

God as Creator

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Date: 06 July 2014

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to the subject for today, which is the matter of God as Creator. Turn to Acts 17, although we're not going to just stay there, but we are going to look at some other places as well.

So let's again pray as we come to God's Word. Lord, help us to hear your voice. Help us to see something of your face.

Help us to draw near to you and that you would draw near to us in the opening up of Scripture. For we ask it of your powerful Spirit through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen. So to repeat, we're going to be looking at some of the main points of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's the Gospel that the Apostles wrote, the Apostolic Gospel. And we're doing this because it's important for us to be clear. Because we're surrounded by lots of voices who say to us, this is what you should believe, this is what the world's like, this is what you should believe, this is what the world's like.

[1 : 17] And we need to have clarity. What is God saying? We need to know, we need to be clear about the Gospel that we were taught.

And you could put that in various orders, but I'm going to treat it in this order. And we'll look first of all at the teaching of God the Creator.

God the one and only Creator. God the one and only Creator. God the one and only Creator. It's a truth which is a fundamental truth. There is an order to truth.

So there are some truths that are basic and then you build other truths upon them. And some truths that are at different places in this structure.

But this is a fundamental truth. And without this, the rest doesn't make sense. And I'd invite you then to look at Acts 17, which is what was read to us.

[2 : 26] And this is the Apostle Paul. So he's bringing the Gospel to Athens. And it's interesting that his approach when he comes to Athens is different to what he has been saying, for example, in the synagogues where the Jewish people were meeting.

So you can help me with this. So have I already given you the answer? I tend to do that sometimes, don't I? Okay, it's people in. Verse 22.

So there's a blank there. Shall I do that? So that was Athens. We'll do that, shall we? People in Athens. Who were ethnically, what would they ethnically be? Greeks.

And the important thing for Paul is, when he teaches them, as distinct from the Jews, they do not have the? Scriptures.

Yeah, they don't have the Hebrew Scriptures. And of course, they don't have the New Testament because it hadn't been written. So if I put, they didn't have the Old Testament. Because the Old Testament, this is one of the basic things you get from the Old Testament.

[3 : 43] God is creator. And because they don't have the Old Testament. Paul has to start at that point. Let me tell you about God. And that's where he's going to go.

And that's what we're going to look at. So I've written, I've got one or two things. I had to change the order this morning. But this is the truth that Isaiah, for example, in the Old Testament says, The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

So that's what we're going to look at. So does the Old Testament teach this? And in what way does it teach it? God is the one and only creator and maker.

So which book of the Bible starts the idea of God as creator? Genesis. Yeah. And in the first five chapters, it has a word.

It's not only used for creating universes. But that is one of the uses of it. *Bara*. God created. That's how the Bible begins, isn't it?

[5 : 03] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And it keeps on saying, God created this. He created the heavens and the earth.

He created humankind. And it doesn't just say it in Genesis. It keeps on being a theme. And I haven't written down all the texts that mention it.

But here is an example. Psalm 148. Which says. Verse 5.

Talking about the heavens and the angels and the sun and the moon and the shining stars. And the heavens and the waters above the skies.

And it says. Let them praise the name of the Lord. For he commanded. And they were created.

[6 : 07] He set them in place forever and ever. And they gave a decree that will never pass away. And it's typical of the Old Testament to say.

How did everything get here? God put it here. What sort of God is the God we worship? He's the God who can make the mountains. And the seas.

And the ends of the earth. And the heavens. And the earth. That's the sort of God we have. He is the creator God. God. And there's a particular use of that in the book of Isaiah.

And again I haven't written all out these verses. But they are rather wonderful. And I'll find them and read them to you. In Isaiah 40 verse 26.

There's a lot about this. A lot about how God's people. In their need. And in their crisis times. Are told to think of the greatness of God.

[7 : 08] The creator. So I'm in Isaiah 40. And it says things like this. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? Or with the breadth of his hand.

