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THE BOOK OF ACTS

Sermon Notes

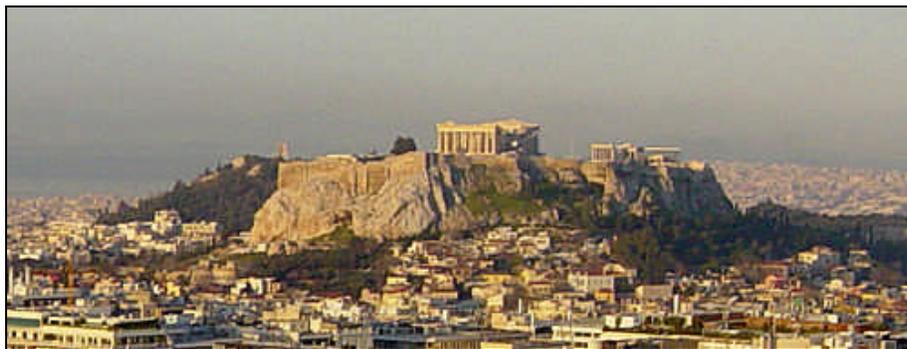
Paul's Second Missionary Journey, Part 5

Paul's Areopagus Address

Acts 17:16-23

December 16, 2007

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The Glory of Ancient Athens

Athens was the most significant city of the classical world. It was the capital of ancient Attica and was located in the Roman Province of Achaia. Named after Athena, the goddess of disciplined war and wisdom, the city of Athens has been populated for at least 3,000 years. Ancient Athens was a city of great wealth, learning, art, literature, philosophy, and architectural beauty. The poet Ovid referred to it as “learned Athens”; and, according to Cicero, the city alone upheld the entire reputation of Greece (*Pro Flacco* 26:62).

Today we have rather romanticized views of the place where we picture men, dressed in pure white togas and laurel wreaths, leisurely gathered on the steps of great marble buildings [complete with Corinthian columns] discussing the issues and philosophies of the day. The figures that most of us associate with this famous city are Socrates (470 B.C. – 399 B.C.), Plato (428 B.C. – 348 B.C.) and Aristotle (384 B.C. – 322 B.C.) – three men whose influence on Western thought is nothing short of profound. In the fifth century B.C., during “The Golden Age” of Athens, the political, philosophical, and architectural splendor of this ancient city was unrivaled in the Western world [perhaps, at that time, anywhere in the world].

However, after the death of Aristotle, the city’s glory, due to multiple political and even philosophical factors, began to fade. By the time of Christ’s birth, Athens was but a shadow of its former glory centuries earlier. Yet, as John Stott writes, **“Even if in Paul’s day it ‘lived on its great past,’ and was a comparatively small town by modern criteria, it still had an unrivalled reputation as the empire’s intellectual metropolis.”** Indeed, even during the first century, Athens was legendary.

I. Paul Distresses over the Idolatry in Athens

- ❑ In Acts 17, the modern-day reader has the unique privilege to read of the great confrontation between the great apostle and the “glorious” city of ancient Athens.
- ❑ Most certainly Paul, being a Hellenistic Jew himself, had known of the fabled city his entire life.

Luke begins **Verse 16** writing, “While Paul was waiting for them [Silas and Timothy] in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.”

- ❑ Athens was, much like the great cities of the modern world, “...aesthetically magnificent and culturally sophisticated, but morally decadent and spiritually deceived...dead” [Stott].
- ❑ Xenophon (a student of Socrates) referred to Athens as “one great altar, one great sacrifice.”
- ❑ There were more gods in Athens than in all of the rest of the country, and Roman satirist Petronius wrote rather sarcastically, that it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man.

