

# Acts 17:22-34 – 5/10/2026

<PRAY>

Please turn to the Acts reading, so that you can follow along with me, to make sure what I am saying is trustworthy and true.

It can be found on page 926 of the pew bible or on page 6 of the bulletin.

## [Intro](#)

We continue this Sunday in the season of Easter, a period in our church year where we focus on, and highlight, the death and resurrection of our savior Jesus Christ. In this season, we celebrate the great victory he has won for us over sin and death. Therefore, I want to focus our attention this morning on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There is much that could be said about this passage, about how Paul contextualizes his message about Jesus for his audience, and whether or not it was effective. But to me, I was struck by how important the resurrection is to Paul's message. It seems like it is a pretty big deal! It determined whether or not people were willing to receive his message.

So, I want us to think about the resurrection, and particularly want us to think about how important is it not just to our theology, but in our everyday activities.

## [Context](#)

In this passage we find ourselves in the middle of the book of Acts, which is the fifth book in the New Testament. This book recounts the growth of the church in the period immediately after Jesus' ascension to the heavenly throne, where he is now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

And have joined the Apostle Paul who, only 9 chapters earlier was persecuting the church, is now travelling throughout the Roman Empire telling people the good news of Jesus Christ.

As we zoom into this chapter, at the beginning of it, Paul is in Athens, Greece, not Georgia. He is walking around, talking to people in the synagogues and in the marketplaces about Jesus. He runs into some Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers, who bring him to the Areopagus to hear what he has to say about the resurrection of Jesus. It is here that our passage picks up.

Now there is much that could be said about this passage, but as we continue to celebrate Easter and remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, I want to focus on the resurrection.

1. [Point 1 - The Revelation of the Resurrection](#)
2. [Point 2 - The Significance of the Resurrection](#)
3. [Point 3 - The Response to the Resurrection](#)

## 1. Point 1- The Revelation of the Resurrection

So, point 1 the revelation of the resurrection.

The revelation of the resurrection is that through the resurrection of Jesus, God has revealed himself to the world. He has made himself known to all people, and brought the times of ignorance to an end.

Look at verses 29 and 30 with me again,

*“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. <sup>30</sup>The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent”*

Paul begins his speech to the Athenians, by connecting with them about their desire to worship. As we heard from the reading, Paul noticed all the altars that they had. They were so religious, they desired so much to worship something that they would worship anything. They didn’t want to offend any god, whether good or bad. This led them to build an altar dedicated “to the unknown god.’ These were very worshipful and religious people.

But instead of encouraging them for their devout worship, he blasts them for their ignorance. He then sets about filling in where their knowledge is lacking, so that God would not remain unknown to them.

In verses 24 and 25 Paul explains that God, who created the world and everything in it, is absolutely in control of all things and completely self-sufficient. He is creator, sustainer, and ruler of all that exists.

In verse 26, he explains that his sovereign rule extends over all the nations of the earth, for all of time.

In verse 27, we read that the purpose of his sovereign rule over all people, is so that all people would seek and find him.

And this is not hard to do, because he is not a distant God, but a God who longs to be in relationship with his creation.

This fact is even supported by some of their own poets and philosophers.

Even they say that we are connected to God, like a parent is connected to their child.

Paul then deduces, that if all these things are true,

if God is indeed the sovereign creator and ruler of all people and nations,

and if God is not hard to find, because he is not a distant God, but a relational one, who is deeply connected with his creation, then we shouldn't treat him as an idol or worship any objects that are made by human hands.

This leads to the question who or what then should they worship?

Paul has exposed and summarized their ignorance, though they claim to be religious, they have failed to seek and find the one true God.

In their ignorance they have worshipped man-made idols.

He then hits them with the sucker punch, their ignorance can no longer be an excuse, because God has now revealed himself to them, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God has bridged the gap in their ignorance, by making himself known to them in Jesus Christ. The period of ignorance is now over, now is the time for repentance.

What does Paul mean by this? That God overlooked the times of ignorance?

The period of time that Paul is referring to here, is the old covenant and the old testament.

When God was known to them in general, but not to all people specifically.

Romans 1 says, that everyone can know about God through the things he has created. Which is what Paul has just established with the Athenians. That because humans are created beings, created by God, we can know something about him. But instead of acknowledging God and worship him, people chose to ignore him, and create their own idols.

But in this period of ignorance God had not revealed himself specifically. He had not revealed his special plan of salvation. He had not revealed himself to the world personally.

Apart from his chosen people Israel, most of humanity remained ignorant of God. And he allowed them to continue in their ignorance.

But now, God has been revealed.

The mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations, has now been revealed. (Ephesians 3:4-5).

There is no more excuse for not knowing God. There is now no excuse for ignoring God.

**Illustration** – One pastor<sup>1</sup> explains, that it is one thing to ignore someone on the street you don't know. You can just walk by someone without acknowledging them and it is considered ok. You might give them a head nod. But it can be a little confronting when you start a full-blown conversation out of the blue.