Marks out the heavens. And it says in verse 26. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these?

Now my son Tim has just bought a telescope. And it's a very nice telescope actually. What do you do with the telescope? Well you look at stars. And what's the point of looking at stars?

Well I think it is wonderment actually. I think it is to do what it says in this text. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these?

Stars are fantastic. As we live in a place like Brighton. Somewhat polluted. A lot of light about. Don't really get a sense of stars.

[8 : 06] You go and live somewhere. We went and stayed for a week in. The deepest, darkest Shropshire. In Clun. And there's no light pollution.

There were some cloudless nights. And the stars are fantastic. Who made these stars? Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens.

Who created all these? He brings out the starry host one by one. And calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength.

Not one of them is missing. And so the Bible is saying. Think of how great God is to make the stars. Think he knows the names of all of them. So don't you think he doesn't know you?

That's the way it goes with that. Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel? My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by God. Don't think that God doesn't know you.

[9 : 07] Because he knows all those stars. He certainly knows you. And hasn't forgotten you. And then in verse 28 it says, Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God.

The creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary. His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary.

And increases the power of the weak. It says, think of God. I mean, haven't you? He says, didn't you know this? Haven't you heard this? The Lord is the everlasting God.

The creator of the ends of the earth. He doesn't get tired like we do. He doesn't have off days like we do. He's full of power. And the text goes on to say, This creator God who doesn't grow weary, He gives power to his weary people.

He lifts them up. He understands. And let's look at Isaiah 45. So if you are prepared to do the sort of thumb work and find this, this is a fantastic text.

[10 : 19] Isaiah 45 verse 18. So we're still on the subject of God's people who feel, God's forgotten me. Everything's gone wrong.

It's all terrible. And Isaiah 45 verse 18 says this, For this is what the Lord says.

He who created the heavens. He is God. He who fashioned and made the earth. He founded it.

He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited. Isn't that interesting? That God the creator didn't make things just because he likes stars, though presumably he does.

And he didn't make things just because he's so big. He really needed a huge big universe to give us a slight idea of how big he is. But he made it to be inhabited.

[11 : 21] He made it as a home for people. Isn't it fantastic, isn't it? That this God who's made everything is interested in us. And he didn't want to just have a huge empty universe with quarks and subatomic particles.

He wanted it to have a Tim Flute in it. And he wanted it to have a Mark Rayfield in it. That's what he made the universe for. He made it to be inhabited. And God says, I'm the only one who does this. I am the Lord, and there is no other. There's no one like me in this regard. I have not spoken in secret from somewhere in a land of darkness.

I have not said to Jacob's descendants, seek me in vain. I, the Lord, speak the truth. I declare what is right. Gather together and come.

And it's interesting the way that it's all linked up, isn't it? Because he says, I'm the creator. And I've made this world to be inhabited. And I haven't said things in a secret way, so that you can't understand it.

[12 : 28] What I've said is, seek me. And I wasn't messing you about when I said that. If you seek me, you will find me.

That's what it's saying, isn't it? I haven't said, I have not said, seek me in vain. What he's saying is, I meant it when I said, seek me.

And then he says, gather and come. So, there are just some of the Old Testament texts. And, while I was on the subject, I thought there might be some objections to this.

So, the objection, but how did God make the universe? Now, there are definitely places in the Bible where asking the question, how, is not particularly commended.

So, when Nicodemus says, to Jesus, how can a man be born when he is old? He doesn't get particularly congratulated for that.

[13 : 32] Sometimes it's God's business how he does things. So, we're not told everything, but we are told, he made everything by his mighty power. It was a miraculous act of power to make the world.

He made things by his great wisdom. I was sort of at the end of my intellectual capacity making this guitar, which is actually quite small.

Imagine the intellectual capacity of making a universe and make it all fit together. Making all the different components. It's an act of mighty wisdom.

