

Acts 17:16-31 Worksheet

It has been a little while since we have filled out one of these worksheets together. So for day 1 I will simply ask that you start by answering some review questions in order to refresh your memory. Then read through Acts 17:16-31 and summarize it in your own words.

Day 1 (17:16-31)

Which missionary journey is Paul in the midst of as we read about his time in Athens? (1st, 2nd, or 3rd)

Last time we spoke, we discussed some important relationships Paul had formed. Give a very brief description of the characters below and what their roles are in Paul's ministry at this time:

- Barnabas
- Silas
- Timothy
- Lydia

Summarize 17:16-31 below:

Day 2 (17:16-18)

1. In verse 16 we see that Paul's "spirit was provoked." This actually is not speaking of the Holy Spirit, but rather a state of agitated excitement. (We've all been there before when you hear or see something disagreeable and your heart starts beating really hard because you know you just need to say something). What had Paul in such an agitate state?
2. What was Paul's typical process when coming to a new town, and how does that differ from what he is doing in Athens?
3. Read: Epicureanism and Stoicism were at two opposite ends of the spectrum philosophically, yet both were very prevalent in Rome. Epicureanism is a form of materialism (material pleasure is the sole intrinsic goal to human existence). Yet in epicureanism, the focus was on living a simple life of tranquility, and free of fear and bodily pain. Stoicism is a form of virtue philosophy (a life filled with virtue is the intrinsic goal of human existence). This would see materials not as something to be enjoyed, but rather tools by which to practice virtue. However, both of these groups of philosophers were very eager to explore further concepts of virtue and freedom from woes.

Day 3 (17:19-21) Today, I just have some supplemental information and one question.

1. Historical Info: The Areopagus was not necessarily a building, though there may have been a building present where they took Paul. The Areopagus was simply a hill. "Areopagus" translates as "Ares Hill." In Greek mythology, it was held to be the location at which Ares was tried by the

gods for the murder of Poseidon's son. Since then, the Areopagus had been used primarily for two causes; for philosophers to debate, and for people to be tried for murder or crimes against public order. The word "epilambanomai" translated as "took" in Acts 17:19 is a word that connotes a rough laying hold of something as if to steal it for one's own possession. So there is a mixed ball of emotions in grabbing Paul. Half of the crowd was wanting him tried for crimes against the public in bringing this new teaching, and others were eager to hear further philosophical thought.

2. Now put yourself in Paul's sandals. Keep the following two facts in mind, and then state what information you think it would be necessary to share about the Lord if you were put in Paul's situation.
 - a. The Epicureans wanted freedom from fear, and the Stoics wanted to live virtuously.
 - b. ½ the crowd wanted Paul tried as a criminal, ½ were genuinely curious about his philosophy

As Paul, what would you share in this situation?

Day 4 (17:22-29) Read, then answer the questions below:

1. How many references can you find in this passage to the philosophic culture of the crowd he was speaking to? (list them below)
2. How would you describe Paul's tone during this message?
3. What lessons can we learn from Paul when it comes to addressing the lost?
4. Briefly summarize Paul's message in your own words:

Day 5 (17:30-34)

1. What was Paul's command for the crowd? What was he hoping they would do in response to his message? (vs. 30)
2. What was the reaction of the crowd to Paul's message?

Day 6: (REFLECT)

Take today to re-read the passage and pray. Is there any specific way the Lord has spoken to you through this passage this week? If so, would you consider sharing it during Sunday School?