



INTRODUCTION: THE BIGGER STORY

The only way you can properly understand who you are and what you were given life and breath to do is when you look at yourself through the lens of the narrative of Scripture. It's only in this story that you will learn that you were made by God and for God, that everything you are and have comes from him, and that you were made to live for something vastly bigger than yourself.
—Paul David Tripp

The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years by forty different authors in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) yet its message is a unified story from the beginning of time (creation) to its conclusion (new creation).

The *Drama of Scripture* is a 12-week Bible study that will cover this redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation.

The purpose of this study is to be informative (teaching), corrective (admonishing), and transformative (changing).

If there is no bigger Story then there is no true meaning or purpose to the smaller stories and events of our lives.

THE MISSION PAUL EMBARKED ON (Acts 13-28)

The apostle Paul took the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the Roman Empire on three missionary journeys and one journey to Rome as a prisoner. During his 2nd missionary journey (AD 49-52), he took the gospel into Asia Minor and Macedonia (Greece). His strategy was to find open doors and reason, explain, and present the message of Jesus (17:1-4).

One city he visited was Athens—the center of art, philosophy, architecture, and drama in the ancient world. Though the city had lost some of its luster by the first century AD, it was still considered one of the intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual hubs of the Roman Empire.

THE CULTURE PAUL ENCOUNTERED (Acts 17:16-21)

Being from Tarsus (a philosophical, intellectual city in Asia Minor), Paul was familiar with Greek philosophy and religion. However, the extent of idolatry and spiritual blindness in the city of Athens “provoked” and “distressed” him (17:16).

I had always felt life first as a story; and if there is a story, there is a storyteller.

—G.K. Chesterton

I cannot answer the question, “What ought I to do?” unless I first answer the question, “Of what story am I a part?”

—Alasdair MacIntyre

Reasoned. Greek, *dialogomai*. “to converse, discuss with one.”

Explaining. Greek, *dianoigo*, “to open up completely.”

Demonstrating. Greek, *paratithemi*, “to set before (like food on a table); to present.”

There were more statues of the gods in Athens than in all the rest of Greece put together and in Athens it was easier to meet a god than a man.

—William Barclay

The Greek religion was a mere deification of human attributes and the power of nature. It was a religion which ministered to art and amusement and was entirely destitute of moral power.

—W.J. Conybeare & J.S. Howson

The Greek poet, Hesiod (650BC), said, “There are 30,000 gods on the fruitful earth.” Athens tried to worship and honor them all.

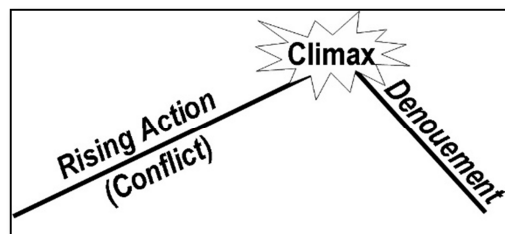
Paul encountered a city/culture characterized by three things:

- Religiously _____ (17:16)
- Philosophically _____ (17:18)
Epicureanism. Practical atheists. Materialists. Hedonists. "Enjoy life!"
Stoicism. Pantheists ("the Force"). Rationalists. Elitists. "Endure life!"
- Socially _____ (17:21)

THE MESSAGE PAUL PRESENTED (Acts 17:22-31)

Paul seeks a point of common ground and speaks with grace even to a people who are vastly different and opposed to him. But he does not compromise the truth/story of God's Word.

- There is one _____.
- There is one _____.
- There is a _____ assigned to each one of us.
- There is a _____
_____ to the Story.
- There is a _____ at the center of the Story.



HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND? _____ (17:30)

- Remove myself from the center of the Story.
- Seek to know the God who created and designed me... and loved me enough to seek me first in Jesus Christ!
- Live faithfully, under His authority, for His glory.
- Trust the Author and the ending of the Story.

Epicurus was an existentialist in that he sought truth by means of personal experience and not through reasoning. The Epicureans were materialists and atheists and their goal in life was pleasure. —Warren Wiersbe

The men of Athens thought their city the greatest in Greece so they felt themselves a cut above the ordinary Greeks. —Ray Pritchard

We Athenians stay at home doing nothing, always delaying and making decrees, and asking in the market if there be anything new. —Demosthenes (384-322 BC)

The heart of the faith of the Christian is the belief that the true meaning of the story of which our lives are a part is that which is made known in the biblical narrative. ...We cannot opt out of the story. We cannot take control of the story. It is under the control of the infinitely patient God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every day of our lives we have to make decisions about the part we will play in the story. ...The essential contribution of the Christian...will simply be the telling of the story, the story of Jesus, the story of the Bible. —Lesslie Newbigin

The best stories are good, standing the test of time, because they reflect another bigger and better story, the biblical story. And the biblical story is good because it is true—so true, in fact, that it is simply Truth. ...It is a redemptive story and it is still unfolding. —Jerry Sittser
A Grace Revealed