

## Introduction

I appreciate the chance to bring this message to <http://omegamanradio.com> and thanks to our friend Rev. Joseph Cohen

- Eric and Noemi Ross
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- Rev Joseph Cohen – <http://newhopeinthelord.com>

## ***Man On Probation***

Introduction – 6 min

There are many great philosophers that have conjectured about who God is and the purpose of life. Many people have offered their ideas about who God is and there have been many debates about his nature and particularly on his influence on our lives. My topic tonight offers some answers and presents this time we are in as "Men on Probation". And I in no way intent men and women in the pejorative. The word Men here includes all of humanity equally as we are creatures of God's creation.

Our main text is Acts 17:30-31, Paul has an opportunity to preach the gospel before the greatest minds of Athens. Of course, this is Athens some time after its prime, yet this was still the gathering place for philosophers. See the write up at:

<https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/acts/athens-versus-paul>

Paul is speaking openly to all in

Acts 17:30–31 (LEB) Therefore although God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man who he has appointed, having provided proof to everyone by raising him from the dead."

Paul had gone ahead to Athens alone. This wasn't his usual routine, but I think he wanted a few days of leisure time. But as he made his way around the city, the spirit of God began to move him. He saw who they were as people.

Acts 17:21 "all the Athenians ... spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing"

"literally, "newer thing," as if what was new becoming presently stale, they craved something still more new [BENGEL]" (Jamieson, 1997)

Acts 17:22 "Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus"

"the hill where the most awful court of judicature had sat from time immemorial to pass sentence on the greatest criminals, and to decide on the most solemn questions connected with religion" (Jamieson, 1997).

And as we read this theme verse, Acts 17:30-31, I want to follow with the response of the people.

Acts 17:32 (LEB) Now when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, "We will hear you about this again also."

He Has Set A Day

Acts 17:31 (LEB) because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man who he has appointed, having provided proof to everyone by raising him from the dead."

I share that to make this point,

### **The Propositional Statement**

People are busy about their lives, doing what they have learned to do, doing what is in their nature to do and the world is filling their time with need of other things.

As Christians, we are ministers of this message,

"God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent"

### **The Transitional Sentence**

So, how do we get them to actually listen? We know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word.

## **We Are Born in Ignorance**

Main Body – 48 min

First Point – 12 min

Every man is born in the same way. Every man must learn how to live in this world. Every man grows from infancy to become full grown with the ability to choose how they will live.

And as we make choices about our lives, we become responsible for the outcome even if we aren't aware of what that outcome will be:

“God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent”

Peter is standing before a crowd in Jerusalem

Acts 3:17 (LEB) And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

Barnabas and Paul are with a crowd in Lystra:

Acts 14:15–17 (LEB) and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, proclaiming the good news that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things that are in them—  
16 who in generations that are past permitted all the nations to go their own ways. 17 And yet he did not leave himself without witness by doing good, giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying you with food and your hearts with gladness.”

Paul said that God “in generations that are past permitted all the nations to go their own ways”. But there was also a witness to them, “doing good, giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying you with food and your hearts with gladness”.

We naturally learn the culture that we are born into. We learn the language, we learn the values, we learn the appropriate social behaviors and these things drive our behavior.

Ephesians 4:17–19 (LEB) This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles walk: in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them,

because of the hardness of their heart, 19 who, becoming callous, gave themselves over to licentiousness, for the pursuit of all uncleanness in greediness.

But let's back up a few verses to:

Ephesians 4:14 (LEB) so that we may no longer be infants, tossed about by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of people, by craftiness with reference to the scheming of deceit.

This is our natural state as we begin life, infants. But we grow, we learn. We change from being completely dependent to taking our place.

**We Are Born in Ignorance**, but no one stays there.

Let's go on to another main point.

## Learn of Me

Second Point – 12 min

God has been revealing himself to the world and:

“God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent”

Every person has a personal experience by living in the world:

**Rom 1:19** Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

People often say that they don't know about God. But this isn't the case. God can be seen in creation. And once the wonder and beauty of creation is seen, we choose whether we will acknowledge God or not. This choice doesn't require any instruction or a preacher to explain. Every person will make their own choice here.

