

The True God (#2)

Joe Slater

There really is a difference between the true God and the innumerable gods devised by people. The true God “made the world and everything in it”; He is “Lord of heaven and earth”; and He “does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). These three facts alone set the true God apart from pagan idols as far as the east is from the west. But there is more!

“Neither is he worshiped with (better ‘served by’) men’s hands, as though He needed anything” (17:25a). Pagans thought the gods depended on their sacrifices for food and drink. In fact, though, the idols could “neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell” (Deuteronomy 4:28). And the true God made it clear in Psalm 50:12-13 – “If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” The true God is independent of His creation; He needs nothing from us.

Far from needing people to feed Him, the true God “gives to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). At creation God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, making him a living being (Genesis 2:7). Throughout the ages He has given us “rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). We depend on Him, not He on us!

This same God “made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings” (17:26). Every race, every nation, every person, has descended from Adam, whom God created. Neither individuals nor nations always do what God desires; but God rules them nonetheless. He is active in human affairs, whether people realize it or not. No mere regional deity, the true God raises up nations and rulers and removes them in keeping with His purpose. Wise are those who humble themselves and seek His favor!

But He Lingered

“As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.’ But he lingered. So, the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city” (Gen. 19:15-16).

But Lot lingered! He was living in Sodom, having gone to the well-watered plains of Jordan when he and Abram parted ways (Gen. 13). Sodom was an exceedingly wicked city (Gen. 13:13) and God has decided to destroy it (Gen. 18). Two angels appearing as men came to Sodom to warn Lot of its impending destruction, urging him to take his family and flee quickly lest he be destroyed along with the city (Gen. 19:12-16). They demonstrated God’s immense power, blinding the dangerous men of Sodom. Still, he lingered! But for the mercy of God, Lot would have perished with the rest of Sodom.

Why should we be amazed that Lot lingered in availing himself of the opportunity to be saved? Lot has his counterpart in every place where the true word of God is proclaimed. Men are told of God’s goodness as well as His severity (Rom. 11:22). We are warned to flee the wrath to come (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Yet many still linger, procrastinate, and put off doing what they know they should do.

God is keeping a record of all our deeds; one day that record will testify either for us or against us (Rev. 20:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). O, how careful we should be each day!

What has been written on our record thus far? Does it testify that we are seeking those things above with our affections set on them (Col. 3:1-2; Matt. 6:19-21; Matt. 6:33; Heb. 12:1-3)? Or does it show that we are following in the footsteps of Lot, lingering, hesitating, dragging our feet in laying hold on eternal life?

Friends, we need to pause and think seriously about what God is recording in His book about us. I leave you with these

words from the Preacher. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going” (Eccl. 9:10).

--Charles Hicks (adapted)

YOU PREACH FIRST!

The first sermon preached each Sunday is not by the pulpit preacher, but by you.

You preach a message about the importance of the Scriptures when you bring your Bible.

You preach a message of good cheer when you say “Good morning!” to those you meet when you park your car and when you are in the hallway and classroom.

You preach a message of hope and joy when you sing enthusiastically during the song service.

You preach a message about the power of prayer when you fervently enter into our times of prayer together.

You preach a message of respect when you listen attentively while the preacher is speaking.

You preach a message of love when you smile, say “hello,” and introduce yourself to visitors.

You preach a message of faith when you give your offering.

Many messages are preached before the preacher stands up to bring his message. If your message is positive and consistent, then the message from the pulpit will be much better received.

Come each Sunday prepared to preach your sermon!

--Cecil May, Jr. (Montgomery, AL) via *Preacher Talk*