

I. Introduction: While Paul was waiting in Athens for his friends, he was provoked by the idolatry of the city, so he preached to them about the unknown God and His resurrection.

- A. Paul rarely rested from his work, but here he was forced to temporarily wait for Silas and Timothy. However, he could not stand by and watch the Athenians worship idols.

II. Proclaiming the Unknown God (Acts 17:16-34).

A. Paul Personified God's Heart (vv. 16-21).

1. Paul arrived in Athens not as a sightseer, but as a soul-winner. He was not impressed by the city's cultural achievements, he was provoked by its idolatry.

B. Paul Proclaimed God's Attributes (vv. 22-29).

1. Paul used his opportunity before the intellectual elite of Athens to proclaim to them the unknown God who had been killed, and had risen from the grave.

C. Paul Presented God's Solution (vv. 30-31).

1. Paul told them that in times past God had overlooked their sins, but now He was calling all men to repent. And that He was coming soon to judge them!

D. Paul Persuaded God's People (vv. 32-34).

1. Paul's preaching produced several reactions: curiosity, skepticism, rejection, and belief. Some believed in Jesus, but others mocked the resurrection.

III. Conclusion: Paul left Athens having proclaimed the unknown God to the elite men of the city, and indelibly leaving a Gospel witness there for generations to come.

Questions About: Proclaiming the Unknown God

1. What is the most impressive city that you have ever visited? What is it about the city that impressed you? Why was Athens one of the most remarkable cities in the ancient world?
2. What was it about the city of Athens that provoked Paul? (**Acts 17:16-21**) How did Paul reflect God's attitude toward Athens? What did Paul do about his frustration? (**vv. 17-18**)
3. Whose attention did Paul ultimately attract in the market? (**vv. 18-19**) What was their major objection to Paul's teaching? (**v. 18**) Why did they want to hear more from Paul? (**vv. 19-21**)
4. How did Paul initially refer the Athenians? (**vv. 22-23**) Why was Paul not encouraged by the religious nature of these people? How is religion often a barrier to the Gospel?
5. How did Paul proclaim to the Areopagus the "Unknown God"? (**vv. 22-29**) What attributes of God did he explain to them? Why do you think he chose to talk to them like he did?
6. What did Paul say was God's message to them? (**vv. 30-31**) What does it mean to repent? Why is it important to tell unbelieving people that God has planned a day of final judgment?
7. What was the response that Paul received from his message? (**vv. 32-34**) Why do you think so few people in Athens believed? How were their responses typical of unbelievers?
8. What can you learn from Paul about his reaction to religion? Why was Jesus constantly attacked by religious people? How was the Gospel eventually victorious over idolatry?

Prayer

1. Will you pray that God might reveal to you if you have idols in your life?
2. Will you pray God would give you a heart for the religious people in your city?