



He Said What?

by David McClister (David will speak for the Men's Day in November)

The apostle Paul was a fearless preacher. I know this from reading his "sermon" in Acts 17. The circumstances were these: Paul had come to Athens, having "escaped" from unbelievers who were threatening his life in Thessalonica. As it worked out, Paul's traveling companions – Silas and Timothy – were able to stay in Thessalonica a while longer, so Paul went ahead to Athens by himself.

At Athens Paul did his usual thing. He went to the local synagogue and began telling them the story of the gospel and how it fulfilled the promises God had made to the Jews. But he also went down to the city marketplace (which was a large area, several acres in size) and would talk about the gospel to whatever person happened to give him a moment of their time.

Now Athens was not the great cultural center in Paul's day that it had been back in its prime. The Romans had subdued the Greeks and Athens was, in many ways, only a shell of its former self. But it was what we would call a "university town." Athens was still famous for being the home of some of the greatest philosophers of the ancient world – Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, to name a few. People still came there to teach, and to learn, philosophy. In fact, the city so attracted philosophical teachers and students, that a local court called the Areopagus was entrusted with the job of directing the public life of the city. Included in this was "screening" and approving what was taught in their city (and who taught it). So when Paul came along preaching the gospel of Jesus, he came under their purview. It would only be a matter of time until Paul's teachings reached the ears of other teachers and philosophers in town, and that is exactly what happened in Acts 17.18. Epicurean and Stoic philosophers confronted Paul about his teaching, which obviously sounded strange to them. They accused Paul of being irrational, inconsistent, and eclectic. We can gather this much from the criticism they leveled at him: they referred to him as "this seed-picker." *[The English translations here say "idle babbler" or similar things, but the term in Greek is used of little birds that went around picking up seeds at different places. The idea, then, was that in their opinion Paul's teaching was a hodge-podge of various ideas which he had picked up from various different teachers and philosophies, but which produced a very strange combination. To them, Paul was nothing but an amateur, an intellectual scavenger.]*

Paul was brought before the Areopagus to explain his teaching. It is at this point that we begin to appreciate Paul's boldness. No, he was not one of them. He did not have their background or their training in philosophy. He was ridiculed for teaching "dumb" ideas. The entire objection of Acts 17.18 can be boiled down to this: "Paul lacks a higher education." But this did not silence Paul. He knew that he had something more powerful and more profound than any earthly philosophy, no matter how high sounding and elitist they made it appear. It is exactly this kind of situation that Paul described in 1 Cor 1.25-28: "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ... God has chosen the foolish things of the

world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God." In fact, what we find next in the narrative is nothing but amazing. Paul basically shows the Athenian philosophers just how ignorant they really were (and he even uses the word "ignorance" when describing the entire course of human history, including the impressive achievements of the Greeks, in v 30!). He begins, brilliantly, with pointing out that they had even acknowledged their own ignorance by setting up an altar dedicated "to an unknown god" – who turned out to be the very God that Paul served and whose gospel he preached. It was this god who was admittedly unknown to them who was actually the most important of all, who is the Creator of all things and whose word is the truth by which all people must think, live, and by which they will be judged (as Paul points out in vv 30-31).

But Paul was not done. He famously said "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ... we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man" (Acts 17:24, 29). Just over Paul's shoulder, plainly visible a few hundred yards away, was the most famous Greek temple in all the ancient world, the Parthenon, home of Athena, the patron deity of the Athenians. Inside this magnificent temple stood a statue of Athena that was about 40 feet tall. The flesh parts of the image were made of ivory, and the rest of the statue was draped with 1,500 pounds of gold. Truly it was the pride of Athens, but Paul dismisses it with a few words. Paul plainly indicated to these cultured-but-ignorant Greeks that the true God is nothing like theirs. God does not dwell in a humanly-built house – even a really nice one like the Parthenon, nor does he conform to human ideas.

