

Knowledge Is Power - ACTS 17:18-34

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Date: 06 December 2023

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[0 : 00] Paul, if you remember, he has left Timothy and Silas behind in Macedonia. He's kind of been chased out of there. He had come as far to Berea, and then the Jews of Thessalonica, they followed him there and stirred everything up, and so he had to leave there as well.

He leaves Silas and Timothy to do a work he couldn't do, right, to do the work of edification and growing the church. He had to get out of there. And he gets to Athens, and we're going to find out in chapter 18 that when Timothy and Silas get there, in verse 5 of chapter 18, it says when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the Spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

This is when they get to Corinth. He's going to be in Athens. He's going to leave there for Corinth. Silas and Timothy meet him there, and then it seems like when they get there, there's just this Holy Spirit begins to move.

Right now he's in Athens kind of waiting for them, and he sees the situation, and it just presses in upon him that he needs to do something about this. Why? Because he had the tools to do something. He had the gospel.

It wasn't because he was the Apostle Paul. It wasn't because he met Jesus on the road. It wasn't because of any of that. It was because he had the truth. He had the gospel. And so today's message, or tonight's message, I guess if you'd give it a name, is knowledge is power.

[1 : 21] Knowledge is power. And that statement will be qualified as we go on. But if you remember, Paul had come. This is kind of piecing together some of his missionary journeys.

The red line, I believe, is the one we're currently following, his second missionary journey, where he's gone down from Berea, that long journey, you know, a week or so, down to Athens, and then it's this quick jump over to Corinth.

But Athens, like we said, there was more gods than men there. In Athens, the word means uncertainty. Very apropos there.

And so this was 300 miles, I'm sorry, it's two weeks from where he was. It was 300 miles away. And as we just read, while he waited, his spirit was stirred within him. And what did it say in verse 17, if you remember?

He disputed with them, or he mingled thought with thought. And that's kind of what we do when we come to the word. We take thought, mingle it with thought. We overlay it with another thought as we go from Scripture to Scripture and throughout the Bible, just piecing together God's word for us.

[2 : 22] Well, Paul was doing that in the synagogue and just layering thought on thought with these Jews. It's different, isn't it? When someone teaches the Bible, right? When we're reading the Bible and we're teaching the Bible, as opposed to when someone teaches about the Bible or talks about the Bible, right?

Or, I don't know, whatever they talk about if they don't use the Bible. And then you find a church where someone's teaching the Bible. And that was for us when we first moved down here in 2016.

It's a good church we were at for a little bit. But then to go to one where they were teaching the Bible line by line, verse by verse, just moving through the Bible, not what I think about the Bible, not what I want to emphasize about the Bible, right?

I'm not personally, you know, we're speaking of gifts ahead of time. I don't really have the gift of evangelism, like when I'm out and about. It's not usually how God uses me. But yet, when I come to the word, it's so alive, and it gives me so much information that I have that I can just pass on to someone.

Maybe not through the gift of evangelism, but through the means God gives us. So Paul, it said there in 17, that he was in the marketplace daily with them that met with him, which literally means anybody and anyone who would listen.

[3 : 33] Paul is there speaking to these people. So he's spoken to the Jews in Athens, and now he's speaking to anybody in the marketplace. And then it says in verse 18, then certain of the philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him.

And some said, what will this babbler say? And others, some, he seems to be a setter forth of strange gods because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. So Athens was no longer the military power and ruling power of the world because Greece had declined and Rome is now ruling.

But it was still very much the intellectual center of the world. And so that's where these guys would gather, what was Mars Hill or what was on Areopagus.

That's what's left of it, where all those people are standing. That would be Mars Hill, the Areopagus. I believe this picture is taken from the Acropolis, which would be the classical pictures you see of Greece with those pillars in the temple that's still there.

So there was Mars Hill, where Paul would have been. That's what this area was known for. And so these men encounter him. And it's interesting, their response, where some are like, oh, it's this babbler.

