

To Be, Or Not To Be, Like Everyone Else?

Compromise & Syncretism

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In an attempt to remain relevant and attractive in a changing world many Christians tend to reflect the patterns of society at large without even realizing it. The “bandwagon” approach may seem like a safe option, but the results are that it makes it easier to be enticed by the world and drawn away by one’s own desires.

More often than not, most people take what seems like the easy route and just go with the flow of things. Most people, within mainstream Christianity and the world as a whole, do not like to stand out and are terrified at the fact of making waves by standing firm for the truth

Christians must face the reality of being *in* the world but not being *of* the world and it is truly challenging. Looking to Jesus Christ’s example, we find that He was not like everyone else. God’s Holy Spirit was given without limit to Him and He was given a full measure of it.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

Measure, literally or figuratively, implies a limited portion or by degree. So according to this, it says that the Holy Spirit was given completely.

John 3:35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. [into His area of responsibility]

Now if God’s Holy Spirit dwells in every true Christian, then how much have we received?

Ephesians 4:7-8 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. [So we see a comparison there. God gives us grace to the limitless degree that He does Christ.] Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.”

Why does God give us spiritual gifts? There are many reasons, but let us continue on here in verse 12

Ephesians 4:12-14 . . . for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

So here we are told not to allow ourselves to be deceived by the world, we are to guard against being deceived and enticed by secular desires and pleasures that titillate our senses. We have the spiritual power, a powerful amount, by way of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to stand firm in guarding our minds without compromise.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines “compromise” in this way: “a way of reaching an agreement in which each person or group gives up something that was wanted in order to end an argument or dispute; something that combines the qualities of two different things; a change that makes something worse and that is not done for a good reason.”

Have you ever compromised about something that you thought was just a little thing, something that you considered inconsequential? Have you compromised in more important matters, have you compromised a belief only to realize that what you thought was a conviction was really a preference? Have you ever let your spiritual standards slip? I am sure that every one of us can say that, at one time or another, that has happened in our lives. Those things do happen.

Nothing erodes convictions and standards faster than compromise! Humans are skilled in this area and this skill runs the gambit of humanity.

Even Solomon, known and extolled for his wisdom, fell victim to compromise and it severely tarnished his reputation and caused him to syncretize religion in ancient Israel. If we compromise our obedience to God, we also expose our reputation to suspicion or disrepute, especially with God Himself.

God appeared to Solomon on at least two occasions, found in I Kings 3:5-14 and I Kings 9:2-9. Both times He offered Him tremendous blessings. Nehemiah 13:26 records that Solomon was beloved of his God for a good part of his life, but sadly sometime later “the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel.”

So even Solomon, with all the wisdom that he had, still compromised. All indications are that Solomon compromised with God’s way of life because of expediency. He decided to give into his wives’ idolatrous practices for personal and political peace, or advantage. That is what compromise is, a weakening or giving up of our principles or ideals for reasons of expediency.

I want to take a look at a couple of verses here in a few different versions to compare some different terminology.

I Corinthians 6:12 (NKJV) All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I Corinthians 6:12 (KJV) All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I Corinthians 6:12 (AMP) Everything is permissible for me, but not all things are beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything [and brought under its power, allowing it to control me].

Paul repeats this but changes the last phrase here in verse 23 of I Corinthians 10.

I Corinthians 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.

The phrase “all things have become lawful for me” had apparently become a slogan to cloak the immorality of some living in Corinth. The statement was true, but it required qualification, and so Paul qualified liberty with the principle of love, applied to both neighbor and self.

Liberty which was not beneficial but detrimental to someone else, was not loving and must be avoided. So liberty which became slavery, was not love, but hatred of self because it masters us.

In the case of Solomon, expediency is doing or considering what is of selfish use or advantage rather than what is right or just. Expediency is usually based in self interest therefore it is something that is not helpful.

Although God had given Solomon wisdom, far above any person before him or since except Jesus Christ, he still allowed himself to reject God’s commands by not using the wisdom at his disposal. Wisdom is the right application of right knowledge and compromise erodes it very quickly.

Unlike Solomon we cannot compromise the wisdom God has give us by His spiritual revelation if we are to, as it tells us in Hebrews 3:

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.

So compromise can steal away our eternal life if we are not careful. Compromise is a very serious spiritual matter!

