



April 12, 2009

## *Is It Any Wonder*

The murder of an eight year old girl and the arrest of a “Sunday school teacher” for the crime is a recent example of the influences that cause many people to doubt, mistrust and hate the idea of being a Christian. This is only one example of the spiritual and social chaos that marks the United States. Newspapers and magazines are filled with stories of the misdeeds of religious leaders, police officers, investors and public officials, to name a few. We realize that the United States is not a “Christian” nation, but the principles upon which the country was founded are drawn from a rich religious heritage and were intended to provide an environment in which the people could think and believe as they would. What the founding fathers did not factor into their considerations was the character of mankind and the inevitable historical degeneration of every great culture that has ever existed on the Earth. We find examples of cultures that practices pagan occultism and they were overwhelmed by their enemies, leaving behind only ruins of their civilization. In North America, Central and South America there are accounts of civilizations that flourished, rose to power and then disappeared, sometimes overnight. What do all of these cultures have in common? In pagan nations there is an absence of a knowledge of God. Israel, specifically the Southern kingdom of Judah, slowly slid away from God as they allowed the influences of the world to corrupt them. Jeremiah states, ***“Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.”*** (Jer 2.11). The problem today is that so many have become involved with religious organizations whose practices and teachings are so permissive that they cannot be distinguished from worldly people around them. Unfortunately, those around them who are not Christians many times are better people than their religious neighbors. None of this is new. We can look to history to find that wars, oppression and atrocities against other humans have been perpetrated and justified on the basis that the person doing so was a “child of God”. Folks today are justified in not

trusting people who claim to be righteous. From the smallest things, such as observing the speed limits on our highways, to murder and other heinous crimes, that gap is narrowing between those who lack religious conviction, and those claiming to be godly. Is it any wonder then that the atheistic front has more than enough proof (to them) that the only difference between them and believers is the deity that they respect. While this spiritual anarchy confuses the general public, it serves another purpose. In contrast to the teachings of the liberal religious bodies, the plain truth of the New Testament shines ever brighter. It is no longer just a matter of showing those who do not accept God the error of their way, we can now demonstrate how far afield religion has gone in departing from the gospel. When we look at God’s word we can easily demonstrate that error is taught and practiced openly. We can show that the morals and ethics of the scriptures embodied in God’s commands are absolutes and are binding when one becomes a Christian. We can demonstrate what real commitment to truth is and can show that the idea of truth has been all but erased in the mainstream “Christian” mindset. Being a Christian and following after God does not mean that we are going to copy everything the world does and tack Jesus’s name on the front to make it appear to be right. If something is right, it is right. Period. The other thing that comes from all this is that New Testament Christians have a chance to demonstrate to the world that claiming to be a Christian has to mean something. It only takes a few bad apples, so to speak, to tarnish the image of everyone claiming to be a Christian in spite of the fact that there are many good people involved in religious error. Teaching and practicing only what the scriptures teach has always stood out, but I expect the contrast to be more noticeable as time progresses.

TLC