

# THE DECLINE & FALL OF PAGAN CHRISTIANITY ELM 91

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

Shortly before the second coming of Christ, the type of Christianity common all over the world today which is riddled with pagan images and practices will be abandoned. People will come to realize the significance of these objects and activities, and how when used in connection with worship they are in direct defiance of God's laws and His wishes and come to repent of their religion.

They will come to realize that to worship the true God, they will have to change drastically the way they do things. Pagan gods and goddesses, their images, statues, and pictures literally abound in their thousands in the cathedrals and churches of today in direct disobedience to the second commandment.

Exodus 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

No likenesses or images of **anything** are permitted in any context of the worship of the true God.

That means no crosses or crucifixes, no pictures of "Jesus" with or without long hair which are in reality likenesses of the pagan god Zeus, no statues of the Virgin Mary or saints even if these images are in the most beautiful stained glass windows.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

The average Christian would tell you that they do not bow down to them or worship them, but that is not true, nor is it the point, they should not be in places intended for the worship of God. They are all an offence to God, our Father in Heaven, and our Creator, and whether or not they 'worship' them, all images should be removed from anywhere linked to worshipping God.

The idea that Mary, the Apostles, the Saints or any other dead human beings are alive in heaven and may be addressed, prayed to or appealed to, are based on the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul first introduced by the Serpent in the Garden of Eden when he told Eve, Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: but latterly by Plato and his band of philosophers in 400 B.C. were proponents of the notion.

All the pagan doctrines and practices which were combined with Christianity, mainly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century by Constantine the Great, are still inextricably intertwined in the Christianity we all know will have to be abandoned also when people come to repentance.

The Reformation barely scratched the surface of addressing the problem, removing some of them, while still allowing many to infest internally and externally their places of worship and their liturgical practices.

Most people, even many of those who consider themselves to be Christians see nothing wrong whatsoever with observing Easter, or Christmas, or Hallowe'en, yet they are all an abomination in God's sight. They all replicate ancient pagan and idolatrous practices, not matter how they are dressed up to look like Christianity.

The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics in Volume 7, page 111 states that 'Christianity' has more idols and images than any other religion including Buddhism and Hinduism. There is coming a revolution in social structure, in national identities as the nations continue to migrate to other areas for reasons of economics, or ethnic rivalries or hostilities.

In the 'Olivet Prophecy' just two days before Christ was Crucified Jesus replies to a question from His disciples who were asking Him, "When will these things be?"

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

This is not talking about individuals saying that they are Christ, but is about religious people, evangelists, ministers, and organizations who claim to operate "in the name of Jesus Christ", and who use that term a great deal.

They speak “in the name of Jesus Christ”, and claim that they have the authority of Jesus Christ, when they most certainly do not.

Jesus Christ is talking to us today through His words in the Bible, where He is at pains to say that no man is to assume the responsibility for speaking for him, and there is only one mediator between God and man, and that is the Person of Christ Himself.

The Olivet Prophecy continues:

Matthew 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

All these factors have existed at various times and periods in history, but the end has not come.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Is the Gospel of the Kingdom being preached in all the world for a witness? Not at the moment.

When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel stand in the Holy Place... Do we? Not at the moment. There is no Holy Place yet. The Temple has not yet been built, but it will be. Watch for it to begin to happen.

Matthew 24:16 Then ( at that time when you do see those things) let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Not those who live in America, or Australia!

Matthew 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Why not on the Sabbath day? Because the Beast and the False Prophet, the Anti-Christ will have reinstated Sabbath keeping on pain of Death!! Anti = against, but it can also mean 'instead of'. There will be a 'false Christ', one who sits in the Holy Place claiming to be the One *instead of* the real Christ who will have apparently good credentials, almost good enough to deceive the very elect. The elect will know it is not Christ, because they will not have been changed into Spirit!

Is a Pope with the mitre hat of the fish god Dagon, or men dressed in robes with skirts teaching Easter and Christmas, and to eat whatever you want to, are they likely to deceive the Elect or the Jews around the world? Not likely at all, but those who are insisting on the public keeping the 'law of God' might! Especially if they are enforcing it with a rod of iron and pain of death.

The Sabbath of the Jews, of Christ, of the Apostles will be reestablished by the government of the day. We are not obliged to keep the Sabbath since Christ amended the physical laws, but we should certainly honour the concept even if it is misused or misrepresented.

How else will Christ distinguish Himself when He returns? He will be acting as He did when He was here before, as a servant, although He will clearly be a King who is Ruling, but in justice and love.

The first person to claim that he is the Christ – IS NOT THE CHRIST!

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Showing himself to be God how? By bringing fire down from heaven, and performing dramatic public miracles. Ignore all this apparent 'evidence'. Will he be lawless? No. He will use God's law to reinforce his rule. I am Emmanuel – God with you, he will say.