Solomon’s example teaches us a lesson about how dangerous it is to compromise with God’s law, particularly in those areas we view as “small and unimportant.” His apostasy late in life shows how seemingly inconsequential compromises can lead to greater sins and the difficulty of repentance.

The Bible gives no indication that Solomon repented before he died, and we can see then that the more we compromise, the harder it is to return to the faith once delivered and to repent.

Any king of Israel was prohibited by God from doing three things: 1) he may not acquire a large number of horses, 2) he may not marry many wives, and 3) he may not acquire much silver and gold.

Deuteronomy 17:14-17 “When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’ Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.”

God blessed King Solomon with wisdom and he certainly knew of those restrictions, so he had absolutely no excuse for what he did when he compromised.

As the children of Israel stood poised to cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land, Moses accurately predicted that Israel would eventually reject God’ divine leadership, preferring a human

king like the other nations. Israel did this about 350 years after Moses' prediction, in the time of Samuel the prophet.

I Samuel 8:1-7 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."

God knew that the people would take this route and so He put down these guidelines, three and one-half centuries earlier of what a physical king of Israel should do. All of Israel had read this and they knew what it said as well.

God instructs Israel how to make the best of this future mistake by giving restrictions a godly king must follow. Now let us compare them to the life of Solomon to see how well he followed these rules. The first restriction found says:

Deuteronomy 17:16 "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'

Given the size and scope of the empire he inherited from his father David, Solomon no doubt needed means for transport and trade. Beyond this, horses were prime war material in those days, particularly for pulling chariots. So multiplying horses can indicate territorial aggression and a war-like spirit. Most importantly it can show a lack of faith in God and too great a faith in human armies.

I Kings 10:26-28 say that Solomon had thousands of horses imported from Egypt and verse 29 reveals further proof of his departure from these royal restrictions. He also imported chariots and sold horses and chariots to other nations. What does this remind you of in our day today?

What surfaces here is nothing more than a 10th century BC arms race. Solomon armed the Hittites and Syria, providing them with the means to attack Israel and Judah in later years. In so doing, Solomon violated one of the smaller precepts of God's law first given to Israel 350 years earlier.

In the second restriction found in verse 17, God's instruction through Moses again leaves little room for interpretation or doubt. Israel's leader was not to multiply wives to himself. Solomon may have subconsciously reasoned, "If importing horses from Egypt brought no immediate consequences, what is the harm of taking a second wife?" To have as many wives as he had, he must have been compromising on a daily basis. Each new wife confirmed his decision to violate God's law and by the end of his reign, he had 700 wives, not to mention an additional 300 concubines or mistresses.

God's prohibition on royal bigamy was a means of protecting the king from having his heart turned away from his God. Solomon failed to heed this wise principle and compounded the problem further by marrying many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites,

Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you!”

In Deuteronomy 7:3-4, Moses predicts the deadly results of marrying non-Israelite women. Such wives would lead to their husbands to serving other gods. Solomon disregarded these warnings.

I Kings 11:4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

From a minor infraction of importing horses from Egypt, he eventually condoned, or at least was an accessory to, the sins of idolatry and murder, sins he would not have contemplated seriously at the beginning of his reign.

Solomon not only went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, he also built a high place to Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon, whose rituals involved the horrible act of child sacrifice by fire. That is how far this compromise syncretized the entire religion of Israel!

Archaeologists have found skeletal remains of infants at three sites where this brutal human sacrifice occurred. These Solomonic high places for Chemosh and Molech stood for three centuries before Josiah finally destroyed them.

As a result of Solomon's perverted disobedience, several of his corrupt successors to the throne even caused their own children to pass through the fire. How degenerate can someone be to sacrifice their own child as a burnt offering to Satan's idolatrous creations! Relating this to today, how many women who have been associated with the church of God, at one time, but have fallen away and have had abortions?

The third restriction found in Deuteronomy 17:17 involved the ban on accumulating gold and silver for himself. After his prodigious wisdom, Solomon is best known for his colossal personal wealth. While riches are not evil in themselves, God admonishes the Israelites kings not to greatly multiply silver and gold for themselves. Beyond the greed factor, God gave this warning, not because He wants His rulers to be poor, but because of the affect amassing wealth has on the general populace. When a king gathers all of the nation's wealth to himself, the subjects experience acute financial oppression.