And God made everything by his word. It's very significant that God didn't clap his hands. God didn't, well, all sorts of things God didn't do.

God spoke and said, let there be light. The way that God meets his universe is by speaking, even as he does through the scriptures.

[14 : 34] And we are told that he did it in stages and he did it by separating things. So, he characteristically separated light from darkness and then the waters above from the waters beneath and then the waters on one side from the water on another.

And in scientific terms, you'd say that's increasing the information in a system. God increasingly brought order into what was formless and void at the beginning.

And I think that's about as far as I'm going to go with that because the Bible doesn't tell us hugely how God did it. It tells us that he did do it and it's for us to wonder and worship and allow God to be God without demanding that he explains how he does everything.

But you might say, well, what about science? Well, because doesn't science disprove God as creator? And I think, well, I don't really see how that possibly makes sense.

I had a quick look on the NASA website this morning, as one does, and, because I looked up dark matter and the NASA, what's NASA stand for?

[15 : 50] Thank you very much. I knew there would be somebody who would know the answer to that question. I think, presumably, they know a bit about what they're talking about.

And it says something about the universe. It says on their website, it's a mystery. 68% of the universe is dark energy. 20% of it is dark matter, which I think leaves 5%, and I'm paraphrasing the next bit.

He says, scientists can know and measure 5% of what they think there is. And if I am going to be told by somebody who knows 5% of something, as if they know everything, I'm going to be a little bit unpersuaded.

Do you see what I'm trying to say? They're saying, scientifically, there's this stuff called dark energy and dark matter. We've never seen it. We believe it's there, but it's purely an act of faith. All we think we know about the universe is 5%. Now, if you found somebody who claimed to be an expert on Brighton and only knew 5% of it, you might well find them saying, there's no sea in Brighton.

[17:09] Of course, the 5% that they know is Patchham. Patchham's a splendid place. But if you only knew Patchham, you would think, there's no sea in Brighton. Tell you there's no sea, but you only know 5% of Brighton.

Or you might say, there's no railway line in Brighton. If in Whitehawk, for example, there's no Whitehawk very, very well. No railway line in Brighton. Well, you only know 5% of Brighton. So, I don't think we should let scientists intimidate us and say, there's no creator. They only know 5% of what they think is here anyway. And for somebody to say, as sort of unbelieving science does, time plus chance produces people and beauty and justice and love.

A long, long time plus chance produces people and justice and love and mercy and kindness. I think to make that equation requires enormous faith.

And I frankly don't have the faith to believe that. So, I won't go any further with that because let's not be intimidated by what scientists say.

[18:22] Let's look at what the Bible says. So, let's come to Acts 17 and I've got three or four sort of sections to look at. So, Acts 17 So, first of all, I'm going to ask the question, what is it the opposite of?

Or what is he teaching against? What are the different wrong alternatives? So, in Acts 17, the context there is of idols and he is teaching against idolatry.

Idolatry is when human beings make up their own idea of what God should be like and Calvin said, depending on the translation, the human heart is a factory of idols.

The human heart is a production line forging one idol after another and it says to, it says this in Acts 17 verse 16, while Paul was waiting for his companions in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols and one of the writers, I believe, said of ancient Athens, it was easier to meet a God than a man because as you walk around, there were all the statues on their plinths, this God and that God, all these different gods and you walk around, it's overwhelming, temple here, temple there, a niche with another god in it and yet another god and another god and they were all painted brightly, the statues that we see now are just a stone aren't they?

But in those days I believe they would have been brightly painted so it was like your HD full colour gods all over the place and there's Paul in the middle of it and in verse 16 it tells us he was greatly distressed.

[20:23] Athens, I thought this was a really clever place, I thought this was the heart of Greek civilisation, I really thought that I'd find sensitivity and wisdom here and all I've got is idolatry, idolatry, idolatry, idolatry.

They've made up their own versions of God and you might say well we don't have idols now do we? Even in Athens they just have pollution.

