

The Only True God

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As we all know, the “Lord’s prayer” was never prayed by our Lord. It was a *pattern* for prayer: “After *this manner* therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name...” (**Mat:6:9**). To repeat these words over and over (instead of using them as a pattern for prayer from the heart) would be to disobey our Lord and to engage in what He strictly forbade: “vain repetition” (6:7).



Certainly this prayer is only for those who know God as their heavenly Father. It is a grievous error common to pseudo-Christianity to assume the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. The typical Unity church service, for example, includes this affirmation repeated in unison, “I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness.” Such “positive confessions” have led multitudes astray. Paul declared that we *become* “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (**Gal:3:26**).

The fact that this relationship with God as one’s Father does not come by natural birth is clear. To those who boasted of being “Abraham’s children,” Christ countered, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (**Jn:8:44**). The rebellion of Adam and Eve, by which they became the followers of Satan as “the god of this world” (**2 Cor:4:4**), made the devil the patriarch of mankind.

That is why Christ told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (**Jn:3:3**). This spiritual birth is an absolute requirement, allowing no exceptions. No one will be in heaven who has not been “born again,” both “of water and of the Spirit” (v. 5).

There is a common abuse of this prayer among American athletic teams. A high percentage of teams across America (especially in high school football) pray the “Lord’s Prayer” either before or after games. Attitudes of participants vary from skepticism, to suppressed ridicule, to a shrugging acquiescence to something that might now and then bring “good luck.” This American tradition is an abomination to God.

Phil Jackson, one of the most successful coaches in NBA history, turned from the Pentecostalism in which his co-pastor parents raised him to Zen Buddhism and the occultism of Lakota Indian “spirituality.” Yet he still repeats the “Lord’s prayer” and has for years encouraged his teams to do so without knowing God or Christ. This unbiblical practice has been one of Satan’s major tools of deception.

Confusion reigns over what it means to be “born again.” The teaching is rather common that Christ’s words, “of water,” refer to the protective amniotic water sac that breaks in natural birth, while “of the Spirit” refers to being born of the Spirit of God at the second birth. The latter is true, but the former is false.

Everyone enters via the amniotic fluid into the human race. “Born of water” must mean more than that. It would be redundant to say that in order to be born again one must have already been born once. Furthermore, that doctrine would place an unbiblical restriction upon entrance into heaven! Such a proposition would mean that there would be no salvation for anyone who had not experienced natural birth. Thus no fetus that died by whatever means before coming to full-term delivery could be considered a real person eligible for the second birth and heaven, thus allowing abortion at any stage.

The biblical teaching of the “new birth” (becoming a “born-again” Christian) has caused much controversy. Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and others believe this occurs at baptism. As previously noted (see TBC 8/04), every Lutheran church follows Luther’s *Small Catechism*. At baptism (usually as a baby), one receives a certificate stating, “In baptism full salvation has been given unto you; God has become your Father, and you have become His child through this act....”

In fact, the Bible teaches that baptism (like the “Lord’s prayer”) is only for those who have believed the gospel. Baptism testifies to the faith by which one was born again. Otherwise it is meaningless. Infant baptism defies Scripture, denies the gospel, and is a major net by which “the god of this world” gathers multitudes into his kingdom, providing them with false assurance that prevents them from seeing their need to receive Christ as Savior and Lord.

How could a church defend baptizing an infant that cannot understand or believe? It was necessary to claim some efficacy, as the Catechisms say, “in this act of baptism....” This occult lie of spiritual power innate in and released by baptism, burning a candle or incense, doing rituals, priestly hand motions, voice tones, etc., has been for thousands of years the essence of ritual magic, witchcraft, paganism, etc., which anthropologists now call shamanism.

This pernicious delusion is also known as sacramentalism—a heresy so vital to Roman Catholicism that it has its own Latin term: *ex opere operato* (i.e., “in the act itself”). To deny this doctrine concerning any official sacrament is to deny

Roman Catholicism, for which the penalty is automatic excommunication (tantamount to being sentenced to hell). Here it is from *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*: Seventh Session...third day of March, 1547, Decree Concerning the Sacraments...Canons on the Sacraments in General [still in full force]:

Can. 4. If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation but...that without them or without the desire of them men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification...let him be anathema.

