

God Is Not Who You Think He Is
Acts 17:22-31

1. **Superstition:** To dread a deity; a religious fear driven by a confused concept of God – producing a sincere but very misdirected religion. Indeed this is the mark of heathenism.
2. What you “think” of God will determine how you live. However, your thoughts will not change God or make him be untrue to himself.

(2 Timothy 2:13) If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

3. We all will be judged/justified according to God’s word not according to how we “think” it will or should be.

Malachi 3:5-6 “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the LORD of hosts. ⁶“For I, the LORD, do not change;

4. Times change, cultures change, people change, God remains the same. (**Matthew 11:28-30**)

Hebrews 13:8-9 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

Isaiah 55:9 “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

5. If we say we know God then we are also saying we know His word and the Holy Spirit who authored His word. They agree with each other.

John 8:28-32 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. ²⁹ And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” ³⁰ As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

³¹ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

Acts 10:44-46 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (word of Christ).

6. With faith we please an almighty God. If we live out our faith, the world mostly “thinks” we are arrogant, boastful or very unwise. (**2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:6**)

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. NLT states: For we live by believing and not by seeing.

Hebrews 11:6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

7. The carnal/natural mind is “hostile” toward God and is unable to submit itself to God.

Romans 8:6-8 NLT So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. ⁸That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

8. Jesus is the Word and He was from the beginning with God. His words are spirit and life. Anyone worshipping God must worship in Spirit and Truth. **(John 1:1-5; John 4:23-24; John 6:63)**

John 4:23-24 But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 6:63 NLT The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are common superstitions in our world today? In your own life? Where do they come from?
2. If we do not know or fill our minds with God's word, how are our thoughts and beliefs formed? What are some non-scriptural beliefs in the church/world today?
3. Discuss how the lack of knowledge and belief in God's word allows for fears and being "swayed" by the world. Read and discuss the truth in Hosea 4:6.
4. Is living by faith "going out on a limb", unwise or not being responsible? These are phrases that many use to describe this kind of living.
5. Discuss and share moments in your lives when faith was born from searching the scriptures and how it changed you and brought you closer to the Lord.
6. Read Matthew 9:1-8. Discuss how the reverses seems true to us today concerning forgiving sins and healing. Why? Read James 5:13-18.
7. Carefully and lovingly discuss what we should "think" when our life or our situations don't line up or agree with scripture.
8. Can the word and the Holy Spirit have the same supernatural impact on our lives today that it did in Jesus' day and in the book of Acts?
9. What does it mean to worship God in spirit and truth?