


# REACHING A CULTURE THAT HAS ABANDONED SCRIPTURE



Acts 17:16-34 - Part 3

# IDOLATRY at ATHENS

- |                                      |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>1. Introduction -</b>             | <b>Context</b>  |
| <b>2. Inquiries of Intellectuals</b> | <b>17:16-21</b> |
| <b>a. Initiative of Paul</b>         | <b>17:16-17</b> |

# PRINCIPLES

1. Be Spiritually Prepared
2. Take Initiative





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| <b>a. Initiative of Paul</b>         | <b>17:16-17</b> |
| <b>b. Interest of Philosophers</b>   | <b>17:18-21</b> |
| <b>3. Illumination of Paul</b>       | <b>17:22-31</b> |
| <b>a. Ideology</b>                   | <b>17:22-23</b> |



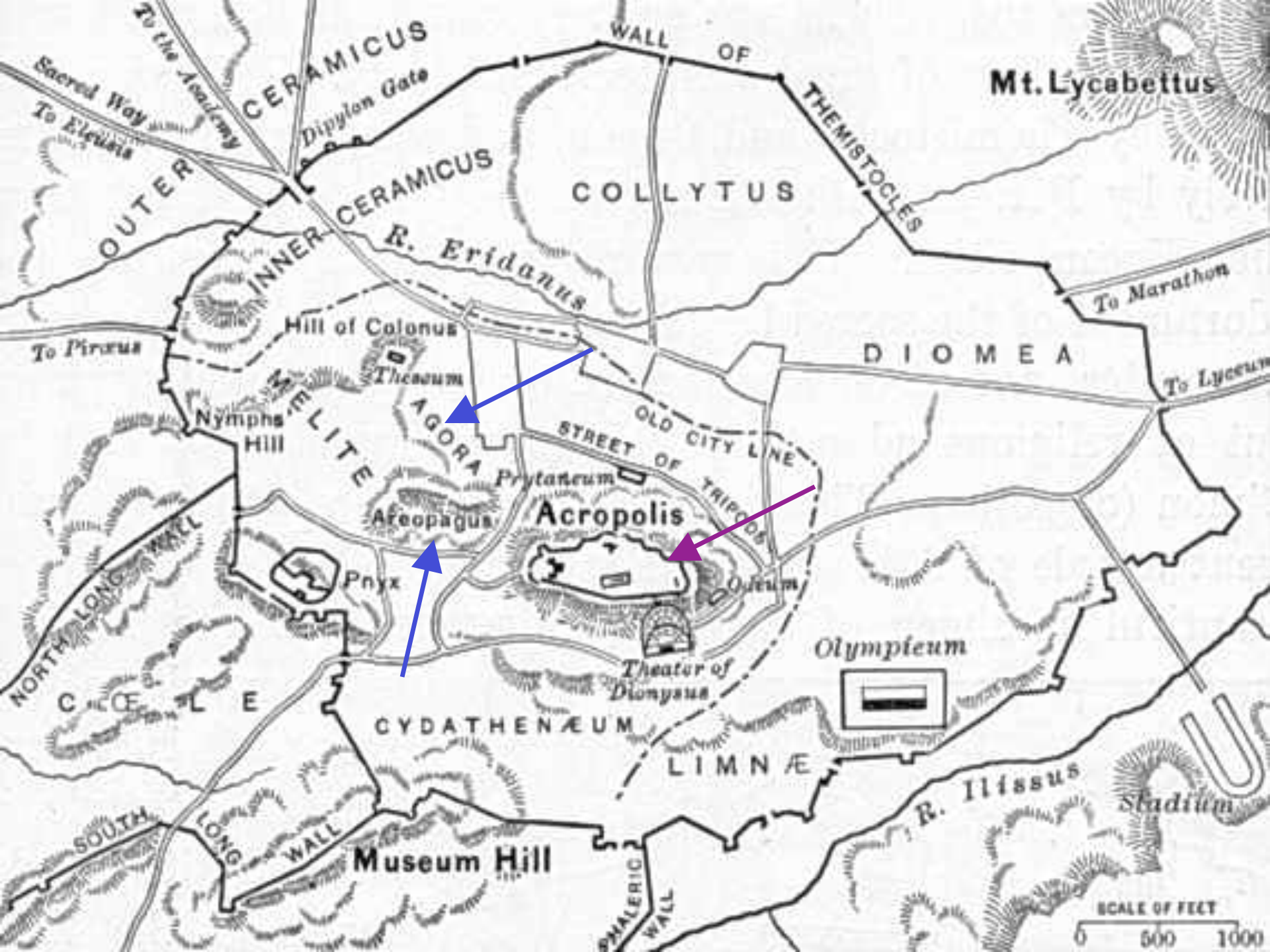
**17:22** So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.





