

I. PAUL IN ATHENS – MOVE!

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: 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 pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 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. 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.”

- A. Paul’s sermon in Athens on Mars Hill given to the leaders of Greek Philosophy is dramatic in its attempt to shift and move a demonically entrenched system of idolatry.
- B. Mars Hill was the place where new gods and religions were presented in hopes that the Greek Philosophers would accept them into the pantheon of Greek worship.
- C. Paul was speaking to cultural/religious leaders who held to two main schools of philosophical thought – Stoicism and Epicureanism.
 - 1. Stoics believe that we must focus on the things that are under our control, and not worry about external forces. Stoic philosophers believe that the only evil is “fear” which leads to irrational behavior. Stoics are called to believe that they should remain free from fear and pain because these things are outside one’s control so why worry.
 - a. Stoics believe that the gods are aloof and distant, and don’t ever interact with the earth.
 - 2. Epicureans on the other hand believe that pleasure (and not wisdom) is the most important thing in life. One of the best ways to attain pleasure is to avoid pain, and the best way to do that is to live an easy life free from the hassles of life: “But of all things let us beware of disappointing ourselves.”
 - a. They also believe that a person should not believe in supernatural forces or divine beings. They should live their life as if they were the only person in the world. To the Epicureans, there are no gods.

II. PAUL'S SERMON – MOVE FROM “WHAT” TO “WHOM”

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you...vs. 23

- A. Paul wasn't trying to add Jesus to the Greek pantheon, he was trying to replace the list with Christ alone.
- B. This *move* would represent a shift in philosophy or thought that would shake the very core of Greek culture and release a global impact.
- C. This *move* would be resisted not just by men but by principalities and powers. Paul was forcing a spiritual power encounter.
- D. Paul was attacking the vain imaginations of the Stoics and Epicureans. Only Holy Spirit could empower such a shift.
 - 1. When you have used vain imaginations to construct your life and build your identity around a pagan philosophy or faith, you must defend it with all your might.
 - 2. To change would require repentance from such vanity, and the humble willingness to change direction – to MOVE in another direction empowered by a different source.
- E. Overview summary of Paul's sermon in paraphrase.
 - 1. Creator God made everything so is not contained or described by our vanity – vs. 24
 - 2. God is the author of life – vs. 25
 - 3. God owns man, not man who owns God – vs. 26
 - 4. God's purpose through life's experience is to know God (whom, not what) – vs. 27
 - 5. God defines life, being and movement – vs. 28
 - a. **Move** - kineo (kin—eh-o) to be set in motion, to move or remove from a place, throw into motion or commotion.
 - 6. God cannot be formed by man, this is ignorance for He is a living being greater than man – vs. 29-30
 - 7. God will judge vain philosophies through the Man who was raised from the dead – vs. 31
- F. Paul was preaching the resurrection of Christ as the plumbline for all truth. He was calling Greek culture to move, realign with the plumbline of God's measuring rod, the cross and resurrection of His son, Jesus.

- G. This is a typical mistake man makes. He creates a law for himself to measure his success by himself. This is true vanity for we are measured by God's law not our own. Measuring ourselves with/by ourselves is the fullness of human pride and vanity.

III. MOVE!

²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being...Acts 17:28

- A. The time for ignorance is over. Vain imaginations must cease. We must MOVE! Shift! We move (from...to...):
1. Pride and vanity to humility and submission
 2. Sin and death to righteousness and life
 3. Lawlessness and independence to submission and surrender.
 4. Hiddenness and unknowing to knowing and being known.
 5. The vanity of my own standard to living by God's standard.
 6. Aloneness to family.
 7. Narcissistic pain free life to a crucified life.
 8. Living for self to living for God and others.
- B. We all must move.
1. Some at the heart level.
 2. Some in our emotions.
 3. Some in our daily walk and practice.
 4. Some literally from one physical space to another.