What a scathing criticism! And what courage it took to speak it to these people!

What do we learn from this episode in Paul's life? We learn that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. In fact, he was downright "proud" of it and happy to be associated with it. He did not care if the intellectuals of his day liked it or disliked it. He did not try to impress them with his knowledge of Judaism, nor did he try to match their philosophical expertise. Paul was simply about the plain, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ, a message that was foolishness to people like this (as Paul would later say to the Corinthians, "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness" -- 1 Cor 1:22-23). Paul did not believe that he had to "fit in" or compete with the world and its ways. Paul knew that what these people needed was the gospel, and he refused to compromise it or himself as he presented it to them. There will always be the temptation to dress the gospel up with fancy, high-sounding rhetoric or to compete in the world's arena for status and esteem. Like Paul we must resist these urges to make the gospel fit the world, and instead boldly demand that the world must fit the gospel. May God give us the same boldness that Paul had.

NEWS & NOTES

UPDATED PRAYER LIST

- **Kathy Austin** had outpatient surgery on Fri, 2/28
- **Kati and Jeremy Crump** are expecting, due 9/16.
- **Harvey Goble** has a consultation with his surgeon on 3/5.
- **Doug and Mary Lou Hall** have increasing difficulties with mobility, preventing them from being able to attend services. A special card or call would be welcome.
- **Bill Hooton** is in Brightpoint of Rivershire skilled nursing, #127.
- **Sandy Leblanc** is recovering from oral surgery this week.
- **Dwight Osteen** had three surgeries last week.
- **Dehbrenda Preuss** had surgery on 2/28.
- **Leo Betancourt's** parents, Elio and Glenda, will be leaving on 3/6. Pray for their safe journey home.
- **Willie and Rita Ray's** daughter, Kimberly.
- **Stacie Bohanan's** niece's husband John has improved.
- **Rich Shewmake's** brother-in-law, Jim Goggan, has been diagnosed with prostate cancer and will have surgery 3/3.
- **Jon Banks**
- Also we received a special prayer request (via Jeremy Crump) for Christians in Italy who, because of the Coronavirus outbreak, are being prevented from assembling.
- **Several people** are battling seasonal ailments. Prayers for wellness is appreciated.

—See Enews for Ongoing Prayer List

MEETINGS, EVENTS, SINGINGS & STUDIES

- **SPRING ADULT CLASSES**
 - **ROMANS** | SUNDAY in the Auditorium
 - **TURNING POINT** | SUNDAY in Classroom #5
 - **THEN SINGS MY SOUL - PSALMS TO SING TODAY** | WEDNESDAY
- **TUESDAY CLASS (LUKE)** | 10:30 am, class # 5.
- **OUTREACH MEETUP** | Mondays, Panera Bread, 7 pm
- **BUILDING A GODLY HOME** | 3/1, 4 pm., auditorium
- **2:52 Kids Class** [2-12] | 3/1, 4:00 pm class #9
- **TEENS STUDY** [13-18] | 3/1, 4:00 pm. class #5
- **BARNABAS GROUP** | See Leo Betancourt
- **SONG LEADER TRAINING** | 3/22, 4:00 pm
- **YOUNG ADULTS** | Fri., 3/20, 6:30 pm (Potters)
- **TEEN DEVO** [12-18] | 3/21, TBD, 6:00 pm
- **ADULT STUDY** [30/40] | 3/28, 6 pm, C/T Chapman's.
- **SINGING** | Sat., 3/7, 5:00 pm
- **VBS** | FOCUS ON FAITH | Mon-Thurs., 6/22-25, registration opens March 15.
- **YOUTH LECTURES** | Sat-Sun, 8/8-9
- **MEETING** | with Ben Hall 9/13-16/2020
- **LADIES DAY** with Sarah Lyon | Sat., 10/10, 10-noon.
- **MENS DAY** with David McClister | Sat., 11/7, 10-noon.