**Areopagus  
from Acropolis**





Mt. Lycabettus

CERAMICUS  
Dipylon Gate

WALL OF THEMISTOCLES

OUTER CERAMICUS  
Sacred Way  
To Eleusis  
To the Academy

INNER CERAMICUS  
R. Eridanus

COLLYTUS

To Marathon

To Piræus

Hill of Colonus

DIOMEA

To Lycæum

Nymphs Hill  
MILITE

AGORA  
Prytaneum  
STREET OF TRIPODS  
OLD CITY LINE

Acropolis

Areopagus

Pnyx

Queen

Olympeum

Theater of Dionysus

NORTH LONG WALL  
C. C. E. L. E

CYDATHENÆUM

LIMNÆ

Stadium

SOUTH LONG WALL

Museum Hill

PHALERIC WALL

R. Ilissus

SCALE OF FEET  
0 500 1000



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**17:23 “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.**



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# WORLDVIEWS

How you view the world around you and How you live life as a result.

Your Worldview determines how you live.

# WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

- **God - Theology**
- **Ultimate Reality - Metaphysics**
- **Knowledge - Epistemology**
- **Ethics - Morality**
- **Humankind - Anthropology**
- **Destiny - Eschatology**



# PHILOSOPHERS

1st Century

21st Century

**Epicureans**

**Materialism**

**Naturalism**

**Hedonism**

**Entertainment**

**(Happiness)**

**(Sensualism)**

**Stoics**

**Self-sufficient**

**Humanism**

**Pantheism**

**New Age**

# **DEFICIENCY**

- 1. Faulty understanding of meaning  
of Existence - polytheistic**
- 2. Limitations of Knowledge -  
unknown god**

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- 3. Weakness of human Intellect - ignorance**

# PRINCIPLES

A nighttime photograph of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. The Parthenon is brightly lit, standing on a hillside. Other ancient structures are visible below, some illuminated by warm lights. The background shows a dark cityscape with some lights.

- 1. Be Spiritually Prepared**
- 2. Take Initiative**
- 3. Analyze Worldview**

# IDOLATRY at ATHENS

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| <b>b. Instruction</b>                | <b>17:24-29</b> |



**17:24-25 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 ...**

# Illumination of Paul

➤ **Creator**



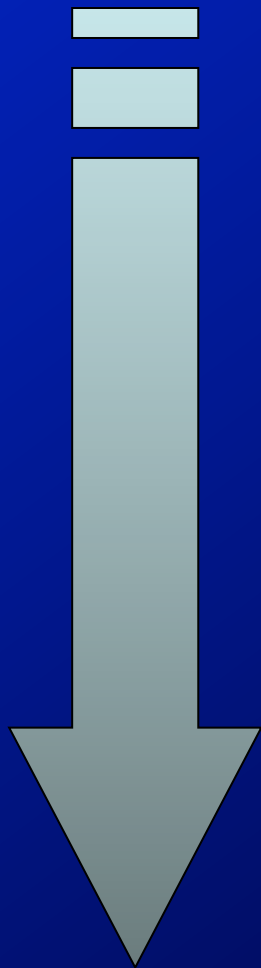
An aerial photograph of Athens, Greece, showing the city and the Acropolis. The Acropolis is a large, rocky hill in the foreground, with several tall, thin cypress trees growing on it. In the background, the city of Athens is visible, with many buildings and a large church with a red roof. The sky is clear and blue.

# Paul's Approach

1. Start from Biblical Worldview
2. God-consciousness - Rom 1



# **REVELATION**



**Realization (19-20)**

**Responsibility (20)**

**Rejection (21)**

**Rationalization (21)**

**Reprobation (22)**

**Replacement (23)**

**WRath (24-32)**

# PRINCIPLES



- 1. Be Spiritually Prepared**
- 2. Take Initiative**
- 3. Analyze Worldview**
- 4. Work from Biblical Worldview**

# WORLDVIEW

Unbeliever

Believer

polytheistic

God

Personal, Trinity

material

Ultimate Reality

spiritual

reason

Knowledge

revelation

relativism

Ethics

absolutes

good

Humankind

image, fallen

varies

Destiny

Heaven/Hell

# PRINCIPLES



- 1. Be Spiritually Prepared**
- 2. Take Initiative**
- 3. Analyze Worldview**
- 4. Work from Biblical Worldview**
- 5. Assume God-consciousness**



**17:24-25** “The God who made the world and all things in it, **since He is Lord of heaven and earth,** does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25 ...**

# Illumination of Paul

➤ **Creator**

➤ **Sovereignty**

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# Illumination of Paul

- **Creator**
- **Sovereignty**
- **Omnipresence**







**Athens Parthenon**

**17:24-25** “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25** nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; **26** ...





