

Acts 17:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Analysis

The times of this ignorance God winked at (τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδῶν ὁ θεός)—The verb **winked at** (ὑπεριδῶν, hyperidōn) means 'overlooked' or 'passed over,' not that God approved pagan idolatry but that He withheld immediate judgment during the pre-Christ era (Romans 3:25-26). **Ignorance** (ἀγνοία) acknowledges humanity's culpable unknowing—not innocent ignorance but willful suppression of truth (Romans 1:18-23).

But now (τὰ νῦν) marks the decisive shift brought by Christ's coming. God **commandeth all men every where to repent** (παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν)—universal scope ('all,' 'everywhere') and imperative mood ('commandeth'). **Repent** (μετανοεῖν, metanoein) means 'change one's mind,' involving intellectual acknowledgment of sin, emotional sorrow, and volitional turning to God. This isn't suggestion but divine command with eternal consequences.

Historical Context

Spoken to Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill (Areopagus) circa AD 50. Athens worshiped countless gods and prided itself on philosophical sophistication. Paul's declaration that their 'ignorance' required repentance offended Greek intellectual pride—they sought wisdom, but Paul proclaimed moral accountability before the Creator God they didn't acknowledge.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding repentance as God's command (not mere option) affect your urgency in calling others to Christ?
2. In what areas of your life might you be relying on 'ignorance' as an excuse rather than genuinely repenting?

Interlinear Text

τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ
G3588 **And** G3767 **the times** G3588 **of this ignorance** G3588
G3303 G5550 G52 winked at

θεὸς τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάσιν
God G3588 G3568 **commandeth** G3588 **men** G3956
G2316 G3853 G444 all

πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν
every where to repent
G3837 G3340

Additional Cross-References

Acts 14:16 (Parallel theme): Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

Luke 24:47 (Repentance): And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

1 Peter 4:3 (Parallel theme): For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Romans 3:25 (References God): Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Acts 3:19 (Repentance): Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Psalms 50:21 (Parallel theme): These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

Acts 17:23 (References God): For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

Acts 11:18 (Repentance): When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Acts 20:21 (Repentance): Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 6:12 (Repentance): And they went out, and preached that men should repent.