**Acts 17.16ff Paul At Mars Hill**

**Introduction: Imagine going to one of the bastions of liberalism today. Places where religion is not appreciated as much as human speculation. A place where conduct the human intellect is celebrated at the expense of truth. Paul was at such a place at Mars Hill. The names of men who shaped Greek culture are remembered today. Men such as Homer, Socrates, Aristotle, Pericles had left their mark on Athens. What Paul found and what he revealed in recorded in our text.**

**I) Athens and Mars Hill**

**A) They were given over to idolatry.**

**6 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Acts 17:16**

1. Paul describing the Gentiles in Romans 1 says God gave them up in **Romans 1.24, 26, 28**,

2. Athens is just one example of what happens when man rejects the knowledge of God.

**B) The unknown God.**

**2 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.
Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: Acts 17:22-23**

1. Like all idolatry, this unknown God was the creation of man,

2. Is totally worthless.

a. Can not help in time of need

b. Could not move themselves but could only be moved by man.

c. Could not hear prayers

**Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.”
26 So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.
27 And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.” 28 So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29 And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. 1 Kings 18:25-29**

d. Just a piece of wood or stone or metal, etc.

e. Try praying to your couch, stove, or some other object.

3. Result of idolatry

a. Man’s worship is vain and worthless.

**8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish;**

**A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine. Jeremiah 10:8**

b. Immoral conduct in the name of religion. Prostitution, human sacrifices. Etc.

**35 And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, Jeremiah 32:35**

c. Rejection pf God and His word. Cannot worship God and be in fellowship with idols.

**14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? 2 Corinthians 6:14-16**

II) Paul’s Revealing of The Unknown God

**Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, Acts 17:23-26**

**A) The Creator of us all**

1. Made all things vs. idols which can make nothing.

a. He is the Lord, the idea of God’s providence, self-rule.

b. He hears our prayers

**22 So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 11:22-24**

2. Giver of life, the sustainer of life, gives us seasons and food.

3. Does not dwell in one place, not limited by time or space.

**B) Within reach of us all**

**27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 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 and man’s devising. Acts 17:27-29**

1. Our being is testimony of His existence; Life can only come from life.

2. Why are we here?

**3 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man’s all.
14 For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**

4.We are his offspring or creation.

a. Spiritual beings

**26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:26-27**

b. Moral beings, ability to control ourselves, reason for ourselves.

5. In order to “know God” He must reveal Himself to us. We must be willing to listen,

**C) Gives salvation to all**

**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.” Acts 17:30-31**

**18 Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?”
Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. Acts 17:18**

1. The days of ignorance is over,

**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 1 Titus 2:11-13**

2. The Gospel is to be preached to everyone, Matthew 28.18-20.

3. Men are to repent and turn to Christ.

**III) Their Response**

**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. Acts 17:32-34**

1. Some rejected the Gospel- thought it to be foolish.

2. Some procrastinated

3. Some believed.