



The God Who Would Be Found

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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Introduction:

I don't know where you are spiritually, what you've done, or how you feel. I don't know what you've been told, what you've heard, or who has said what to you. But I am here to tell you boldly, loudly, and unequivocally that God is and God can be found by you. I know our culture and society is increasingly filled with voices that tell you God isn't there or if He is, you won't be able to find Him. But those voices are wrong. Sadly, these voices are getting louder and prouder. One of the problems is that when we hear something loud enough and long enough, we sometimes begin to believe it and never even realize it. Just this week, I learned how true this statement is. I wanted to use an illustration to start this lesson. I was going to call to mind the supposed words of Yuri Gagarin, Russia's first cosmonaut (in fact, the world's first cosmonaut). I have heard all my life that after his trip he said, "I looked and looked but I didn't see God." I wanted to use that as an opening illustration and then say that he was looking in the wrong place. But, I read an interesting interview with one of his best friends this week. I heard that report loud enough and long enough that I accepted it as true without any question. But his friend reports that not only did he never say that, he believed in God and was a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church.¹ His friend reports that actually Krushchev said that and it was purposefully put in Gagarin's mouth because Krushchev was not very popular but Gagarin was hugely so. The Soviets wanted to use this as propaganda. What do we learn again? When people say something loud enough and long enough, it gets accepted as truth. But it looks like Yuri Gagarin never uttered this famous line. It's just not true. And just because our culture increasingly seems to believe God isn't out there, that isn't true either. God is there and He is the God who would be found.

Discussion:

I. The God who stands out in a crowd

A. Yahweh stands out in the crowd of gods who folks in the world have followed. Consider some of His supposed competitors.

1. *Greco-Roman deities*: It was not easy to find the Greco-Roman gods: Zeus/Jupiter; Athena/Minerva; Hades/Pluto; Poseidon/Neptune. First, they dwelt on the highest mountain in Greece, Mt. Olympus. But then if you really wanted something from them, wanted them to be on your side, you inevitably had to accomplish some tremendous quest which would include things like killing vicious monsters, completing treacherous voyages, competing with demi-gods. If you want to see what this looks like, you can read the popular Rick Riordan books featuring Percy Jackson to see that getting the gods on your side in paganism is never easy. (One caveat: Be aware that in his most recent book, he attacks Christianity head on, moving from entertaining fantasy, to a competitive worldview with the one, true God.)
2. *Hinduism*: Hinduism is complex and confusing. There are many facets to it and multiple paths that are suggested. However, I think the following quote stands out to show us how hard it is to find god in Hinduism: "It takes **many lifetimes of continuous practice** to establish 'jnana' in the mind, the stable understanding of the illusiveness of mayic happiness and the divinity of the soul. Further, it takes hundreds of lifetimes of continuous practice of samadhi in jnana yoga to enable a yogi to receive liberation." And then this quote explaining how those who are far advanced in their search for god can mess everything up very easily: "Diverting their minds with utmost difficulty from mayic attractions, the few yogis who reach the final stage of yoga, after crossing the five material barriers (koshas) begin to believe they have crossed the ocean of Maya completely. They are mistaken. Because of this mistake, they may be attracted to the world and fall back into the field of attachment."²
3. *Islam*: On the one hand, finding the god of Islam seems very simple. You simply need to believe there is no god but Allah and that Muhammed is his prophet. However, if you wish to be with Allah, you can't sin. If you sin, your merits have to outweigh the demerits you get from sin. This is accomplished by pursuing the five pillars: 1) reciting the confession of faith, 2) praying five daily prayers, 3) fasting, especially during Ramadan, 4) giving the required alms, and 5) making a pilgrimage to Mecca. However, to get directly

¹ <http://www.pravmir.com/did-yuri-gagarin-say-he-didnt-see-god-in-space/> (see also: <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/view/yuri-gagarin-first-human-in-space-was-a-devout-christian-says-his-close-fri>)

² <http://www.bhakti-yoga-meditation.com/jnana-yoga.html>

to Allah's presence, when you stand before him in judgment, your good must outweigh your bad. No doubt, some people might think that is pretty easy, until we start considering what kind of things are really bad things—you know like telling little white lies, gossip, slander, lust, pride, etc.

