

What Does The Bible Teach About - The One True God

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
English Standard Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Before commencing this talk, I will just mention that all Scripture references will be from the 'English Standard Version', unless otherwise stated.

As I am preparing this talk, this nation has commenced lockdown due to the pandemic that is slowly spreading across the world, that of the coronavirus. The UK is beginning to experience a devastation not known since World War 2; at that time the government and King George urged the country to pray to the One True God. In today's crisis, we are urged to clap for the people at the sharp end, dealing with the virus suffers. For me I believe praying to the One True God and Jesus Christ the Son of God would be more effective and will achieve more.

Our talk this morning may well be considered controversial by some especially those who follow one of the many world religions that exist today. Back in the early days of Christianity, the apostle Paul came across numerous 'gods' for the multitude of religions that existed in his day and especially in the highly sophisticated Athenian society of Greece.

The Unknown God

This situation is highlighted in Acts 17:16, Paul's visit to Athens.

"Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols."

Paul found this a distressing situation and so embarked upon preaching to the Jews, reasoning with them concerning Jesus and the resurrection. Paul, however, did not limit himself to the Jews, he reached out to others, some of whom followed various philosophies, Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were two such groups as mentioned in verse 18. Epicureans' aim in life was to have a pleasurable time as determined by their own experience. For them everyone was their own philosopher and it did not matter whether others agreed with them. We see this kind of philosophy today; everyone does what is right in their own eyes. The other group, Stoics, had an entirely different philosophy as they believed in a single supreme being but with numerous subordinate gods. Again we see this in today's society that there are those who say they believe in God, but their lives are ruled by lesser gods such as ambition, wealth, their local football, rugby, cricket, or other sport to which they devote much time and energy. This list is almost endless in today's world.

As these philosophers listened to Paul, they decided that a more in-depth conversation would be necessary and so Paul was invited to the Areopagus, a debating arena, to give Paul the opportunity to present his message. Let us read Acts 17:22 - 31.

“So, Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Paul has a related theme as stated in Colossians 1:15 – 23 where he brings to the attention of the believers at Colosse the God of creation. Paul also lays emphasis upon the Lord Jesus being fully God. Let us read these verses which speak for themselves.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

The Athenians with their multiple gods were also very superstitious and worried that they may have missed out a god, so they had a shrine to the unknown god. Paul having observed this nameless shrine uses the opportunity to present the ‘One True God’. Paul covers in his message the God of creation, the God of life and blessing to mankind; he alludes to all being descended from Adam. God cannot be represented by material things such as gold or stone or man’s artistic imagination. However, the time of ignorance on the part of mankind was now at an end and God has made himself known, and more so that He commands people to repent.

Finally, Paul mentions that God has His Man, the judge of the world, and the guarantee that this will take place is founded upon the resurrection from among the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point there is mockery, a dismissal of Paul by saying we will hear about this some other time. But, out of all the assembled crowd there were those who took the message to heart and believed. God is not unknown; He can be known and that is through trusting Christ as Saviour.

The Beginning

Let us read from Genesis 1:1, where we have a simple statement that starts with the presentation of God.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

The Bible records God’s communication to mankind, His activities and promises. It also records mankind’s response to God. In this opening verse of Scripture, we are presented with the declared fact that in the beginning there was God. There were not multiple gods only one God. The first two chapters of Genesis mainly provide us with the detail of creation and, in particular, this world the earth, as the platform on which mankind is to live.

The Testimony of Isaiah

In the book of Isaiah, written by the prophet of that name, we have a few definite statements to the truth that there is only one real God. By the time we come to the days in which Isaiah lived there were many gods and many religions. This was similar to what the apostle Paul encountered on his visit to Athens, as mentioned earlier.

No servant of the Lord has an easy life when being faithful to the ministry that God has called him or her. Isaiah was no exception, and this was true for all the Old Testament prophets. However, in the book Isaiah, there are wonderful verses which emphasise the truth of the ‘One True God’. In parallel is the truth that this God is the only Saviour God.

Let us look at the first reference under consideration in Isaiah 44: 6.

“Thus, says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.””

The Old Testament is primarily God’s message to Israel as a nation and we have the first part of this verse very clearly consistent with that message – “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts.” The LORD is Israel’s King and Israel’s Redeemer. However, the second part of the verse describes what is universally true in relation to God and in contrast to the idols of the world.

Let us consider, “I am the first and I am the last.” In a few words we have described what can only be true of God; as the first, He originates everything, and as the last He concludes everything. But what is also implied, very strongly, is that God precedes and succeeds everything. Therefore, the God of the Bible was before all things and when all things are completed, God is still there. He is the eternal God.

The parallel thought that is found in Isaiah 43:11 is worth considering at this point.

“I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no Saviour.”

As the only true God, He is the only God who can provide salvation. God, who is the eternal God, is therefore the only one capable of providing a real salvation that is eternally based on what God can do and has done in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. A religion that is the product of man’s imagination whether based on a crafted idol, an item of creation or a philosophy is massively flawed because it is time bound and not eternal.

Turning to chapter 44:8 we read,

“Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.”

The prophet is writing this as though God is speaking directly to the recipients of Isaiah's message. The verse commences with encouragement and a reminder of the consistency of what God has said in the past, and this is still true now. The waywardness of Israel does not alter the fact that they were God's witnesses and God challenges them with the question, "Is there a God besides me?" If the people cannot or will not answer then, God provides the answer. Possibly it is a rhetorical question where God does not expect anyone to answer except Himself. So, the end of the verse states, "There is no Rock; I know not any." There is no other foundation on which Israel or indeed mankind can securely rest; there is no other rock. God affirms that even He does not know of any other god or rock like Himself, "I know not any".

