

## Major Event: Paul at Athens

### Lesson: Paul Confronts the Polytheism of the Greeks

Scriptures: Acts 17: 16-34

Central Text: Acts 17: 22-31

#### Suggested contextual information:

1. That this event took place during Paul's second missionary journey circa 50 AD.
2. Locate Athens on current world and Biblical maps. Show its location relative to Israel and Rome & the U.S.A.
3. Explain (and display) that the Areopagus is a famous historical rock formation where the Athenians of the past had held court. In Paul's day it was a place of gathering of the city's leaders and most influential people to discuss issues of the day.
4. Upon arriving in Athens, Paul had noticed that the Athenian people worshipped multiple false gods / idols. He even saw that the Athenians had erected an altar to an Unknown God -- just in case they had left one of the false gods out.
5. Paul, spoke to the people – listen to our passage as he points out their ignorance (calls them “very religious in all respects”, v. 22) and tells them about the One True God.

#### Suggested Subjects:

1. We are not to worship in ignorance. Discuss how we can avoid this – by daily learning His Word. The more we know God & what He revealed through scriptures, the more we can love Him and properly worship Him. Worshipping in ignorance results in worshiping idols. (Acts. 17: 22-23) In Paul's day, the Athenians believed in a something beyond their understanding that created all things. So, Paul started with the Creator God and the general revelation of God.
2. God is the creator of all things (discuss the Creator / creature relationship) – He does not need or depend on us. (Acts 17:24-26)
3. As creatures of a Divine God, we should seek Him (worship, including by learning His Word) & know that He is never far from us. (Acts 17:27-28).
4. God is not an idol made from gold, silver or stone – because man is the creature and God is the creator, it is foolish to think that God could be a man made idol.
5. As with all lessons about avoiding idolatry, teach the application today regarding the need for us, individually, as families, and as a nation to obey God's mandates, such as walking by means of the Spirit rather than carrying out the sinful desires of our sin nature Gal. 5:16)...and how we learn to do that. And, that doing so requires / means making good decisions consistent with Divine viewpoint (vs. giving in to human viewpoint) – all day long.

#### Suggested attributes:

- 1 Of God: Omnipotence, Eternal Life, Omnipresence, Sovereignty.
- 2 Of Man: Imperfect creature (because of sin nature and personal sin), ignorant without learning God's truth.

**Suggested Home Study:** Ecclesiastes 3:11 – note that “God set eternity in [man's] heart” includes the fact that our Creator made us for His eternal purpose; Romans 1: 18-32 note that “...suppress[ing] the truth...” includes the fact that even though man has evidence of God from our conscience, His creation and His Word, we choose to suppress the truth.