[4 : 44] He's just some dude in the marketplace. And I think how the world will only hear those things, they will only hear people they deem worthy of listening to. It's like, well, it's not what you have to say.

Well, I don't care what you have to say. Give me your credentials and then I'll listen to you. Oh, you're going to tell me a pack of lies? Well, where'd you go to school? Oh, and you have what degree? Okay, I'll listen and I'll believe you.

But is it true? Well, I don't care. Did you see their credentials? And that's the world. They only care about those they deem worthy. But who are these Epicureans and the Stoics? Well, the Epicureans, let's put this up there for you.

They pursued pleasure as the chief purpose in life. And not like we think today, like, you know, debased pleasure, but the simple pleasures. They wouldn't do anything that was like too far off in one direction because that would upset their way of life.

They valued most of all the pleasure of peaceful life, free from pain, disturbing passions, and superstitious fear, including the fear of death. They did not deny the existence of gods, but believed that they had nothing to do with man.

[5 : 45] So they're very much those that were more the materialist, but not like we think today, where today everybody is excessive. They prize moderation.

But look at the end there. They believed that gods, the gods, had nothing to do with man. And then you have the other side of that. You have the Stoics. The Stoics were pantheists. They believed in many gods who put great emphasis on moral sincerity and a high sense of duty.

They cultivated a spirit of proud dignity and believed that suicide was better than a life lived with less dignity. The Stoics believed that everything was God and God was in everything. So they believed that all things, good or evil, were from God, so nothing should be resisted.

And they believed there was no particular direction or destiny for mankind. These were those that just kind of, everything went, everything worked. You know, whether it was said that the Stoic was always happy, even if he was being, you know, tortured or if he was at a party or whatever.

His goal was to always maintain this inner stability. Nothing shook him. But both of these people, the interesting thing was that the Epicureans said, oh, there's gods, but they have nothing to do with man.

[6 : 56] And the Stoics said, well, we believe in tons of gods. Everything's God, but there's no particular direction or destiny. And that's where they kind of converge here. And Paul's going to rock their world by the end of this year.

And so in verse 19, And they took him and they brought him unto Areopagus saying, May we know this new doctrine, wherever you speak, or whereof thou speakest is.

What is this new doctrine? What's this new teaching? What is this idea? What are you talking about, Paul? And it said there at the end of verse 18, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.

Now, there are those that would say when Paul was in Athens, the reason he didn't have many converts was because he didn't preach Christ. Because when he gets to Corinth, he's going to say, I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

We're going to see his message here to the Athenians. And it's like, well, he doesn't say Jesus. Well, right here it says he's been, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. So he's preaching Jesus.

[7 : 58] The thing that's going to stumble them is the resurrection. We're going to see eventually. So what the gospel has been presented in the synagogue, it's been presented in the marketplace, and now it's in the highest court in a sense.

You know, the highest intellectual court, the Ivy Leagues of the land. The gospel is fit for any company. The gospel stands alone in any company. And it's not about the person who presents it.

Now, the person who presents it, unfortunately, has the capability of not disqualifying the gospel. But if they are disqualified, then they make their words of no account.

And then it devalues the gospel. That's why we're to live holy lives set apart. So they bring him to Mars Hill, and it says in verse 21, it tells us about them. It says, We looked at this scripture on Sunday, in 2 Timothy.

You know what people do today?

[9 : 11] They are ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They live to hear something new. Right? Oh, I need more information.

Right? They're not gaining knowledge. They're gaining information. They're loading their lives up with information. I need a new tidbit. I need, and look, I'm just as guilty. I can be a news junkie. Right?

It's like, oh, okay, well, it's been 30 minutes. What if something, what if Damascus has been destroyed? I should check my news feed just to make sure. You know, I mean, the rapture could be this afternoon. I need to be ready for these things.

But we don't maintain a state of readiness by the news cycle. Paul, Paul, Solomon, in one of his not-so-great moments of life in writing the book of Ecclesiastes, which is a fantastic book.