- ❑ Virtually every public building, not just each temple, was dedicated to a different god. Furthermore, statues of gods filled the city.
- ❑ One scholar writes, Athens was a “veritable forest of idols.”
- ❑ There were multiple images of Apollo, the city’s patron. There were statues of Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, Bacchus, Neptune, Diana, and Aesculapius.
- ❑ According to one historian, “In the Parthenon [the Acropolis] stood a huge gold and ivory statue of Athena, whose gleaming spear-point was visible forty miles away.”
- ❑ We do not know if Paul was impressed with the architecture and the physical grandeur of the buildings in Athens, although surely he was.
- ❑ However, the problem in Athens was that the pagans of the city had **created false gods**, then created buildings and temples of grandeur to worship these false [created] gods. Therefore, what Paul observed and what “greatly distressed” him was that men were using their God-given talent and abilities to worship other gods.
- ❑ This is one reason idolatry is so heinous in the eyes of God. Everything we have, to include our talents, work ethic, our passions, our money even the very breath we breathe, is from Him. Each time we worship something other than Him, we are taking what **God** has given us and using it to turn away from Him. Thus, proper worship of God is, in a very real sense, a “stewardship issue,” in that we must be good stewards of all the gifts God has given us, not just our money, and use them to glorify Him.
- ❑ Thus, in Athens, the buildings were monuments which reflected the glory of man and not God. They reflected what “impressed” man [if we were the objects of worship]. They were massive. They were made with precious materials, such as marble, silver, and gold. However, God was not “impressed”; for the things that impress man do not “impress” God, for He made all things out of nothing.
- ❑ Yet, the pagans, who did not know God, created temples that reflected themselves, not Him.
- ❑ **Isaiah 44:9-20** speaks to the foolishness of such idolatry:

“Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame. Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit? Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame. The man shapes iron into a cutting tool and does his work over the coals, fashioning it with hammers and working it with his strong arm. He also gets hungry and his strength fails; he drinks no water and becomes weary. Another shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house. Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak and raises it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow. Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image and falls down

before it. Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, "Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire." But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image he falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god." They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend. No one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat it then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!" He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside and he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

- Almost ten years ago, I had the opportunity to attend a Sunday Mass at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, in Rome, Italy. The building is the largest church in the entire world. It is an architectural masterpiece, made of precious stone, marble, and gold. Not only this, but within the Roman Catholic Church, the building itself is deemed to be "holy." The reasons for this are many; however, one of the main reasons is because they claim that the Apostle Peter is buried below the building. I will never forget first entering into the building and observing in the floor on the middle aisle, markers which demonstrated how far short the other great cathedrals of the world would fall short of St. Peter's. These markers were intended, so it seems, to demonstrate to all visitors that they were in a building that was physically more significant than any other church in the world. Yet, such a "demonstration" reflects the glory, not of God, as if he were concerned with physical "things"; but, the glory and desires of man.
- It is certainly ironic, as well, that it was through the financing of St. Peter's Basilica in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the issuing of indulgences became so widespread. Because of these abuses of power by the Church, Martin Luther protested, sparking the Protestant Reformation.
- Therefore, because of the widespread idolatry which Paul observed, "he was greatly distressed."
 - The word translated "distressed" literally means "to become angry, or infuriated."
 - In other words, what Paul was expressing was a "righteous indignation" at the idolatry in Athens. It would have been a similar emotion to what Jesus experienced when He cleansed the Temple in John 2.
 - The one true and living God is [rightfully] a jealous God, willing to share his glory with no one [or *nothing*] (Exodus 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 5:6-9).
 - Paul saw right through the beautiful exterior of the temples to the heart of the matter.
 - Today, it seems as though we do not believe that God still hates idolatry as He did in ancient times...but He certainly does.
 - We must continually guard ourselves against this constant temptation.

- We so often place our faith and our hope in people and *things* which **can** be seen. Yet, this is the essence of idolatry – worshipping the created things that can be seen, rather than the Creator which cannot be seen.
- Further, this is why images can be so dangerous, as we begin to associate God’s glory with the face we can see. Yet, this is an abomination in the sight of God, whose glory is incomprehensible. This is why ancient Judaism and its fulfillment in Christ [Christianity] is an imageless religion.
- Yet, like all pagans of the ancient and modern worlds, Athens erected images that looked like man.
- In fact, the gods of ancient Greece were not fundamentally different than humans, rather, they were humans who possessed supernatural strength and power.
- However, just as the Athenians were created, so the objects of their worship – the gods of the Greek pantheon – were created as well. This is a classic [yet, tragic] case of the creation worshipping a creation.

