

'Casting Down Imaginations'



Rob Pue

All of humanity was born to worship. We have an instinctive need to reverence our Creator. This is just how God made us. In the beginning, mankind had a close relationship with Him. But in Genesis Chapter 3, we read of how the king of demons, Satan, tempted Eve and caused her to doubt what God said. And the rest, as they say, is history. Adam followed Eve in her quest for forbidden knowledge and power, and together they traded perfect communion with God for a life of pain and toil, of blood, sweat and tears... of thorns and thistles, culminating in death and then the judgment.

But that need to worship never subsided. It's woven into the very fabric of our souls; that innate need to revere the One who created us – to worship Him, and to somehow return to Him and re-establish that bond that was broken so long ago. It's the one and only thing that will ever satisfy our souls; and the one thing that we will never find apart from Him.

The problems we encounter in this life begin the minute we depart from our Lord and try to do life on our own. The consequences of this are immediate and devastating. This is what happened to our first parents. This rebellion is the "sin nature" that we are now all born with, so that even today there exists within us a great turmoil, a constant tug-of-war between our desire to know God and worship Him and our desire to stray away from Him and worship something else.

Now, God created us with minds to think and reason. He

doesn't hide from us, and then expect us to have blind faith in a Creator we can never know anything about. On the contrary, He makes Himself abundantly visible to all who have eyes to see. We are without excuse. The Bible makes it clear that we are able to know God, by the things that He made. In other words, by observing His awesome Creation all around us, we know that God exists. What's more, He provided us with a book, The Bible, the very words of God Himself, so that we can know Him more; and He did not spare even His own Son for our sakes, so that we may RETURN to Him and restore that perfect relationship, as He welcomes us back and draws us close to Himself with loving arms of compassion.

Let's summarize these points: We are born with the knowledge of God and with a desire and PURPOSE to worship and glorify Him. This knowledge of God and desire to worship Him is reinforced as we observe His Creation all around us. We also have His written Word to teach us all we will ever need to know. Yet, many of us still prefer to deny Him, to run and try to hide from Him, because His light exposes the darkness of our sinful hearts.

Now, what happens when we do this – when we deliberately choose to deny God? Romans 1, starting at verse 28: *“Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents, they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”* The heart of man, apart from the renewing and regeneration of Christ is hopelessly lost. The Bible says it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Surely it is obvious that this is true. Even little babies, as precious and as “innocent” as they are, do not need to be taught to sin. We

are all born with a self-centered, sinful nature.

Depraved minds. But you see, even depraved minds STILL have that in-born desire to worship that we are all created with. And so, apart from Christ, we begin to invent things to worship that will fit conveniently into our lives without requiring anything of significance on our part. As if we can fulfill our need to "worship" but still live as WE choose, accountable to no one. Deep thinkers with depraved minds will expand on these thoughts to create entire religions and theologies. In other words, we use our IMAGINATIONS to invent things to worship, instead of God.

What is the root word of "imagination?" It is "IMAGE." We create an image to worship, – one that is to our liking. In modern times, this "image" is usually an unseen thing – an invisible "god," theology, idea or concept. But in ancient times, man built idols and graven IMAGES to bow down to as a substitute for the real thing... Rather than worshiping the Creator, they worshiped and served created THINGS.

In Exodus, Chapter 20, God gave His eternal laws to mankind, written with His own finger on tablets of stone. The Ten Commandments. And first on the list was: *"You shall have no other gods before Me."* Why do you think this was the first, and most basic law God gave to us? Because He knows the heart of man, and our need to worship. He also knows how susceptible we are to demonic deceptions.

Let's read more of this Scripture. *"You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them..."* But yet what has mankind done? Turn again to Romans, chapter 1: *"...although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for IMAGES made to*

look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”
Then in verse 25: *“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.”*

There is nothing new under the sun. Mankind has been worshiping idols in vain ever since Satan deceived Eve in the garden. It's our eternal struggle to worship, but yet to worship without submitting ourselves to God's authority. So we use our imaginations to create a god to suit our selves... ultimately, one that WE, ourselves, control. Most of us no longer carve and mold a golden calf or a totem pole. But we invent gods in our minds that suit us better than the one TRUE God of heaven.

