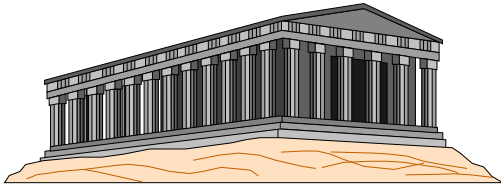


PAUL IN ATHENS: A CASE STUDY IN WORLDVIEW THINKING AND COMMUNICATION (ACTS 17)



OBSERVATIONS

¹While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly **distressed** to see that the city was full of idols.

²So he **reasoned** in the *synagogue* with the *Jews* and the *God-fearing Greeks*, as well as in the *marketplace* day by day with those who happened to be there. ³A group of **Epicurean** and **Stoic philosophers** began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "*What is this babbler trying to say?*" Others remarked, "*He seems to be advocating foreign gods.*" They said this because Paul was proclaiming the good news about *Jesus and the resurrection*.

⁴Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the *Areopagus*, where they said to him, "*May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ⁵You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.*" ⁶*(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)*

⁷Paul then stood up in the meeting of the *Areopagus* and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ⁸For as I **walked around and observed your objects of worship**, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

⁹"The *God who made the world and everything in it* is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ¹⁰And God is not served by human hands, as if God needed anything, because God gives all men life and breath and everything else. ¹¹From one man God made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth; and God determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ¹²God did this so that men would seek God and perhaps reach out for God and find God, though God is not far from each one of us. ¹³For in him we live and move and have our being.' ***As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'***¹⁴ ¹⁴"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. ¹⁵In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now God commands all people everywhere to repent. ¹⁶For God has set a day when God will judge the world with justice by the man God has appointed. *God has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.*"

¹⁷When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." ¹⁸At that, Paul left the Council. ¹⁹A few became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the *Areopagus*, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

¹ Aratus, (circ. B.C. 272), *Phenomena*, opens with an invocation to Zeus, which contains the words Paul quotes. Similar words were used by Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus* (B.C. 300).

WELTANSCHAUUNG-WORLDVIEW²: DEFINITION AND FORMATION

"A world view is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false which we hold, consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently, about the basic make up of our world."³

"**1**) The collection of beliefs (ideas, images, attitudes, values) that an individual or group holds about such things as the universe, humankind, God, the future, etc. **2**) A comprehensive outlook about life and the universe from which one explains and/or structures relationships and activities. A worldview may be deliberately formulated or adopted, or it may be the result of an unconscious assimilation or conditioning process. It is the general perspective from which one sees the world."⁴

"The sum of the beliefs that an individual or the members of a society hold about the universe and the place and destiny of man within it; a philosophical view of the universe."⁵

QUESTIONS: WORLDVIEW THINKING BEGINS WITH QUESTIONS



ULTIMATELY REALITY?
WHAT IS THE ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF THE COSMOS?
WHAT ARE HUMANS?
WHAT IS DEATH? WHAT HAPPENS?
HOW CAN WE KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL?
WHAT SHOULD MORALITY BE BASED UPON?
IS THERE A "MEANING AND PURPOSE" TO LIFE?

ANSWERS WORLDVIEWS PROVIDE ANSWERS



ULTIMATE REALITY IS...
THE EXTERNAL WORLD IS . . .
HUMANITY IS...
DEATH IS...
WE CAN KNOW THINGS BECAUSE . . .
THE BASIS OF MORALITY IS...
THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF LIFE IS...

REASONS



EACH WORLDVIEW IS (EITHER DELIBERATELY OR NON-DELIBERATELY) BELIEVED IN BECAUSE OF REASONS. THE VALIDITY OF THE REASONS THAT SUPPORT ONE'S WORLDVIEW IS THUS JUST AS, IF NOT MORE, IMPORTANT THAN THE VIEWS THEMSELVES.

TO PARAPHRASE SOCRATES, "THE UNEXAMINED WORLD VIEW IS DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY."

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_view

³ J. W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 16.

⁴ P. A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1981), 319.

⁵ H. H. Titus and M. S. Smith, *Living Issues in Philosophy* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1974), 549