**Athena of  
the Dynx**  
2nd c AD copy

# Illumination of Paul

- **Creator**
- **Sovereignty**
- **Omnipresence**
- **Self-Existence**

**17:24-25** “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25** nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 ...**

# Illumination of Paul

➤ **Creator**

➤ **Goodness**

➤ **Sovereignty**

➤ **Omnipresence**

➤ **Self-Existence**



# PRINCIPLES



- 1. Be Spiritually Prepared**
- 2. Take Initiative**
- 3. Analyze Worldview**
- 4. Work from Biblical Worldview**
- 5. Assume God-consciousness**
- 6. Focus on God of Bible**

**17:26-27 ... 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 ...**

# **HISTORY**

**1. God as Creator is author 26**

**17:26-27 ... 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 ...**

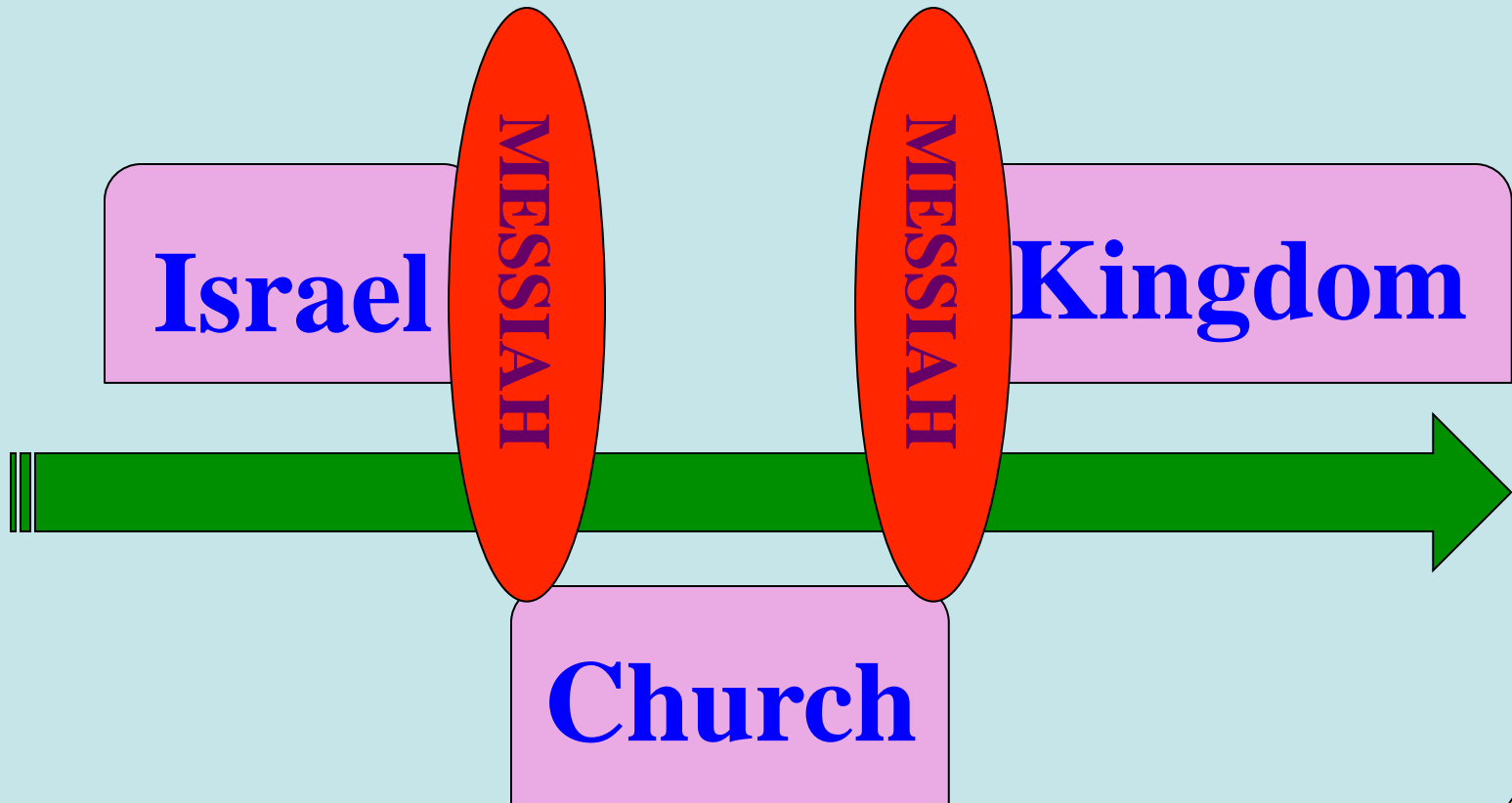


# **HISTORY**

- 1. God as Creator is author 26**
- 2. God's Sovereign Plan**
- 3. Linear Concept**
- 4. Involves Time & Geography**

# HIS STORY

## Revelation of His Glory



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# **HISTORY**

- 1. God as Creator is author 26**
- 2. God's Sovereign Plan**
- 3. Linear Concept**
- 4. Involves Time & Geography**
- 5. Divine Purpose 27**



**17:26-27 ... 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 ...**

# Illumination of Paul

➤ **Creator**

➤ **Goodness**

➤ **Sovereignty**

➤ **Providence**

➤ **Omnipresence**

➤ **Self-Existence**





**History = Record  
of God dealing  
with His  
Creation**





**Purpose of History -  
That man may seek Him**



# **DEFICIENCY**

- 1. Faulty understanding of meaning of Existence - polytheistic**
- 2. Limitations of Knowledge - unknown god**
- 3. Weakness of human Intellect - ignorance**
- 4. Inadequate view of History**

**17:28 ... for in Him we live and  
move and exist, as even some of  
your own poets have said, 'For  
we also are His children.'**

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# Illumination of Paul

➤ **Creator**

➤ **Sovereignty**

➤ **Omnipresence**

➤ **Self-Existence**

➤ **Goodness**

➤ **Providence**

➤ **Immanence**

# PRINCIPLES



- 1. Be Spiritually Prepared**
- 2. Take Initiative**
- 3. Analyze Worldview**
- 4. Work from Biblical Worldview**
- 5. Assume God-consciousness**