Fantastic. But Solomon wasn't in a great place. He writes in chapter 1, verse 18, for in much wisdom is much grief. He that increases knowledge increases sorrow. That is, when you increase wisdom and knowledge apart from the wisdom and knowledge of God, then it just becomes a heaviness and sorrow.

[10 : 18] In one of his better moments, in Proverbs 14, verse 23, he wrote, In all labor there is profit, but the talk of the lips tends only to penury or to poverty. So here are these men who just spend all of their time wanting to tell or hear something new.

And it was like the equivalent of social media, okay? With a little more depth. And so Paul stands up in the midst of them on Mars Hill, verse 22. Paul's like, whatever.

Look it. Paul didn't judge anybody based on their credentials of who they were, their background. He judged everybody based on their response to the gospel. He says, I'm going to give you the gospel.

I don't care who you are. If you give me an opportunity, I don't care where I am. And then I'm going to judge you based on your response to the gospel. And so Paul stands up in the midst of Mars Hill and said, you men of Athens, you men of uncertainty, that's what Athens means, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious.

And the word there, superstitious, it means, it has the meaning of being like too religious. But I was thinking of superstition. You know, what is superstition?

[11 : 26] Well, we kind of, we won't, you know, we've got our four leaf clovers and our rabbit's feet because we think it's going to bring us luck. We won't sit down at a table if we make up the 13th person, then that's unlucky, you know, superstition.

Well, where's that come from? Well, Paul's eventually going to tell, tell us in verse 23 when he says he's passed by the altar of the unknown God. He says, whom therefore you ignorantly worship.

There's an ignorance there. And what is worship? Worship is to bow down, right? It's to bow, it's to reverence something. And so I think superstition is an ignorance of God plus fear, right?

It's a rejection of God. So they have all these other idols there. Why? Because they're afraid. They're afraid because the thing that God was supposed to satisfy in their life, he didn't because they've rejected him and they've got to figure out some other way to make themselves feel good.

And so as they reject God or have an ignorance of God, plus fear creates this quasi weird substitute for that. And Paul then says, because I passed by in verse 23 and beheld your devotions or literally your worship.

[12 : 33] I beheld the gods that you worship. And I found an altar with this inscription to the unknown God whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you.

So who's this unknown God? It wasn't just like that the Athenians were like, well, you know what? Let's just for the heck of it cover our bases. Well, what happened was 600 years before Paul, there was a terrible plague and this guy named Epimenides, he had an idea that they would let a flock of sheep loose into the city and then wherever one laid down, they would sacrifice that sheep to the God whoever's temple was closest.

And if he laid down when there was no temple anywhere around, well, they would just erect an altar to the unknown God just to cover themselves. This was his great idea. And so now you had these altars dotted about to the unknown God because a sheep laid down there and that cured them.

You know, superstition, I would say. Ignorance of God plus fear ends in a lot of weird things. So what has it been to worship an idol? To worship an idol is to bow down before ignorance and fear.

That's what it is. When we remove God and we interject something else because of our ignorance and our fear, we're bowing down before that. That's what these Athenians were doing. And Paul says, you are ignorant and you ignorantly worship.

[13 : 54] You're bowing down before ignorance and fear. Psalms 14.1 says, the fool has said in his heart there is no God. They're corrupt. They've done abominable works. There is none that does good.

That is the Old Testament parallel to Romans 1. They've said in their heart there's no God. What's it lead to? Corruption, abominable works, and nothing good.

Romans 1.21-23 says, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts, the heart that said there's no God, was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.

This is exactly what they've done. They've rejected God. They're foolish. The fool has said in his heart there's no God. When that happens, then they profess themselves to be wise but they become fools.

[14 : 58] Knowledge, devoid of God, is ignorance. So where Paul says, I see you do this in ignorance, that's what ignorance is. Ignorance is knowledge, devoid of God, which naturally then the natural course of that leads to idolatry.

It's the same in the world today. You say, now wait a minute. I had someone once teach me how to change the oil of my car and he wasn't a believer. He gave me knowledge. You know, was that ignorance? It didn't lead me to idolatry, did it?

