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Acts 17:24-31

24. “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

25. nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

26. and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

27. that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

28. for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’

29. Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

30. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,

31. because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has

appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

This text contains Paul’s message to the religious folks in Athens. Here we see in Paul’s proclamation--as inspired by the Holy Spirit--evidence for both predestination and free-will.

Verse 26 states, “God made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation.” Here we see God has determined, that is pre-destined, when and where each person will live his life on earth. So many of the physical parameters of this life have been decided for us by our Creator and are beyond our control. For example, God decides who are parents are, and our brothers and sisters; as well as when and where we are born.

But there are areas of our life which we have been given responsibility and control over, which is known as “free-will”. Paul, inspired to speak for God, proclaims in verses 30-31 of this passage: “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

All men everywhere are called to repent. It is the individual's decision and prerogative to heed God's call. And God gives all men proof, that is hard evidence to base their decision upon, by raising Jesus from the dead.

“God wills that none should perish, but that all would come to repentance.” (II Peter 3:9) The fact that many people will not repent, even though God would will it, clearly shows that men have the free-will with regards to salvation. I Timothy 2:3-4 points out that “God desires all men to be saved.”

So He calls all men to repent and turn to the Lord, furnishing abundant proof to all men--so that we may freely and reasonably come to Him. Have you obeyed God's call?

The serenity prayer then is indeed Scriptural--

“Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things which I can not change, the power to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”