

ACTS 17:27-34

Introduction: Paul is speaking on Mars Hill before Athens' court. Paul commends them for being religious, but tells them they are **mis**directed in Who the true God is. The true God created and sustains all of creation. The human race is of one blood that had begun through Adam. We are all **re**lated!

****Internationalism, one world with no borders**, is a satanic attempt to destroy the purpose of God for the nations. The news media pushes a one-world government, a one-world economy, and one-world politics.

****It is God Who sets up a nation and its boundaries. He is the One Who set up nationalism. One-world government is what took place at the Tower of Babel and will happen again with Antichrist in the Tribulation.**

A.

Acts 17:27 - That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

1. God set up the boundaries to see if any of the nations would seek Him. Individual nations had a better chance to do so than having one government to blanket the world. There have been few, but thank God for the **couple** who did.
2. Also, God's purpose in doing this was to make man's dependence upon Him and to cause man to seek Him in hope of touching and finding Him.

****[feel]** has the idea to grope after God as **blind** men in the dark - seeking Him, to touch Him for help.

Ephesians 4:18 - Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

II Corinthians 4:4 - In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

- a. Paul points out that seeking God should not be too difficult since God was so very close to every one of them. Remember, some of them had made God too **far** from them to be of any help.

*Paul says that, in spite of the greatness of God, He is near and especially to those who truly desire Him (Nineveh-Cornelius).

Psalms 145:18 - The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Can
and
Jeremiah 23:23-24 - Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Jer. 23:24
any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven
and earth? saith the LORD.

- b. Boundaries - if blind, it is easier to find something in a **small room** than in open spaces! God hemmed men in nations to give them a better chance to find Him.

(1) *The more information put out over the media, the less truth can be found! There has never been a time in the history of human communications like today, and the world is ready for **antichrist**.

(2) At church, with the biggest crowds, the less depth you can preach on. You are always trying to strike a balance between the spiritually mature and less mature. But with a smaller crowd (Sunday School), you can dig deeper in scripture.

c. The best way to kick God and the Bible out is to get people together, without boundaries.

Isaiah 10:12-13 - Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. Isa. 10:13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*:

B.

Acts 17:28 - For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

1. Paul does not call them sons of God redeemed, but the offspring of God. Paul is referring to creation and their relationship to God through creation. They are offspring, because God created mankind.

Genesis 1:26-27 - And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Luke 3:38 - Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

2. Paul (presence of mind) quotes their own poets, who evidently agreed with Paul's point here - that man was dependent upon God as the sustainer of life.

**That doesn't mean that their Greek poets were inspired, like scripture. But their statements agreed in that point with God's truth.

3. Man, created by God, has both the image and likeness of God. Both of these characteristics by nature, through Adam's fall, have been marred and scarred by sin (no more innocence, but are alienated from the life of God).

Ecclesiastes 7:20 - For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

4. Man has the image of God in a trinitarian way: mind, body, and soul - or - spirit, soul, body.

I Thessalonians 5:23 - And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Man has the likeness of God, not in essence, but in that he has a will or power of choice in what he does, or does not do, as a responsible person. Man can make moral decisions.

John 7:17 - If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

5. Paul is saying to them, "Since it is God Who created you, sustains you, and gives you your very next breath, your very existence depends upon God - the One you don't know."

C. Acts 17:29 - Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

1. The conclusion was inevitable. Since humans have been created by God, that true God could not possibly live in the **form** of an idol or any image constructed by man.

Romans 1:22-23 - Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom. 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

*Paul is giving these Athenians a completely new revelation, whose city was full of idols-altars and objects of worship (vs. 16, 23).

2. Their idols of gold, silver, and stone were the result of man's **imagin**ations in their **search** of the One true God. A statue or inanimate object would not possibly show the living God (Father and Holy Spirit are Spirit).

John 4:24 - God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Isaiah 44:6 - Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

- D. 1. There was a time (when Israel was favored-the circum.) when God turned the other way and shut His

Acts 17:30 - And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

eyes to the idolatry of paganism. But since Israel had fallen (temporarily), Paul says that **now** the Gentiles were experiencing the light of God. But this light causes **responsibility** to change their thinking about God and turn to Him.

