

Series: God Who Creates – Acts 17:22-34

I believe in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth...



“Acropolis in Athens” by Leo von Klenze 1846, Paul stands in the
sunlight on the Areopagus indicating the dawn of Christianity

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

Athens at the time of Paul’s visit, around the year AD 50-51, was a small city in the Roman Empire. It boasted a population of about 20,000. But it was a “university town” and still considered the intellectual capital of Hellenistic thought and learning. Paul very carefully constructs his message. Since he was alone Luke would have had to construct the event from interviews with Paul and Christians from Athens.

Garrison Church of God



This altar to an unknown god or goddess was found on Rome’s Palatine Hill, 1820. Such altars were common in Paul’s time.

Aug. 6, 2023

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

Paul according to 1 Corinthians viewed his attempt to evangelize the Athenian elite as a failure. But the central core of his message there seems to have influenced his approach to the gentiles in Corinth and Ephesus. Paul in his message quotes 2 ancient Greek poets, one of them Epimnemides is believed either to have lived during the time of Isaiah in the 600s BC or Ezekiel in the 500s BC.

Garrison Church of God



This altar to an unknown god or goddess was found on Rome's Palatine Hill, 1820. Such altars were common in Paul's time.

Aug. 6, 2023

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

Epimmenides is also credited with saving Greece during a time of wide spread devastation by encouraging the Athenians to send out starving sheep and wherever they rested to build an altar to the unknown God and sacrifice each sheep. This was to appease the unknown God. According to legend there were altars to the unknown God all over Greece. The one Paul noticed may have been one.

Garrison Church of God



This altar to an unknown god or goddess was found on Rome's Palatine Hill, 1820. Such altars were common in Paul's time.

Aug. 6, 2023

Acts: 17:25 [ESV]

25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Genesis 2:5-7 [ESV]

5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up — for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,

6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground —

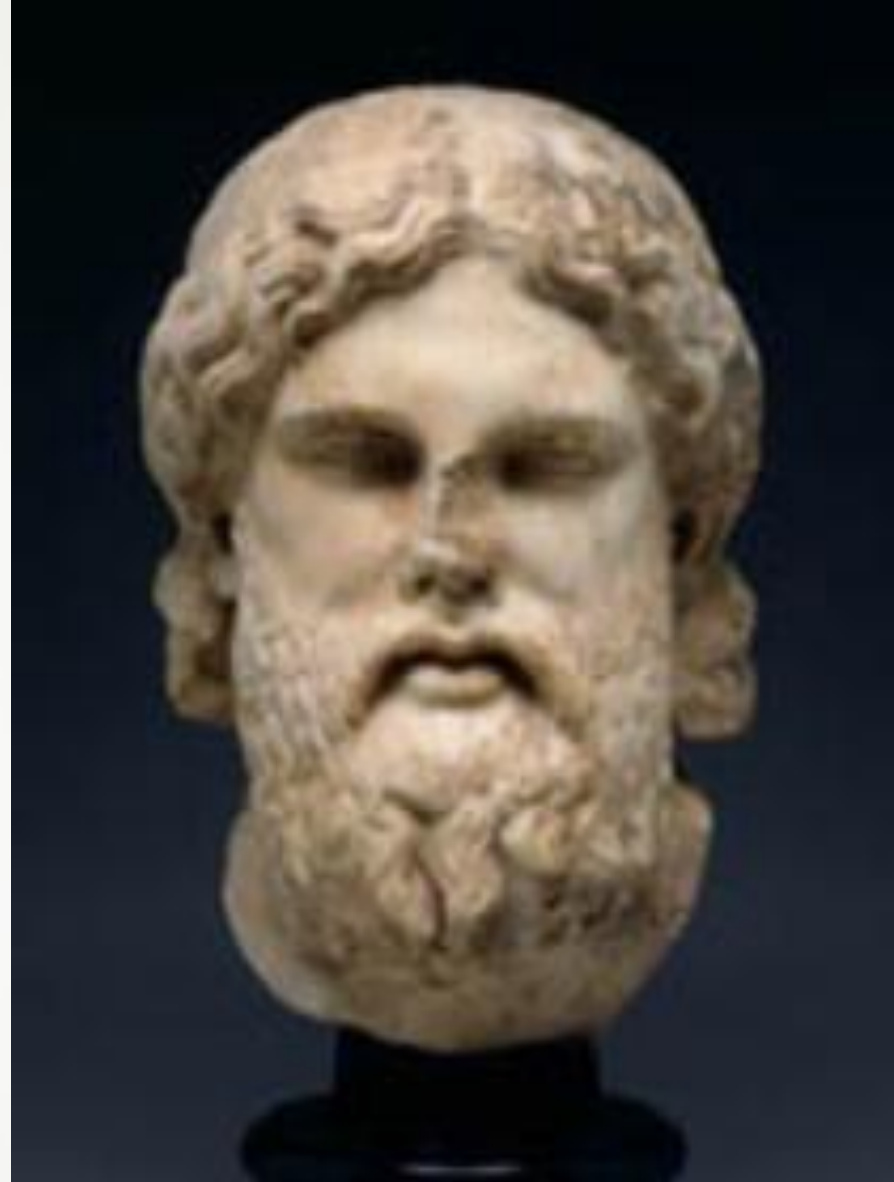
7 then the LORD God formed the **man of dust** from the **ground** and **breathed** into **his nostrils** the **breath** of life, and the man became a **living creature**.

