

## **Responding to the New Atheists' attacks on the God of the Old Testament-33: The Mosaic Law-6 The Superiority of the Mosaic Law Over Pagan Religions-1**

For the next few articles, I wish to illustrate the superiority of the Mosaic law—which was less than God's ideal and only provisional until the coming of Christ and the New Testament Scriptures—over pagan systems of religion, economics, work, ethics, life and death issues, law, and government. I will even give a distinct advantage to the pagans by choosing what is considered as the most civilized pagan nation of the ancient world, namely the Roman Empire. *The World Book Encyclopedia*, commonly used by high school students, informs its readers that “The principles that bound the Roman Empire together—justice, tolerance, and a desire for peace—influenced countless generations.” But this is only part of the story.

The bottom line regarding all pagan religions is that they are *all* saturated with stupidity as the people go about their rituals without reality/Truth. However, this is the way of all negative volition, even in Christianity. Christians who do not understand God and His Word and thus live for kosmos diabolicus are just plain stupid, stupid, stupid! Yes, there are plenty of other terms like reversionism and losers, but the one thing ignorant, doctrineless Christians share with pagan religions is ignorance of the true nature of God. What makes these Christians even stupider is that they actually have the Word of God, which reveals the Maker. It is one thing not to have revelation of God and thus necessarily become an idol maker, it is another to have Bible doctrine and not avail oneself of its wisdom. If pagans traffic in stupidity because they do not have a book from God, and if Christians traffic in stupidity about God because they do not study His Word, what does that make doctrinal believers who have Bible doctrine, yet choose to ignore it and Him while they build their kingdoms? The stupidest? Whatever one thinks about the Mosaic Law, it was a system of the Book that was designed to *teach* and *illuminate* about morality, the nature of God, and the need for the Coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, to solve the sin problem.

Greece and Rome were drenched in mind-numbing, anti-intellectual human religion. On Paul's arrival in Athens he found a city “given over to idols,” Acts 17:6. Consider the superiority of the Mosaic Law written as a personal covenant between a personal God and His people to all of the religious ignorant activity that was part of everyday life in the greatest *human* empire known to man. Religious life in the Roman Empire consisted of:

1. Ghosts, apparitions, and the “evil eye” were both feared as sources of harm and sought as sources of guidance.
2. Astrology was considered a science and part of high culture.
3. Idols, images, and shrines were ubiquitous.

4. Temple prostitution was commonplace and viewed as acts of worship to god.
5. The Greek and Roman gods and goddesses were men and women fought, schemed, lied, got drunk, raped, and committed incest.
6. The Romans worshiped twelve major gods and goddesses and thousands of lesser gods, which had arisen from the animism of early Roman.
7. There were gods of war, fertility, love, harvest, travel, doors, *ad infinitum*.
8. Each god and goddess had his or her own sphere of influence, his or her department; and the devout Roman did not worship one god to the exclusion of others, but worshiped each as circumstances demanded: there were gods which watched over each period of a man's life from birth to death; gods which aided at birth and guarded the child in the cradle; gods which taught child to take his mother's milk; gods which watched over a child's wearing years, and gods which taught the child to talk.
9. Features of Roman religion included witchcraft; divination by birds, entrails; incantations; human sacrifices; curses; worship of the dead; worship of Diana, Queen of Heaven.
10. Polytheism (or more accurately, polydemonism) was the day.

Both Greek and Roman religions were very different than the Mosaic Law and Christianity. The key difference is that the pagan religions *did not emphasize knowledge, learning, understanding, and teaching. They had no sermons, no books to be studied, not body of doctrine to believe!* They were thoroughly anti-intellectual! I haven't the time or space to go into all of the problems that the saturation of anti-intellectualism has brought to Christianity and Christians. It breaks my heart! But what is more important is that it makes it more difficult for any believer to understand doctrinal and philosophical concepts like the timelessness of God or the omnipresence of God. They have no background because of the results of anti-intellectualism for the last 150 years. The Roman religious system would have totally rejected the disciplines of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, linguistics, and hermeneutics in spiritual matters. Without them one cannot understand the Mosaic Law, Christian doctrine, or the nature of God, yet many Christians have the same attitude toward spiritual matters as the animistic Romans. Is it any wonder that when the world sees the anti-intellectualism in popular Christianity that they have the same responses that we have toward the Roman religious system? The Old Testament may have had a lot of rules to educate and protect the Israelites, but it was not anti-intellectual. It was far more enlightening than the greatest human empire of the ancient world, which had over a thousand years (after the Mosaic Law) of human civilization to make improvements.

In Him,

*Pastor Don*