

“CERTAIN STRANGE THINGS”, #3

INTRODUCTION

In 2 previous lessons, we studied about the apostle Paul having gone to Athens, Greece, and being troubled to see the whole city being “given” to idolatry. He went public with his opposition to idolatry by preaching things relative to JESUS and the RESURRECTION. Cf Acts 17:16-17. In our previous sermons, we observed how Paul preached on the Nature of God, the Creation, Jesus, and the final resurrection of the dead,. However, there are some OTHER things of special interest that we learn from Paul’s final sermon that were surely those “certain strange things” to the philosophers. Let’s examine them,.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, Paul preached about the CHURCH.

A. Now, you may be thinking, “I don’t remember the word ‘church’ even being mentioned in this sermon by Paul.”

B. Let me explain.

1. Paul was in eyesight of the “temple” of the Parthenon temple made with hands
2. Paul referred to the “temple” of God that had been unknown to them, in which the real God of heaven does dwell, that was “not made with men’s hands.”
 - a. On Pentecost day in Acts 2, in addressing thousands of Jews, Peter declared that JESUS was made “Lord” on the day the church began. Acts 2:33-36; cf v. 47
 - b. That CHURCH is the “temple of God” in which He dwells in the gospel age. 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16; Eph. 2:16-22; 1 Pet. 2:5 (Explain and tie these passages together).
3. So, to preach about the ONE temple of God in the gospel age, is to preach about the **church** today, and to say such may seem “strange” to many hearers, as it was to the philosophers in the first century.
 - a. Jesus purchased the spiritual temple of God by shedding the blood of His physical temple which was His physical body. John 2:19-22; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 3:16; Heb. 9:11
 - b. Jesus built only **one** temple or church. Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13
4. NARROW MINDED. Some might think Paul surely was narrow-minded for thinking there was only one true God and one true temple. Why did not Paul just leave the Athenians alone, for after all, they HAD their “god” (or gods), and HAD their temple?? Wasn’t that good enough? It would be even to some in the church today. However, Paul **knew** these idol worshipers were **wrong** NOT to be following God in His temple, the church. Cf Matt. 7:13-14

II. 2nd, Paul preached about REPENTANCE.

A. To the Jews who had been the chosen people of God, John the immerser **and** Jesus Himself preached the importance of repentance. Matt. 3:1-2; 4:17

B. Now, to the heathen, idol worshipers, the command to repent is given. Acts 17:30

1. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of life.
2. Repentance is a result of godly sorrow, with a view to “life.” 2 Cor. 7:10

C. Paul may have talked about the real God (unknown to these people) Who had **always** called for repentance.

1. God sent Jonah to Nineveh to urge them to repent.

2. God sent prophets to Israel and Judah to warn them to repent.
3. He sent John the immerser to preach repentance to Israel.
4. The other apostles of Jesus were also preaching repentance. Acts 2:38; 3:19; 2 Pet. 3:9

D. It may have sounded “strange” to the Athenians to hear that they must give up some of their popular pleasures of the world in order to have eternal joy in heaven, but **SIN**, held onto without repentance, will keep one out of the temple of the living God.

III. 3Rd, Paul preached about the FINAL JUDGMENT.

A. Paul preached that God has “appointed” a particular DAY in which He will judge the world, including these worshipers. Acts 17:31; cf Heb. 9:27

1. First of all, in that judgment, it will be done “in righteousness” (or fairly, Gen. 18:25).

a. The Jews will be judged by the Old Testament (law of Moses) under which they lived, and that is only fair, for they did not **know** the New Testament which had not yet been given.

b. The rest of the world **after** the Old Testament, will be judged by the New Testament, which would include even the Jews, and the idol worshipers of the world. John 12:48

2. Secondly, God will judge the world BY a particular **person**—Jesus Christ (who had been raised from the dead, and having lived IN heaven, and ON earth, He can judge fairly, and understands both God and man. Acts 17:31

B. It may seem “strange” to some to know that they will someday answer to ONE person who was once killed, then raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will someday come again to judge the world. 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt.25:31-32

CONCLUSION

I. The **reaction** to Paul’s preaching was mixed.

A. 1st, some “mocked”, thinking of it as a “big joke” of some kind. Acts 17:32

B. 2nd, others said they would hear more about this later—putting off their obedience. v. 32; cf Acts 24:25; 26:28; Prov. 27:1

C. 3rd, some became “believers”--accepting the message in humble obedience. Acts 17:34

II. How do **you** react to the gospel today?

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