

Destination Unknown

“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 17:23).

Do you know where you are going?

A man named Huxley, having finished another series of public attacks against Christians, was in a hurry to catch a train that would take him to the next city. He left the hotel, jumped into the taxi, settled back, and closed his eyes to rest for a couple of minutes.

He assumed the driver had been told the destination by the hotel doorman so when he got in all he said was, “Hurry...I’m almost late...Drive fast!”

The taxi rushed through the streets of the city. Before long the man glanced out the window and frowned as he realized they were going west away from the sun, not toward it. Leaning forward the man shouted, “Do you know where you are going?”

Without looking back the driver yelled, “No, your honor, but I am going fast!”

This story humorously depicts the situation many people find themselves in; going nowhere, fast, and not realizing it. Peter exhorted in Acts 2:40, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” We need to save ourselves from a generation that is going nowhere.

In Athens there were more idols than all the rest of Greece put together. It was estimated that

there were more than 30,000 statues in Athens. Here they were seekers of any new doctrine that would come their way. They treated religion like they would a market where they could pick up what they wanted. These people conformed instead of being transformed. They had no burden for souls and played the part of a modern day Pharisee. They sought pleasure only. They were superstitious and religious but still did not know God.

In many countries there is a church on every corner. People use religious terms in their everyday speech. Signboards and bumper stickers on cars proclaim a knowledge and form of godliness but deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5).

While others are looking for some new thing, we need to return to the original. There are those who are sincerely seeking for salvation and we must tell them the truth of Acts 2:38. Their destination must be clear!

A story is told of a terrible storm that was raging across the eastern part of the United States, making the progress of the train difficult. Among the passengers was a woman with a child, who was concerned lest she get off at the wrong station. A gentleman, seeing her anxiety, said: “Do not worry, I know the road well, and I will tell you when you come to your station.”

In due course the train stopped at the station before the one at which the woman wanted to get off.

“The next station will be yours,” said the gentleman.

As they went on, in a few minutes the train stopped.

“Now is your turn, Madam. Get out quickly!”

Doctrine

The woman took up the child and thanking the man, she left the train. At the next stop, the brakeman called out the name of the station where the woman had wished to get off.

“You have already stopped at this station,” called the man to the brakeman.

“No sir,” he replied, “something was wrong with the engine, and we stopped for a few moments to repair it!”

“Oh, no” cried the other man, “I put that woman off in the storm when the train stopped between stations.”

As they went back they found the lady dead (frozen to death in the storm) with the child lifeless in her arms. It was the mistake of wrong directions being given.

Still more terrible is the result of misdirecting souls. We must preach the original salvation message given to Peter in Acts 2:38:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Paul would have understood the situation at Athens for he had also suffered from misguided direction and devotion. He had persecuted the church, held coats while Stephen was stoned, and locked up church members in prison. One day his direction changed while moving fast on the Road to Damascus. The Lord was able to catch his attention by blinding him! His destination became known.

Study Questions

1. What is the major question put forth in this lesson? _____

2. What were the characteristics of the people in the city of Athens? _____

3. In Athens, how did the people generally treat religion? _____

4. What are some of the religious phrases you have seen written on signboards and vehicles? _____

5. While others are looking for something new, what should we return to? _____

6. Why should Paul have understood the misguided devotion of the people at Athens? _____

7. Explain how Paul had suffered from misguided devotion. _____

8. What was the original message of the Apostle Peter? _____