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- Therefore, it is clear why Paul became “distressed” at the abomination he saw in the city of Athens. Yet, Paul’s “distress” led him, not to simply sit back idly, but to confront the idolatry of the city **with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ**.

II. Paul Reasons with the People

- Just as he had done in Thessalonica and Berea, Paul began *reasoning* with the people of Athens, beginning first in the synagogue.

Verse 17 states, “So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.”

a. The Jews and God-fearing Greeks in the Synagogue

- As was Paul’s custom, he began in the synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel to the Jews first, then to the Greeks [Romans 1:16].
- Yet, this time Paul takes his *reasoning* [his *dialoguing*] into the public square – the marketplace – Athens’s famed *agora*.

b. The Greek Pagans in the Marketplace

- It would be here, for the first time, that Paul would encounter the intellectual Greek philosophers.

- ❑ One scholar [Schnable] notes “how littered with idols this entire area was, honoring Themis [Justice], Eueteria [Prosperity, or Good Harvest, related to Demeter], Apollo, Agyieus, Hekate, and Hermes along the more popular gods.”
- ❑ Darrell Bock writes, “Paul could well have been in the northwest corner of the agora, where such idols were located. Here also were lines of idols, especially in an area where a series of square pillars, phallic symbols, and a bust of Hermes were placed. This collection of statues was located in an area known as the *Stoa Basileios*.”
- ❑ Once again, unlike Christians today, Paul was not intimidated by the intellectual “giants” of his day. He is not afraid to confront their pagan beliefs with the truth of the Gospel message.
- ❑ In short, we are terrified of the *agora*, the marketplace where the atheistic and pagan ideas of the world are shared. Again, it is as though we are afraid to think – or possibly afraid that if we do think, then we might discover that our Christian beliefs are untrue.
- ❑ Bertrand Russell, the 20th Century atheistic British philosopher and 1950 Nobel Prize Winner in Literature wrote, “**Most Christians would rather die than think – in fact they do.**”
- ❑ In truth, because of the work of the Apostle Paul and members of the early Church, the Gospel message eventually triumphs over the paganism in Athens.

In his work, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Mark Noll writes of Charles Malik, a Lebanese diplomat, scholar, and Eastern Orthodox believer who was invited in 1980 to open the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College with an address. Few expected that Malik’s speech would be direct and incriminating of the state of the church in America.

“The greatest danger besetting American Evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind as to its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough... Who among the evangelicals can stand up to the great secular or naturalistic or atheistic scholars on their own terms of scholarship and research? Who among the evangelical scholars is quoted as a normative source by the greater secular authorities on history or philosophy or psychology or sociology or politics? Does your mode of thinking have the slightest chance of becoming the dominant mode of thinking in the great universities of Europe and America which stamp your entire civilization with their own spirit and ideas?...For the sake of greater effectiveness in witnessing to Jesus Christ Himself, as well as for their own sakes, the Evangelicals cannot afford to keep on living on the periphery of responsible intellectual existence.”

- ❑ Because of the work of early Christians such as Paul, Christianity for centuries was, indeed, “**the dominant mode of thinking in the great universities of Europe and America.**” Yet, in recent centuries the church seems to have lost the passion of Paul – a passion to glorify God with all of whom we are, to include our mind. Tragically, we have replaced the passion with emotionalism and pragmatism – that is, we “do whatever ‘works’.”

III. The Athenians Dispute Paul's Message

Luke continues, **Verse 18**, describing Paul's experience in the marketplace: "A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection."

a. The Stoics and Epicureans Challenge Him

- As Paul reasoned in the marketplace day by day, members of two separate philosophical schools approached him. They were the Epicureans and the Stoics.

Epicureans

The Epicureans followed the teachings of the movement's founder, Epicurus (341 – 270 B.C.). They were rather apathetic towards the gods, believing that the gods were too far off, too transcendent to be of any real concern to mortals. Furthermore, the Epicureans believed that the world came into being "due to chance, a random concourse of atoms." Furthermore, they denied an afterlife or a judgment. They were similar to modern-day agnostic secularists.

