

LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Acts 17:24-31

24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' 29 "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." NAS Acts 17:24 - 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands

1. **The God who made the world and all things in it** – Here Paul begins a discourse to the Greeks explaining the doctrine of the “One true and Living God.” In explaining the reality of One God, Paul seeks to convince them of the folly of idolatry, and lead them to repentance. The following is therefore a marvelous description of our God and His supreme authority. If He is the creator of all things, then He is the rightful owner, proprietor, and possessor of all beings, power and dominion. (Gen 1:1, Psalm 24:1, 89:11, Ex 4:11, 9:29, Na 1:5)
Q. If God made the world, is there anything He cannot do?

Q. What does the word Creator express about God?

2. **Lord of Heaven and Earth** – Here Paul tells them that God is the Lord of Heaven, obviously higher than any other in Heaven, including therefore any deity which they would have worshipped. These words express the “dominion” that God possesses over all of Heaven and Earth. (Dan 4:34-35, Isa 40:14-18, 1 Tim 6:15-16, Eph 1:11, La 3:37, 1 Chron 29:11-13)
Q. What does it mean that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth?

Q. If He is Lord, is there any weather pattern, natural disaster, planetary function, government, individual, or even any angelic or supernatural being or power that He is not in control of?

3. **does not dwell in temples made with hands** – Here again Paul shows the folly of idolatry. As if heavenly deities can be created by the work of men’s hands. Rather the true and living God is “omnipresent” and therefore not confined in an earthly temple. (Is 66:1, 2 Chron 6:18, Mt 5:34, Jer 23:23-24, Ps 139:7-8, 11-16, Pro 15:3)
Q. If He does not dwell in temples, where does He dwell? (1 Cor 6:19)

Acts 17:25 - 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;

1. **neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything** – Here Paul speaks of the absurdity that God is somehow dependent on humans for anything at all. This is an obvious contrast to the Greek deities who were “fed” by humans through sacrifice and offering. God is self-existent, and all things are therefore dependent upon Him. He is not dependent upon His creatures for happiness or any other thing. If God is the source of life, He therefore transcends it, and the dimension in which it exists. (Ps 50:10-12, Ps 145:15-16, Gen 1:29)

Q. What does it mean, He is not served with human hands?

Q. What or who is God dependent on?

2. **since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things** – Here it is explained that God is literally the “giver” and therefore “sustainer” of the life of all things. It is not only His air that we breathe in, but it is in His hand that our breath is! We are absolutely dependent on God, as well as every living thing. (Dan 5:23, Gen 2:7, Job 12:10, 14:5, Is 42:5, Ps 139:16, Heb 1:3)

Q. Does God give life even to evil men?

Q. Who has power over the life and death of every living thing?

Acts 17:26 - 26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,

1. Here Paul clearly states that God made all mankind from one, that being Adam. God’s purpose was for man to “fill the earth and subdue it”, and to accomplish this He intervened in human history by confounding the languages. But this is only one example of God’s intervention. Here Paul says that God has appointed the times for men and nations, showing His Providence over all things to be complete and meaningful. God is working all things after the counsel of His own will, even determining the boundaries of the habitation of men and nations.

(Gen 1:28, 11:1-6, Rom 13:1-2, Job 12:23, 14:5, Is 26:15, Duet 4:38, Dan 4:25, Acts 15:18)

Q. How many people did God originally make? _____

Q. Did God intend for man to cover the earth, if so, why? _____

Q. Who was in control of the spreading of the nations across the earth?

Q. Did God ordain and establish rulers in history such as Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Ceaser Nero, Stalin, Hitler? _____

Acts 17:27 - 27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

1. **that they should seek God** - Here Paul tells of the great purpose of God in His creation, that men would seek Him. That they would apprehend God, to lay hold of Him and know Him, that they should contemplate his wisdom in his works, and thus come to a knowledge of his existence and character. The word for grope means to search diligently and lay hold of. God has a desire in the creation to be known by us, and this not for His happiness but ours. God desires for individuals to know and appreciate His lovingkindness. All nations, though living in different regions and climates, have thus the opportunity of becoming acquainted with God. The fact, that the nations did not thus learn the character of the true God, shows their great stupidity and wickedness. The folly of their idolatry is manifest.