This is what is happening still today. Even professing Christians are not immune from idol worship, and many create a god in their own image that bears little resemblance to the God of the Bible. How many liberal Christians will admonish you if you “judge” or speak firmly about sin, repentance and holy living? How many will declare it is not “Christ-like” if you confront the evils and wickedness of our day, such as abortion or sexual depravity? “You'll never win them to Jesus if you don't welcome them and love them,” they say. Or they'll declare, *“MY god would never condemn anyone to hell...MY god is a god of love.”* Religious people are great at creating gods in their own image; in their own imaginations.

Those who do not know God, those who are not diligent in studying the Scriptures are easily led astray and deceived by Satan. Paul warned the Corinthians, *“I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily...”*

To the Galatians he wrote, *"I am astonished that you are so quickly... turning to a different gospel... some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned."*

Today we have many who profess to be Christians, but who deny the truths of Scripture or pervert the word of God by compromising it with their own imaginations. And throughout the history of mankind, Satan has been at war with us, seeking our eternal damnation by luring us away from the pure word of God, with enticing things that appeal to our carnal natures. Paul warned us of angels preaching false religion, tempting us to worship something other than God Almighty. Scripture also tells us that Satan masquerades as an angel of light. This is the same angel that appeared to Mohammed, calling himself "Allah." This is the same angel that called himself "Moroni" as he appeared to Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon religion. This is the same so-called "angel," who appeared to Satanist Aleister Crowley, and declared, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

What it really comes down to is that we, in our sinful, human natures, are still trying to achieve what Satan promised Eve so long ago in the garden: that we can become LIKE God. In fact, many New Age religions will even teach that we can BECOME gods ourselves if we follow the path of "enlightenment."

But let me clue you in to something that seems, to me, to be elementary, yet so elusive for so many: as human beings we have two choices: we either worship God or we worship Satan, in any number of disguises he will appear to us in, whichever disguise he knows will appeal to us most. There are NO OTHER alternatives. It is one or the other.

I was speaking to a New Ager recently and she was trying to

explain to me how she prays to the Universe and how if she thinks good thoughts and surrounds herself with positive energy, the Universe will reward her with the desires of her heart. Her ultimate hope for eternity is that her body will return to "star dust," and that her soul will return to the Universe where she will be reincarnated, hopefully to a much higher, developed sentient being on this planet – or perhaps another planet, because as a citizen of the Living Universe, we do not limit ourselves to just the narrow mindedness of Earth.

Now, this woman reveres the "Universe" or the "Living Universe" as the ultimate "higher power" or "thing" that she worships. She rejects the Bible and the God of the Scripture because she tried Christianity and it didn't "work" for her. In her mind, she cannot understand why anyone would follow a book so full of rules and laws and things that limit her freedom, words written by MEN thousands of years ago... words of superstition and bigotry and things that are clearly so old fashioned and irrelevant. Now she is much more enlightened and on a "path" that appeals to her way more than the narrow-mindedness and confining dictates of a religion that limits her freedom to do as she pleases. And, as the Wiccans say, "if it hurt no one, do as you please."

Not knowing the Bible, the word of the eternal Creator, she does not realize that Scripture describes her to a tee: in short, this woman "worships and serves created things, rather than the Creator." You see, in her mind, the Universe is the biggest, most powerful thing she can imagine. (There's that word again: "imagine!") But she neglects to remember that the God of the Bible CREATED the Universe!

Why would you worship and serve a created thing rather than the eternal One who created it? Friends, be warned, that those who DO, and deliberately choose to deny God and persist in their rebellion, will eventually be given depraved minds. They will no longer be ABLE to discern the truth, even when it

is staring them straight in the face. It will be nonsense to them. Good will be bad and bad will be good. That's what it means. I believe there are many in the world today, who have passed this "point of no return" already. Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He has turned them over to depraved, reprobate minds.

We are seeing a lot of this lately. In fact, I believe we are nearing the close of time, the last days, and people are choosing now to seal their fate, and pick their eternal destinies. It is a scary thing, but know this: God has never condemned a single soul to hell who did not have ample opportunity to know Him and return to His loving arms. The spiritual forces of darkness surround us, unseen as they are, but no less real. Satan and his demons are contending for our souls and many are being led astray and deceived. The most insidious part is that he rarely comes in his true form, but rather, as "enlightenment," as a more pure, loving "path" to "god." So now, more than ever, we must remember the words of Paul to the Corinthians: *"Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down IMAGINATIONS, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* Study and KNOW God's word, dear friends, and you will not be deceived by the schemes of the devil.

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E-Mail Rob Pue: Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com