As a result of their agnosticism [that is, they believed that a "god" or "higher power" may exist, but that he [or she or it] was essentially unknowable. Therefore, Epicureans believed that the ultimate purpose in life was the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, passion and fear. Diogenes Laertius wrote this of the Epicureans: "Nothing to fear in God; Nothing to feel in death; Good [pleasure] can be attained; Evil [pain] can be endured."

Stoics

The Stoics, on the other hand, followed the teachings of Cypriot Zeno (340 B.C. – 265 B.C.). The name Stoics literally means "philosophers of the porch," as the *stoa* was the porch or painted colonnade where they gathered and taught near the *agora*. Unlike the agnostic Epicureans, they were pantheists, believing, not that God was everywhere, but that god, the world soul, was everything.

Further, according to the Stoics, the world was ruled by fate, and humans should resign themselves to this truth, embracing the idea that "Whatever will be, will be." F.F. Bruce writes, "Their system aimed at living consistently with nature, and in practice they laid great emphasis on the primacy of the rational faculty in humanity, and on individual self-sufficiency... Their belief in *cosmopolis* or world-state, in which all truly free souls had equal rights, helped to break down national and class distinctions. Stoicism at its best was marked by great moral earnestness and a high sense of duty. It commended suicide as an honorable means of escape from a life that could no longer be sustained with dignity." It is the Stoics who promoted the emotionless "stiff-upper lip" in times of struggle and pain.

- Ultimately, "Stoicism and Epicureanism represent alternative attempts in pre-Christian paganism to come to terms with life, especially in times of uncertainty and hardship, and post-Christian paganism down to our own day has not been able to devise anything appreciably better." [F.F. Bruce]

- As the Stoics and Epicureans “began to dispute with” Paul, some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?”
 - The word for *babbler* is the Greek word *Spermologos*, literally meaning, “seed picker” [sperm-ologos].
 - “The word evoked images of a bird pecking indiscriminately at seeds in a barnyard. It referred to a dilettante, someone who picked up scraps of ideas here and there and passed them off as profundity with no depth of understanding at all.”
John Polhill
 - This word was used of teachers who never had a unique or original thought or idea. These “seed-pickers” often plagiarized from others by arbitrarily taking bits and pieces of teaching from multiple sources, until their system of belief was nothing but a compilation of other people’s ideas.

Yet, this is what many Christians do today. We are nothing more than ancient “seed-pickers,” [although, in our vernacular we might say they “cherry-pick”] taking from the Scriptures only that which we like and taking from other systems and religious movements what we like from them. We combine these varying beliefs [which often contradict one another!] together into a system we are comfortable with and then call it “Christianity.”

- **The irony in this passage however, is that it is the Athenians, the intellectuals that they are, who are the arbitrary “seed-pickers!”**
- **The Greek pantheon was nothing more than a conglomeration of created objects [false deities] of worship intended to cover the various aspects of life and spirituality.**

b. They Question his Teaching on Jesus and the Resurrection

- Luke then writes, “Others remarked, ‘he seems to be advocating foreign gods.’ They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.””
 - It is interesting that the “charge” here against Paul was that “he seems to be advocating foreign gods.” The reason for this is that 450 years earlier this was the charged leveled against Socrates, leading to his execution [forced suicide].
 - Yet, given the recorded responses of the people in the marketplace, it is most likely that Paul was proclaiming the *kerygma* [which is a Greek word meaning “to proclaim or herald”]. The *kerygma* was the early form of apostolic preaching [seen throughout Acts], which typically included four parts:
 - 1.) The announcement that the age of fulfillment had arrived because of the life of Christ;

- 2.) An account of the ministry, death, and resurrection / ascension triumph of Jesus Christ;
- 3.) Citation[s] of Old Testament Scriptures whose fulfillment in these events proves Jesus to be the One to whom they pointed forward;
- 4.) A call to Repentance.