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

In verse 25 of Acts 17 Paul states that this unknown God gives life, breath and everything else to humans. He is the Creator. Paul wants to emphasize that God is the creator of all humanity. By quoting from Roman poets concerning the god Zeus and applying their observations to the Jewish God. Zeus was considered the creator of humanity. Paul treats their observations about divinity and the creator as truth.

Garrison Church of God



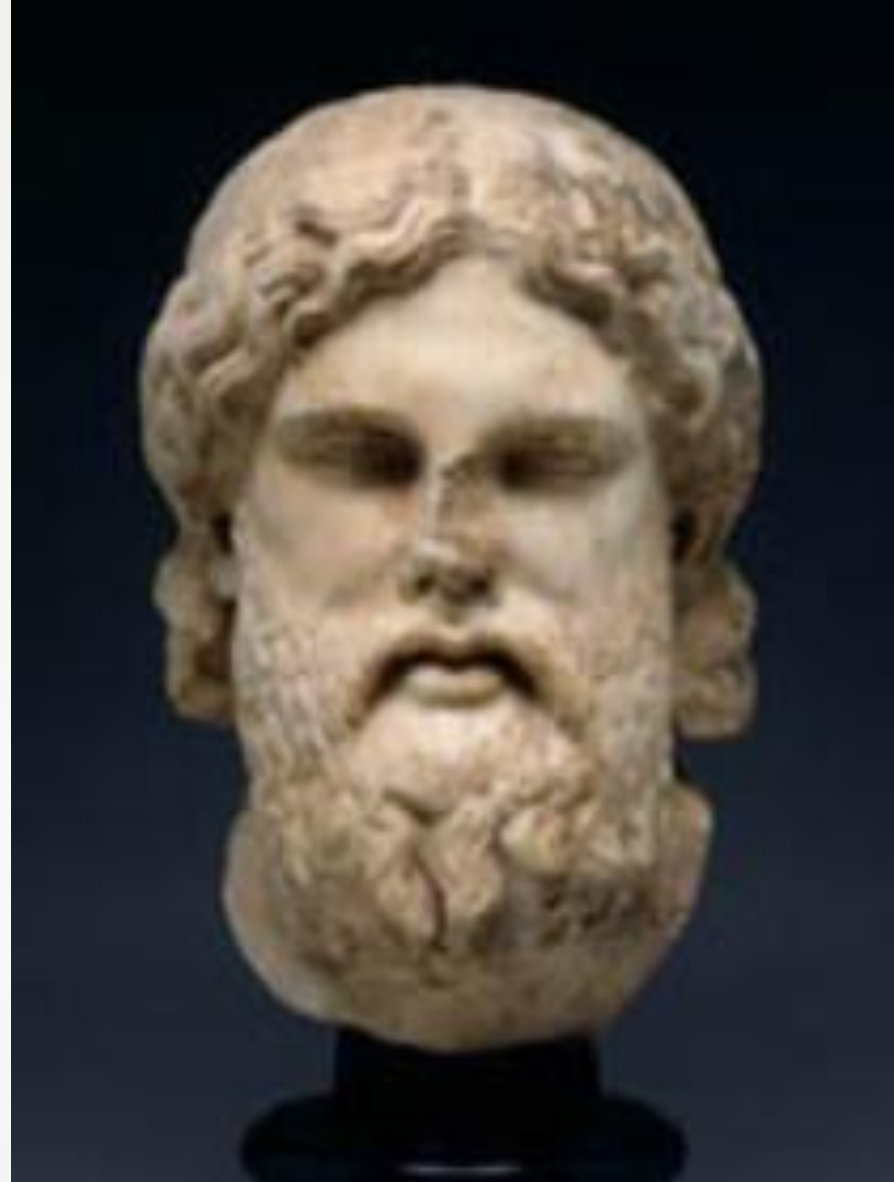
Head of Zeus, c. 340 BC

Aug. 6, 2023

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

A truth for Christians is that “all truth belongs to God”, so we should not fear to embrace observable truth. We may not agree with the interpretation of what it means but truth is not something we should be afraid of. Besides Epimnenides, Paul also quotes Arastus [310-240 BC]. Both poems cited were popular in Hellenistic culture of the time and were odes to Zeus.



