

The True God

Joe Slater

This article's title sounds narrow-minded in today's politically correct world. Most likely Paul's audience in Athens (Acts 17) thought he was narrow-minded too. Petronius, a writer at Nero's court, remarked that it was easier in Athens to find a god than a man! Yet here was Paul, telling the brilliant Greek philosophers that their views about deity were erroneous! His magnificent sermon mentioned at least thirteen points about the true God. Let's look briefly at the first few.

"The God who made the world and everything in it" (Acts 17:24a). Indeed, the true God is the creator of the universe (see the first two chapters of Genesis). Greeks, like other pagan cultures, worshiped dozens of gods and goddesses, crediting certain ones with creating and having charge of various portions of nature (e.g. god of the sun, god of the sea, goddess of the forest). But Paul affirmed that the true God, whom the Athenians didn't know, is the creator of all things.

"He, being Lord of heaven and earth" (17:24b). Pagans believed their gods ruled over various parts of the world, fighting back and forth to take over one another's dominion. The true God, however, is Lord of heaven and earth; He admits no rival.

". . . does not dwell in temples made with hands" (17:24c). Athens, like other cities, contained numerous temples where the gods supposedly dwelled. Jerusalem also boasted of the temple where the true God manifested His special presence. But Solomon knew and freely confessed, "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built?" (1 Kings 8:27).

There is but one true God! (More next week.)

Answering The Call

The first time I heard a cell phone ring during a church service was while visiting friends in Texas. While preaching, the minister shared how people need to heed God's call and how some refuse to hear it. As the minister elaborated on the subject, a cell phone rang. People giggled and laughed as the phone continued to ring. The speaker struggled to maintain his composure. Finally, he said with a smile, "And if that's God on the line, I'll turn services over to Him!"

During a recent mid-week service, I taught from Exodus 3 about how God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. I focused on how God told Moses to tell the Children of Israel how *"I AM has sent me to you"* (3:14). I then shared how Jesus referred to Himself as "I AM" in John 8:58. As I completed the sentence, a cell phone rang in the audience with the opening notes to the song "Bad to the Bone." Not missing a beat, I told the people that "I AM" is all powerful and bad to the bone!

Technology provides numerous ways for our brethren to reach the lost and to maintain communication. God's people constantly find ways to use technology to make a difference, and for that, I am grateful. However, I especially love those moments when the "little things" make people smile. I hope these words have brought a smile to your face.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

No One Can Insult You Without Your Permission!

No matter what one may say, you have to decide how to interpret it. A vicious insult can be used as a reminder that some people are to be pitied. Unless you choose to interpret someone's comments as an insult, you are not affected by what others say or do. The reflection is upon them.

--via RSVP Newsletter

ANYONE FOR TRUTH?

Our world has little regard for truth – sad, but true. Actually, it's much more than sad, it's a tragedy of immense proportions.

Truth is very much the cornerstone of God's interaction with mankind, His creation, so as to affect their salvation. Speaking of Jesus John wrote, *"And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). If Jesus is the very embodiment of truth, then truth cannot be minimized without minimizing Jesus!

Nevertheless, popular efforts at religion often give little more than lip service to truth. Of higher priority are emotional experiences and personal fulfillment. Modern religious groups utilize the popular "market-driven" approach. The way to attract people to church is to give them what they want. The "model" church most often emulated in this regard in America was started by surveying neighborhoods to find out what people wanted in a church, and then devising a scheme to vit those criteria.

Yet it is truth to which we are called. *"Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart"* (Proverbs 3:3). *"So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free'"* (John 8:31-32).

One final admonition from the wise man: *"Buy truth, and do not sell it; get wisdom and instruction and understanding"* (Proverbs 23:23).

But be ready! Not only is truth not easy, it's not cheap.

--David Deffenbaugh (via Old Paths) adapted