

The Wednesday Word, May 20, 2020: “This New Doctrine”

When the apostle Paul was at Athens, (see Acts 17) he was told that the gospel he preached was a new doctrine. How wrong his critics were!

Evidently, they did not know that in the ancient Hebrew writings, CHRIST JESUS is the great theme. No sooner had sin entered mankind than the Lord God prophesied about the coming one (Christ) who would bruise the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). From that point on, the tone was set. There was a deliverer coming.

Consider how the following point, in types and figures, to this One who was to come. Here are but a few examples.

Abel's Lamb: It was accepted as a substitute for Abel. It had done no wrong but was slaughtered for Abel's sin. Likewise, Christ, the innocent one was slaughtered for us.

Noah's Ark: All the people in Noah's Arc were safe. Likewise, all in Christ will be saved.

Isaac was bound to the altar by his Father. Christ was bound to the cross, by His Father (see Isaiah 53:4–5, 10).

Joseph was rejected and exalted, ...Similarly Christ came to His own and they rejected Him but now He is exalted.

The blood of the Passover lamb and the **elements** of the Passover feast all pointed to Christ (see 1Corinthians 5:7-8).

The writings of the psalmist David and the prophets also abound with allusions to the coming Saviour (see Psalm 22; Isaiah 53). Indeed, the doctrine of Christ is no new thing. It is from eternity (Revelation 13:8).

Which brings us back to Acts 17. The philosophers of Athens brought Paul to Mars Hill, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine of which you speak is?”

New doctrine indeed! Jesus a new doctrine? Ha! Was Athenian philosophy older than the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Was Greek philosophy older than the precious promise of the seed of the woman? And was Greek philosophy to look down despairingly on the antiquity of the Hebrew prophets of whom we are told that "to him (*Christ*) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins " (Acts 10:43).

Athenian philosophy was a mere “Johnny-Come-Lately” in comparison to the doctrine of Christ!

But those arrogant Greek philosophers were more to be pitied than scolded. They knew nothing of the Scripture promises concerning the Lord Jesus. The mass of these men, as it transpires, had no heart for Christ, but through infinite mercy and grace, perhaps a few were brought to salvation

(see Acts 17:34).

New doctrine indeed!

Jesus remains the sum and substance of the scriptures. It is no wonder then that the Father announced from the excellent glory, “This is my beloved Son; hear him” (Luke 9:35).

Let me ask, have you heard Him? Or are you, like the Athenians, living with a salvation of your own devising and invention.

But hear the word of the Lord, “Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved” (Acts 16:31).

The New Testament gives us abundant instances of faith in Him. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and rejoiced in God's salvation (see Luke 2:25-30).

Peter confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16).