



Superstition

or

Faith.

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Superstition or Faith.

Topics.

- Alexander the Great.
- The creation and birth of other gods.
- Real emotions and feeling are created by other gods.
- The LORD your god.
- Belief and actions.
- Spiritual experiences.
- Faith and hope.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible speaks of other gods besides the immortal invisible Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life, yet God Himself says, "There is no God beside Him." This study sets about to explain who are these other gods are, where they get their power from and discover if they evil demonic spirit entities working for Satan as many believe or are they something else.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Alexander the Great, made the statement, all things are perceived through God or gods. There was a movie made in 1950 titled, Alexander the Great though it was a Hollywood movie in one scene it did reflect the attitude and mindset of the people at the time of Alexander. In this scene a gathering of army commanders were trying to decide if it was God's will that they go to war, they looked up and saw a bird in the sky with stick in its mouth, while they were looking the stick fell out of the bird's mouth, the army commanders took this as a sign from their god or gods that they would get the victory in battle. They were fully convinced that the god they believed in was speaking to them through this bird so they went to war, they had a full confidence and belief that God was talking to them through this bird, was this faith or superstition? What is the difference between Christian faith and Superstition? The following Scriptures show that peopled believed there were many types of gods in the world

- The LORD said: "I will pass through Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and all the gods of Egypt" (Exod. 12:12).
- God said: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3).
- Moses said: "You (Israel) shall consume all the peoples the LORD your God will give over to you. You shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods" (Deut. 7:16).
- Moses said: "For the LORD your God is God of gods" (Deut. 10:17).
- Solomon said: "The house that I (Solomon) am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods" (2 Chron. 2:5).
- David said: "There is none like you among the gods, O Lord" (Psalm 86:8).

From these verses we see that Egypt had multitudes of gods, Israel is told to have no other gods clearly implying that there are other gods. Moses, David and Solomon speak of other gods and Moses said the LORD God is

the greatest of all gods. These verses shine a spotlight on the truth that there are other gods of some sort besides the God all Christians worship. Yet God Himself says:

- I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6).
- Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any (Isaiah 44:8).
- I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me (Isaiah 45:5).
- From the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else (Isaiah 45:6).
- There is no God beside me; a just God; there is none beside me (Isaiah 45:21).

Since these verses very clearly show that there are no other Gods who are these other gods that Egypt worshipped and who Moses, David and Solomon speak of and who armies go to war for? Since there are literally hundreds of verses in the Bible that talk about other gods the remainder of this study will focus on answering the following questions:

- How do these other gods get such strong power over so many people?
- Do these other gods exist and if so, where do they live?
- Do they have any real power over people and if so how?

THE CREATION AND BIRTH OF OTHER GODS

There are no other gods existing in the universe these other gods that the Bible speaks of are a creation of the imagination and are given power over those who believe in them by their strong belief that these gods are real. The stronger the belief the stronger the power these illusionary gods will have over the mind and the emotions of the man or woman believing in them. The creation (or birth) of these other gods begin with religious teachings that give a wrong understanding of God and of sin and of evil. When these wrong spiritual teachings concerning God are embraced and believed that belief in these gods creates them in the imagination of the mind and the imagination of them produces emotions and feelings accordingly convincing those who believe in them that they are a very real entity. When in actual fact they are and imaginary illusion that is created by a strong belief in religious and spiritual teachings that have presented a false concept of God, demons, devils and of sin and evil. Nevertheless, these gods are very real to the people who believe in them, in fact so real many go to war and die for these gods.

REAL EMOTIONS AND FEELING ARE CREATED BY OTHER GODS

The reality of these gods created in the imagination by belief also creates emotions and feelings accordingly. If a person believes their illusionary god to be one of stern judgment and wrath, they will feel the emotions of fear and terror accordingly, but if they believe their illusionary god is a god of love and kindness, they will feel warm comfort.

THE FOLLOWING TWO TESTIMONIES SHOW HOW TRUE AND FALSE TEACHINGS CAN AFFECT HUMAN EMOTIONS

1. A certain religious woman had been taught God kept a score card of how many doors she knocked on and how many magazines she sold, based on her teaching God was a legalistic God, her belief produced emotional feelings of guilt, failure and fear before God because she never felt that she sold enough magazines or knocked on enough doors

to be spiritual or accepted by God. Her desire to be accepted by God was so great she would buy most of the magazines herself to get a better score card. After 20 years or so she went into a church and heard that Salvation and God's acceptance comes by God's grace through Christ, with heartfelt tears in her eyes she embraced the beauty of the Christian message and her new found belief produced emotional feelings of warmth, acceptance and joy before God.

