

THE PANTHEON OF GODS, Pt. 1

Acts 17:22-23

INTRODUCTION

- A. King Olaf of Norway.
 - 1. Facing a group of pagan farmers.
 - a. Exhorted the farmers to accept the real God and put away their idols.
 - 2. Gulbrand, chief of the pagan farmers.
 - a. Should have brought our god, but it was rainy.
 - b. We will return tomorrow – either surrender or fight.
 - 3. The next day was favorable, so the farmers brought out their god, Thor the Thunderer.
 - a. Everyday 5 cakes were set before him and disappeared – he consumed them.
 - b. It was silver and gold, carried on shoulders and placed in midst of field.
 - 4. King Olaf, quite impressed at the size of the idol, which could not speak or hear, and carried from place to place.
 - a. *“But now look to the east and see our God!”*
 - b. At that moment, Kolbing, a faithful servant of the king, clubbed the idol.
 - c. The idol broke and rats went scurrying – as did the pagans.
- B. Question to consider: Am I guilty of idolatry?
 - 1. Are we taking God and modifying Him to be something different than what He is in Scripture?
 - 2. Acts 17:22-23, the Unknown God amidst other idols.
 - a. Verse 18, they accuse Paul of babbling about “strange deities”.
 - b. Translated is “foreign demons”.
 - c. Athens worshipped thousands of foreign demons.
 - i. 12 major Greek gods.
 - ii. Between 340-400 gods.
 - 3. Gideon, Judges 6:25-28.
 - a. Not to manage the idols, or make shorter, or keep under control.
 - b. To tear it down – completely destroy.

I. THE GOD OF MY CAUSE.

- A. The God to support my cause.
 - 1. The feminist agenda.
 - 2. The ecological propaganda.
 - 3. Fashion style.
 - 4. Entertainment choices.
 - 5. The gun debate.
- B. Problem:
 - 1. Making the Sovereign God become the Slave.
 - 2. Revamping of God, based on our own self-centeredness.
 - 3. 1 Samuel 4:3-8 – ark of the covenant into battle.

II. THE GOD OF MY UNDERSTANDING.

- A. Making God how we want Him to operate.

1. Doctrines we want stressed.
 2. A god to condone or condemn what we encourage.
 3. We decide what is important or not.
 4. We force God to subscribe to our list.
 5. We believe God feels very much at home with our understanding.
- B. Problem:
1. We limit God by what we understand of the Bible.
 2. We define God in the way we want to understand Him, 1 Kings 20:23.
 - a. Israel's battle against Syria.
 - b. Syrians, "Their God is a God of the mountains."
 3. He is the God of grace and love – but what about demanding godly living? Obeying the gospel? How can a loving God allow such destruction?
 4. It is understanding ALL of Scripture, Ephesians 1:17-18; Colossians 1:9.

III. THE GOD OF MY EXPERIENCE.

- A. *"If I feel it, it must be true!"*
1. Allowing the subjective [feelings] to mold the spiritual and ignore the objective [Scripture].
 2. *"I know what the Bible teaches, but I feel differently."*
 - a. *"I won't believe it, even if you show it to me in the Bible."*
 3. The god of MY experience becomes the only standard of authority in religion.
 - a. After Assyria removed Israel, they brought in people to maintain the land.
 - b. God sent lions which killed some.
 - c. 2 Kings 17:27-29, 33
- B. Always wanting something different, more exciting, more sensational.
1. For them, worship and service to the biblical God is never satisfying.
 2. *"...holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power..."*, 2 Tim. 3:5.

CLOSING

- A. If I worship the **"god of MY cause"** I will live life inconsistently and will wander from cause to cause, forcing God to fit my agenda, Philippians 3:1-6.
- B. If I worship the **"god of MY understanding"** I will limit the Almighty God to what I want Him to be and will never find the freedom that comes from knowing the whole truth of God, Jn. 8:31-32.
- C. If I worship the **"god of MY experiences"** I will forever live enslaved to emotions or sensations and will never know the absolute security that is provided to those who follow Scripture, 1 John 5:13.