




1. What was Paul doing while waiting for Silas and Timothy that opened the door for him to present Jesus to the people of Athens? (16) What activities are you involved in, while waiting for the Lord's return?
2. Paul **reasoned** in the synagogue, **conversed** with the philosophers, **proclaimed** in the marketplace, and **preached** Jesus and the resurrection. (17-18) Contrast these 4 verbs.
3. Why do you think the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers brought Paul to the Areopagus to explain this new teaching and what it meant? (19-21)
4. In Acts, this is the first message Paul gave to a Gentile audience. Where and how did Paul prepare for how he would approach his message on Mars Hill? (22-23)
5. How did Paul's description of his observations in the city of Athens change between verses 16 and 23? What effect do you think this change had on the listeners?
6. Paul introduced the Athenians to the God they did not know. What attributes of God do you see in this passage? (23-31) The true God is so different than the gods worshiped in Athens – what differences did Paul allude to? What are some misconceptions about the true God that people hold today?
7. Why did God create mankind? (26-27) How long does God give each one of us to figure this out? (see Psalm 139:16.) What does God require all people to do in order to experience His purpose for their lives? (30)
8. Identify the gospel message Paul shared, using just what is in this passage. Why do you think Paul did not give a more complete explanation of the gospel to the Athenians?
9. What fact creates an urgency to get the gospel out? (31) After hearing Paul, what kind of responses did the Athenians have to his message? (32-34) How does the tone of their overall response compare with those in the last two cities Paul had visited? (17:4, 12)
10. What lessons can we learn from Paul about how we can be more effective in the task that the Lord gave us to do while waiting for His return?



Why Are You Still Here? Leader Notes for Acts 17:16-34



By way of review, in chapter 16 of Acts, Paul and Silas were in Philippi. Paul cast out a demon from a fortune-telling slave-girl, thus infuriating her masters at the prospect of lost income. The result was that Paul and Silas were seized, dragged into the marketplace, accused before the authorities, and ordered by the chief magistrates to be beaten with rods. They were then struck with many blows and thrown into the inner prison, where their feet were fastened in stocks. God provided an earthquake and the subsequent salvation of the Philippian jailer, along with his household. Paul and Silas were then released from prison, with the authorities begging them to leave the city.

In chapter 17 Paul and Silas traveled to Thessalonica. For three Sabbath days Paul was reasoning from the Scriptures and persuaded many that Jesus is the Christ. The Jews, however, formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and dragged Jason before the authorities for welcoming Paul and Silas. The brethren there immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, where the word of God was received by noble-minded people who examined the Scriptures daily to verify the message. Jews from Thessalonica heard about this and brought trouble to Berea. Leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea, the brethren escorted Paul down to the sea and off to Athens, before returning to bring them instructions to meet Paul in Athens.

Up until this time, God provided Paul with like-minded companions and fellow-workers, willing to risk their own lives for the sake of the gospel, together with Paul the Apostle. Now in Athens we find Paul alone... but not alone. He had the Holy Spirit with him and in him, and Jesus, who promises to never leave the believer. Often it's when a person is alone that we see what they are really like, what really drives them, and where their interests really lie.

As we read through these 19 verses, we see at least two interwoven lessons. **The first lesson** reveals the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ for those lost in ignorance. It was on display through Paul as the Holy Spirit provoked him into action, giving him not just a great opportunity to preach the gospel but also a wonderfully unawkward transition into their spiritual need. Paul introduced them to the true God, a very personal God, who is different than any of their so-called gods. Paul answered the age-old questions of “WHY am I here?” and “WHY did God make me?” Paul proclaimed the good news of the gospel. He appealed **to the lost** as an audience of **those who do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior**. That is the very purpose for which He created them.

The second lesson instructs the believer who would seek to co-labor with the Lord in how to reach the lost. Paul's sermon is a classic example of a Spirit-directed presentation of man's need and God's solution. It touches the mind, the heart, and the soul of man. We would do well to follow its pattern.

Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you **fishers of men.**” (Matthew 4:19)

Also, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; **and you shall be My witnesses...**” (Acts 1:8)

The title of this message addresses both groups: the unsaved and the saved.
“Why Are YOU Still Here?”