



FAITH IS ACTION

JANUARY 2025 · VOLUME 64 · NUMBER 1

ONE GOD FOR ALL MEN?

“For as I passed by, and beheld, your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you” (Acts 17:23).

Paul had gone ahead of his evangelistic party to Athens, the capital of Greece, where he was taken back by their pervasive idolatry. Athens had temples to many gods with shrines and altars all over the city. After preaching in the synagogue to his Jewish brethren, he went out into

in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” Hearing a new orator was not unusual, but what about a new god? Could Paul penetrate their polytheistic world with the true and living God?

He began by observing how “superstitious” they were. The literal translation is *fear of the demons*. Literally, all the Roman and Greek gods are demons, because there are no other gods. Behind the inspiration for the legends of Greek mythology were



the marketplace to preach, attracting non-Jews, including *Stoics* (lovers of wisdom), and *Epicureans* (lovers of pleasure). These philosophers heard him with interest until he began preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They called it “a strange new doctrine” and called him a *babbler*, asking “Who is this strange God?”

Then some took Paul to Mars Hill where the elite orators spoke: “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time

demonic powers. They paint an entertaining picture, and it’s fun to read about Hercules and Thor, etc., but to understand what Paul was up against, we must put ourselves in their time and mindset, *and they believed in these gods!* If you were having a good day, the gods were happy with you, and if you were having a bad day, the gods were mad at you. They were always trying to appease the gods, and it’s why they had temples and shrines to them all, including one to a

nameless, unknown god—they did not want to risk overlooking any. But this temple gave Paul a brilliant idea.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Scripture says, “*He that wins souls is wise,*” and the Holy Spirit gave Paul wisdom to declare to them *who* the unknown God is. It was a God-ordained open door, and he walked through it. What could they say? They didn’t know who he is; they didn’t know his name or anything about him, so how could they deny that Paul could tell them who he is? They could have no argument against it!

In essence, Paul said: “*I have come to town to tell you about this God whom you ignorantly worship: He made the world and all things therein and, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, He doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He worshipped with men’s hands as though He needed anything, seeing He gives to all life and breath*” (vv.18-25).

What Paul did next was another stroke of Holy Ghost-genius. He quoted one of their own poets: “*For we are his offspring*” (v.29). Paul reasoned: If we are His offspring, then He can’t look like something made out of gold and silver, graven by man’s device—He looks like us, because we look like Him! So why bow down to idols of beasts or birds, or half-man-half-horse, or something else?

ONE GOD FOR ALL MEN

“*And has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and move, and have our being...*” (vv.26-28).

This is one of the most important verses in your Bible, because it reveals *there is only one God for all nations—only one God for all men*: red, yellow, black, white, or brown. The Greek word for *nations* is ETH-NOS, referring to *all* ethnicities and their cultures. There are many cultures, and every culture has its distinct music and dance, hairdos and clothes, and other idiosyncrasies, and sometimes cultures clash. But a clash of cultures has nothing to do with a person’s skin color. God does not give a hoot about skin color. He doesn’t care if you’re lily white or black as night. *He only cares what color your heart is.* He said of the wicked: “*Their foolish heart was darkened.*” Yet racism is one of the most divisive things we deal with on this planet.

When God sent the great flood of Noah and destroyed all human life, He spared Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives. The whole world was populated and spread out from those three young couples, as God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. At that time, the whole world spoke

one language until a mighty man named Nimrod subjugated people, making them slaves to build the Tower of Babel. This was in defiance to God's command to spread out over the earth. God intervened by confounding their languages, and naturally, groups began forming based on common language, which became the various nations.

It is God's intention for all men of every nation to seek after Him. It is His intention that all men from every nation find Him. There are no other gods for other nations! *There are not other gods for other people! There is only one God for all men!* If they seek after Him, they will find Him, and as Christians, we must not think that we should not preach the Gospel to nations who have their own gods. We must not think that we should not preach to Islamic nations or Asian nations where there are Buddhists, Hindus, as in India where they have over 33 million gods.

Should we seek to proselytize people of other religions? Absolutely! God wants *all men* to seek and after Him and find Him, because He is not very far from any of them! And if we will present the Gospel to them, and they will call upon the name of the Lord, they too shall be saved. As we saw with Paul in Athens, we must be led of the Holy Spirit and learn our craft to be able to give an intelligent, inspired, effectual witness to all people of every ethnicity, culture, and religion.

"God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge

of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself for all" (1Tim.2:4-6). Peter declared: *"The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9).

GOD IS NOT WINKING

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now he commands all men everywhere to repent. Because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained; whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead" (vv.30-31).

