse – University

From Areopagus > City Fathers of Athens > oversaw all Religion & Education  
// Modern Media – Center of Ideas and Influence  
Lawmakers / Professors / Journalists / Producers / Broadcasters

There is an urgent need for more Christian thinkers who will dedicate their minds to Christ, not only as lecturers, but also as authors, journalists, dramatists and broadcasters, as television script-writers, producers and personalities, and as artists and actors who use a variety of art forms in which to communicate the gospel.

John Stott

Message: Weak and Powerless Servant > Unjustly Nailed to a Cross  
 THAT SERVANT is SOVEREIGN GOD > NOW Risen in Power and Glory

MESSAGE for the CENTERS of Power, Influence, Government, Education

Athenians > God-thinkers, God-talkers, God-seekers  
 PAUL'S STRATEGY > was that they become GOD KNOWERS

Jesus: Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and  
 Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17.3

19<sup>th</sup> C England: Committed Christian – HENRY MARTYN – Bright, Promising  
 Top-Student at CAMBRIDGE Univ – Grad w/ HONORS & OFFERS  
 Turned DOWN > Offers of MARRIAGE and PROMINENT EMPLOYMENT

Went as M to INDIA > M's in Calcutta invited HM stay w/ them in COMFORT  
 Lived on FRONTIERS > Away from COMFORTS > Hard Places, Hard People

LIFE'S WORK > Saw ONLY ONE Person CONVERTED to Follow Jesus  
 Transl. Bible into URDU (Hindustani) and then into PERSIAN  
 LEFT BEHIND Inspirational DIARIES, Motivated many to Mission Service

“I could not endure existence of Jesus Christ were not glorified; it would be hell to  
 me, if he were always to be dishonored” Henry Martyn

## 2. Sermon

Some Sermons > AFFIRM Hearers Beliefs > Good when True Beliefs  
 Paul presents 8 IDEAS which CHALLENGE Core Beliefs of Athenian People

v. 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.”

1<sup>st</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – RELIGION IS GOOD

People in Athens > FLATTERED BY Paul's Intro “you are very religious”  
 Good Right!?! > Sunday Services / Singing Hymns / Sermons / Prayers

Pastor Spent Night at Ch Member's House > awakened by singing in kitchen

Woman of House singing > "Nearer My God to Thee"

Pastor: "I am very impressed by your morning devotional singing"

Woman: "Oh that's how I time my boiled eggs > 3 vss for Soft > 5 vss for Hard

...having a form of godliness but denying its power.

2 Timothy 3.5

Resurrection Viewpoint > JUST being Religious is BAD

Early Chs. of Romans > Problem of Religion > Try to Make Self Acceptable

Many Defined Religion by Most Popular Verse in Bible > NOT IN BIBLE

"God helps them that help themselves" Hezekiah 0.0

TRUE RELIGION "God helps them who CANNOT help themselves"

THOSE Humbled by Sin / Repentant / Broken by own Failures

Paul spent first part of his life doing religion the wrong way: TESTIMONY

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ"

Philippians 3.4-9

Jesus came to FORGE a RELATIONSHIP Not to FOUND a RELIGION

2<sup>nd</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – v. 23 God is UNKNOWABLE

v. 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.

Altar "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD" - fearfully wondered, forgot one?

It is hard to investigate and to find the framer of the universe. And, if one did find him, it would be impossible to express him in terms which we could understand.

Plato

The Supreme Cause is by all men dreamed of, and by no man known Aristotle

Man found little boy busily drawing a picture

Man "what are you drawing"

Boy "I am drawing a picture of God"

Man "But no one knows what God looks like"

Boy "When I finish this picture, everyone will know"

v. 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.

HOPED TO PLACATE EVERY POSSIBLE DEITY > gain Favor of all gods

Pastor in Hawaii > Called to Pray for Blessing on New Homes / Businesses

Mormon Bps / Buddhist Priests / Roman Catholic Priests / Hawaiian Chanters

All invited to call on our gods for the prosperity of their new enterprises!

v 23 Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you....

REALLY KNOW GOD? How? Sounds Arrogant? Exclusivist?

Difference Between - Theoretical and Experiential Knowledge

Red Double-Decker Buses in London/ diff btwn SEEING photos & RIDING 1

BIG DIFFERENCE btwn: What READ ABOUT / What DONE YOURSELF

Paul did not know God by Reason but by REVELATION > met X Personally

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection

Philippians 3.8,10

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – We can PUT GOD IN OUR BOXES

Paul is SHOCKED by Abundance of Athenians Temples and Shrines

Church Building is NOT God's House / Even Temple was not God's House  
 GOD does NOT Live in STAR'S CLUB > He can AFFORD NICER DIGS

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication for the Temple

But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! 1 Kings 8.27

v. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

Cannot LOCALIZE or LIMIT God / He's NOT our PRISONER or PUPPET

### 4<sup>th</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – God Needs us and our Gifts

gods of Athens > Surrounded by pagan priests and false worshippers

Church: "Isn't he a great servant of God? What would God do without him?"

