



9/11/25

As we study our Almighty, Powerful, Creator God, I sit in shock as I absorb the news that Charlie Kirk was shot and killed yesterday. I'm so thankful that He is now in the presence of the Lord who is saying to him, "Well done, My good and faithful servant." But I pray and grieve for his wife and kids and so many who loved him. I look forward to the day when our Creator God will take us all home to be with Him.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Acts 17:16-34

Paul was on his second missionary journey, preaching the gospel in Macedonia and Achaia, which is a part of Greece. In every town he entered, people were being saved, but Jewish persecutors were following him everywhere he went, trying to stir the people up against him. It got really bad, so the brothers in Christ sent him to Athens to allow things to cool off a little. I'm guessing they figured he would take a little break, but Paul was so excited about the gospel, he just couldn't be quiet. This passage picks up with Paul in Athens, waiting for Silas and Timothy to come and get him.

Vs. 16-21 ~ Paul tried the tourist thing. He was walking around just minding his own business... but he kept seeing idols everywhere he went. "His spirit was provoked within him." So he started talking about the gospel with the Jewish people in the synagogue and then with any devout people who would converse with him in the marketplace.

The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers started talking with Paul, too. They called him "a babbler." I looked these philosophers up... The Epicureans believed that the world is just material... just a bunch of laws of nature... and so they should submit to the laws of nature, avoid being burdened by worldly cares, and avoid pain. The Stoics believed God was in everything... nature, man, the universe... and the best way to live was by being virtuous and self-controlled... and the greatest achievement for man is to conquer self. (This is according to Bible Resources.)

Very interesting... one group sounds a lot like the scientists who try to explain the world without God. And the other sounds a lot like legalists who respect God but have no relationship with Him and basically try to live as their own gods. I see these philosophies still existing today. They just get dressed up with different labels.

Well... after going back and forth about the gospel of Jesus and His resurrection with all the different people, Paul was invited to speak at the Areopagus, a place where people got together to pontificate about their philosophies with each other. It's amazing how we can puff ourselves up with ideas that never actually change us. James 1:22-24 says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like."

Vs. 22-31 ~ This is what Paul talked about...

- He acknowledged that they were "very religious." He saw all the idols they worshiped. They even had an altar dedicated to "the unknown god." There are many people today who call themselves religious, but faith in something that isn't real is empty. There is only one true God.*
- Paul said to them, "I know the God who you worship as the unknown God." This God is Creator. "He MADE THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT." In my own faith, I have to start with the premise that God is Creator. I negate SO MUCH of His word if I negate that.*
- This God is LORD of heaven and earth. He is not just like an idol that is believed to be over little pieces of nature. He is LORD over everything! He is Master.*
- He does not live in temples made by man. Even when He inhabited the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem and in the wilderness, He was not bound by them. He graced the Israelites with His presence there... but His throne is in heaven over all.*
- He is not served by human hands, as though He needed anything... In Psalm 50:12, God says, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are Mine." I don't serve God because He NEEDS me. I serve Him because I NEED HIM. He wants relationship with me. I serve in gratitude, not fear.*
- Not only does God not need me, but "He Himself GIVES to all mankind life and breath and everything." The very breath these philosophers were breathing as they arrogantly judged Paul's babbling was given to them by the God they didn't know. But... "The true light (Jesus), which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:9-13). My God is GENEROUS. What other religion exists where God comes and serves us so that we could know Him? Only Jesus!*
- God made from one man (Adam) every nation of mankind to live all over the earth with their allotted times and boundaries. God has no boundaries... but He gives us times and*

boundaries. For... "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.' And this word is the good news that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:24-25).

- God's purpose in all that He's done on earth is that people "should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). He who GIVES to us all the good that we don't deserve WANTS us to know Him. HE is not far from US. HE pursues US.*
- Then Paul tried to reach them with their own philosophical and poetic words... "In Him we live and move and have our being." And "For we are indeed His offspring." So... if we ARE His offspring, we shouldn't think that WE create or imagine HIM. No gold, silver, or stone image can hold Him.*
- Now is the part when Paul called for repentance... Why do people choose ignorance over recognition of Jesus as Lord? If we admit that He is who He says He is, our only logical response is to bow to Him as Lord. Him in charge. Me His servant. He told these people who spent all their time discussing things of "wisdom" that they were actually ignorant. He said it's time to stop being ignorant. Just as our times and boundaries are fixed, a coming day of judgment is fixed. He will judge the world in righteousness, according to our righteousness before Him. But Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous, no not one." The only hope we have of righteousness comes through the free gift of righteousness by Jesus. Jesus is the Man the Father has appointed to judge the world. The assurance He's given us that Jesus IS the judge is that He raised Him from the dead. Jesus is alive and He is on His throne in heaven. Romans 10:9-10 says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."*

So... I believe in One God in three persons... the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I believe that He is Creator... that He is not made in my image, but I'm made in His... He doesn't need me, but generously gives me everything I need... He places boundaries on me, a descendant of Adam, but He is held by no boundaries... He wants me to seek Him and He is near to me... He is the ultimate judge who will judge the world in righteousness. I bow to Him.

Vs. 32-34 ~ This conversation did not go well. Some mocked him for talking about the resurrection... because if they can't understand it, it must not be true, right? No... God is not held by the laws of nature. God is Lord of nature.

Others said, "Sure, we'll let you talk about this again." But though they were willing to hear, they had no interest in believing and repenting.

A few joined Paul and believed. Only a few.

If I move on to Acts 18, I see that Paul went on to Corinth from Athens. This is what he told

the Corinthian believers when he wrote to them later... "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with LOFTY SPEECH OR WISDOM (as the Greek philosophers love to do). For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling (Athens and all the stuff that went on before took it out of me... I was wiped out), and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). O Lord, please help me to never think I have any words that are more powerful than Yours. Help me to be unashamed of the gospel, unafraid of what people think of me. Let my words demonstrate the power of Your Spirit.

I remember a story of a woman going up to DL Moody, an internationally known pastor and the founder of Moody Bible Church and the MB Institute, when he preached overseas. She said to him something like, "Now I know that the Holy Spirit is doing amazing things through you because you're not really that great of a preacher." Hahaha. I pray that no matter how I speak, I will point to Jesus and not self... I will speak in the power of the Spirit and not my own strength... and I will glorify God and bear fruit for Him. To Him be ALL glory forever. Amen.