

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

James M. Duncan, Pastor

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What We Believe About God our Heavenly Father

SERIES: The Foundations on Which We Stand – Why We Believe What We Believe!

Ephesians 4:1-6 (Read)

Acts 17:16-34

God wants us to worship Him and know Him personally. This can only happen through the work of the Holy Spirit. Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in John 4 about our God and Father and how we are to worship Him. Jesus said, *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Vs. 23-24)*

True Christianity is not a **religion** but a **relationship**. We are called into a relationship with God - not into bondage to a set of rituals, observances, traditions and customs. **Ephesians 4** tells us that Christianity is exclusive in that it worships an exclusive God.

There are three kinds of people in the world...

Atheists - those who believe in no God; **Agnostics** – those who believe that there might be a God, but He has no interested in them or their lives and lastly **Theists** – are those who believe in a God.

We read in **Deuteronomy 4:35 and 39** and in **Deuteronomy 6:4-6** and **three things about God:**

1. We worship a **particular God**
2. We worship a **personal God**
3. We worship a **passionate God**

Now I want you to turn with me to **Acts 17:16-34**. Paul had a message for the Athenian intellectuals who were all wrapped up in empty philosophy. As we'll see, to these philosophers, God was distant and unknowable and unreachable. We begin at **verse 16** – Here was a city built on man's wisdom and totally given to idolatry. Then in **V-17** Paul shares the Gospel.

I would like us to notice two things about this fascinating incident in the life of Paul.

I. FIRST, NOTICE WITH ME PAUL'S AUDIENCE – **Verses 18-21**

Verse 18 tells us there were two main philosophic belief systems in Paul's audience that day:

First were the **EPICUREANS** whose philosophy was formulated by a man named Epicurus, who lived from 342-270 BC.

The second main philosophical system represented in Paul's audience were the **STOICS**, whose philosophy was articulated by Zeno, who lived from 336-264 BC.

The **EPICUREANS** said, **“Enjoy life!”** and the **STOICS** said, **“Endure life.”** You know, there are a lot of people who believe those two things today. They only lead to purposelessness and emptiness—but Paul had an answer for them.

II. LOOK WITH ME AT PAUL'S MESSAGE IN THE REST OF **CHAPTER 17** - on What We Believe About God our Heavenly Father

The truth is that most of humanity's problems are the result of ignorance of, or a defective view of, who God IS and what God DOES. So, Paul gave these learned men a simple primer on the one, true God. **Note seven truths about God Paul told them about in his brief sermon:**

1. **First**, Paul taught them that God is the **CREATOR** – **Verse 24a**
2. **Second**, Paul taught them that God is the **LORD** of heaven and earth. – **Verse 24b**
3. **Third**, Paul taught that God cannot be contained in man-made temples because He is **OMNIPRESENT** – **Verse 24c-25a**
4. **Fourth**, Paul taught that God is **TOTALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT** – **Verse 25**
5. **Fifth**, Paul taught that God is **SOVEREIGN** – **Verse 26**. Many people think that history is the record of man's deeds. How foolish! —**History is “His story.”**
6. **Sixth**, Paul also taught them that God is **APPROACHABLE** – **Verse 27**
7. **Finally**, Paul taught them that God will **JUDGE THE WORLD** – **Verse 31**

I would like you to note three responses to Paul's sermon:

Some mocked – **Verse 32a**

Others procrastinated – **Verse 32b**

Finally, some believed – **Verse 34**