

THE GOD OF THE HERE AND NOW

Text: Acts 17:24-27

INTRO: In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth. He has great things planned for our future. But what I want to emphasize in this lesson is that God is not just the God of long ago and far away, He lives, He is active today. He is the God of the here and now.

I. GOD IS LORD OF HEAVEN & EARTH, vs. 24.

A. He made the heaven & earth & everything in them--plants, animals, minerals, angelic beings... whatever exists, He made it by the power of His word.

B. Even today, He continues to sustain or uphold all things by that same great power.

Heb 1:1-3, God, who at various times & in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, thru whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

C. He sends the sunshine & rain, the wind & snow. Spring, summer, fall & winter continue to come because He upholds that which He set in order at the beginning.

Like begets like because He upholds what He set in order at creation.

He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven & fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food & gladness. (Acts 14:17).

II. HE GIVES TO ALL LIFE & BREATH, vs. 25.

A. Many of his blessings are not automatic, but they are readily available. Our daily bread. Our homes. Our families.

B. Because He has given us so much, we should be forever thankful, and should praise Him continually.

III. HE DETERMINES THE TIMES & BOUNDARIES OF NATIONS, vs. 26.

A. The destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D.

B. The fall of the Roman Empire.

Rev 17:18, And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Rev 18:21, Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

IV. HE IS ALWAYS NEAR FOR ALL WHO ARE WILLING TO SEEK HIM AND FIND HIM, vs. 27.

Ps 139:7-10, Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, be-

hold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, & dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, & Your right hand shall hold me.

- A. He is there to rejoice when a sinner repents, LK 15:7, 10
- B. He is there to forgive every sinner who meets the conditions of forgiveness, Acts 2:36-41.
- C. He is always on hand to see to it that we are not tempted beyond our power to resist, 1 Cor. 10:13.
 - 1. When I'm near at home, among family, friends, & associates, I have extra incentive to behave.
 - 2. But even when I am far away from all who know me in a strange & foreign place, He is there to hold me up & keep me strong, if I'll cooperate.
- D. He is there to hear & answer our prayers. This is no guarantee that we will not suffer. Lazarus suffered. Paul suffered. Job suffered. Jesus suffered. There is no guarantee that we will not suffer, but there is a promise that we will not have to suffer alone.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1 Pet 5:6-7).

- E. As we pray, Jesus is always there to search our hearts & present to the Father the prayer we would have prayed if we had been able to utter it, Rom. 8:27. He always lives to make intercession for us, Heb. 7:25.
- F. God is always there to have fellowship with us as we walk in the light, 1 JN 1:7. He is always there to cleanse us with the precious blood of Jesus.
- G. Thru His providence, He sees that each of us finds himself in situations where our abilities & talents are needed. We must seek to take advantage of our opportunities. Esther 4:14. The good Sam. LK 10.
- H. He is there to see that all things work together for our good, if we love Him & seek to accomplish His will, Rom 8:28.

NOTE the case of Joseph in the O.T. How could it be good for his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery? How could it be good for them to lead Isaac into believing for years that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal when they knew better? How could it be good for him to be imprisoned by Potipher for a crime of which he was not guilty? None of these things were good. Most if not all of them were downright sinful. But because Joseph loved God and sought to serve Him faithfully, God caused good to result from all these evil things.

But as for you, you meant evil against me: but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. (Gen. 50:20).

Rom. 8:28, 34-39, And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors thru Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 26, 1995
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, September 15, 2002