

Acts 14:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Analysis

He left not himself without witness (οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφῆκεν)—Despite nations walking in their own ways, God provided general revelation through creation. The **rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons** (ὑετοὺς...καιροὺς καρποφόρους) demonstrate providential care, echoing Psalm 145:15-16 and anticipating Romans 1:20's testimony of creation. The Greek agathourgeō (doing good) describes God's beneficent character revealed through common grace.

Filling our hearts with food and gladness (ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης) appeals to universal human experience—everyone has tasted God's goodness, whether acknowledged or not. This natural theology provides evangelistic common ground without compromising special revelation's necessity.

Historical Context

Paul's appeal to creation's witness suited a pagan agricultural audience in Lystra. Unlike his synagogue sermons grounded in Old Testament, this speech employs natural theology, pioneering the church's later engagement with pagan philosophy while maintaining gospel distinctives.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does creation's witness to God provide evangelistic starting points with those outside biblical tradition?
2. In what ways have you seen God's 'doing good' prepare hearts for gospel reception?

Interlinear Text

καὶ τοι γε οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἐαυτὸν ἀφῆκεν
and Nevertheless G1065 not without witness himself he left
G2532 G2544 G3756 G267 G1438 G863

ἀγαθοποιῶν, οὐρανόθεν ἡμῖν ὑετοὺς διδοὺς καὶ καιροὺς
in that he did good from heaven us rain and gave and seasons
G15 G3771 G2254 G5205 G1325 G2532 G2540

καρποφόρους ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς
fruitful filling with food and gladness G3588
G2593 G1705 G5160 G2532 G2167

καρδίας ἡμῶν
hearts our
G2588 G2257

Additional Cross-References

Job 5:10 (Parallel theme): Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

Joel 2:23 (Parallel theme): Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

Deuteronomy 11:14 (Parallel theme): That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

Isaiah 5:6 (Parallel theme): And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Psalms 145:9 (Good): The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Jeremiah 5:24 (Parallel theme): Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Deuteronomy 28:12 (Good): The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

Ezekiel 34:26 (Parallel theme): And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

Leviticus 26:4 (Parallel theme): Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.