



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Is there a God?

#### Acts 17:22-24

**Acts 17:22-24**, *Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;<sup>23</sup> 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:<sup>24</sup> 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.*

Paul is on his second missionary journey. He has been troubled all the way because Satan always resists what God is doing. He founded churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, which are all cities in the area known as Greece. He has been chased out of every one of them. He has left Luke, Silas, and Timothy behind to care for those churches, and he stands alone, in verse 16, in the city of Athens.

Paul waits there until Silas and Timothy can join him.

He is lonely, and alone. But it is in that situation that God uses him to give one of the most important messages he ever spoke. Paul's sermon to the Areopagus court.

Christianity somehow has drifted away from an intense understanding of God.

Jesus came to introduce us to God. What the Church desperately needs today is to get its perspective on God.

### **How can you know God who is knowable?**

The knowledge of God is the key to everything.

### **What were you made for?**

You were made for one thing that you might know God.

God wanted creatures who would acknowledge Him.

God made you to know Him and give Him glory.

If you don't know Him, then you do not exist as you were designed to exist. Rather than being in the knowledge of God and reflecting glory to God, you are a blemish on His glory.

For example, a father who has an unruly son finds that that son diminishes his own glory. We see a father, and we see an unruly son, and automatically we think something's wrong with the father.

God created men to give him glory. We look around the world, and we see sinful men. We see men who refuse to give Him glory, men in rebellion. God does not like that because that diminishes, in our eyes, the glory of God.

God desires glory from every creature, and ultimately removes from His presence those that don't give Him glory.

So, men were made to know God and knowing Him, to give Him glory.

### **Who allows us to know God?**

Jesus Christ.

### **What eternal life is?**

Eternal life is not a quantity of life.

We always think of eternal life as the concept of going on forever kind of life.

**John 17:3**, *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

It is not a length of life, but it is the kind of life that knows God.

Eternal life is the knowledge of God. The very thing for which Jesus came was to give us eternal life. Eternal life is primarily knowing God. That just happens to go on forever.

So, the reason men were made was to know God.

The reason Jesus died was to give you the knowledge of God that you lost in sin.

When Adam was created, he knew God. Adam and Eve they walked and talked with God in the cool of the day in the garden. He knew Him.

Immediately, when he sinned, he was blinded to God, cut off from God's presence. That presence is only restored in Christ who said, "I am the way and the truth."

Being a Christian is being one who knows God.

People like to meet and take pictures with very famous personality.

- I know the God of the universe.
- He never leaves me.
- He is with me all the time.
- He likes my company.
- I know God.

**What is the best thing in your life?**

**What brings me the most delight?**

Knowing God.

People try to find contentment in everything imaginable. But real contentment comes in knowing God.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24**, *Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; <sup>24</sup> But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.*

I can't glory in my wisdom.

I am not that smart.

I can't glory in my strength.

I am not that strong.

I can't glory in any kind of human riches.

But I tell you one thing that I will glory in this. I understand and I know the God of the universe.

### **What pleases God most?**

**Hosea 6:6**, *For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

As a Christian, the pursuit of the knowledge of God is what everything is about.

## **1 John chapter 2.**

We have three levels of spiritual growth.

We have a baby, and that they know the Father.

We have young men and know the Father.

We have spiritual father simply means a guy who's mature and know the Father.

God created man initially to know Him. But something entered into man's world and turned out the lights.

### **What was it?**

Sin.

When man came into the knowledge of God and sin came separated him from God.

**Romans 1:18-24**, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,<sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became*

*fools,<sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.<sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves,*

Every man who ever lived in this world has resident truth about God available to him.

God plants the innate knowledge that He is in men. It is instinctive for men to believe in God. We find this with children.

So, God is knowable. His knowledge is in and around them.  
It is around me.

The knowledge of God is available.

Sin comes in and destroys that possibility.

God let them go.

Paul arrived in Athens, and he was going to wait awhile, but his waiting was like most men's hard labour.

He saw the city full of idols and it stirred him emotionally.

The lostness of men worshipping idols and the glory of God moved him.

Paul began to preach.

In Athens, there was a famous court called the Areopagus court. It was so named because it originally met on a hill called Areopagus. in Latin, Mars Hill. Mars is the Latin word. The same Greek word Areopagus.

This is the supreme court of Athens, the same court that had tried and condemned Socrates four centuries earlier.

This court had a sort of a religious responsibility to defend the gods. When some new person came to town with some new idea, he had to go before this court so that his philosophy could run the test. It was sort of a review of Paul's new doctrine.

Paul goes to tell them about the only true God. No matter how many gods a man has, no matter how much religion he has, if it never gets to the true God, then he never knows satisfaction.

So, here in Athens they had thousands upon thousands of gods. In the midst of all of that, they had statues to unknown god.

Why?

You never get to the true God, so you never get satisfied.

Man has a God-shaped vacuum that is only satisfied when he knows the true God, then no matter what he sticks in there, it's not going to fit until he knows the true God.

Religion is a totally unfulfilling thing.

