

# THE BEGINNING OF ERROR

How did it happen? Why does it continue?

## God speaks

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eat thereof thou shalt surely die’ ” (Gen 2:16-17).

## Our adversary speaks.

"Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1). Eve then explained they could eat from every tree except one, and they were not even to touch it least they die.”

Satan, snickering as if everyone but them knew, said, "In dying ye shall not *surely die*; (*implying man has immortality*) for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, (*suggesting God was not being totally open with them*) then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, (*obtaining godhood*) knowing (*deciding for yourself*) good and evil." (Gen. 3:4-5).

Matthew Henry defined it well. "You shall be as god himself, equal to him, rivals with him; you shall be sovereigns and no longer subjects, self-sufficient and no longer dependent." (Excerpt from Matthew Henry's Commentary on Geneses 3:5). It is not that man outright claims to be a god, (as some do), but that they act like god by reasoning around God’s word to come up with their own conclusions in an attempt to justify actions which are in conflict with God.

## **The Snare**

The lie has been told, doubt has been planted now all he has to do is let the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, (I John 2:16-18) influence her reasoning and she will rationalize herself into disobedience. Her first mistake was to look longingly at the fruit (lust of the eyes) and reasoned that it was good for food (lust of the flesh -- gluttony, etc.) besides, wouldn't it make one wise enough to be like God (pride of life)? Adam giving tacit approval of her disobedience also participated and they both succumbed to the three temporal lusts of this physical world that pass away. Interestingly Adam was not deceived but chose to disobey (1 Tim. 2:14).

## **A New God**

Satan, the god of this world, has now become the god of all mankind and has blinded their minds to God's truth (Rev. 12:9). He offers many counterfeit religions or way of life to any willing to believe that they can decide for themselves right from wrong over God's word. In doing so, they are unconsciously serving their new god who has blinded their eyes to the light of the gospel Christ (II Cor. 4:3-4). "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

## **Nonetheless We're Still Dust**

God then reminded Adam and Eve that they came from dust and will return to dust thereby underlining the fact that they will surely die. They were then driven from the Garden of Eden and the tree of life thereby losing their opportunity for eternal

life and living forever. Although man does not have immortality man still clings to Satan's first lie that we don't surely die. So man reasons that he has an immortal soul (I Cor. 15:53-54, I Tim. 6:16) and at death simply change forms living a fully conscious life in heaven, hell or purgatory. Note that even David is neither conscious or in heaven (Acts 2:27, 2:34, 13:36).

### **A Doomed World**

Since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden the world has been under the curse of death and in need of a savior. This present world and all in it is under that death sentence. Thus we understand Christ's statement when He said, "... I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ..." (John 12:47). Jesus came preaching the good news of the coming Kingdom of eternal life to all who believed (Mk. 1:14-15).

But mankind has continued to doubt and question what God has said and grasps at any supposed contradiction in his word to insert their personal interpretation. Therefore, we have a multitude of varying sects, cults, and denominations, some Christian, some think they're Christian, and many anti-Christian.

### **But We Are Gods -- Aren't We?**

Mankind, still believing Satan's lie that he has now obtained (in some sense) godhood, and will not die (has an immortal soul). Consequently, man feels fully capable of judging right from wrong, good and evil independently from God's word. Ignoring that God plainly told them that dust they are and to dust they will return; they chose to believe that the Bible's use of the word sleep for death does not mean to die and return to

dust but to discard the physical and release the spirit. As a result of their changing God's use of the word sleep to their interpretation they are still believing the god of this world that man will *not surely die* (Rev. 12:9).

### **Lots to Choose From**

Satan offers many counterfeit religions to fit any delusion of man, but one of his most successful was one that was very prevalent in Rome prior to the time of Christ and during the time of the lively expansion of the New Testament Church. It was called Mithraism.

### **Mithraism**

Their high feast day was December 25th, the birthday of the Invincible Sun, "Solis Invicti". Their sacred day was Sunday and it was called "the Lord's Day." Mithras was supposedly born on December 25th of a virgin, known as the mother of God; they believed in a holy trinity; he had a last supper with 12 of his followers before his death. He was in the grave for three days and was resurrected on Easter morning at the rising of the sun. They believed in an immortal soul that went to a celestial heaven or to an eternal hell fire at death.

There were many other similarities to the prevailing Christian religion of today as well as some that were completely foreign, but how did these similarities come about? Were they a copy of the Christian Church, or did the Christian Church copy from them? Sadly, many of the customs practiced by the church today were not taught by Christ or the apostles but were brought in by those who crept in unawares (Jude 4).

