

Paul's Boldness - cont.

However, the words the gospel of Christ, as proclaimed by Paul, endure to this day. Jesus told the woman in John 4, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (v24). Nevertheless, like men of old, men, today, abandon God's revelation of The Truth, in favor of inventing to themselves ways to worship God that feel right to themselves. They create philosophies that tickle the ears of those who want to worship God in their own way. Hundreds, if not thousands, of churches have been created by man to satisfy a desire for man-made worship.

The message of Paul to the people of Athens was not only a condemnation of idolatry and their temples, but it was also a revelation of truth and a call to repentance. It was a call to recognize only true God and the only true way to Him – Jesus Christ. Without obedience to the will of God, man worships man (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus is the only way (John 14:6). The temples of man will fall in decay, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

- Doug Roush -

- Scripture of the Week -

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
- John 3:5 -

Many things in life are optional, but not everything. Jesus said you must be born again of water (baptism) or you "cannot" enter God's kingdom. Think about it!

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Guest Article: Paul's Boldness in the Midst of Idolatry

As Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy, his heart was stirred by the many idols he saw, and by temples that had been erected to worship the false gods that had been created out of mankind's imagination. He took advantage of every opportunity to speak the truth to the people of a city that was completely devoted to superstitious idolatry. Paul preached in the synagogues and marketplaces that Jesus was the Christ who had paid the price of our sin in His death and had rose from the dead.

Encountering men of philosophy, and asked by them to explain this new doctrine, Paul was taken to a rocky hill called the Areopagus. This hill is located at the foot of the Acropolis and above the Athenian Agora. From the vantage point of the Areopagus, Paul could see the temples of the Acropolis: The Erechtheum, the Propylaea and the Temple of Nike Apteros.

At the foot of the Areopagus spread the vast network of the Agora, or marketplace. This was the "civic center" of Athens that contained shops, government buildings and temples to various mythological

gods. He could see the Temples of Ares, Apollo and Hephaestus mixed among the Stoas of Zeus, Hermae and Attalus.

Paul stood in the very center of pagan worship and said, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24, 25).

There could not have been any clearer statement of love and courage than when Paul challenged everything the people of Athens believed. The temples were beautiful beyond description, with their artistic and ornate depictions of everything that made their gods so important to them. In their design and purpose, the majestic buildings surrounding Paul stood as monuments to the knowledge of man. Lost in this wealth of man's intellectual and architectural achievement was the self-evident knowledge of the revelation of the true God who made the world and all things in it, including every living thing.

Paul appealed to men of Athens to consider that the Creator of the world

could not be confined within the walls of man's devising. Neither was it to man's devising to determine how such a great God should be worshiped. The gods of man's philosophy were dependent on man's perception and imagination. The Creator does not need the pathetic efforts of men to be the Almighty. As proclaimed by Paul, man's dependence is on God, "He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (v. 25).

In the center of heathen worship, the true God was proclaimed and given His deserved honor and glory. His honor was not seen in gold or silver or stone. Glory to God by man can only be given by the obedient faith of those who know God through the revelation of His will, found in His word.

The ruins surrounding the Areopagus stand as silent witness to the words of Paul. The Agora is little more than broken rocks with most of the temples destroyed. The Acropolis that stood so majestically before Paul is a hill filled with the carcass of man's worship of himself.

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