

America's Greatest Sin

If you were to speculate on what is America's greatest sin, what would it be? Would it be dancing, drinking, and honky-tonking—or something so close and incredibly insidious that none would ever suspect it?

IN THE BEGINNING, when God created man, He instilled within the mind of man several driving forces including self-preservation, procreation, curiosity, and the desire to worship something greater than himself. If man does not know the true God, he tends to make gods of his own—in his own image. A study of history and your Bible shows this proclivity of creating gods to worship is as old as man himself.

Satan is in tune with the human mind and has exploited man's desire to worship a being or supernatural force greater than himself. It has always been Satan's desire to be worshiped, bowed down to, and treated as a god. For 6,000 years God has allowed Satan to be the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). This is called idolatry.

Idolatry is a religious worship of a false or nonexistent god—that is, heathen worship. It is a placing of anything between you and the true God.

Thousands of years ago, God made unconditional promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendants would grow great and inherit great blessings. But in the end they turned to idolatry and went into captivity.

The United States and British peoples have come into power and fortune as no other nation in all history. We have every conceivable blessing: blessings of the womb, of weather, of mineral resources, of crops, of wealth, of military might, and every convenience. And yet we seem to be bringing more and more curses upon our heads.

Why? Why crime, murder, rape, drugs, turbulent weather, and broken, unhappy homes? We see children murdering children in our schools. We are murdering our unborn babies by the millions.

Ahhh, but we are a Christian nation, aren't we? I submit to you that, more and more, we are reaping curses and not blessings (Leviticus 26). Are we following the same courses as our forefathers?

Jesus was asked in Matthew 22:36–38, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."

This goes together with Exodus 20:3–8: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "Thou shalt not make

unto thee any graven image." "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Which of the Commandments have we, as a nation, not broken? Which of God's Ten Commandments do we not, as a nation, daily grind into the dust? We have placed other things and ourselves before our God. We are committing the sin of national idolatry!

The ancient Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul and life after death. Their religion had many objects of worship including crosses, steeples (obelisks), trees, and idols—and many of their customs remain with us to this day. (Reread *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop to refresh your memory of these things.) The religion of Egypt deified animals, insects, and reptiles, including dogs, cats, frogs, flies, cattle, gnats, bugs, and beetles, as well as certain deified people such as Pharaoh himself. They worshiped the sun, moon, wind, and stars via astrology. Their chief god, Horis, and the goddess, Isis, were but recreated names for Nimrod and Semiramis (Astarte, Ishtar, or Easter today). If we had asked those living in those societies about the validity of their beliefs, they would have assured us that they were "A-OK." They believed like everyone else around them, and "surely all these people could not be wrong"...could they? Is the majority always right?

Unknown to professing Christianity today, our nation, as well as many other nations around the world, has adopted many of the pagan customs and idols of ancient Egypt and Babylon, Greece, and Rome. If one has an eye to see, they are everywhere. Why, we even see resemblances in comic books: Superman, the Flash, the Hulk, Wonder Woman, and so forth, where human characters take on some of the same magic, mystical, or super powers that were attributed to many of the pagan gods of long ago.

What is a true Christian?

What, then, is the Bible definition (not Webster's) of a Christian? Read and memorize Romans 8:9: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His [that is, he is not a Bible-defined Christian]." Therefore, a Christian is one who has the Holy Spirit and belongs to Christ.

To whom does He give His Spirit? Read and memorize Acts 5:32: "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, which God hath given to them that *obey* Him."

We see a stern warning in Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The White Horse of Revelation 6:2 is identified in Matthew 24:5 as being *false religion* and *false Christs*.

America's greatest sin

The national sin of America today is the same as that of ancient Israel; that of *idolatry*. And the *idol* of America is and consists of false Christianity! But aren't we a Christian nation? Read on.

In Matthew 24:5 Jesus prophesied, "For *many* shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive *many*." The use of the Greek word *polus* used here actually means "most." "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, *they shall deceive the very elect*" (Matthew 24:24).

The "Christian" religion of the world, as most people observe it, is one that has appropriated the *name* of Jesus Christ to give it legitimacy.

We are commanded to "judge righteous judgement" (John 7:24). This means we are to make discernments. Jesus said we will know them *by their fruits* (Matthew 7:20). Many see great evangelistic works today on TV and *assume* they must be blessed of God. But growth, numbers, and TV stations are *not* the true measure of God's blessings. The devil can also inspire growth, numbers, and outlets for his "ministries"! How can we *know* who blessed a particular church? Again, Christ answered, "Wherefore *by their fruits* ye shall know them."

That means by what they *teach*, what they *say*, what they *do*—how they *live*. Check up on their doctrines. Speaking of Christ, Mark's Gospel says, "And they were astonished *at His doctrine*" (Mark 1:22), or teaching, because He did not speak and teach and live like those around Him.