I mean, like my car, but ultimately if you look at the path of someone who continues to reject God, they profess wisdom but that wisdom eventually leads to idolatry.

It leads to foolishness. It leads down this path away from God. You see that in our culture today. You see that in our society where the continued rejection of God when they knew he was God has led to knowledge devoid of God which has created this ignorance.

And so Paul then, what does he say to them? Where's where he at? Yeah, I declare unto you, therefore, I declare him unto you.

[16 : 04] Him I declare unto you. And so Paul did what? Paul replaced ignorance with knowledge. That's what the world says. The world says, replace ignorance with more knowledge. If you can just gain more knowledge, knowledge is power.

Get more. No, Paul replaced ignorance with truth. Paul says, oh, you don't need more knowledge. You need truth. Truth is the solution here. Truth is what's gonna help you.

You know, I could show you how foolish it is to make an idol and how it's not actually gonna help you. And I can talk to you all day about how nonsensical it is to believe the ridiculous propaganda that's a straight up lie that, you know, terrorists aren't terrorists.

They're the good guys. But you're not gonna believe me because you rejected God and you professed yourself to be wise where you're really a fool. And Paul says, you need truth.

You need to replace your ignorance with truth. What is truth? Truth is knowledge plus God. Right? Knowledge plus God. Well, we bring God into the equation.

[17 : 04] Knowledge plus God and knowledge of God. That is truth. When I tell you the truth, I'm disseminating something to you. I'm giving knowledge to you.

Right? But it's only truth because it contains God. If I remove him from it, it's no longer truth. Remember? God is light. God is love. God is truth.

Wherever God is, is those things. Wherever God is not, is not those things. No matter how it looks, it's not. God is love. It's like the world says, oh, we love each other.

You know, this church is all about love and inclusivity. That's not love because God is love. And God says that kind of love is not love, it's wickedness. So it can't be love no matter how you redefine it. And so then Paul, he's going to say, hey, look, I'm going to declare the God that you don't know.

I'm going to give you some truth so that you can have true knowledge. In verse 24, he says, God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he gives to all life and breath and all things.

[18 : 18] So why is he structuring it this way? That interesting idea there that, okay, God, God, he dwells not in temples made with hands, okay, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything.

Well, what does that mean? Well, because their idols are completely dependent upon them. Their idols and their religion is only as effective as they are in propagating it.

But God dwells in temples not made with hands. You know what temple God dwells in? Right, right, God dwells in temples not made with hands. Right. God does dwell in a temple, but it's not made with our hands.

It's made with his. In Acts 7, verse 48, Paul says, howbeit the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands, as says the prophet. Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool.

What house will you build me, saith the Lord? But what is the place of my rest? Has not my hand made all these things? Sorry, Stephen said this. Paul's copy, Stephen, that was the point. That Stephen's testimony was so impactful in his life that here you see, you know, 10 plus years later, the man is almost verbatim, quoting Stephen.

[19 : 28] The Lord says, what is the place of my rest? Where is the place of God's rest? Now, Paul tells us, later in Corinthians, when he writes that letter, 1 Corinthians 6, verses 19 and 20, he says, what?

Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own, for you are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Who does the temple belong to? The temple belongs to the God who's worshipped in the temple. That's who it belongs to. It's his temple. And so, if we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, it belongs to him.

It's his. And there's another thing here where he says that neither needs he anything, but he gives to all life, breath, and all things.

Giving expresses a lack of need. When I give something, I give because I have extra for a surplus. Oh, right? Remember when Jesus, he said to his disciples, he called them over when they're standing in the temple and they're all, everyone was coming through and throwing their money into those big cornucopia type horns.

[20 : 37] Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, and the Pharisees would come and throw all their change and they're like, wow, he's so, oh, he's so holy. Man, no, he just gave five dollars in pennies.

You know, that's all it was, okay? But then the widow, he calls his disciples to him and says, truly I say unto you that this poor widow who threw in one penny has cast in more than all they which cast into the treasury.