I Kings 10 describes Solomon's nearly unbelievable wealth in detail. He was so wealthy that he surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches.

I Kings 10:14-20 The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides that from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country. And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred shields of hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests.

Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom. All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

I Kings 14:27 Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house.

He even set a hefty fee for anyone who wanted to hear his wisdom! What nerve he had! His wisdom was a gift from God, and he exploited that just to make a profit.

Obviously much of his wealth came to him from trade and as gifts, like that from the queen of Sheba. Obviously God blessed him and blessed the nation of Israel, however he took advantage of his people to garner a great deal of wealth in the form of high taxes and using resident aliens as forced labor on public works projects.

Now after Solomon died, people sent emissaries to his son Rehoboam, to request a lightening of their work and tax burdens. But he unwisely rebuffed them, causing Israel's rebellion under Jeroboam. From the biblical perspective, amassing wealth like this is a terrible abuse of power and the people suffered for it.

Solomon had no excuses; he was fully aware of God's instructions. Deuteronomy 17:18-19 shows that Israel's kings were to read all of the book of the law, that is Deuteronomy, write it out by hand, keep it with them and read it continually. So we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Solomon knew these things, but he compromised his way out and away from God's truth.

Solomon knew it was wrong to import horses from Egypt, take many wives, and enrich himself, but apparently he considered these infractions too minor and too small to limit him from such action.

How is it possible that the great King Solomon stumbled over the three restrictions that God placed over kings? An unexpected sequence of facts provides us with a clue as to how this happened.

I Kings 3:1 Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall all around Jerusalem.

So basically we are told here that Solomon became the son-in-law to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Later he,

I Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

Should not have chapter 3 rather begun with the information that Solomon loved the Lord? Instead it first tells us of his entanglement with the daughter of a nation that enslaved Israel and which Israel is repeatedly admonished to spurn and avoid.

It is even worse than we suspected. While building his palace he naturally would have built quarters for all of his wives. It is an ominous sign that he singled out Pharaoh's daughter by building a special accommodation for her. Now let us go forward a few chapters to I Kings 7.

I Kings 7:8 And the house where he dwelt had another court inside the hall, of like workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken as wife.

Now while we are told very little about Solomon's many other wives, this we know:

I Kings 9:24 But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

She had a separate house or palace altogether. Notice that she was never named, instead she is only referred to as "Pharaoh's daughter." This is yet another sinister suggestion that she remained more deeply connected to Pharaoh than to her husband and there is evidence that confirms just that in I Kings 9.

I Kings 9:16 (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.)

So we see how the Pharaoh is viewing Solomon's kingship. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, conquered Gezer and gave it as a gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. Pharaoh did not gift Gezer to his son-in-law, but to his daughter. Clearly Egypt and its leader had a channel of communication right into the heart of Israel's governmental administration. Equally clear is that Solomon's connection to his Egyptian wife was not personal and romantic, rather it was philosophical and political.

Solomon was hoping to build a godly empire, he planned an entire God-centered nation, sculpted to a biblical version and governed by godly principals emanating from a grand temple in Jerusalem. At that time in history, approximately the mid-10th century BC, Egypt provided the closest model of a large empire, and he was closely allied with it.

Instead of envisioning something entirely new and fresh, Solomon was seduced into trying to redesign the Egyptian civic and royal model into his godly society. Hence the sinister presence of Egypt in Solomon's administration in the form of his wife, Pharaoh's daughter. Not surprisingly his kingdom was doomed!

Solomon fell victim to the same temptation that the rest of us so often face, to the compromise in what we think are small concerns or "gray areas." The danger in such thinking is that small compromises weaken character and over time lead to major sins. Just as we can grow in character, little by little, so we can backslide in the same manner.

Solomon's experience is a warning of what will befall us if we follow his example of compromise. His series of compromises gradually, but inexorably, distorted his understanding of God and His ways. The psalmist of Psalm 111 writes:

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

If we slacken in our resolve to keep all of God's commandments, even those we might deem as less important, we will gradually lose our God-given understanding of His way to eternal life.

King Solomon may not have understood how far reaching his "little sins" would be, but by his royal sanction to the worship of pagan deities, Solomon set a precedent that was followed by most of Israel's and Judah's kings after him.

