

THE FUTURE

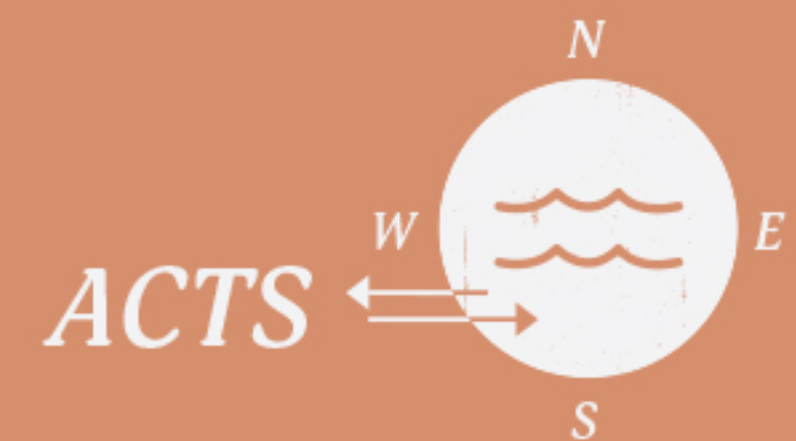


BEGINS



Paul is Deeply Troubled

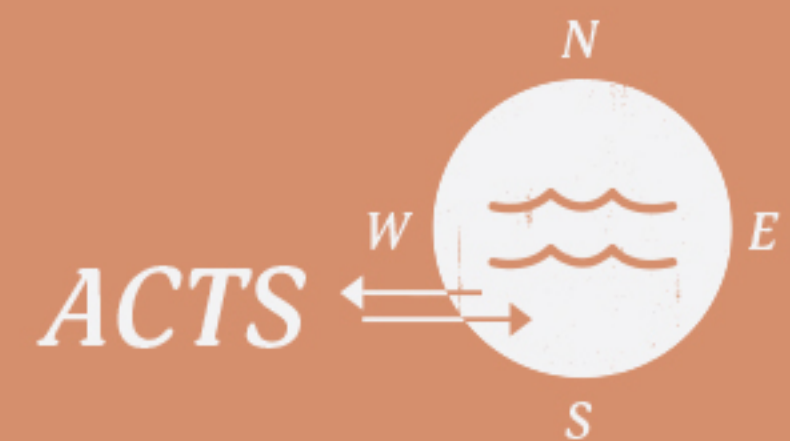
“16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. 17 He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there. 18 He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, “What’s this babbler trying to say with these strange ideas he’s picked up?” Others said, “He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods.” - Acts 17:16-18 NLT



Paul Goes Before the High Council

“19 Then they took him to the high council of the city. “Come and tell us about this new teaching,” they said. 20 “You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it’s all about.” 21 (It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing the latest ideas.)

- Acts 17:19-21 NLT

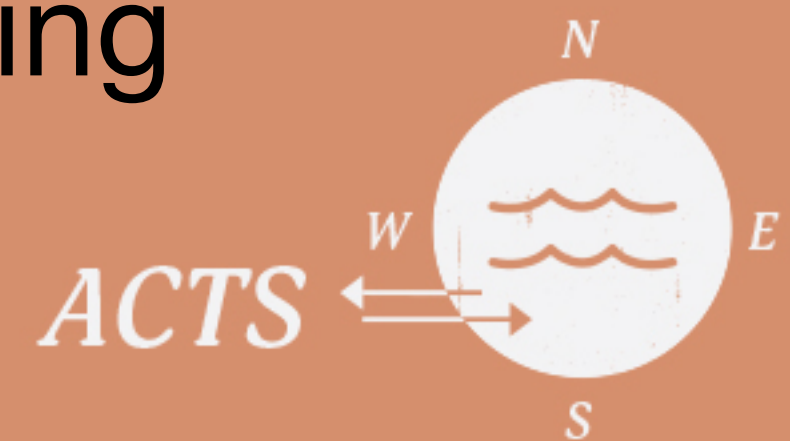


Epicureans and Stoics

Epicureans: They pursued pleasure as the chief purpose in life and valued, most of all, the pleasure of a peaceful life, free from pain, disturbing passions or superstitious fears. When a person died, they believed his body and soul ceased to exist.

Stoics: Stoic philosophy was about self-mastery — the goal of life was to reach a place of indifference to pleasure or pain.

