

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Modern Trends In Paganism Part Four

by Linus A. Mathis III

The Eclipsing of Choice:

God has endowed mankind with many wonderful attributes. However, unlike the animals, man is essentially bereft of instinct. Instead, He made man a thinking creature with the ability to reason, decide and choose. God has also vested us with freedom of will, perhaps our most engaging custody. This freedom of choice can be both a blessing and a burden. Either way, He never violates this entitlement.

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

It's evident that God always honors man's right to choose, as seen in His dealings with the first man, Adam. He didn't force obedience upon him, rather He allowed Adam to make his own decisions. Adam stood on legal, if not moral, grounds in respect to his exercise of free will. Furthermore, God had amply equipped him for the task of making correct decisions. God gave Adam spirit which could provide guidance far superior to animal instincts. As wonderful as the predisposition to intuitively know is, it pales in the face of revelation from God. He also gave Adam a command. The only side bar was, free will choice. Unlike man, an animal has no choice but to

obey its instincts (a similar urge is produced in conditioned response). A strong compulsion accompanies instinct and the animal is slave to it. Not so with man. We have the privilege to say yes or no. Of course, we would be well advised to always say yes to God. Wouldn't you love to get to the place where you are as driven to obey God's Word as a wild animal is to survive? Consider the example of a fox with his leg caught in a trap. The instinct to survive being so strong the fox willingly chews his trapped appendage off. Oh that we would be as desperate to do God's Will!!!

Though God Almighty recognizes our gift of choice the Adversary does not. If subtlety and deceit do not work for him (as they did in Eve's case) he will assay to coerce man. He's not above the use of force when trickery fails him.

John 10:10a

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

The thief, as Jesus called him, absconds with the property of others. He will initially use stealth and if necessary, force. Not only is he crafty and deceptive but also violent and invasive. Given the option, his preference is brutality. This is why vexation of evil spirits is called "devil possession."

Acts 16:16-18

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed (to have, hold fast) with a spirit of divination met us,

which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

This poor woman was possessed, a part of her will was out of her control. When you are in possession of something you are in charge of it, even if it isn't yours. You decide regarding use and misuse of that which you possess. She needed deliverance and praise God she received it!

Verses 17,18:

The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour (right then, immediately).

Matthew 4:23,24

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Isn't that wonderful! These poor souls were found to be horribly tormented but the magnificent Son of God healed them.

Acts 10:38

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

God sent His Son to uncover the snare of the Devil, defeat him and deliver the oppressed.

Luke 4:14-19

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

To preach the acceptable year of

the Lord.

Ephesians 4:8

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

He has commissioned us to do likewise.

Mark 16:17

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

Church leaders should remain mindful of Satan's desire to hold people hostage and seek to effect their release. This is expedited by skillfully teaching the greatness of God's Word and meekly instructing the beguiled.

II Timothy 2:24-26

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Again notice, as expressed in Timothy, the snare is set by the Devil and sprung by those taken captive. This process may be observed in fur trapping. The trapper sets the trap but the fur bearing animal springs it. A man who opposes himself is one in disagreement with God and His Word. This man exercises his free

will to disobey and in the process forfeits some measure of it. How ironic for man, how shrewd of the Devil.

The Devil thinks nothing of violating you. Since modern culture is not "God driven," you can be sure this is the way of the world. The campaign to make it harder for you to choose rightly has been underway for ages. The ultimate goal being, the loss of choice *in toto*. This mechanism by which the Adversary manipulates mankind is fear.

The record of the man born blind, whom the Lord healed, clearly demonstrates this exploitation.

John 9:13-23

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

Notice what happens to his parents.

Verses 18-23

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

His parents were afraid! This fear prevented them from being the type of parents one would expect. They should have been exuberantly celebrating their son's deliverance. No doubt they would have loved to. Instead they were paralyzed by fear, their wills held hostage by the threat of expulsion. This may not sound too menacing to us, but at that time, any one put out of the synagogue would be ostracized from society. They would no longer be able to buy or sell. In short, they could no longer lead normal lives. That is, if they confessed that Jesus was the Christ. Did they have the freedom of will to choose what they confessed and

believed? Of course. But the ease with which they could exercise that choice was being severely repressed. Without question, had they been bold enough to speak truthfully, there would have been repercussion. Certainly God would have delivered them had they not been afraid. But they were and you can readily see how their right to choose was being impinged. This type of coercion is still with us and has mounted in strength over the years.