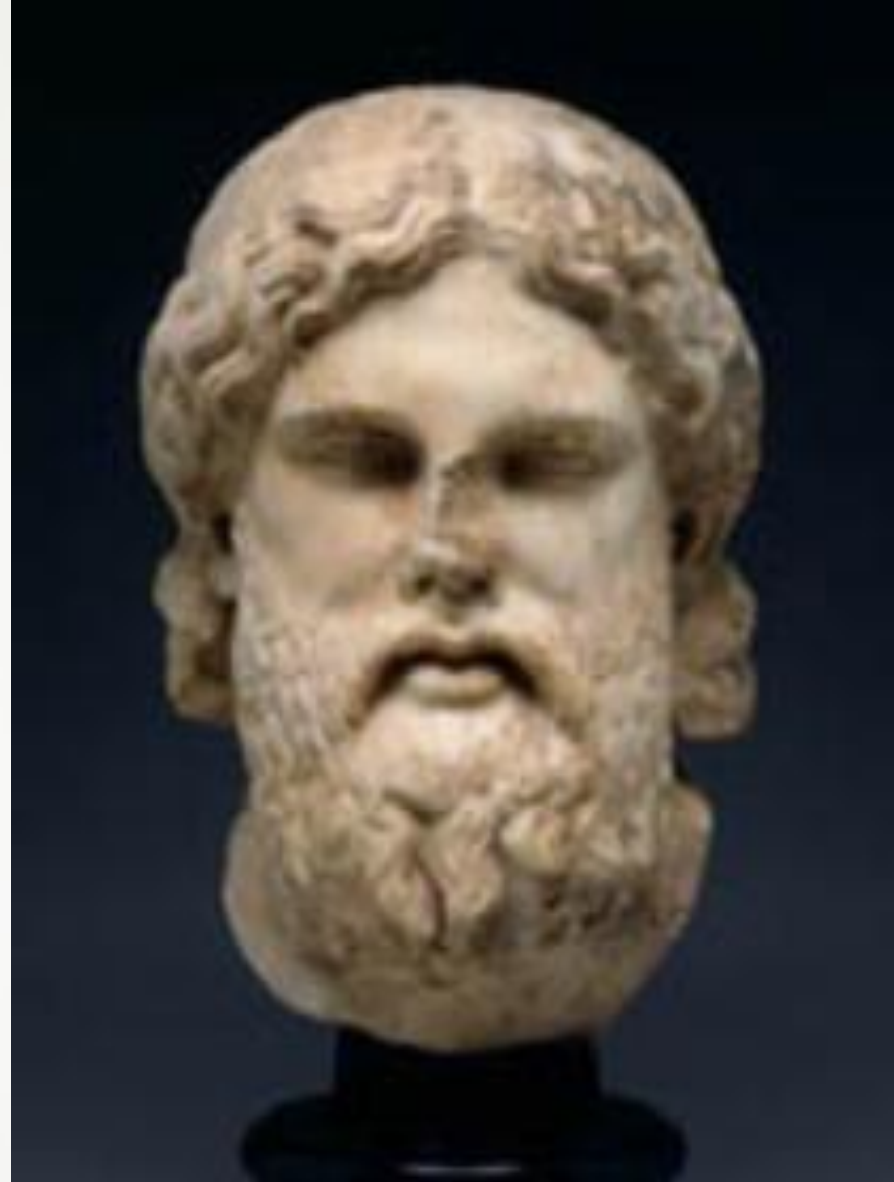
Head of Zeus, c. 340 BC

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

Paul in verse 25 though returns to the Scripture and references both Genesis 2:7 and Job 12:10. Paul identifies as central to the Jewish concept – life, breath and all others things necessary for existence. In Greek thought all living things (animals – things that moved) had “life” or “zoe”. But Paul also uses the word “pnoe” we get our word pneumonia from this word. It means breath, wind or spirit.

