

Christian or Pagan - Which are You?

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2 Kings 18:19 And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

2 Kings 18:22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

Isaiah 36:4-7 says exactly the same thing.

- I. In this world there are only two different peoples; there are the sons of God, and there are the sons of Belial.

2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

- A. Out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, there are only two camps, as far as the kingdom of God is concerned.
1. When all it finished and everything is folded and put away like a garment, this is all that will matter.
 2. Any other earthly loyalty, affection, or association is vanity in view of this truth.
- B. There are believers and unbelievers (in Almighty God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.)
- C. There is the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.
- D. All that is going on between nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues now on this earth is the battle between these two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness, and the kingdom of light; good and evil; God and Satan; all the forces of evil and all the forces of good.
- E. This is the true state of things in the universe in which we exist right now.
- F. Until we realize this truth, embrace it, and enter into the conflict on the side of God and right, we are aiding the enemies of God and we are a pawn in their game.
- II. God's army is much smaller in this world than the armies of the evil one.
- A. The reason for that is that God's army lives and stands for righteousness and lives in holiness to the Lord.
- B. The rest live in ALL unrighteousness (Romans 1) and regard not God, or his law.
- C. Man can live wickedly, indulge his lusts at his will, be completely selfish in all his ways, and as long as he is in the company of others that are doing the same he can quiet his conscience enough to get by.
- D. But he cannot convince his conscience that there is no God in heaven that he will answer to one day for the way he is living his life.
1. His forgetfulness about God and judgment only consists of temporary interludes when he is immersed in his sin.
 2. Whenever his mind clears just a little, he must deal with this matter somehow, so there is idolatry, which is paganism, or heathenism, which is

simply false religion; another god, or a substitute for Almighty God, who is holy and all-powerful.

- E. All religions or philosophies that men lean on when they reject God have one thing in common: They reject the moral law of God, that is their issue with God – always.
- F. They seek a life of love, peace, happiness, and safety,
 - 1. But to them love means lust, peace means enough money and property to never have to worry, happiness means indulgence of their desires without restraint, and safety means divine guarantee of no punishment for their evil deeds.
- G. So all religions and philosophies that exist on this earth besides Jehovah, the God of Israel are designed to accommodate people who are seeking these things.
 - 1. They talk of love, but it is a sensual concept of love that is patterned after the carnal love of humanity rather than the divine love of God.
 - 2. This is why their temples are all covered with naked people and sex is a part of their worship.
 - 3. They talk of peace, but it is the kind of peace that men give, and not the peace that Christ gives.
 - 4. It is peace that lets you continue to live in your sin without feeling condemned in your heart about it.
 - 5. That talk of happiness, but that happiness only exists when things are prosperous and everything is coming your way, and all your life is good.
 - 6. Their prophets get rich by promising over and over to these people the high life and blessings and riches and victory, and they keep believing them in spite of the fact that it never happens.
 - 7. If they talk of salvation it is simply the free ticket to heaven that everyone gets if they will just join up with them.
 - 8. There is no hell, no chastisement, no judgment, no consequences for sin and evil-doing; everyone goes to heaven when they die, no matter what they do.

III. The trick is that they continue to say that they are serving God.

- A. The apostates in Israel never stopped saying that they were serving God while they were burning incense in the high places, sacrificing their children to Molech, or bringing sodomites and prostitutes into the temple of God.
- B. When Josiah became king of Judah at the age of 8 years old, he set about to straighten things out in this matter and they went to work on the house of God.

2 Kings 22:8 And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

2 Kings 22:10-11 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

2 Kings 22:13 Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

2 Kings 22:2-25

- C. It is easy to see from all this that the pagans had not separated themselves from the main-line religion of Israel, but that they had taken it over and perverted everything about it and taken away anything that resembled any kind of righteousness.
- D. The gods of the pagans are always just different versions of what ungodly people want to think of God.
 - 1. It was sort of like the demoninations that we are familiar with.
 - 2. They were just different variations of the true worship of God without the holiness, reverence, piety, or righteousness.
 - 3. They were variations of worshipping God where you could continue in whatever sin you wanted and it was not only acceptable, but sanctioned and approved by those who claimed to represent divine authority.
 - 4. What men call “idols” referring to the objects of the different pagan religion are really just like symbols that identified what they believed.
 - 5. They were like what we call logos, or brands; like many churches have now to identify what they believe and stand for. (i.e., Methodists (fire/cross) Pentecostals (fire) Southern Baptists (world/cross) Mormons (Jesus Christ))
 - 6. A golden calf, a goat, a beast that was half man and half animal, naked gods and goddesses, (the likeness of corruptible man) birds, snakes, and dragons.
- E. It is worth noting that the thing that was missing while they were doing all this “worshipping” was the “book of the law of God.” – the written Word of God.
 - 1. It had been put away a long time ago, and worship was just based on free-wheeling feelings, excitement, and drama fueled by superstitions and vain imaginations about the supernatural.
 - 2. Without the written Word of God, there is no final authority, so everyone just does what is right in his own eyes, and every way of a man is right in his own eyes:

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

- 3. And that is how things get in such a disastrous state.

- IV. There is only one way to deal with all this matter and that is to come out from among them and be separate.
 - A. Joshua put all of Israel on the spot and called them out to choose that day who they were going to serve, and there were only two choices.

Joshua 24:14-19 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the

people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Joshua 24:22-23 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

B. Elijah did the same thing:

1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

C. God, speaking through Moses said the same thing to the children of Israel:

Deuteronomy 30:15-19 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

D. Jesus and Paul both said the same thing in the New Testament:

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 25:32-33 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

1 Corinthians 10:21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

- E. You can have religion without righteousness and holiness, but you cannot have God that way, you may call yourself a Christian, but the Word of God and all of human history identify you as pagan.
- F. If you truly know God and are born of his Spirit and worship Him in Spirit and truth, you will have nothing to do with the religions of this world and you will not be able to worship with them, or fellowship with them, and if you do you must realize that you are forfeiting any claim you think you have in God and his promises.