

THE ROCK

“WHO IS GOD?”

Matthew 7:24-25 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

-THE HEART OF THIS SERIES! ALL AGES TOGETHER!

-SOAP: Scripture.....Observation.....Application.....Prayer

CHURCHWIDE! WEEKLY: MONDAY MORNINGS

-Materials: “FOUNDATIONS” Julie Nelson

THIS WEEK’S VERSE:

Acts 17:24 “The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth.”

Historical & Cultural Context

Location: Athens, Greece.....the intellectual capital of the ancient world

-home of philosophers, idols, and debate.

-Luke says the city was “full of idols” (Acts 17:16).

Audience: vs 18 says Paul is speaking to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers
-not synagogue Jews.

-These thinkers valued reason, logic, and public debate.

Setting: The Areopagus (Mars Hill)

-not just a hill but a respected council and forum where new ideas and teachings were examined.

-Paul is not on trial, but he is being evaluated.

NOW: ENTIRE TEXT:

Acts 17:24-32 Then they took him to Mars' Hill and said, "We want to hear of this new teaching of yours." ²⁰ Some of the things you are telling us are strange to our ears. We want to know what these things mean." ²¹ The people of Athens and those visiting from far countries used all their time in talking or hearing some new thing. ²² Then Paul stood up on Mars' Hill and said, "Men of Athens, I see how very religious you are in every way. ²³ As I was walking around and looking at the things you worship, I found an altar where you worship with the words written on it, TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN. You are worshiping Him without knowing Him. He is the One I will tell you about.

²⁴ "The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not live in buildings made by hands." ²⁵ No one needs to care for Him as if He needed anything. He is the One who gives life and breath and everything to everyone. ²⁶ He made from one blood all nations who live on the earth. He set the times and places where they should live.

²⁷ "They were to look for God. Then they might feel after Him and find Him because He is not far from each one of us." ²⁸ It is in Him that we live and move and keep on living. Some of your own men have written, 'We are God's children.' ²⁹ If we are God's children, we should not think of Him as being like gold or silver or stone. Such gods made of gold or silver or stone are planned by men and are made by them.

³⁰ "God did not remember these times when people did not know better. But now He tells all men everywhere to be sorry for their sins and to turn from

them.³¹ He has set a day when He will say in the right way if the people of the world are guilty. This will be done by Jesus Christ, the One He has chosen. God has proven this to all men by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.”

³² Some people laughed and made fun when they heard Paul speak of Christ being raised from the dead. Others said, “We want to listen to you again about this.”

SAME RESPONSE OF PEOPLE TODAY!

Big Picture Meaning

- Christianity is intellectually credible
- God is knowable, not distant
- The gospel can engage culture without compromising truth
- Faith and reason are not enemies

We live in an age of information. If you want to know anything—how galaxies form, how DNA works, how your phone recognizes your face—you can Google it in seconds.

And yet, with all our knowledge, humanity still asks the oldest question of all:

Is God real?

TODAY: WHO IS GOD?? (START WITH GOD’S WORD)

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Isaiah 45:18 For this is what the Lord says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create

it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: **“I am the Lord, and there is no other.”**

Isaiah 43:10-13 “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that **I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.** ¹¹**I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.** ¹²**I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,”** declares the Lord, “that **I am God.** ¹³**Yes, and from ancient days I am he.**

Isaiah 44:7 “This is what the Lord says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: **I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.**

-ALL GOOD IF WE BELIEVE IN GOD.....AND HIS WORD!

Foundational question: Is God Real?

If the answer to that question is, “no,” then there’s really not much sense in asking any other questions about Him, is there?

Everyone wonders about God from time to time. It’s the nature of faith.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and **certain of what we do not see.**

“what is faith? It is the existence of things we cannot yet see.”

If we could see it, it wouldn't be faith.

ALL OF LIFE IS BUILT ON FAITH!

- You put money in the stock market, with faith that you won't get burned.
- You join a company, with faith that they'll pay you every month.
- You get married, believing you'll live happily ever after.
- You get on an airplane believing you will get to where you want to go.
- You got up this morning, believing that there would be enough air to breathe for you to make it through the day.

There are no guarantees in life, only expressions of faith.

But that doesn't mean that we have to express faith blindly.

- We invest in the market after reading about a company.
- We accept a job after interviewing the boss.
- We get married after meeting our potential in-laws.
- We get on an airplane of an airline with a trusted reputation.
- We believe there'll be enough air to breathe because there was enough air yesterday and the day before and the day before that.

Our faith is based on reasoning and facts and prior experience.

God gave us our intellect.....we don't just blindly believe.

POINTERS TO GOD'S EXISTENCE!

(Peg) Jeep: Starbucks cup and normally a fork, napkin & gouda egg bites bag.

(Soph) Bathroom: makeup is out and coffee cups and opened daily contacts

(Family) Kitchen: dishes are out and food is out.....garbage is FULL

(Dog) Back Yard: dog poop

EXAMPLE: CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT I HAVE A FAMILY!

