

# ACTS

THE PERPETUAL POWER OF THE GOSPEL

“A Forest of Idols”



## Acts 17:16-34

**16** 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. **17** So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with those who happened to be there. **18** Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babblers wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

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**19** And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? **20** For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” **21** Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. **22** So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

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**23** For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. **24** The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, **25** nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

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**26** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way towards him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, **28** for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring." **29** Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

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**30** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, **31** because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” **32** Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” **33** So Paul went out from their midst. **34** But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

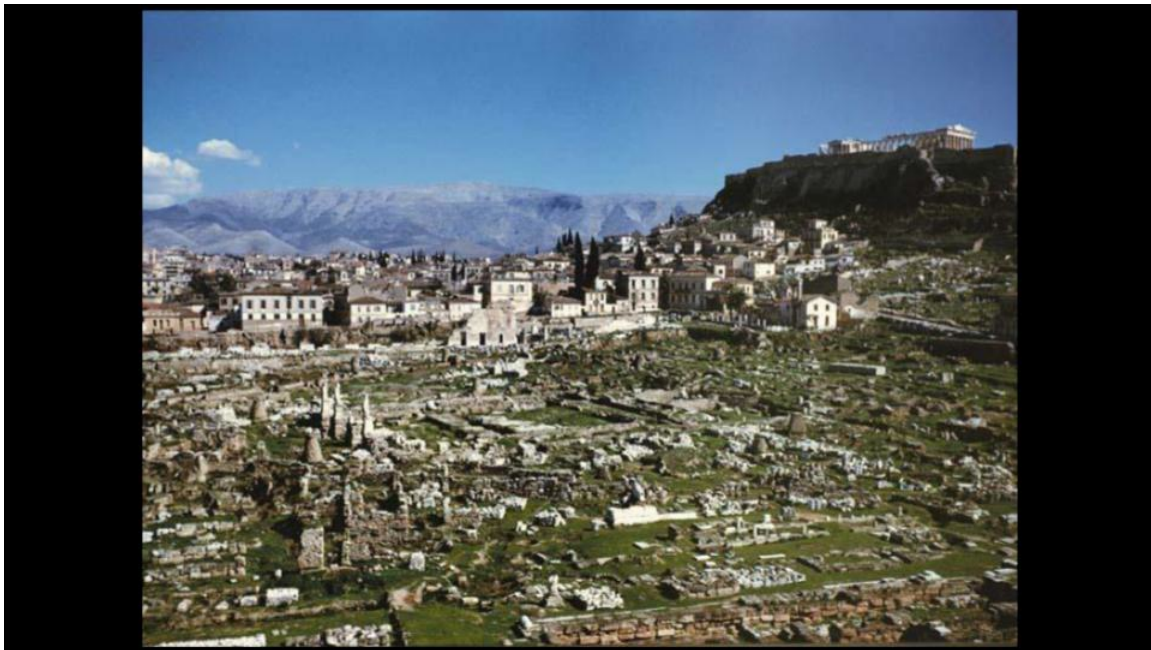
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## Central Themes of the Passage:

1. **Where** was Paul?
2. **How** was Paul?
3. **Why** was Paul?

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## Hosea 8:4-5

**4** They (Israel) made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. **5** I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns (*literally: my wrath is provoked*) against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence?

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## Philippians 3:4b-7

**4b** If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. **7** *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

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## Psalms 115

**1** Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! **2** Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" **3** Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. **4** Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. **5** They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. **6** They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. **7** They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. **8** Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

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