

Series: Acts

Lesson #74

Title: The Temple of the Sovereign God

Scripture: Acts 17: 19-24

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Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Princeton, New Jersey

We see in the Athenians the natural thoughts of man if God leaves us to ourselves. Those to whom Paul preached set themselves up as if they were their own creator. They imagined that they were the benefactors toward God. These were men and women who lived as if everything was made for their glory, for their happiness, for their recreation.

We find these same thoughts in our day, even among many who claim to be worshipping Christ. Most are nothing more than would-be gods. Multitudes speak as if it is man who is benefiting God, gracing God, gifting God by their worship of him. We are living in the day when men are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

Paul strikes this error at the very root with this beginning word:

Acts 17: 24: God that made the world and all things therein,

I. GOD IS THE CREATOR OF THE WORLD AND ALL THINGS THEREIN

The first words, whether in writing or in public speaking, are of utmost importance. I realize that Genesis is not the first book of the Bible which was written. But in God's sovereign providence, the arrangement of the Bible as we have it today begins where everything, including our salvation, begins.

Genesis 1: 1: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2: And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3: And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Isaiah 40: 12: Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?...28: Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

Jeremiah 10:11: Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

The errors of men concerning creation manifests the necessity that God, in the beginning must create a new spirit within the sinner, that the Spirit must move upon our void and unformed deadness, that God must say let there be light or else we will not have the Light of Christ.

Without God creating spiritual life within a sinner the sinner will never be anything but void and without form.

II. GOD IS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Acts 17: 24: God that made the world and all things therein seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth...

The void and formless figures called sinners do not know the power of the Lord.

Job 40: 6: Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 7: Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 8: Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? 9: Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? 10: Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. 11: Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him. 12: Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. 13: Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in secret. 14: Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Psalm 115: 2: Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God? 3: But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Isaiah 46: 5: To whom will ye liken me, and make *me* equal, and compare me, that we may be like? 6: They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, *and* hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. 7: They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, *one* shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. 8: Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring *it* again to mind, O ye transgressors. 9: Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, 10: Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it. 12: Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that *are* far from righteousness: 13: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

III. GOD DWELLETH NOT IN THE TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS

Acts 17: 24: God that made the world and all things therein seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

The Athenians thought they could use their own hands to build temples for God to dwell in. This philosophy and idolatry is found in our day in many who profess to believe on Christ.

This refers back to when Solomon was given a charge by God to build a temple. This is what Solomon said:

2 Chronicles 2: 5: And the house which I build *is* great: for great *is* our God above all gods. 6: But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who *am* I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

Solomon asks a good question. Who IS able to build the temple of God? God that made the world and all things therein; the Lord of heaven and earth; there is but one who builds the temple of God, Christ, the son of David, of whom Solomon was but a type.

We just read that in the beginning, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Luke 1:35: And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Hebrews 10: 4: For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5: Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

John 2: 18: Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19: Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20: Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21: But he spake of the temple of his body.

Hebrews 9: 24: For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Colossians 2: 8: Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15: *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Christ Jesus alone builds the temple wherein God dwelleth.

Genesis 2: 1: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth 2: And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3: And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

2 Corinthians 4: 3: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2: 4: To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, 5: Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6: Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Ephesians 2: 21: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Hebrews 8: 1: Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2: A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Do you believe God? Do you believe God created the world and all things therein? Do you believe that he is absolutely sovereign to do whatsoever he pleased to do? Do you believe on Christ Jesus?

2 Corinthians 6: 14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

What a word is this!---*your life is hid with Christ in God.*

John 14: 19: Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20: At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Psalms 139: 7: Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8: If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. 9: *If* I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10: Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11: If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12: Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*. 13: For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14: I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. 15: My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16: Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

Is it really all that big a deal for me to believe that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth? That he is the Lord of the heaven and earth. That he does not dwell in temples made with hands.

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Galatians 6:15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

It is not just a big deal it is a matter of life or death.

2 Corinthians 5:1: For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

God creates his holy temple. The Son of God, Christ Jesus, the Son of David, through his one offering builds God's temple--we are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

May God make it a matter of life to you! Amen.