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- It appears however, in the context here, that the Athenians believed that Paul was proclaiming two new gods.
- The “foreign gods” likely correspond to “Jesus” and “the resurrection.”
 - In other words, the Athenians probably “hear” Paul introducing two new foreign deities which personified the powers of “healing” and “restoration.”
 - To the pagans, it is quite possible, even probable, that what they heard was a new male god, “Jesus” and his female companion “Anastasis.”
 - Dr. Conrad Gempf notes, “The Athenians imagine two new gods, while the Lystrans think they are seeing two old ones! Could Luke be warning his readers of the ways in which pagans misunderstand?”

c. They Bring Him Before the Areopagus

In **Verses 19-21** Luke writes, “Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, ‘May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.’ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas).”

- The word Areopagus comes from two Greek words, *Ares* – the god of war [the equivalent to the Roman god *Mars*], and *pagos*, meaning “the Hill.”
- This is why the Areopagus is often referred to as “Mars Hill.” It sits just below the towering Parthenon on the Acropolis.
- Interestingly, Ares/Mars was believed to be the “son of god” – the offspring of the union between Zeus and Hera.
- **Thus, Paul is proclaiming the Gospel of the TRUE Son of God on the hill bearing the name of the Greek “son of god.”**
- Just as Peter and John have stood before the Sanhedrin, the powerful Jewish ruling council, now Paul stands before the Areopagus, the powerful Greek ruling court.

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- The reason why the men of Athens brought Paul before the Areopagus was because of the “newness” to them with respect to the substance of his teaching.
 - By including this information, Luke is demonstrating that it is truly the Athenians who are the “seed-pickers!”
- The reason why Paul’s message was so “new” to the Greeks was because it, or more specifically Jesus Christ, is truly unique.
- Jesus Christ stood in direct contrast to the Greek “son of god:” Ares/Mars.
- Jesus Christ is eternal, Ares [and all the other gods of the Greeks], were temporary. Jesus Christ is the Creator of all that is; Ares was a creation [of creations]. Jesus Christ is dependent upon nothing; Ares was dependent upon human imagination. Jesus Christ is fully God; Ares is but an illusion. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Ares was a false god who led to destruction. Jesus Christ is the Savior; Ares saved no one.
- This is why the Scriptures [John 3:16] reveals Jesus Christ as the unique Son of God. The *monogenes*, μονογενής, or the One who is of “one” [*mono*] “type” or “kind” [*genes*].

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- Yet, although Jesus Christ and Christianity are unique, they are not new. In fact, “Christianity” precedes time itself, as we were chosen *in Christ* before the foundation of the world.
- However, the Athenians were looking for something “new.” This seems to be the way culture has always been. We clamor for all things that are new. Whether they are the latest clothing trends, or the latest religious school of thought, we are enamored with all things new.
- Although novelty may be exciting in certain areas of life, such as fashion, **in theology, novelty is fatal.**
- The “faith” that we have is a historical faith. It is one that has been providentially preserved and handed down to us. We do not have the right to alter it; but rather, we are commanded to embrace it.
- It seems that every year, some new philosophy emerges [however, they are never *truly* new, but are usually nothing more than “repackaging” of ancient heretical views]. This year it may be *The Secret* [which is nothing more than Eastern Mysticism/New Age pantheism], next year it will be something “new.”

- ❑ The “faith” we have received is an ancient, historical, unchanging faith. Only Christianity has stood the test of time, remaining unchanged since the first century when Christ Himself walked the earth.

IV. Paul Addresses the Areopagus

After being brought before the Areopagus, Luke writes in **Verses 22-23** that “Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: ‘Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.’”

- ❑ There is little doubt that the Apostle Paul was a brilliant man. However, as he speaks before the Greek intellectuals, his message remains profoundly simple. He was, no doubt, prepared to discuss the philosophical validity of Christianity; however, he begins with the simple truth of the gospel. We should take great comfort in this truth. We should never shy away from engaging the intellectuals of our day with biblical truth. The truth of Jesus Christ is the truth upon which all truth hinges. Yet, **the message of the gospel is profoundly simple**, although incomprehensible in its depth.

a. The Athenians are “Very Religious”