His example was retained by the Ten Tribes of Israel in Samaria, and in their subsequent wanderings. His religious influence still pervades the thinking of the monarchy of the line of David to this present day. Solomon, having learned the hard way, writes,

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Satan begins making his inroads in our lives when he influences us to compromise on God's law and follow our own way. Once we compromise the process has begun and its ultimate end is death.

James 1:14-16 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

James is not talking to the world here. He is talking to us in the church, telling us how we are pulled away from obedience to God—by our own desires!

The time to stop the process is in the beginning when the situation and the pulls are still small and simple. It is the little compromises, the ones that we think are so meaningless that grow into full blown sin and apostasy. Nip it in the bud and the enduring consequence of compromise will never have a chance to bloom.

Compromise in religion tends to lead to the syncretizing of biblical doctrines. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, syncretism is "the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought."

The first use of the word syncretism in English was in AD 1618. It derives from the modern Latin *syncretismus*, drawing on the Greek word *synkretismos* which means "Cretan federation." The Greek word occurs in Plutarch's first century essay on "fraternal love in his moralia," where he writes, "and that is their so called syncretism." He sites the example of the Cretans, as immoral as they were, who compromised and reconciled their differences and came together in alliance when faced with external dangers.

We know that the apostle Paul was very familiar with this belief. It was one that all of society at the time knew of. Paul mentions some of the dangers to Titus at about the same time Plutarch does.

Titus 1:10-14 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision [that is within the church], whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

To be a Cretan became synonymous with being a liar. In the same way, to be a Corinthian became synonymous with living an immoral life. In fact, the people in Paul’s day invented a new term out of the name Cretan that meant “to lie, to speak like a Cretan.”

Their reputation for falsehood seems to have risen from some deeper cause than this and to have it applied to their general moral character. They were only more well known in what was common among the ancient pagans in what was universal among the world now. Paul had nothing good to say about these false teachers. They would not submit to God’s Word or to the authority of God’s servant, because they were rebellious. “Beware of teachers who will not put themselves under authority.” They were vain talkers, what they said impressed people, but it had no content or substance and when boiled down, it was just nothing but hot air. They excelled in talking, not in doing. They could hypocritically tell others what they should do, but they did not do it themselves.

Apparently they talked incessantly and were horrible listeners. The great tragedy was that they deceived people by their bad advice and false teachings. They claimed to be teaching truth, but they were peddlers of error, because they themselves were deceived by Satan and taught things that they should not teach. They were carnal and worldly while pretending to be spiritually wise!

Paul had nothing good to say about them. Instead of living for the abundant blessings of the spiritual life, they lived for their own desires. They lived it up at the expense of their followers and true to human nature, their followers often loved it. This led to the religious syncretizing of their beliefs into other distorted forms.

What do we see happening in mainstream Christianity today? Religions, called Christianity, that are being made up as we go along year after year and we do not even recognize them as being Christian. The only thing they claim is that Jesus Christ lived, everything else has been syncretized. That is the extreme example of what I am talking about today.

In a sense, religious syncretism is a specific type of compromise in which it combines different forms of religious belief or practice, and it requires reaching an agreement in which each side of the belief gives up something that was wanted, or adds something that was not wanted in order to end a difference of opinion or to be accepted by the other side.

Religious syncretism is a combination of truth with error in a way that seems acceptable to the majority and the result is confusion. In other words, religious syncretism exhibits the blending of two or more religious belief systems into a “new system,” or a the incorporation of the distorted views into a religious tradition of beliefs from unrelated traditions. The Catholic Church is infamous for such syncretism since its inception back around the 2nd to 4th centuries.

Now this can occur for many reasons. It happens commonly in areas where multiple religious traditions exist in proximity and function actively in a culture, or when a culture is conquered and the

conquered bring their religious beliefs with them, but do not succeed in entirely eradicating the old beliefs and especially the practices.

We are seeing this happen so rapidly nowadays that it is kind of makes our head swim, with the allowance and tolerance of the Muslim religion and Sharia law. This is exactly the example that I am talking about here, where a religion comes in that is the minority but it has such force of will in it that it pushes itself into all aspects of life, even to the point where it is convincing some of the judges and Attorneys General of states to allow Sharia law, which includes the mutilation of women and marriage of little children, among other things.

