



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Leading the Greatest Minds to Christ

JUNE 20-22, 2018

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Acts 17:28-34 *“For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ 29) Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art or man’s devising. 30) Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31) because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.’ 32) And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’ 33) So Paul departed from among them. 34) However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”* (NKJV)

“AS IF TO MAKE UP FOR THE FEWNESS OF THE CONVERTS IN THIS FAMOUS CITY, ONE OF THEM WAS CHOSEN FROM AMONG THE JUDGES OF THE AREOPAGUS ITSELF, THE MOST AUGUST TRIBUNAL OF THE ANCIENT WORLD ... THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH DESCRIBES HIM AS THE FIRST CHRISTIAN BISHOP OF ATHENS (SO EUSEBIUS), AND A LEGEND OF MUCH LATER DATE AS HAVING SUFFERED MARTYRDOM THERE (SO NICEPHORUS).”

J. A. ALEXANDER

If we are the offspring of God and we cannot be adequately represented by gold, silver or stone, how can God be represented as such? How did God overlook their past ignorance? On what basis is everyone commanded to repent? Does Paul reveal the judgment day as an immediately

impending event? Who did Paul say would be the judge of every person? Why did these world renowned intellects interrupt Paul’s message? Did the procrastinators have the opportunity to hear Paul present the gospel to them again?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES AND EVENTS:

- > JUNE 27-29: ACTS 18:1-4 PAUL’S NEW TEAM IN THE WEALTHIEST CAPITAL
- > SEPTEMBER 21: LIFT-DELTAVILLE THE LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT

Paul had taken the kindest possible approach as he addressed the reigning intellectuals of the world his day in the ancient university city of Athens. Rather than blasting their foolish idolatry that was not even aligned with their own schools of philosophy, he began graciously with words that could be received as a compliment. Then he presented the true God through an altar of their own making, “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” These men respected as the greatest intellects of the world of Paul’s day, had continually chosen to worship ignorantly a deity whom they even acknowledged that they did not know! With all their thirst for knowledge with the newest trends of thought, they had neglected the knowledge of this one Paul presented as the Creator, the God who made everything and therefore is the sovereign Master over it all, including themselves, and He therefore gave them their life and even their next breath. Paul challenged their national pride and racism by overthrowing their concept that the world was made by chance (the philosophy of evolution), revealing that God had “made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.” These greatest university leaders had ignored their true Sovereign upon whom they were completely dependent and who had given them every accomplishment in their history, “having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation.” Paul informed them that they were made for a singular purpose, “that they should seek God.” In spite of their wisdom, they were blind to the fact that “He is not far

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

Leading the Greatest Minds to Christ

from each one of us.” In fact, He is so close that “*in Him we live and move and have our being.*” Because we are His creation, Paul said their poets were correct, “*For we are His offspring.*” These intellectuals are now beginning to realize their foolishness in seeking to appease the gods through idol worship, and they are realizing that their understanding of God is the most important knowledge determining what they do and how they act in every way.

“IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPRESS IN MORE EMPHATIC LANGUAGE OUR ENTIRE DEPENDENCE ON GOD.”
ALBERT BARNES

I. THE CORRECTION IN REVERENCE ACTS 17:28-29

Paul presents his first philosophical argument with the word “*therefore,*” inviting them to think of the logical conclusion to being the “*offspring of God.*” His argument literally continues, “*we are not obligated to suppose the Divine Being to be like gold or silver or stone, the engraved work of the skill and meditation of man.*” Rather than seeking God, or even seeking to know about Him, they felt obligated instead to foolishly make more idols from gold, silver or stone, hoping to appease the gods by worshipping an image in their likeness or dedicated to them. With no further investigation, they had continued to walk blindly down the same path for the entirety of their history. How could they consider everyone else to be barbarians and lacking intelligence, while they, the Greeks had the monopoly on wisdom? If even man, the creature, created in the image of God cannot be adequately represented by matter alone, how much more the God who created him!

“THESE, WHO WERE CONSIDERED TO BE THE GREATEST INTELLECTS OF THEIR DAY, HAD FOOLISHLY CREATED GODS THEMSELVES THAT THEY WISHED TO EXIST!”

II. THE COMMAND TO REPENT ACTS 17:30

Paul presents his second philosophical argument with the next “*therefore,*” inviting them to abandon their ignorance. His logic continues, “*these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*” When Israel had turned to idolatry after having known their Creator God through His own self-revelation in the Bible, they had been immediately made subject to their enemies, until finally they were completely deported out of their land into the Babylonian captivity. The Greeks had worshipped idols for the entirety of their existence, yet they had never been deported for it, because, as Paul said, “*these times of ignorance God overlooked.*” They had continually followed the cycle of abandonment by God in Romans 1:18ff, and God had not sent them a single prophet to alter their ignorance until Paul had arrived. He had been commissioned specifically by Christ to give them (the Gentiles) the truth of the gospel and bring His name to them (Acts 9:15). Paul relieves them from their ignorance in how to worship their Creator and how to please Him in that He “*now commands all men everywhere to repent.*” Obediently, they must turn from their sin to God.

“IT IS IMPLIED THAT THE COMING OF CHRIST MEANS A FRESH START.” F. F. BRUCE

III. THE COURT OF THE RESURRECTED ACTS 17:31-34

Paul reveals the authority behind the command to repent with God’s summons to all to His final Supreme Court, “*because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*” Greeks refused to believe in the resurrection, so this great intellectual court began to mock, interrupting Paul’s speech. Some claimed to desire to hear Paul again. Yet, one man who led the philosophers, a woman, and others courageously joined Paul and believed in Jesus Christ.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Have you come to understand that your knowledge of God is most important and it will determine what you say and do?
- 2) Do you embrace your dependence upon God in gratitude for all that He has given you and repented of your sin?
- 3) While others may mock or procrastinate, have you believed in Jesus Christ and received Him as your Lord and Savior?