The tragedy of the hopeless, unfulfilled frustration of false religion was obvious in Athens. Everybody worshipping gods and nobody satisfied.

Paul, in his passion for the lost men, and the passion for the glory of God speaks out.

First you must recognize God is.

Second recognize who God is.

Thirdly recognize what God is saying.

Knowing God means that you believe there is a God, that you understand who he is, and that you understand what he requires.

Paul wants them to know that there is a God.

**V 22**, *Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;*

They were supernaturalists.

They were very religious.

They were very satisfied with their religiosity.

In the very beginning of knowing God, one got to be a supernaturalist.

If you run across somebody who does not believe in God, who says, "There is no God," a crusty, hard-shell, impossible, obstinate, dead-set atheist, he is hopeless.

**How are you going to introduce him to a God he doesn't believe in?**

If a person says that he is an atheist, and he doesn't believe there is a God, he will say, "There is no God."

Then you ask him if he has been everywhere in the universe.

When he replies no!

You say then you really can't say there is no God. You can only say you don't think there's a God. You are not an atheist but an agnostic."

The Latin word for agnostic is ignoramus.

Then after reacts to that, you can go from there.

If he says yes, he has got a different problem. You need to deal with it in a different way.

**Einstein** said that anybody who didn't believe in a cosmic power was a fool.

You look around and see the creation and you will say God exist.

**Hebrews 11:6**, *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Nobody is ever going to get to God if he doesn't believe God is. You can't find the road to the place you don't believe exists. It's got to be somewhere before you can go there.

We can surely lay up a lot of heavy evidence, but God is not provable in an empirical sense.

**John 1:18**, *"Nobody's ever seen God at any time."*

View on why people are atheists.

## **Biblical view of Atheism.**

**Psalm 14:1-4**, *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. <sup>2</sup> The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. <sup>4</sup> Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call on the Lord?*

Because they are sinners, and they want to eliminate the ultimate judgment on such sinfulness. Consequently, they eliminate God.

Philosophically they want to get rid of God so that they don't have to live under the guilt and the fear of a coming judgment.

In fact, the word "fool" there is the Hebrew word *nabal*, and the word literally means vicious wicked.

Man wants to live his sinful life, so he just reasons God out to accommodate his sinfulness.

**Psalm 10:11-13**, *He has said in his heart, "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see." <sup>12</sup> Arise, O Lord! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble. <sup>13</sup> Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, "You will not require an account."*

Most people are atheists because that is the only way they can get off the hook of judgment for a sinful life.

They are not willing to come to God on His terms. So, they want to eliminate God, so they don't have to live in fear of judgment.

Athens was full of people who were supernaturalists who believed in God. But it was also full of some people who were atheists, at least practical atheists.

The **Epicureans**, they believed that pleasure was the highest good, and they didn't believe necessarily in God.

Paul is about to present the true God.

*V 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:*

They had all these thousands of gods, and they still weren't home. So, they just had one to an unknown God, figuring there's got to be another one out there somewhere, and we haven't hit it yet.

There are reasons to believe that God is. The only alternative is to believe He isn't.

### **Can you imagine believing that there's no God?**

Believing that nothing in this universe came from anything.

Two simple reasons that the Bible uses.

#### **One is law of cause and effect.**

There's a God because I see these things, and I wonder where they came from. That is obvious. No effect can ever come about without a cause.

When you talk to the evolutionist, and he says, “once there was a puddle and a one-celled thing. The one-celled thing said, ‘Let’s be two.’ Then they were two. Then those two said, ‘Oh, this is terrific; let’s be four.’”

Now you say, “That’s really good, but where would the puddle come from? Where did the one-celled thing come from?”

How can you have a puddle in nothing from nothing?

**Hebrews 3:4**, *For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*

Can you imagine going out and seeing a new home and somebody just goes, “I want to show you our new house. One day we had a lumberyard deliver a whole pile of lumber, and we set a stick of dynamite, and it blew up, and it all landed like this. Because the den is right where we wanted it, with the fireplace and everything. The bedrooms are all upstairs, and the plumbing was right in the right spot for the kitchen. It was terrific.”

**What would you say?**

The guy is an idiot.

The first cause is God.

How could you ever have anything without a first cause?

## **Secondly, the law of intelligence or design.**

The world is so absolutely intricate, and design is so astounding.

One of the big arguments that we have in evolution is how do you ever get as complex as a human out of a puddle?

**How do you get intelligence from non-intelligence?**

**How do you get moral judgment from a non-moral?**

**What's the difference between a horse and a man or a monkey and a man?**

Morality.

Moral judgment.

Ethical judgments.

Wisdom.

The thinking processes.

How do you get those things?

**Psalm 94:9-10**, *He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see? <sup>10</sup>He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?*

Intelligence comes from intelligence.

One who creates hearing must hear.

One who creates sight must see.

One who makes moral judgments must be a moral being.

All of that can't come out of ignorance and dead matter.

There is order in the universe, and it speaks of a God. From the external world of God's revelation is the fact that man inside has that innate knowledge of God. The only reason that he would philosophically violate that is to entertain sin without the fear of consequence.

