

ACTS - "To the Ends of the Earth"

"Paul in Athens"

Acts 17:16-34

August 2, 2015

PAUL'S EXPERIENCE IN ATHENS (17:16-21)

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean." (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) Acts 17:16-21

Paul feels "distress" over the fact that people are neither _____ God as God, nor _____ the benefits of an accurate understanding of God.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE ATHENIANS (17:22-34)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. 24 "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 human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 29 "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 human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 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." 32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. Acts 17:22-34

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1. God is the _____, and the Lord of heaven and earth. (17:24)

“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the Lord. “These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word. Isaiah 66:1-2

2. God is the _____ of life, and not dependent upon humankind for anything. (17:25)

I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Psalm 50:9-12

3. God is the _____ of the nations, and bids them to seek Him so they might find Him. (17:26-28a)

“Am I only a God nearby,” declares the Lord, “and not a God far away? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord. Jeremiah 23:23-24

4. God is the _____ of humankind, and beyond anything one could imagine or design. (17:28b-29)

With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it... “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Isaiah 40:18-25

5. God is the _____, and calls all people to acknowledge His Person and Provision. (17:30-31).

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” Acts 10:42-43

PAUL’S MESSAGE TO US

Hear and Receive the _____: Let God inform your mind/heart.

Reject _____: Let God root out your substitute gods.

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” Jeremiah 2:13

Engage the _____ with the Good News: Let God strengthen you for Spirit empowered witness.

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