Garrison Church of God



Head of Zeus, c. 340 BC

Aug. 6, 2023

“Just Breathe” Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7



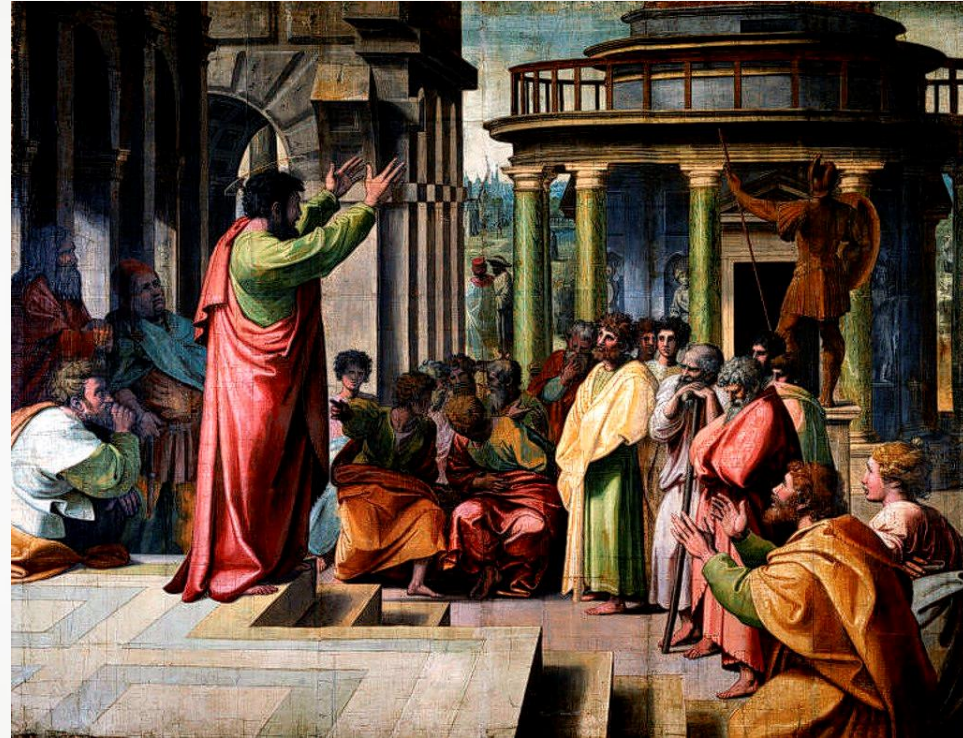
St. Paul preaching at the Areopagus by Raphael, 1515. Perhaps the most iconic painting of this event.

Paul in using this word must have intrigued the Greeks who were listening. They were aware of the wide usage of the word in their language. But in Hebrew there are 3 words that mean breath and can be translated as breath, wind or spirit. Two are found in verse 7 of Genesis 2 – “napach” a verb which means to blow lightly. When the rabbis before the time of Christ translated it they used a Greek word that means “to puff into”.

Garrison Church of God

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7



St. Paul preaching at the Areopagus by Raphael 1515. Perhaps the most iconic painting of this event.

Aug. 6, 2023

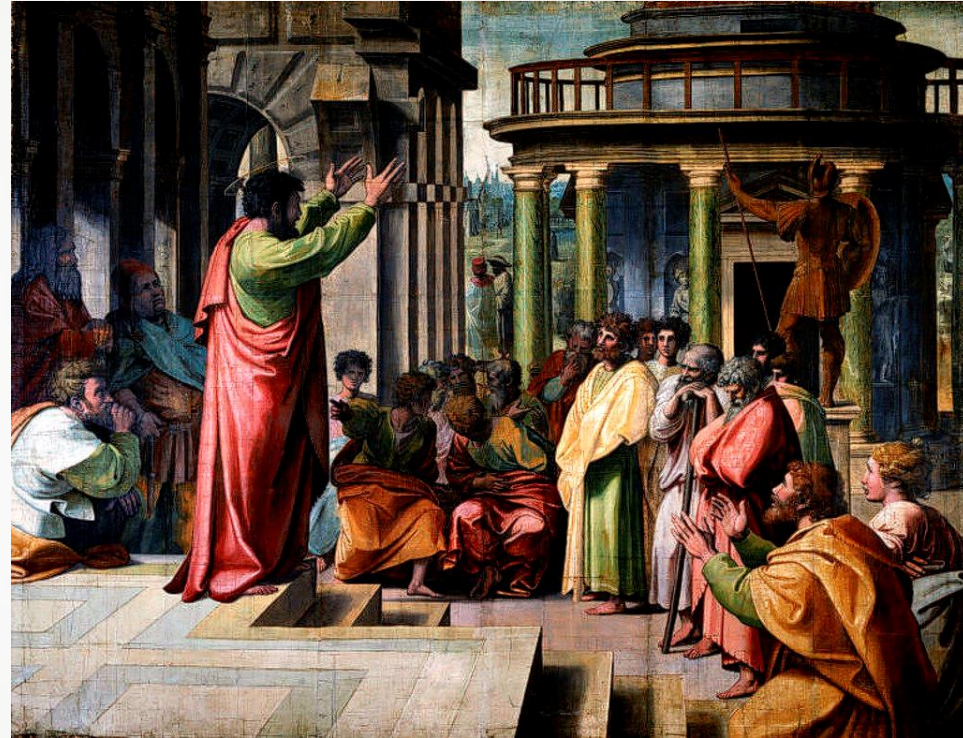
The other word is “neshama” and they translated it with the Greek word “pnoe”.