For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even of all her living. You see, when Jesus is saying she gave and her giving expressed, because she gave out of what we would say would be her necessity, but her giving expressed that she had no need because she had a different source.

Her needs were supplied by God. So she could give because everything she had was surplus. Everything she had came from God. She said, wait, he supplies all my needs. This doesn't supply my needs. God supplied this and right now I'm going to give that because that's why he supplied it and giving expresses a lack of need.

God is the giver of all good things. God has no need. God is the one who gives for us to receive and then God says, now you give so that you can also understand and enjoy the same experience when Jesus says it's more blessed to give than to receive.

[21 : 55] Philippians 4.19 says, but my God shall supply all your need according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus. All of it. All of our needs are supplied for by God. So when Paul says here, well, God has no need.

God is the supplier of all. Well, you and I have no need either. You think, well, wait a minute. Yes, I do. I got to get Christmas presents. No, we don't. All of our needs are met. Remember Jesus said, the birds of the air have nests, the foxes have holes, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

I have somewhere to lay my head. I've already got more than is promised to me in the Gospels. He said, give us this day our daily bread. I've got bread for multiple days. So what do we have to be complete enough?

And then he said here that God has made one blood of all nations and has made one blood of all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.

One blood. When you cut yourself, you bleed. Every single human being on the face of the earth has the same blood. There's only so many blood types. Right?

[23 : 04] It doesn't matter what nationality they were, what part of the world they came from. It's all the same blood as he's made us. And then it says, Paul says, and God has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.

This is very restrictive to these free-thinking Athenians, these Greeks. This is very deterministic. He's saying, God has a plan and no amount of political activism is going to change his plan.

No amount of philosophy and reasoning is going to change his plan. God has a plan and you need to get on board with it. That's your option. And he says, he's set the bounds of their habitation.

I like that because it seems like this world's just going out of bounds. No matter how far it gets, we'll never be outside of God's boundaries. Never. So moving to verse 27, Paul says that they should seek the Lord.

So the purpose of this, the purpose that God's made one blood and nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, God made man to be on the face of the earth, he's determined their times and boundaries.

[24 : 10] Why? That they should seek the Lord. God's purpose for society is to awaken man to God. We think, well, God's purpose for society is to have good roads, to supply my needs, to protect its citizens.

God's ultimate purpose for society is to awaken man to their need for God. That's the reason. The reason that we're here and the reason that God has created things in the order that he's made it is so that we can be awakened to our need for God.

And that they should seek the Lord if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from any of us. There's a few words in there that kind of jump out, right?

Seek the Lord, they might feel after him and find him, and he's not far from any of us. The reality is, fellas, this God you're trying to seek, he's put it in your heart.

Feel after him. He's given you a desire. He's drawing you towards him. And he's not far from you if you would but turn to him. But why would they not turn to him? Because they're in ignorance. Because they've rejected God.

[25 : 17] They've become fools. And so now they're in ignorance. Professing themselves to become wise. They're fools. So Paul is giving the truth to them to directly combat that mindset and to then awaken that desire to draw them back to God.

As Paul continues his little discourse in verse 28, he says about God, he says, for in him, in God, we live and move and we have our being as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are all his offspring, or we are all his creation, is the idea is what he's saying.

So he's putting before these Epicureans and Stoics that the God who created you, you have a responsibility to. And this is going to really start to kind of like tweak these guys.

They're good with the unknown God. They're good with Diana. They're good with, you know, all of these other gods. They're fine with that because those gods require what?

They require, they're determined by what man decides. Right? Is man going to go and worship and sacrifice to this? Oh, it's the feast day of so-and-so. Let's all get together and do whatever needs to be done to make this happen.

[26 : 30] Where the one true God doesn't require man to do anything. Right? It's not man who's determining what God does. It's God who determines what man does.

So he says, for in him we live and we move and we have our being. Creation is sustained by the creator. And our existence is directly related to the existence of God. In him, we live and move and have our being.

