

## THE IMMORAL IMAGINATION OF IDOLATRY - A17:29

071022A

### INTRODUCTION

1. A17:29 concludes body [v22-29]: v30-31 = applics. 2 fndtns: 1] God is our Creator; 2] We are image of God.

i. Paul assumes their awareness of the existence of God - suppress & exchange - Rm 1:18-23

ii. We must be careful when we are told to find "legitimacy" in idolatry. Natural theology is found in false religion. False religion is idolatrous, but man's awareness of God gives us a point of contact for the gospel.

2. Having focused on God, now on man as image of God - v28b-29

### 1st: It is foolish to think that the Creator can be created by a creature out of creation - v29

1. Smthg in paganism to affirm - poet Aretas: humans are *children of God*. Not "child" but "generation". Refutes Athenian "racial superiority".

2. We are like God, but God is not like us. Man is made by God [image of God], God is not made by man as image of Man. Rm 11:36

i. "Human" is defined by Creation - Gn 1:27

ii. Man as image of God - fulfilled in Jesus.

3. We shroud know selves in rln to God. Calvin - 1st teach God, then self [although in our experience we are 1st self aware].

4. v30 *God is now declaring* = special revelation. In view is pagan's hope the gods will protect from jdgmnt [v31]. 1st indict foolish, disobedient thinking re: God - *we ought not to think* as you think about *the Divine Nature!*

i. *think*

ii. *ought not*

iii. *Divine Nature*: we are responsible to God for the way we think about God. Translated *divine* in 2Pt 1:2-4. Creator//creature. Synonym in Rm 1:20. God is divine, not creature.

5. The immorality of physical idols made by men's technology.

i. *gold, silver or stone*

ii. *image*:

iii. *formed by man's art* = "technology"

iv. Futility of idols - Gal 4:8; A19:26.

6. Men thot idols = *divine nature*. Academics - & *thot of man*: imagination. See Jeroboam 1Kg 12:33. 3 kinds of Gentile paganism: 1] folk; 2] civic; 3] philosophical.

7. A17:29 The issue: how do we think of the Being of God [determines how we think of selves & reality].

i. The Being of God is not a *being like* - He is "a se" [aseity].

ii. God's being is who God is. His essence is His existence. God IS. All else BECOMES.

8. Paul threatens all that is Athenian.

i. 1st - he has confronted them w/ their ignorance of God. See Jesus w/ Pharisees - Jn 9. Their projections of themselves onto "gods" inevitably limits the "definition" of God.

ii. 2nd - he tells them their assumptions about reality are wrong, not just inaccurate, but immoral, disobedient - Rm 1:25. Sophisticated fools. They're wrong about God & they're wrong to be wrong about God.

9. Let's review

i. v22-23 idolatry evidences of ignorance of God who is known.

ii. v24 - foolish to try to contain the Creator w/i man-made container

iii. v25 - foolish to try to sustain the life of the God who gives & sustains life. Men do not feed God, He sustains us.

iv. v26 - foolish to think the God who made all men is not God of all men.

v. v27-28a foolish not to seek the God who is near

vi. v29 - foolish to think that the Creator can be created by a creature out of creation

vii. Repeated "foolish" - "fool" = someone who is ignorant of God. They are aware of God as *the unknown god*.

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10. In v30- applications: repent in view of gospel of resurrected Jesus.