Having witnessed the wholesale idolatry of Athens, under the clever guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul gave a rousing declaration of *the unknown God* to the philosophers gathered on Mars Hill. Incredulous of their many temples, especially the one to an un-named god, he reasoned with them that the Creator God who made the heavens and earth and all living things could not be reduced to graven images made by the hands of men. Why would they bow down to an idol of stone, silver, gold, or anything man-made—and inferior to themselves? He brilliantly quoted their own concepts, referring to a famous poet of theirs who said, *"Man is the offspring of God."* He continued the logical deduction: If man is the offspring of God, then God must look like us, and we must

look like Him. So why worship beasts, real or imaginary?

Paul pressed forward to his climax: In light of these facts, there was only one thing left to do. When you follow the logical order and finely-constructed argument Paul gave, it leads to only one conclusion: *“All men everywhere need to repent and call on the only true and living God.”*

Paul explained, *“In times past, God winked at men’s sins, because they were ignorant,”* and He let the nations serve their gods. On an earlier missionary tour with Barnabas, they went to Lystra where the people tried to worship them as gods, calling Barnabas *“Jupiter”* and Paul *“Mercury.”* Paul had to stop them from making sacrifice to them, and said, *“God in times past allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good to all men, and gave us rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with gladness”* (Acts 14:16-17).

Before He sent His Son Jesus to be our Redeemer, God permitted the nations their idolatry. He winked at it. They were ignorant; they didn’t know any better. Meanwhile, God dealt with Israel, because Israel is His firstborn, His portion out of the nations, and gave them His Word and plan for mankind.

But He sent Jesus for the whole world: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). He died for all the sins of the world,

and God is not going to wink at them anymore, because it cost Him a terrible price. His Son suffered a gruesome, agonizing death on the cross to shed His blood, and God is not going to wink at our sins! He’s not winking at America’s sin of homosexuality. He’s not winking at the abortions in this nation. And He has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by that man He raised from the dead, the One who said: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes unto the Father but by me”* (John 14:6).

ONE ROAD MAP TO HEAVEN

What Jesus said is politically incorrect. It is okay to say: *“I know the way”* or *“I can show you the way.”* The Bible is inclusive in that Jesus said: *“Whosoever believes on me shall have eternal life,”* but it is exclusive in that He said, *“I am the way.”* Many claim that all roads lead to Heaven, meaning that all religions are equal. But what is the basis for this claim?

Buddhism says that you must achieve “nirvana” after no less than 547 reincarnations, but the Bible says, *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment”* (Heb.9:27).

Hinduism believes in many gods, over 33 million, and not one offers a personal relationship, but they worship the creation. The Bible says: *“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator”*

(Rom.1:25).

Humanism does not acknowledge Jesus is the creator of life, but evolution—accidental origin, but the Bible says, “*All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made... For by him were all things created in heaven and in earth...*” (Jn.1:3, Col.1:16-17).

Islam says that Jesus was a prophet, but He is not the Son of God, because Allah has no son, but the Bible says: “*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but should have eternal life*” (Jn.3:16).

Mormonism says that Jesus started out as a human and obtained godhood, and we also can obtain godhood through good deeds. The Bible says: “*For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast*” (Eph.2:8-9).

Judaism worships the one true living God, but says that Jesus is not the Messiah; nor is He the Son of God or the Savior of man. Their salvation is based on keeping the Law of Moses.

All of these declare that you can save yourself by some kind of good works. The Bible says: “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Not Buddha, Allah, Mohammed, Hari Krishna, not Moses nor Peter, and not the Pope. *Jesus is the*

only way, and if you want to go to Heaven, you must follow Him.

Can you get to Disney World in Orlando, Florida if you board a plane to Niagara Falls, New York? No! Nor can you get to Heaven unless you follow Jesus Christ. He is the only one who came down from Heaven, went back, and promised to return for His followers: “*I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself...*” (Jn.14:1-3).

WATCH OUT FOR SYNCRETISM

“*And this is life eternal, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*” (John 17:3).

Jesus does not share the same page in the history books of time with Buddha, Allah, Mohammed, or any who claim to be the way to God. *Chrislam* is a blend of Christianity and Islam that claims that Allah and the God of the Bible are the same. The reality is: No true Muslim will ever accept this, as they staunchly believe *God has no son*; nor do they believe Jesus was crucified, but only caught up to Heaven. This poses a huge problem for Christians who believe in the sacrificial death and bodily resurrection of Jesus for forgiveness of sins and justification. Beware! Greater *syncretism*—blending of religious elements—is coming.

A Gospel evangelist who was born a Hindu in India, became an apologist on radio and college campuses. He once told how he went to Cambodia, a Buddhist stronghold,

to preach. Using an interpreter, the message was well received that night. Many hearts opened to receive Christ. When he finished, the interpreter asked him to take his seat while he talked to the crowd. He spoke with great passion, and the more he spoke, the more animated and passionate he became. Quickly, the people were visibly upset, and some even got up and walked out. The evangelist was upset too! He had no idea what he said, but it was apparent that it had undone everything he had just preached!

