



THE LIFE OF
PAUL

FAMILY DEVOS

The Unknown God

Scripture: Acts 17:16-34

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 10:10a

“But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King.”

For My Family:

In our last study, we saw Paul teaching in, and then getting chased out of, Thessalonica and Berea. When the Jews came for Paul in Berea, he fled to Athens, but Silas and Timothy stayed behind to continue the ministry for a little while longer. Meanwhile, Paul went to the city of Athens and waited for them there.

While he was there, Paul noticed something about the city: it was filled with idols! The people believed there was a god of thunder, a god of the sea, a god of the sun, and more. In fact, the people of Athens believed in so many gods that they worried there might be a god they had forgotten, so they even built an altar to “the unknown god.” That way, if they had forgotten a god, they could worship him too.

Seeing all these people worshipping false gods made Paul very upset, so he began to do what he did everywhere else: he preached the Gospel. The philosophers (men who thought they were very smart and tried to figure out the mysteries of the universe) heard about Paul and asked him to explain what he believed, and so he did. He told them that they were right about one thing: there *is* a God they had forgotten about, and He is very different from the idols that they worshipped.

Paul’s sermon focused on explaining who this “unknown God” is. He told the people of Athens that God created everything (vs. 24), that He doesn’t live in a man-made temple (24), that He gives life to all things and has created every nation and group of people (25-26), that He is not far from any of us (27), and that He is not made of metal or stone like their idols (29). Paul then called them to repent of their sins and turn to the Lord. Some made fun of him for these beliefs, others were uninterested, but a few believed and were saved.

Our world today is actually a lot like Athens. There are many different people who believe all sorts of things. There are some people who follow religions like Buddhism or Islam and believe in gods other than the God of the Bible. Other people don’t believe in any kind of god at all. They might believe that the most important thing in life is to be happy, make money, or even do good deeds. The problem is, none of these beliefs can save a person from their sin or give them eternal life. Only faith in Jesus can do that. As Christians, it is our job to teach them about the true and living God. Of course, in order to tell others about what God is like, we first need to know ourselves who God is, what He is like, what He has done, and what we need to do about it. The answers to all these questions can be found in the Bible. So study the Word, then go out and tell others about our wonderful Lord!

Questions for Young Children:

Who or what were the people of Athens worshipping?

What strange altar did Paul see in Athens and talk about in his message?

Do you know anyone who does not know the true and living God? Talk to them about the Lord.

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

How would you describe God to someone who has never read the Bible?

Some people say that every religion is true, and that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe it sincerely. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

Paul corrected a lot of misconceptions that the Athenians had about God. What are some untrue things that some people today believe about God? How can you show them the truth?