- 6. Focus on God of Bible**
- 7. Refute their Worldview**



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<b>b. Instruction</b>	<b>17:24-29</b>
<b>c. Implication</b>	<b>17:30-31</b>

**17:29** “Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

**17:30 “Therefore having overlooked  
the times of ignorance, God is now  
declaring to men that all people  
everywhere should repent,  
31 ...**

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the times of ignorance, **God is now**  
**declaring to men that all people**  
**everywhere should repent,**  
**31 ...**

# REPENTANCE

- Paul has made drastic contrast
- μετανοεω - change in thinking, direction
- Not to feel bad
- Change to biblical worldview



# **DEFICIENCY**

- 1. Faulty understanding of meaning of Existence - polytheistic**
- 2. Limitations of Knowledge -**
- 3. Weakness of human Intellect –**
- 4. Inadequate view of History**
- 5. Need to change ethics**

**17:30-31** “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,  
**31** because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

# **DEFICIENCY**

- 1. Faulty understanding of meaning of Existence - polytheistic**
- 2. Limitations of Knowledge -**
- 3. Weakness of human Intellect –**
- 4. Inadequate view of History**
- 5. Need to change ethics**
- 6. Faulty eschatology**
- 7. Inconsistency of Worldview**

**17:30-31** “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness **through a Man whom He has appointed**, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

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| <b>c. Implication</b>                | <b>17:30-31</b> |
| <b>4. Impression on Athenians</b>    | <b>17:32-34</b> |

**17:32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, We shall hear you again concerning this.”**

**17:32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, We shall hear you again concerning this.”**

**17:33-34** So Paul went out of 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.

# **Gospel is Power of God unto Salvation**





# PRINCIPLES



- 1. Be Spiritually Prepared**
- 2. Take Initiative**
- 3. Analyze Worldview**
- 4. Begin from Biblical Worldview**
- 5. Assume God-consciousness**
- 6. Focus on God of Bible**
- 7. Refute Worldview**
- 8. Present Gospel**