The concept of being politically correct is one such example of how this process has been "modernized." Incidentally, the motivation behind all such intimidation is to stop people from glorifying God and proclaiming the Saviour. The threat leveled by the Jews to stop anyone from confessing that Jesus was the Christ hasn't changed one bit. It may come in a different package but when you unwrap it, it's the same tired threat. If you behave in a godly fashion, you may lose social acceptance. Should you speak of Christ in the work place you may jeopardize your job. You will have no friends and no employment. We are prohibited from openly speaking God's Word in our schools and in our government. In fact, there are ordinances which strictly forbid the posting or mention of His Word in any government building. But it doesn't end there. We are under assault in our own homes. In some states should your next door neighbor think you abuse your children they may alert the authorities. Once having done that, those in power can come and take your children leaving you with the burden of proving your innocence. Talk about injustice!

Our God-given right to freely obey His Word is being contested daily.

The unfettered exercise of free will is being stripped from our society in increments as more and more pressure is applied to those of us who make godly choices. While at the same time, those who propound devilishness are unobstructed in the furtherance of satanic arrogance and spiritual obscenity. This is a trend of those who do not worship the One True God. They are on a path which will conclude with the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of in both the Old and New Testaments. The Scripture foretells of a day when the "eclipse of choice" will reach it's zenith.

Revelation 13:11-17

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the

image of the beast should be killed.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Imagine that? No man without the "mark" will be able to buy or sell. This sounds quite similar to being put out of the Synagogue. Most certainly. Especially when you consider the stakes. It all boils down to, who are you going to worship? I'm reminded of the three great men who refused to bow down and worship the image set up by king Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 3:13-18

Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God

that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

We know in looking back that they didn't burn, God delivered them. But at the time they didn't know that. Nonetheless, they were confident in God. Consequently, they didn't burn. A very wise man once said, "If you don't bow, you won't burn." How true that is! If you don't bow, you won't burn! Make up your mind never, never, never to bow! Oh, the pressure will be on at times making it difficult for you but your choice will always be clear. That is, if you choose to obey the Word of God, He's bigger than threats and those who tender them. Nothing is too hard for Him.

Jeremiah 32:27

Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

Peter and John were rewarded for an act of love with imprisonment. What did they do? They healed a lame man who was at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The religious leaders of the day did not want this act to proliferate. They chose to

threaten these men and by force stop them from speaking about the Saviour.

Acts 4:13-20

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.

But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

What a man! This should be our

credo. It's our right, it's our heritage! Before you speak or choose, consider the future:

Revelation 19:11-16, 20,21

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Look what happens to the beast, the false prophet and those who follow them.

Verses 20,21

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped

his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Our future is sealed and it's awesome. All we need do is stand, withstand and endure. For if we don't bow, we won't burn.

Ephesians 6:13

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Though these pagan trends ever increase, we need only remember two things:

- 1.) Stand your ground, always choose God and His Word. "If you don't bow, you won't burn."
- 2.) Do as God does and always respect the rights of others to choose, never violate the free will of another.

II Peter 2:9

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

The Stability Of Trusting God

Ours is an age of crumbling values. Icons, honesty, morality and trust have all been trampled under foot by society. Heros are no longer sequestered from villainy and rise has been given to the "anti-hero." Our children are asked to admire and emulate those who represent debauchery, wickedness, hate, treachery and promiscuity. If you think I'm kidding watch professional wrestling or MTV. Because of this, the concept of trust has become very moot. Frankly this is understandable, especially since so many of our figures of authority are at best louts. The gravest danger, however, lies in the erosion of trust. Why? Because trust is at the core of our best belief systems. Consequently, it is incumbent upon us to see that our children learn the fruitfulness of trusting God. This is vital, even as they learn the infertility of trusting man.

Psalms 146:1-4

Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there* is no help.

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Proverbs 22:17-21

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

For *it is* a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

Men come and go but God and His Word abide for eternity. Therefore, we can be assured that our trust is well placed in Him. To trust anything else is groundwork for failure. It's risky even to trust yourself. My grandmother used to say, "You can't even trust yourself, you put on clean clothes and take off dirty."

The following passage was expressly given with young people in mind:

Proverbs 3:1-10

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him,

and he shall direct thy paths.

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

We can certainly all benefit from these truths but think how reassuring they are to a young person. When you trust God you can expect health, wealth and long life.

In this age of uncertainty, trusting God provides a safe harbor for us. All the time is the right time to trust God.

Psalms 62:8

Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge (shelter from storm) for us. Selah (pause and consider these words).

Psalms 91:2

I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress (strong place, defense): my God; in him will I trust.

Consider this song sung by king David:

II Samuel 22:1-8

And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

And he said, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

Our children must learn to trust God to the end that they run to Him for help. There they will find a safe place and a strong. It's from Him that they will receive deliverance.

The Word promises perfect peace to those who trust solely in God. Not only safety from the storm but quiet as well.

Isaiah 26:3

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

Disillusionment and insecurity are a by-product of trusting man. But confidence and stability are forged by trusting God. Here's why:

Psalms 60:11,12

Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

Spare your child from the disappointment that comes with trusting men and the things of man. Raise up a confident child, one who knows the stability that comes from trusting God.

Psalms 118:8,9

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
