

“I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

The High Places

“Yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God, and kept not His testimonies: but turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images” (Psalms 78: 56-58).

Six times in the Books of Kings and twice in Chronicles are the basic words repeated: “But the high places were not removed.” The Holy Spirit of God made the point several times. He only does that when there is something very serious happening.

The Lord often pointed out that the high places should have been removed.

What are the high places? Are they referred to as “high” because they were on hills? Were they referred to as “high” because they were tall and impressive structures, overshadowing those around them? Or were they “high” because they were esteemed so in importance? I think all three, sometimes all at once.

It is written that they worshiped in those high places. It is said that they worshiped the true God, but also false gods - mainly Ashtoreth (Astarte, Ishtar, Easter) and Baal - but several others, as well. In any event, the Lord was very jealous and angry, often pointing out that they should have been, but were not, removed.

He also pointed out when they were removed. Only those kings who served the Lord with all their might removed them. These kings were Hezekiah, Josiah, Asa and Jehoshaphat. Yes, these same men all had their infirmities and their sins like any other, but they were the few of many that removed the high places, and the record of that is a high honor to them.

Josiah removed not only the high places of Judah, but of Israel as well, though he was only monarch of Judah. He alone, after many reigns of other monarchs, including Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, and Asa, even removed the high place of Jeroboam, in Israel, of whom it is written several times: “Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger.” Jeroboam had founded a high place, as a substitute for the Temple of God in Jerusalem, lest his nation should leave off following him. Apparently he was more concerned that they should follow him, rather than God.

So then where were the Israelites to worship? Obviously, they could not all go to the Temple in Jerusalem all the time. As many as were willing and able, would make their journeys to Jerusalem for the feast days, but what about the rest of the time? The answer is that they were to worship Him according to faith and the law of God, every day, everywhere, in all things. That is what true worship is all about.

True worship is not about a place; it is not about only certain things; it is not about certain appointed times; it is not about religious activities, such as Sunday “church services.” It is about **LIFE**, everyday life, everywhere, in all matters.

Micah says, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). There is no “secular” and “religious” to God. There is no division with Him concerning those things that He has created. He is interested in all because He created all. Did He do so in vain? Does God do anything for nothing? Does God putter around? I don’t think so.

It is still about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

I say to you, reader, that the high places continue today, that they are presided over by those like Jeroboam, who are more concerned that worshipers follow them, rather than the Lord God. Today, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the gods Ashtoreth and Baal are worshiped, their characteristics attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and some of His to them. The whole thing is an unholy mixture, even as in the days of Noah when the sons of God went in unto the daughters of men, defiling everything so much so that the Lord had to destroy all but a tiny handful. In those days it was about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. As it is written: “The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took them for wives.”

It is no different today. It is still about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Today they speak of love, joy, prosperity, abundance, and of freedom “in Christ.” These things are truths, but misapplied and misinterpreted. They speak of a false love, an emotional kind of love. They live in the realm of passion, emotion, and affection - all these are neither good nor bad in and of themselves, but the trouble is that they hold these as the core substance of worship and their relationship to their gods. They think that the God of Heaven and earth values the sentimentalities of the flesh, supposing to be saved and prospered in the flesh, but it is not necessarily so.

At the same time, when a prophet or servant of the Lord speaks of His anger and wrath concerning sins, idolatry and false religion, they think these messengers represent the Devil himself. “God is a God of love, not anger, not judgment,” they complain. “We will listen to God, not you! You make your choice and we make ours! Stop judging us! We don’t tell you what to do!” they cry, while they perish in their sins and in their high places, worshipping the gods of their choice.

They rashly discount the possibility that Christ comes in the flesh, by His servants to tell His people their sins. Ironically, those gods His people and others look to for love and comfort are so cruel, so destructive, so vicious and judgmental, and so deceptive because they

introduce themselves as otherwise. Their subtlety and deception are quite remarkable. They come as lambs and finish as ferocious, devouring lions. The Lord comes, as a Lion, and finishes as a Lamb. The saved perceive His sacrifice in the end.

What do the high places look like? Go into any city and you will see several of them. They are the church buildings, often set on hills, or in prominent locations. The structures are often tall, with steeples, formerly with bell towers. They will sometimes demonstrate a tall cross, often electrically lit up, to be seen for miles, if possible. And it is only lack of finances that prevent many from building greater, more outstanding edifices to their gods. All this they do in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as to Mary or some saint.

Is it sacrifice and decorum He desires, or is it faith and obedience?

How do I know that these are those same high places spoken of in Kings and Chronicles? First of all, God has revealed these things to me, and He has warned me to flee from the wrath to come upon these places and the builders of them. But furthermore, allow me to reason with my readers, and so I will do, being compelled to do so, although I know well that only the grace and will of God can prevail and enable one to understand of what I speak.