In the car, he asked the interpreter what he said that upset the people. He replied: *“You must understand: I had to make it perfectly clear that by accepting Jesus Christ, they had to follow Him and Him alone. They had to forsake all other gods! It is not unusual for Buddhists to just add another god to their repertoire of polytheism, but I told them that Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life!”*

Today in American colleges, talk radio, TV panels, internet forums, and political rallies, it would be okay with most if you stood up and said that Jesus is *one* of the ways to God. But the moment you say that He is the *only* way, they will turn on you, scorn you, and denounce you as an intolerant, right-wing radical and subverter of America, and the favorite new buzzword: *hater!* People are now quick to throw this word around, and Satan cleverly uses it

to obscure the heart of the Gospel: *“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...”*

Anyone who claims to honor Jesus and advocates other ways to God is deceived or is a deceiver, or both, and makes Jesus a deceiver. One cannot say Jesus was good and a prophet, *but not the Son of God*, which is what Islam says. How can He be *“a good prophet”* and claim to be the Son of God if it is not true? As the late renowned theologian C.S. Lewis said, this would make Him a *liar*. If He was delusional in believing He was the Son of God, He would be a *lunatic*. Neither is acceptable to be called *“good.”* There’s only one alternative: He is who He said: *He is Lord!*

ALL ARE ONE BLOOD—BUT NOT ONE SPIRIT

“God has made of one blood all nations of men...” I remember as a girl in Sunday School singing the song, *“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world: Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight.”* This simple children’s song contains the absolute truth: No matter what color, *all men—all people are one blood*

Today, while all men are *one blood*, as all came from one set of parents, Adam and Eve, *made in the image of God*, billions still ignorantly worship false gods. When our first parents sinned, the nature of sin was passed down, and with every generation iniquity increased until God actually *“repented that he had made man.”* Noah, a righteous man,

found grace in His sight (Gen.6:6-8). His sons *Japheth, Shem, and Ham*, were not corrupted by the perverse sexual sins that were prevalent, so God spared them and their wives when He destroyed the earth. From them the earth was repopulated, and God chose *Shem*, progenitor of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, to birth a nation as His firstborn in the earth: “*Thus says the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn*” (Ex.4:22).

Israel was the central factor of how God divided the nations: “*When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel... Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*” (Deut.32:8-9). A way to God chose Jacob, father of the 12 tribes of Israel, separating the world into two entities: *Israel and the other Gentile nations*—until 2000 years ago, a new entity was spiritually birthed into the world: “*Give none defense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles [nation]; nor to the Church of God*” (1Cor.10:32).

We who are born-again are members of Christ’s body—the Church—and firstborn of God. “*We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we call God, Abba Father. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...*” (Romans 8:15-17). Paul further noted in his letter to the

Romans: “*Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*” (v.9).

While all men are of one blood by natural birth, only those who have been born again are of one Spirit: “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*” (Eph.4:4-6). “*Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God*” (1Cor.2:12).

WILL FEW BE SAVED?

“*Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? He said, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*” (Luke 13:23-24).

I have wondered this many times—Have you? You can’t live in this perverse, ungodly, Christ-hating world and not wonder if many will be saved. How many real Christians are there in your world? In your family, where you work, where you go to school, in your neighborhood? You may think to yourself, *Lord, is there only a few that will be saved?*

Notice Jesus didn’t even bother to answer the question; He didn’t even comment if only few will be saved. Rather, He said: “*YOU strive to enter in!*” It is as though He said: *What about you—will you be saved?* Because He said that *many* will try to

enter in and won't be able! This word means *to be strong, to have strength*. Many will not have the spiritual fortitude to go all the way with Jesus, especially in these last days of deception and compromise. It's little wonder Jesus said, "*When I come, will I find faith in the earth?*" (Lk.18:8).

Jesus was saying: "*Don't worry about the rest—if you will enter in, you are going to have to strive.*" The Greek word is AGONIZOMAI, transliterated into English as *agony, agonize*, meaning *to go through a time of suffering*. Paul used it in his letter to Timothy: "*FIGHT the good fight of faith*" (1Tim.6:12). If you make it to Heaven, you are going to have to fight!

You can't work your way in, because salvation is free: "*It is not of works lest any man should boast. It's the grace of God through faith, and even that's a gift of God.*" But you are going to fight your way in, because you have an adversary, the devil, who will actively oppose you in every way possible. The reason for the *agony* is "*the gate is strait.*" (Notice the spelling is missing *gh*. That's another *straight* meaning *without curve or bend*.) The meaning here is *narrow, confining, and constricting*. We will feel pressure on the left and on the right, on the front and on the back. Paul described himself as being "*pressed in spirit*" and "*pressed above measure*" (Acts18:5, 2Cor.1:8).