The Athenians were used to, no, no, no. Our gods live and move and have their being in me. If it wasn't for me. The gods are existing and because of what I'm doing.

Where Paul flips that around and says, oh no, not at all. That your existence is directly related to the existence of God. You see, it's in God. Even your own poets have said, and he quotes one of their poets, that in God, you live and move and have your being.

It sounds very poetic. But then when you actually start to apply that to your life, there's a responsibility there. You see, when man rejects God, man is also rejecting the very essence of who he is.

[27 : 34] Without God, man ceases to exist. In God, we live, we move, we have our being. Outside of God, man has no being. Man ceases to exist outside of God.

And quickly spirals down into the animal kingdom, right? Into his basis of desires, as we were reading about in Romans. And once man ceases to exist in God, it's only a matter of time before he attempts to find something else to exist in.

You know, these Athenians, Athens full of all these gods because they had to find something else to give them relevance and value and existence, meaning and purpose because they've rejected God.

And so Paul is, this babbler, as they thought, is telling them this. You know, I have a picture of Paul from that day. Someone took a picture when they were there. They only had black and white photography back then.

But, this is like the only one I could find he didn't have a halo on. Most of the drawings are like, he's got a halo and they always have like one finger up. But, you picture Paul as he's, as he's telling this.

[28 : 43] You know, like I said, Paul was the same whether he was in the synagogue, whether he was in the market, or here. He was going to give the gospel when he eventually is going to be before Agrippa who has essentially the, the authority say off with his head.

He's like, whatever. You need Jesus, King Agrippa. You know, are you going to be saved? And he puts that to him. So as man ceases to exist in God, it's only a matter of time before he attempts to find something else to exist in.

Verse 29, for as much then as we are the offspring of God, we come from God. God doesn't come from us. We exist because of God. God is the creator. We ought not to think that God had his like unto gold or silver or stone graven by art and man's device.

And the key there is God was not facilitated by you. The greater always creates the lesser. The greater creates the lesser.

Idolatry places man in the place of God. As creator of his own God, he is then, by definition, greater than his God. That is the problem with idolatry. That's why when God gave the commandment to Moses and to Israel, he said, you shall have no graven images.

[29 : 54] You shall not take to yourself graven images because it puts you in the place of God. All of a sudden, you are the one who is now the creator and the creator creates the lesser.

As Paul points out here where he says that we ought not to think the Godhead is like unto us. No, we are to be like the Godhead. God is not to be like man.

It is man who is to be like God. So Paul's working through this with these guys. He's pointing out to them that you're in ignorance. Ignorance is knowledge devoid of the truth.

Okay, I'm going to give you devoid of God. I'm going to give you the truth. Knowledge plus God equals truth. Truth directly contradicts the way you've been living which is man-centric which is you thinking you're the greater.

You're the one thinking that your gods are facilitated by you. Well, truth flips that and all of a sudden it puts man in a place where he's answerable to God. And the times of this ignorance God winked at.

[30 : 51] Wink, wink, wink. But now commands all men everywhere to repent. It means overlooked. Winked. The idea there that God overlooked. That at the times of this ignorance God overlooked.

There was a time for that. But now commands all men everywhere to repent. What happened? What's the difference? Truth. Truth leaves no alternative and it cannot be overlooked. When truth comes in there is a response that must happen.

You see, the greater knowledge of the truth requires a greater response. And so as these men all of a sudden have received now knowledge according to God the truth their response is required.

They can no longer just stay in ignorance. In Galatians 4 verse 9 the scripture says but now after they have known God or after that you have known God Paul's writing or rather have known are known of God how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements where until you desire again to be in bondage.

You know the truth. Why are you going to go back to something that you've been freed from? You don't need to live in ignorance anymore.

[32 : 05] You have the truth. Don't turn back. Verse 31 Paul says because God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world.

How does he have the authority to do that? Well he just said he's the creator or his creation. We live and move and have our being in him. He's the deterministic one not us. He's the one who sets the boundaries not us. He is appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained.