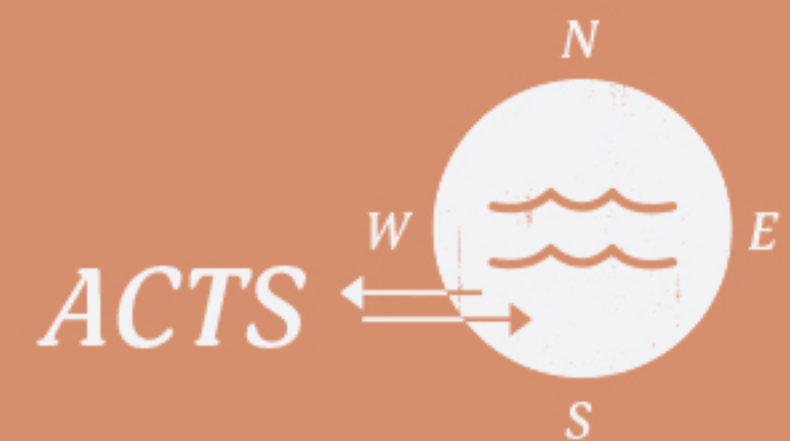
“A Stoic doesn't control the world, but they control always how they respond to the world. So it's a really great philosophy if you're doing something ambitious. If you're a leader or an athlete or a poet or a politician, it's there for the stresses of life.” - Ryan Holiday



An Altar To The 'Unknown God'

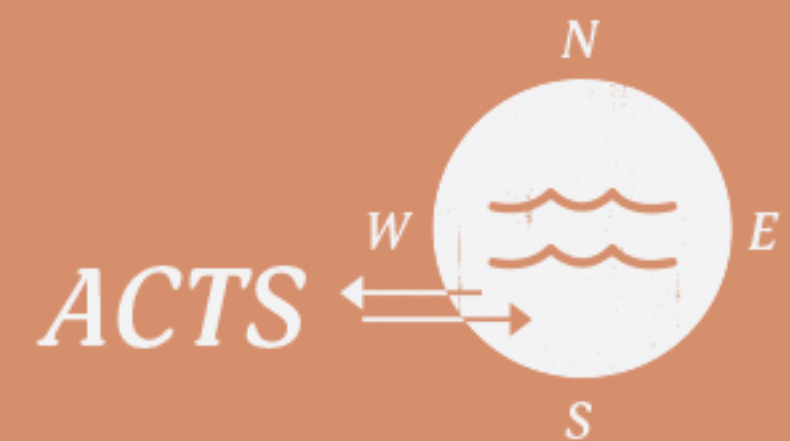
22 So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows:
“Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, 23 for
as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars
had this inscription on it: ‘To an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you
worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about.”

- Acts 17:22-23 NLT



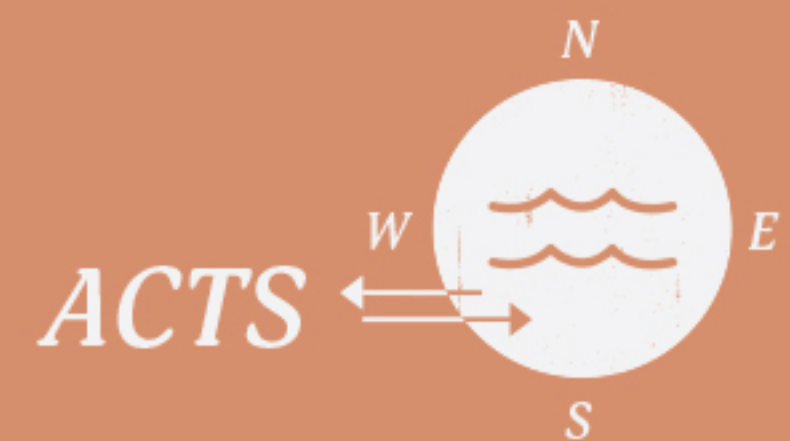
Paul Reveals the ‘Unknown God’

“24 “He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, 25 and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. 26 From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.” - Acts 17:24-26 NLT



Know Your Audience

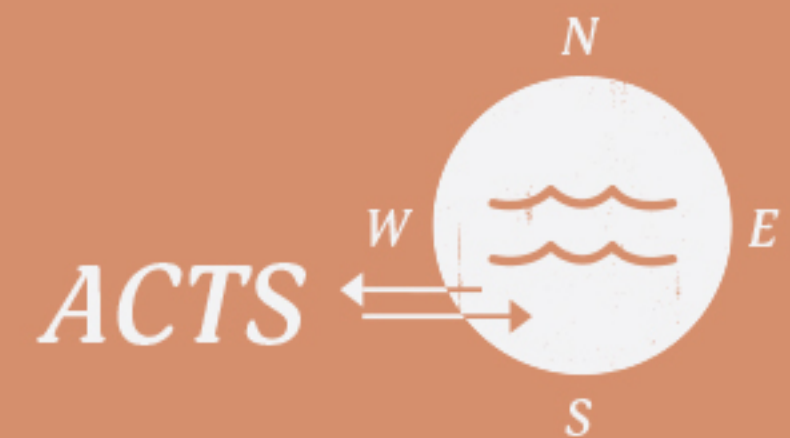
27 “His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. 28 For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ 29 And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.” - Acts 17:27-29 NLT



Know Your Audience

“The poets Paul’s hearers recognized as authorities have to some extent corroborated his message. In his search for a measure of common ground with his hearers, he is, so to speak, disinfecting and re-baptizing the poets' words for his own purposes.”

