

I'm not robot!

the anger of any still unacknowledged god who might be known to them. That no deity might punish them for neglecting his worship, or remain uninvoked in asking for blessings, they may not expect altered to his own name or known among them, but, distrustful still they might not comprehend fully the extent of their subjection and the extent of their own deity, they might be angry that the gods should be so slighted. The Athenians, by their apostasy, had broken the gods' idols, and by their worship recognize; there is such an extent of their own deity, they might be angry that the gods should be so slighted. They are correct in confuting that this Being is unknown to you, you have no just conceptions of his nature and perfections. (Acts 17:23) Vincent's Word Studies Calvin said it better to have knowledge of God than to worship without knowing Him, for God cannot be worshipped reverently unless He first becomes known. What irony – Athenians the bastion of "learning" does not know the "god" and yet worships Him. In so doing, they are in effect acknowledging that such a deity exists, but they have no knowledge of Him. Their worship is deficient because their knowledge is deficient. Worship is related to the word "worthy." If you do not know something, it is ludicrous to ascribe it worth! It is into this "spiritual (deity) vacuum" that Paul introduces the Worthing One, the Only God worthy of our worship! Paul proceeds to explain that this God is not only their Creator and Giver of breath (Acts 17:25), the Determiner of the length of their life ("having determined their appointed times," Acts 17:26) but He will one day be their Righteous Judge! (Acts 17:31) A. W. Pink has the following note regarding knowing God - God can only be known by means of a supernatural revelation of Himself Apart from the Scriptures, even a theoretical acquaintance with Him is impossible. It still holds true that "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor 1:21). Where the Scriptures are ignored, God is "the unknown God" (Acts 17:23). But something more than the Scriptures is required before the soul can know God, know Him in a real, personal, vital way. This seems to be recognized by few today. The prevailing practice assumes that a knowledge of God can be obtained through studying the Word, in the same way as a knowledge of chemistry may be secured by mastering its textbooks. An intellectual knowledge of God maybe, not so a spiritual one. A supernatural God can only be known supernaturally (i.e. known in a manner above that which mere nature can acquire), by a supernatural revelation of Himself to the heart. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor 4:6) More literally this reads "that you worship without knowing." Earlier they had accused him to be a proclaimer of strange deities. Now he proceeds to explain to the identity of the unknown God. He is seeking to correct their ignorance by declaring Him in the following passages. Paul's sermon might be entitled "Getting to Know the Unknown God" as MacArthur says "That God can be known is the clear teaching of the Bible (Deut. 4:35; 1 Kings 8:43; 1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 9:10; Jer. 9:24; 31:34; John 17:3). The God who can be known is the believer's message of hope to the lost world." (LDB) Guzik - Many ancient observers noticed the religious character of Athens, and some thought that Athenians were the most religious of all people. But when Paul said this to the Athenians, he didn't necessarily mean it in a positive way. Religion can lead one away from God, and if we trust in a false religion, it is little credit to say of us that we are "religious." (ED: The most difficult and most resistant people for me to witness to are those who claim to be religious and practice a religion filled with rituals and non-biblical traditions which ensnare their hearts and serve as a "vaccination" so to speak preventing them from hearing the true Gospel.) NET Note - Paul, in typical Jewish Christian style, informs them of the true God, of whom their idols are an ignorant reflection. A T Robertson observes that Paul is a proclaimer of a God, both old and new, old in that they already worship him, new in that Paul knows who he is. By this master stroke he has brushed to one side any notion of violation of Roman law or suspicion of heresy and claims their endorsement of his new gospel, a shrewd and consummate turn. He has their attention now and proceeds to describe this God left out of their list as the one true and Supreme God. "Worship (present tense) [215] (eusebeo) means conducting oneself with reverent regard for divinity. BDAG says eusebeo "refers to a sense of awesome obligation arising within a system of reciprocity in which special respect is shown to those who are the recipients of the respect." (1979) 215. It is a verb that is used in the Septuagint and in the New Testament. It is used in the Septuagint in the following passages: Gen 22:5; Ex 17:16; 18:25; 20:18; 21:17; 22:28; 24:10; 25:17; 26:10; 27:18; 28:28; 29:16; 30:16; 31:12; 32:1; 33:1; 34:1; 35:1; 36:1; 37:1; 38:1; 39:1; 40:1; 41:1; 42:1; 43:1; 44:1; 45:1; 46:1; 47:1; 48:1; 49:1; 50:1; 51:1; 52:1; 53:1; 54:1; 55:1; 56:1; 57:1; 58:1; 59:1; 60:1; 61:1; 62:1; 63:1; 64:1; 65:1; 66:1; 67:1; 68:1; 69:1; 70:1; 71:1; 72:1; 73:1; 74:1; 75:1; 76:1; 77:1; 78:1; 79:1; 80:1; 81:1; 82:1; 83:1; 84:1; 85:1; 86:1; 87:1; 88:1; 89:1; 90:1; 91:1; 92:1; 93:1; 94:1; 95:1; 96:1; 97:1; 98:1; 99:1; 100:1; 101:1; 102:1; 103:1; 104:1; 105:1; 106:1; 107:1; 108:1; 109:1; 110:1; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1; 114:1; 115:1; 116:1; 117:1; 118:1; 119:1; 120:1; 121:1; 122:1; 123:1; 124:1; 125:1; 126:1; 127:1; 128:1; 129:1; 130:1; 131:1; 132:1; 133:1; 134:1; 135:1; 136:1; 137:1; 138:1; 139:1; 140:1; 141:1; 142:1; 143:1; 144:1; 145:1; 146:1; 147:1; 148:1; 149:1; 150:1; 151:1; 152:1; 153:1; 154:1; 155:1; 156:1; 157:1; 158:1; 159:1; 160:1; 161:1; 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1393:1; 1394:1; 1395:1; 1396:1; 1397:1; 1398:1; 1399:1; 1400:1; 1401:1; 1402:1; 1403:1; 1404:1; 1405:1; 1406:1; 1407:1; 1408:1; 1409:1; 1410:1; 1411:1; 1412:1; 1413:1; 1414:1; 1415:1; 1416:1; 1417:1; 1418:1; 1419:1; 1420:1; 1421:1; 1422:1; 1423:1; 1424:1; 1425:1; 1426:1; 1427:1; 1428:1; 1429:1; 1430:1; 1431:1; 1432:1; 1433:1; 1434:1; 1435:1; 1436:1; 1437:1; 1438:1; 1439:1; 1440:1; 1441:1; 1442:1; 1443:1; 1444:1; 1445:1; 1446:1; 1447:1; 1448:1; 1449:1; 1450:1; 1451:1; 1452:1; 1453:1; 1454:1; 1455:1; 1456:1; 1457:1; 1458:1; 1459:1; 1460:1; 1461:1; 1462:1; 1463:1; 1464:1; 1465:1; 1466:1; 1467:1; 1468:1; 1469:1; 1470:1; 1471:1; 1472:1; 1473:1; 1474:1; 1475:1; 1476:1; 1477:1; 1478:1; 1479:1; 1480:1; 1481:1; 1482:1; 1483:1; 1484:1; 1485:1; 1486:1; 1487:1; 1488:1; 1489:1; 1490:1; 1491:1; 1492:1; 1493:1; 1494:1; 1495:1; 1496:1; 1497:1; 1498:1; 1499:1; 1500:1; 1501:1; 1502:1; 1503:1; 1504:1; 1505:1; 1506:1; 1507:1; 1508:1; 1509:1; 1510:1; 1511:1; 1512:1; 1513:1; 1514:1; 1515:1; 1516:1; 1517:1; 1518:1; 1519:1; 1520:1; 1521:1; 1522:1; 1523:1; 1524:1; 1525:1; 1526:1; 1527:1; 1528:1; 1529:1; 1530:1; 1531:1; 1532:1; 1533:1; 1534:1; 1535:1; 1536:1; 1537:1; 1538:1; 1539:1; 1540:1; 1541:1; 1542:1; 1543:1; 1544:1; 1545:1

the resurrection of the fact of judgment: the appointment of the judge has already taken place and is to be seen in the fact of his being raised from the dead by God." MacArthur explains "The resurrection of Jesus Christ showed God's approval of Him, and qualified Him as judge. There are no excuses now—the proof of the Word of the Lord is all in Him. Sinners will be judged by what they do with that truth." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts) Christ's RESURRECTION is the Father's "AMEN" to His Son's declaration "IT IS FINISHED." (See Tetelastai) Furnished proof to all men raising Him from the dead. Death has always been man's greatest, and finally victorious, enemy (1 Cor 15:26), and only the Creator of life, the judge who imposed the sentence of death because of sin (Ge 3:17-20+), can conquer death. The founders and leaders of all other religions and philosophies eventually die, but Jesus Christ is alive! His tomb is empty, and He has ascended in His resurrection body to the Father in heaven. His bodily resurrection, which is the best-proved fact of biblical history, is the certain assurance that He is the Creator and Judge of all. And it is also the greatest assurance that we too will be raised bodily to walk in newness of life in His very presence some day (soon) - see 1 Cor 15:20-22. Swindoll says with the resurrection Paul dropped a bombshell into their philosophical systems - For the Epicureans, who believed death was the disassembly and dissemination of one's atoms—which became parts of a billion other things—resurrection required the destruction of those other things in order to be reassembled. For the Stoics, who embraced death as one's reunification with the logos, resurrection re-created the problem death had solved. (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts) Robertson - This Paul knew to be a fact because he himself had seen the Risen Christ (Acts 9:3-16). Paul has here come to the heart of his message and could now throw light on their misapprehension about "Jesus and the Resurrection" (Acts 17:18). Here Paul has given the proof of all his claims in the address that seemed new and strange to them. Furnished (3930)(parecho from para = near, beside + echo = hold) basically (literally) means to hold beside, To hold out toward someone, to present, offer, to cause someone to experience something, with the possible implication of a duration - 'to cause to, to cause to experience, to give.' "let no one give me trouble" or "... cause me trouble" Galatians 6:17. To cause something to happen to someone - 'to cause to hold)' "why do you cause the woman trouble?" Matthew 26:10; To maintain a state or condition - 'to continue to be, to keep on being:' napofoyou hoy(ou 'they kept silent' Acts 22:2. (from Louw-Nida) In the present context it means to furnish, and was used regularly by Demosthenes for bringing forward evidence. Zodiastes - Figuratively, meaning to be the cause, source, occasion of something to a person, to make or do, give or bestow, show, occasion in one's behalf, with the acc. and dat. expressed or implied. With kopon , trouble, to give one trouble, to vex (Matt. 26:10; Mark 14:6; Luke 11:7; 18:5; Gal. 6:17); erasia , work, to make or bring gain to someone (Acts 16:16); pistis , faith, having made available to everyone the capacity to experience saving faith so that all who do not believe are responsible for their unbelief (Acts 17:31); hēsuchia , quietness, silence (Acts 22:2; Sept.; Job 34:29); philanthrōpia , benevolence (Acts 28:2). In the mid. paréchomai, to do or show for oneself, for one's own part (Luke 7:4, "for whom he should [on His part] do this"; Acts 19:24). With to dikaioun , that which is just (Col. 4:1, "bestow on your part that which is just to servants" [a.t.]); seautou , thyself (Titus 2:7, "showing thyself a pattern of good works"). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament) Gingrich - 1. act.—a. give, offer, present Lk 6:29.—b. grant, show Ac 17:31; 22:2; 28:2; 1 Ti 6:17.—c. cause, bring about Mt 26:10; Mk 14:6; Lk 11:7; 18:5; Ac 16:16; Gal 6:17; 1 Ti 1:4.—2. mid. e' auto,n ti p) show oneself to be something Tit 2:7. Grant Lk 7:4; Col 4:1. Get for oneself Ac 19:24. Gilbrant - The classical Greek meaning varies with its usage. Actively the word means "hand over" or "deliver" something to someone. Reflexively the idea is submission or giving oneself up for or to something or someone. In law it means "bring forth" a witness, while in mathematics it denotes the sum total (cf. Liddell-Scott). The Septuagint utilizes parecho to translate the hiphil uses of different Hebrew terms for causing trouble (shāqat, Job 34:29) and causing exhaustion (lā'āh, Isaiah 7:13). It also denotes the divine causation of God in nature ('āmād, Psalm 30:7). The New Testament retains the negative connotation of parecho in such passages as Matthew 26:10; Mark 14:6; Luke 11:7; 18:5; and Galatians 6:17 where the term means "to bother" or "trouble" someone. The classical active sense of bringing an offering is found in Luke 7:4, while the reflexive idea of submission is observable in the quietness of the Jews before Paul (Acts 22:2), the generosity of those on Malta (Acts 28:2), and the justice and fairness of masters toward slaves (Colossians 4:1). In Acts 16:16 the money earned by the spectacular soothsaying of the demonized slave girl "brought her masters much gain" (cf. Acts 19:24; 1 Timothy 1:4; 6:17). Hence parecho can be used to express the idea of causing bother or trouble, as well as the sense of simply presenting or demonstrating something to someone. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary) Parecho - 16v. became(1), bother*(3), bothers*(1), bringing(2), cause(1), furnished(1), give rise(1), grant(2), offer(1), show(1), showed(1), supplied(1). Matt. 26:10; Mk. 14:6; Lk. 7:4; Lk. 11:7; Lk. 18:5; Acts 16:16; Acts 17:31; Acts 19:24; Acts 22:2; Acts 28:2; Gal. 6:17; Col. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Tim. 6:17; Titus 2:7 Proof (4102)(pistis) is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things. Here Paul uses "pistis as conviction or ground of confidence (Hebrews 11:1-note) like a note or title-deed, a conviction resting on solid basis of fact." (Robertson) Raising (450)(anistemi from ana = up, again + histemi = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up or stand up (Acts 1:15) or to raise up from the dead, bring to life - "God raised Him up again" (Acts 2:24) (Mt. 17:9; Mt. 20:19 Mk 9:9, 10; Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34, Lk 9:8, 19; Lk 16:31 Lk 18:33; Jn 6:39, 40 Acts 13:34 Acts 17:3; 1 Th 4:14, 16). Anistemi in Acts - Acts 1:15; Acts 2:24; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:22; Acts 3:26; Acts 5:6; Acts 5:17; Acts 5:34; Acts 5:36; Acts 5:37; Acts 6:9; Acts 7:18; Acts 7:37; Acts 8:26; Acts 8:27; Acts 9:6; Acts 9:11; Acts 9:18; Acts 9:34; Acts 9:39; Acts 9:40; Acts 9:41; Acts 10:13; Acts 10:20; Acts 10:23; Acts 10:26; Acts 10:41; Acts 11:7; Acts 11:28; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:16; Acts 13:33; Acts 13:34; Acts 14:10; Acts 14:20; Acts 15:7; Acts 17:3; Acts 17:31; Acts 20:30; Acts 22:10; Acts 22:16; Acts 23:9; Acts 23:16; Acts 26:16; Acts 26:30 Lumby summarizes - It is worth while to notice how St Paul's argument advances through its various stages. He speaks first of God as the Creator of the world and of men, and of the ordinances which He has made for man's abode on earth. Then he argues that all this should inspire men with the thought that as they are more worthy than material things, so God is far exalted above men. This ought to have led them to seek after Him, and even in the darker days those who sought could find Him. But now the days of God's revelation through nature are at an end. He has spoken through that Son of Man whom the resurrection proved to be the Son of God. Through Him will God judge the world, for which judgment men should prepare themselves by repentance. (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges - Acts of the Apostles). Who Says? Read, Acts 17:16-31 He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.—Acts 17:31 I had always admired a well-known television news personality and thought of him as someone with high moral standards. So it surprised me one day when I heard him remark that he doesn't want anyone telling him what is right and what is wrong. He made it clear that he answers to no one but himself. The idea that we are not accountable to anyone—even to God—appeals to many people. But it contradicts the deep-down feeling that there are things we ought to do and things we ought not to do. The Bible calls that inner conviction our conscience. In Romans 1:18-20, the apostle Paul stated that the voice of conscience reveals God's standards in the hearts of those who've never even heard the Word of God. And Ecclesiastes 3:11-14 declares that God has placed a sense of eternity in everyone's heart, a conviction that what we do has everlasting consequences. I am thankful that the Bible tells us the One to whom we are accountable and that it clearly defines what is right and wrong. But I'm also grateful that God offers forgiveness to us through faith in Christ, so we don't need to fear His judgment (Acts 17:31). Like it or not, we are accountable to God. By Herbert Vander Lugt Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved Our conscience is a gift from God, It is a guiding light; And when aligned with God's own Word, It tells us wrong from right. —Sper Only God has the right to say what's wrong. —Acts 17:32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." REACTIONS TO THE GOSPEL Reception or rejection. Belief or unbelief. Repentance or rebellion. Life or death. There is no middle ground. Jesus was crystal clear when He declared to the Jews "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins;" for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24) And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked - One group treated Paul's statement of the resurrection of Jesus with derision, scoffing at him, imperfect tense picturing them mocking him, casting one verbal assault after another. At least they were not like those rejecters at Lystra who cast stones to kill him! We must remember that Paul was a man, and one can only imagine how this hurt him. And yet he rested in the truth that his hope was founded on Jesus' blood and righteousness, not men's mocking taunts! And we need to steel ourselves with a similar biblical mindset, for if we share the Gospel enough, we can be sure that some with mock and sneer and deride us for believing such narrow minded foolish fables! As Paul warned young Timothy " Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Ti 3:12+). Robertson - The Greeks believed that the souls of men lived on, but they had no conception of resurrection of the body. They had listened with respect till Paul spoke of the actual resurrection of Jesus from the dead as a fact, when they did not care to hear more. Hayford - To the Greeks the idea of the resurrection of the dead was ridiculous, because they believed that death was a release of the soul from the prison of the body. (Spit Filled Life Study Bible) John Polhill - Epicureans believed in no human existence after death. Stoics believed that only the immaterial spirit survived death. To Greeks the idea of a body surviving death did not make any sense—even a transformed body. (NAC) Resurrection (386)(anastasis from ana = up, again + histemi = to cause to stand) literally means "to stand again" or "to cause to stand again" and most NT uses refer to a physical body rising from the dead or coming back to life after having once died. The resurrection is distinguished from belief in reincarnation, which usually involves a series of rebirths from which the soul may seek release. Resurrection has primary reference to the body. The resurrection is the central, defining doctrine and claim of the gospel for as Paul wrote "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1 Cor 15:14)] Vernon McGee - Do you know why they mocked? Because Platonism denied the resurrection of the dead. That was one of the marks of Platonism's curiosity for something "beyond" It denied the physical resurrection. When you hear people today talk about a spiritual resurrection but denying the physical resurrection, you are hearing Platonic philosophy rather than scriptural teaching. Paul taught the physical resurrection from the dead. So when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. Sneer! but the fact that Paul went out of their midst and soon departed from Athens strongly suggest that these "seekers" missed their opportunity of a lifetime! Left reader, beware of contemptuous facial expression, phrasing, or tone of voice. To scoff stresses insolence, disrespect, or incredulity as motivating the derision. It means to make fun of someone by joking or jesting. NET Acts 17:32 Now when they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some began to scoff, but others said, "We will hear you again about this." BDAG - (1) to engage in mockery, mock, sneer, scoff; (2) to make fun of maliciously, mock, scoff at, sneer at Vincent on chleazo - Only here in New Testament (3x in the apocryphal Septuagint - 2Macc 7:27; 4Macc 5:22; Wisdom 11:14), though a compound, diachleazo, mock, occur, according to the best texts, at Acts 2:13. The force of the imperfect, began to mock, should be given here in the translation, as marking the outbreak of derision. The response is not surprising for whenever one preaches or witnesses of the creation and resurrection to unbelievers, especially to modern day Stoics (atheists) or Epicureans (pantheists, New Agers), many ridicule, some defer judgment, and some believe. Robertson - In contempt at Paul's statement they declined to listen further to "this babble" (Acts 17:18) who had now lost what he had gained with this group of hearers (probably the light and flippant Epicureans). PROCRASTINATION THE DEADLY DECEPTION! Procrastination is the act of putting off, delaying, or deferring an action until a later time. Procrastination is the act of willfully delaying the doing of something that should be done. Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task that needs to be accomplished by a certain deadline (ED). In the present context the "deadline" is before one "flattines!" It is an intentional delay of finishing a task despite knowing it might have negative consequences (ED. In this case not just "negative consequences" but "eternal consequences"). We might say it was not curiosity (like the Athenian's curiosity for something "beyond") which kills a person (like curiosity killed the cat), but procrastination which kills a person's hope of eternal life! Beware of falling into the deception of procrastination! (See illustration below) Jack Arnold - These were undoubtedly the Stoics who were sincere in their desire to know more about Christ, but they were also procrastinators. As far as we know, they never heard Paul a second time. These scholars succumbed the curse of the intellectual. They were guilty of academic detachment. They were remotely interested in Christ but only in an academic sense. Procrastination in receiving Christ can be just as fatal as total rejection of Christ. ILLUSTRATION - There is a story of Satan having a "planning session" in hell. He asks, "How shall we ruin the souls of men?" One demon stands up and says, "I will go and start a great movement. I will tell men that God is dead." "No, that won't work," replied Satan. "We've already tried it. There is too much evidence for God in the design of creation. Men know there is a God." Another demon stood up and said, "I've got a plan! I'll go tell men the Bible is not true." Satan said, "We've worked a lot on that and haven't had a great deal of success. There is something about the Bible that is self-authenticating." A third demon stood up and said, "I will go and tell men there is a God, the Bible is His Word, Jesus is the Son and He did die for them. . . . but there is still time. They don't really have to come to repentance and faith in Him just yet. I will tell them to eat, drink and be merry today because they can always repent tomorrow!" Then Satan stood up and said, "Now, you've got something! That will do the job! Procrastination will ruin the souls of many, many men!" (Sermon) R Kent Hughes - Paul's sermon had three results—mockery, delay, and belief. The first two responses show that many did not care about truth. Some said, "Seedpicker... what a waste of time!" When the discussion went beyond fun and games, they cut it off. Others said, "We want to hear you again," but they cared little whether they actually did or did not, and they never did hear him again. Acts 17:33 and the opening verse of Acts 18:1 tell the story. "Paul left the Council... After this, Paul left Athens." Praise God—some truly believed and came to faith. But most apparently rejected the apostle's message ("but 'eternal consequences'"). We might say it was not curiosity (like the Athenian's curiosity for something "beyond") which kills a person (like curiosity killed the cat), but procrastination which kills a person's hope of eternal life! Beware of falling into the deception of procrastination! (The Church Affire) And others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter - Were they sincere? We cannot discern from Luke's record. They may have had "good intentions" but the fact that Paul went out of their midst and soon departed from Athens strongly suggest that these "seekers" missed their opportunity of a lifetime! Left reader, beware of "good intentions" when it comes to the Gospel! Good intentions