

REVELATION 17:5

"THE 1ST CHURCH OF SATAN"

Last week we saw that the first church of Satan is an amalgam of counterfeits of the true church. 3 Lessons:

- (1) Renounce
- (2) Avoid idolatry
- (3) Believe as Word

Open to Romans 1 to Rev. 17 --

(1) Renounce Heredity:

- I. This is the reason why every nation and tribe of the past or present (except those whose cosmogony is based on Genesis 1 and 2, such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) has a religious system which is fundamentally:
 - A. PANTHEISTIC (believing that the physical universe (v. 23) rather than the transcendent Creator of that universe, is the ultimate reality),
 - B. POLYTHEISTIC v. 23 (believing that this deified cosmos manifests itself locally as various forces and systems of nature, which are personified as "gods" and "goddesses"),
 - C. (v. 23) IDOLATROUS (believing that these gods and goddesses, or personified forces and systems of nature, should be worshiped through images constructed to represent them and which they then possess and energize). This monstrous system of evolutionary, polytheistic, pantheistic, spiritistic, astrological idolatry has permeated practically every culture in the world in one form or another. Even modern evolutionary scientism is nothing but this same ancient paganism in more sophisticated garb. All religions and philosophies except those founded on special creation as revealed in Genesis worship and serve the creation more than the Creator (Romans 1:25) and thus are under God's condemnation. They are either
 - D. (v. 25) EVOLUTIONARY (believing that these personified forces of nature somehow generate higher and higher orders of beings, including man and--in many cases--even spirits),
 - E. (2 K 17) ANIMALISTIC/SPIRITISTIC (believing that the spirits so generated, including the spirits of dead men and women, continue to survive and perhaps evolve into still higher beings),

- F. (2 K 12:17) ASTROLOGICAL (believing that the highest beings so developed either inhabit or are identical with the starry host of heaven, so that these stars control events on earth), and
 - G. (v. 25) HUMANISTIC (worshiping man as the highest attainment of the cosmic process) or
 - H. (Rev. 13, 17) "SUPERHUMANISTIC" (worshiping spiritual beings as still higher attainments of evolution than man). Since they are inexcusable in such an arbitrary rejection of their Creator, God has given them up (Romans 1:24, 26, 28) to uncleanness, to vile affections, and a reprobate mind. Thus have all the inhabitants of earth been made drunk with the wine of Babel's primeval fornication, as Nimrod chose Satan rather than God.
- II. Romans 1 is an indictment of all of humanity. What's the proper response to God the Judge?
- A. v. 18 Suppress truth = bondage or Jn. 8:31-36
Embrace truth for freedom
 - B. v. 21 Not honor/glorify God = darkened heart or Acts 26:18
New heart
 - C. v. 28 Not acknowledge God = depraved mind or Rom. 12:1-2 Dedicate body for renewed mind
 - D. Have you got freedom in Christ? Have you got a new heart from Jesus? Have you got a renewed mind from the Lord? They are all yours by the obedience of faith -- a new heredity planted by regeneration.
- III. Avoid Idolatry -- 17:1-5

True Church	False Church
True Bride	False Bride
Jerusalem	Babylon
City of Peace	City of Confusion
Spiritual	Fleshly
Internal	External
Creation	Evolution
Monotheism	Polytheism
Heaven Rules	Astrological
Spiritual Worship	Idolatrous
Divine	Humanistic
Contentment	Covetousness
Faith	Intellectualism
Spirit	Religious Rituals

v.5 "abominations" This is the Greek word *bdelugma* that Christ used in Mk 13 and Mt 24 for the image of the Beast set up in the Temple during the

Tribulation. The worship of idols has always been warned against by God to His people. God even warns that the worship of the True God in a false way is totally unacceptable to Him. Note these verses:

STUDY OF THE ORIGIN OF 5 OF THE 8 CHARACTERISTICS OF SATAN'S CHURCH IN ROMANS 1:18-32=

1	v.21	Pantheism
2	v.23	Polytheism
3	v..23	Idolatry
4	v.25	Humanism
5	v.25	Evolution

1. EX 20:1-6 = the first two commands are against idolatry.
2. I John 5:21= the last words of John to believers are a warning against idols.
3. Col 3:5; Eph 5:5 = both verses tie idolatry to covetousness. Also as the first two in the Decalogue denounce idols so the last is against covetousness.
4. Lk 16:13 = our Lord said we can't serve God and Money.

The underlying danger of a covetous person is: REJECTION OF GOD AND HIS WILL...DISCONTENT WITH WHAT GOD HAS SUPPLIED. A DESIRE FOR THINGS RATHER THAN GOD...*THUS, GIVING ANYTHING PRIORITY OVER THE TRUE GOD AND HIS PERFECT WILL IS IDOLATRY IN HIS SIGHT*

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How do we avoid idolatry?

1. Following Christ is yielding to the will of God.

John 4:24

5:30

6:38-40

7:17

9:31

1:13

2. Choose Godly contentment - Phil. 4:10-12

Finally, let's look with the eyes of faith and believe God's word! 17:6-10:

"The first¹ kingdom was *Assyria*, with its occult-mad capital city of Ninevah (see Nahum 3:4).

