

While Paul was waiting in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of different spiritual beliefs. So he reasoned in the synagogue and other places with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks<sup>1</sup>, where various groups of philosophers would debate with him. Some thought that he advocating foreign gods because he was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

Then they took him to a meeting of the Areopagus Council, a group of thinkers who loved to talk about the latest ideas. They asked him to present his strange teachings to them and explain what they meant.

But they also promoted their own ideas. Besides those who followed their own gods, there was a group who did not believe in God at all, and believed that matter simply existed without a Creator. Life itself was a mere accidental but inevitable product of that matter. To them, the amazing symbiotic relationships between different animals and the organic functional behavior of all creatures did not come from an organized design. The world was their altar, but they had nothing to worship.

So Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus to proclaim God to them. In complete amazement at the level of their belief in accidental existence, He said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith, even in Israel."<sup>2</sup> But he knew that it was due to their will that they rejected the more rational idea of creation by a higher being<sup>3</sup>.

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. He gives everyone life and breath and everything else. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' Consider the flowers and birds<sup>4</sup>, their beauty and instincts. The irreducible complexity of life cannot be simply due to chance!"

When they heard about the Divine Creator, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." At that, Paul left the Council.

Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. The others, who turned their face from God, were too ready to believe a lie<sup>5</sup>.

1. This story is based on Acts 17:16-33.
2. see Matthew 8:5-11 and Luke 7:1-9
3. consider Psalm 14:1
6. Luke 12:27: "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these."
5. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, "... They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie..."