2. Another religious woman believed God was telling her to go and stand before a congregation of about five thousand people and howl like a wolf. Within the thoughts of her mind she told God that she could not do this, but a voice in her mind said, "If you can't do this simple thing for me what can I get you to do?" She believed this voice to be God and went and howled like a wolf before the congregation. On the positive side of this story, we have to admire the woman's commitment to obey what she believed to be the voice of God at a great cost to her pride, I am sure God in His mercy will see the woman's devotion to Him (howbeit so grossly wrong).

On the negative side sadly, this woman had been taught a wrong understanding of God, His ways and His nature, her belief in what she had been taught produced a reality of her concept of God in her feelings and emotions, this wrong belief produced wrong self-talk in the mind. What she did, she did in faith, but it was faith based on a wrong concept of who God was. Without a correct understanding of the Bible and of God, people will have wrong concepts, wrong emotions and wrong feelings, misguided thoughts and behave accordingly.

THE LORD YOUR GOD

The follow verses are only a very small portion of the multitudes of verses show that the expression "The LORD your God" is a constant statement throughout the Bible:

- You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and your soul (Deut. 6:5).
- I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him (Deut. 11:13).
- The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart (Deut. 30:6).
- Moses commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways (Joshua 22:5).
- Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Listen to the words of the LORD your God" (Joshua 3:9).
- Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God (Joshua 23:11).

There are literally hundreds of other verses that use the expression, "LORD your God," which raises the question why does the Bible emphasize the fact that God is Israel's God by repeatedly saying YOUR God when Israel clearly knows God is their God, why do the Scriptures constantly say to Israel, "the LORD your God", instead of just simply saying, "the LORD God"? The reason for this is that God knows that the imagination of every man and woman has the power to create his or her own personal god to suit their particular lifestyle and passions.

The following are some examples of false personal gods:

- Laban said to Jacob you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you (Rachel) steal my gods? (Gen. 31:30).

Though these gods were worthless idols, they represented some type of god that Laban strongly believed in and therefore that belief would create superstitious power over his mind.

- When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us (Exod. 32:1).

The golden calf was only a symbol, its power was in the superstitious imagination of the mind, the power of the idol is in how it affects the mind, because what the mind believes affects the feelings and emotions and determines outward behaviour. Remember Israel had a golden Ark with cherubim's as a symbol, so to make a golden calf to worship was not such a strange thing to the people, especially since they would have seen people worshipping them during their time in bondage to Egypt. When people give their mind over to worshipping and idol and the god it represents to them, their mind is not only fully convinced that the god they are worshipping is real, but their mind is also fully surrendered to that god.

Since the human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore cannot tell the difference between an imaginary object or a real object pictured on the imagination of the mind it responds accordingly. The stronger the belief the stronger the emotions, the feelings and a person's behaviour will be affected. From these verses we see that people cannot only believe in God and still have a totally wrong concept of Him, and that they can also have just as much faith in a false god, as people who have faith in the true God. So, what makes people so convinced that the false god they believe in is actually the true god? And why do so many people have a wrong concept of God and believe so strongly in these wrong concepts of God?

To answer these questions, it helps to understand emotions and feelings. Belief will produce a reality in the feelings and emotions of the God or god's people believe in whether the God or gods they believe in are true or false. Generally, Trinitarians, Unitarians, Baptist's, Christadelphians, Pentecostal's, Catholics and Seven Day Adventist all have the same warm feelings and emotions in their relationship with God, but feeling and emotions of God's love do not guarantee that a person's belief is correct or that a person has a right understanding of God.

Moslems, Hindus and New Age Spiritualist have the same feeling and emotions of the love of the god they believe in this is why deception is so deceptive it affects human emotions and feelings. This raises another question, "Should Christians have emotional feelings toward God and from God?" Absolutely, should they trust that these good feeling and emotions are proof that they are worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and have a right understanding of His ways and His nature? Absolutely not, the only way a Christian can know that their emotions and feelings are right and proper, is by having a right understanding of the Bible.