IF YOU HAVE YOUNGER KIDS:

-Barbie dolls.....cars and trucks

THE EVIDENCE IS EVERYWHERE!!! EVERYWHERE!!!

The nature of cause and effect: For every effect, there has to be a cause.

Faith in God is not belief without evidence—it is belief based on overwhelming evidence.

1. Creation: Evidence You Can See

Psalm 19:1-4 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. ³ They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. ⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

-LOOK IN THE SKIES! -NORTHERN LIGHTS!

Scientists tell us that just about Everything in the universe is contingent.

Which means, it's dependent on other things in order to exist.

Take trees for example. They need air to exist, air to survive, air to have been created in the first place.

-Trees are contingent on air. (OXYGEN AND CARBON DIOXIDE)

The earth needs the sun. The sun needs the solar system, and gravity, and a whole bunch of photo and electrochemical reactions to be able to exist.

Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

-Why people try to disprove CREATION!

Look at the universe. It had a beginning.

-Science agrees on that. Time, space, matter all came into existence at once.

And logic tells us this: Nothing does not create something.

Hebrews 3:4 “Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.”

COMMON SENSE: If you find an Iphone on the ground, you don't assume it assembled itself over billions of years.

-Design points to a designer.

-Order points to intelligence.

-Creation points to a Creator.

Imagine you're walking alone on a beach and find that phone in the sand!

-You pick it up. The screen lights up. It has apps, photos, messages...

-Face recognition. Millions of lines of code behind that glowing glass.

Now imagine someone walking up to you and saying.....

“Isn't it amazing what the ocean can do if you give it enough time?
Waves, wind, pressure—eventually, a phone just forms.”

...ARE YOU SERIOUS?????

-Why? Because instinctively you know something:

Complex information always points to intelligence.

-A phone requires a mind.

-Code requires a coder.

-Design requires a designer.

SO THINK OF THIS:

If a phone demands a creator, what about the human mind that invented the phone?

- Your brain processes 11 million bits of information per second.
- Your DNA carries more data than the world's largest libraries combined.
- Your heart beats about 100,000 times a day without you telling it to.
- Your eyes adjust to light faster than the best camera ever made.

And we're told all of that came from nothing... by accident... for no reason...

-Creation isn't whispering It's shouting!

Psalm 14:1 “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

Why? Because denying God requires more faith than believing in Him.

2. Conscience: Evidence Within You

Romans 2:15 “They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness.”

Every culture, every generation, everywhere.....

.....people know some things are right and some things are wrong.

We argue about what is right and wrong, but we almost never argue whether right and wrong exist.

- Why does injustice outrage us?
- Why does cruelty feel evil?
- Why does love feel sacred?

If there is no God, then morality is just opinion.

- But your heart refuses to believe that.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 “He has also set eternity in the human heart.”

That ache for meaning, justice, and eternity is not an accident.

- Hunger proves the existence of food.
- Thirst proves the existence of water.
- Longing for God proves the existence of something that can satisfy it.

3. Reason: God Invites You to Think

-God never tells us to turn our brains off.

Big Picture Meaning of Acts 17 (Our text)

- Christianity is intellectually credible
- God is knowable, not distant
- The gospel can engage culture without compromising truth
- Faith and reason are not enemies

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord.”

-Jesus constantly asked questions.

-Paul debated philosophers.

Christianity was never afraid of reason.....

..... because truth doesn't fear examination.

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Not the end of thinking—the beginning of it.

Even Jesus appealed to evidence. After His resurrection, He told Thomas:

John 20:27 “Put your finger here; see my hands... Stop doubting and believe.”

-God doesn't shame honest doubt. He answers it.

SO: CREATION.....CONSCIENCE.....REASON.....

4. History: A God Who Stepped In

Christianity is not built on vague spirituality.

It is anchored in history.

1 Corinthians 15:3–6 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas,^[b] and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

THE TRUTH OF THE STORY OF JESUS STILL STANDS!

Acts 17:31 For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.

The resurrection is not just a miracle—it's God's public proof.

5. Experience: Lives That Are Changed

Finally, there is the evidence no argument can erase: Transformed lives.

2 Corinthians 5:17 If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

- Addicts set free.
- Hopeless people restored.
- Enemies forgiven.
- Purpose reborn.

-You can argue philosophy. You can debate science...

-But you cannot explain away billions of lives changed by the same Savior.

Psalm 34:8 “Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Conclusion: The Evidence Demands a Response

God has left fingerprints everywhere:

- In the universe above you
- In the conscience within you
- In the cross before you
- And in the empty tomb behind you

Hebrews 11:6 Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”

Acts 17:32 Some people laughed and made fun when they heard Paul speak of Christ being raised from the dead. Others said, “We want to listen to you again about this.”

SAME RESPONSE OF PEOPLE TODAY!

OUR RESPONSE:

1) “We want to listen to you again about this.” (9 Week JOURNEY!)

2) I want to say YES to Jesus!

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