

The Book of Acts

Holy Agitation

Pastor Carl Toti - June 29-30, 2019

Acts 17:15-18 (NLT)

15 Those escorting Paul went with him all the way to Athens; then they returned to Berea with instructions for Silas and Timothy to hurry and join him. 16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. 17 He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there. 18 He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, "What's this babbling trying to say with these strange ideas he's picked up?" Others said, "He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods."

AGITATION

Acts 17:16 (KJV)

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

Acts 17:17-18 (NLT)

17 He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there. 18 He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, "What's this babbling trying to say with these strange ideas he's picked up?" Others said, "He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods."

Two groups of individuals are mentioned.

(1) The Epicureans - They denied the existence of a creator. They made the pursuit of pleasure their god.

(2) Stoics - They glorified human reason and virtue, which led to the good life.

ASSURANCE

Acts 17:19-23 (ESV)

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. 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.

PHILOSOPHY (Gk. philosophia, "love of wisdom"). The investigation of truth and nature.

- *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*.

Colossians 2:8 (NLT)

8 Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.

"What can I know?" "What shall I do?" and "For what may I hope?"

The German philosopher, Kant.

Sample philosophies.

- Nihilism (denial of meaning)
- Essentialism (everything means something; nothing means anything)
- Secular humanism (naturalism, rejection of God. Man is god)
- Hedonism (the idea that pleasure or happiness is the one thing with intrinsic value)
- Marxism (no classes, government controls all)
- Taoism (focus on living a simple and balanced life in harmony with nature)
- Relativism (no absolute truth, truth is subjective)
- Buddhism (four noble truths: existence is suffering)

Philosophy about life without Christ can be compared to...A blind man in a dark room looking for a black hat which is not there.
—Anonymous

Philosophy is the search for truth. In Jesus, the search ends.
—John Blanchard

WHO IS GOD?

1. CREATOR

Acts 17:24-25 (NLT)

24 "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, 25 and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need.

2. GOVERNOR

Acts 17:26-29 (NLT)

26 From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. 27 "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. 28 For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 29 And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.

3. JUDGE

Acts 17:30-31 (NLT)

30 "God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. 31 For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."

ACCEPTANCE

Acts 17:32-34 (ESV)

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.

Our response should be—

1. _____ All Idolatry.
2. Repent. Inward _____ is what God is after.
3. Have _____. Jesus lives!
4. _____ day is coming!

Answers:

- 1) Stop
- 2) Transformation
- 3) Hope
- 4) Judgment