



Decade of Availability The Marketplace

The Spit and Argue Club in Long Beach, California (left) was a great place to gather and share ideas. It was a little folksy-like Athens and the forerunner of our modern social media.

Introduction: Paul is in Athens, the center of Greek thought and the native city of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Zeno. The birth place of Hellenistic speech and the Koine Greek that was spoken in Jesus day.

A. Stirred by the Spirit v. 16

1. **Have you been stirred?** What does it take to be ‘stirred’ in the spirit? What does it take to be moved to action?

—**Waiting:** Taking time to really see things. Paul waited for Timothy and Silas for at least three weeks. Rather than be impatient for their late coming—he studied the city.

—**My spirit open to the Holy Spirit:** This verse (;16) implies the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to the moral condition of the city. Paul ‘saw’ more with his spirit than with his eyes.

Will you take time this week to look at those around you and let the Holy Spirit stir your heart for them?

B. Stirring The City v. 17

1. **The synagogue:** As was Paul’s usual strategy, if there was a synagogue in a city...that’s where he started preaching. The Athens’ synagogue had both Jews and devout Gentiles who followed the God of the Jews. They would share Paul’s view of the city—but did not know his view of the Messiah—the answer to the city’s needs.

Dispute: *dialogomai* Greek—to argue, dispute differences of opinion or facts. In context here it means to ‘make an argument.’ Paul was laying out the truth (the argument) of the Gospel.

2. **The Marketplace:** Notice that on the Sabbath that Paul spent his time with the Jews and observant Gentiles but the rest of the week he was in the marketplace. The marketplace was the social hub of the city and where people gathered to shop and talk.

Do you have ‘an argument’ for the gospel? Can you share the truth of the Gospel in a clear manner?

C. Stirring the Philosophers vv. 18-21

1. **Epicureans and Stoics:** v. 18 They represented the dominant philosophies in Greek culture at the time. Generally the Epicureans believed that seeking happiness or pleasure was the primary goal in life. By contrast the Stoics placed thinking above feeling and tried to live in harmony with nature and reason.

2. **Paul the babbling!** V. 18 The word ‘babbling’ comes from scavenging birds ‘picking up seeds.’ The meaning here is that Paul was accused of hearing bits and pieces of stories and philosophy and strung them together to tell his own story.

Do we babble? It’s important that we base our faith on the Bible—God’s revealed Word. Not on the latest new Christian-fad theology or good sounding thoughts from non-Biblical sources. Stick to the Word of God...it does not need anything added to it.

3. **When they want to know:** vv. 19-21 Paul is given a golden opportunity to speak before a large crowd of people who loved to hear the latest ‘new thing.’ They said they wanted to know this new doctrine! God makes a way for us to share our faith with the audience He puts with us....an individual or a large group.

Will you be ready to share your faith when God places you before someone or a whole group?

Acts 17:16-21 (KJV)

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbling say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

