

Paul's gospel message to educated pagans

Acts 17:22-34

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

Acts 17:22-23

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Acts 17:24-25

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.

Acts 17:26-27

Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for

“‘In him we live and move and have our being’;

as even some of your own poets have said,

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Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

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The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Acts 17:30-31

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Acts 17:32-34

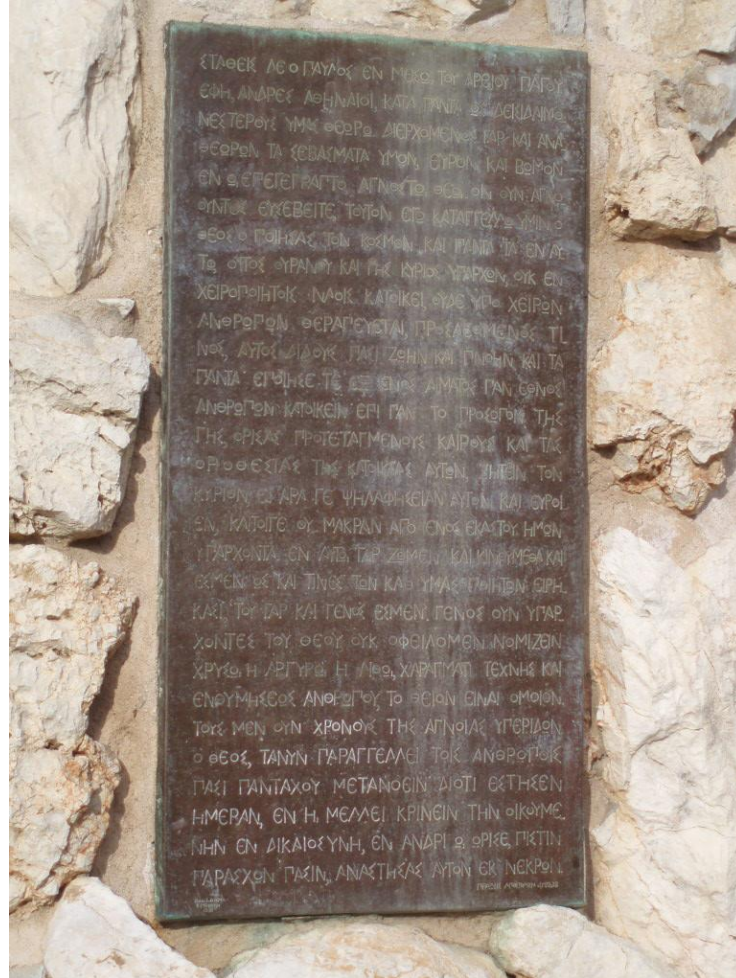
Peter witnesses to Cornelius (38*)			●									
James, brother of John, martyred (41–44)				■								
Peter rescued from prison, leaves Jerusalem (44)				●								
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)				■								
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					■							
Peter and Paul at Jerusalem council (48–49*)					■							
Paul's second missionary journey (48/49–51*)					■							
Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)					●							
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)						■						
Paul ministers in Ephesus (52–55)						■						
Claudius dies; Jews allowed back to Rome (54)						●						
Nero's reign (54–68)							■					







The Areopagus as viewed from the Acropolis.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Areopagus>



Engraved plaque containing Apostle Paul's sermon, at the Areopagus, Athens, Greece.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Areopagus_sermon



Reconstructed Stoa of Attalos
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoa_of_Attalos



Inside the reconstructed Stoa of Attalos
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoa_of_Attalos

“Paul’s argument is a challenge to all forms of religion which seek to make a god to suit the needs of the worshippers. Moreover, idolatry can take many forms, both intellectually (with false ideas about God) and practically (with the worship of created things rather than the Creator).”

David Peterson, 501

“Idols are not limited to primitive societies; there are many sophisticated idols too. An idol is a god-substitute. Any person or thing that occupies the place which God should occupy is an idol. Covetousness is idolatry. Ideologies can be idolatries. So can fame, wealth and power, sex, food, alcohol and other drugs, parents, spouse, children and friends, work, recreation, television and possessions, even church, religion and Christian service.”

John Stott, 291

“So it is with the supremacy of Christ in your life. All the planets of your life — your sexuality and desires, your commitments and beliefs, your aspirations and dreams, your attitudes and convictions, your habits and disciplines, your solitude and relationships, your labor and leisure, your thinking and feeling — all the planets of your life are held in orbit by the greatness and gravity and blazing brightness of the supremacy of Jesus Christ at the center of your life.

And if he ceases to be the bright, blazing, satisfying beauty at the center of your life, the planets will fly into confusion, and a hundred things will be out of control, and sooner or later they will crash into destruction.”

John Piper, conference message, September 26, 2004

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“The reason this book is being written by a hairy biped, rather than a scaly one, has more to do with dinosaurian misfortune than with any particular mammalian virtue.”

Elizabeth Kolbert,
The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History

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Acts 17:24-25

Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Psalms 100:3

I will not accept a bull from your house
or goats from your folds.

For every beast of the forest is mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.

I know all the birds of the hills,
and all that moves in the field is mine.

“If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the world and its fullness are mine.

Psalm 50:9-12

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When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he divided mankind,
he fixed the borders of the peoples
according to the number of the sons of God.

Deuteronomy 32:8

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Acts 17:26-27

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Romans 1:19-20

Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for

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as even some of your own poets have said,

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Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

Acts 17:27-29

“They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one —
The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies —
But thou art not dead; thou livest and abidest for ever,
For in thee we live and move and have our being.”

Epimenides of Crete, c. 600 B.C.
(according to Clement of Alexandria)

“Let us begin with Zeus. Never, O men, let us leave him
unmentioned. All the ways are full of Zeus,
and all the market-places of human beings. The sea is full
of him; so are the harbors. In every way we have all to do
with Zeus,
for we are truly his offspring.”

Aratus of Cilicia, born 310 B.C.
The fifth line of the *Phainomena*

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In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

Acts 14:16-17

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Romans 11:36

“God, not merely the creation, is the environment in which we exist.”

David Peterson, 499

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