

sermon notes

November 9, 2025 | Pastor Tony Caffey, Messiah Bible Church
No Other Name | “Athenian Apologetics” | **Acts 17:16–34**

- 1) False religions should _____ us and provoke us to
_____ (Acts 17:16–18)

- 2) False religions should _____ us to proclaim
_____ (Acts 17:19–31)

- 3) False religions should _____ us to press on
despite _____ (Acts 17:32–34)

Questions for further application of God’s Word:

GO DEEPER

Read Acts 17:16–34. Describe what Paul may have felt as he stood up to preach at the Areopagus—surrounded by Athenian philosophers, the grandeur of Greek architecture, and countless idols. Do you think Paul felt intimidated? Or does the passage suggest confidence? In what ways does it seem that the Holy Spirit empowered him as he spoke?

According to Acts 17:32–34, what three different responses did Paul receive to his message about the resurrection? Does it surprise you that the crowd at the Areopagus mocked him (17:32)? Was Paul’s preaching there ultimately worthwhile? Why or why not?

Is idolatry a problem in modern America? If so, in what forms does it appear? Is idolatry present in your own life—perhaps in subtler forms such as identity, money, power, pleasure, or success? Why does John end his letter with the command, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21)? For help reflecting on this, consider Pastor Tony’s sermon on 1 John 5:21 entitled “Idols”: <https://www.messiahbible.org/1-john-5-21-keeping-yourself-from-the-idols>.

GET PERSONAL

List some of the false religions and belief systems present in today’s world. What are some false beliefs commonly practiced or accepted in America? Do these beliefs grieve your heart as idolatry grieved Paul in Athens? Have you ever felt a similar stirring to speak, act, or pray, because of the spiritual brokenness around you?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Explain how you would lead a person to faith in Christ if they had some exposure to a Christian background. How would your approach differ if they had a Jewish background? How would you adjust your method if a person had no Christian or Jewish background at all? What if the person came from another country or followed another religious worldview? What principles can we learn from Paul’s practice in Acts 17:16–34 about meeting people where they are, understanding their worldview, and building a bridge to the gospel?

ADVANCED QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER STUDY

Paul quotes two Greek poets/philosophers (Aratus and Epimenides) in his speech to the Athenians (17:28). But he doesn’t quote any passages of the OT. Why did Paul use this approach in Athens? How might you learn from the poets, thinkers, and cultural influences of your own society so that you can better connect the gospel with the people around you?