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<sup>1</sup> [16. The Religion of A Dead World - Phillip Jensen](#)

But if you walk past someone you already know, and you ignore them, that can be considered quite rude.

So, how is it that God is revealing Jesus to the world? First, he has done so through the incarnation. By God himself coming down from heaven, taken on human flesh, living among us, dying for us, and rising to new life.

But now that Jesus has ascended to sit at the right hand of his father in heaven, now God is revealing Jesus to the world through the message about him, from the lips of people like Paul. But you don't have to be an apostle or professional pastor, because he is spreading the message of Jesus through regular believers, people just like you.

[Sum] – So, the times of ignorance are over, God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and now is the time to repent.

This brings us to our second point, the significance of the resurrection.

## 2. Point 2- The Significance of the Resurrection

What has God revealed to the world about Jesus through the resurrection? What is the significance of this event?

The significance of the resurrection, is through it God has revealed that the day has been set when all people will face judgement, and that the judge will be Jesus.

Look at verse 31 with me again, (starting at verse 30,)

**“<sup>30</sup>The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup>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 significance of this event cannot be understated. There has been a cosmic shift in the story of history, the epochs have changed. The times of ignorance are over, now is the day of repentance, salvation, and judgement.

There are two things that I want to highlight that are significant about this event.

Through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead;

1. Jesus has been appointed to judge the world.
2. And the day when he will judge the world has now been set.

### **1. Jesus has been appointed the Judge.**

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, reveals, confirms and proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus of Nazareth is the long awaited for Messiah. He is the man appointed by God, to judge the living and the dead. All authority in heaven and on earth, as we heard in the gospel reading, has been given to Jesus.

He is the one the people of God have been waiting for ever since the fall in the garden of Eden. The one who would restore and redeem what was broken by the fall, the one who would bring rest to all enemies, both foreign and domestic, physical and spiritual. The one who would bring peace to the world, and inner peace to our restless hearts and minds. He truly is the one!

It is just like in a movie or story when there is a significant event that convinces everyone that the main character is the “chosen one”.

One of my favorites, is the 1999 movie, the Matrix. In the Matrix, humanity is at war with artificially intelligent machines. And the main character Thomas Anderson, a computer hacker also known as Neo, is considered by many to be the chosen one, the one who would finally bring an end to the war between humanity and machines.

But after a betrayal by one of his friends, Neo is shot and killed. And in that moment, all seems lost. The machines have won, humanity is hopeless once again!

But then, something happens and everything changes. Neo rises from the dead! And in doing so, he proves that he truly is the chosen one! The one who has power over the machines.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, is not just a nice story it is a significant event in history where God reveals to us that Jesus is the promised one, the man that he has appointed to judge all people.

He is uniquely gifted for this role. Because in the resurrection, Jesus is proven and vindicated to be who he said he was. He rose from the dead just like he said he would. He is not a liar or a lunatic, he is Lord.

But also, in Romans 6, Paul says because Christ has been raised from the dead, he will never die again; and therefore “death no longer has dominion over him”. (Romans 6:9)

The resurrection is a history-altering event, because it marks the end of the reign of death, and the beginning of new life in Christ.

## **2. The day of judgement has been set.**

Not only does it prove that Jesus is the judge, but it sets in motion the day of judgement.

In the old testament the resurrection is considered to be this great end of time event. A day when God would come from heaven and reign down justice upon sin and evil, across the face of the earth. Where he would wipe out all of his enemies, and bring an end to all evil. It is meant to be a day that evokes great fear and trembling.

In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we get the down payment, the guarantee that that day is coming. The confirmation that God will do what he has said he will do.

Like a deposit on a house or a car.

Like an engagement ring that announces that one day a wedding is coming when two people will be married.

The resurrection of this one person (Jesus), guarantees that one day all people will be raised from the dead and come face to face with their creator.

There is a day coming when all people will be raised and face judgement. For those who repent and believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, they will be raised to the new creation and enjoy life with God.

But for those who choose to ignore God, and who have done evil, who have not repented, their judgement will not be favorable and they will go to eternal punishment.

### Implication: Are you ready?

If the date of judgement has been set, and if the judge has been appointed, then; are you ready for it?

Have you marked it on your calendar?

Have you prepped for it?

Just think about how much time you spend getting ready for a big event, for a wedding or a prom. Or getting your house ready to host a party.

Is your hair done? Have you put your face on? Have you shaved? Do you smell good? Do your socks match? Is your house clean? Are your base-boards spotless? Is your yard pristine?

Are your oil lamps full of oil? Are you ready to meet the judge?

Or,

are you continuing on in ignorance? As though the resurrection never happened?

**[Sum]** - The resurrection of Jesus is the most significant event in history that cannot be ignored, it reveals to the world Jesus will one day judge the world in righteousness.

This brings us to our final point, point 3, the response to the resurrection.

