

LIVING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

God Is Always At Work In The World

Acts 17

Part 11 May 15, 2022

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What do you believe?

How does what you believe get lived out every day?

Where on the road of becoming like Jesus are you?

LET THE WORLD PROVOKE YOUR SPIRIT

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols. So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. Acts 17:16-17 NAS

Athens was a city whose fame rested on intellectual pursuits and competing philosophies.

YOU HAVE TO CONNECT THE GOSPEL TO THEIR LIVES

So Paul, standing before them at the Mars Hill forum, addressed them as follows: "Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious, for as I was out walking I saw your many altars, and one of them had this inscription on it--'To the Unknown God.' You have been worshiping him without knowing who he is, and now I wish to tell you about him." Acts 17:22-23 NIV

THE STORY OF THE UNKNOWN GOD

Three assumptions:

1. There is still another god whose name is unknown to us.
2. That this God is great enough and good enough to do something about the plague if only we invoke His help.
3. The third assumption is that any god great enough and good enough to do something about the plague is probably great enough and good enough to smile on us in our ignorance, if we acknowledge our ignorance and call upon Him.

TELL THEM GOD IS GOD AND HE WILL BE THEIR JUDGE

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands....In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 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 all men by raising him from the dead." Acts 17:24, 30-31 NIV

Look again at Paul's approach.

V 22-23 He compliments their religious pursuits and points to the Unknown God.

V 24 He points to the evidence of creation in the hands of God. Creation is not a god itself, or even several different gods.

V 25 The vanity of idolatry is rejected as unnecessary.

V 26 God is director of nations.

V 27-28 God is near.

V 29-30a Since God is all powerful, overall, not like gold or silver to be cast, idolatry is ignorant.

Acts 17:29-30 NIV

"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

V 30b God, Theo, not 'a god' but God. Proper noun, who is the unknown God. He is Theo - God. God calls people to repent!

V 31 Paul jumps to the resurrection as proof of God's plan for mankind.

NOT ALL WILL ACCEPT THE MESSAGE - BUT SOME WILL

But a few joined him and became believers. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the City Council, and a woman named Damaris, and others.

Acts 17:34 LIV

Behold the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the message of Jesus and His resurrection.

For the truth about God is known to them instinctively; God has put this knowledge in their hearts.

Romans 1:19 LIV