

Acts 17:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

Analysis

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing— Paul dismantles pagan anthropomorphism at Mars Hill. The Greek *therapeuō* (θεραπεύω) means 'to serve' or 'attend to,' carrying connotations of nursing the sick. Pagan temples housed idols requiring daily food offerings, ritual washing, and maintenance, as if deity needed human care. Paul declares God's complete *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency)—a concept Stoic philosophers prized but failed to connect to the living Creator.

Seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things— The order is precise: *zōē* (ζωή, life), *pnoē* (πνοή, breath), and *panta* (πάντα, all things). God is not recipient but universal Giver. This echoes Genesis 2:7 and Isaiah 42:5, establishing that the Creator-creature distinction makes worship of handmade gods absurd. The Athenians 'served' deaf idols while the true God sustains every heartbeat and breath of His worshippers—a complete inversion of pagan cultic logic.

Historical Context

Paul delivered this address around AD 50-51 at the Areopagus in Athens, a philosophical center with temples to countless deities. Greek religion involved elaborate temple rituals where priests 'cared for' divine images. The Parthenon, visible from where Paul stood, housed a 40-foot gold and ivory statue of Athena requiring constant maintenance—the epitome of what Paul critiqued.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do modern religious practices sometimes treat God as if He 'needs' our service rather than we His grace?
2. In what ways does recognizing God as the source of 'life, breath, and all things' demolish any ground for human pride or self-sufficiency?

Interlinear Text

οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός

Neither **with** **hands** **men's** **is worshipped** **as though he needed**

G3761

G5259

G5495

G444

G2323

G4326

τινος αὐτὸς διδοὺς πάντα· ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν κατὰ

any thing **seeing he** **giveth** **all things** **life** **and** **breath** **and**

G5100

G846

G1325

G3956

G2222

G2532

G4157

G2596

πάντα·

all things

G3956

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 2:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Acts 17:28 (Parallel theme): For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Job 33:4 (Parallel theme): The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Romans 11:35 (Parallel theme): Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Isaiah 42:5 (Parallel theme): Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

Job 22:2 (Parallel theme): Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

Job 27:3 (Parallel theme): All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

Psalms 16:2 (Parallel theme): O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

Job 12:10 (Parallel theme): In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Zechariah 12:1 (Parallel theme): The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.