

## Sermon Notes

National Presbyterian Church  
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### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF TWO GREEK PHILOSOPHIES & CHRISTIAN FAITH

#### EPICUREANS (Acts 22:18)

- (i) They believed that everything happened by chance.
- (ii) They believed that death was the end of all.
- (iii) They believed that the gods were remote from the world and did not care.
- (iv) They believed that pleasure was the chief end of man. They did not mean fleshly and material pleasure; for the highest pleasure was that which brought no pain in its train.

#### STOICS. (Acts 22:18)

- (i) They believed that everything was God. God was fiery spirit. That spirit grew dull in matter but it was in everything. What gave men life was that a little spark of that spirit dwelt in them and when they died it returned to God.
- (ii) They believed that everything that happened was the will of God and therefore must be accepted without resentment.
- (iii) They believed that every so often the world disintegrated in a conflagration and started all over again on the same cycle of events.

William Barclay, Daily Study Bible: Acts Of The Apostles, p.129, 1953.

#### CHRISTIAN FAITH (Acts 17:22ff)

- (i) God is not the made but the maker; and the one who made all things cannot be worshipped by anything made by human hands. It is all too true that people often worship what their hands have made. If a person's God be that to which he gives all his time, thought and energy, many are clearly engaged in worshipping man-made things (idols).
- (ii) God has guided history. God was behind the rise and fall of nations in the days gone by; God's hand is on the helm of things now.
- (iii) God has made humans in such a way that instinctively we long for God and grope after God in the darkness.
- (iv) The days of groping and ignorance are past. So long as people had to search in the shadows they could not know God and God excused their follies and their mistakes; but now in Christ the full blaze of the knowledge of God has come and the day of excuses is past.
- (v) The day of judgment is coming. Life is neither a progress to extinction, as it was to the Epicureans, nor a pathway to absorption to God, as it was to the Stoics; it is a journey to the judgment seat of God where Jesus Christ is Judge. (*DR – not only judging guilt and innocence; but sorting out the injustice in the world and making the world right (righteous)*).
- (vi) The proof of the preeminence of Christ is the resurrection. It is no unknown God but a Risen Christ with whom we have to deal.

William Barclay, Daily Study Bible: Acts Of The Apostles, p.130, 1953.

#### DR:

- vii. God rules – is very much alive and is interested in --the earth and heaven (contrary to the Epicureans)
- viii. God is not far off (contrary to the Epicureans)
- ix. But the earth is not God (contrary to the pantheistic Stoics)
- x. There is a human resurrection of individuals (contrary to both Stoics and Epicureans).