AREA EVENTS

- **MEETING** | Timberland Dr church of Christ | 3/1-5
- **MEETING** | Adoue St church of Christ | Alvin | 3/1-6
- **MEETING** | Spring Woods church of Christ | Houston | 3/13-15

DIRECTORY UPDATES

- **PHOTO DIRECTORIES** The most recent printed directory is in the foyer for members. Changes? See Brian Clark for any corrections or changes. **We would like all families** to update their information and ALL worship leaders to do the same. If you have any questions about the DIRECTORY application of our website, be sure to see Brian Clark.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **VOLUNTEER SIGN UPS for 2020**, including Communion Prep, visitor greeting and bimonthly building lockup.
- **DO YOU EXCEL in SOCIAL MEDIA?** Don is looking for some volunteers to co-manage the INSTAGRAM and TWITTER accounts with him. If you are interested, be sure to message Don or text him.
- **WOULD YOU TEACH?** John Beighle is looking for teachers for the summer quarter (Jun-Aug). Email or text him if you would like to teach.
- **WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE?** See Leo Betancourt about getting involved in encouraging our visitors and members.

Attendance	Last Month Avg	Last Week
Sunday Bible Class	116	116
Sunday Worship AM	159	166
Sunday Worship PM	97	86
Wednesday PM	78	72

Sunday AM Worship	3/1/2020	3/8/2020	Communion Preparation
Song Leader	Dwight Haas	Alan Stilts	March— Brenda Swann
1st prayer	Hayden Clark	Craig Preuss	Visitor Hospitality
Scripture Reading	Craig Preuss — Acts 6:1-7	Lyn Ray — 1 Peter 3:8-17	March—
Lord Supper Lead	Dwight Osteen	Kaku Barkoh	Elders
Bread	Keith Arrants	Dwight Haas	Keith Arrants 936.582.1244
Fruit of Vine	Mitch Harvey	Stuart Jones	George Chapman 281.298.1303
Offering	Michael Henss	Nathan Shows	Norman Davis 832.326.2966
Helper	Joshua Suarez	Al Suarez	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Helper	Michael Harvey	Steve Dargan	Deacons
Preaching	Don Hooton	Don Hooton	John Beighle 806.367.3389
Usher	Kaku Barkoh	Jeremy Crump	Adam Bohanan 281.798.1093
Closing Prayer	Gerald Hodges	Dwight Osteen	Brian Clark 281.513.0706
Announcements	Trent Williams	Barrett Blankenship	Gary LeBlanc 281.292.0262
Sunday PM Worship	3/1/2020	3/8/2020	Craig Preuss 832.477.0578
Song Leader	Don Hooton	Adam Bohanan	Evangelists
1st prayer	Cody Betton	Jay Dulin	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Scripture Reading	Paul Harshman — 2 John	Dwight Osteen -Matt 5:17-26,38-48, Matt 8:31 - 9:1	<p>You can also find us here...</p> <p> WOODLANDSCHURCHOFCHRIST.org</p> <p> facebook.com/woodlandschurchofchrist</p> <p> @woodlandscc</p> <p> woodlandschurchofchrist</p> <p> woodlandschurchofchrist</p>
Lord Supper	Trent Williams	Stuart Jones	
Preaching	Singing	Don Hooton	
Closing Prayer	Mitch Harvey	Paul Harshman	
Wednesday	3/4/2020	3/11/2020	
Song Leader	Dwight Osteen	Norman Davis	<p>SCHEDULE OF SERVICES</p> <p>Worship Assemblies Sundays at 10:20 am & 5:00 pm</p> <p>Bible Classes for All Ages Sundays 9:30 am & Wednesdays 7:00 pm</p>
Invitation	Norman Davis	Alan Stilts	
Closing Prayer	Barrett Blankenship	Gary LeBlanc	
Announcements	Adam Bohanan	Craig Preuss	