4. *Gnosticism*: An early competitor with Christianity that seems to be getting a lot of press over the past few years was Gnosticism with its emphasis on knowledge. Because we in the physical realm are separated from the pure and holy God, we must learn the special knowledge that allows us to go through the separating spheres to get to God. Look at how this is described in Jack Cottrell's explanation found in [God the Redeemer](#). "Thus the Gnostic way of salvation also turns out to be a salvation by self-effort or by one's own works. Revealed knowledge, necessitating a 'savior,' is an essential prerequisite; but the salvation of each individual is actually in his own hands. He must find the knowledge deposited by the divine messenger and retain it until death; then he must use the secret names and formulas and incantations to pass through the series of spheres that separate him from heaven."³
5. *Ancient Middle Eastern Religions*: It is popular among critics of Jesus to compare Him to ancient middle eastern religions like the *Egyptian Cult of Osiris*. Because Osiris died and was resurrected, some want to compare this to Jesus. But finding your way to heaven and god in this religion was significantly different. First, you had to die. Then you had to go before a tribunal of gods. You must make a declaration of innocence before Osiris himself with a long list of "I have nots," stating the sins you never committed and concluding with the proclamation: "I am pure. I am pure. I am pure. I am pure." Then you had to make a long series of declarations to a tribunal of 40 deities in which you address each one and declare your innocence to each one of them in reference to a particular wrong doing which in effect declares that the gods owe him salvation. Then comes the tricky part. The heart of the accused will then be weighed in the balances with a feather to weigh the truth of the statements he just made. So, if you committed one of those sins, your heart would weigh more than the feather and no salvation.
- B. Yahweh stands out in a crowd. Considering the above, you can understand then why Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 4:7**: "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?" (ESV). He wrote this and read it to the Israelites when they could see the glory and smoke-filled tabernacle. They remembered the plagues on the Egyptians and their gods. They remembered the trek through the Red Sea. They remembered the lightening and smoke on Mt. Sinai. They remembered the judgment on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They remembered the judgment of the serpents, they remembered the judgment with Baal at Peor. God was with them. He was near. They knew it.
- C. But all of that was simply a precursor to His plan for the New Covenant in which God was not simply near because of a tabernacle, temple, or prophet but because He sent His very own Son to be among us and to bring salvation to us as **John 1:14** says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (ESV).
- D. And so Paul says to the Athenians as he wants to teach them about the one, true God whom they do not know and therefore were worshipping in ignorance: "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'in him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring'" (**Acts 17:26-28**, ESV).

II. The God who sent His Son

- A. We've already alluded to this as we described how God stands out amid the competing "deities" throughout world history. But we must single out this point. What makes our God so different is not simply that He is so near and He is so easy to find. What makes our God so distinct is that He did the hard work of finding. Our God has not remained aloof from this creation with separating spheres that need passwords and special knowledge. He does not send us through tribunals of lesser deities that we must prove ourselves to. And He is not simply hanging out in the cosmos watching us mess around trying to get to Him. He isn't simply waiting for us to seek Him. He has sought us.
- B. **Luke 19:10** says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (ESV). As **John 3:16** so popularly says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (ESV). No doubt, like the prodigal, the Father will let us wander away into the far country. He will not come drag us out of the far country. But neither does He wait until we have done some amazing work that brings us into His own presence. See the Father in **Luke 15:20**: "And he arose and came to his

³ Cottrell, Jack, [God the Redeemer](#), Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 1987, p 72.

father. But *while he was still a long way off*, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (ESV, emphasis added—ELC). Our Father wants to be found and is seeking us. He has done the hard work in this process. God has sent His Son to make it easy to find Him.

III. The God who wants to be found

- A. And so, as we pursue a God Filled life, we can rest assured that God can and will be found if we simply seek Him His way. The Bible drives this home in repeated ways.
- B. Consider David’s words to Solomon: “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever” (**I Chronicles 28:9**, ESV).
- C. Consider also Ahaziah’s words to King Asa: “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you” (**II Chronicles 15:2**, ESV).
- D. Then Jesus words in the Sermon on the Mount: “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened” (**Matthew 7:7-8**, ESV).
- E. Finally, consider the Hebrew writer’s encouragement in **Hebrews 11:6**. “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (ESV). Keep this in mind, what is the reward for the seeker? If someone is seeking the perfect chocolate cake, what is their greatest reward? Finding the perfect chocolate cake. If someone is seeking their lost puppy, what is their greatest reward? Finding their lost puppy. When someone is seeking God, what is their greatest reward? Finding God. God rewards those who seek Him with Himself.

Conclusion:

We serve a God who can be found, who wants to be found, who would be found. Therefore, let us seek Him. In **II Chronicles 15:12** the Judeans under Asa “entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul” (ESV). Let us do the same, seek God with all our heart and all our soul. The only way we will fail is if we don’t seek Him. If we do seek Him, we’ll find Him and He will fill us.