

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – May 28, 2009

I recently heard a man say that Christians were just one more religious sect in the world that thinks they are right, too. It is sad that believing in God has become just another item on a smorgasbord of religious systems. What distinguishes God from all the other choices? The prophet Micah gives us the answer in today's Templates of Truth.

Micah poses the question, "*Who is a God like Thee?*" (7:18). It was not just any god to whom Micah refers; it was *to the Lord our God* (7:17). It was to Jehovah God that Micah was making the comparison, and in doing so, he draws three distinguishing characteristics that set God apart from all the other gods of the world.

First of all, God is one *who pardons iniquity* (7:18). In 7:9, Micah said that God *pleads my case and executes judgment for me*. Micah's plea was guilty – *I have sinned against Him*. God's sentence, accordingly, was - *pardon!* How often do you see that in modern court rooms? Confession of guilt, followed by full pardon. So complete is the forgiveness of God, that Micah says, *Thou wilt cast all (our) sins into the depths of the sea* (7:19). David wrote in the Psalm, *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us* (103:12). To the depths of the sea and from the east to the west are expressions representing infinity. God removes our sins to a place they can never be found again. If that were not enough, Isaiah revealed to us that God *wipes out (our) transgressions...and will not remember (our) sins* (Isaiah 43:25). He will no longer hold us accountable to them ever again. They are completely removed and totally forgotten. What other god can provide that kind of forgiveness and grace?

Secondly, God is one *who will again have compassion on us* (7:19). In the views of some world religious systems, when you blow it in life, it is over! You are finished. Your god will have nothing more to do with you. Not so in Christianity. Micah confidently declared, *though I fall, I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me...He will bring me out to the light* (7:8-9). How could Micah speak with such assurance? Because he knew that God *does not retain His anger forever* (7:18). David affirmed this incredible character in God: *He will not always strive with us; nor will He keep His anger forever* (Psalm 103:9). God deals with us at the point of our sin, administering divine judgment and discipline. But there comes a time when His anger ends and His compassion overwhelms us once again.

Finally, God is one who *delights in unchanging love* (7:18). This means that God's love is teeming with goodness, favor, mercy, devotion and lovingkindness. The old adage that says, "this hurts me more than it hurts you," characterizes the heavenly Father far better than it does the earthly father when it comes to discipline. God delights far more in expressing love than in administering judgment and wrath. He would much rather bless His children than curse them. He would much rather flood our lives with blessing and favor, than fill our lives with punishment and oppression. God takes pleasure in giving us His love. David said, *The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness...for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him* (Psalm 103:8,11). No other god can manifest this kind of unconditional and steadfast love.

God is not just another choice that claims to be right – He is the ONLY choice that IS right! In fact, He is the only REAL choice. All the others are false icons offering empty hopes and unfulfilled promises. Yes, many would say that is a statement of religious arrogance. Well, call it so, because – as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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