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Paul the Preacher
Acts 17:23-31; 13:38,39

We are living in important times. We have the first black President in America and he clearly demonstrates the art of public speaking. Today we have read from two of the messages that Paul the apostle preached although the ultimate example of public speaking is the Lord Jesus Himself. Even when his enemies listened to him, they said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). People tried to trip Him up in what He said, but there was never a misplaced word. He is the Son of God, present from the beginning, living a perfect spotless life. He alone could make the claim, "He that heareth My Word and believeth on Him the sent Me hath everlasting life" (John 5:24).

In the verses that we have read we find the following effect:-

1. The whole city wanted to hear (Acts 13:44)
2. Different Responses: Mocked, believed, wanted to know more (Acts 17:)
3. Hostility to the Message
4. Preaching the Truth, not rhetoric

In Acts 17, Paul was in a city marked by religion that showed confusion because it did not know God. In Athens, the altar was reared to "The Unknown God". Today, the altar is reared to Self. Paul answered the challenge in the way:

1. Who is the "unknown" God? He is the Creator of the World. Everything was made by Him.
2. He is the Source of all, so He does not need any to give to Him.
3. He is in control. He made all nations, He set their boundaries
4. He wants people to seek Him. He does not hide, but He does want evidence of desire.
5. Commands all men to repent because:
 1. They are sinners
 2. They are on the wrong path so need to turn around
 3. They come short of God's standards.

Why is this important? Because God has appointed a day of judgment when men must answer to the Man Whom they refused.

In Acts 13, the uniqueness of the Lord is emphasised.

He died as a sacrifice for sins, but He rose again as the confirmation that the work was completed. He not only forgives, but justifies. When a person believes, they are seen in Christ, clothed in His righteousness. Acts 16:31 states, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved", Romans 10:9 states, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart..thou shalt be saved"

In his inaugural speech in 1933, Roosevelt stated "There is nothing to fear but fear itself". For the believer in Christ, this is true as every enemy has been overcome. For the unbeliever, this is not true because he will face God in his sin.