Does doctrine make a difference?

Let's be honest. *Do* the typical Sunday-morning preachers teach the truth of God from the Bible, or do they teach the commonly believed errors of heaven, hell, the immortality of the soul, the trinity, Sunday, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, Easter, and Halowe'en? *Do* they teach God's holy days correctly, if at all? *Do* they understand and teach correctly about the Godhead, if at all? *Do* they properly teach church gov-

ernment? *Do* they teach the ultimate destiny of man—that he is to be born again by metabolic change into the very Kingdom of God? *Do* they teach biblical prophecy accurately, or do they place their various denominational twists upon it? *Do* they correctly teach the resurrections as outlined in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4, or do they substitute one of the various secret rapture theories? What about God's plan of salvation? *Do* they know, understand, and teach God's seven-step plan of salvation as revealed through His annual holy days (Leviticus 23), or do they exchange it for "just giving your heart to the Lord" at an emotionally charged assemblage in an auditorium or football stadium? *Do* they teach that God's laws ought to be obeyed today, or that they were "nailed to the cross"?

In view of these things, *what* do they have doctrinally *correct*? What do they teach? What is their *proof*? *Do* they teach God's truth, God's doctrines, God's laws—or Satan's lies? By their overall *fruits* shall you know them, not just by their kindly words and generous deeds! Yes, we shall know them by what they say, teach, and *do*!

We see in Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, except those calling themselves 'Christians,' or except those in the United States of America." It *that* what it says? No! Read these precious words in your own Bible! It says Satan the devil has the *whole world* deceived. Do you believe this? Or do you prefer to go along with the majority? Many, thinking they are doing the right thing, actually find themselves dabbling in doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

Enter in at the strait gate

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Enter ye in at the *strait gate*: for *wide* is the gate, and *broad* is the way, that leadeth to *destruction*, and *many* there be which go in thereat: Because *strait* is the gate, and *narrow* is the way, which leadeth unto *life*, and *few* there be that find it (Matthew 7:13,14).

How many?

"Few."

Christ said, "And why *call* ye me, Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I *say*?" (Luke 6:46).

The vast majority of those claiming to follow Christ today worship a Christ who *never lived*! Indeed, they worship a "Christ" who never walked the face of this earth!

Again, let's be brutally honest. Most professing Christians today do not know what Christ *looked* like then, or what He looks like today (Revelation 1:13–16),

when He was *born*, when He *died*, or *how*.

- Most worship a Good Friday-Easter Sunday god and mistakenly *call* it three days and three nights (72 hours), thus denying the only *sign* that Christ gave that He was indeed the Messiah (Matthew 16:4).

- Many worship a god who supposedly did away with His own *law*. And yet Christ plainly said in Matthew 5:17, "Think *not* that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I *am* not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

- The majority worship a three-in-one trinitarian god, which becomes a mockery when we think of God making man in His own image (Genesis 1:27). Such a god-head is exclusively closed and cannot be entered into by the begotten sons of God.

- They worship a god who is represented by *Sun*-day worship, crosses, steeples, colored bunny eggs, burning candles, holy statues, holy water, holy saints, and pagan holidays and many such things.

- All these things are an integral part of their worship, yet have little or *nothing* to do with the God of your Bible.

- Those who persist in this idolatrous form of worship *will not be in the First Resurrection*. So says your Bible! "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:15). God says, "Learn *not* the way of the heathen" (Jeremiah 10:2), and yet many see no harm in going against God's commands.

Many falsely worship a god who is surrounded in a mythological heaven operating a kind of "soul factory." As most would see it, God is surrounded by innumerable sweet, innocent, immortal "souls" which He stuffs into human bodies on the earth, and if they live good, righteous lives, He may accept them back into His heavenly realm at the end of their journey. Or, if they do wickedly, He may send them down into an ever-burning eternal hell to roast, pop, and sizzle for all eternity.

And yet, if the Bible is to be our criteria—if God means what He says and says what He means—it seems He must be obliged to send *most* of these immortal souls to an ever-burning hell because they were unfortunate enough to be born in a part of the world where they have never heard the *only* name under heaven by which men might be saved (Acts 4:12).

Many quote John 3:16, but totally ignore what is said just three verses before where it plainly says, "And *no* man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13).

Does all this make sense to you? Could you be happy in heaven, praising God, while your relatives and loved

ones are in the darkest pits of hell and torment, screaming their eternal lives away? Is *this* the loving God of your Bible? We submit to you that it is not. We invite you to send for our free booklets, *Hell, You Say?* and *Immortality—God's Gift to the Saints*.

Could you be deceived?

The apostle Paul tells us, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an *angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* [yes, he has ministers—many more than God has at this point in time] also be transformed *as* [resembling] the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14,15).

