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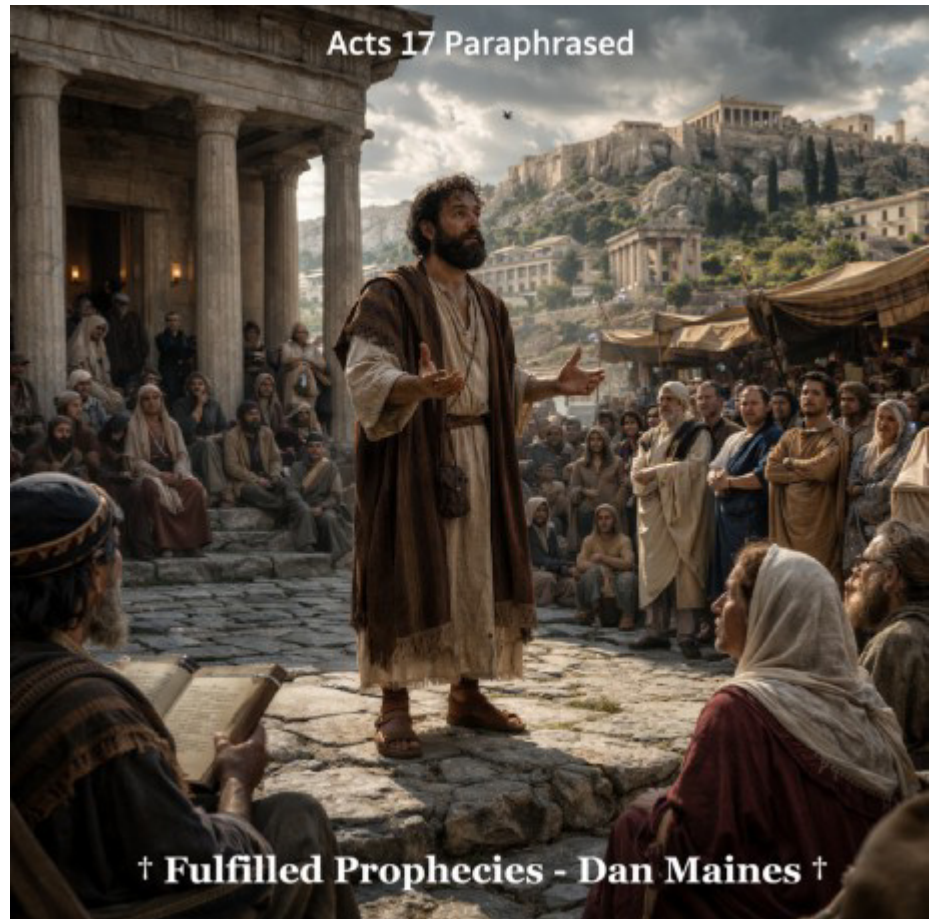
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Acts 17 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 17 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows the gospel entering cities filled with religion, politics, and philosophy

† It shows that Christ was being preached as the already promised King

† It also shows how some searched the Scriptures honestly, while others resisted the truth

Acts 17:1

After traveling through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to

Thessalonica, where the Jews had a synagogue

† The mission keeps moving forward from place to place

† Paul begins where the Scriptures were already known

† This shows the message of Christ was tied to what God had already promised

Acts 17:2

As he usually did, Paul went in to them, and for three Sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures

† Paul did not preach a new religion detached from Scripture

† He proved his message from the written word

† He stayed with it long enough to make the case clearly

Acts 17:3

He opened the meaning of the Scriptures and showed that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead, saying, This Jesus I am preaching to you is the Christ

† Paul explained that the suffering of Christ was not an accident

† The resurrection was part of God's plan from the beginning

† He identified Jesus directly as the promised Messiah

Acts 17:4

Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of God fearing Greeks and many prominent women

† The gospel was gathering both Jews and Gentiles

† The truth was not hidden from important people or common people

† This is the widening of the kingdom in real time

Acts 17:5

But the unbelieving Jews became jealous, gathered some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob, and threw the city into confusion, and they attacked Jason's house, trying to bring them out to the crowd