I shouldn't have said that. But you know I think saying which people do say I like to think of God as God or I think God must be da da da da.

That's just making an idol. It's making an idol mentally, a mental idol rather than a metal idol. So people say I like to think of well I think really the earth is a goddess.

She's Gaia. Oh yeah. Or there's Hindus say well we have a God who's like an elephant. God Ganash the elephant God. Or perhaps a little bit more subtly what do you live for?

[21:41] What do you put your hope in? What do you trust in? Money. In the New Testament it says greed is idolatry. What do you want to be?

Famous. Fame as an idol. What would be the point of being famous? You can no longer get on a bus. or this very very you have to be quite observant to notice it.

This God who makes everything very skillfully but we're told he's not an intelligence certainly not a person.

He's called evolution and this God fantastically does all these things and yet we don't have to worship him because he's just a sort of force.

And you know how you get which Attenborough is it who does the programs? David is it? And millions of years ago evolution decided that four legs was better than two.

[22 : 50] And so if you listen carefully you find evolution deciding things, evolution thinking things, evolution planning things and you think that's not chance is it?

You're actually telling us you've got a scientific theory but you've actually made up really a person. Idolatry. What do we worship?

What do we trust in? What guides us? What gives the deepest explanation for life? That is our God and the God of the Bible says that should be me.

and to put your trust in anything else is the sin of idolatry and that's what Paul was greatly distressed about. The second thing about his speaking here is that of the idea of ignorance versus knowledge.

It's quite an interesting comparison or an interesting dynamic that's going on. So in verse 23 he says I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship.

[24 : 02] I even found an altar with this inscription to an unknown God. So he says to these Athenian philosophers and professors and gurus and pundits he actually says you're ignorant.

He says it very politely. I found an altar with this inscription to an unknown God. And this God that you don't know that you're ignorant of that's the one I'm going to tell you about.

So in verse 23 he says unknown and in verse 30 he says God overlooked such ignorance. But he also says you're not completely ignorant though are you?

Even in your own poetry books just go and get your kindle out and get this poem up and I've forgotten what the name of the poet was but in verse 28 he says you know this in him we live and move and have our being that's in your own poetry and we are his offspring that's in your own poetry as well.

So it's interesting you know some things but you're completely ignorant in a way as well and it's like what Paul says in the beginning well what Paul says is Paul speaking here what he says in Romans about the condition of our human family where he says we're in this created world and in Romans 119 he says since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain so we do see things about God we just had the eyes to see it and the brains to think it through God must be big if he's made a big universe he must be clever if he's designed all this he must be wonderful he must be a person if he can do all this he says what can be known about God is plain to them but then in the previous verse he says they suppress the truth by their wickedness so things that perhaps ought to be obvious they just squash them out or close their ears or turn the sound down or whatever so this is one of the things this curious mixture of ignorance and knowledge and C.S. Lewis has a

[26 : 33] I think it's C.S. Lewis has the example of something that is so obvious but you might not notice it and it's a little bit like a fish swimming in water saying I didn't notice any water where's the water can't see it of course he might not be able to see it you see but it's there it's so close that it might escape his attention and it also gives us this picture of the the pundit who is a very very clever person and yet tells us perhaps on BBC 2 clever nonsense see there is such a thing as very very clever people who are very very stupid in some areas and it says Paul in Romans says although they claimed to be wise they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal

God for something else and we get that today don't we people who claim to be wise but even a child could see that's ridiculous so ignorance versus knowledge and the way Paul deals with it is very interesting he does two things he does reasoning and he does assertion generally speaking you find that Christian missionaries are perhaps good at one but not the other and Paul does both so there's a little picture of Paul in Athens and it says in Acts 17 which I need to find again so he was greatly distressed Acts 17 verse 16 and what he does he goes and reasons verse 17 he reasons in the synagogue and he reasons in the marketplace and he sort of dialogues and he says tell us about what you think about God and then they tell him and he says well look have you ever thought that you know I know you've got these gods and they're about that high and they sort of go like this have you not thought that the real God can't possibly be that high the real

