

# THE UNKNOWN GOD OF THE ATHENIANS

By Keith Greer

*“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.” {Acts 17:16}*

On his second missionary journey, Paul came into Athens, a city overrun with idolatry. False gods abounded, with altars to many different pagan gods in every part of the city—there was even one to an “*unknown god*.” Paul used that particular altar as a basis for his sermon about the one true God. Let’s examine some of the things he said:

**Does not dwell in temples made with hands.** *“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.” {Acts 17:24}* The Athenians had built many temples as homes for their false gods. Yet, a temple built by human hands cannot contain the one true God of heaven. *“Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?’” {Isaiah 66:1}* Even in the days of Solomon, when he built the temple for God, in the dedication of that temple he well understood no physical structure could house God. Why? He created the whole world—it belonged to Him! The one true God created the entire universe, and His home is high above the heavens.

**Is not worshipped with men’s hands.** *“Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything...” {Acts 17:25}* Those who worshipped pagan gods often brought them gifts of food, drink, and clothing. Yet, it would be futile to bring such gifts to the true God of heaven; He needs nothing from us. We worship God because we love Him, because He is great, and because we want to give Him the praise He deserves. What can we bring God that He doesn’t already have or that He needs? The need is on our part—not His.

**Giveth life, breath, and all things.** *“...since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.” {Acts 17:25}* Because of Him, we have life, and we have it abundantly. *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” {James 1:17}* Even though many people do not believe in or acknowledge God, they live because He permits it. We would have nothing in this life were it not for God’s love and His willingness and desire to share this world’s good things with us.

**All Nations Made From One Blood.** *“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.” {Acts 17:26}* All of mankind springs from one bloodline. No matter where—Philippines, Europe, Russia, New Zealand—we live, or what our nationality, we all have the same blood. *“And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.’” {1 Corinthians 15:45}* So we all have the same value to our Creator.

**Not far from each one of us.** *“So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.” {Acts 17:27}* Those who truly seek for God can easily find Him. *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” {Matthew 7:7,8}* Unfortunately, so many cannot find Him because they seek

Him in places He can never be found! He's not in a bottle, not in drugs, not in a human relationship, possessions, money, or any other physical thing! Yet, if one would only open their heart and His word—He can be found!

Sadly, I must admit that God is also unknown to many in our own country. Not because He has done nothing to make Himself known, but because people do not look in His word to find and know Him. How sad, with all the technological advancements that make God's word more available to us, people don't take the time to seek Him. The Bible is the number one selling book in the world and has been for over one hundred years. Looking at statistics, I'm told that every home in America has at least two Bibles in them. Information is available and can easily be secured but means little if one never bothers to examine or study it. What about you—is He unknown in your home? \*\*\*