**Truth Sowers Life Group**

April 28, 2013

**Who Was the Apostle Paul?**

**Paul Travels to Athens**

**Introduction:**

Our key scripture for this study is:

**1 Thess 5:12, 13**

*12And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.*

**PAUL’S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

**Paul at the Aeropagus**

### Acts 17

### The Philosophers at Athens

16Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. **I sat through a couple of sessions of the Exponential Conference this week with about 6,000 other church planters and I thought if all of these people would preach about Holiness, maybe we could change this country.** 17Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. 18Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler (Grk. spermalogos – seed picker – gossip – trifler) want to say?”

**Epicureans – Believed in living for the moment. They didn’t really believe in any gods other than in name only. There whole purpose in life was to live for the moment and gratify the appetites of the flesh. They believed when you died, you were dead and there was no immortality of the spirit or soul and did not believe in the resurrection of the body.**

**The Stoics held to a high morality and an independence of spirit. Unlike the Epicureans, they did believe in the immortality of the spirit and soul but did not believe in the resurrection of the body.**

**It was pretty obvious that the philosophers looked down their noses at Paul. They believed in “Mythological gods” so they probably didn’t have a hard time believing in Jesus but when Paul preached that Jesus had been raised from the dead, they struggled with that.**

Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

**Where did Greek gods come from?**

**One theory is named "euhemerism" after the mythologist** [**Euhemerus**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euhemerus) **(c.320 BC), who suggested that the Greek gods developed from legends about human beings. For example, one might argue that the myth of the wind-god** [**Aeolus**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeolus) **evolved from a historical account of a king who taught his people to use sails and interpret the winds. Stories got bigger and bigger.**

19And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak?

**It was illegal to present any new deities in Athens, just as it was in Rome, so the philosophers decided to take Paul to Aeropagus, partly to see what he was talking about and partly as a trial.**

**“Jesus and the Resurrection” - This was Paul’s main message and it is the main message of an evangelist. This is what Billy Graham has preached for over 70 years. An evangelist doesn’t have to preach much more than Jesus and the resurrection. Apostles, Pastors, Prophets and Teachers have to teach much more.**

20For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” 21For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

### Addressing the Areopagus (Mars Hill)

**The Aeropagus - north-west of the** [**Acropolis**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis,_Athens)**, which in classical times functioned as the high** [**Court of Appeal**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court_of_Appeal) **for criminal and civil cases in** [**Athens**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens)**. Ares (Mars) was supposed to have been tried here and acquitted by the** [**gods**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_gods) **for the murder of** [**Poseidon**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poseidon)**'s son Alirrothios in Greek mythology.**

**The decisions handed down were supposed to be so unbiased that defendants and prosecutors were said to always have been satisfied with the judgments. Court was held at night so as not to be distracted by the busy commerce of the city below. An animal was sacrificed between both parties in a case as an example as what would happen to their families if either party lied. Fragments of bone were cast upon one of two tables showing the outcome of the trial. One would show the person to be innocent, the other would show the person to be guilty.**

22Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;

**Some people are SO spiritual and so HEAVENLY, they are NO EARTHLY good! (I found at least 70+ Greek gods [titans, primordial deities, deities, sky deities, immortals, agricultural deities, deified mortals, health deities, heroes, and many more])**

23for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

**TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.**

**These are people that had never heard of Jesus.**

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ 29Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. 30Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

32And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this *matter.*” 33So Paul departed from among them. 34However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

**g** [**strange gods**] Greek: *xenos* (GSN-[<G3581>](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?strongs=G3581)) *daimonion* (GSN-[<G1140>](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?strongs=G1140)), foreign demons. Daimonion is translated "devils" 52 Times and "gods" only here. See [Demons or Unclean Spirits](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=45&sec=00104764#Demons or Unclean Spirits). Preaching strange gods was forbidden both in Rome and in Athens. One charge against Socrates was that of introducing strange divinities. Heathen theology taught that the *theoi* (GSN-[<G2316>](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?strongs=G2316)) were gods of nature, and the *daimon* (GSN-[<G1142>](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?strongs=G1142)) were deified men. Paul had taught that Jesus was a man, crucified, risen and exalted at the right hand of God. This was the same to them as the deification of heroes who had been honored form their special services to mankind. Hence, the use of the term daimonion in connection with Jesus. To them He was not a god of nature, but a daimon or a deified man. The heathen Greeks also were used to personifying abstract ideas, as victory, pity, etc., and they may have thought that Jesus and the resurrection were two new divinities Paul was introducing. At least, they thought they had just grounds for bringing him before the council of the Athenians.

