

Isaiah 45:20-25
Good Shepherd, December, 2020

Although we cannot see God, we know of Him through nature, our conscience, and God's Word. If those who don't know the true God, don't listen to God's Word, they will have no idea who the true God is. Since everyone wants to believe in something, unbelievers try to imagine what their god is like. They become figments of Satan's imagination.

Here are examples of human gods:

- *Anubis*, part man, part jackal, Egyptian god of the dead
- *Dagon*, part man, part fish, Philistine god of fertility
- *Kali*, the Hindu god of death, wears a necklace of decapitated heads
- *Huitzilopochtli*, (we zee lo - po zee li) Aztec god who desired human sacrifice
- *Ah Puch*, Mayan god of death, pictured as a bloated corpse
- *Moloch*, Canaanite god, part bull, desired child sacrifices.

Would you worship gods like this? Why would anyone worship them? Today our society has many gods: entertainment, wealth, sports, science, and even Jesus as a mushroom. However, there is only one God. And He says,

I am the Lord, and there is no other!

Human beings create gods, making them out of wood, stone or metal and pretend that their god is real and could make life better for them. Listen what God says about pretend gods: Their idols are like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch. They cannot speak. They must be carried because they cannot walk. Human gods are hopeless, helpless and worthless.

The only reality those gods have is in the mind of the worshiper. The gods of the ancient world are of no consequence any more. We know their names but no one worships them. Who worships Baal, Moloch, Dagon, Anubis, Ah Puch or Chinnamasta? But the Lord remains.

There is only one God. God says in Isaiah: I am the first, and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me. Our God is unique. Our God has no equal! There is no comparison between gods dreamed up by human beings and the true God mentioned in Scripture!

God speaks to the nations of the earth in our text: Gather together and come; assemble, you survivors from the nations. God wants all people to meet with Him and says the people can drag along their pretend gods if they want. "Let's see what you can do," God says to the gods. Then God challenges them, Declare what is to be, present it – let them take counsel together,. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but Me.

In our text, God challenges the gods of human beings to foretell something that will happen in the future and then have it happen. But they couldn't. No one knows the future. Our God does. God used the prophet Isaiah to say that some 700 years in the future a virgin would give birth to a son. God used the prophet Micah to say, some 700 years in the future, this child would be born in Bethlehem. It happened! Our God is not a pretend god!

Our God speaks to the peoples of the world saying, Turn to Me and be saved...for I am God and there is no other. The message of the true God is a message of invitation and grace. God announces judgment on all who refuse the salvation only He can provide and the forgiveness only He can give.

God says, Turn to Me and be saved. No pretend god says words like that! Human gods use threats and terror. Our God uses LOVE. Our God wants all people to be saved! There is a difference!

Only the God of the Bible has paid the price to give forgiveness to all the people of the world. No pretend religion announces the sacrifice of God's Son for the forgiveness of sins – only the Christian religion.

The worst problem in this world is that human beings refuse to admit the truth and worship the true God. The Bible tells us the simple way to eternal life – through Jesus Christ. God promised the way to life through the prophets and, at the right time, God sent His Son to be our Savior. God kept His Word!

The gospel holds out the gift of salvation, won by Jesus with a death payment on the cross. The good news of Jesus comforts the guilty with forgiveness. It gives hope to the hopeless by showing God's love for them. This gospel promises resurrection from the dead and eternal life as the answer to death, illness, injury and tragedy.

This good news shows us God's love for us. This doesn't happen in any pretend religion! We don't earn God's love; we don't deserve God's love. He gives us love because He loves us completely! Peace is ours without conditions, bought and paid for by Jesus. We cannot lose it, we can only throw it away through unbelief.

Isaiah speaks of the last day when he writes, every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear allegiance. They will say, "Only in the Lord is there true righteousness and strength." To Him they will come and be ashamed - all those who are angry at Him.

On the Last Day everyone will confess that God is real and the gospel is true. That confession will come too late for unbelievers who hated God and rejected His salvation. They will know that salvation comes through Jesus alone. But they will never share in that salvation. They will be ashamed because salvation was free and they wouldn't even listen to that saving news!

But Christians are justified, forgiven because Jesus Christ paid the debt of their sin! They are taken to heaven because of God's love! They will be happy forever.

This is the message of Isaiah for people today. There is only One God. All other gods are just pretend. They are not real. The true God announced Himself long ago and sent His Son to be our

Savior. And we rejoice because of our Savior and thank our God because of His grace. There is no god like our God

1055