Paul was turning their minds to consider that humans were more than animals because God had given them “breath” or “spirit”.

God also sustained the universe providing for His creations what they needed to live.

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7



St. Paul preaching at the Areopagus by Raphael 1515. Perhaps the most iconic painting of this event.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 [ESV]

45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a **living being**"; the last Adam became a **life-giving spirit**.

46 But it is not the **spiritual** that is first but the natural, and then the **spiritual**.

47 The **first** man was from the **earth**, a man of **dust**; the second man is* from **heaven**.

48 As was the **man of dust**, so also are those who are **of the dust**, and as is the **man of heaven**, so also are those who are **of heaven**.

49 Just as we have borne the **image** of the man of **dust**, we shall also bear the **image** of the man of **heaven**.

* Some early manuscripts include after this word "the Lord"

In the process of God breathing into Adam's face (the Hebrew word for "nostrils" can mean "face" – that is how it was translated into Greek), Adam became a "nephesh" or living being. This is a word which indicates emotion and personality. It is almost identical to the Greek word "psyche" (from which we get our word psychology). Unlike the animals who are living beings humans have been given the breath of God.

Garrison Church of God

"Just Breathe"

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7



Still from a video describing the creation of humanity

Aug. 6, 2023

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 uses the word “psyche” when he summarizes Genesis 2:7. He states that our spirit comes from the 2nd man who is a life-giving spirit. Here he uses a derivative word “pneuma” which can mean breath or spirit. He like Genesis 2 makes a point of speaking of humans as “dust” from the earth. We are akin to animals in this respect.

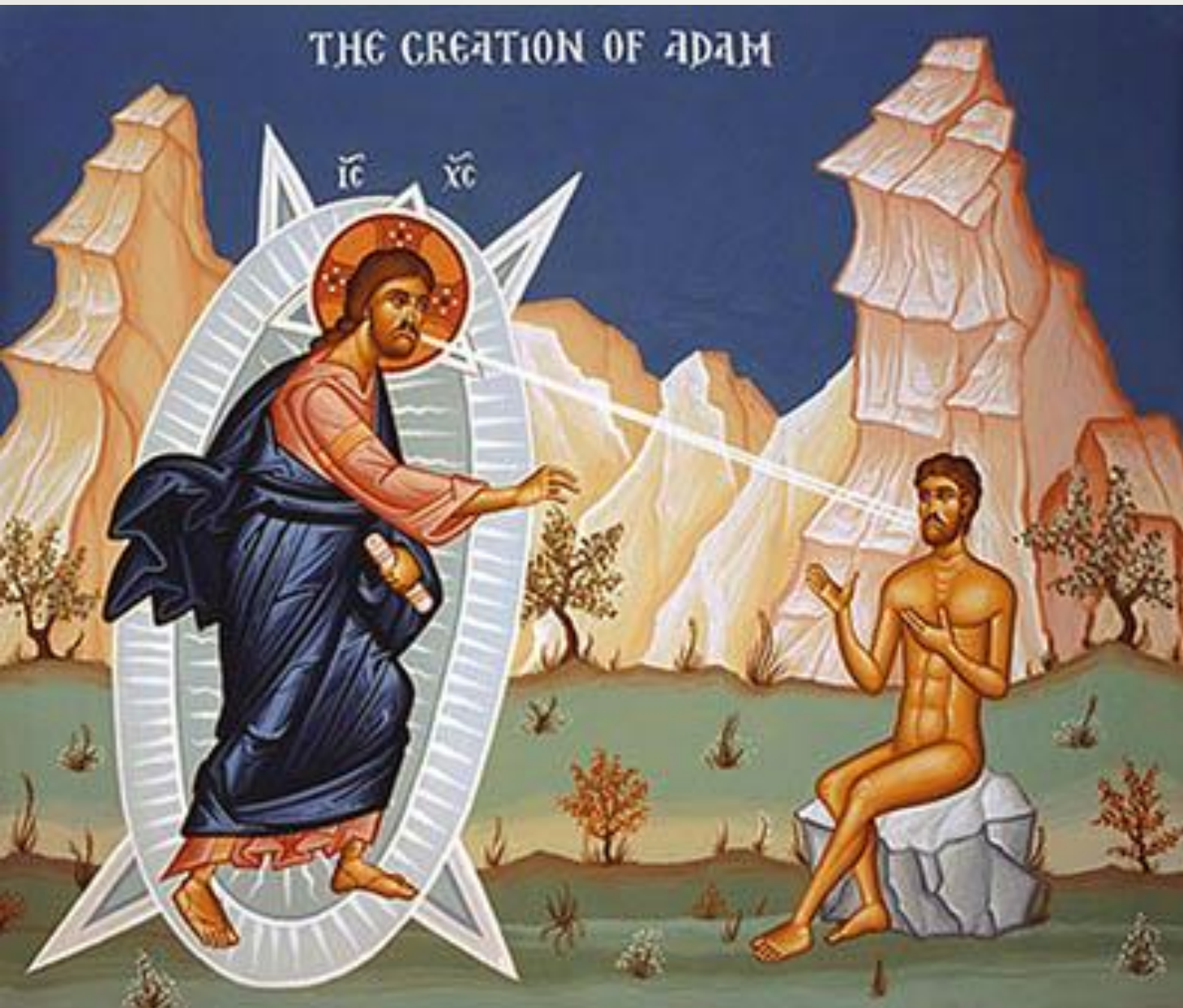
“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7