I ask you: Does God want tall spires, steeples, and huge crosses? Does God want large arched doors, plush carpets, chandeliers, oak pews, huge bouquets of flowers and plants, choir gowns, expensive pulpits, baptismals and the like? Does God want formal, stuffy “church services” wherein people are not free to speak or to express themselves because of a programmed atmosphere under the full control of formal leaders?

You may think so, saying, “It is appropriate to honor God with the best!” But IS this the best? Is this what He wants? Is it sacrifice and decorum He desires, or is it faith and obedience? On what basis do you think He desires any of these things? There is no Scriptural direction for them; on the contrary, the Spirit as well as the letter of the Scriptures are quite against them.

Why do men build these great buildings? Is it not because they worship in the flesh, rather than in the spirit? Is it not to please and to impress men? Is it not because they are trying to reach Heaven by their own power of persuasion, persuading God to hear and to honor them? Is it not because they seek glory of men rather than of God?

“Flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven,” the Scriptures say. Did you know that these structures and their basic designs and intent have no origin, no foundation in genuine faith? God will not accept carnal worship. That is why Christ died for us, that we may be delivered from our righteousness, and know His.

The only structures ever built, as recorded in the Bible to honor God, were the Tabernacle of Moses, a glorious tent, portable and temporary, and Solomon's Temple, much more glorious, built to replace the Tabernacle. Now the Temple was built not just anywhere, but in the capital of Israel, even Jerusalem. Nor were these structures fashioned just any way. They were built according to strict patterns revealed from Heaven to the prophets and builders.

The Temple was not any mere structure. I am told that it was once a candidate for, if not one of the Seven Wonders of the World, not that the esteem of men matters. The Temple was glorious indeed, as described in Scripture. Furthermore, both these structures were commissioned by none other than the Lord God Himself, the first through Moses, the second through David and Solomon. Consider that these places of worship looked like nothing at all compared to any of the churches since Christ, and the churches of these past two thousand years look nothing like those holy structures.

Have you ever wondered why church buildings have spires and arched doors?

Clearly it cannot be said that church buildings should look similar to the Temple or the Tabernacle, even as the Tabernacle and the Temple were quite dissimilar to each other in many respects. But what are the determinant influences of "Christian" church buildings? I tell you now that they pattern the high places of old, the worship places of pagans, of idolaters, of the worshipers of Baal and Ashtoreth and other foreign gods. Foreign, I say, not to the world, but foreign to the apostles, prophets, and saints of the Lord God Most High, foreign to God Himself.

It is true that many of the pagan religions were expressly sexual in content and conduct. Ishtar (Astarte, Ashtarte, Ashtoreth) for example, was the sex goddess of fertility. She was the "many-breasted one." There were temple priests and priestesses who would perform sexual acts with congregants, not only in the worship of Ishtar, but of many others. Some worship services would be sexual orgies.

Have you ever wondered why many traditional church buildings have spires and arched doors? Looking from a distance, when one sees spires, one would say, "Look, there's a church." He or she would not say, "Look, there's an office building, or a store, or a school, or a home, or city hall." When one thinks of arched doors, the first thought that comes to mind is "church." Why spires and arched doors? The spires, I am told (and this could be researched and verified), represented the male organ, and the arched doors the female organ. These were architectural representations of pagan religions in honor of deities, worshiped in sexual contexts.

Have you ever wondered about the Maypole? At May Day, as an altar boy in my church (Catholic), along with the girls, we would gather around a tall pole. From the top of it would issue forth streamers, one of which each of us would take the end, and circle the pole till the streamers were wrapped around the pole to the bottom. Every May Day we would do this.

Has anyone ever determined the origin of this ceremony? I am told that the pole represents the male organ, that the whole celebration has its origin in heathen sexual fertility rites. Tell me, where in the Bible does one see any direction or justification for this religious event? Nowhere. Then why is it done? Why is it done in the Name of God and worship of Christ?

The fact is, many people indulge in many religious ceremonies and doctrines without pausing to ask, “Why?” and “Where did this come from?” and “Is this what God wants?” They simply do these things as tradition. They follow blind religious leaders who direct them to do these things, the leaders themselves not knowing nor caring about the origin or significance. There are many traditions and doctrines in nominal Christendom that have nothing whatsoever to do with God, true Christianity, or the Bible. On the contrary, they are quite anti-Christ.

God constantly rebuked and punished His nation for going awhoring from Him.

It is incumbent upon the partakers thereof to determine the right and the wrong of all these. This is not a teaching of righteousness by the law, but neither will grace save you when you willingly partake of these things. Indeed, if one continues in these things in the Name of Christ or any other, I would have to conclude that he or she is still in their sins, far, far from grace.

