

TURN TO THE LORD

45 ²⁰Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Those who carry around their wooden idols have no understanding, those who pray to gods that cannot save. ²¹Declare and present [your proofs]; indeed, let them take counsel together! Who foretold this from the distant past? Who declared it long ago? Was it not I, Jehovah? There is no [other] God besides me. [I am] a just God and a Savior—there is none besides me. ²²Turn to me and be saved, [you people from] all the ends of the earth; because I am God, and there is none other. ²³I have sworn by myself, with complete integrity my mouth has uttered a word that will not be revoked: Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess [that I am God]. ²⁴They will say of me, Righteousness and strength are found in Jehovah alone. Men shall come to him, but those who raged against him shall be put to shame. ²⁵All the descendants of Israel will be justified by Jehovah, and they will exult. (Isa. 45:20-25)

Introduction

A T.V. adventure movie began by transporting its leading character back to his boyhood in India. As the character recalled his boyhood days, the camera showed scenes of India, finally focusing in on the Ganges River. As our eyes took in the scene of the Ganges, with its muddy brown waters, with its banks crowded with Hindus who consider the river sacred, the voice of the lead character can be heard commenting, “All the world’s religions flow from here.”

“All the world’s religions flow from here.” In other words, all the world’s religions have a common source; they are all basically the same. That was the message being subtly conveyed. “All the world’s religions flow from here,” from that muddy, filthy, putrid river.

All the **world’s** religions may flow from that filthy river, but not the religion of **heaven!** John the Baptist, under divine inspiration, made this distinction between the religious teachers of the world and the Lord Jesus Christ:

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and he speaks of the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He testifies of what he has seen and heard. (Jn. 3:31-32a)

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself declares: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except by me”* (Jn. 14:6.)

Men in their sinfulness invent false gods, as the Apostle Paul declares in Romans 1:25, *“they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.”* But the LORD in His mercy calls men to turn to Him, the true and living God. This is the message that is the subject of Isaiah 45:20-25, encapsulated in the LORD’s call to the nations: *“Turn to me and be*

saved, [you people from] all the ends of the earth, because I am God, and there is none other”

Because the LORD alone is God, you must turn to Him. That is the message the world needs to hear and the message the Christian needs to remember.

I. Turn to the LORD, in Worship (Isa. 45:22c)

“Turn to me,” declares the LORD, *“because I am God, and there is none other.”* In the previous verse the LORD asserts, *“There is no [other] God besides me. [I am] a just God and a Savior—there is none besides me”* (vs. 21b.)

Scripture teaches that is not true that the whole world worships the same God, merely calling Him by different names and serving Him in different ways. If, indeed, the whole world was worshipping the God of heaven and was at peace with Him, why would the Lord Jesus Christ have issued the Great Commission: *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matt. 28:19)? Why would the Apostle Paul preach as he did to the men of Athens? The summary of his message is presented in Acts 17:16, 22b-31,

While Paul was waiting ... at Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols ... ²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious; ²³for as I walked around and observed your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else ... ²⁸In him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ ²⁹Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man’s design and skill. ³⁰... he commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17:16, 22b-31)

The fact is, the world has willfully and wickedly turned away from the God of heaven, inventing false gods of their own choosing:

... although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him ... ²²... they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles ... ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created

things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (Rom. 1:21a, 22b, 23, 25)

The fact is, behind the false religions and the idols of the world there resides the spiritual power of darkness, the presence of the devil:

Now then, what do I mean? [Am I saying] that meat offered to idols has [any] special significance? or that an idol is anything? ²⁰[No! But what I am telling you is] that the sacrifices of the Gentiles are being offered to demons, not to God; and I do not want you to have communion with demons. (1 Cor. 10:19-20)

In this regard, note, also, the testimony of the Psalmist:

*... [they] mingled themselves with the nations and adopted their customs. ³⁶**They worshipped their idols**, which became a snare to them. ³⁷**They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.*** (Psl. 106:35-37)

The fact is, men need to turn away from their religions and their idols, and return to the true and living God; as the Apostle Paul reminds the Thessalonians that this is precisely what they did when they received Jesus as their Lord and Savior:

... you turned to God from idols in order to serve the living and true God ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Thess. 1:9b-10)

Turn to the LORD, in worship:

Sing to Jehovah, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. ³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples; ⁴for great is Jehovah and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods—⁵for all the gods of the nations are idols, but Jehovah made the heavens. ⁶Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary. ⁷Ascribe to Jehovah, O families of nations, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength. ⁸Ascribe to Jehovah the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. ⁹Worship Jehovah in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. (Psl. 96:2-10)

II. Turn to the LORD, for Salvation (Isa. 45:22b)

“Turn to me and be saved,” declares the LORD. The LORD commands us to look to Him alone for our salvation; and He assures us that in so doing we shall surely be saved.