Still from a video describing the creation of humanity

“Just Breathe” Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

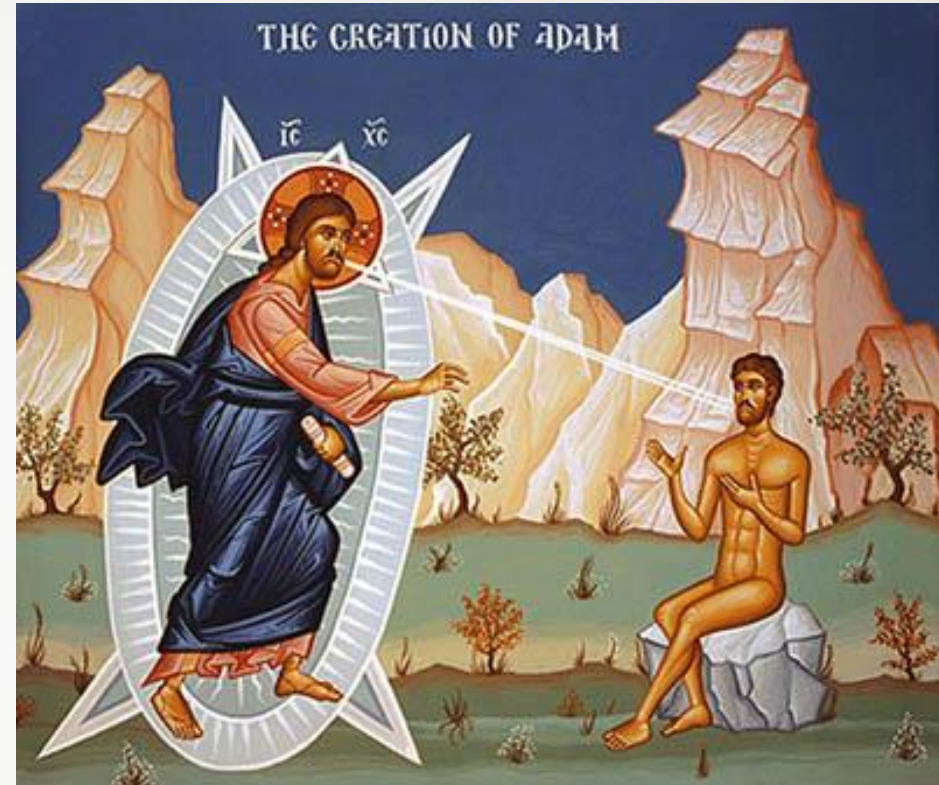


A Greek Orthodox “Icon” used to impart a spiritual truth about the creation of humanity. Jesus breaths his Spirit into Adam and he becomes a spiritual being.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:49 says that we since Adam bear the “image” of the “one of dust”. The word for image in the Greek is “icon”. We are temporal and passing away, our bodies weaken and decay. But in Christ we will bear the image of heaven – the spiritual realm. So we must breath.