Those who see to incorporate a new view, belief, or practice into God's truth, completely distort and pervert the original faith. Nevertheless, we must hold fast to the faith once delivered to us by the prophets, Jesus Christ, and apostles.

Jude 3-4 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

It mentions lewdness here. Why? How many of you young people are guilty of or have been guilty of fornication, or sexual immorality while calling yourself a Christian? From my experience, the easier question should probably be how many have not, because there are so few. What an indictment!

The consequence for not contending earnestly for the faith is a fatal compromise of the integrity of God's truth leading to syncretism.

Syncretism is a process by which elements of a single set of world views are harmonized and assimilated into another resulting in a change in the nature of both of them and the emergence of a new system, a revised and perverted set of beliefs, rules, and ethics.

God's inspired written Word and any kind of amalgamation simply do not mix. Paul rhetorically asks questions connected with syncretism in II Corinthians 6.

II Corinthians 6:14-17 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

That is a condition that has to be met. Paul is exposing syncretism here and he calls for separation from people inclined to compromise and syncretize God's way of life. Separation is an antidote for syncretism.

Now people who advocate such blending of religions and false doctrines have been deceived into thinking that syncretizing is an acceptable attempt to help "old" belief systems—old fashioned—

become relevant, less confrontational, controversial, and culturally alienated by mixing and matching with local ones. The ones who compromise say, “We do not want to hurt anyone’s feelings.” They claim that it removes the burden of absolutes that any belief can be adopted, remolded, reshaped, discarded, denied, or repudiated for the good of the inhabitants of the earth.

When the Worldwide church of God was breaking up, one of the comments I heard was, “God would not want us to suffer by having to obey everything He says.” You get my point here.

In reality, syncretism involves misrepresentation of the truth by limiting and distorting part of the underlying message so that it fits the values and traditions of outsiders, introducing falsehoods.

Syncretism is widespread throughout the world’s pagan religions today as the religious globalists attempt to amalgamate the different religions into a one world religion of the end time. All non-Christian religions are the product of syncretization because Satan has counterfeited religion for almost 6,000 years. Many of the beliefs that are coming out today were pre-Flood beliefs that carried over into Noah’s children.

John 8:41 “You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

That is the source of syncretism! One of the main driving forces behind believing the lie is that Satan influences people with the desire to live like everyone else. As our children, as they grow up, seem to want to be just like the world.

People think that by adopting the popular world views and mixing them with faith and ethics, that life would be easier than swimming against the cultural current. Satan is always promoting the idea and demanding that attempts at worshipping God be shared with competing deities. This occurred constantly in the Old Testament as the values of the Canaanites, Babylonians, Assyrians, and others permeated ancient Israel.

On one occasion the prophet Elijah challenged the nation of Israel to stop wavering between two opinions and decide whether YHWH or Baal was the deity worth following. I want to present this question to you: Which deity do we believe in? Is it the enticements that the world has or is it God the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?

I Kings 18:21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

Even presented with the choice of a conviction or a preference, they would not answer. That really should have been a no brainer, but the idea of Baal and other gods of the Canaanites had a great influence.

Sadly, the people were mute, and they could not but feel the logical force of Elijah’s argument, but they were not willing to immediately act on it. They wished to unite with the worship of YHWH, the Eternal, with that of Baal to avoid breaking with the past and completely rejecting the old national worship. Yet at the same time they had the enjoyment of the new rites which were sensuous and detestable by God’s standards.

Church history is filled with the struggle with syncretism from political, social, religious, and economic sources. In the New Testament times Greek, Roman, and “mystery religions” sought to undermine the Christian community through syncretism and compromise. In subsequent centuries, particularly after false Christianity became the official religion of the state following the conversion of Constantine in 312 AD, it was easier to undermine the Christian faith by mandating toleration rather than persecuting Christians, which only led to martyrs. So the unholy Roman church syncretized Christianity, especially throughout the 4th century AD.

Constantine had been a pagan and there is a story of how he changed over to Christianity, which I will not go into for the sake of time, but then when he “became a Christian” he was actually easy on the Christians, he did not persecute them very much. What he did though was change the doctrines to bring in the pagans.

As an example of this let us take a look at the synchronizing of Christmas into Christianity. Let us reflect for a moment on the origins of this holiday which is flourishing in its quagmire of traditional deception. With so many lies surrounding and deeply embedded in this holiday it would be foolish to believe that this is a celebration of which God would approve. These lies put people in spiritual bondage.

Two key figures in the origin of Christmas are Nimrod, the great grandson of Noah, and his mother, Semiramis. Nimrod was the founder of the first world empire, the Babylonian empire. After Nimrod's death around 2167 BC, his mother/wife, Semiramis, propagated the belief that Nimrod was a spirit being.

She claimed that, out of the roots of a dead tree stump sprang a full-grown evergreen tree, which symbolized the springing forth of new life form, Nimrod. Semiramis and Nimrod were worshipped as the first mother and child deities. As the generations passed, the names of Semiramis and Nimrod as “mother and child” varied in different countries and languages. For example, they were called Isis and Osiris in Egypt; Fortuna and Jupiter in Rome; and Venus and Pan in Greece.

During the 2,000 years before Christ, the pagans and sun worshippers had developed the belief that the days were getting shorter because their sun-god was leaving them. When they saw the length of the day increasing they began a celebration of riotous, unrestrained feasting and orgies. This celebration was known as Saturnalia named after their sun-god, “Saturn,” another name for Nimrod.

After Jesus Christ was born, many historical sources show that Christmas was not observed by Christians from Christ's time all the way to the 4th century AD. So during those 300 some odd years there became a separation between the true church and a mainstream Christian church was forming.

Saturnalia, which was from about December 17-24, and Brumalia (December 25), continued as a pagan celebration by the Romans well into the 5th century AD. The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911 edition, published by that church, under the heading “Natal Day,” recorded that the 3rd century Catholic father Origen acknowledged the following truth: “In the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on his [Jesus'] birthday. It is only sinners like Pharaoh and Herod who make great rejoicings over the day in which they were born into this world.”

Now Origen was later excommunicated from the Roman church. During the 4th century, the emperor Constantine claimed to convert to “Christianity” and changed Sabbath keeping from the 7th day to

the 1st day of the week, recognizing Sunday as the day of worship which was the day he had worshipped the physical sun. This made it easier for the Romans to call their pagan “December 25th celebration,” birth of the sun-god, then they were able to change it to the birth of the “son of God.”

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 1967 says: “According to the hypothesis. . . accepted by most scholars today, the birth of Christ was assigned the date of the winter solstice (December 25 in the Julian calendar, January 6 in the Egyptian), because on this day, as the sun began its return to northern skies, the pagan devotees of Mithra celebrated the dies natalis Solis Invicti (meaning birth of the invincible sun). On Dec. 25, 274, Aurelian had proclaimed the sun-god principal patron of the empire and dedicated a temple to him in the Campus Martius. Christmas originated at a time when the cult of the sun was particularly strong at Rome.”

It was in the 5th century that the Roman Catholic Church ordered that the birth of Christ be observed on December 25, the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, the sun god.

Moving down though history, in AD. 596 Pope Gregory I dispatched the monk Augustine to Britain as a missionary. The Pope had decreed that whatever pagan practices were not of themselves “evil” should be blended (or syncretized) with Christianity. According to the 11th edition of the *Encyclopedie Britannica*, article entitled “Christmas”: “In Britain, the 25th of December was a festival long before the conversion to Christianity. . . the ancient peoples of the Angli began the year on the 25th of December. . . [The night now called Christmas Eve] they called in their tongue “modranecht” meaning the mother night, by reason we suspect of the “fertility” ceremony which in that nightlong vigil they performed.”

So we see there that December 25th was actually a fertility ceremony that had the name of Christ placed on it in Britain. By the 1500s and 1600s in Britain the undisguised pagan element in Christmas had often provoked criticism from conservative Protestants but the festival was not really affected by their beliefs until the Puritans came to power in the early 1600s. Christmas was attacked as ‘the old heathens’ feasting day to Saturn their god, and singing carols was forbidden.

In 1644, in protest against Christmas, December 25th was proclaimed as a fast day by the Protestant Church and banned by the English Parliament. The new rule was enforced by the English army, which spent much of its time pulling down the greenery that festive ‘pagans’ had attached to their doors. In Scotland as well, the prohibition was enforced with great rigor.