Moving to chapter 45:5 - 6, let us read,

"I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other."

This is an interesting section of God's word because it is prophetic, and it is speaking to a Gentile monarch, Cyrus by name, who was not yet born. Here God is speaking about Cyrus and that He was going to equip him for mighty things, and it would be a testimony to all people that He is the only God, because He can do what seems impossible. God is speaking of a man, not yet born, who would be the head of a mighty Empire.

Towards the end of chapter 45:21 – 22, God addresses His people Israel and the whole world.

"Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."

In these two verses we have again brought together the twin thoughts of the "Only One True God" and the fact that He is the only Saviour. In addition, we have the declaration that God is a righteous God. Everything that God does is right and true and there is no injustice in what God does. But there is something further in these verses: the appeal to the people of the whole earth to turn to God and receive salvation. Salvation cannot be obtained in any other way but from the Saviour God.

To close this section, I refer to [1 Samuel chapter 5](#), where the ark of God, the symbol of God's presence, has been captured and placed in the temple of the fish god Dagon. This is a chapter worth reading alongside [Isaiah 42:8](#).

"I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols."

[God is superior in every situation especially where false gods and religions are concerned.](#)

The Testimony of the Apostles

The declaration of the "One True God" is not solely an Old Testament revealed truth, it is also in the New Testament. We will look at the recorded words of Jesus as found in [John 17:3](#). This is part of the prayer that the Lord made prior to Calvary. Let us read the verse.

"And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Real life, eternal life, can only be received and experienced by truly knowing the “Only True God” and Jesus Christ, the One sent into this world. As we have had the record given by Isaiah, we now have the same truth from the lips of the Son of God. This chapter is the record of the prayer that the Lord Jesus uttered just before going out with His disciples to the garden called Gethsemane at the Mount of Olives. It is a wonderful prayer, full of concern for believers, the glory of the Father and of the Son and the promise that believers will one day be with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven and behold His glory.

Eternal life is indissolubly connected with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, as it states in 1 John 1:1 – 4,

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

John writes these divinely inspired words to convey to his readers, and to us, that Jesus, the Son of God, can be referred to as “The eternal life”, verse 2. We have a related truth conveyed at the commencement of John’s Gospel chapter 1 where the Lord Jesus is described as “The Word”. Please read the first chapters in both John’s gospel and John’s first epistle.

The apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians writes about idols in contrast to the One God. There were many problems that the Corinthian Christians experienced. They had left their idols and the immorality connected with false religions, but some had not been totally liberated from them and set free in Christ. In particular, the sacrifices to idols and the subsequent sale of those animals in the food markets. Let us read 1 Corinthians 8:4 – 6.

“Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords” - yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

In these verses Paul seeks to allay the fears of the Corinthian believers by stating that “an idol has no real existence”. An idol has no life or power. However, I do not want to minimise the fear that was associated with idol worship which many were bothered about. Even today there are Christians in many countries of the world who are liberated from their previous religions, know their sins forgiven but are afraid of the power that the priests and witch doctors of those religions still wield to keep their followers enslaved and obedient.

Let us read from chapter 10:19 – 21. Now you might think that this contradicts what Paul has said in chapter 8. Let us then briefly consider these verses in chapter 10 where Paul looks at the actual power behind the idol or religious ritual.

“What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

We see from these verses that although the physical idol was nothing, the unseen power behind the idol was satanic and very real. It is the demons that control and in a certain sense give a measure of power to the adherents, especially the priest or witch doctor of the false religion. It is the demon that seeks to control the followers and through them cause harm to others. This may well be through craft and guile to deceive and harm people.

So, Paul states that the Corinthians needed to separate themselves from the idolatry because of the hidden danger.

To Conclude

Now some who are listening to this talk may have a question relating to the title, "The One True God". You may well be thinking that I have quoted from Scripture and stated a number of times about God and also the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. I know that there are people in the world who have a religion who deny the existence of Jesus Christ as God and or the Holy Spirit as God and say how can you have three Gods and yet refer to one God.

1. The Bible does make it clear that there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
2. The Bible also states that there is One God. However, the One God is a triune God, that is consisting of three persons in that one single God and each are equally God.
3. The three persons of the Godhead sometimes act as one and sometimes act in clearly distinguishable roles. They never contradict each other but always work towards their collective defined purpose and counsel.

[G. W. Frazer's hymn captures this in the third verse, but it is worth quoting all three verses.](#)

God, our Father, we adore Thee!
We, Thy children, bless Thy name!
Chosen in the Christ before Thee,
We are holy without blame.
We adore Thee! We adore Thee!
Abba's praises we proclaim!

Son eternal, we adore Thee!
Lamb upon the throne on high!
Lamb of God, we bow before Thee,
Thou hast brought Thy people nigh!
We adore Thee! We adore Thee!
Son of God who came to die!

Father, Son and Holy Spirit-
Three in One! We give Thee praise!
For the riches we inherit
Heart and voice to Thee we raise!
We adore Thee! We adore Thee!
Thee we bless through endless days.

Therefore, we can again reiterate some of the Scriptures already mentioned.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God."

Isaiah 45:5, "I am the LORD, and there is no other, beside me there is no God."

1 Corinthians 8:4, "There is no God but one."

And John 17:3, "The only true God."

Thank you for listening to Truth for Today, the Bible explained on the subject; 'What does the Bible teach about; The One True God, talk number T1163.

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