- † Their problem was not lack of evidence, it was jealousy
- † When truth threatens power, people often turn to chaos
- † Opposition to the gospel was emotional and political

Acts 17:6

When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city rulers, shouting, These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too

- † Even enemies admitted the gospel was having major impact
- † The world they were upsetting was the old order that was passing away

† This was happening in their own generation

Acts 17:7

Jason has welcomed them, and they all act against Caesar's decrees, saying there is another king, Jesus

- † The charge centered on kingship
- † Jesus was being preached as the true ruler
- † The gospel was not a private opinion, it declared authority

Acts 17:8

The crowd and the city rulers were disturbed when they heard this

- † The message of Christ always presses on men's loyalties
- † Earthly systems are troubled when Christ's rule is proclaimed
- † Truth does not leave rebellion comfortable

Acts 17:9

After taking security from Jason and the others, they let them go

- † The early church often suffered financially and legally
- † Persecution came through pressure as well as violence
- † Yet the message kept moving

Acts 17:10

That night the brethren sent Paul and Silas away to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews

† Opposition did not stop the mission

† Paul stayed focused on preaching rather than protecting comfort

† The pattern remains the same, Scripture first, Christ proclaimed

Acts 17:11

Now these people were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, because they received the word eagerly and examined the Scriptures every day to see whether these things were so

† Noble character is shown by honest examination of Scripture

† They did not reject the message just because it challenged tradition

† This verse condemns blind loyalty to religious systems

Acts 17:12

So many of them believed, along with quite a few Greek women and men of high standing

† Honest testing of Scripture led many to faith

† The gospel continued breaking social boundaries

† Truth stands up under examination

Acts 17:13

But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God had been preached by Paul in Berea also, they came there too, stirring up and troubling the crowds

† Unbelief often follows truth in order to silence it

† Their hostility was organized and determined

† This shows how hard men fight against fulfillment when it exposes them

Acts 17:14

Then the brethren immediately sent Paul away to go as far as the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there

- † The work required wisdom as well as boldness
- † Not every servant moved at the same time
- † God preserved His messengers for continued labor

Acts 17:15

Now those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving instructions for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left

- † Paul was not working alone, he labored with fellow servants
- † The mission was ordered, not random
- † Even under pressure, communication and purpose remained clear

Acts 17:16

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was deeply troubled within him as he saw that the city was full of idols

- † Paul was not impressed by Athens, he was grieved
- † Idolatry provoked him because it dishonored the true God
- † Spiritual blindness should stir sorrow, not admiration

Acts 17:17

So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God fearing Gentiles, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be present

- † Paul spoke wherever people were found
- † He brought the truth into both religious and public spaces
- † The gospel was not confined to a church building

Acts 17:18

Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were also talking with him. Some were saying, What would this babbler like to say? Others said, He seems to be preaching foreign gods, because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection

- † Human wisdom often mocks what it does not understand
- † They reduced Paul to a fool because they judged by pride

† Yet the heart of his message remained Jesus and the resurrection

Acts 17:19

They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting

† Athens wanted novelty more than submission

† They were curious, but not yet humble

† Still, God gave Paul a platform before learned men

Acts 17:20

For you are bringing strange things to our ears, so we want to know what these things mean

† The gospel sounds strange to minds trained by error

† Truth often sounds foreign in places ruled by idols

† Their question opened the door for a direct witness

Acts 17:21

Now all the Athenians and the foreigners visiting there used their time for nothing else except telling or hearing something new