Consider for a moment: that the Bible did not exist, how would we know whether our belief is faith or superstition, when there is nothing to compare or measure our faith against? This is why God gave Israel prophets to guide them in the right way. Sadly, the people of Israel many times made their hearts diamond hard against the word of the prophets so they could go their own corrupt way.

TWO EXAMPLES OF HUMAN EMOTIONS

- 1 At some stage everyone falls emotionally in love with different humans at various periods of time, yet they have the same emotional feelings of love with each person they feel attached to, they feel joy, excitement and a sense of newfound life and the mind is possessed and cannot stop thinking of that person does this mean that person is the right life partner for them? Absolutely not, they then have to use reason, logic, intelligence and common sense to see if they are going to be compatible together, emotional feelings are not proof something is right.

- 2 A man or woman has emotional feelings for another person's husband or wife, does that mean that is right and proper to have an affair with that husband or wife, of course not. We all have emotions and feelings, but not all emotions and feelings should be acted upon.

Many sceptics claim that God is an invention (or creation) of the mind to comfort and give hope to those who believe in God. Without the Bible how would Christians know that this is not a true statement? It is the Bible that gives Christians a solid foundation for their faith (especially the many prophecies that have been so perfectly fulfilled). Without the Bible how would Christians know that God's character is one of love?

CONSIDER FOR A MOMENT

if a negative person casts their eyes over the world and sees multitudes of good people and families and their children suffering because of sickness and natural disasters they would conclude that God, is not very loving. On the other hand, if a positive person casts their eyes over the world and sees all the beauty of creation and the multitude of courageous and self-sacrificing deeds good people make for other humans, they would conclude that God was loving and kind. Without the Bible God can be whoever people want Him to be or think Him to be and their concept of God will be determined by their individual mind and the way they view the world. If people believe God is judgmental, wrathful and angry at sin they will feel fear, guilt, anxiety and terror at the thought of Him, but if people believe God is loving, merciful and kind they will feel emotions and feelings of comfort, warmth, acceptance and love.

BELIEF AND ACTIONS

The term believe, is often used loosely today in that many say, "I believe the Lord is returning in three to five years, but their actions show they don't really believe it, because if they did they would not be putting their family under daily oppression by overstretching the budget to take out an excessive loan to buy a house or renovate the existing one. Actions show doubt or true belief, we should check our actions to see if we really believe what we say, and if we don't we should use words such as, "I hope," "I expect" or "I think," because if action does not manifest what we are saying we believe, we are deceiving ourselves and others.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Multitudes of secular men and woman around the world have wonderful spiritual experiences through various forms of meditation and by embracing certain spiritual teachings from a variety of global secular authors who do not know or teach the God Christians believe in. In the light of this truth how can Christians know and experience their God? How can they know God is with them in prayer at work and at home? The world says, "Seeing is believing" this is a true statement for most things, but true belief in God comes not through seeing, but by being absolutely confident and certain that the things you believe are true.

Knowing and experiencing God comes by faith not by sight, it is by believing that God is with us in the present moment. Belief is the power of the Christian faith, without belief there is no power. It is being mentally conscious and having the faith that God is with us in the good, the bad and even the ugly moments of life. Those who have faith in Christ cannot escape God because He loves everyone who belongs to His Son and will not let them go even in the unpleasant moments of their life. It is knowing that God will get down in the gutter with us should we find ourselves there, God will not leave us simply because we have got some mud on our linen clothing. The Christian faith, without belief is like a golden tap without water, dry and useless

The author of Hebrews wrote:

- Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible (Heb. 11:1-5).

The following is the definition of faith from Strong's Concordance: faith is yielding to the Gospel and being absolutely confident in it. It is trusting and relying on and believing in the Gospel message with inward conviction and certainty and absolute assurance based on evidence and authority. Strong's Concordance shows that though faith is an inward conviction, assurance and confidence of things not seen, it has to be based on evidence. Evidence of Christian faith is found in the following things:

- History, geography and archaeology all evidence the Bible.
- Sin in the world evidences and confirms the Bible's teaching concerning sin.
- Jesus' teachings on morality and the only way humans can live in harmony evidence the Bible.
- A person's own inward nature and their experience with God evidence the Bible.
- Prophecy past, present and future evidence the Bible.
- The tiny nation of Israel's existence and that its affairs affect the entire world evidences the Bible.

