

Church – The Beginnings, Part 52

Paul's Mission to Athens – Part 3

Acts 17:15-34 | 10/29/2017

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Act 17:15-21

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. (ASAP)

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. 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. ¹⁸ Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbling man want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? ²⁰ For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." ²¹ For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

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; 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 [i.e.: in ignorance], Him I proclaim to you: 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. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 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 preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 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; 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.' 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. ³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 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."

³² And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." ³³ So Paul departed from among them. ³⁴ However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. [NKJV]

1. Paul noticed and knew their Culture and History – their “religious” practices and sought to find something to use – a LAUNCH POINT for the Gospel. He did not super-impose his culture.
2. Paul used a Historical “God Intervention” as a CONNECTION POINT for explaining the Gospel: “the Altar to an Unknown God”. → Epimenides and the Plague in Athens, 6th Century B.C.
3. Paul was Gracious in addressing them as being “religious”. Some translations say “superstitious”, but the overwhelming best practices of translating that would be using the concept/word: “religious”. Paul eased into the TRUTH without Compromising the TRUTH.

4. **Paul introduced the Real / True God, based upon something that the Athenians could relate to: their Own History – God’s Real Intervention in their History. “that which you worship in Ignorance ...” “I am here to proclaim to you ...” the whole truth about HIM**

5. **Paul does not quote the Bible (the Old Testament, etc.) to the Athenians. He does, however explain Biblical Concepts about God, History, Mankind, the Messiah/Savior, etc. He does this, because these people do not have any connection to the Bible (that is, they have not read it, they are not familiar with it, etc.) So, Paul uses concepts and ideas that are common to all humans, because we are created in God’s Image, etc. (ref.: Rom. 1:18-23)**

Follow-up – Deeper Study → go to: <https://NLFJI.org/PaulAthens/>