Can. 8. If anyone says that by the sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred *ex opere operato*, but that faith alone in the divine promise is sufficient to obtain grace, let him be anathema.

The grievous heresy of sacramentalism continues to seduce in various forms most “Reformed” churches. R.C. Sproul, for example, justifies infant baptism by likening it to circumcision: “The scriptural case for baptizing believers’ infants rests on the parallel between [O.T.] circumcision and N.T. baptism as signs and seals of the covenant of grace....The Old Testament precedent requires it” (*Geneva Study Bible*, p. 38).

The Ethiopian to whom Philip had just preached Christ from Isaiah 53 (**Acts:8:29–35**) asked, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest” (8:36,37). Philip then baptized him—not by sprinkling or pouring water over him but, obviously, by immersion, for “they went down both into the water” (v. 38). Baptism publicly declares one’s faith, identifying the believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. One does not sprinkle dirt on a corpse. One buries it.

If “born of water” does not refer to amniotic fluid or to baptism, what could it mean? The second birth is by the Spirit of God and by water (**Jn:3:5**), symbolic of the Word of God, as in “the washing of water by the word” (**Eph:5:26**), and “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (**Jn:15:3**). When we believe the gospel, we are regenerated and washed clean. “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Peter declares: “Being born again...by the word of God...which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pt 1:23–25).

Having been brought into the family of God, we address Him as “Father” in prayer. In His high priestly prayer (the true “Lord’s prayer” that Christ prayed), He declared, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (**Jn:17:3**). So the new birth involves knowing *the only true God*—not being “born again” through baptism, especially of infants.

There are millions of so-called gods and numerous prayers to each of them in the various religions they represent. The Bible condemns every one in unmistakable terms:

For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens....Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name....[F]ear before him, all the earth....[H]e cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth. (**Ps:96:5–13**)

Such language is ridiculed by the “New Atheists” such as Richard Dawkins, who says the atheists must “spread the good news. Evangelism [to convert the world to atheism] is a moral imperative.” Although the Bible clearly distinguishes Christianity from all religions and separates their leaders (Buddha, Muhammad, et al.) from Christ, who is unique, atheists make no such distinction. Consequently, most of their arguments are irrelevant.

The Bible denounces *all* religions as instruments of Satan to keep mankind in darkness, shut off from the light of the gospel by which alone one can be saved, for “the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not” (**2 Cor:4:4**).

Atheism is just one of the world’s religions, and Satanic blindness is reflected in its arguments against God and Christianity. A recent secular article about the New Atheists was titled, “The Church of the Non-Believers.” And *it is* a church—a church to which everyone must belong, if atheists get their way. In their religious fervor to destroy “religious faith” and to convert the entire world to their religion, they are blind to the true faith that motivates biblical Christians.

Dawkins says, “Faith is one of the world’s great evils....[It is] belief that isn’t based on evidence [and] the principal vice of any religion.” Francis Collins, however (in charge of the Human Genome Project involving 2,300 scientists), who turned from unbelief to faith in Christ, says that Dawkins’ definition of faith “certainly does not describe the faith of most serious believers of history nor of most of those of my personal acquaintance.”

Many famous scientists, Nobel Prize winners, and some of the greatest historians and legal experts have turned from atheism to faith in the resurrected Christ—not by mystical or emotional experience but from verifiable evidence. The early pioneers in science, like Kepler, claimed that it was precisely their conviction that there was a creator that inspired their science to ever-greater heights.

“Religion is not only wrong; it’s evil,” atheists fume, unaware that biblical Christianity is not a religion but a relationship

with God through Jesus Christ. Leading atheists harangue against religion, blind to the fact that the Bible is not about religion. In its more than 1,000 pages, the phrase “religious faith” is not found *once*, the word “religion” appears only five times, and the word “religious” twice. All but two of these seven references are critical of “religion.” Furthermore, in these few times that it mentions religion, the Bible never means what atheists foolishly denounce.

