

What Are You Searching For?

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-6 Lar/AL: Dismiss Kids. *Welcome online*. Mission's Prayer. Food drive. Men's Breakfast. Harvest Festival.
- B. Slide7 Wed Night Message – (Identity) *Apple of His Eye*. [*Deaf Interpreter Sun am]
- C. Slide8 Rohingya Nepal (*listen*) Carpet training. Sewing machine. Educational supplies.
- D. Pray: **Jesus** you are *never boring* and *always relevant*!

II. Slide9 **Intro: What Are You Searching For?**

- A. What are you searching for? *I know what it is*. It is at least 1 of the **4 fundamental questions of life**. 4 areas in which people are seeking **answers**. [we'll get to that]
- B. We left off with Paul & Silas in *Thessalonica* when a riot broke out. They harassed the owner of the house they were staying at, *Jason*.
Now from the *Thessalonian Metropolis* to a little town **Berea**, present day **Veria**.

III. Slide10 **BEREAN'S, AN ATTITUDE OF RECEIVING (10-15)**

- A. **Berea** – located about **50 miles** from Thessalonica. The atmosphere was much diff.
 - 1. They were *more noble*, or had *noble-character*, open-minded. *i.e. they were sensitive and responsive to the truth*. How?
- B. Slide11 **2 WAYS: receive & examine**
 - 1. **Received the word with eagerness** – not arms folded, with a critical heart.
 - a) Some think that's actually *spiritual*, **no** that's *critical*.
 - b) Some *love apologetics* **but** forget it's about *loving people*.
 - 2. **Examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so** - back up to see if these things were right/true.
 - a) They had a spirit, **not** to prove *him* wrong, **but** prove *it* right.
 - b) Obviously it's dangerous for us to *blindly accept* what people teach. *That's how cults get started*. **Instead learn to ask 3 Questions:**

C. Slide12 3 QUESTIONS:

1. Did Jesus/Gospels **teach it**? Did Acts/early church **reveal it**?
Did the Epistles **expound on it**? [eg. sharing your faith/Great Commission]

IV. Slide13 **ATHENIANS, AN ATTITUDE OF SHARING** your faith (16-21)

A. Slide14a The Great Seal of the State of California.

1. CA grizzly bear (official state animal) he's feeding on **grape vines**, (representing California's wine production). **Sheaf of grain** (representing agriculture). **Miner** (representing the California Gold Rush & the mining industry). **Sailing ships** (representing the state's economic power) on the **San Francisco Bay or the Sacramento River**. The phrase **Eureka** (meaning ***I have found it*** is the California state **motto**) (I hear they want to want to change our motto to, **Yikes**) **Slide14b**. **But** I'm most interested in **the Lady** on the Seal. **Who is she?** She is the Greek goddess **Athena**, the goddess of wisdom.

a) The folks in her hometown are who we're talking about here!

B. Slide15a Paul travels about **200m** south from **Berea**, to the famous **Athens**.

[walk from **Tijuana**, at SD sail up to Long Beach, then walk up the 5 Frwy to **6 Flags**]

1. **Athens**, **most celebrated city** in all Greece. Home of **literature, art, politics & thought**. Home to **Socrates, Plato, Aristotle**.
2. With its **Acropolis** (a fortified stronghold on a **hill**). Its illustrious **Pantheon building** with its massive pillars could be seen for miles.
3. As **NZ** has **5mill** people & **28mill** sheep (aprox, 6 to 1 ratio) **Athens** had a population around **10,000**, yet **30,000 statutes of gods** (ratio 3 to 1).
 - a) These idols were etched into public buildings, stationed along the streets, & memorialized in shrines & temples.

C. Slide15b Let's hear from some historians of the day regarding Athens:

1. **Petronius** /Pe-Tron-ius [Roman Historian] remarked, ***In Athens it was easier to find a god than a man.***

2. **Pausanias** /Pau-Sani-us [Gk. Geographer & Historian] said, *Athens had more images than all Greece put together.*
3. **Xenophon** /Zen-o-fin [Gk. writer] calls Athens, *one great altar, one great offering to the gods.*

D. (16) **Note:** Paul **felt** (*in his spirit*) **and** he **saw**. [*do you feel/see those around you?*]

1. **Jesus** beheld the city **Jerusalem** & wept for it. **Paul** beheld the city **Athens** & was stirred by it.
2. **Jesus** wept because, *they knew the truth and didn't want it.* **Paul** was stirred because, *they wanted the truth but did not know it.*
 - a) Which better depicts your **city**? The **people** you share with?

E. **Slide 16** Next Paul answers *where* to take the Gospel. [*Religious place. Market place. Academic pl*]

1. **RELIGIOUS PLACE** (**synagogue**) as was his custom. [at church today, not all saved]
2. **MARKET PLACE** (the **Agora**) [at Albertsons, Shell gas station, Starbucks]
 - a) Paul doesn't limit his sharing about **Jesus**, **on** the Sabbath **nor inside** the synagogue.
 - b) Our last generation bought into the lie, *Never discuss Religion or Politics.* **But** Jesus isn't only for *Sunday church.* **But** for *Monday work, Tues sports, Wed shopping, Thurs at the dentist, Fri appointments & Sat neighbors.*
3. **ACADEMIC PLACE** (**Areopagus**, Mars Hill) [in HS, MSJC, Univ, work place]

