

PAUL AT ATHENS

Int.

1. Aim: To show that we must be like Paul in being ready to preach the gospel wherever we may be .

2. Acts 17:16-34 - context

- a. Second missionary journey
- b. Paul, Silas and Timothy
- c. Silas & Timothy were still at Berea
- d. Paul had to leave to escape the Jews
- e. He sent word for them to come to him with all speed

3. Paul was alone in the city of Athens

- a. Noted for its beauty - center of art
- b. University town - center of learning
- c. City given to idolatry "it was easier to find a god than a man."
- d. Paul found the inhabitants very inquisitive

(1) Epicurdeans

- a. Get the most out of life possible
- b. "Eat, drink & be merry, for tomorrow we die"
- c. Materialism was their aim in life

(2) Stoics

- a. Indifference to sorrow and pleasure, unmoved
- b. "Whatever is to be will be if it never happens"
- c. Not affected by passion or feeling

4. Let us notice what happened to Paul while he was in the city of Athens

Discussion**I. WHAT PAUL SAW IN THE CITY**

- A. He did not see:
 - 1. The famous Greek city of culture
 - 2. The wonderful historical sights
- B. Paul saw - v. 16
 - 1. Their sins - idolatry
 - 2. Their lost souls
- C. III. Of three men who admired a mountain
 - 1. Artist - "what a picture that would make"
 - 2. Prospector - "I wonder if there's gold in the mountain"
 - 3. Preacher - "Reminds me of the law at Mt. Sinai."
- D. Paul as a Christian looked at Athens as Christ would have - he saw the Souls of lost men
- E. What would you have seen?

II. THE EFFECT IT HAD ON PAUL

- A. His spirit was stirred
 - 1. V. 16 - asv "his spirit was provoked"
 - 2. Irritated, provoked - roused to anger
 - 3. He was painfully excited
- B. These people were bowing and praying to god's who could not hear them
 - 1. This broke Paul's heart

2. Rom. 10:1-2 "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."
 3. He did not grow accustomed to it.
 4. He was concerned
- C. How would it have affected you? How does it affect us today?
1. Many lost in this community
 2. Many worship God in false religions
 3. Yet we're unconcerned and uninterested

III. PAUL DID NOT SAY

- A. One religion is as good as another
1. Paul knew they must follow the truth to be saved
 2. Paul knew that false religion was useless
 3. Matt. 15:8-9 "his people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men."
- B. Every man has a right to his own belief
1. He knew that Jer. 10:23 "O LORD, I know that the way of man [is] not in himself: [it is] not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 2. Paul said that we must obey God !

C. We are all headed for the same place

1. There is one God, one Christ, one faith - Eph. 4:4-5
2. Paul earlier in his life thought he was going to heaven but he was wrong.

D. This place is hopeless

1. Though given wholly to idolatry it was not hopeless
2. With God on our side it matters not what odds we face - Rom. 8:31 "What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us?"

E. I'm the only preacher in town, so I'll keep quiet

1. He was no coward Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."
2. Rom. 1:16 - he was not ashamed of the Gospel

F. I'll wait for Timothy and Silas

1. The fields were ripe unto harvest
2. The gospel could not wait

G. I'll get in the ministerial association

1. I am the minister of God
2. Rom 1:15 "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

IV. WHAT PAUL DID

- A. He went to work - v. 17
 - 1. He disputed in the synagogue with the Jews
 - 2. He disputed in the synagogue with devout persons
 - 3. He disputed in the market daily
 - 4. Disputed = to converse, argue, discuss [Thayers p. 139]
- B. What would we have done? What are we doing right now?
 - 1. Waiting to go to work
 - 2. Putting everything else before God's work
 - 3. Teaching no one about God's will

V. THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE

- A. Some said he was a Babblers
 - 1. "An empty talker" - [Thayer p. 584]
 - 2. "What is this ignorant show-off trying to say" - T.E.V.
- B. Others said he set forth a strange God
 - 1. He was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection
 - 2. This was strange to their ears
- C. They knew that Paul was in town
 - 1. They talked about him
 - 2. They wanted him to give the explanation of his teachings - v. 19

VI. **PAUL'S SERMON**

- A. Introduction - v. 22-23
 - 1. Too superstitious - very religious asv
 - 2. To the unknown God
- B. Discussion - v. 24-30
 - 1. God is creator - v. 24-26
 - a. Made all things
 - b. Dwells not in temples made with hands
 - c. Does not need mans assistance to exist
 - d. Creator and overseer of all nations
 - 2. God is within reach - v. 27-29
 - a. Not far from every one of us
 - b. Poets - offspring of him
 - c. He is not like any of these idols - gold, silver, stone
 - 3. Salvation is to all men - v. 30
 - a. God did wink at ignorance, but notd now
 - b. All are commanded to repent
- C. Conclusion - v. 31
 - 1. Judgement day is coming
 - 2. Christ, who was raised from the dead, will judge us

VII. REACTION TO THE SERMON

- A. Some mocked - did not believe in resurrection - v. 32
- B. Some were non-committed - we'll hear you again - v. 32
- C. Some believed - listed their names - v. 34

Conclusion

1. If you had been in Paul's position, what would you have done?
 - a. Would you have seen the lost souls?
 - b. Would you have been stirred up by their idolatry?
 - c. Would you have made excuses for doing nothing?
 - d. Or would you have discussed religion with them?
 - e. Would you have preached if given the opportunity?
2. Paul said: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Cor. 11:1
3. Paul was interested in saving his soul and the souls of those who were lost !
4. Are you as interested as Paul was when he visited in the city of Athens?