

THREAT OF HEATHENISM (#2)

Request: “How do you witness to people who have made up their own god and religion and salvation?”

Last week, we studied personal heathenism as defined by Paul in 2 Thess.1:8 and Webster’s Ninth Collegiate Dictionary.

“Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thess.1:8)

“An unconverted member of a people or nation that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible.”

This week we will study the Threat of Heathenism against human society and the plan of God.

**We will study three important segments of human society related to the plan of God:
Heaven and the earth; Civilization; and National culture.**

1. We will begin by looking at a bigger picture of the threat of heathenism. We will study the threat of heathenism against the Heaven and earth and the plan of God.

This is brought out in our lesson text (3:4-5, 7, 10, 12-13). “And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’” (Gen.14:19-20) [Melchizedek to Abraham]

There are four stages to the heaven and earth in biblical history.

- Original heaven and earth (Gen.1:1) (2 Pet.3:4-5)
- Tohu waw bohu heaven and earth (Gen.1:2) (Isa.45:18)
- Present heaven and earth (Gen.1:3-31) (2 Pet.3:6-7)
- New heaven and earth (2 Pet.3:10-13) (Rev.21:1)

“Heaven and earth will pass away, **but My words** shall not pass away.” (Matt.24:35)

“That at the name of Jesus **every knee** should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.” (Phil.2:10)

2. Heathenism threatens the civilizations of the world by attempting to create godless, anti-Christ, but religious societies.

A classic example of this doctrinal principle would be the contrast between Cain (evil) and Able (righteous) of Gen.4 (1 John 3:10-13).

Paul made mention of this doctrinal point at Mars Hill (Acts 17:16, 19-29). “The God, who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.” (Acts 17:24)

There are three stages to fallen human civilization in the plan of God.

- **Antediluvian civilization** (Gen.6:5-9; 8:21-22; 2 Pet.2:4-5, 9; 1 Pet.3:19-20).
 - It occurred from fall of Adam until Noahic flood.
 - It was destroyed by the Noahic flood (2 Pet.3:6).
 - It was a civilization of families (Gen.5 and 11).
- § **Post-Diluvian civilization** is also called the **present civilization** (2 Pet.3:7-12; Matt.24:36-39; 25:31-33).
 - It occurs from Noahic flood until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - It is civilizations and evangelism of nations (Gen.10-11) [Tower of Babel incident] (Matt.24:14; 28:18-20).
 - This is the period of the great apostasy and the man of lawlessness (2 Thess.2:1-12)
“Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.” (2:4; Isa.14:12-14)
- **Millennium civilization** is part of the Second Coming of Jesus where He reigns 1000 years as King of Kings (Isa.9:6-7; 11:6-12; Luke 1:32-33).
 - This is the only period of human history of fallen man when Satan will be unable to fight against the plan of God (Rev.20:1-3).
 - It will be the only period when heathenism is **not** an issue until Satan is released towards the end of it (Rev.20:7-10).
 - This will bring the complete renovation of the original elements of the heaven and earth “will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!” (2 Pet.3:7, 10-12).
 - It will produce the New Heaven and Earth (2 Pet.3:13; Rev.21:1).
“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought **you** to be in holy conduct and godliness.” (2 Pet.3:11)

3. Heathenism threatens the culture of a nation.

“And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth.” (Rev.20:7-8)

Satan’s agenda is to push:

§ Worldliness	[knowledge without the Bible]	(1 Cor.2:12-16; 3:18-20),
§ Ungodliness	[life without God]	(Rom.1:18-23),
§ anti-Christ	[salvation without Christ]	(2 Thess.1:8-9),
§ but religious	[with all forms of god of human imagination]	(Acts 17:16-34).

“And with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, **because** they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.” (2 Thess.2:10)

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us **to deny** ungodliness and worldly desires **and to live** sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” (Titus 2:11-12; 1 John 2:2)

Christians are ambassadors of the gospel not legislators of law for change in the culture (2 Cor.5:17-21) [regeneration, reconciliation, righteousness]. “Therefore if (1cc) [and it’s true] any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things passed away; behold, new things have come. All these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Cor.5:17-18)

“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor.10:4-5) “My kingdom is not of this world. If (2cc) [and it’s NOT true] My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” (John 18:36) [Jesus to Pilate]