F. (18) **Epicurean & Stoics** were at *opposite ends* of the philosophical spectrum.

1. **Epicurean** – Taught **pleasure** as main purpose of life. **And** regarded **gods** as far removed from all **earthly** things. [So Paul will preach **Jesus**, *God come near*]
2. **Stoics** – were into **Materialism, pantheism, fatalism, and pride.**

G. **So Paul spoke to:** *the religious folk*, the *regular Joe*, **now** *the intelligentsia of Athens*

H. (21) Spent their time in nothing except **telling** or **hearing** something *new*.

1. Many of the Thessalonians rejected *the new* (faith/king). The Bereans investigated *the new*. Here the Athenians were always looking for *the new*.
 - a) Some go to church today for the same thing. They are looking for something *new* & exciting. [a new doctrine to teethe on]. Unfortunately for many, *the search for Novelty seems to overshadow the search for Reality*.
 2. We should seek freshness not newness, when it comes to **doctrine**.
- I. *Ever realize at this point in history, the Greeks had 700 years of Greek Mythology, & 500 years of Greek philosophy...& they were still searching!
- J. Slide17 What are you searching for? *I know what it is*. It is 1 of these 4...
1. There are **4 fundamental questions of life**. 4 areas in which people are seeking answers.
 - a) You've asked them. I've asked them. *Every thinking person asks them*.
 2. They boil down to: *origin, meaning, morals and destiny*.
 - a) How did I come into being? What brings life meaning?
How do I know right from wrong? Where am I headed after I die?
 3. Which 1 of these did you struggle with before becoming a Christian?
 - a) Mine personally was #2 *What brings life meaning?* (partying a year out of HS, I said, *there's got to be more to life than this!*)
 4. The Christian faith is **unique** in its ability to answer all 4 questions.
 - a) It's **coherent**. It's capable of withstanding *the toughest philosophical attacks*.
- K. The topic of *Worldview* looks at *how you view the world around you*.
1. It is the glasses, lens or filter by which you see the world...see life.
 2. Everybody has a worldview. Question is, *Is it a good one or a bad one?*

V. ORIGIN [*where did we come from?*]

- A. How did I come into being? Did I just happen or was I an intentional creation?

B. There are **2 possible answers** to the question of **origin**:

1. **1st**, that *all intelligent life* came through **chance mutation**.

a) Nothing + infinite time + chance = everything.

2. **2nd**, behind it all there exists an *intelligent creative Being* who started the process, & has continued to guide it with some ultimate purpose in mind.

C. There is really no other option: intelligent life came through **chance mutation** or there exists *an Intelligent Creative Being*.

1. The 1st vs in bible speaks to this, (barasheet) ***In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth.*** [that's Origin]

VI. MEANING [*purpose?*]

A. What brings life meaning? Why am I here? What's my purpose for existing?

B. If we can agree that a **Creator** exists, *then you* are a **created being**. And the purpose for any created being or thing, can only be determined by *The Creator* who designed the creation.

C. I found my answer for *the purpose question* in the **bible**. I was created in the image of my Creator so I could know Him in *personal intimacy*.

1. **Also**, He created me so that I could *live in relationship with other persons*.

D. Westminster shorter catechism. #1 What is the chief end of man? ... *is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*

E. Revelation 4:11 *You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.*

VII. MORALS [*where does right & wrong come from?*] (lit cigarette/baby, *how know wrong?*)

A. How do I know right from wrong? How should I live today?

B. There are 3 possible answers to this question:

1. **Option 1**, we could allow each person to determine his or her own morals & laws

2. Option 2, is that we could have a popular vote and determine the law by a simple majority rule.
 - a) There is a *downside* to this system of determining laws. To illustrate: Passengers on an airplane could take a vote that it would be best for everyone to throw another passenger out of the plane. But, of course, this decision would violate the rights of the person thrown out of the plane.
3. Option 3, is that **the Creator** designed a world in which certain **physical** laws, **such as** the law of gravity would govern the world, **and** certain **moral & spiritual** laws would govern our relationships within that world.
 - a) If God created an *orderly physical world*, does it not make sense that He would ensure that there was also *moral order*?
 - b) The 10 Commandments cover all the basic areas of our 2 fundamental relationships: *our relationship w/God & w/our fellowman*.
 - c) These very commandments are the foundation for our countries **legal** system.
 - d) **God Himself** is the only one who has the right or ability to determine how we should live.

VIII.DESTINY [*Where am I headed after I die?*]

- A. This is one of the most critical questions that we will ever answer *because* all of us will one day **face death**. Death rate is still 100%.
- B. There are 3 possible answers:
 1. Option 1 life is all there is & when we **die**, *we return to dust & cease to exist*.
 2. Option 2 is the **circular view** of history where everything that exists is part of the *oneness of the universe* which is itself eternal. You may be **reborn in several different lifetimes or even life forms**.
 - a) Perhaps, if you are **good**, you will be born into a higher or more glorious body. *But what if you're not?*
 - (1) *People do evil things. We have bad thoughts & motives. And we often fail to do good things.*

b) **But**, let's assume the best: that you *advance* to the next level when you die.

(1) The end result of *successive positive reincarnations* is said to be this blissful union with the one, the divine force, which is described as **Nirvana**, *a mindless and person-less existence*. (This idea is not far from *dying, returning to dust, and ceasing to exist*)

3. **Option 3**, it is the natural conclusion to all we have talked about. *You were created in the image of God so that you might know Him and serve His purpose, now and for all eternity.*

a) Your Creator is eternal by His very nature *and thus* He alone can give eternal life. *He has made you so that you can live eternally with Him.*