Inflated view of OUR OWN IMPORTANCE > Power of OUR MINISTRIES

v. 25 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.

Paul Turns Tables on Athenians > God serves us! God sustains us!

God will not be TAMED or DOMESTICATED like a HOUSEHOLD PET

### 5<sup>th</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – God made different people from diff stock

Greeks, ESP. Athenians > Believed themselves Master Race / Superior Humans

NO ARYAN RACE / No Super Power Nations in God's Eyes  
 No First World / No Third World STATUS under His Sovereign Analysis

Everyone thinks they are the best / Everyone looks down on Everyone Else

v. 26 “From one man he made every nation of men”

No matter COLOR of our Skin, Same Sin-Tainted blood of Adam in our Veins  
ONLY BLOOD OF THE LAST ADAM CAN REDEEM US ALL FROM SIN

6<sup>th</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – Our life is a matter of Random Chance

Hawaii saying “Lucky you live Hawaii” / ONLY MATTER OF LUCK?

Is Life COSMIC ACCIDENT / CRUEL FATE / ULTIMATE MISTAKE?

v. 26 ...they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

We have Father in HEAVEN > Not just ME counting my hairs in Shower Drain  
GOD HIMSELF NUMBERED THEM > I am His Slowly Balding Child

7<sup>th</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – If there is a god, he must be very far off

Some – Even Christians! – call God “The man upstairs” / “The old man”  
PROMOTING IDEA that God is Drowsy, Distant, and Disinterested in Us

IDOLATRY > taking Name of God in Vain

We can only Rightly Call God > what He Teaches us to call Him  
Many names of God in Scripture > “Man Upstairs” is NOT ONE OF THEM

v. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’

Paul APPROVINGLY QUOTES > 6<sup>th</sup> C Greek Poet EPIMENIDES  
ALL TRUTH IS GOD’S TRUTH > from Greek poets / godless Rock Stars

Bible GOES FURTHER THAN EPIMENIDES > or even the Koran  
 Koran: *“God is closer than your JUGULAR VEIN”/ Warm Fuzzy Feeling!*

JESUS: PERSONALIZES Truth “I am with you always” Matthew 28.20

8<sup>th</sup> Challenge > Popular Idea – We can fashion god into our own image

Thus, we ultimately control him > We set the Agenda of Life and Eternity  
 Some Venerate > Shrines, Graves > Places of Spiritual Power  
 Some Wear > Charms and Jewels > Provide Spiritual Protection

v. 28 As some of your own poets have said, `We are his offspring.' "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by man's design and skill.

GOD IS LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER > Sovereign, Risen King  
 CANNOT BE MANIPULATED OR CAJOLED

NO PLACE FOR IDOLS > Material or Mental, Ancient or Modern  
 Idols and Amulets > Attempt to CONTROL God rather than Submit  
 > Attempts to CONFINE – Him who is Infinite & Awesome

Greeks CLAIMED great LOGIC > IDOLATRY utter FOOLISHNESS

### 3. Summary

v. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 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.

REPENTANCE – not just advised or suggested >  
 COMMANDS ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

From Athens to Almaty / Church to Courts / Cinemas to Shopping Malls

Resurrection brings FINAL CHAPTER of Salvation History

WORK OF REDEMPTION FINISHED / Raised to Life for our Justification

NOW > we Anticipate God's Judgment Day

Living & Dead // High & Low // Scholars & Simple // Haves & Have Nots

Judgment will be RIGHTEOUS > "he will judge with JUSTICE"

Judgment will be DEFINITE > "he has SET A DAY"

500 yrs before Paul in Athens > Greek Philosopher spoke in Areopagus:  
When the dust has soaked up a man's blood, once he is dead, there is no  
resurrection  
Aeschylus

NOW Paul in same place: Declares Jesus has RISEN FROM THE DEAD

VERSATILITY of Paul > ONE Man Effective Messenger in MANY AREAS  
CHURCH > Paul's VISION > EVERY Area Reached with GOOD NEWS

Paul in Athens - Jesus Christ - Lord of Aereopagus & Parthenon

Today Lord Of University - Church - World - Your Life?

Three Reactions:

1. Some Reject

v. 32 "When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered"

Hard to Speak to SOPHISTICATED Snobs, Cling to FADING Glory of Athens  
Also NEED JESUS > Patiently, Winsomely PRESENT Good News to Them

2. Some Reflect

v. 32 but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."

Did NOT Turn City UPSIDE-DOWN // Macedonian cities of Philippi,  
Thessalonica, Berea >> GOOD Seed Planted in HARD SOIL, God is Faithful

### 3. Some Receive

v. 34 A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1.21,24

Athens TODAY > Streets named after Paul and Dionysius  
BETTER TO HAVE NAME WRITTEN IN LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE?

Jesus: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."  
John 5.24

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### Acts 17:16-34

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

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.

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 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. 26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 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."

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.