In the days of Old Testament Israel, God would constantly warn, rebuke and punish His nation for going awhoring from Him, and for adultery. Was He speaking of only the physical, bodily form? Was He not speaking of the spiritual, as with the worship of other gods, of partaking of the ways of the gentiles? Was this not fornication or adultery to Him?

You say, “We are innocent! We do not do those things or know them in a sexual context!” It does not matter. You are still guilty, because even if you don’t indulge in your church activities in an evident physical manner, you indulge in spiritual whoredoms. If spiritually, then all the physical activities involved are included. You are in fornication against God. Physically or spiritually does not matter to Him. Both are alike, and truly, both are one.

Now if you are His, indulging in these pagan and idolatrous practices, you are in spiritual adultery (betraying your Husband, the Lord). If you are not His, you are guilty of spiritual fornication (misconduct outside of marriage) which still carries the penalty of sin, because sin it is. Not much difference, except that those who are His surely have known better.

Therefore they are the more guilty. I want to inform you, in all solemnity, that the partaking of these things, whether ignorantly or wittingly, brings wrath upon the partakers, understandably so. When my family and I were participants, we suffered the consequences. We didn't know it then, but I know it now. To be sure, God does not hold the ignorant responsible to the same degree as He does those who deliberately continue in these things, though they have been informed. I am informing you now.

As you read these words, it becomes incumbent upon you to decide something. You will have to ask yourself: "Are these things true? If so, shall I ignore the facts and continue as usual, or shall I refrain myself, in the fear of God? Am I more concerned about pleasing pastor, friends, and family, or God?" If you continue, you most certainly bring wrath. No excuses will do.

If you choose to discontinue, God will deliver you, and lead you to the next step of obedience. If you think you will remain neutral, forget it. There is no neutrality. Remaining neutral, and continuing as usual, you have decided, and your decision has not been for God, but for other gods.

I see people suffering the consequences of their ways
and not knowing it.

Your spiritual leaders will give account for these things, teaching and leading people to take part in abominations, and what's worse, in the Name of Jesus Christ. But so will you. You will not be able to stand before God, saying, "I was told it was right. My priest (pastor, bishop, or elder) taught me to do this!"

No, believe it or not, we are responsible for ourselves, and must not only put away our bad things (sins) but forsake the good things for the sake of Christ. The fifth commandment says, "Honor your father and mother." It is true that parents may have been given you of God, but when they lead and encourage you to do that which is against God, your responsibility is then firstly to God. You will have to forsake your parents, hence putting away the bad, and forsaking the good or the neutral.

And don't think you can do these evil things, yet put your connotation or meaning on them so that you may continue in them. "I know that Christmas is pagan in origin, but I celebrate Christmas with a Christian meaning to it. I honor Christ's birth in it." The Lord made it very clear that we are not to take upon ourselves the ways of the heathen. Jeremiah prophesied, "Thus says the Lord: learn not the way of the heathen..." (Jeremiah 10). I see people everywhere suffering the consequences of their ways and not knowing it. Honor God and He will honor you.

I have been asked, “If you don’t go to church, then where do you get fed?” My response is, “The Shepherd feeds me! I am one of His sheep!” I have been asked, “If I stop going to such-and-such church, where will I go? What will I do?” People seem so lost without religious activity. It is a social necessity to them.

I like social activities, too. We have all been created as social beings, and those who have withdrawn from society are in the minority, many of them because suffering certain handicaps. So where *does* one go? Where did Noah go? Where did Abraham go? Or Isaac, or Jacob, or Joseph, or Moses, or Job, or Elijah, or John the Baptist, or the disciples? The answer is: “To the Lord.” Consider this passage:

John 12:42-43 MKJV

(42) Still, however, even out of the rulers, many did believe on Him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

(43) for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not without, but within.
Repent of your sinful ways.

The choice is a matter of pleasing the flesh or pleasing God. If you wish to indulge in false worship, you will favor men and their thoughts and ways. If you will have God, you must come away from the ways and thoughts of man. As Isaiah prophesied, God speaking by him, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, says Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa 55:8,9).

A woman whom Jesus met at Jacob’s well in Samaria said to Him:

“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (John 4:20).

His reply answers the questions as to where and how we ought to worship:

John 4:21-24 MKJV

(21) Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither worship the Father in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem.

(22) You worship what you do not know, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

(23) But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.

(24) God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

The Kingdom of Heaven is not without, but within. Repent of your sinful ways. Come away from external religion, which does not profit in God's sight. Indeed, it is contrary to true religion. Turn to the Lord with all your heart; seek Him while He may be found. Seek His righteousness, forsaking your own.

Forsake the temples and organizations of men, as impressive as they might be. The more impressive they are in our sight, the more abominable they are in God's sight. As Jesus said, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination to God" (Luke 16:15). Seek out the True, Invisible Temple of God, made without hands, of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and wherein dwells the righteousness of God.

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