

“THE UNKNOWN GOD?” Acts 17:16-32

I) Idolatry (Acts 17:16):

A) “wholly given to idolatry”:

- 1) Athenians (Greeks) worshipped many mythical gods/goddesses; this city was wholly given to polytheistic worship.

II) The Crowds of Athens (Acts 17:17-21):

A) Jews in the Synagogues:

- 1) Those who are following the tradition of their fathers; follow strictly to the rules.

B) Devout Persons:

- 1) Those who think themselves to be spiritually minded and devoutly practice worship of the multiple gods.

C) People of the Market Place:

- 1) Common worker/man.

D) Epicureans/Stoics (intellectual/philosopher crowd):

1) Epicureans:

- Followers of Epicurus (341-270 BC); they believed their own pleasure and happiness was the only worthwhile thing. Self-indulgence is of most and only importance.

2) Stoics:

- Followers of the founder Zeno (335-263 BC); they believed feelings and happiness were a weakness, and were indifferent to pleasure or pain;

III) Paul’s Introduction/Correction (Acts 17:22-23):

A) The condition of the intellectual crowd (22):

- 1) “Too superstitious” (Heb: *deisidaimonesteros*): much religious worship in the wrong way; false worship especially.

B) The false altars (23):

- 1) Their “devotions”: altars were created for each of gods worshipped; meticulously, the Athenians had a place of worship/devotion to each of the believed gods.

2) The alter “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”:

- This was made out of respect to possibly missing a god who deserves worship.
- Athenians ignorantly worshiped the true God.
- **They gave him worship, but they didn’t know Him.**

IV) Paul’s Message (Acts 17:24-31):

- A) The Creator(24-28):
 - 1) God created the heaven and the earth (24).
 - 2) God gave life and sustains all things (25, 28).
 - 3) God created Man (26).
 - 4) God desires fellowship with His creation (27).
- B) Worship (25-29):
 - 1) Man is to worship God by the spirit (25).
 - 2) Man is to seek after God, and he will find Him (27).
 - 3) Man is not to worship an image of God, but God Himself (29).
- C) Repentance (30-31):
 - 1) God commands all to repent of their sin.
 - 2) Judgment is coming on those who don’t repent.
- D) The Saviour (31):
 - 1) The Saviour is the determining factor in the judgment of sin.
 - 2) The Saviour has given all men the assurance of knowing their eternal condition.
 - 3) The Saviour’s death and resurrection to eternal life has paid the price for sin.

V) The Response (Acts 17:32):

- A) “Some mocked”:
 - 1) **There will always be mockers of God**, and the unbelieving.
- B) “Others said, we will hear thee again”:
 - 1) Some procrastinated; hesitant to believe the Gospel.
 - 2) Some desired to learn more about the true God (There will always be a remnant who do chose to follow God).