Add all these together and they prove the Bible to be a true spiritual book

THE MEANING OF HOPE

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Hope is to expect and anticipate with confidence it is trusting and relying on something (usually with pleasure) in the Christians case the Gospel and the return of Christ. The things hoped for are not as extensive as the things unseen this is because the things hoped for refer to things future and joyful to us, whereas the things unseen embrace the future the past and the present and can refer to things good or bad. When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie (Rom. 8:24).

- The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2).

The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

FAITH AND HOPE

The difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will be raised to eternal life. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is, faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God, thus faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of

our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in. Faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith. A person who is full of faith is a person who has examined the evidence and is fully convinced that what they have examined proves itself to be true. The pillars of faith are conviction, assurance and confidence without these three there is no faith. The following verses show that Christian hope will not leave anyone feeling ashamed (meaning foolish) that they have believed:

- Hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom. 5:5).
- As it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (Rom. 9:33).

God has given us all a brain and intelligence, reasoning, logic and common sense to seek out what is right and what is not, there is no Scriptures in the Bible that say, "Seek God with your emotions and feelings," but there are Scriptures that say:

- Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Should Christians have emotions and feelings toward God of course, but they need to be sure they are based on a correct understanding of who God is. In theory God is the same to all who have a correct understanding of the Bible. God is the immortal, invisible omnipresent, Almighty sovereign Holy God the creator of all things and the source of all life and the Lord Jesus Christ is His most beloved Son and Saviour of the world. But God is different to each individual in relationship to some He is formal, to others legalistic, stern or liberal, while others view Him as kind, merciful and Graceful.

In relationship God will be different to each individual and these differences will vary according to their own personal perceptions of Him. Every Christian should believe that God is with them, next to them, in their room (especially when praying) or wherever they are in life, if we do not believe God is with us we are robbing ourselves of His and Christ's fellowship, we miss a beautiful spiritual relationship with God if we pray without believing God is with us and intent on hearing us, but this is a constant battle of the mind because when we feel we have not done certain things or have done something we perhaps should not do or we are in one of those ugly moments of life we feel God is not with us.

When Christians are confident that their lives are in God's control, they have peace, but the instant doubt comes in and they think they are out of God's control, fear and anxiety take over. This is because belief produces the presence and peace of God. The Spirit of God moves on belief that is why belief is the power to a relationship with God, the greater and stronger the belief the more real God will be in a person's emotions and their feelings.

The following examples show how a wrong belief can affect a person's emotions and behaviour:

- One religious organization won't give blood transfusion to dying children because of a wrong understanding of the words, "No person among you shall eat blood." (Lev. 17:12).
- People who have a grossly wrong belief in Satan and demons not only sense an outward presence of fear, darkness and heaviness, but often have mental breakdowns.
- People who believe that wind chimes are instruments to keep demons away often experience fear when they hear them chime.
- People who are focused on Satan and demons, more than they are on God are fearful of demons possessing them.

- There are religious people who because of a wrong understanding of the words, "Defend the faith" go to war and kill to protect what they think is true.
- Others who have a misunderstanding of the words, "Be not of this world" will separate themselves from the world entirely.

The following verse shows that the people in the land of Canaan believed in gods that wanted them to burn their children:

- You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods (Deut. 12:31).

Wrong belief confuses and messes up a person's mind and results in wrong behaviour this is why is so important to have a correct understanding of the Bible and a correct understanding of God, because it results in a peaceful mind and loving others and doing-good.

SUMMARY OF SUPERSTITION OR FAITH

The other gods that are spoken of in the Bible are illusionary gods created in the imagination of the mind by belief. They gain power and control over people through strong belief and through religious and spiritual teachings that gives a wrong concept and understanding of God. Though these gods do not exist in reality they are very real entity to the people who believe in them. This is because these illusionary entities dwell in the mind of those who believe in them and seem so real that they affect a person's behaviour in such a way that some who strongly believe in them do crazy things, go mad, commit suicide and even murder. If the belief in these gods is strong enough, they can seem to appear as very real creatures outside of themselves.

Joshua said to Israel:

- Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24:15).

Today this verse could read:

- If it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD of the Bible and Israel, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your feelings served in many churches today or the gods of your own imagination that can dwell in any mind that creates them or the LORD the Scriptures proclaim (Joshua 24:15).

The words of Paul could be stated in the following way:

- For although there may be so-called gods in the mind or imagination of men as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" created this way. Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. However, not all possess this knowledge (1 Cor. 8:5-7).

Choose which God you will serve.