Satan the devil masquerades and presents himself to *many as their god*. Jesus Christ was not the sick, effeminate, sad-eyed apparition in white robes with a halo over His head as many works of art depict Him. Our Lord and Savior was all man and a yard wide! What could be more cunning and diabolical than for Satan to deceive men into worshiping *his* own image, disguised as Christ? He often masquerades in a false "Christian garb" and has deceived men into worshiping him on his day, the first day of the week, which we call *Sun*-day. Send for our free publication, *Saturday, Sunday—What Difference Does It Make?*

God defines *His* annual holy days in Leviticus 23. These festivals are *God's* holy days, not Jewish holy days. God's holy days are pregnant with deep spiritual meaning and insight, yet most worldly churches completely ignore them, labeling them as "Jewish." In Exodus 31:13, God plainly says that these sabbaths (weekly as well as annual sabbaths) are a *sign* between Him and His people. "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a *sign* between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you."

Without this sign, you are simply not identified in the Bible as one of God's chosen ones.

The sin of America is the national sin of *idolatry*. False Christianity—following a form of religion in the *guise* of Christianity—is a *curse* to our nation, not a blessing! Counterfeit Christianity obfuscates real Christianity. The evil of it is that once men have accepted the satanic counterfeit, they no longer see any need to seek out the true God of your Bible. They become ensnared in their comfort zone instead of seeking correction and instruction in righteousness through the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16). We have strayed *far* from our God. Oh, how *blessed* we would be if only we would follow our God!

"But there are good people out there!"

Are we "trashing" all those churches and the people in them? By no means! We are simply comparing commonly believed doctrines with the Bible. Make no mistake! There are *many* good, kind, caring, loving, sincere, and well-meaning people out there. There *are!* But *that* does not make them a Bible-defined Christian. Truth is always exclusive! One cannot make a true statement about anything without excluding something else. Two plus two equals four. That excludes three or five. Truth and error are mutually exclusive. Many were offended by Jesus' statement, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Many who would broaden the way to God actually make it more exclusive than Jesus does.

My wife worked with a lady from India who was very moral, but totally deceived. She believed in reincarnation, holy cows, and various gods and idols. Yet, if there was anyone my wife would have trusted with her purse and her paycheck, it would have been the sweet lady from India. Mahatma Gandhi was also a good, moral man who would as soon have his tongue torn out by the roots as to curse, but that did *not* make him a Christian. He never claimed to be.

Christ warned in Matthew 7:21-23, "Not every one that *saith* unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven. *Many* will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied *in thy name?* and *in thy name* have cast out devils? and *in thy name* done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you:* depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Some will surely cry at that time, "But, Lord, don't you remember all that we did *in your name?* We filled vast auditoriums and stadiums with worshipers; we sang praises to your name; we built great edifices, hospitals, universities, and seminaries, all *in your name,* Lord! We printed Bibles and sent out missionaries, some of which gave their lives, *all in your name,* Lord! Remember?" and the Lord Jesus Christ is prophesied to answer them, "*I never knew you:* depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). So says your Bible.

Think for a moment. *If* all these churches with all their various conflicting doctrines are right in the eyes of Jesus Christ, then *who* on earth was He talking about? Has *anyone* been deceived? Could *you* be deceived?

The resurrection is the great equalizer

Those who may cry "foul" or accuse God unjustly simply do not see things from God's perspective. The resurrection is the great equalizer. *All* in their graves will have their opportunity for salvation, but each in his own order (1 Corinthians 15:23). God does not view death as man views death. God sees death as a "holding pattern"—a place of safety, if you will—until the resurrection. God is simply not calling everyone on earth at this time. "No man can come to me," Jesus announced, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and [here it is!] I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

Make no mistake: America is in for a rude awakening! The cries of human rights, women's rights, gay rights, animal rights, and the rights of this and that group will soon *pale to insignificance* as our beloved nation goes down and our peoples are taken captive—even as ancient Israel.

Bear in mind, God has a *plan* for your life—but so does the devil. *Which* plan are you helping fulfill? Are you walking the walk, or merely talking the talk?

"Men and brethren, what should we do?"

Remember that a Christian is to be *two things* to the world: (1) a light, to show the way—an example of how we should live (Matthew 5:14); (2) a trumpet as a witness and a warning (Isaiah 58:1).

Once again we have heard the warning. Now let us go out and do the work and be a *light* by setting the right example.

The Church of God International is doing its level best to fulfill the twofold commission Jesus Christ gave to His church: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe *all things* whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20) and to "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17).

If these words have pricked your heart—if you see a need in your personal life to repent and be baptized—there may be a Church of God International congregation or minister not too far from you. Why not write in and ask? You may be eternally grateful you did.

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