- ✓ The second was *Egypt*, which devoted much of its total wealth to the construction of pyramids, all built according to astrological specifications. Egypt was also given to black magic (see Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18; 2 Tim. 3:9).
- ✓ The third was the *neo-Babylonian* empire of Daniel's day, which really perfected the black arts.
- ✓ The fourth was *Medo-Persia*, which conquered Babylon but was in turn enslaved by the Babylonian religion.
- ✓ The fifth was the *Greek* empire. One visit to Greece and her ancient temple sites will convince you of the sway which idolatrous religions held there!

"Running through the culture of all these great past empires was an underlying belief in astrology. This was the cohesive force which bound together all the witchcraft, sorcery, and magic. Kings would seldom make a move without consulting advisors steeped in the ancient art of Babylonian religion. The ancient priests enjoyed royal stature and power, especially in Egypt.

"When John speaks of the "five kingdoms that have fallen" he means the five I just mentioned. But then he says, 'One is.' This *has* to refer to the great empire of his day, Rome, which was filled with the same occultic beliefs that had originated on the plains of Shinar in ancient Babylon. This was the sixth kingdom of John's vision.

¹ Hal Lindsey

“John looks to the future when he says of the seventh head (kingdom) that ‘...the other is not yet come; and when it comes, it must continue a short while’ (Rev. 17:10c). This refers to the future *revival* of the Roman empire.

HUMILITY

“To be nothing before God and men,” wrote Murray², “to wait on God alone; to delight in, to imitate, to learn of Christ, the meek and lowly One--this is the very key to the School of Christ, the only key to the true knowledge of Scripture.”

Donald Grey Barnhouse put it all in biblical perspective:

If you exalt man in any way, God is thereby debased. But if you exalt God as He should be exalted, man thereby takes his true position of utter nothingness, and only then can he find his real exaltation, for it will come to him through the grace of God in Christ.

This one was written by James M. Gray nearly 100 years ago:

Naught have I gotten but what I received;
Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed.
Boasting excluded, pride I abase;
I'm only a sinner saved by grace.
This is my story; to God be the glory,
I'm only a sinner saved by grace.

Lloyd-Jones expressed it well:

Pride is ever the cause of the trouble, and there is nothing that so hurts the natural man's pride as the cross of Christ. How does the cross do that? What has happened that there should ever have been a cross? It is because we are failures, to keep you and me humble. God's biggest job is to get us to believe that we are somebody and that we really can do something....

Remember the confusion of Robert Schuller? He writes in *Self-Esteem*:

“If your pride is rooted in your divine call, your humility is assured. The Cross will sanctify your ego trip.”...For the Cross protected our Lord's perfect self-esteem from turning into sinful pride.

This new theology can be confusing, with its apparent new definitions for words that have long had established meanings. We are told that humility and self-esteem are one and the same and that humility is nothing to “worry about.” It is puzzling, then, why self-esteem is of such concern if it truly is the same thing as humility, which comes so easily. Despite its obvious contradictions the new theology is even beginning to affect our hymnology. For example, the otherwise-

² Dave Hunt, *Beyond Seduction*, pp. 163, 173, 176, 187, 189, 235.

beautiful song *They'll Know We Are Christians* contains the pledge to “guard each man’s dignity and save each man’s pride.”

In contrast, John Calvin warned that those who urge a man “not (to) be ignorant of his own excellence and dignity” thereby “fill him with vain confidence and inflate him with pride.”

F. B. Meyer declared:

Earthly thrones are generally built with steps up to them; the remarkable thing about the thrones of the eternal kingdom is that the steps are all down to them. We must descend if we would reign, stoop if we would rise, gird ourselves to wash the feet of the disciples as a common slave in order to share the royalty of our Divine Master.

Oswald J. Smith wrote that God;

“will never be satisfied with you until like a slave, a willing slave, you place yourself entirely at His disposal. Then He can use you for His glory.”

What the Bible says about pride and humility is put very succinctly by C. S. Lewis:

We must not think Pride is something God forbids because He is offended at it, or that Humility is something He demands as due to His own dignity--as if God Himself was proud. He is not in the least worried about His dignity. The point is, He wants you to know Him; wants to give you Himself. And He and you are two things of such a kind that if you really get into any kind of touch with Him you will, in fact, be humble--delightedly humble, feeling the infinite relief of having for once got rid of all the silly nonsense about your own dignity which has made you restless and unhappy all your life. He is trying to make you humble in order to make this moment possible.

James Bjoanstad³ wrote:

At one time, most Christians believed that to have a close relationship with God, a person should magnify God, deny himself and the pleasures of this world, repent and confess his sins, and live a holy and separated life. Their heroes were missionaries who gave up everything to serve God and martyrs who suffered because of their faith.

Today, it’s becoming a different story. Many Christians believe that to have a close relationship with God, a person should realize the importance of himself as God intended, pursue his dreams and aspirations, and become affluent and successful. Their heroes are those celebrities and self-made individuals who happened to be Christians.

Behind this new gospel stands a variety of distinguished teachers, preachers, and evangelists proclaiming a variety of ways to attain prosperity and

³ Moody Monthly, November 1986, p. 19-20.

success. But examining their theological models and points of emphasis reveals one common element--they are simply not biblical.