

I. PAUL'S BURDEN TO PERSIST

- A. Paul leaves Berea by night and the brethren conduct him to Athens
 - 1. Remember what happened in chapter 16!
 - 2. Paul has been protected by the Saved in Thessalonica and Berea
 - 3. Now he is waiting in Athens
- B. History of Athens, Greece
 - 1. One of the oldest cities in the world
 - a. Continuously populated for over 5000 years
 - b. The foundations of Western philosophy began in Athens
 - c. Named for the goddess Athena
 - i. Goddess of wisdom, warfare, and handicraft
 - ii. And the Athenians became scholars and warriors
 - iii. Ultimately giving rise to Alexander the Great himself
 - 2. Origin of Socrates, Aristotle, Plato
 - a. Much of our thinking today results from their logic then
 - b. Our nation would not be the same without the rise of Athens
 - c. The city remained important throughout the Roman Empire
 - 3. Geographically
 - a. The very hill (Mars Hill) was part of the "Acropolis" (high city)
 - b. This "high city" was a defensible position
 - c. But still a seaport to proximity and river access
- C. Paul arrives and observes the city (vs. 15-17)
 - 1. He sends for Silas and Timothy to come quickly
 - a. But he wasn't on vacation from the Lord's Work
 - b. He was still busy – he spent his time OBVERVING the people
 - i. He saw the city was WHOLLY given to idolatry (vs. 16)
 - ii. It was a heathen city, filled with pagan worship
 - iii. That was to be expected – but it was the extent
 - iv. His heart was STIRRED by the state of the lost around him
 - c. When was the last time your heart broke for the lost people
 - i. People who have NO HOPE NO GOD NO PEACE NO SAVIOR
 - ii. Paul wasn't trying to win an argument
 - iii. Paul was trying to win a soul
 - 2. Paul got busy right where he was (vs. 17)
 - a. We fool ourselves often into waiting "until"
 - i. I'll be a faithful church member when I get done with...
 - ii. After school, I'll get on fire for God
 - iii. After I get a job, I'll start working for God
 - iv. After I get a promotion, I'll have time for serving Jesus

- v. After the kids get a little older, there'll be time for ministry
- vi. After the kids get grown, we'll focus on evangelism
- vii. After we retire, I'll be free to win souls
- b. Tomorrow never comes!
- c. 2 COR. 6:2 "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"
- 3. Paul's spirit was STIRRED
 - a. We all can become complacent in this life, this fast-paced world
 - b. Paul DISPUTED with them:
 - i. With the Jews in the synagogue
 - ii. With the devout persons
 - iii. With anyone who would talk to him in the marketplace
 - iv. EVERYWHERE he went, he told them about Jesus
 - c. We get the idea that "disputing" means pointless bickering
 - i. But when we confront someone with Truth
 - ii. It is a DISPUTATION of their beliefs with the Word of God
 - iii. There cannot be two Truths
- 4. Paul is burdened to persist

II. PAUL BEHOLDS THE PHILOSOPHERS

- A. Sooner or later, one of the "intellectuals" meet Paul and take him to Mars Hill
 - 1. I personally believe that they wanted to ridicule him
 - a. Or treat him the same way one would a witchdoctor
 - b. They call him a "babblers" (vs. 18)
 - c. "He seemeth" – it looks like he has some strange religion
 - 2. They had an academic interest, not a spiritual interest (vs. 21)
 - 3. NONETHELESS!
 - a. This was still a divine appointment – there was at least one there!
 - b. Dionysius the AEROPAGITE needed to hear the GOSPEL (vs. 34)
- B. The groups were the same then as they are today
 - 1. You will find them in every corner of the world
 - 2. The Epicureans were atheistic pleasure lovers – same as many today
 - a. 2 TIM. 3:4-5 – "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."
 - b. High-minded – the sort that looks down upon your childlike faith
 - c. Sadly, there are many like that in churches today
 - i. People who are just there for the music, not the message
 - ii. People who are there for the disco, not the discipleship
 - iii. People who show up for the party, not to participate
 - iv. People who want the feelings, not true fellowship
 - 3. The Stoics were materialistic, filled with human reasoning – Modernists

- a. We know them as well – our culture is filled with them
 - b. The Australian philosophy of “No worries, mate.” Or “No Fear”
 - c. They think they can ignore God and eternity
- C. But their curiosity was aroused when Paul wasn’t a wild-eyed charlatan
- 1. They wanted to hear some “new doctrine” (vs. 19)
 - 2. But Paul had already gotten to know their empty faith and pointless lives
 - 3. Paul had already beheld the Philosophers

III. PAUL BEGINS TO PREACH

- A. He calls them “too” (or overly) Superstitious (religious without basis)
- 1. 4 Presuppositions of Paradigms
 - a. Is there anything beyond the natural?
 - b. Is there a God or Gods?
 - c. If so, which God?
 - d. If so, what is your basis of Truth?
 - 2. They had belief in every fable or myth, but no FACT / NO TRUTH!
 - a. PSA. 119:160 – “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”
 - b. JOHN 17:17 – “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
 - c. JOHN 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - 3. Never lose sight of the GREAT BLESSING you have in TRUTH!
 - a. You don’t have to fumble blindly in the dark
 - b. HE has GIVEN you HIS TRUTH!
- B. They had idols everywhere (like India)
- 1. They even had one to the UNKNOWN GOD in case they missed one
 - 2. You ignorantly worship this unknown God, but I can introduce you!
 - a. Paul declares the living God to them
 - b. The God of Creation (vs. 24) – not an idol made with hands
 - c. JER. 51:17 – “Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.”
 - 3. God is NOT a materialistic God (like the Stoics wanted) (vs. 25)
 - a. He cannot be worshipped with hands – as though He needed us
 - b. He is a SPIRIT
 - c. JOHN 4:24 – “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
- C. God is a God of:
- 1. Segregation – He separates Light from Darkness
 - 2. He is the God of ALL Life (we are all His creation)
 - 3. He is a God that demands REPENTENCE (vs. 30)

- a. John the Baptist: MATT. 3:2 – “And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
- b. Jesus Christ: LUKE 13:3 – “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
- 4. He is a God of JUDGMENT (vs. 31)
 - a. He will judge all – the Saved at the judgment seat of Christ
 - b. The lost He will judge at the Great White Throne

IV. PART BROUGHT THEIR PRAISE

- A. A few heard the Word of God and believed (vs. 34)
 - 1. ROM. 10:17 – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - 2. ROM. 10:14 – “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”
- B. You might think that this was a waste of Paul’s time
 - 1. There were not great numbers that came to faith and were baptized
 - 2. Dionysius and Damaris and several others are in Heaven right now!
 - 3. They don’t think Paul’s time was wasted in Athens!
- C. Part, a small part, believed and praised God

V. PART BEGGED TO PROCRASTINATE

- A. But another part, the larger part, put it off for another day (vs. 32)
 - 1. MATT. 7:13 – “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:”
 - 2. They took the easy path, the BROAD PATH
 - 3. “Maybe some other time...”
- B. There may NOT BE another time!
- C. God is real!
 - 1. His Word is True
 - 2. There IS no other path to get to Heaven
 - 3. There IS no other escape from the fires of Hell
 - 4. Be Saved Today!