God must be vast and do you not think that to make an image like that is really insulting to the real glory of God so he could reason with them you see and he does that reasoning verse 20 which is what I was just saying verse 25 God does not live in temples built by hands that would be a foolish thing to think wouldn't it you've got a huge great temple but the universe is so big you couldn't possibly fit God into that temple could you I mean talk sense and you make these little shrine things to offer things to God as if he needed them but he's actually given you a world full of forests and crops and seasons I mean he doesn't need you to put little flowers out for him and things does he

so he reasons but he also proclaims so verse 23 he says I looked carefully at your objects of worship

I found an altar with this inscription to an unknown God what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you so there's some bits you can't reason your way to I'm just going to tell you I'm going to tell you and I'm going to trust that the Holy Spirit will put into your mind while I'm speaking to your ears the Spirit will put into your mind yeah that's actually right that makes more sense that rings true much better than our Zeus and Apollo and Diana and all the idols and it would not be true to say that revival strikes in Athens it would be true to say that he gets a very sort of similar reaction to the reaction that we often get so in verse 18 a group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with them and this is what they say what is this babbler what is this babbler trying to say it's very condescending isn't it here's Paul the mighty apostle who's seen Jesus

Christ and they say he's a bit of a babbler isn't he and he can't get his words out properly come on Paul try it again what is he trying to say and it's not a very complimentary thing but they do give him another chance but it would not be true to say that they're they're they're bowled over with with belief and conviction although some of them are at the end it says verse 33 Paul left the council a few men became followers of Paul and believed among them was Dionysius a member of the Areopagus and also a woman named Damaris and a number of others well I would be delighted wouldn't you if we'd spent a week going out and reasoning and discussing and turning to people and then on Sunday we had a few people who had come in and believed well that was the sort of situation that

[32 : 09] Paul had so let's think about what where this gets us so I'd like to think for a minute about the world view that this puts us in and I want to say first of all it's a personal world not a mechanical world I mean there is please understand me I'm not saying there's no such things as machinery I'm not saying there's no such things as the laws of physics I was a studied physics myself I know all about those things but that's not the fundamental truth of the universe the fundamental truth of the universe is a person and the person as it says as he says that God lives and God verse 25 gives and God even kindly overlooks and God in the end judges so the universe that we live in is not an empty machine but the fundamental truth behind it is a person and then the world that we live in puts us under authority so verse 24

Paul says this creator God the God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth that's significant the Lord so he's saying the Lord has authority so the universe that we live in has God on the throne whereas we tend to think or some philosophical thinking tends to say well human beings we make up what's right and wrong who else is going to do it we can make up how to live just choose it ourselves and Paul says no if you live in a created universe it's the creator who is Lord of heaven and earth and he gives us words like ought see evolution can't ever give you the word ought all evolution could do is say well that's what happens you know the survival of the fittest things like that it's

God's authority that gives us right and wrong and every human being knows such a thing as right and wrong evolution couldn't give us that it would just give us what's more competitive and what's less competitive it's God who puts into the world such a thing as obedience and praise and blame and value that's the sort of world we live in and that's where it comes from thirdly it tells us that being human is a huge amazing privilege and in this text he talks about he says well your poets say it in him we live and move and have our being as some of your own poets have said we're his offspring we're his offspring we're in a sense God's family and this is an enormous difference to the way we think of the world we're not just atoms we're not just statistics we are people made in the image of God and that makes a huge difference as to how we treat other people how we treat them at the beginning of life and the end of life and how we just treat people that we meet we value people we're not talking about whether they're