(Rom 1:19-20, Ps 19:1-6, Ez 8:22, Is 55:6, Heb 11:6)

Q. What was God's original intention in placing mankind on the earth?

Q. Why is it that God is not far from each one of us?

Acts 17:28 - 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'

1. **for in Him we live and move and exist** – Paul shows here our absolute dependence upon God not only for life and breathe, but also the very strength to move, and our very existence depends upon His further goodness to us. He created us, He has appointed the number of our days, determined the places in which we live, and sustains our very lives. In Him we exist! We are owing to God for everything we have, including our next breathe. There is no more emphatic language to explain our utter and total dependence upon God.

(Col 1:15-17, Rev 4:11, Rom 11:36, Prov 16:4)

Q. What does this mean, "In Him we live and move and have our being?"

Q. Can we choose to violate God's will and do something other than what He has planned for us? To what extent?

Q. Does God place limits on our ability to make free choice?

Acts 17:29 - ' 29 "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

1. Paul continues his reproof of idolatry explaining that God is much greater than any of His creations and ought not to be represented as so. Man himself is far more excellent than an image of wood or stone; how much more excellent still must be the great Fountain and Source of all our wisdom and intelligence!"

(Isa 40:18-23, Ps 115:4-8, Isa 46:5-10, Isa 44:13-19)

Q. If we are not to think of Him as these things, what should we think of Him as?

Q. Can man actually comprehend God in his mind?

Q. If not, why not?

Acts 17:30 - 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,

1. Paul begins here to conclude his statements by showing the expectation and duty of man to respond to God. Although God has overlooked man's ignorance in the past (not having given a command to all to obey), the Lord of Heaven and earth is making a declaration to all men everywhere, and men have a responsibility to obey it. It goes out to "all men everywhere" so that no one is excluded and by this, it is implied that it can be done. Men can repent, should they be willing, and turn away from and forsake their sins. God will therefore now hold all men responsible for this commandment, and it is implied, no longer overlook man's ignorance but rather expects man to hear and obey.

(Titus 2:11-12, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:38, 3:19, Mark 1:15, 6:12, Rom 6:19, 2 Thes 1:7-10)

Q. What does this mean, that God overlooked the times of ignorance?

Q. What is God declaring to men everywhere?

Q. If we are saved "by grace through faith", do we really need to repent?

Acts 17:31 - 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

1. After having established God's absolute Sovereignty and Providence over the whole world, Paul now explains that God is indeed the Judge of all the world. The

God that made the world will judge it. It is God who therefore determines right and wrong, good and evil, and will hold men accountable for the evil which they do, and repay with reward those who have done good. This will happen, "on the appointed Day," when God will reveal the secrets of men's hearts.(Ecc 12:13-14, Rom 2:5-6, 14:10, John 5:22-29, Acts 10:42, Pr 24:12, Jer 17:10, 32:19, 2 Cor 5:10-11,)

Q. Will God actually judge the world?

Q. What will happen in this judgment?

Q. Will God be just, or will He grant mercy?

Q. What is the just penalty for sins?

Q. What will become of your sins and mine?

1. There is a judgment - Ecc 12:13-14, Rom 2:5-6,16 –
2. Two Judgments – John 5:22-29,
3. Judgment Basis-

Believer is in Christ – imputation. Substitutionary atonement
Unbeliever – Stands on his on merits before God sins included
Believer- sins/cross – John 5:24,Rom 8:1,
Works/Bema seat – 2 Cor 5:10-11, Rom 14:10

Belief on the Son, produces righteousness, prayer, praise, hatred of sin, love of the Truth, patience, kindness, self-control

Unbeliever- Works – Great White Throne

What good deed will be found?

The secrets of men. See Lu 18:17; Ec 12:14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing," etc. Mt 10:26; 1Co 4:5. The expression denotes the hidden desires, lusts, passions, and motives of men; the thoughts of the hearts, as well as the outward actions of the life. It will be a characteristic of the day of judgment, that all these will be brought out, and receive their appropriate reward.

Raised Him from the dead - given assurance. or, offered faith.(pistis) in that. Ac 17:18; 2:23,24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30-32; 10:39-41; 13:30,31 , Lu 24:46-48; 1Co 15:3-8