In the late 1600s this anti-Christmas attitude spread to Puritan territories in America. In defiance of the Puritan attitude the Catholic Church established special Christmas services in Boston, Massachusetts during the 1690s, but many civil authorities strongly opposed this move.

In 1836 Christmas first became a legal holiday in the U.S. in the State of Alabama. That is fairly late in history! Later, one state after another legalized this pagan festival. Today, the U.S. celebrates this 4,000 year old festival as a national holiday with riotous unrestrained feasting and drinking, in a similar manner to the celebration more than 4,000 years ago. Now we live in the result of a lot of compromising and a great deal of synchronizing!

Notice just a few of the synchronized traditions that are still performed today. The Christmas tree represents eternal life, stealing that from God. Jeremiah 10:1-5 proves that this evergreen tree decorating custom was being observed as far back as the 7th century BC. The round Christmas wreaths stand for an eternal, never dying, or annually self-renewing sun.

What do you think inspired giving little girls dolls as gifts at Christmas time? *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, under the article “Saturnalia” gives an eye-opening explanation. “These dolls were especially given to children, and the makers of them held a regular fair at this time. Varro thought these dolls represented original sacrifices of human beings to the infernal god.”

(As a side note, the reason I use *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition is because it is the last edition that has religion in it and truth about those religious beliefs in it. After the 11th edition it became secularized and they sanitized it of anything that did not go along with the truths of God.)

Human sacrifices were once offered to Saturn. The Greeks and Romans gave the name Cronos and Saturn to the cruel Phoenician god Baal. The ancient pagans sacrificed their firstborn children to Baal in ancient Carthage.

The origin of Christmas and the traditional perversions and religious amalgamation characteristic of this holiday should be enough to repulse people to completely avoid this evil time. Obviously, this ultra-pagan holiday is in no way representative of Jesus Christ. God made His position on such things very clear through Moses in Deuteronomy 12.

Deuteronomy 12:31-32 “You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

But the world rebels against God’s commands to its own destruction. Secular humanism strives to be the common ground for solving problems. Pluralism is proclaimed as the recipe for mixing all old religions into a lethal soup of new religious ideas.

The United Nation’s philosophy encourages religious and secular syncretism. They advance the idea that tolerance of all religion tends to facilitate co-existence and unity between otherwise different cultures and worldviews. On the other side of their mouths they are trashing Christians every which way.

When we strive to be like others in the world, and accept their values in our lives as our guiding principles and aspirations, we are not consciously bowing to false idols or making them our “gods,” but yielding in more subtle ways.

Paul encouraged Christians in the church at Corinth not to lose sight of their pure and simple devotion to Christ, not to add anything to it, but hold firm to the simplicity of the Word of God.

II Corinthians 11:3-4 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. [We see here that just as the serpent deceived Eve, he can certainly deceive every single one of us.] For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! [He is warning us that it is possible that even the elect may be deceived.]

The “gospel” of Paul’s opponents may have promised everyone health and wealth with no sacrifice or suffering, contrary to Paul’s God inspired message and experiences of sacrifice and suffering strengthened by mercy and love.

There is no reason why you should follow such teachers of temporary pleasure and entertainment, and forsake those who teach God’s wonderful everlasting promises of salvation and eternal life.

Why would we forsake the truth that we know and understand for the deceptive traditions of men? Why would we forsake the better for something worse? Well, why then, do we have a tendency to compromise living God’s way of life for the sake of expediency? You may say, “It will never happen to me!” Nevertheless, from experience Paul warns in I Corinthians 10,

I Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Thousands of people have abandoned God’s church throughout the centuries to go back to false beliefs such as Sunday-keeping and the celebration of holidays of pagan origin, many who thought that it would never happen to them.

We must follow the supreme example of Christ in our opinions, our conduct and our morality; in our plans, our method of worship, and our use of language; and also in our friendships, our entertainments, our clothing.

No one has ever proven that anyone has ever bettered himself or his family by forsaking the simple doctrines of the Bible, and embracing a philosophy of speculation; or by forsaking the scriptural truth of the Lord and Savior, the Son of God, and embracing the human reasoning of mere human traditions.

We can add nothing to what Jesus has already done for us, but we need to know what we believe and be committed to it in faith, holding to the absolutes of God’s truth.

We have been given a choice. God has given us the power to be convicted and faithful or would we could be just like everyone else, confused and insane.