Notes For Verse 19

**a** [**Areopagus**] The hill of Mars where the great council of the Athenians was held ([Acts 17:22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+17%3A22)). It was the most sacred and reputable court in the Gentile world. The legend is that Mars was tried there by a court of 12 gods for the murder of Halirrhothius, son of Neptune, but was acquitted. The justice administered in this court was held to be so strict and impartial that both the accused and the accusers were satisfied with the decision. Judges held court at night so they could not be distracted from the great business by the sight of the accused to pity or despise. The pleaders were strictly forbidden the use of any means whatever to excite either pity or aversion, or to affect the passions, everything being confined to simple relation, or statement of facts. The two persons involved, placed with bleeding members of an animal (slain on the occasion) between them, were obliged to take oath with a warning that if they did not tell the truth they and their families would be liable to such a horrible death. The gods of the infernal world whose temple was next to the court were called to witness the oaths. When the case was fully heard, the judges gave their decision by throwing flint pebbles on one of two boards or tables; one for condemnation and the other for acquittal of the person in question.

**What happens to people who die when they stand before God and they have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What about American Indians?**

Romans 1

19They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. 20For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

**What about little children that die?**

**Romans 7 Easy to Read Version**

9Before I knew the law, I was alive. But when I heard the law’s command, sin began to live, 10and I died spiritually. The command was meant to bring life, but for me it brought death.

Age of Accountability – Mormons say Age of 8 but everyone is different and some never reach that age.

**Matthew 19:14**

14But He said, Leave the children alone! Allow the little ones to come to Me, and do not forbid *or* restrain *or* hinder them, for of such [as these] is the kingdom of heaven *composed*.

### Acts 18

New Living Translation (NLT)

### Paul Meets Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth

18 Then Paul left Athens and went to Corinth **(48 miles West of Athens) Somewhere around this time Paul writes his letter to the churches in the region of Galatia. We know it as the Book of Galatians. While in Corinth, he also wrote his two letters to the believers in Thessalonica. We know them as 1st and 2nd Thessalonians.**

The capital of Greece at this time and seat of the Roman proconsul ([Acts 18:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A12)), as Athens was its center of learning. It was 46 miles west of Athens. The worship of Aphrodite (Latin: Venus) and the Astoreth of [Judg. 2:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+2%3A13), was carried on here, with all the Eastern immorality, probably introduced by Phoenicians ([1Ki. 11:33](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ki+11%3A33)).

2There he became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. They had left Italy when Claudius Caesar deported all Jews from Rome. 3Paul lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers just as he was.

4Each Sabbath found Paul at the synagogue, trying to convince the Jews and Greeks alike. 5And after Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul spent all his time preaching the word. He testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6But when they opposed and insulted him, Paul shook the dust from his clothes and said, “Your blood is upon your own heads—I am innocent. From now on I will go preach to the Gentiles.” **This changed Paul’s approach in Ministry. He had always approached the Jews first, then the Gentiles.**

7Then he left and went to the home of Titius Justus, a Gentile who worshiped God and lived next door to the synagogue. 8Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers, and were baptized.

**This must have been galling to the Jews to have their chief ruler of the synagogue converted to Christ. The chief ruler presided in all assemblies, interpreted the law, decided what was lawful and unlawful, punished and executed the rebellious, solemnized marriages, and issued divorces. Upon his conversion Sosthenes succeeded him (**[**Acts 18:17**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A17)**). He also became a convert (**[**1Cor. 1:1**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Co+1%3A1)**).**

9One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, “Don’t be afraid! Speak out! Don’t be silent! 10For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me.”**It is easy for us to think of Paul as some kind of superman but he must have gotten REALLY discouraged at times and he must have gotten scared at times. He must have been afraid here for God to come to him in a vision and to tell him not to worry. God put a big job on his shoulders plus give this evil spirit to be a thorn in his flesh. How many of us would continue?**  **PRAY FOR YOUR PASTORS – PRAY FOR YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS !!!** 11So Paul stayed there for the next year and a half, teaching the word of God.

12When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, 13saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

14And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. 15But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters.*” 16And he drove them from the judgment seat. 17Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

### Paul Returns to Antioch

18So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. 19And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21but took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.” And he sailed from Ephesus.

22And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23After he had spent some time *there,* he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

### Ministry of Apollos

24Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

#### Footnotes: