

APOLOGETICS - DEFENDING OUR FAITH AGAINST ALL OPPOSITION

LESSON 9 : A CLASSICAL ILLUSTRATION II

REVIEW

- +We have to “always be prepared” to defend our faith (1 Pet 3:14b-16 Acts 22:1 etc.)
- + The unbeliever is not neutral and (Rom 1:18) we must not be (Prov.26:4).
- +Everybody has a worldview = elementary presuppositions **NO NEUTRALITY!**
- +Our worldview must be Christian in all we say, think and do!! (Mk 12:30 etc.)
- +Our standard for all this is Scripture and **NOTHING** else! **SOLA SCRIPTURA!**
- +First key issue of a worldview: Metaphysics-what accounts for the physical world?
- +Second key issue: Epistemology - how and what do we know?
- +Third key issue: Ethics - what is right and wrong (*moral philosophy*)?
- +4 popular worldview-schemes impact our society today:
 1. Hinduism / 2. Behaviorism / 3. Marxism / 4. Existentialism
- +Most basic building blocks for unbelievers’ worldviews:
 - 1.Monism 2.Dualism 3.Atomism 4.Pragmatism 5.Scepticism
- +In Acts 17:16-34 Paul:
 - uses the presuppositional method
 - did not use the Athenians’ presuppositions
 - dealt with worldviews as a whole (didn’t separate theology from worldview)
 - he didn’t pile up evidence but **DECLARED** the truth

Acts 17:16-34 (ESV)

- (16) Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.
- (17) So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.
- (18) Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"--because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.
- (19) And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"
- (20) For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean."
- (21) Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.
- (22) So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.
- (23) For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.
- (24) The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,
- (25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.
- (26) And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

- (27) that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,
- (28) for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."
- (29) Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.
- (30) The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,
- (31) because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."
- (32) Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."
- (33) So Paul went out from their midst.
- (34) But **some men joined him and believed**, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

- **He is showing them the internal contradictions of their worldview**
 - to point out its inherent, destructive self-contradiction
 - they had a God-created knowledge of Him in their hearts (Rom 1:18-20)
 - evident in their altar "to an unknown God" (17:23)
 - evident in their own religiosity ("I observe...very religious" 17:22)
 - evident in their own poets' musings about God (17:22)
- **Thus, the unbelieving worldview is schizophrenic and necessarily so:**
 - It has to presuppose the real world implications of the biblical worldview in order to rationally operate in life
 - But at the same time they deny the reality of the God, Who alone can account for all these presuppositions [uniformity of nature, the mind etc.]
 - Paul is warning them that their ignorance and resistance will be no longer tolerated by God (17:30)
- **In his desire to proclaim God, Paul highlights their admitted ignorance [17:23]**
 - And from there forcefully declares the authority of the God of Scripture
- **Paul sets forth Christianity as alone reasonable and true**
 - And his *ultimate starting point*: The authority of Christ's revelation
 - This *antithesis* was fundamental to Paul's thought
- **V30: "...commands all people everywhere to repent..."**
 - *metaneo* = Greek "change of mind" (*nous* = mind)
 - They must change their whole way of thinking [same word in Rom 12:2]

...to be continued

NEXT WEEK: Book and Media list for the project "Renewing our minds" in 2008