2 Thessalonians 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth (Michael and Gabriel are) that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (prevents it) will let (prevent it too soon), until he (Michael and Gabriel) be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

Michael and Gabriel will be taken away, and he will be allowed to get on with it. The Beast will use signs and wonders to support his claim.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

There is a lot of posturing in the world, but the Great Tribulation is not in sight. When nuclear war breaks out, or the worldwide use of toxic materials, or whatever, it will come suddenly for sure, but we will see it coming because we are watching for it. Then it will be possible that no flesh would be saved except for the intervention of Christ.

Religious people get the whole concept of the Beast and the False Prophet completely wrong. He will not bring in paganism, but on the contrary will banish it, and enforce the Laws of God. He will look like an angel of light, not some horned monster. He will mimic Christ, and as a counterfeit he will appear just like the real thing. That is what a counterfeit is. He might even show wounds in his hands and feet, but they will have been self-inflicted in the house of his friends.

Zechariah 13:6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

If we have not risen to meet him in the air, he is not the Christ.

Colossians 2: 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

The new Gospel of the mystery revealed by Christ to Paul brought in freedoms. There is only one Mediator between us and God, we know that.

But if you are a wise virgin, you will submit to the rules and laws he institutes, and keep your head down. We are supposed to obey those who have rule over us because they are ordained of God. Do not under any circumstances worship him, but obey his ordinances, and God will protect you.

So what is the mark of the Beast in the hand and forehead? It is what you do in respect of physically and mentally keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days, the food laws, and avoid the wrath of the secret police, like the CIA, FBI, or whatever. God will protect His own.

Read Zechariah 12, 13, 14, which were written by Jeremiah, without chapter breaks, for none of this has ever been fulfilled in history. It has interesting parallels with Matthew 24. 12:1 talks of the burden of the Prophet which gets lighter as he prophesies and teaches. Best to use a modern translation like the RSV.

Those in Jerusalem and round about are 'staggering', drunk with false doctrine. There is coming a siege of Jerusalem, look for it beginning to happen in the news. Whether it be with armies, embargos, economic sanctions. It will be a heavy stone, and all those nations who involve themselves with it will get seriously hurt. All nations will gather against Jerusalem, and this has never happened, but it will. God will step in to help, and confuse their enemies, and give victory to the Jews and to Jerusalem.

Then Christ will really get rid of paganism, and adopt New Testament Christianity, not the Old Law. He will pour out the Spirit of Supplication, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will mourn for the One they pierced. This is on the horizon. There may even be a type of civil war between those who accept Christ and those who do not.

Chapter 13 tells about being cleansed from ritual sin, or the sin of rituals and traditions, and there will be national repentance. Of all, probably not, there will always be the stiff-necked ones.

Then in Chapter 14 Christ returns, and starts putting everything right.

Zechariah 14:6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: 7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. 8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them

toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. 9 And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. 10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. 11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

We are not yet in the time of the end, not until these things which we have not yet seen begin to come to pass.

B Most Christians think that the Anti-Christ will cause chaos, confusion, and spread all kinds of dreadful activities, with war, and persecution, moral depravity, and worse. This is so far from the truth, as when the Anti-Christ appears he will look like, and appear as if he is Christ returning to the earth in glory. He will re-institute the law of God, the Sabbath and the Holy Days, food laws of clean and unclean meats,

There is a simple way to know that this individual is the false Christ, if he were the real Christ, we who are His people are going to be resurrected or changed into immortality and rise to meet Him in the clouds. So if we have not been changed, he is not the real Christ, but he will be such a close counterfeit that he will fool everyone except the elect, those who are written in the book of life.

The Anti-Christ will look like the real thing.

The Anti-Christ will enforce the keeping of the Mosaic Law all over the world with secret police, S.S., C.I.A., F.B.I. type organisations with ruthless power. The keeping of the Law under these circumstances will constitute the 'Mark of the Beast'.

Colossians 2:15

Let no man tell you anything like this, if he does he is a false Christ.

Let the body of Christ tell you what to do, but no man. What is the body of Christ? It is all the members of the ecclesia, all who are equal and the same level under Christ, who is the only Mediator.

So nobody, especially an organization of men, cannot tell us what to do in these respects.

1 Timothy 2:5 One mediator.

No prophets, no apostles, no Popes, no ministers, no organization whatsoever have any right or authority to tell us what to do and how to behave. If however they are the powers that be, then we should submit quietly. quietly get on with out lives obeying the rules they impose so long as we are not involved in any type of worship of any individual.

This is one way God will provide protection for His people during this time. Obey the powers over you.

Zechariah 12, 13, and 14 give a long series of events that have never been fulfilled at any time in history.