

Sermon Notes
Acts 17
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**Attributes of God proclaimed by Paul to the Greek
philosophers in Athens during his 2nd missionary journey**

- Verse 24 God made the heaven and earth, is master of both and doesn't dwell in manmade temples. (Isaiah 66:1) 1 Cor 6:19 (Body is the temple)
"Thus says the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. Where is the house that you will build me? And where is the place of my rest?"
(Compare to man's temples built today, which are tributes to himself)
- Verse 25 He isn't supported by the efforts of man's labor, since he is life and all things to man. (Isaiah 42:5)
"Thus says the Lord God, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, and spirit to those who walk on it."
(Compare with sciences belief that the earth was not only formed by natural processes, but evolved to its present state)
- Verse 26 He made all nations from one and determines when & where they exist. (Deuteronomy 32:8) *"When the most high divided their inheritance to the nations, When he separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples, according to the numbers of the people of Israel."*
(Compare with tower of Babel, and Gods scattering of the people) Gen 11
- Verse 27 He did this that man would seek for Him, that by groping blindly about they might hope to find Him, though he is not far from anyone. (Romans 1:20), (Jeremiah 23:23-24)
"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so they are without excuse."
(Man can deny God's existence, but the irrefutable evidence is all around us, so that on that day he won't be able to say "We didn't know")
- Verse 28 In God we live, breath, and have our existence, as even some of their own poets admitted. (Colossians 1:17)
"And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."
(What would the earth and man be without God's forming and breathing?)
- Verse 29 Because we come from God the Divine Nature as His living and breathing offspring, we shouldn't think He exists in a form of non-living, non-breathing object shaped by the hand of man. (Isaiah 40:18)
"To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?"
(Or worse, that He does not exist at all!)

Verse 30 There was a time when God overlooked man's ignorance and foolishness in seeking after Him in a way He could not be found, but now He calls on men everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day when He will righteously judge the world by the One ordained to do so, that One being Jesus the Christ. (Acts 10:42-Peter) He assures all of this fact by His resurrection from the dead. (Romans 3:25) *"whom God set forth as a propitiation by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in his forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed."*

Verse 32-34 Goes on to say that some mocked while others said they would hear him again on these things. Paul left them but some joined to him and came to believe (Dionysius, Damaris, etc)

Pauls situation at this time

He was on his second missionary journey.

Imagine his physical condition. He was an older man now, and somewhat physically infirm, yet he did not cease in doing the Lord's work.

Preached in Thessalonica, where many believed, and was sent secretly out by night to go to Berea to preach the word. (were we as diligent)

He was being hounded almost constantly, and in some cases having to flee for his life

He ended up in Athens, waiting for Silas and Timothy to come and assist his work.

He is troubled by the idolatry he sees everywhere around him.

While waiting he reasons daily in the synagogue and market place with the Jews and whoever happened to be around.

He ends up talking with philosophers, some of whom had no idea what he was talking about, while others could only ascertain that he was proclaiming foreign gods. Their level of reasoning and understanding reminds me of today's so called "theologians" who never reach clear conclusions on anything. To reach a clear conclusion would be the end of the matter, and thusly the appearance of wisdom.

This was something the Jews would have tried to use against him, as it was against Roman law to establish new religions. This was the basic claim made against the church when the hard persecutions arose, and they were faced with proclaiming the emperor as "god."

Recognizing their religious nature, albeit an errant nature, he opens his talk by noting that nature and their altar to an "unknown God."

He spoke in a way they could understand, though it would have been below his own level of understanding. He was telling them things they had never heard before, yet

which reasoned thought could not logically deny.

He was able to make them understand that what they were seeking and how they were going about it was futile, by appealing to their sense of logic. Those who ultimately refused the teaching were not nearly as intelligent as they might like to have thought. Those who received it even followed after Paul.

Examine what Paul established in his teaching.

God is creator

Acts 17:24

Doesn't dwell in any kind of abode

Acts 17:24

He isn't supported by man

Acts 17:25

All nations come from His creation

Acts 17:26

He determines when and where they exist

Acts 17:26

It is by God that we live and breathe

Act 17:28

It is foolish to think of Him as made of some material, since we ourselves live and breathe

Acts 17:29

There was a time when God overlooked mans ignorance, but that time has passed

Act 17:30

He has appointed a day to judge all men

Acts 17:31

Because Christ was resurrected, man can be sure of judgment and resurrection

Acts 17:31