are like checks drawn on a bank where you have no account! (cf Pt 14:23) As the old adage says "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" which probably comes from Samuel Johnson who said that "hell is paved with good intentions," and the phrase "the road to" got added on later. Beware of falling into the deceptive "Athenian Abyss" of "mañana!" (Spanish for "Tomorrow") Good intentions are nice, but they are deadly deceptive unless they result in good actions (Acts 16:31+)] LIFE APPLICATION NOTE - WHY GOOD INTENTIONS CAN'T SAVE US Starting out with good intentions does not ensure the results will be good. Possessing good intentions does not guarantee that any action will be taken. Good intentions by themselves do not fulfill the demand to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Our ever-present bad intentions are often hidden from us. Good intentions can lead to false pride. Good intentions can seek to bypass and alter God's clear commands. Good intentions can be a cover-up for ignoring or willfully disregarding God's desires. Good intentions may appear to do so, but they cannot actually make up for bad deeds. Many people claim that they are acting with good intentions when, in fact, their efforts are half-hearted. They want to dictate the way God should accept them. But none of our best intentions can save us. "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12+) It is always dangerous to put off until tomorrow what you can do today, especially when what you are putting off is the eternal salvation (or destruction) of your soul. There are many who have delayed only to die before they had another chance, if you are reading these notes and have put off receiving Christ as your Savior, then read Paul's warning in 2 Cor 6:1-2 (notice how Paul piles up time phrases to get our attention!)... And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION". Others - A more polite group like those who had invited him to speak (Acts 17:19). They were unconvinced, but had better manners and so were in favor of an adjournment. This was done, though it is not clear whether it was a serious postponement or a courteous refusal to hear Paul further (probably this). It was a virtual dismissal of the matter. "It is a sad story—the noblest of ancient cities and the noblest man of history—and he never cared to look on it again" (Furneaux) (Robertson), Vincent - In this remarkable speech of Paul are to be noted: his prudence and tact in not needlessly offending his hearers; his courtesy and spirit of conciliation in recognizing their piety toward their gods; his wisdom and readiness in the use of the inscription "to the unknown God," and in citing their own poets; his meeting the radical errors of every class of his hearers, while seeming to dwell only on points of agreement; his lofty views of the nature of God and the great principle of the unity of the human race; his boldness in proclaiming Jesus and the resurrection among those to whom these truths were foolishness; the wonderful terseness and condensation of the whole, and the rapid but powerful and assured movement of the thought. Jack Andrews on others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." " We can respond aggressively against the message or we can respond apathetically towards the message. Both responses are wrong. These folks that Luke reminds us of were not aggressive against the message, but they were not accepting of the message. It is an awful thing to receive this kind of response in the world, but it is even worse when there is apathy within the church. R. Kent Hughes wrote, "One of the great sins of the church today is the dispassionate hearing of God's Word. Because of this, there are many who are spiritually ill, unable to comprehend the truths they once held dear. Only God can deliver His children from such apathy!" The philosophers in Athens were somewhere between rejecting the message and receiving the message. Others stated, "We will hear you again on this matter." Matthew 12:30 Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." These folks had a "between" response—we will hear you again on this matter. They were closed to the message, but they were not excited and believing of the message. There are examples of these "between responses" in both the Old and New Testaments. Old Testament Example: 1 Kings 18:20-ff The prophet Elijah called for Ahah, the prophets of Baal, and the people to gather on Mount Carmel. Elijah gave the people a proposition. He wanted a show down between the false god Baal and the True God Jehovah! Before the show down and the futile acts of worship and prayer and sacrifice on the part of the false prophets and before Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, poured 12 barrels of water on the sacrifice, and the fire of God fell—Elijah gave a challenge and a rebuke to the people. In 1 Kings 18:21 the Bible says, "And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word." New Testament Example: Acts 24:21-27: Paul had been arrested, arraigned, and was on his way to Rome to appear before Caesar. On his journey there the Lord opened up doors for Paul to share his testimony with powerful rulers of his day. The governor Felix heard Paul's defense before the Jews. Acts 24:21-27 says, "unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'"" 22 But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case." 23 So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him. 24 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." 