

THE UNKNOWN GOD ACTS 17:16-34

➤ INTRODUCTION

- Let me ask you a question today. Do you know God?
- I'm not asking do you know about God.
- I'm asking you do you know God.
- Do you have a personal relationship with the God of this Universe?

➤ The one true God of the Universe wants people to know Him!

- He says in *Psalm 46:10*—"**Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.**"
- The Psalmist said in *Psalm 100:3*—"**Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves...**"

➤ By and large the world does not know God!

- Jesus prayed in *John 17:25*—"O righteous Father, **the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.**"

➤ A person can never have eternal life until he or she comes to know the only true God!

- Jesus also said this in His prayer to the Father in *John 17:3*—"And this is life eternal, **that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**"
- The Apostle John said in his epistle of *1 John 5:20*—"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, **that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.**"

➤ WHY THE UNKNOWN GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN:

➤ I. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE. (VS 23)

- "Unknown" means "not to know."
- It can mean to not know because of lack of information or intelligence; but the real implication of the word is that it is because the individual chooses to ignore someone because they are unwilling or reluctant to know them.

➤ A. Paul No Doubt Was Reminded Of His Own Former Ignorance.

- *1 Timothy 1:12-13*—"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; {13} Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."
- Now understand that Paul thought that he knew God before he was saved on the Damascus road; but after he was converted, he freely acknowledges that he did not know God but was ignorantly in unbelief.

➤ B. Paul No Doubt Was Reminded Of The Nation Of Israel's Ignorance.

- Paul said in *Romans 10:1-3*
 - Jesus told a group of Jews in *John 8:43-45*
- Jesus was asked some questions by a group of Sadducees and here is what he said to them in *Mark 12:24*—"And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye

not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?"

- **Proverbs 4:19**—*"The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble."*

➤ **GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE.**

➤ **II. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPOSED DARKNESS.**

- **Psalm 14:1**—*"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."*
 - Why is a man a fool who says that there is no God?
 - Because everything in Him and around Him and about Him says that there is a God!
- Paul said in **Romans 1:20-21**
- Jesus said in **John 3:19-20**
 - **A man knows that as long as there is no God, then there is no responsibility or day of reckoning!**
 - **But it is extremely foolish to deny what is an obvious reality!**
- **Exodus 5:2**—*"And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."*
- Many today say the same thing! "Who is God that I should obey Him?"
 - **Acts 28:24-29**

➤ **GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE.**

➤ **GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPOSED DARKNESS.**

➤ **III. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF THE BLINDNESS OF HEARTS AND MINDS.**

- What is it that blinds men's hearts and minds?

➤ **A. Satan Blinds Men's Hearts.**

- **2 Corinthians 4:3-6**

➤ **B. Sin Blinds Men's Hearts. (Isaiah 59:1-2,10)**

➤ **C. Sedition Blinds Men's Hearts.**

- "Sedition" is "the agitation against the authority of a government." (i.e. rebellion)
- **John 12:37-40**

➤ **IV. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF DECEITFUL LUSTS.**

- The Epicureans were followers of Epicurus who said that the chief end of man was pleasure and happiness.
- This pleasure, they believed, is attained by avoiding excesses and the fear of death, by seeking tranquility and freedom from pain, and by loving mankind.
- They believed that if gods exist they do not become involved in human events.
- **Ephesians 4:17-24**
 - Deceitful" means "tending to mislead, deceive or ensnare; trickish, fraudulent."
 - "Lusts" means "a longing, especially for what is forbidden."
 - **1 Corinthians 12:2**—*"Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led."* ("Carried away" means "out of control!")

- **1 Thessalonians 4:3-5**
- That word "concupiscence" is the same word translated "lusts" in Ephesians 4:22 and means "a longing, especially for what is forbidden."
- GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE.
- GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPOSED DARKNESS.
- GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF THE BLINDNESS OF HEARTS AND MINDS.
- GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF DECEITFUL LUSTS.
- **V. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE OF WRONG IDEAS ABOUT GOD AND/OR SEEKING GOD IN THE WRONG WAY. (VS 16, 21-23)**
 - "Too superstitious" means "more religious than others."
 - The Stoics were followers of Zeno and got their name from the painted portico or stoa, where he traditionally taught in Athens.
 - They were pantheistic in their view and felt that a great ➤ "Purpose" was directing history.
 - Man's responsibility was to fit himself and align himself with this "Purpose" through tragedy and triumph.
 - What is your idea of who God is and how He relates to man and his universe?
 - How do you think a man makes his way to God?
- **Listen very closely, if your ideas about who God is and how we make our way to Him is anything other than what the Bible says, then it is wrong!**
 - **You may be very sincere in your belief, but friend you are deceived!**
 - **Not only that, but unless you repent you will be separated from God and spend eternity in hell!**
 - **Proverbs 14:12**—"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."
 - **1 Corinthians 1:21**—"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
- **VI. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE PEOPLE SERVE THE WRONG GOD. (VS 29)**
 - **Galatians 4:8**—"Howbeit then, **when ye knew not God**, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods."
 - **Joshua 24:15**—"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose you this day whom ye will serve**; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - **We don't get to choose if we are going to serve but whom we are going to serve!**
 - **Acts 17:29**—"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."
- **VII. GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN BECAUSE THE GOSPEL IS NOT PREACHED.**
 - **A. Paul Was Stirred By What He Saw. (Acts 17:16)**

➤ **B. Paul Was Moved To Action By What He Saw. (Acts 17:17,18, 23)**

○ **Romans 10:13-15**

- Paul preached the Gospel as the only remedy to these folks!

➤ **CONCLUSION**

○ **THE UNKNOWN GOD REMAINS UNKNOWN:**

- **I. BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE.**
- **II. BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPOSED DARKNESS.**
- **III. BECAUSE OF THE BLINDNESS OF HEARTS AND MINDS.**
- **IV. BECAUSE OF DECEITFUL LUSTS.**
- **V. BECAUSE OF WRONG IDEAS ABOUT GOD AND/OR SEEKING HIM THE WRONG WAY.**
- **VI. BECAUSE OF SERVING THE WRONG GOD.**
- **VII. BECAUSE THE GOSPEL IS NOT PREACHED.**

○ **Well, what happened when the Gospel was preached?***

○ **The same thing that happens when we preach the Gospel! (Vs 32-34)**

- **1. SOME MOCKED. (Vs 32)**
- **2. SOME WANTED TO HEAR MORE. (Vs 32)**
- **3. SOME BELIEVED. (Vs 33-34)**

➤ **Do you know God?**

➤ **Do you really know Him or do you just know about Him?**

➤ **Do you have a personal relationship with Him?**

➤ **God wants you to know Him!**

➤ **God has made a way for you to know Him!**

➤ **That way is through His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!**

○ **John 14:6**

○ **I John 5:11-13**

* **Romans 10:9-10**