For me, this personal experience happened in the Colorado Rocky Mountains when I was thirteen years old. That summer we hiked and climbed Longs Peak, one of the highest peaks. It was such an awesome view, in all directions. The plains East, more mountains North, South, and West. There were snow covered peaks, Pine trees below, valleys with streams running to lakes, the great plains stretching out as far as I could see, and the beautiful clear blue Colorado sky. That day changed me forever as I was taken in by God's great creation.

Once people have known God through his creation and rejected Him, they have a predisposition against the knowledge of God that isn't easily broken. As it says in Rom 1:21 "their foolish heart was darkened".

There are those that will deny the truth that is clearly seen right in front of them.

And now we come back to our main point, we are to learn and grow.

Matthew 11:29–30 (LEB) Take my yoke on you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to carry and my burden is light."

We often think only of our need to conform to God's Word and this is true, there is a way of righteousness that we must put on. There is though, this nuance from this teaching, that his yoke is easy. It isn't one size fits all.

"He says: 'My yoke is easy.' The word easy is in Greek *chrēstos*, which can mean well-fitting. In Palestine, ox-yokes were made of wood; the ox was brought, and the measurements were taken. The yoke was then roughed out, and the ox was brought back to have the yoke tried on. The yoke was carefully adjusted, so that it would fit well, and not chafe the neck of the patient animal. The yoke was tailor-made to fit the ox" (Barclay, 2001).

It isn't just learning the doctrines that everyone should know, it is also learning the gifts, the calling that is part of who God has made you to be.

Hebrews 6:1–2 (LEB) Therefore, leaving behind the elementary message about Christ, let us move on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith in God, 2 teaching about baptisms and laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

There is a deeper understanding of our relationship with God that comes as we learn of Him, and allow Him to teach us who we are, our place in the body of Christ.

Let's take another main point.

## Repent

Third Point – 12 min

Unless the person or group you are talking to has accepted Christ, there is a message that you have for them,

“God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent”

We can learn the message but we also need to learn how to communicate with people.

Peter said in

Acts 3:17 (LEB) And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

They will be taught about the sacrificial blood of Christ through his crucifixion and death, and his resurrection and now position in heaven with the Father.

The best illustration I can think of here is ...

There is a new way for us to order our lives.

1 Peter 1:13–16 (LEB) Therefore, [when you have prepared your minds for action] by being self-controlled, put your hope completely in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former desires you used to conform to\* in your

ignorance, 15 but as the one who called you is holy, you yourselves be holy in all your conduct, 16 for it is written, "You will be holy, because I am\* holy."

After John the Baptist, Jesus went:

Mark 1:15 (LEB) and saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the gospel!"

Repentance is just the initial step, the recognition that I have wronged God. Jesus included something else with repentance in

Luke 24:45–47 (LEB) Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

It wasn't just repentance, it was repentance and .... Forgiveness of sins (plural, all).

When Paul delivered this message to the children of Israel in Jerusalem, he said:

Acts 2:36 (LEB) Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt, that God has made him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified!"

Paul gave them the gospel message that they had crucified Christ, but God had raised him from the dead and seated him at his own right hand as "as Lord and Christ". And this is how they reacted

Acts 2:37–39 (LEB) Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "What should we do, men and brothers?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all those who are far away, as many as the Lord our God calls to himself."

Repentance is more than just recognizing sin. It is also receiving forgiveness. Water baptism is an outward act that recognizes the work God has done in our hearts. But God has more than that for us, His own Holy Spirit.

The way God said it to the "house of Israel" is

Ezekiel 36:25–27 (LEB) And I will sprinkle on you pure water, and you will be clean from all of your uncleanness, and I will cleanse you from all of your idols. 26 And I will give a new heart to you, and a new spirit I will give into your inner parts, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will give my spirit into your inner parts, and I will make it so that you will go in my rules, and my regulations you will remember, and you will do them.