- ❑ As Paul stands to speak, he notes that the problem with Athens is NOT that it is atheistic [that is, denies the existence of God]. Rather, it is polytheistic, affirms the existence and validity of multiple gods.
- ❑ This seems to be the main problem with our Western culture today. It is not that we are atheistic, but polytheistic. The great problem here is that if we believe in everything, we believe in nothing in particular. It is like saying, “If every child is special, none are.” Thus, if every god is valid, then none truly are.

b. The Athenians Worship an “Unknown God”

- ❑ Paul then refers to “the objects of worship” there in Athens and the altar “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.”
- ❑ Ironically, it was the Athenians who prided themselves in their great intellect who did not even know the god they claimed to worship. Such is the foolishness of paganism.
- ❑ Once again, the Epicureans were agnostics while the Stoics were pantheists; yet, neither group [nor any other philosophical/religious school in Athens] would ever claim to “know God.” “God” or “the gods” were either far removed from humans and their interactions or an impersonal force, a “world soul” that was inherent to everything [so that all things are god].

- ❑ Even today, one of the fastest growing religions of the world, Islam, claims that Allah is unknowable.
- ❑ To quote G. H. Smith, **Allah is, “...an unknowable being—does things in an unknowable way through some unknowable nonprocesses.”** (*Atheism: The Case Against God*, Prometheus Books, 1979, pages 72-73).
- ❑ According to Norman Geisler, “Since God has no essence [in Islam], at least not one that the names (or attributes of God) really describe, the Islamic view of God involves a form of agnosticism. Indeed, the heart of Islam is not to *know* God but to *obey* him. It is not to *meditate* on his essence but to *submit* to his will...If [Muslims] think at all deeply, they find themselves absolutely unable to know God...Thus Islam leads to Agnosticism.”
- ❑ In other words, in Islam, as well as all false religions, God may be called “good” only because he causes good, not because goodness is inherent to his essence.

❑ **However, Biblically, knowledge of God is the essence of salvation (John 17:3); yet, only in Christianity is God truly knowable. This is yet another unique aspect of the one true faith.**

c. The One True God is Knowable

- ❑ Therefore, as Paul begins his famous speech he turns the eyes of the Athenians away from their false, unknowable god(s) to the one true God, who is knowable.
- ❑ The reason that the one true and living God is knowable is twofold: the truth of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.
 - The first reason that God is knowable is that He exists eternally as three coequal, coeternal Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [the doctrine of the Trinity].
 - In other words, God is eternally **personal**. We know this for several reasons. First of all, throughout the Scriptures, the personal pronoun He is used for all three persons of the Trinity [to include the Holy Spirit]. Secondly, the Scripture ascribes personal properties to all three persons of the Godhead – personal properties such as intelligence, understanding, wisdom, power, will, and purpose. Thirdly, the Scriptures ascribe personal activities – such as speaking, revealing, guiding, teaching, warning, comforting, and encouraging – to all three persons of the Godhead.
 - Therefore, because God exists in three persons, He is personal and can be known personally.
 - Yet, the second reason that God is knowable is because of the two natures of Christ.

- During this time of year, we celebrate the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, the point in time when the eternal Son of God took on human flesh and was born to the virgin Mary.
 - In his classic work, *De Trinitate*, Augustine wrote concerning the Incarnation, "...when the Son of God came in order to become Son of man and to capture our faith and draw it to himself, and by means of it to lead us on to his truth; for he took on our mortality [flesh] in such a way that he did not lose his own eternity [His divine nature]...and so provided us with a bridge to his eternity." He continues, writing that Jesus Christ became Incarnate "not by changing his divinity but by taking on our changeability." Finally he writes, "Thus Jesus could be a model for those who can see him as God above, a model for those who can admire him as man below; a model for the healthy to abide by, a model for the sick to get better by; a model for those who are going to die not to be afraid, a model for the dead to rise again. **Man ought to follow no one but God in his search for bliss, and yet he was unable to perceive God; so by following the one made man he would at one and the same time follow one he could perceive and the one he ought to follow.**"
 - In other words, it was the human nature of Christ that has led us to the divine nature of the triune God. If we have seen the Son, we have seen the Father!
- Therefore, God is supremely knowable, and this is the greatest gift mankind could ever know.
 - "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." John 17:3