Christians or not we value them because they're people and I think it's only Christians who've got a handle on that don't treat them because we make money out of them we don't treat them because they're nice to us we treat them like that because they're made in the image of God and another thing about this universe that Paul says is we depend on him it's not him who depends on us get it the right way round so in verse 24 for example he says he says he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything because he gives all life and breath and everything else yeah and it also says that he gives us places to live that we should inhabit the whole earth and determined the

places set for them so we depend on him not he on us and we live in a world filled with generosity and care so scientists particularly cosmologists astronomers have been researching all the different stars and different planets and they're extremely clever about it looking at the starlight and watching for little blips and then calculating the masses and saying how many planets how many stars have got planets that are in the goldilocks zone so you know the goldilocks the porridge that wasn't too hot and that's not too hot and that's too cold and this bed's too big and that's too small this one's just right so the goldilocks zone is when your planet is not too close to the sun because it will burn up and not too far away from the sun so it will get too cold but just right and you might have noticed we live in the space that's just right and is that an accident well no it isn't now maybe you give yourself a headache trying to work out how it all works and maybe we're not supposed to try and work that out but we know that God has given us this planet for us to live in and it says he gives us life and breath and everything else it's a world full of his generosity and Mars isn't like that and the moon isn't like that but this planet that God's given us is like that he's given us a place and I think we can learn from that to look at the world in that way and to say God made this world he's made it like it is and we should value creation it seems to me and we should value what it is to live as his creatures so

I think one thing that does for Christians is to put onto our agenda sort of green issues green agenda things so I know that the green party locally get described as being bonkers and I don't think they are bonkers really but I think one of the things that they've got right is that we should care for our environment because God cares about it we shouldn't just be ruining it and filling it with pollution and rubbish we should be caring because God cares we should value creation and we should live as God's creatures so I'm just going to move on because I don't want to take too long so I wanted to move thirdly to God the creator and his providence and these two are always linked the one who made everything runs everything so we can say that God's the creator and he doesn't get tired but looks after his people and gives strength to them so

[39 : 47] God is the creator and the ruler and he's the supplier and he's the planner and you can see it in this passage racially he no I'm sorry providence means the way he provides and guides and orders and rules that's what providence means and it's we're told here in verse 26 that he guides racially so from one man he made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth and he determined the time set for them and the exact places where they should live well I think that's very interesting so God arranged it that there should be a place like China and Chinese people should live there and God arranged it there should be a place called India and Indian people should live there and God arranged it that there should be a place called Denmark and Danish people would live there this is not accidental it's not out of God's plan it's under God's control and all that goes along with that and I think we could we could say not just in large scale of a hundred thousand people here and a quarter of a million people there I think he does it person by person so the God who says I will bring

Zach and Darlene from South Africa and put them in Brighton and I will take Min from China and bring her to Brighton and I will take Lindsay from the United States of America to Brighton and I'll take her away again and then bring her back again so it I wouldn't be surprised if sometimes people think I'm in the wrong place I'm in the wrong time if only I'd been born then or if only I'd been born there please don't think that please don't think that because God's planning includes the exact place where you were born the exact places moved you to and the exact timing of it that's what it says isn't it he determined the time set for them and the exact places where they should live and he does it and I couldn't think of a right word to put this racially personally and invitationally no such English word as invitationally but he does it with a reason and the reason is so that people would seek him verse 27

God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him though he is not far from each one of us and that's an amazing thing why did he put such and such a person in the Ukraine and such and such a person in Switzerland and such and such a person in China so that this person would reach out for God and maybe to find him and I think that this gives us wonder and it gives us security because we do sometimes think it's all gone wrong if I hadn't been in that place at that time I'd been completely different well we have to say God is the one who puts people in exactly the right place exactly the right time for his plan and he has a good plan and it is an encouragement to seek the Lord and maybe you're thinking well here I am find myself in this strange little church building this morning not really quite sure where I'm here sounds a little bit

interesting and what I want to say is God's brought you here and he's brought you here so that you can seek him that's why he did it that's why he's planned it all that's why you happen to be there somebody else happened to be there and things developed and that's why you're here so I'm going to move on to some action points because we've looked at this teaching about