### 3. Point 3- The Response to the Resurrection

If the resurrection is such a significant event, that reveals God's plan for salvation and judgement, how then should we respond?

Look at verses 32-34 with me again,

*"<sup>32</sup> Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, 'We will hear you again about this.' <sup>33</sup> So Paul went out from their midst. <sup>34</sup> But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them."*

Now I am sure that Paul could have gone on and on about Jesus, just like he did at other times and in other places. But it seems like when they heard him mention the resurrection and the coming judgement, this was all too much for some of them and they began to mock him.

But that wasn't the case for everyone. Some did mock him.

But notice, others wanted to hear more.

And even some people believed his message and became followers of Jesus with Paul.

I wonder, where do you fit in these responses?

Do you scoff at the resurrection? Denying its reality and living as though it never happened.

Or are you curious about it, though with some doubt, but you'd like to learn more?

If this describes you, the pastors here would love to meet you after the service and talk to you more about Jesus and his resurrection.

Or have you already come to believe and joined Paul in following Jesus?

The resurrection of Jesus is an event that demands a response, it is not trivial or insignificant. It cannot be ignored, you cannot remain in your ignorance any longer.

But many of us here have responded in belief, however, we might practically live as though it never happened. As though it makes no difference to our lives.

I have been convicted of this, this past week as I have meditated on this passage.

Thinking about difference does the resurrection make to my life right now?

Now on the surface level the answer is that it makes a rather big difference to my life, I have a job that exists because Jesus has been raised. I come to church every Sunday (not just because I am paid to) to worship Jesus, because he is alive and reigns over all. I look forward to a time when I will be with God face to face, and finally be fully restored.

But my mind isn't always occupied with these things, my day to day activities aren't necessarily shaped by Jesus' resurrection or the coming day of judgement.

As I change my youngest son's diapers, play with my daughter, take my son to soccer, make plans for their schooling, figure out how my wife and I can spend some time together without them, and plan for our future;  
I find myself very much focused on this life.

So, how can we get ready for the resurrection and judgement day now?

Here are my 3 steps for living into the resurrection.

### **1. Repent (if you haven't already)**

As we have heard, the times of not knowing who God is, and the times of ignoring God, are over! It is now the time for repentance.

If you haven't already repented of your sin, of the ways you have ignored God, then now is the time to do that.

It is as simple as telling God that you were wrong, and asking for his forgiveness, which he freely offers you through Jesus' death on the cross for you.

### **2. Join and believe.**

Once you have repented, the next step is to join with his followers and believe in the one who has been raised.

You can find followers of Jesus pretty easily, some of us gather here every Sunday.

So, commit to coming to church, learn what it means to follow Jesus, not just from the internet chatbots or from textbooks, but from real people, who are following Jesus with you.

Become a member of the church, volunteer to serve, and give up your time and your talents, in service of your Lord.

### **3. Live as though you were in heaven already.**

After repenting, join and believe, live as though you were already in heaven.

In the book of Revelation, we get a glimpse into the throne room of heaven, and what we see there is people from all over the earth gathered around God's throne, singing praises to him, enjoying being with him in person.

I think this is a small picture of what our resurrection life will be like. We will be overwhelmed with joy of being in the presence of our maker, redeemer and king, that won't be able to stop praising him.

The point of the Christian life and salvation is not to escape suffering, or to find a better way of being a moral person. The point is to be in relationship with God.

Were made for relationship for him, were have been redeemed so that we might be reconciled to him, and we will be raised to live with him, forever.

So, if you aren't enjoying God now, if you aren't praising Jesus now, I have some bad news for your future. You probably aren't going to enjoy heaven.

What does this mean practically? It means spending time with God, by his Spirit, through reading his word and speaking to him in prayer. It means reorganizing your life and calendar so that he is a priority in your life. Learning more about him, talking to others about him, both believers and non-believers alike. Making your life, more and more about Jesus, and less and less about you.

### [Conclusion](#)

The age of ignorance is over, now is the time to repent because the judgement day has been set, and the judge has been appointed through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let me pray for us.

## Discussion Questions

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1. What stands out to you from Paul's message to the Athenians?
  - a. Is there any you notice that Paul didn't say?
2. How does Paul connect with his audience?
3. How does Paul confront his audience?
4. What do we learn about God from this passage?
5. Verse 27 says that the purpose for God establishing the boundaries and times of every nation is so that should seek God, what does Paul mean by this?
6. What does it mean that we are God's offspring?
  - a. In what sense are all people God's children?
  - b. If we are all God's children, and he loves his children, then what need is there for repentance?
7. What do you think "the times of ignorance God overlooked" means?
8. What is the connection between the resurrection of Jesus and the day of judgement?
9. How do you respond to the resurrection of Jesus?
10. How much does the resurrection shape your everyday life?
  - a. Do you live a resurrection-less life?
11. Are you ready to face judgement?
  - a. How might you get ready now?