## **A Long History**

Aspects of Mithraism can be found in many ancient pagan religions throughout history. It would seem to be a conglomeration of many beliefs that just morphed into what eventually became known as Mithraism. It is interesting that it matured at the opportune time of the formation of the Christian Church.

### **Jews and Their Sabbaths Expelled**

Christianity was making great inroads throughout the known world at that time, but also suffering great persecution. The Jews, being hated by nearly everyone, had been expelled from Rome, and it was dangerous to be associated with anything that appeared Jewish. Therefore, it was prudent to not stress Jewish customs such as the Sabbath or the Holy days. None-the-less the two predominant religions at that time were Mithraism and Christianity, and in spite of severe persecution, Christianity was growing fast. Tens of thousands of Christians were martyred during that period; but, it seemed the more persecution, the faster Christianity grew (Re. Foxe's Book of Martyrs).

In due course, Constantine, a devout worshipper of the sun god, was building and uniting his kingdom; but his kingdom was largely divided between two major belief systems. A master politician he devised a way to meld them together. Claiming to have been given a sign to fight a coming battle under the sign of the cross, which battle he did win, he declared Christianity to be the Official religion of the empire. Others were tolerated but nothing that might be construed to be

of Jewish origin. This made it much easier for the corruption of the true gospel and the acceptance of pagan festivals into the church. Consider Jude's counsel in verse 4.

### **The Compromise**

But now what to do with the many temples, priests and other followers of Mithraism scattered throughout his empire? Here he shows his brilliant leadership.

Taking advantage of the very prevalent hatred of the Jews, he proclaimed the Jews to be the Christ killers, and declared anything that appeared to be Jewish was forbidden in his kingdom. Many temples, priests, and followers of other religions including Mithraism declared themselves to be Christian because of the many benefits offered Christians by Constantine. Priests could keep their positions, the many lesser gods of Mithraism were now designated saints, many of the temple practices were somewhat cleaned up (such as temple prostitution and sacrifices etc.) and proclaimed Christian.

Dispensing with the far out extreme parts of Mithraism, but keeping some of the main tenets such as life after death, the trinity, Easter resurrection, the birth of the sun god (which they designated as the birthday of Jesus and called it the mass of Christ or Christmas) and, so on. It seemed he had found a middle ground they all could live with. But, along with things that must be eliminated are the practicing of the "Jewish" Sabbaths and annual festivals.

It is important to note that Constantine remained a sun worshipper and only paid lip service to Christianity (as did many of the followers of Mithraism). He continued to be as

brutal as ever, but supposedly had a death bed conversion and was then baptized.

Throughout the following dark ages it was very dangerous to be caught practicing anything deemed Jewish such as not working on Saturday or even working on Sunday, as you would be pronounced anathema from Christ by the Catholic Church and then delivered over to the government for punishment, usually death unless one recanted.

Much of Mithraism, being made more tolerable, now lives under the banner of Christianity. Christianity had now become compromised and Christian in name only; forcing true Christians to go underground, some retreated to the mountains between northern Italy, Switzerland and France. They became known as the Waldenses and were greatly persecuted by the Catholic Church.

In the year 1556, Barthelemy Hector a Waldense Christian and bookseller was charged of selling books that contain heresy. He replied, "If the Bible is heresy to you, it is truth to me. He later summarized his defense with, "I have spoken only truth, can I change truth as I would a garment?" He was later burned at the stake for defending the truth. Many similar incidents are recorded in history. (See, The Israel of the Alps, the Story of the Waldenses, also Foxe's Book of Martyrs).

### **The Protestors**

As is often said, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Eventually the Catholic Church became so corrupt that a dedicated young priest named Martin Luther challenged the church to change many of their disgustingly

corrupt un-Biblical practices, which of course they denied. (Later after much of the Catholic world joined the rebellion they did make some minor changes). Thus, we have the birth of the Protestant Churches.

### **The Child of the Mother**

What started out as a protest ended up as a major split of the Catholic Church. Originally, Luther was just protesting the many abuses of the Catholic Church but it quickly became a new denomination. However, having been steeped in the traditions and beliefs of Catholicism since his youth, his mother church, he carried much of them with him into his new movement.