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7



A Greek Orthodox “Icon” used to impart a spiritual truth about the creation of humanity. Jesus breaths his Spirit into Adam and he becomes a spiritual being.

Acts: 17:25 [ESV]

25 ...nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind **life** and **breath** and **everything**.

Job 12:9-11 *10 [ESV]

9 Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

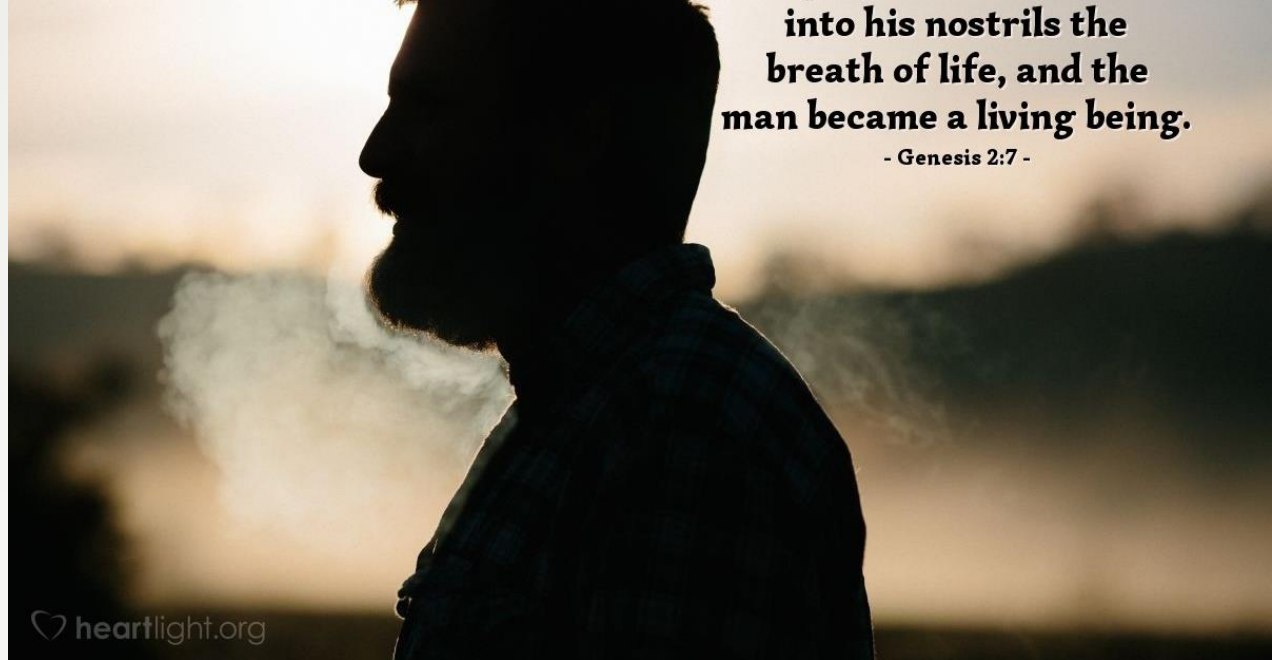
10 In his hand is **the life of every living thing** and the **breath** of all mankind.

11 Does not the ear test words as the palate tastes food?

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 &
Genesis 2:5-7

Job reflects in chapter
12 on the concept of
Genesis 2:7



into his nostrils the
breath of life, and the
man became a living being.