† This exposes the emptiness of intellectual vanity

† They chased new ideas without coming to truth

† Curiosity alone does not save anyone

Acts 17:22

So Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious

† Paul began with what was visible in their culture

† He did not flatter them, he exposed their condition

† Being religious is not the same as knowing God

Acts 17:23

As I was passing through and looking carefully at the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore what you worship in ignorance,

this I proclaim to you

† Their altar confessed their ignorance

† Paul used their own admission to point to the truth

† God was not unknown because He hid Himself, but because they were blind

Acts 17:24

The God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands

† Paul begins with God as Creator and Lord

† This destroys the entire foundation of idol worship

† The true God cannot be contained by man's buildings

Acts 17:25

Nor is He served by human hands as though He needed anything, because He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things

† God is not dependent on man

† Every breath they had came from the One they ignored

† Idolatry reverses reality by making man the giver

Acts 17:26

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 where they would live

† All nations share one human origin

† History and geography are under God's rule

† Men do not rise beyond the boundaries God sets

Acts 17:27

So that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel their way toward Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us

† God ordered history so men would seek Him

† Their blindness did not mean God was distant

† The problem was not His absence, but their darkness

Acts 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 offspring

† Paul even used their own words where they matched truth

† Every moment of life depends on God

† Man's existence itself testifies against idolatry

Acts 17:29

Since we are God's offspring, we ought not think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human art and imagination

† If man lives by God, then God cannot be reduced to carved matter

† Idols are the product of human imagination, not divine reality

† Paul tears down the false image of God made by human minds

Acts 17:30

So having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to all people everywhere that they should repent

† The command is universal

† The nations were no longer left in the same darkness as before

† This was a present call, not a distant offer

Acts 17:31

Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having given proof to all by raising Him from the dead

† Judgment was certain because the day had been fixed

† The risen Christ is the proof and the Judge

† This fits the coming covenant judgment tied to Christ's

authority

Acts 17:32

Now when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, We shall hear you again concerning this

† The resurrection divided the audience

† Some mocked, others delayed

† Truth still produces those same responses

Acts 17:33

So Paul went out from among them

† Paul delivered the truth and left the results to God

† Not every sermon ends with mass repentance

† Faithfulness is measured by truth spoken, not applause gained

Acts 17:34

But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them

† God still gathered His people even in Athens

† The gospel was powerful enough to save people in the heart of pagan thought

† Christ's kingdom reached even those surrounded by idols and philosophy

Historical References

† Eusebius wrote that the apostles carried the message of Christ into the nations, showing the spread described in Acts was real history

† Clement of Alexandria referred to Greek philosophy as something that exposed man's searching, but could not save apart from the truth of God in Christ

† Irenaeus testified that the apostles proclaimed one God, the

Creator of heaven and earth, directly against pagan error
† Tertullian argued against idolatry by showing that carved images are man's work and not the living God

How It Applies To Us Today

† We must test everything by Scripture like the Bereans did

† We must not confuse being religious with knowing God

† We must preach Christ clearly even when the culture mocks the message

† We must remember that human wisdom cannot replace divine truth

† We must call men to repentance because Christ reigns now

Q: Why did Paul always begin in the synagogue?

A: Because the promises were first given through Israel, and Christ was the fulfillment of what the Scriptures had already declared. That is why he reasoned from the Scriptures first. See Acts 17:2-3.

Q: What made the Bereans more noble minded?

A: They did not blindly accept or reject the message. They searched the Scriptures daily to test what Paul was saying. See Acts 17:11.

Q: Why was Paul troubled in Athens?

A: He saw a city consumed by idols. His grief came from seeing God's glory exchanged for false worship. See Acts 17:16.

Q: What was wrong with the altar to an unknown god?

A: It admitted religious activity without true knowledge of God. Paul used it to show that their worship was rooted in ignorance. See Acts 17:23.

Q: What proof did God give that Jesus is the appointed Judge?

A: He raised Him from the dead. The resurrection was God's public confirmation of Christ's authority. See Acts 17:31.

Q: What does this chapter teach us about philosophy and

human wisdom?

A: It teaches that human wisdom may ask questions, but only the gospel reveals the true God. Philosophy without Christ leaves men in ignorance. See Acts 17:18-21, 24-31.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Acts 17

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Tertullian, On Idolatry

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