

Sermon Handout

One True God

Acts 17:22-34

I. St. Paul Addresses the Council of the Areopagus vv. 22-23

- a. "I see that you are a devout people" v. 22
Mt 10:12-14; Prov 15:1-2 (*cf.* Acts 17:18-20)
- b. Theological ignorance – the unknown God v. 23
Paul turns their acknowledged ignorance to advantage
Paul points them to the "Creator of all things" v. 24a *cf.* Gen 14:19
Not the "demiurge," nor the Greek "logos"

II. St. Paul's Gospel Message vv. 24-31

- a. Did not "reason from the Scriptures" *contra* vv. 2, 11, 17
- b. But builds his argument on O.T. *content* (*cf.* 14:15-17)
 - i. Creation vv. 24, 25, 26a
 - ii. Providence vv. 26b, 28
- c. Defines God's being
 - i. Transcendence vv. 24b, 25, 29
 - ii. Immanence vv. 26b, 27-28
- d. Man is accountable to God vv. 30-31
 - i. "times of ignorance" – returns to his beginning *cf.* vv. 29, 23
 - ii. God **commands** men to repent v. 30
 - iii. Judgment is certain v. 31
The resurrection of Jesus affirms the judgment! v. 31b

III. The Result and the Lesson vv. 32-34

- a. The audience is divided – the Gospel always divides v. 32
 - i. Stubborn materialists find a resurrection absurd
 - ii. The truth raises doubt among others
- b. Conversions are few, but definite v. 34
 - i. Damaris – a foreign lady, probably a God-fearer
 - ii. Dionysius – a member of the Areopagus Council
 - iii. Others unnamed
- c. God's providence is **always** at work Isa 55:6-11 (*cf.* Acts 17:27)
 - i. The Holy Spirit operates through the Word of God
 - ii. God builds his church as He sees fit (*cf.* Corinth, not Athens)
 - iii. God's people must be bold in proclaiming Truth I Pet 3:15-16
Leave the results to God.