

Getting the Gospel – Part I  
Acts 17:16-31

Introduction

- A. It is possible to sum the Gospel up in a few words. But those few words assume a lot of **teaching**.
- B. In much of our evangelism today we have a “**sound-byte** Gospel.”

But the most important question is: Are we effectively communicating the **full** Gospel.

- C. In our evangelism, we must clearly and carefully *instruct* the unsaved in the **teachings** of a God-centered, Christ-centered, and grace-centered Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20).
- I. The first indispensable teaching of the Gospel is teaching about **God**.
- A. If the person you are talking to is “in the flesh,” then his mind is **hostile** toward God (Rom. 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14).  
  
If he speaks “nicely” about God, then either he is not sincere or he not talking about the one **true** God of the **Bible**! (He is an *idolater*.)
  - B. Acts 17:16-21 (cf. verse 29)
    - 1. Paul is about to evangelize **idol**-worshiping pagans in Athens, Greece.
  
    - 2. So Paul will spend most of his time **instructing** his audience in the basic, *biblical* understanding of **God**!
- II. Acts 17:22-28 – For the purposes of Evangelism, what is the basic, biblical understanding of God?
- A. Acts 17:22-24 – God is **Creator**.
  
  
  - B. Acts 17:25 – God is **Sustainer**.

C. Acts 17:26-27 – God is **Ruler**.

✓ If God really did make the world and all things in it...

And if God really does give to all people life and breath and all things...

Then of course He is the ruler and master of mankind...

And therefore, He must be **sought** after, **served**, and **worshiped**!

D. Acts 17:28 – God is **Father**.

1. (“*In Him* we live and move and exist.”)

2. This is the **summary** and **climax** of all that we have learned about God thus far!

E. Acts 17:29-31 – Paul’s conclusion

1. Verse 29 – God is not who you **think** He is.

2. Verses 30-31 – God is the **Judge** of all the world.

a. Paul’s goal has been to demonstrate our daily **obligation** to worship and serve and seek after God – *and* to show that we will be **accountable** to God on the Day of Judgment.

b. Contrast your neighbor’s god!

F. Summary and Conclusion

IV. In our evangelism, we must teach people about the God of the Bible – using the **Bible**.

A. Hebrews 4:12 – The Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

B. **Idol-destroying** Scriptures.

1. **Acts 17:24-31!!!**

2. Isaiah 44:24 – Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone.”
3. Isaiah 45:5, 7 – I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God... The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.
4. Isaiah 45:18 – For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), “I am the LORD, and there is none else.”
5. Isaiah 45:21-23 – There is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.
6. Colossians 1:16-17 – For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
7. 1 Corinthians 8:6 – There is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

III. Remember: Evangelism is not *proving* the true God or *arguing* for the true God, it is simply **proclaiming** the true God.

- A. Every human being *already* **knows** deep down the truth about God. But we have wickedly **suppressed** the truth in our hearts (Romans 1:18-25).
- B. The problem is not intellectual, but **spiritual** (cf. Acts 17:32-33).

### **Conclusion**

- A. When we leave out or distort the Gospel teaching about God:
  1. The **rest** of the Gospel teachings are also distorted and warped.
  2. The Gospel becomes **man**-centered instead of **God**-centered.
  3. The Gospel loses its **power**, and we lose our **boldness and joy** in proclaiming it.
- B. The Gospel teaching about God is for *us* too!

## Teaching our Children

- Q. What kind of people did Paul evangelize (tell the Gospel to) in Acts 17?
- A. Paul told the Gospel to people who worshiped many idols. These people believed in all sorts of gods that they had invented in their own thinking.
- Q. When Paul evangelized these people what did he spend most of his time teaching them about?
- A. Paul spent most of his time teaching the idol-worshippers about what the one *true* God of the Bible was *really* like!
- Q. If your friend or neighbor is *not* a Christian but he/she believes in God and says nice things about God, do you think that he/she is really thinking about the one true God of the Bible? Why or why not?
- A. No, he must not be thinking about the true God of the Bible because the Bible says that everyone who doesn't have the Holy Spirit actually *hates* the true God.
- Q. So what kind of "god" does your friend/neighbor believe in if it is not the true God of the Bible?
- A. An idol. He believes in a god that he has invented in his own thinking (a nice, safe, friendly god).
- Q. If we want to tell the Gospel to this friend/neighbor, what is the first thing we would need to teach them about?
- A. We would need to teach them about what the one true God of the Bible is really like – just like Paul!
- Q. What do idol-worshippers especially need to know about God? (What did Paul teach them?)
- A. God is Creator – God made the world and all things in it.  
God is Sustainer – God gives to all people life and breath and all things.  
God is Ruler – God decides when and where every nation on the earth will live.  
God is Father – We live and even *move* only because of Him!
- Q. If God is our Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, and Father, then what does that mean we absolutely *must* do?
- A. We absolutely *must* seek after God, and serve and worship Him alone – with all of our heart and soul and mind!  
We will be accountable to Him as our Judge.

When someone who is not a Christian has learned about what the one true God of the Bible is *really* like, then he is ready to hear the next teaching of the Gospel (next week)! What do you think the next teaching of the Gospel will be?

Reflect with your children on the truth that God is *our* Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, and Father. What does this mean for *us*?

Start memorizing Acts 17:24-31