

## PERSONAL HEATHENISM

**Request:** “How do you witness to people who have made-up their own god and religion and salvation.”

You have described personal heathenism just like Paul in 2 Thess.1:8 “Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

According to Paul, personal heathenism can occur with negative volition either at God-consciousness or at gospel hearing.

We will examine our lesson text by the following four questions regarding witnessing to unbelievers who may be considered heathen.

Who does the witnessing? (Rom.1:14) \_\_\_\_\_.

What do you say to these people? (Rom.1:15-17) \_\_\_\_\_.

Why do you witness to them? (Rom.1:18-23)\_\_\_\_\_.

When do you give up on them? (Rom.1:24-25, 26, 28)\_\_\_\_\_.

**Heathenism can be viewed as personal or cultural.  
This lesson will study four aspects of Personal Heathenism.**

**1. Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines heathenism as “an unconverted member of a people or nation that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible.”**

Paul defined a heathen as anyone who rejects the revealed truth regarding God at God-consciousness and or rejects the revealed truth regarding the gospel of grace salvation (2 Thess.1:8; Rom.1:18-32).

An example of witnessing to people of a heathen nation and culture was Paul’s sermon from Mars Hill to the Athenians (Acts 17:22-34).

Part of Paul’s opening statement of this sermon was “I observe that you are very religious in all respects” and “What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you” (Acts 17:22-23).

Later in this same sermon, Paul told them, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to **men that all everywhere** should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom he has appointed having **furnished proof** to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31; Acts 4:12; Phil.2:9-11)

**2. The plan of God decrees that every generation of mankind receive God-consciousness. Some theologians call it “innate or intuitive knowledge of God.”**

This is based on the divine decree that every soul of mankind be made **tselem demuth** (made in the image according to image of God) – “Then God said, “let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” (Gen.1:26) **and** “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Gen.1:27) [bara] Gen.9:6; 1 Cor.11:7)

“Because that which is known about God is **evident** within them; for God made it **evident** to them.” (Rom.1:19; Acts 17:25, 27, And 34)

### 3. Theologians teach that there are five basic approaches to God-consciousness in the world.

Teleological approach says that the universe demands a master designer (Rom.1:19-20).

Cosmological approach says a law of cause and effect governs the universe. The universe must have a cause outside itself since it is not eternal or self-existent (Rom.1:18).

Anthropological approach says that there is a moral conscience in mankind. Therefore there must be an absolute right and truth (God) and wrong and lies (Satan) (John 8:44; Rom.1:25). It asks how a materialistic ungoverned universe could know anything of moral values.

Ontological approach says how the human mind could possess an idea of a perfect absolute Supreme Being unless a higher intelligence exists (Rom.1:28)

Religious approach says men everywhere desire to worship a supreme being called god and if they don't have one or more within their culture they will create one (Rom.1:23-25, 29; Acts 17:22-29).

Pagan heathenism seeks to create a society and culture without the true God and His Son Jesus Christ. Isn't it interesting that they become anti-God and anti-Christ but not anti-religious (Book of Acts).

It goes against the conscience and self-consciousness of mankind – “And he made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, and **they should seek God**, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even as some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His offspring.’” (Acts 17:26-28)

### 4. Positive volition at God-consciousness places the responsibility on God to provide gospel hearing (2 Pet.3:9).

He will bring the unbeliever to the gospel or send an ambassador with the gospel to him. Where you live is not an issue (omniscience and omnipresence of God) (Acts 1:8; 13:47; 17:26-27; Matt.28:19-20).

- God brought Abraham to the gospel. Abraham was born in a pagan heathen culture but God saved him (Josh.24:2; Gal.3:8).
- God sent Jonah as an ambassador to pagan heathen Nineveh (Luke 11:32).
- God sent the Ethiopian eunuch to the gospel and Philip as ambassador to him (Acts 8:25-40).

The Book of Acts is about getting people to the gospel and the gospel to people (2 Cor.5:18-21; Eph.6:15). It set the pattern for New Covenant evangelism (Acts 1:8; 1Tim.1:15; 1 John 2:2).

How do you know that this doctrinal principle is true?

It is what we call self-evident truth.

Are you saved!

Then **you** are living proof of it.