26 Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him. 27 But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix, and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound." The governor Felix had a "between" response! These folks in Athens had a "between" response. Be very careful how you respond to the gospel! They said that they would hear Paul again on this matter, but there is no evidence that they ever did hear Paul again on the message of the resurrection. Joseph Parker wrote, "We say, 'We will come again tomorrow.' So we may, but Paul may not be there." (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts) Acts 17:33 So Paul went out of their midst. This is one of those short but deeply profound passages. He had dispensed truth and some mocked the truth. And so we picture him (albeit a bit sad I am sure) turning and walking out of this famous forum, departing the vaunted city of Athens, never to return again. Acts 17:34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. certain Acts 17:4; 13:48; Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 20:16; Romans 11:5,6 the Areopagite Acts 17:19; John 7:48-52; 19:38-42; Philippians 4:22 Acts 17:32-34 Power of the Gospel - Sermon by Ray Pritchard Acts 17 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries SOME HEARERS HEARD AND BELIEVED! But some men - Praise God for this divine contrasting conjunction "but!" This rebuts those critics who say Paul's sermon in Athens was unsuccessful. These men simply fail to read the rest of the story! Masses did not accept Christ. Paul was the power of the gospel did work among Athen's intellectual elite. God calls us to be salt, to be light, not to make believers. Only God can open a closed heart and blind eyes and deaf ears. It is however notable that there is no specific record of a church in Athens. Paul does call certain Corinthians the first converts on mainland Greece (1 Co 16:15). Jack Arnold - The vast majority of the philosophers in Athens rejected Christ, but some did believe (cf Mt 7:13-14+ "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."). God had decreed that some in the Areopagus would believe and turn to Christ. Even one of the judges of the court, Dionysius, received Christ. There was also a famous woman, perhaps a philosopher, Damaris, who yielded her life to Christ as Savior and Lord. What does this tell us? God saves some intellectuals. It is God's plan to save all types and kinds of men. Yet, not many wise in the world are saved. For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, 27 but 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, 28 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, 29 so that no man may boast before God. (1 Cor 1:26-29)] Vernon McGee - There was quite an aggregation of converts in the city of Athens. When Paul went to a place and preached the gospel, he had converts. He didn't fail. He succeeded. Wherever the Word of God is preached, there will be those who will listen and believe. Joined ("glued") (2853)(kollao from kollā = glue, cement, join or fasten together and thus to unite (someone with or to someone or some thing). To fasten firmly together. Kollao can mean to attach oneself to a master in a job means to hire oneself out as a servant ("the prodigal son" in Lk 15:15). Robertson - No sermon is a failure which leads a group of men (andres) to believe (ingressive aorist of pisteuo - word study) in Jesus Christ. Many so-called great or grand sermons reap no such harvest. Dionysius the Areopagite was one of the members of the upper echelons of the Athens Council, whose members all had once held some high office of state and were more than 60 years of age. Tradition (Eusebius) maintains that Dionysius was the first bishop of Athens and that he died the death of a martyr. Vincent adds Areopagite refers to "One of the judges of the court of Areopagus. Of this court Curtius remarks: "Here, instead of a single judge, a college of twelve men of proved integrity conducted the trial. If the accused had an equal number of votes for and against him, he was acquitted. The Court on the hill of Ares is one of the most ancient institutions of Athens, and none achieved for the city an earlier or more widely spread recognition. The Areopagitic penal code was adopted as a norm by all subsequent legislators." ("History of Greece," I, 307). " R Kent Hughes has a sobering application for all believers in the modern church - If we are believers, if we truly know Christ, we must never hear or read God's Word in a detached manner. We must pay attention to God with all our being. We must never give way to a cerebral detachment when it comes to divine things. We must always respond. Jesus stated the principle beautifully in Matthew 13:12: "Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." When truths come, we must interact with it and appropriate it. One of the great sins of the church today is the dispassionate hearing of God's Word. Because of this, there are many who are spiritually ill, unable to comprehend the truths they once held dear. Only God can deliver his children from such apathy! Prayer - O God, help us not to consider your Word in a casual, unfeeling way. May our hearts burn with sacred truth—flames of the Holy Spirit that cannot remain within us but must overflow to others, drawing them into personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. May our grief over the idolatry all around us move us to speak and live the gospel, so that others will come into your precious kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen (Preaching the Word – Acts: The Church Affire) (Bold added) Robertson adds this note on Dionysius - One of the judges of the Court of the Areopagus. That of itself was no small victory. He was one of this college of twelve judges who had helped to make Athens famous. Eusebius says that he became afterwards bishop of the Church at Athens and died a martyr. A woman named Damaris - A woman by name Damaris. Not the wife of Dionysius as some have thought, but not necessarily an educated courtesan as Furneaux holds. And there were "others" (heteroi) with them, a group strong enough to keep the fire burning in Athens. It is common to say that Paul in 1Corinthians 2:1-5 alludes to his failure with philosophy in Athens when he failed to preach Christ crucified and he determined never to make that mistake again. On the other hand Paul determined to stick to the Cross of Christ in spite of the fact that the intellectual pride and superficial culture of Athens had prevented the largest success. As he faced Corinth with its venser of culture and imitation of philosophy and sudden wealth he would go on with the same Gospel of the Cross (1Cor 1:23), the only Gospel that Paul knew or preached. And it was a great thing to give the world a sermon like that preached in Athens. Barclay - It would seem on the whole that Paul had less success in Athens than anywhere else. It was typical of the Athenians that all they wanted was to talk. They did not want action; they did not even particularly want conclusions. They wanted simple mental acrobatics and the stimulus of a mental hike. There were three main reactions. (i) Some mocked. They were amused by the passionate earnestness of this strange Jew. It is possible to make a joke of life; but those who do so will find that what began as comedy must end in tragedy. (ii) Some put off their decision. The most dangerous of all days is when a man discovers how easy it is to talk about tomorrow. (iii) Some believed. The wise man knows that only the fool will reject God's offer.Two converts are named. There is Dionysius the Areopagite. As already said, the Areopagus was composed of perhaps not more than thirty people; so that Dionysius must have been one of the intellectual aristocracy of Athens. There was Damaris. The position of women in Athens was very restricted. It is unlikely that any respectable woman would have been in the market square at all. The likelihood is that she turned from a way of shame to a way of life. Once again we see the gospel making its appeal to all classes and conditions of men and women. (Acts 17 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible) Jack Arnold - What, my friend, is your reaction to Christ? Do you mock and sneer as the Epicureans at the supernatural and the resurrection, refusing to believe you are a sinner under judgment in need of a Savior and repentance? A man mocks either out of ignorance of the facts or as a front to cover up his inward conviction about Christ. Perhaps you, as the Stoics, are interested in the message of Christ but you are procrastinating about true repentance and surrender to Christ. You say, "I'll put off my decision until tomorrow." Tomorrow may never come and then you will face an angry God at the Final Judgment. Perhaps you will be like Dionysius and Damaris. You have heard that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, both undiminished deity and perfect humanity, who died for sinners and was raised from the dead to give men resurrection life. Dionysius and Damaris heard and repented. They changed their attitudes about Christ, and sin, and received Jesus as Savior and bowed to Him as Lord. Have you repented? Have you bowed to Christ as Lord and received Him as Savior? Do not put this commitment off. There may be no tomorrow! (Sermon)

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