Meaning Jesus of course. Wherefore he has given assurance unto all men and that he raised him from the dead. The word ordained there means to mark out boundaries to define.

It says that God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has marked out boundaries with excuse me excuse me or defined or literally the man that God marked out boundaries and that man fulfilled them.

The man that God defined ahead of time this is what the man must be and then here he is. He's the only one who can fulfill that. That man the one who fulfilled God's marked out boundaries the one who fulfilled God's definition of the judge that man is going to judge the world in righteousness.

[33 : 18] Wherefore he has given assurance unto all men and that he raised him from the dead. The word there has given assurance that phrase can also mean he's offered them faith.

That God has given faith unto all men the opportunity for faith and that he raised him from the dead. So what do we see here? Knowledge alone is not enough. It's not enough.

It's not enough just to have knowledge. There's something more that's required here. Faith. Right? He's given them faith. Faith is that which acts upon knowledge of the truth. It's not enough to have knowledge.

Not enough to know about Jesus. But we have to actually act upon that knowledge. We act upon the truth. The knowledge of the truth acted upon is what we would call faith. Right? If someone says to you you must be born again to see the kingdom of heaven.

That Christ Jesus died for our sins. He was buried and he rose again as the scripture says. Do you believe that? I do believe that. Okay, then you must act upon that. You must put your faith in that.

[34 : 16] Your trust in that. You must surrender yourself to the Lord expecting him to do what his word says. That's what we would call faith. Faith is not knowledge but faith is dependent upon the knowledge of the truth.

Faith is the what? Substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen. Right? Faith is the knowledge in a sense acting upon the knowledge of God and the result then is I know for sure because God has said it that these things are so.

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead this is the linchpin here some mocked and others said we will hear the again of this matter. The resurrection is the standard of authenticity.

Right? There's no other religion out there that contains within it the resurrection. Now there's other religions that say oh this God died and came back to life but none that have the resurrection out from among the dead.

Jesus is the only one who declares to have done that. That he died could not stay dead and rose again to die no more. Rose out from among the dead and that by putting our faith in him we too partake in the resurrection.

[35 : 23] And so when he proclaims a resurrection to them it's like whoa the resurrection has forced them all of a sudden to acknowledge a God greater than themselves. Because idolatry those gods deal in death.

Right? They deal in death. Whereas the one true God dealt with death. All of the false gods they all have to do with oh going to the lands of the dead and oh we shall go into the halls of whatever.

They all deal in death. It's some form of after death and in death this is happening. Well the resurrection says come out from among the dead. God dealt with death so that it's no more.

And the difference between the the false and the true the thing which is proves authenticity is that Jesus rose out from among the dead. And so when Paul presents that to these Epicureans and Stoics some of them just mocked and they said no that's not how it works Paul no way no way and others said no we'll hear you again on this matter and they didn't they didn't because it says what Paul departed from them.

See the truth must always be responded to in the present. You can't put off the truth. Truth is responded to in the moment and that's our response of faith. He said well I'll hear you again on this matter.

[36 : 43] Well maybe tomorrow. God doesn't deal in tomorrow God deals with the present because God is always in an eternal state right? The eternal state eternal present and so when truth comes it must be responded to in the present.

Isaiah 55 6 says pretty much the same thing it says seek you the Lord while he may be found call upon him while he is near. And then 2nd Corinthians 6 verse 2 which is quoting Isaiah 49 8 For he saith I have heard thee in a time accepted and in the day of salvation have I succored thee behold now is the accepted time behold now is the day of salvation the truth is never to be acted upon tomorrow.

Tomorrow will have truth that God will have you act upon at that time but truth must be acted on in the present. And these men mocked Proverbs 14 9 says fools make a mock at sin but among the righteous there is favor.

And so these men are mocking this because they're fools because what does the fools say? In their heart there is no God and so then they mock at sin. Proverbs 8 36 but he that sins sins against he that sins against me wrongs his own soul all they that hate me love death.