In their war against God, Dawkins and his fellow crusaders dishonestly equate Christian “fundamentalists” with murderous Muslims. In fact, atheists are themselves fundamentalists, seeking to impose their warped interpretation of the fundamentals of science on the world.

Nor can the New Atheists be ignorant of the fact that the fundamentals of Islam (according to the Qur’an, Hadith, the dogmas and example of Muhammad, and 1,300 years of history) teach that Islam must be forced upon the entire world by murdering all who refuse to submit to Allah. Christ taught and lived entirely otherwise. Yet the New Atheists persist in equating Islam and Christianity simply because each is considered to be a “faith.” Such irresponsible accusations permeate their arguments.

Yes, some who have called themselves Christians (Roman Catholic popes, Eastern Orthodox leaders, crusaders, numerous televangelists, et al.) have been guilty of all manner of evil. In the process, they have violated the teachings and example of Christ. But Muslim terrorists follow both Islamic teaching and the example of Muhammad and his successors who tortured and slaughtered millions from France to China for 13 centuries. Today’s terrorism is just a hint of what Islam would continue to do if it could.

The fundamentals of true Christianity promote love, freedom of choice, and forgiveness, not hatred and violence. The latter are the trademark of fundamentalist Islam. To equate the fundamentals of Islam with those of Christianity is reprehensible.

Atheists also perversely equate Christianity with the fanaticism and violence of the Crusades and Inquisition. Yet the crusaders were not biblical Christians; they violated everything Christ taught and slaughtered His brethren, the Jews, everywhere they went. It is gross dishonesty to attribute the crusaders’ misconduct to biblical Christianity.

From the days of Christ, multitudes of Christians have never given allegiance to Rome but to the Bible and to Christ alone. They were martyred by the millions by the church of Rome for centuries before the birth of Luther. From the 16th-century Reformation onward, millions of Roman Catholics embraced faith in the Bible and Christ alone and were martyred by the hundreds of thousands by the popes and their armies. To fail to distinguish between martyrs and their murderers is unconscionable.

The New Atheists, led by Dawkins, call themselves “the brights” and look upon theists as dimwits. Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg recently said, “The world needs to wake up from the long nightmare of religion....Anything we scientists can do to weaken the hold of religion should be done, and may in fact be our greatest contribution to civilization.” Richard Dawkins says: “I am utterly fed up with the respect we have been brainwashed into bestowing on religion.” *Religion?* As we’ve seen, atheists are tilting at windmills.

In their fervor to convert the world to their religion, atheists betray their complete ignorance of biblical Christianity. The Bible is not a religious book and does not promote “religion.”

Many Christians try to be “scientific” by adopting theistic evolution as *compatible* with Christianity. Their compromise does not impress atheists. Unashamedly, Dawkins declares that “evolution must lead to atheism” and “the atheist movement has...a moral imperative...to aggressively spread the good news....”

Dawkins declares, “Should [theists] be free to impose their beliefs on their children? Is there something to be said for society stepping in?” This is dangerous totalitarian talk that makes one fear for parents and children alike.

James Perloff put it well: “But remember; ‘The princess kissed the frog, and he turned into a handsome prince.’ We call that a fairy tale. Evolution says frogs turn into princes, and we call it science....Is that science? Or is it, like the fraud of Piltdown Man, the forgeries of Haeckel’s embryos, the misrepresentations of *Inherit the Wind*, and the coercions of the Supreme Court, merely part of a long effort to deny God?”

Atheists who end up in hell cannot blame the God they hate for excluding them from heaven. We need to rescue as many as we can from atheism’s lies. **TBC**

Quotable
Question: Romans 12:18 tells us, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." Many Muslims want peace. Can't we accept the olive branch they offer?
Question: Are you forbidding Gentile believers to celebrate Jesus, our Passover Lamb, in a Passover setting?

Question: I love your newsletter and radio program but I have to take exception to your statement that for Christ to taste "death for every man would have to include the experience of the 'lake of fire' [which is] the second death."

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