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Creating God in One's Own Image

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A young woman writes on her blog: "My relationship with god is very non-traditional. I do not attend church, nor do I read the Bible. I created my own relationship and what looks good for me and to me. The space I hold for God, allows God to open doors for me immediately." Well, it's obvious that Brittany doesn't read her Bible, for what she espouses about a "relationship" with her god does not square with anything said by the true God in His Scriptures. For many decades now Western thinking has been drifting into a radical individualism that exalts self and rejects anything that infringes upon self-interest: **my truth**, not **the** truth; **my feelings**, not **facts**; **my reality**, not the **objective world** that is defined by rational laws and rules.

Such hyper-individualism is untenable. It sounds attractive at first, but eventually truth and reality will demolish such a flimsy foundation. Brittany is so deluded by her ego-centric view that she thinks she can create "god" in her own mind, according to her own wishes and desires. Of course, mankind has been doing this for thousands of years – it's called *idolatry*. And the pagans of OT history thought their idols could "open doors" for them also, until they were confronted with the true and living God.

The Assyrian king Sennacherib, for example, swept through the Levant unchallenged and even conquered Israel, scattering them into distant territories as God's prophets predicted would happen. Flush with his overwhelming victories, Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem with the same arrogant assurance that his gods would grant him victory over Judah and Jehovah: "Do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying,

"The LORD will deliver us.' Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" (2 Kgs 18:32-35).

Sennacherib and his whole culture had created their gods in their own minds and attributed to them powers and characteristics that resembled themselves. Thus, as long as Assyria was victorious in battle and held political sway over their subjugated enemies, their gods seemed real to them and able to bestow upon them well-being. That delusion was shattered when the LORD, the great I AM, slew 185,000 besieging Assyrian soldiers in a single night.

The same mistake was made by Pharaoh with his Nile-gods, Syria and their valley-gods (cf. 1 Kgs 20:23-30), Nebuchadnezzar and his Zoroastrian god. After the miraculous spectacle of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego emerging unscathed from the execution furnace, Nebuchadnezzar confessed: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trust in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap, because there is no other God who can deliver like this" (Dan 3:28-29).

Brittany and millions of others just like her have fallen into a similar mindset. They fancy themselves as “progressive,” rejecting the tired, old religious dogmas and rituals and forging her own path, not of *how* to serve God (erroneous enough in its own right) but *what god* to serve. What a contemptuous view of the true God! The transcendence, glory and power of God – far surpassing the capacity of the human mind to completely comprehend – is rejected in favor of an ersatz non-being conjured by the fictions and frailties of human imagination. This is as nonsensical as being offered the opportunity to marry a beautiful princess, live in a palace, be the favored son-in-law of the king and receive the adulation of the masses and turning it down to marry a potato sack stuffed with hay, wearing a wig of corn silks, dressed in faded overalls with lip-stick smeared all over a carved gourd. Call it a royal relationship if you wish, but if this “prince” says his scarecrow wife is better than a real princess, he is only fooling himself.

God is wholly and singularly responsible for the existence of humankind: “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness ... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gn 1:26-27). The essence of life, then, is to “seek the Lord, in the hope that 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 have our being ...” (Ac 17:27-28). We have no independent purpose or meaning apart from the God who made us.

And herein lies a conundrum: God is *near*, but He must be searched for. In this “last days” era in which we live, God has not made Himself perceptible to our senses. He did so in ancient times of human spiritual infancy, but in the present age God has amassed sufficient evidence of Himself in the natural world. Further, His Son became incarnate and opened His mind to us via Scripture. Thus He is findable by those who search for Him by faith (cf. 2 Cor 5:7; Rom 10:6-13; Eph 3:8-12).

On the one hand, I understand why people like Brittany might look at the crassness, corruption and commercialization of denominational religion and be disgusted. But on the other hand, the homespun tonic is sometimes worse than the malady. The attempt to bend God to fit our own criteria is a lose-lose strategy. Not only is God’s true nature distorted, such fictionalizing of God negates the true advantages and blessings He offers to believers: actual forgiveness via Jesus’ sacrifice; providential care; hearing and answering our prayers; a strong foundation of hope; etc. Creating and worshiping a false god is a delusion that will eventually crumble before the harsh realities of life and leave one humiliated when standing in judgment before the God who was rejected.

The real solution is to seek God on His terms; embrace Him in truth; humbly submit to His will; obey Him in love and gratitude; accept His forgive-ness and provisions for emotional and spiritual health. “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near” (Is 55:6). God is to be *sought*, not created; *discovered*, not imagined. 08/18/24 - *The Centreville Journal*

It Needs No Change

- by Greg Gwin

The men who wrote the Constitution of the United States have long been praised for their wisdom and foresight. The words they penned have served as the basis for the laws of this land for over 200 years, and have needed relatively few changes or additions. This is indeed remarkable when we view the governments and laws of most other nations in a constant state of change. Far more amazing than this, is the law of Christ. Written nearly 2000 years ago, it continues today to provide us with "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). It is a "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). No change has ever been, or ever will be needed in it. Its own pages contain warnings to those who would attempt to alter its commands (Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9,10; Revelation 22:18,19). Let us learn to appreciate the beauty and perfection of God's word, and strive to live and worship according to its precepts. 9/8/24 Collegevue Columbia, TN