He said: "*Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with*

patience the race that is set before us" (Heb.12:1). No one can enter into the strait gate trying to drag the world and all its stuff with him. We all struggle with something we must overcome. He said: "*Know you not that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And every man that strives* [AGONIZOMAI] *for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible*" (1Cor.9:24-27). He referred to Olympians who not only train, but *master* their bodies and minds through self-control, so as to finish strong and reach their goal.

He said: "*So that I might finish my course with joy... lest I myself become a castaway*" (Acts 20:24).

NO FEAR OF GOD = NO HOPE

As Jesus prophesied, we are in a time parallel with Noah's day, when the earth is filled with violence, chaos, and great troubles, both natural and man-made. Paul said that these things would increase and intensify like birth pangs upon a woman in labor. While there are many variables that feed into these conditions, a major cause is *a lack of the fear of God*. This is a direct result of the spirit of godlessness that has infiltrated our society since World War II. The 1950s was a time of blessings and prosperity. The emphasis in America was *God, country, and family*.

In the 1960s, prayer and Bible reading were taken out of public

schools. Families that once attended church together on Sundays stayed home to enjoy their new pleasures of life. Little by little, God was squeezed out of our lives. Then Satan made an all-out attack when he introduced the teaching of evolution in public schools. The Bible was not only removed, but ridiculed. When young people are taught that they are not created by a designer for a purpose, and are only cosmic matter that will be absorbed back into the universe, there is no incentive to live according to the Bible, which is mocked as fables of men. Nor is there any restraint from doing evil, because if there is no Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge, there is no judgment. The Wiseman said, *“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil”* (Pro.16:6).

Scripture says that when there is no fear of God before their eyes, the results are: *“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace they have not known”* (Rom.3:10-18). We are seeing this today, and it will continue to manifest, because the fear of man is not enough to stem the tide of rebellion that flows from their hearts. *“Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but their foolish heart was darkened.”* (Rom.1:21).

We have a generation who has grown up without the knowledge of God and a healthy fear of God. This means they have also grown up with

out hope of a future. It fuels frustration, anger, and indifference to authority. Who is telling them what God says He will do for those who follow His plan? Even in a fallen world of pain, inequity, and injustice?

“The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that does good, no not one” (Psalm 14:2-3). David said that they don’t understand God, so they don’t seek Him. Their foolish hearts are darkened, and they are spiritually blind.

THE MIND-BLINDER

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (1Cor.4:3-4).

It was prophesied by Joel and confirmed by Peter and Paul, that in the last days, even though it would be perilous times of great wickedness, it would be easy to be saved: *“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Rom.10:13-15) Yet Paul said that men cannot call on the name of the Lord if they have not heard of Him, and they cannot hear unless there is a preacher. It’s nearly impossible in America not to hear about Jesus Christ. In this age of technology,

people anywhere in the world can hear the Gospel on the Internet. Even in Siberia, where people actually live in igloos isolated from civilization, there are centers where they can travel 300 miles by reindeer to watch Christian satellite and hear the Gospel.

Jesus said commanded the Church to preach the gospel to all the nations of the world: *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations”* (Mt.24:14). As He ascended to the Father, He commissioned His followers: *“Go therefore and teach all nations. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 13:15). He It’s been noted that you cannot spell *Gospel* without *Go*—someone has to *go* and preach the good news so they can *hear*, and *believe*, and *call* on the name of Jesus and be *saved*.

Yet multitudes who hear the Gospel do not believe and are not saved, and the reason for many is they are spiritually blind. Satan has blinded their minds with a spirit of error, so that they cannot receive the spirit of truth. John said: *“They were of the world, therefore, speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God: and he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error”* (1John 4:5-6).

Paul certainly understood spiritual blindness, because before he was converted, he was a merciless activist against Christianity. His life was a

campaign to round up Christians to be condemned to death. He stood by, holding the cloaks of those who stoned Stephen to death, as his face shone like an angel’s, and he cried out: *“I see the heavens opened, and Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of the Father ready to receive my spirit”* (Acts 7:56). Paul saw and heard this, but it did not convict him! On the contrary, he ratcheted up his campaign against Christians, because he was blind. Later he explained to Timothy: *“I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief”* (1Tim.1:13).

We must understand that often when we witness to people who do not believe and resist the message of the gospel—they are blind. We must pray for God to remove the mind-blinders so the light can get in.

Note: In my studies, I have found eight things that blind people’s minds to the truth and keep them from being saved. (2 CD set: *8 Reasons Some Are Not Saved*). For more info visit www.soundofffaith.org