Such things as belief in the immortal soul - an ever burning hell fire - going immediately to either heaven or hell at death - being fully conscious after death - a priesthood that is superior to the laity and functions as a mediator between God and man, even denying access to those deemed unworthy - the day of the sun god as the official day of worship, Easter, Christmas and much more. None of these doctrines were ever taught, practiced or tolerated by Christ or the Apostles but are carried forth from paganism. Still, the mother church considers them her children and that they will eventually come back, which the book of Revelation seems to confirm. (Note: oddly, Luther never believed in consciousness after death and called it just another Catholic lie. He understood that the Biblical use of the word sleep in reference to death meant the same as it did to Daniel and does today, asleep in the dust in a coma like state until they awake in the resurrection (Dan.12:2).

## **The Catholic Challenge**

One church official stated that by keeping Sunday as their day of worship, the Protestants are like a child that has run away from home, but had carried a lock of his mother's hair in his pocket to remember her by.

Sunday is claimed by the Catholic Church to be their exclusive divinely appointed day of worship. In his book "Plain Talk About Protestantism" Monsignor Segur claimed: "it was the Catholic Church which by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. (*Even if true it's no reason to change God's law*) Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) Church."

There are many similar quotations and challenges made by the Catholic Church, some even challenging the Protestants or anyone else to produce even one verse from the Bible authorizing a change in the (Saturday) Sabbath. There has never been a taker and there never will be, because there is absolutely no support in the Bible for changing God's seventh day Sabbath. No man, government or church, regardless of claims, has authority to change any of God's laws.

## **About Easter**

Most arguments against God's Sabbath can easily be dispelled with just a little research as there is so much information readily available today that hasn't always been easily obtainable. However, the Easter Sunrise Services substituted for the resurrection of Christ is so ingrained in the

traditions of the church that few dare to challenge it. There are many that so tenaciously hang on to the belief that Jesus rose from the tomb at sunrise on Easter Sunday morning that they will simply not consider its background or history.

It is not necessary to have a "thus saith the Lord" as to the exact time of the resurrection as we have been given enough information to know that it was not Sunday morning. We know that when Mary came to the tomb it was still dark and He had already risen and the tomb was empty, which rules out the Easter sunrise resurrection (John 20:1). We also know that by Jesus' own words He would be in the tomb for three days and three nights, no more and no less (Matt. 12:38-40), which rules out the Friday crucifixion. We can also easily prove that there were two Sabbaths in the week Christ died (Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56, One was an annual Sabbath).

### **Why the Resurrection Misunderstood**

Much of the ignorance about the Friday Crucifixion and Sunday morning resurrection is because most have ignored, or maybe never understood, God's annual Holy Days. They assume that the reference to the next day being a Sabbath day in Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, and John 19:31 was referring to Saturday; which, of course, would then make the previous day Friday. These verses were referring to the First Day of Unleavened Bread, an annual High Day which could come on most any day of the week, but always the day after Passover. They were not referring to a weekly Sabbath day.

The Passover in the year 30 AD fell on a Wednesday which would make the following day (Thursday) a High day, or annual Sabbath. This fits perfectly with Jesus' statement in

Matthew 12:39-40 proving that he was in the tomb for three days and three nights as He said, and that He was the true Messiah. Which begs the question, who is the world worshipping if they are worshipping a god that did not fulfill the only sign that Jesus gave to the world as to exactly how to identify the true Messiah? (See the booklet the day Jesus died). Would Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24 fit, or Jude 4, or II Thessalonians 2:7? How about II Corinthians 11:13-15 and II Peter 2:1-3. Truly, Satan has deceived the whole world!

### **If It Still Works, Why Change It?**

And so the cause of the beginning of error, the lie that mankind still believes is found in Geneses 3:3-6. Man believing himself capable of discerning on his own what is true and what is not, what is right and what is not, what is good and what is evil, even when it is in direct opposition to God's word, is still believed. For God said, "thou shalt surely die" but Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die". Whom do you believe?

### **Why It Is As It Is**

Why is mankind so deceived? "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, (truth) and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. "And for this cause God shall send them strong

delusion, that they should believe a lie: "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thess. 2:7-12). Do we love the truth enough to search it out (Jn. 4:23-24)? The Father seeks those who worship Him in spirit **and in truth**. Are you following "cunningly devised fables"? Are you giving diligence to make your calling sure (2 Peter. 1)?

### **Think About It**

"When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic."

*Dresden James*

"In religion and politics people's beliefs and convictions are generally gotten second-hand, without examination, from authorities who have not themselves examined the question but have taken them second-hand from other non-examiners, whose opinions about them are not worth a brass farthing."

*Mark Twain*

Pray for a love of the truth and the courage to speak it.

### **Be bold!**

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