

Acts of Jesus 37 notes

1. Paul moves from town to city: Acts 17

VV. 10-12 – about a thirty miles journey.

- "**They examined the Scriptures daily**" – Which Scriptures? The Old Testament. The Old Testament validated the New Testament not the other way around.
- The Old Testament is the first floor of the inspired building we call the Bible.
- The first floor was built before the second and stood on its on before the second.
- The Old Testament is inspired, authoritative and necessary for the life of believers to this day --**Romans 15:4**

VV. 13-15 – Approximately 160 miles of walking.

V. 16 --Athens in Paul's day was known as the Intellectual Center of the World; home to the great thinkers like Socrates, Aristotle and Plato.

- Since man apart from God cannot think correctly, Athens was full some of the most crazy ideas and practices.
- Rom. 1:21-23**
- This city was the poster child for man thinking apart from God and was full of idols.
- An ancient historian wrote a 6-volume set on the beliefs of Athenians, but Luke here sums it up in 4 words "given over to idols."
- At one time there was estimated to be 30K idols in the city, and it was said, "it is easier to find a god than a man in Athens."
- V. 17** – Interesting: he's there by himself – no back up – he just wades off into them because Jesus said, "**I will be with you always.**"
- The world needs and God is looking for believers who will just wade off into whatever situation they find themselves with the truth.
- They will find out how powerful God and His message really is.
- V. 18** – These guys who confront Paul were from 2 very different trains of thought and without the boring details we can sum their philosophies up this way:
 1. Epicureans -- were in essence atheists who saw people as no different than animals: no afterlife, this life is all we have---So indulge yourself!!
 - "**Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die**" – **I Corinthians 15:32**
 2. Stoics -- believed in many gods and demigods, so much so that they were fatalists.
 - "**Whatever will be will be...you can't change the gods or their will.**"
 - "**Grin and bear it**"

Both of these groups call Paul a "babbling" which would be somewhat equivalent to calling him a lunatic in our day.

--The Greek word literally meant "seed picker" referring to a sparrow that would hop around and pick up this and that.

--It was a slam on Paul's teachings saying that he just picked up stuff

from here and there and threw it together into some form of belief system.

--Interesting accusation from a people with 30K gods in their city!
They were the seed pickers.

Today we live in a society of "seed pickers" – very spiritual, but they are choosing their beliefs sort of buffet style from countless philosophies out there.

"I believe in an idea of God, although it's my own personal ideal. I find most religions interesting, and I've been to every kind of denomination: Catholic, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist. I've taken bits from everything and customized it." --[Sarah Michelle Gellar](#)

"I believe in God...I'm just not sure if he's Jehovah, Buddha or Allah."
-- [Halle Berry](#)

It is amazing how similar our society and the Greek society of that day are:

1. They enjoyed the blessings of political freedom and democracy.
2. They thought of themselves as intelligent, educated and very religious.
3. They were accepting of all kinds of beliefs so long as the belief did not break the cardinal rule of TOLERANCE.

--Tolerance is tolerant so long as you don't claim to know anything for certain.

--Tolerance is the gate keeper that keeps people from finding the way out.

--Tolerance is tolerant of anything except Christianity and the Gospel.

The boat is sinking and everyone knows it, and that is why they are all seed picking and will tolerate any new ideas. But any person who stands up and says they know a safe way off the ship will be shouted down by "tolerance."

--**VV.19-23**

Writing in the 3rd century a Greek historian told of a plague that had swept through Athens almost a 1000 years earlier. The story went like this: This horrible plague descended on Athens killing hundreds of people. At a loss to determine the cause of the plague, the Athenian leadership decided that they had somehow offended one of the gods of the city. But which one? Someone suggested that they take a herd of sheep and release them in the city and whenever a sheep would lie down near an idol they would sacrifice that sheep to that god. This worked fine since it was hard for a sheep to lie down in Athens except by and idol, but some sheep chose not to lie down in places that had no idol. On these sites, the Athenians erected a hand full of altars to unknown gods not wanting offend anyone at their time of need.

--"Unknown" = Greek word Agnosto which is where we get our word "agnostic" = means unknown or without knowledge.

--A Good name for not only the agnostics in our society but also pretty much every person without Christ.

--Theirs is a life much like the city of Athens full of gods but never full enough---always willing to let another in if they think it will help---not really knowing what is right.

--Always window shopping in the marketplace of truth but never actually

buying what is authentic.

V.24a – He is the God who created all things

-- Interesting that he starts there to tell them about God.

-- Evolution strikes at the very roots of the Gospel. It's not a benign belief system at all.

V. 24b – He cannot be contained in any building (all these are contrary to any notion they had of a god).

--They built their temples to contain their gods, and, in some ways of thinking, limit them to certain places.

Part of God's problem with the Tower of Babel was that containing or restricting Him was part of the ploy of the tower.

--They had been commanded to subdue the earth and they instead decided to stay in one central location and not spread out.

--They were shaking their fists at heaven saying, "we will stay where we want to and we will meet with You on our terms"; so, God made it where they would have to spread out.

V. 25a –God needs nothing from us

--All their gods were dependent on them for their food and drink.

v. 25b –He is the giver of life to everything.

Paul knew they needed to know about the real God and he knew that he was responsible to tell them.

Our world needs to know our God

Will you be courageous enough to tell them?