

Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED

Church – The Beginnings, Part 50
Paul's Mission to Athens – Part 1
Acts 17:15-17





Act 17:15-17

Those who were caring for Paul's safety went with him as far as Athens, and then left him, taking a message from him to Silas and Timothy, asking them to join him as speedily as possible.

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was stirred within him when he noticed that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ [Therefore] he had discussions in the synagogue with the Jews and the other worshippers [i.e.: Gentile Converts and Gentile God-Fearers], and in the market place, day after day, with those whom he happened to meet.

Act 17:15-17

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- 1. While Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy –
Why was Paul's spirit stirred (provoked, angered, deeply moved)?**

**Answer: He saw all the idols
and that the city was fully given over to full IDOLATRY.**

**Just like Jesus, Paul's heart was moved with compassion
(see Matt. 9:35-38)**



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Matt. 9:35-38

³⁵ Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

³⁶ Seeing the people, He felt COMPASSION for them, because they were distressed (harassed) and dispirited (cast down/thrown down) like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸ Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Would the IDOLATERS of ATHENS be any less "distressed (harassed) and dispirited (cast down/thrown down) like sheep without a shepherd" ?

Act 17:15-17

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2. Those ancient statues or idols – so what's the big deal?

Answer: It all started with the Tower of Babel and Nimrod – Genesis 10 & 11:1-9 – IDOLATRY has been at the heart of all humans → it is a symptom of our sinful depravity. The Tower of Babel was the climax of our sinful pride of worshipping ourselves and worshipping anyone and anything else other than the True and Living God, the Creator of the Universe (i.e. the God of Israel).

It was the downfall of Sodom & Gomorrah (those other wicked cities) (along with gross immorality that was the fruit of Idolatry)

Compare with Romans 1:18-32 – step-by-step denigration of society that always starts with IDOLATRY . . . always . . .

Act 17:15-17

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It was the downfall of the Northern 10 Tribes of Israel, and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. This is repeated over and over again in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Open and Hidden Idolatry.

Idolatry is more than just bowing down to, praying to, and worshipping some idol (some statue). It has everything to do with all of the trappings of that religion, that “faith”. All the beliefs, practices, traditions, rituals, philosophies, principles, and “holy-days”, etc. of that “religion” → **Idolatry. Paganism, Wicca, Witchcraft, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Shintoism, Islam, Animism, etc. are all modern “packaging” of the same old IDOLATRY.** The Roman Catholic church blended much of paganism / idolatry into their “religion”, as well. This is very plain to see, even today when you see folks bowing down to statues, praying to saints and to Mary, etc. – same old, same old – just repackaged. In Islam, when you see Muslims bowing down to the Ka’aba, kissing the Black Stone in the Ka’aba in Mecca. It is still idolatry – old Babylonian Mystery Religion – just repackaged.

Idolatry Breaks The First 2 Commandments

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Idolatry Breaks The First 2 Commandments

Exodus 20:2-6 - “I AM Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ (1st) You shall have NO other gods before Me.

⁴ (2nd) You shall NOT make for yourselves an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵ you shall NOT bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was stirred within him when he noticed that the city was full of idols. 17 [Therefore] he had discussions in the synagogue with the Jews and the other worshippers [i.e.: Gentile Converts and Gentile God-Fearers], and in the market place, day after day, with those whom he happened to meet.

3. Paul was moved to Action → what was that Action? (see Acts 17:17)

After assessing the main SINFUL Issue that Athens had → IDOLATRY – He went to Work ...

He did NOT Succumb to “I CAN’T Do This” or “I GIVE UP” or to Depression . . . nor was he overwhelmed with the insurmountable, seemingly impossible task ...

Paul was MOVED from the Heart to share the GOSPEL:



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Paul was MOVED from the Heart to share the GOSPEL:

a. In the Synagogue – Reasoning – DIALOGING – Discussion – Conversation – Arguing

Just like we've seen Paul do in the past – from Acts 13 unto Acts 17:17

... same pattern

Reasoning, Discussions, Civil – Level Headed Discussion, etc.

Reasoning from the Scriptures that “this Jesus is the Messiah” ...

NOTE: Luke doesn't record that anyone became a disciple of Jesus Christ, here.

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b. In the Marketplace – The AGORA – More than an Open Market – or – a Farmer’s Market ...

It would be like the CENTER of Town, the PUBLIC Square ...

Not only was commerce conducted there, also exchange of ideas, dialog, discussion ... It was a place of politics, economics, and academics, as well. It would be like Washington DC, Las Vegas, and all the Farmers Markets – rolled into one place → It might look like India’s New Delhi or Mumbai (Bombay), etc.

It would’ve been A Very Busy Place.

and in the market place, day after day, with those whom he happened to meet. [Acts 17:17(b)]

Notice – Paul talked with those that he met – so this is NOT Open Air Preaching. This is One-on-One / Face-to-Face dialogue.

So far we have seen NO Examples of Open Air Preaching in Acts.

This is the first time we see some example of Paul, in an open market place, talking with people ... with a description of HOW he did it →

One-on-One / Face-To-Face – Personally talking with people

Paul, as an example for us – God used as an example for us, today – any disciple of Christ can do this (see Philippians 4:13)

We've had many occasions of Paul in the Synagogue, which does not apply to us, today. But, Paul in the Marketplace (AGORA) totally fits us, today. We, all, can do this.

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**More Open Doors for the Gospel Because of Faithfulness:
Paul's Faithfulness in Praying, Plowing, and Planting Seeds, will pay off, eventually, with more open doors for Paul's Faithfulness – an Open Door – Invitation – to share the Gospel with the Elites of the City of Athens. Open Doors for Paul so that Paul can be more faithful unto Christ and Christ's Mission.**

ref.: Luke 16:10 - He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much

So, Tune in next week for more on Paul's Mission to Athens.