- Expositors Bible Commentary



Paul Shares The Gospel

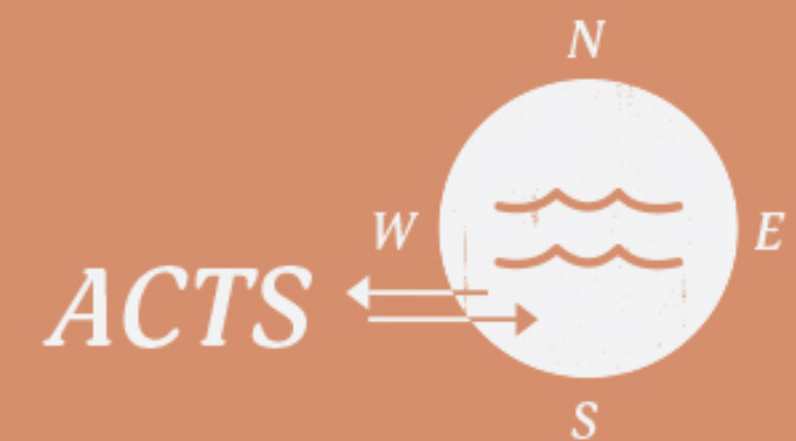
“30 God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. 31 For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.” 32 When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, “We want to hear more about this later.” 33 That ended Paul’s discussion with them, 34 but some joined him and became believers. Among them were Dionysius, a member of the council, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” - Acts 17:30-34 NLT



1. Feel The Weight

“While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, **he was deeply troubled** by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city.” - Acts 17:16 NLT

“...as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, **he began to weep.** “How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes.” - Luke 19:41-42 NLT

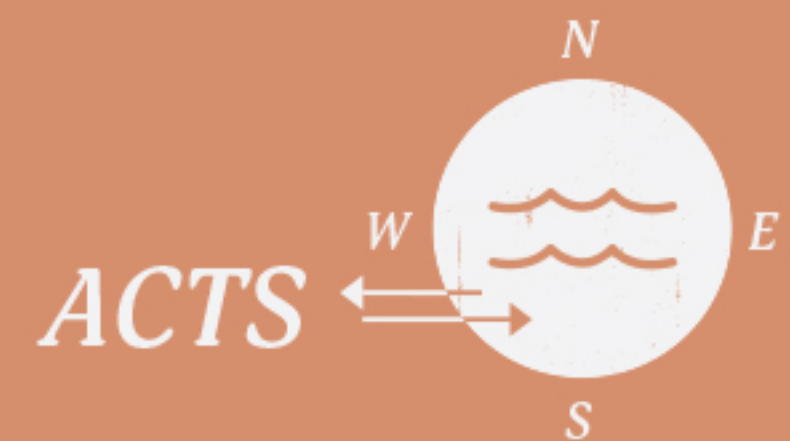


2. Let Compassion Rise

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

- Luke 9:36 NLT

“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.” - Ezekiel 36:26 NLT

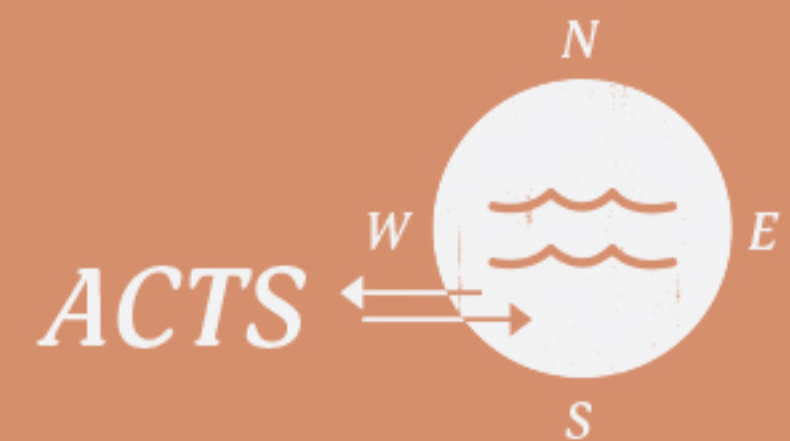


3. Know Your Audience

“...Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, ... For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ - Acts 17:22b; 28 NLT

19 Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. ... Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. 23 I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

- 1 Corinthians 9:19; 22b-23 NLT



**THE
FUTURE
BEGINS**

Taking The Gospel Into This Holiday Season

1. Feel The Weight
2. Let Compassion Rise
3. Know Your Audience
4. See How The Lord Will Use You!

