

### 3) CONVICTING

Acts 17:30-32

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this [matter]."

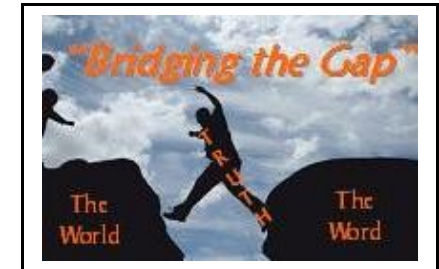
- a) **Climactic** transition as to why this discussion matters
- i. The Holy Spirit alone convicts (John 16:8)
  - ii. 17:27 God is **God is Just and Holy!**
  - iii. 17:30 God is **loving: He provided a way**
  - iv. 17:30 God is **a judge, for ALL people**
- b) **Confrontational** to their mind, heart and conscience
- i. 17:30 Humans must **make a choice**
  - ii. 17:30 Humans must **admit: God is God!**
  - iii. 17:31 God **will hold ALL to that choice**
  - iv. 17:31 God **the resurrection is PROOF**
  - iii. 17:32 Those present were confronted . . .
    - 1) Some **mocked**
    - 2) Some **were seeking more**
    - 3) Some **believed (17:34)**

**We fall into two dangers: a valued relationship where we are too scared to reach a climax and prefer to let a loved one slide blithely to a lost eternity in hell, or we fall into "hell, fire and brimstone" lambastology without genuine concern for an actual human soul that will one day face a loving, yet Holy God that provided a path, and proof. Both extremes are wrong.**

## Bridging the Gap

### Sunday: TRUTH ENGAGED

- What is Truth?  
What is postmodernism?  
What is the gap?  
What is tolerance?  
Can a postmodern person be saved?  
Where does *MISSION* fit in all of this?  
What do we do about it in *MISSIONS*?



<b>Mission</b>	<b>God's redemptive plan to save his lost world</b>
<b>Missions</b>	<b>Mission lived out by believers in various ways</b>
<b>Truth</b>	<b>That which corresponds to reality</b>
<b>Postmodernism</b>	<b>The contemporary state of no hope in a secure, knowable reality. There is no single reality, but just your localized perception</b>
<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>"You must accept ALL views as equal"</b>
<b>The "Gap"</b>	<b>Believers with Truth, reaching a lost world which has no hope that there is any truth!</b>

### **The Proposition:**

*"The present chasm [between Christian's and the world] . . . has been bought about almost entirely by a change in the concept of truth . . . So this change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today . . . If anything was true, the opposite was false. In morality, if one thing was right, its opposite was wrong. . . If you understand the extent to which this no longer holds sway, you will understand our present situation."*

Francis Schaeffer The God Who Is There

## How to bridge the gap, using Paul as our model in Acts 17:1-34

The place	Athens, at the <i>Areopagus</i> (Ares is the Greek god of war)
The purpose	To further explain his “babbling” from 17:18
The people	Some are curious, some cautious and some hostile
The plan	Connect to their world, then correct their false views
The product	Conviction for some, ridicule from others!

### 1) CONNECTING

#### Acts 17:22-23

*“Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.”*

#### a) **Compassion** toward them as *people* made in God’s image

- i. A stirring, or provoking, of spirit (17:16)
- ii. Human need is the *same* (always, everywhere)
- iii. “*I perceive you are religious*” (17:22)

#### b) **Courteous** engagement with their own worldview

- i. “*I considered*” to see your side of things (17:23a)
- ii. I found the extend of your worship (17:23b)
- iii. “Speak, and if necessary use words”?
- iv. Proclamation removes ignorance (Romans 10)

**While a testimony and godly lifestyle are important, at some point WORDS must be used to clearly and carefully explain the Truth. What is the SAME is the proclamation of who God is and why it matters eternally. What is DIFFERENT is the unique and personal situation of each person we meet. That “bridge” is different.**

### 2) CORRECTING

#### Acts 17:24-29

*God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.*

#### a) **Clear** teaching of *doctrine* regarding the True God

- i. God is **the starting point of all things!**
- ii. God is **known by clear statements about His nature, not *exhaustively*, but *truly***

#### b) **Comprehensive** (a systematic and balanced) view of God, going from “*God is King*” to “*this matters to you, personally*”

- i. 17:24 “*God, who*” **God is Self existent (Aseity, “of ones-self”)**
- ii. 17:24 “*made the world*” **God is Creator, all else is derivative**
- iii. 17:24 “*Lord of heaven*” **God is Sovereign, all else are subjects**
- iv. 17:24 “*does not dwell*” **God is Transcendent, above all else**
- v. 17:25 “*men’s hands*” **God is Spirit, above human representation**
- vi. 17:25 “*needed anything*” **God is Impassible, without *passion*, need**
- vii. 17:25 “*gives to all life*” **God is Sustainer, immediate and personal**
- viii. 17:26 “*one blood*” **God is powerful, directing ALL human affairs**
- ix. 17:26 “*might grope*” **God is Free. We have a “shadowy likeness”**
- x. 17:26 “*is not far*” **God in omnipresent, distanced only by our sin**
- xi. 17:27 “*in Him*” **God is personal, seeking free, loving relationship**

**God is both transcendent (above all), yet personal. He is also king, (determining all) yet free (allowing us to grope). We have a “shadowy likeness” and understanding of free relationships that are based on love, not force. Tozer said, “the essence of idolatry is entertaining thoughts about God that are unworthy of him.” Is. 44**