Many people look to their religion. They may put their trust in their baptism, confirmation, church membership, financial contributions, or acts of religious service. But could any one of us ever honestly maintain that we have met the

religious demands of an infinite God? The God who is worthy of receiving the devotion of our hearts and lives, the God who requires that we worship Him *"in spirit and in truth"* (Jn. 4:24)? He is the God who requires that we love Him *"with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"* (Matt. 22:37)? Each one of us must turn to the Lord, as He today reveals Himself in His incarnate state as Jesus Christ, and turn to Him alone for our personal salvation: *"Turn to me and be saved."*

Many others look to their lives. They place their confidence in their conviction that they are sincere, decent, law-abiding citizens, and in this they put their hope of salvation. But who is truly sincere? Who can compare to Jesus? What about our sinful human hearts? The Lord Jesus confronts us with the true state of our hearts, when He declares, *"out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. ²⁰These are the things that defile a man"* (Matt. 15:19-20.) Each one of us must turn to the Lord, as He today reveals Himself in His incarnate state as Jesus Christ, and turn to Him alone for our personal salvation: *"Turn to me and be saved."*

Still others look to "false gods" and entertain false hopes. If they do not actually turn to pagan religions, they may invent a caricature of the true God. The most common caricature is the one that maintains, "God is love, therefore He will allow me to do whatever I please." Men trust in such caricatures of God, rather than accept Him as He fully reveals Himself in His Word, the Bible. Each of us must turn to the Lord Jesus Christ (as He is revealed in the Bible) and to Him alone for our personal salvation: *"Turn to me and be saved."*

When you turn in trust and complete surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, you will surely be saved, even as the LORD so emphatically asserts through the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, when He declares, *"Turn to me and be saved."* Such is the case, because the Lord Jesus is the one true compassionate and faithful High Priest: *"he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people"* (Heb. 2:17.) By way of illustration: If you are in debt, it is good to have a sympathetic friend; but it is even better if that sympathetic friend is also rich. Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ is both sympathetic and spiritually rich, He is fully able to meet the requirements for our salvation. Furthermore, you and I can turn to the Lord Jesus with full confident of salvation because the Lord Jesus is fully committed to doing His Father's will, as that will is expressed in John 6:37-40,

All whom the Father gives me will come to me; and he who comes to me I will by no means reject; ³⁸for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, [namely,] that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰My Father's will is that every one who looks to the Son

and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (Jn. 6:37-40)

Turn to the LORD, for salvation. When the question was asked of Paul and Silas, *"What must I do to be saved?"* they replied, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"* (Acts 16:30b-31a.)

III. Turn to the LORD, in Submission (Isa. 45:23)

The LORD has sworn by Himself that every knee shall bow before Him and every tongue shall acknowledge that He is the LORD (vs. 23.) The LORD is a jealous God; He will not tolerate the giving to any other the worship due Him, He will not tolerate the giving to any other the devotion due Him.

True worship involves devotion, note Matthew 4:10, where the Lord Jesus informs the devil who was tempting Him, *"You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."* Devotion is one of the greatest expressions of worship. Worship apart from devotion is empty and hollow, it is detestable to God; the LORD demands that He be the first and the supreme object of our devotion.

Here in Isaiah 45:23 the LORD declares, *"Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess [that I am God]."* The awesome message from the Word of God is this: *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time"* (1 Pet. 5:5b-6.) If a man refuses to bow before the LORD God, yielding his will to Him, that man will be forced to do so in judgment:

Jehovah of hosts has a day in store for all that is proud and arrogant, for all that is exalted—and they will be humbled ... ¹⁷The arrogance of man shall be brought low, and the pride of man shall be humbled; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted on that day. (Isa. 2:12,17)

But if we willingly bow before the LORD our God, yielding our will to Him, He will lift us up to reign with Him in glory: *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time."*

Turn to the LORD, in submission. Each of us is required to do so because it is our duty to acknowledge Him as our God, and it is the very essence of worship to yield our will to Him. We are to do so because such worship is pleasing to God and He will greatly reward it.

Conclusion

In this age of idolatry and spiritual darkness and religious "tolerance," in this age when men turn their back on the God of heaven and defy His rightful Lordship over

their lives, we need to hear and heed this word spoken by the God of heaven Himself:

Turn to me and be saved, [you people from] all the ends of the earth, because I am God, and there is none other. ²³I have sworn by myself, with complete integrity my mouth has uttered a word that will not be revoked: Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess [that I am God]. (Isa. 45:22-23)