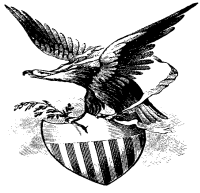


Light Brings Salt

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The Trend Today - Idolatry

Scripture is specific: "You shall have no other gods before Me." (Ex. 20:3).

These words cryptically describe the battle that was joined before humanity's fall. The satanic obsession was framed in the devil's words to Eve in the Garden of Eden. "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:5).

Titillating words, these. Mankind, in the infancy of its innocence, was led to believe that being liberated from obedience to the Creator could be equated with becoming God-like. The delusion was but an extension of the devil's desire to displace God and, in the process, to enthrone himself as the god of the universe. His heart's desire is described in Isaiah.

"But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (Isa. 14:13-14).

In Eden, the desire revealed the design--inducing humans to believe the big lie; that is, to aspire to live in independence from God, embrace Satan, "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4), and choose him as their master.

From Babel to Baal

The satanic strategy for implementing his design is, at its base, rather simple. The

process, however, is complex. It can be broken into three general categories.

A Declaration of Intent

Babel, and its gateway-to-the-heavens tower, embodies mankind's declaration of independence, while evidencing the decision to follow the devil's lead.

"And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly ...And they said, Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:3-4).

It is rather interesting that the word us is found in the Genesis 11 passage no less than five times. This is equal to the five I will's of Lucifer found in Isaiah 14. In both quotations, the intent is the same--to "ascend" into the heavens and "exalt" themselves above and beyond their Creator's sovereign control.

An Attempt to Redirect Worship

The stated intention to go it alone and deny God His rightful place in human affairs would not involve the elimination of worship. It would instead focus spiritual adoration on other objects and false gods--in short, idolatry. The Scriptures clearly tells us that while the devil may be a rebel, he is not an unbeliever in worship.

This is an extremely important point. Satan is not an atheist. Nor does he desire his followers to be. The entire satanic struggle against God for the hearts and minds of the Lord's creatures is not an effort to eliminate

acknowledging deity, but to ultimately direct worship toward himself.

The communists' colossal miscalculation was in thinking they could strike the compulsion to worship from the minds of the people under their control. Within a generation, they boasted, no one would believe in the existence of God. The material state would be lord and master wherever atheistic communism reigned supreme. What they managed to accomplish by suppressing religious belief and expression, however, was to fuel the inherent desire to worship something other than money or machines. In fact, the rush toward gaining knowledge about the Bible and God since the fall of the Soviet Union is a magnificent demonstration of the folly of atheism. People deprived of spiritual light will not gravitate automatically to a permanent state of unbelief. Mankind was fashioned to worship, and they will bow the knee. The only question is, to whom or what?

The sea of Gentile paganism surrounding Israel across the centuries illustrates redirected worship. It is a matter of record that the great temptation faced consistently by the Jewish people was to fall into idolatry. The verses following the Exodus 20:3 prohibition of countenancing the presence of "other gods" besides Jehovah brought a clarification.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. "You shall not worship them or serve them;" (Ex. 20:4-5a). In other words, don't become a god-maker!

Creating the Self-God

Idolatry carries an inevitable conclusion. If people can make gods out of images they have carved, what does this say about the god-maker himself? The answer is obvious: The creator of gods must, after all, be a superior form of god. Worshiping creatures-created things--moves toward self-adoration, or, it could be said, human deification.

Need I remind you that this is precisely what paganized Americans are at the moment? There is nothing new about the New Age. The dominant features of the system are a fixation with the creatures of "Mother Earth" and the proposition that each of us is, in a degenderized way, a sort of self-god. Thus, getting in touch with yourself and tapping into self-empowering sources, whether it be crystals or psychic-occult energies, simply resurrect Israel's ancient adversary--pagan idolatry.

The Ultimate Issue

As far as the devil is concerned, all forms of idolatry are only stepping stones from which to make a leap to the grand delusion. That will come when the preparatory process has run its full course. The Antichrist will exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Th. 2:4). The objective? "And they worshiped the dragon who gave power unto the beast [Antichrist]; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4).

Those two questions, posed by fully paganized earthlings, are the consummate put-down of God and the Messiah-King, Jesus Christ. If the objective of all biblical Judaism was the Messiah and His opening the way back to God, the devil's design, through his Baalish-Babylonian style idolatry, will lead to the Antichrist and a demented, God-free satanic utopia.

The question we must ask is, Where are we positioned today? Clearly, we are squarely in the stage that is producing, we must conclude, frantic, satanic efforts to divert and redirect worship. For all the diversions of the New Age and its fellow travelers, the primary point of attack is to direct worship away from Christ. Jesus, the Messiah, in His first coming began what will be finalized in His glorious second advent.

Satan's program must, therefore, concentrate on distraction and diversion until his Antichrist can come to the stage

and seek to win the day. He must have a host of contemporary human assistants.

Over a little more than the last century, there has been a concentrated assault on the integrity and identity of Christ. This, we must conclude, indicates where the prophetic clock is positioned--it must be getting very, very late.

A survey of the multitude of American-bred cults can be placed as evidence of the growing obsession to discredit the deity of Christ and offer palatable alternatives. Mormonism, for example, converts Jesus into "a god" and anoints its followers as "gods" also. So, the Messiah becomes merely a god among gods. In one way or another, basic elements in the Mormon system of belief about Jesus are mirrored in what cults collectively have to offer.

Over the past fifty years or so, equally strident and--with the advent of modern media--even more pervasive voices have been heard.

Liberal Protestant theologians stripped mainline denominations of the very core of their spiritual existence by proposing that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary and a Roman mercenary.

Adolf Hitler's mania for divorcing Jesus from any attachment to Jews or Judaism reduced Him to a Germanic Gentile. H. S. Chamberlain, Hitler's theological voice, stated emphatically that "Whoever claimed that Jesus was a Jew was either stupid or telling a lie...Jesus was not a Jew...He was probably an Aryan!"

Hans Kerrl, Minister of Church Affairs for the Reich, said, "Faith in Christ as the son of God. That makes me laugh...."

Incidentally, all forms of revived Nazism, from the sheeted Ku Klux Klan, to the pseudo-Christian Identity Church, share the Hitlerian view of the non-Jewishness of Jesus. They thus reduce the New Testament, from which they often quote, to little more than a fictional novel.

Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, promotes the idea that Jesus was his

Palestinian forebear. Jesus was, in the eyes of the chairman and his passionate fellow radicals, a Palestinian freedom fighter who was leading a revolution against the Romans.

Closer to home, but equally ominous, is the anti-Semite, anti-Christian, Black Muslim leader, Louis Farrakhan. He and his movement would have us believe that Jesus was a good black man--a black revolutionary Messiah.

We could go on, but these examples will serve the purpose. Each of these groups or individuals has recast Jesus into a humanized instrument created to serve their prejudices and purposes in implementing their nefarious agendas. All of this relates to two obvious objectives: Jesus is divested of His deity and used to play a humanly designated role; that is, to promote causes and personalities with ambitions and intentions that are, in essence, evil.

Such god-makers are only doing what has been done since that first ignoble encounter in the Garden of Eden, holding out the seductive promise that people can "be as God." There is, consequently, no need to be subject to the Christ or the truth He represents.

What is the final word in all of this? It is, simply: At all costs, beware of and avoid the god makers. Paul said it in extremely dynamic words.

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there are gods many, and lords many), But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:5-6). Let His Word be the last word.