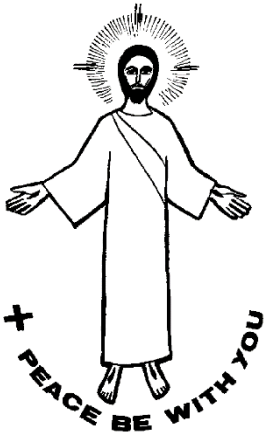


The United Benefice of St Michael on Greenhill, Lichfield
with St John, Wall



Living our Easter Faith

Bible Study in Easter Season 20th May

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Acts 17.16-34

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the market-place, every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, 'What does this babbler want to say?' Others said, 'He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.' (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) ¹⁹So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, 'May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?' ²⁰It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.' ²¹Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor* he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God* and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring."

²⁹Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, 'We will hear you again about this.' ³³At that point Paul left them. ³⁴ But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Our on-line Bible study will begin with an introduction to the text and then move on to discussion and end with prayer.

Introduction

The disciples were moved by their experience of Jesus' resurrection and later the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, to go out and proclaim the gospel in new places. In this Bible Study we will begin by exploring what the preaching and teaching of the early church might have been like. We will go on to consider how we might share the gospel with others today.

Questions to think about

1. Paul addresses the crowds at the Areopagus and uses what he notices around him as a starting point; referring to the altar "To an unknown God". What starting points might we use to share the good news today?
2. Paul debated with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. What are some of the prevailing philosophies or ways of looking at the world that we need to debate with today?

Prayer

God our redeemer,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen