

A Reasonable Faith

6/28/15

Be Noble-minded

Acts 17:10-34 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.

¹¹ Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

¹² Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

¹⁴ Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there.

¹⁵ Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

Get Angry

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"--because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"

²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean."

²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

The Sermon

²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,

²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

²⁷ that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,

²⁸ for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."

²⁹ Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

The Response

³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."

³³ So Paul went out from their midst.

³⁴ But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Evidence for the Resurrection

4 Facts in every Gospel account. Not disputed even by secular historians.

FACT #1 -- Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea

- a. location was known
- b. no other historical record given

FACT #2 -- Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers

- a. no signs of legendary embellishment
- b. women's' testimony discounted, so if made up not likely to say women found him first
- c. early allegations that disciple's had stolen the body
- d. easily falsified -- show a body

FACT #3 -- Multiple occasions of individuals and groups experiencing the appearance of Jesus alive

- a. list of eyewitnesses (1 Cor 15)
- b. multiple independent sources (Gospel accounts)

FACT #4 -- Original disciples believe Jesus was risen from the dead despite having every predisposition to the contrary

- a. situation: leader is dead and no one had the idea at the time that the messiah was to die.
- b. his execution showed that he was a condemned criminal and a heretic by the religious leaders
- c. disciples would die for this conviction -- not going to die for something known to be false when there is nothing to be gained.

What is the best explanation for these 4 facts?

- conspiracy by disciples?
- hallucinations?
- apparent death?
- God raised Jesus from the dead
 - shows he is truly the messiah
 - work on the cross is true
 - message is true

From: www.reasonablefaith.org/the-resurrection-of-jesus

By William Lane Craig