They reject the resurrection. They would rather stay in death because they don't want to have to be answerable to God. And so Paul having given this little message now I think he said a lot more than this right?

[38 : 10] That if you read that straight through as we did it took about two minutes two and a half minutes. I don't think they said all right Paul here you are on Mars Hill. Paul spoke for two and a half minutes and they're like next get him out of here. I bet there's a lot more dialogue.

But I think what the Holy Spirit wants us to see and Luke's trying to get across is this is as far as Paul was really able to get. They wouldn't let him go any further than the resurrection. He didn't get into you know how Jesus born of a virgin became a man that how God took upon him the form of a man and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.

He never got that far on the hill here because they heard the resurrection. So Paul departed from among them. 1 Corinthians 2 2 is where it says for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Well Paul in this dissertation he didn't actually say that. Well as we read in verse 18 it says because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. They wanted to hear more because of that.

But for Paul there was no reason to stay where there was no fruit. Paul had nothing more to say to those who chose to remain in ignorance. And again Paul's determining factor the way he judged was your response to the gospel.

[39 : 23] If you accept the gospel I'll stay with you until they run me out of town. Until they beat me. And we will grow together and I will teach you. But if not there's others who will receive it and I'm going to go find them.

Paul will tell us in Thessalonians and Timothy he will tell us that there are those that we should withdraw ourselves from.

There are those where there's no fruit there so there's no reason to stay. Where their response maybe not to the gospel maybe they might be believers. Right? But they're walking as he says disorderly.

And that's in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 and then 2 Timothy we'll look at that one. Chapter 2 verses 16 through 18 he says but shun profane and vain babblings for they will increase unto more ungodliness and their word will eat as does a canker of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus who concerning the truth have erred or who have deviated.

Saying the resurrection is past already. What do they deny? Look at that. Resurrection is past. Now what resurrection is that? That would be the rising up. That would be the rapture.

[40 : 38] They say oh the resurrection from the dead is past already and they overthrow the faith of some. So Paul says there are those that are unfruitful that maybe they have received the gospel but maybe they're not walking according to the truth.

Maybe they're choosing to be in ignorance because they're rejecting the knowledge of the truth. And deviating from the truth there it says that they overthrow the faith of some. Whenever we deviate from the truth it undermines faith.

And lastly how be it certain men they clave unto him literally they glued themselves to him and believed among which was Dionysus which means devoted to Bacchus Bacchus was the god of like wine and pleasure and debauchery so here is this man whose name meant devoted to Bacchus and he heard the truth and he turned from ignorance to the knowledge of the truth which brought him life and then Demarius her name means small calf or gentle and these are the people who responded to Paul and so Paul presented the gospel to those that were in ignorance and how did he do it?

Well Paul started by presenting them presenting these people to God God is the creator he presented God as a judge he presented God as a savior he presented man as responsible to God remember these are not the Jews they don't have the background of the Old Testament so he starts and works his way down through this until he gets to man is responsible to God and what was the problem as he presents that he then presents the resurrection and they reject that so the doctrine of God comes before the good news of God the creation of man comes before the cross of redemption and the judgment of God comes before the need for salvation you see as Paul presents this what's this doctrine let me teach you about God you need to know who God is before I can tell you his good news he said you need to know that you are created that you're responsible to God before I can tell you anything about the cross needed in the life of man and then God is a judge God does not just remember what these two groups said well there's gods but they don't interfere with man he said no

God does interfere with man and you need to be saved from judgment to come so knowledge of the gospel is power Romans 1 16 for I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes to the Jew first also to the Epicurean and the Stoic also to the Greek for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is written the just shall live by knowledge by faith Lord we praise you and thank you and love you and glorify you but who are we that we should be so privileged Lord to have such a treasure in these earthen vessels Lord to have the truth give us boldness in these last days to like Paul Lord not worry about whether it's the religion that somebody has that they think well they're so religious or whether it's when we meet in the marketplace or whether it is the elites or the truth cuts through all that we love you we thank you we magnify and glorify you in Jesus name

[44 : 14] Amen