- Genesis 2:7 -

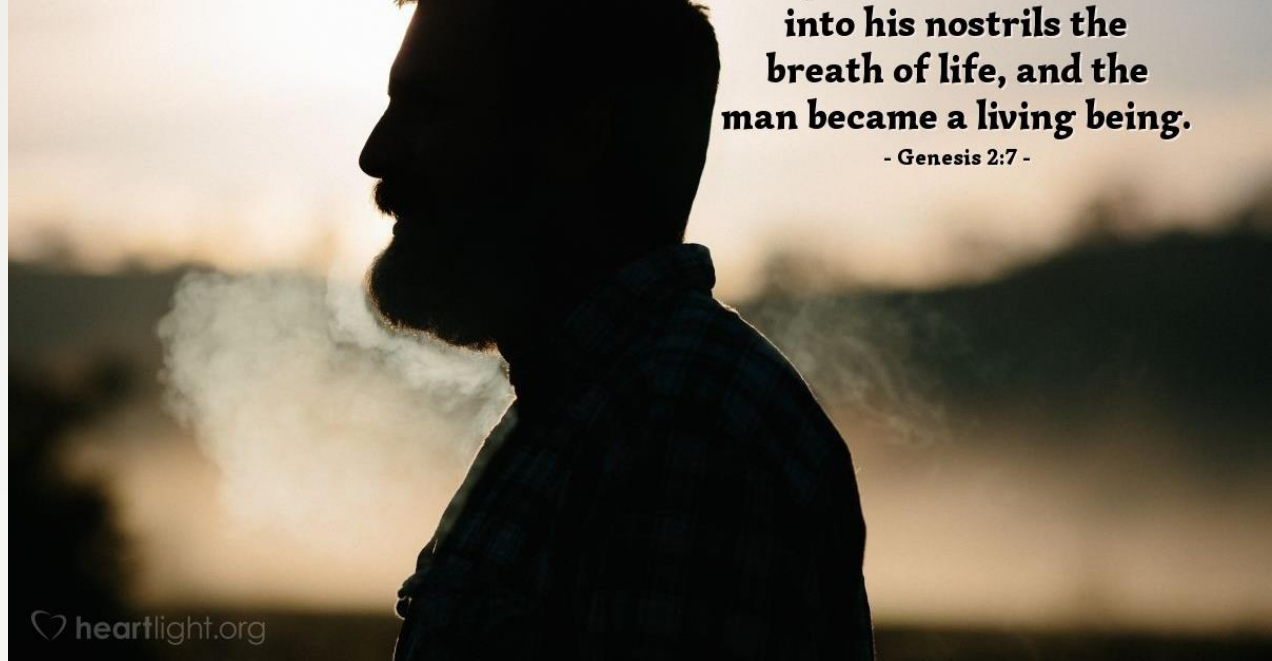
heartlight.org

In Job 12:10 we are introduced to another Hebrew word that means “breath, wind or spirit” it is the word “ruwach” it is used as a synonym for “neshama”. It is the word most often translated in the Old Testament with our word “spirit” here it is was also translated into Greek with the word “pneuma”. Job also uses the word “nephesh” and it to is translated with the word “psyche”.

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 &
Genesis 2:5-7

Job reflects in chapter
12 on the concept of
Genesis 2:7



into his nostrils the
breath of life, and the
man became a living being.

- Genesis 2:7 -

heartlight.org

For us as humans spiritually we died because of sin. We faced not only decay into dust physically but eternal decay and destruction spiritually. We were dead in our trespasses and sin.

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

The modern CPR movement really began in 1740 when the the French Scientific society recommended mouth to mouth resuscitation in the case of drowning victims. This was based on the accounts of a Scottish doctor who in 1732 had resuscitated a coal miner who had suffocated clearing a mine pit. In 1744 he was urged to give a detailed account of the procedure.



This 1744 engraving accompanied the first descriptive account of mouth to mouth resuscitation given by Doctor William Tossach who resuscitated a suffocated coal miner in 1732.

Aug. 6, 2023

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

Job through out his book references the temporal nature of human existence. Yet he longs for eternal life that the spiritual nature within him yearns for. Paul indicates to the Athenians that all humans have this yearning and that in the resurrection that eternal breath of God it used to resuscitate us for eternity. Jesus through his resurrection was providing as it were CPR for all who accept the grace of God. He breathes his Spirit into us, giving life.

Garrison Church of God



This 1744 engraving accompanied the first descriptive account of mouth to mouth resuscitation given by Doctor William Tossach who resuscitated a suffocated coal miner in 1732.

Aug. 6, 2023

2 Timothy 3:16-17 [ESV]

16 All Scripture is **breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

17 **that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

“Just Breathe”

Job 12:9-11 & Genesis 2:5-7

Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 uses the Greek word “Theopneustos” “God breathed” or “inspired” when he refers to scripture.



How do we live up to life that God has placed in each of us . Well it begins as Paul tells Timothy with Scripture which is “God breathed” and draws us toward completion in our Christian faith by providing correction, rebuke and training. It equips us for our Christian walk and for good works. This is the power of scripture in our lives. It provides the Holy Spirit who is quickening our spirit with handles in our heart so that he can bring us into constructive and worshipful lifestyle.

Just Breathe! Job 12:10 & Genesis 2:7

God gives us breath and has a right to expect that we use our life constructively and worshipfully.

The painting depicts the Acropolis in Athens, showing the Parthenon on the Acropolis hill, the Propylaea, and the Areopagus. In the foreground, a group of people is gathered on the Areopagus, with a central figure standing in the sunlight, indicating the dawn of Christianity.

“Acropolis in Athens” by Leo von Klenze 1846, Paul stands in the sunlight on the Areopagus indicating the dawn of Christianity