**V 23**, *I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.*

600 years before Paul arrived there, they had a terrible plague. History confirms that in that terrible plague, people were dying, and they didn't know how to stop it.

There was a very well-known poet from **Crete** by the name of **Epimenides**, and he came up with a plan. They were trying to figure out which God was upset and how to pacify the gods to get this plague over with. Since they couldn't find out, they figured maybe the gods would draw the attention to themselves if they had a plan.

So, **Epimenides** got on the Areopagus, this little hill there where the court met, and he let loose a flock of black and white sheep. The plan was that apparently the gods who were uptight would draw the sheep to themselves. So, the plan was the sheep will run around town, and wherever they lie down, the nearest God that they will take them and sacrifice them to that God. If they happen to lie down over here next this god, they will kill them

there, assuming that those gods would draw the sacrifices to themselves. They had so many gods.

So, the sheep went all running through town. They would lie down, and they would take them over and sacrifice them to a god. There were a bunch of sheep that didn't cooperate at all. They went and did not lie down by any gods.

In all the places where the sheep weren't near a particular god, they raised an altar to the unknown God and sacrificed the sheep there.

Historically, all throughout Athens it was very common to see altars to the unknown God.

**V 23, *Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:***

Paul says that I am going to introduce Him to you.  
Meet the unknown God.

That was powerful. They had been hung up on this unknown God thing for at least 600 years. Here is apostle Paul with the message. Fantastic.

Can a man know the unknown God?

**Galatians 4:8-9**, *But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup>But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? .*

**1 Chronicles 28:9**, *“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:8**, *“Jesus is coming in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.”*

Yes, you can know Him, but not all men know Him.

A man must know that God is. He must recognize that.

Man must believe or recognize who God is.

Not just that God is, but who God is.

Paul says that “God is Creator. This is who He is.”

**V 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.*

The Epicureans believed that matter was eternal which means nobody made it.

The Stoics believed that God was everything and in everything, Pantheism.

So, God couldn't create Himself.

Paul just shot down that philosophy with his first statement about who God is.

“God is Creator of all.”

Does that mean you don't believe in evolution?

Yes!

I don't believe in evolution.

I believe God created everything.

The Bible defends that, and I accept the Scriptures.

**Psalm 146:5-6**, *Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God, <sup>6</sup>Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever,*

God made everything. He made it all.

Isaiah's got some tremendous statements about the creative aspect of God.

**Isaiah 40:12**, *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?*

**Isaiah 40:28**, *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*

### **Who made it all?**

God made it all.

**Isaiah 45:18**, *For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the Lord, and there is no other.*

God is the Creator God. That everything that has been made has been made by Him.

**Zechariah 12:1**, *The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:*

God created everything, including men.

**Jeremiah 10:10-11**, *But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation. <sup>11</sup> Thus you shall say to them: “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”*

Do you know that demons always claim to create?  
These are the false gods that claim to have created.

**Jeremiah 10:12**, *He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.*

It didn't happen in an evolutionary process!  
God Himself and He alone is the Creator.

There is absolutely none other beside Him. No other god, therefore, there can be no other creator.

**Jeremiah 32:17**, *Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.*

No, we do not believe in evolution. We believe that God created.

Do you know what the faith of an evolutionist is?

Here is what evolutionists believe.

One, no supernatural power created.

Two, all creation is a matter of chance.

Three, living matter comes from no matter.

Four, intelligence, conscience, and moral judgment appears with no source.

The law of thermodynamics, if you were to study that, you would find proves that the very opposite of evolution is true.

Paul says, "Meet God. Who is He? Creator."

**He is Ruler. He is Lord.**

**Genesis 14:19-20**, *And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup>And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."*

He didn't only make it, He owns it. He rules it. He is Lord.

**Psalm 24:1**, *The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.*

**Revelation 20:11**, *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*

**V 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.*

You can't confine Him to a building.

**What these people were doing in Athens?**

Here was the god in this little box, little statue, and little shrine, and here was the god in this little temple.

God is too big for that. You are confining God, and God will not be confined.

Anything, beloved, that limits God to a physical representation diminishes His glory.

There is nothing in the world that can manifest the glory of God. Idolatry is not only worshipping a statue of the false god, but also any representation of the true God, because there is no way to represent Him.

When you reduce God to that kind of worshipping thing, that you have diminished Him and corrupted Him.

**1 Kings 8:27**, *“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!*

Solomon says that this is a neat temple, but God You are too big for it.

**Psalm 139:1-12**, *O Lord, You have searched me and known me. <sup>2</sup>You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. <sup>3</sup>You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. <sup>4</sup>For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. <sup>5</sup>You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. <sup>7</sup>Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. <sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, <sup>10</sup>Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. <sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; <sup>12</sup>Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*

Don't ever reduce God to visible images!

God is not worshipped in shrines, and He is not worshipped in buildings. He is too big for that.

Meet God: Creator, Ruler.

No man comes unto the Father except by Jesus.

You got to know who God is, but you will only know Him personally through Christ.

Will you receive Him today if you have not received Him yet?