

Paul in Athens

Acts 17:16-34

by Don Falkos

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Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy. He talked with people in the synagogue and with those he met in the marketplace, sharing the good news about Jesus. Some dismissed him as speaking nonsense. Others were interested to hear about these ideas, which were new to them.

To one group Paul said, "It's clear you Athenians are very devoted to your religion. I've seen idols and altars everywhere in the city, including one with the inscription, 'To an Unknown God.' As it happens, I can introduce you to this Unknown God so you might worship more intelligently. The Unknown God is the one true God, who created everything – the heavens and the earth, plants, animals, and human beings. God, who allows us to live and to move and to be who we are.

"One of your own poets has said, 'We are God's offspring.' If that's true, it doesn't make much sense for us to think we could carve a god out of stone, does it?

"God has been putting up with that kind of ignorance for a long time. But the human race is going to be judged by a man named Jesus, a man God has raised from the dead."

As soon as Paul mentioned the resurrection of the dead, a number of his listeners began to scoff and walk away. But the majority were still interested. "We'd like to hear more about this. Can you come back tomorrow and talk to us again?" And there were a few in the crowd, both men and women, who believed. These new believers became Paul's followers.