God the creator and I'd like to make some action points so number one we should adopt a respectful critique of people who are not Christians and this is what Paul does do you notice the wonderful way he begins his address verse 22 Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said men of Athens I see that in every way you are very religious and you think what do you mean by that Paul in the authorised version I think it says very superstitious but that is probably an over translation I think he's doing two things isn't he he's saying actually you're not quite right but he's saying I'm going to say that in a respectful way and I think we will increasingly need to learn to offer a respectful critique of the society around us we're no longer in a society certainly in Brighton where it is normal to go to church or respectful to respect

Christian ministry and ministers rather it's to be suspicious of them and we need to find a respectful way of offering a critique in Acts 19:37 after there's been a riot in Ephesus the local magistrate or leader of the city council or whatever he is the city clerk says about the missionaries who are being mobbed he says verse 37 you have brought these men here though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess so that Paul managed to have integrity and he managed to be truthful but he also managed to do it without people saying well you're just slagging us off being disrespectful so a respectful critique here's another action point the call to think and not to think well you didn't think

[45 : 59] Christianity was anything to do with thinking you thought it was how you feel well actually it's how you think as well verse 29 Paul says since we are God's offspring we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone an image made by man's design or skill in the past God overlooked such ignorance he's saying there's ways of thinking that you should not adopt there's ways of thinking you should learn there's ways of thinking you should turn from so if you were thinking time plus chance equals people plus beauty plus justice that is not the way to think think God think different there is a call also to move so that he ends his sermon by saying in the past God overlooked such ignorance but now he commands all people everywhere to repent you might not be familiar with the word to repent it means to turn to turn from going one way to going the opposite way and he says you that

God is now in the business of saying to people it's now become urgent that you turn from idolatry from neglecting me you turn to me and it is a command do you notice that God commands people it's not optional and it's not debatable and it's not postponable there isn't such a word as postponable either but it's not optional you can become a Christian if you feel like it it's saying I command you to repent nothing less than that honors me as I should be honored and it's not debatable not you say well I quite like idols what do you think God I think you got a point it's not debatable God says no I'm not having that at all it's completely unacceptable for you not to worship me God commands all man it's not postponable either

I'll put it off maybe when I finished my degree maybe when I've found a wonderful husband or wife maybe when I've got a steady job maybe you do it now God commands all people everywhere to repent to turn to God our maker the doctrine of God as creator has this call to it you need to turn to your creator and finally to see Jesus as key now I haven't the sermon has not been mostly about Jesus but it would be incomplete without him and Paul says this command to repent is for this reason God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed and this is the resurrection man he has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead that's

Jesus and Paul says in fact Jesus is the key to this now I'm sure Paul would have said more because they sort of poo poo him and say right that's enough time for us to go and have the Greek equivalent oh Greek coffee that's what they're saying but so he would have said more but he says enough he says you need to repent because there is a day coming when this key man who died and rose again from the dead will judge the world and of course the creator has the right and the authority to judge and he says that's where we're going to go to he's made you and he's going to judge you and between now and then you need to sort out with him how to get right with him and the person who holds the key to judgment is Jesus he can open the door and let you in or lock it and keep you out and that's what judges can do

I mean you could say that he could exclude you as judge or include you as saviour but he's the one with the key and that's the person that you need to look for you need now as an action point from what you've heard this morning if you are not settled with God God commands you to repent to turn to him and the way to do that is to make it your business to get to Jesus how do you get to Jesus well you don't get on the bus and get to Jesus you pray you get out your Bible you get somebody to go through the Bible with you you say I need to make some time to go into this properly God commands you as someone that he's made to get to know him through Jesus and the fascinating thing is it's not just an abstract possibility but it can actually happen to people and when [51 : 36] Paul preached it says there's some people who heard him and they said I'll do that and they did