

## Three Cities, one Gospel

### Part 3: Athens

#### Acts 17: 16-21

#### Keywords and Phrases\*

Athens (v. 16)

Babbler (v. 18)

Devout persons (v. 17)

Epicurean philosophers (v. 18)

Idols (v. 16)

Jews (v. 17)

Preaching (v. 18)

Provoked (v. 16)

Resurrection (v. 18)

Stoic philosophers (v. 18)

Synagogue (v. 17)

Teaching (v. 19)

\*Keywords may vary depending on Bible translation

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#### Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is the importance of Luke's detailed portrayal of Paul's experiences, emotions, actions, and words during his time in Athens? How does this serve as a critique of Athenian culture?
2. What is the significance of the Scripture indicating that Paul's spirit was deeply stirred when he observed the idols in Athens (compare Isaiah 2:8; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 2 Peter 2:7-8)?
3. Why did the philosophers think Paul was a preacher of foreign divinities when he preached Jesus and the resurrection (Compare 1 Corinthians 1:23; 4:10)?
4. Examine and highlight the similarities and differences between Paul's approach in Athens when preaching the Gospel and his methods in Thessalonica and Berea.

## Analyzing the Scripture

### Paul

- waited in Athens for Timothy and Silas to join him (v. 16).
- was provoked in his spirit when he saw the idols (v. 16)
- reasoned with the Jews and devout persons in the synagogue (v. 17).
- conversed with the philosophers (v. 18).
- preached Jesus and the resurrection (v. 18).

### The Philosophers

- some called Paul a babbler (v. 18).
- some thought Paul was a preacher of a foreign god (v. 18).
- brought Paul to the Areopagus (v. 19).
- invited Paul to explain his teaching (v. 19-20).
- spent all their time telling about and hearing something new (v. 21).

#### Reflection Question

How can you effectively communicate the Gospel in a manner that is both truthful and non-offensive within the context of our contemporary culture?

*"Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols"  
(Acts 17:16 ESV).*