Let me ask here, have you had a personal experience with the Holy Ghost? Maybe you accepted Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you know that you are saved and have eternal life with him. He said, "I will give my spirit into your inner parts".

Have you received him? Have you received the Holy Spirit? When Peter was summoned to preach the gospel to Cornelius and his house in Act 10, Peter began telling them how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power and how they executed him by hanging him on a tree and how God raised him from the dead on the third day and

Acts 10:43 (LEB) To this one all the prophets testify, that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.

Acts 10:44–47 (LEB) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to the message. 45 And those believers from the circumcision who had accompanied Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, 46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter said, 47 "Surely no one can withhold the water for these people to be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as we also did!"

Right now, say this with me, Father, give me your spirit. Holy Spirit, I receive you. Holy Spirit I give you permission to enter into my innermost being. Now, thank him for the gift of His Spirit.

People must hear the gospel message. They can hear it by reading God's Word, the Bible. They can hear it through a media message. And, they can hear it by the words of your mouth. It is our mission to share the message of Christ, to teach them what God has already said.

One final point.

## **Then Comes the Judgement**

Fourth Point – 12 min

Once you begin preaching the gospel,

“God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent”

We are born into a world that is fallen. But God has given us a way to restore our relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

There is one thing in life that carries eternal consequence and that is the work of redemption that occurs when we come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. As it says in

Hebrews 9:27–28 (LEB) And [just as] it is destined for people to die once, and after this, judgment, 28 thus also Christ, having been offered once in order to bear the sins of many, will appear for the second time without reference to sin to those who eagerly await him for salvation.

When Christ appears the second time, for us who have accepted him, there won't be any consciousness of sin, only carrying us away to be with Him.

There is though, a final judgement where every soul who has ever lived will stand and give an account. The books are opened. What books? The record books of the deeds of men. And, the Lambs book of life.

Revelation 20:11–15 (LEB) And I saw a great white throne and the one who was seated on it, [from whose presence] earth and heaven fled, and a place was not found for them. 12 And I saw the dead—the great and the small—standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and each one was judged according to their deeds. 14 And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

We are all busy, doing the things of life. Have you taken care of the one most important issue? Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

## **The Sermon Conclusion**

Conclusion – 6 min

Our main text says:

Acts 17:30–31 (LEB) Therefore although God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man who he has appointed, having provided proof to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

And people react in one of two ways to this message:

Acts 17:32 (LEB)

32 Now when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, “We will hear you about this again also.”

Now let me briefly re-state the main points:

1. We Are Born in Ignorance
2. Learn of Me
3. Repent
4. Then Comes the Judgement

There was a time when we could just continue in our ignorance, but now, God has revealed His Son, Jesus Christ:

“God has overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent”

This repentance is simply accepting that what God has said is true. That men are born into a fallen world. That we need Jesus Christ.

Pray: If you have been listening and have never accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life, simply say this prayer with me.

"Dear God,  
I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness.  
I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died  
for my sin and that you raised Him to life.  
I want to trust Him as my Savior and follow Him as Lord,  
from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do your will.  
I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

If you prayed with me, I want to seal that with a short prayer for you.

"Father,  
I thank you for these that have accepted Christ today. Lead them by your  
Holy Spirit to a local Church where they can learn more about you and  
your plan for their life, In Jesus name, Amen

Pray: For those of you that are Christians, we have a commission to preach this gospel of the kingdom. Go and read Paul's message. Make it your own. And, pray with me now.

"Father,  
I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Father, I know it is your desire that all would be saved and come to know  
the truth.  
I commit myself to this work of ministry and ask you to order my steps  
and prepare people by drawing them in.  
Prepare moments when I can share the work and love of Jesus Christ with  
others.  
I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

For those of you that prayed with me, would you please go to [prayny.org](http://prayny.org) and add a prayer request so that we can connect with you and continue to pray for the fulfillment of God's plan in your life.

"Preparation time is never wasted time." Dr. Kenneth E. Hagin

"Success is always the result of following the leading of the Holy Spirit." Dr. Kenneth E. Hagin

Thank you for this time on <http://omegamanradio.com>

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