*God's patience and longsuffering caused Him to overlook their idol-making and idolatry, without immediately punishing them.

2. However, being lost still made them **condemned** and under God's **wrath**. Even though Paul is now revealing to them the light of God, previously they were always without excuse because of natural revelation!

Romans 1:18-20 - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Rom. 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. Rom. 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

*Paul is saying, now that the true God has been revealed - they are accountable to believe in Him. Paul is not just trying to convince them, but (through the Spirit's assistance) to **convict** them to repent of their idolatry and turn to the only living God.

E.

Acts 17:31 - Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

1. Paul now tells them why they need to repent, to stop their idolatry, and turn to the true God because judgment was coming! God has **fixed** a coming day that He will pour out His wrath (no longer withheld) on each idolater who has made a mockery of His mercy and truth.

Romans 2:3-6 - And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Rom. 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Rom. 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Rom. 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

2. God has designated - ordained - appointed a **man** to be in charge of all judgment. By the will of the Father, this task has been given to His Son Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:11-12).

John 5:22, 27 - For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

3. Paul then gives his evidence/proof/authority/assurance as to why all should believe in this Christ... He is **alive**! Based upon this true, historical, and supernatural fact, they will be judged.

Note: Paul discusses sin (repent), righteousness (justice), and judgment (He will judge).

John 16:8 - [And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:]

F.

Acts 17:32 - And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

1. As soon as Paul mentions Christ's resurrection, he is immediately interrupted. The majority thought him to be **fanatical** and his message **non**sense, to think that a dead man could rise from the dead to live forever.

2. Some "mocked" - The Epicureans and Stoics, who lived for pleasure alone in this life, when all is over, began to sneer and make light of Paul's message. They were content with their own created idols and did not want to hear any more from Paul. They made fun and ridiculed him. They were wrong!

Romans 14:9 - For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Hebrews 9:27 - And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

3. Some procrastinated - They said perhaps a later time, but not now Paul. They postponed a decision.

Proverbs 27:1 - Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

II Corinthians 6:2 - (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Proverbs 1:26-28 - I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; Pro. 1:27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Pro. 1:28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

4. Some believed -

G. Acts 17:33-34 - So Paul departed from among them. Acts 17:34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

1. It's amazing that it is still the same today! We preach to a group of lost people and some think it is silly, some say not right now, and some do believe (thank God).
2. One was Dionysius the Areopagite, who evidently lived on Mars Hill. Being around all these council members and philosophers, he must have been an intelligent man. Not many of this type are called by God.

I Corinthians 1:26-27 - For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: 1Cor. 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

Romans 1:14-16 - I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. Rom. 1:15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

3. Another convert was a lady named Damaris. Her name means "a delicate woman", and that is all we know about her. But God thought her important enough to have her name engraved in the halls of scripture!
4. It also says: "certain men...and others...believed". They stayed close to Paul so they could hear more about this wonderful God and Savior.
5. As Paul walks away from the majority of people on Mars Hill, his preaching stopped there. Do you think Paul felt that his message was a failure, like many say it was?
 - a. Always remember, if a failure happened in Athens, it wasn't Paul's message or the way he presented it. If anything, it was because of the hardness of the idolatrous Athenians' hearts.
 - b. Paul's message was a masterpiece of God-given wisdom and power. The way Paul skillfully took into consideration where the Athenians were coming from was a demonstration of wisdom and boldness. Paul powerfully met human philosophy with God's truth. Tactfully, Paul exposed their idolatry with the challenge to search their consciences, and warned them of coming judgment and their need to repent and turn to God. Paul appealed to creation's witness and even their own poets on that point. Paul proclaimed his God was their "Unknown God" and with truth proved their wrong of atheism, polytheism, pantheism, fatalism, and materialism. Paul did this all in the course of a few moments of time. It was no failure. What a speech!
 - c. Also remember, Paul did have some believe. Even if no one receives-believes the gospel when Christ is shared, it is a success. One day when a lost person stands before God, having rejected our gospel of grace, they will be judged guilty - lost - "with out excuse". But know that we have been obedient to God's will in sharing His D.B.R. message

II Corinthians 5:19-20 - To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
2Cor. 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Galatians 6:9 - And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Acts 13:49-52 - And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. Acts 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. Acts 13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.