

THE IGNORANCE OF IDOLATRY - A17:23

INTRODUCTION

1. Areopagus: court scene. v18 *Jesus & the resurrection*. Ignorance evidenced idolatry. A 17:22-23
 - i. Mistaken interpretation - Paul validates idolatry?
 - ii. Keep Rom 1-2 in mind. Idols evidence rebellion against revelation of God as Creator - repent - v30-31.
2. v22 - *very religious*: KJV - *very superstitious*
3. v23 - *that you worship in ignorance = this I proclaim to you*. Paul focuses on their false worship of idols. *I proclaim*: preaching

1st: The Absurdity of Idolatry

1. Pagan idolatry - OCov idolatry: Golden Calf - adultery on wedding night: stiff-necked: refuse to turn [Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 2008].
2. N. Kgdm - Jeroboam's idolatry [2 calves, 2 locations]
3. S. Kgdm - penchant for idolatry: Isa 44
 - i. v6-8 YHWH is 1 true God - foolish - v9-17 _
 - ii. v18-20 idol evidence culpable ignorance
 - iii. v21-23 Unserved men can acknowledge God as Creator yet be ignorant of who He is as Savior.
 - iv. v24-25 Israel's God = Creator: sorcery is *foolishness*
4. Damning knowledge of God vs saving knowledge of God.

2nd: The Indictment of Idolatry

1. The idolatrous ignorance of OCov Israel - A 7:39-43
2. Reason for Assyrian destruction of Israel: idolatry - 2Kg 17:7-23.
3. True religion [remnant] - but extensive idolatry.
 - i. 2Ch 24:18-19. [Jer 3:6-11] - Judah worse than Israel.

ii. Exiled - idolatry in temple - Ezek 8:1-18

4. Gentile idolatry - Rom 1:18-23 God's wrath is revealed: *fools* [v22]: *turn knowledge into foolishness* [Isa 44:25]
 - i. Paul sees Athens as under God's wrath for refusal to honor God as God.
 - ii. God withdraws common grace of created order; Satan attacks created order [1T 4:1-5]: *give over* - v24; v26-27; v28-32.
 - iii. Cruc = v25 - vocab of IInd. In A17 - God as Creator is issue of idolatry.

3rd: The Ignorance That Characterizes Idolatry

1. Idolatry - damning knowledge of God - Jms 2:19 - demonic
2. Idolatry evidences man, image of God, is religious - Isa 45:15-22 - Phil 2:10f
3. Gal 4:8-9 *not know God*; enslaved to idols; but now, god knows them
4. Jn 4:22 Samaritan worship is *ignorance*:
5. The ignorance of idolatry is knowledge of the lie - Rm 1:25; Lk 11:34-35

Applic #1: Do We Live in a Paganized Athens?

1. Is our culture pagan? Are we seeing evidence of God abandoning men to sexual sin & moral insanity?
2. You ask - "Where is an altar to an unknown God in Flemington?" Steven D Smith, *Pagans & Xns in the City* [2018], 3 kinds of paganism: 1] folk [popular myths]; 2] civic/political [social cohesion]; 3] philosophical [virtues abstractions]. Mat 6:24; Isa 65:11
3. Challenge - to live as disciple in idolatrous society - Col 3:5 *greed* [Xthc] = *idolatry* [1stc]. Heart's desire = functional deity. 1 Jn 5:21

Applic #2: What Should We Do?

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1. What did Paul do? Rom 1:15-16; A17:16-18
2. Believe the gospel of Jesus & the power of the Spirit to use that gospel to reach & save the elect.
3. Men who believe lies about God are ignorant of God [& likely lying about God]. Let us bear witness to *Jesus & the resurrection*.