



# INSTITUTE of CHRISTIAN GROWTH

A Ministry of Carolina Evangelical Divinity School

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## COMMENTARY

### Christ & Belial

**T**he apostle Paul wrote to his people in Corinth: “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

*‘I will live with them,  
and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
and they will be my  
people’”*  
(2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

When we read this scripture almost everyone wonders who Belial is. In the Old Testament he was one of the four crown prince’s of Hell, or in other words he was a demon. Now if we carefully search the Bible, we find that there are only two gods – the Trinitarian God and a subordinate god who was the god of the world. Paul knew Satan is God of the world, so one wonders why he implied that Belial was also god of the world.

It is also clear that in the Hebrew Bible all gods other than Yahweh and Satan are no gods (Psalm 106:28, Isaiah 37:19, Jeremiah 2:11, Jeremiah 5:7, Jeremiah 16:20, Daniel 5:23, Jonah 2:8, Acts 19:26). They are just images of men, birds, reptiles or other animals. These were the kind of idols in the countries surrounding Israel. Today we worship indigenous gods like Elvis, sports figures, entertainers, musicians, those who the church denominates as saints, and ourselves (2 Timothy 3:2). Satan has always tried to appeal to our pride by telling us we can be like god (Genesis 3:4). He does have subordinates dwelling

in the world who are demons, and man can worship them as they do in Hinduism. Satan’s goal is to distract us from worshiping the one true God – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Son of God – Jesus.

One other ploy of Satan is to distract us by offering a god who is said to be the god of Abraham. He is also the God of Ishmael who was not the child of “promise.” God promised to make Ishmael the father of a great nation, but he did not make him a child of the covenant (Genesis

17:21). Isaac was the child of promise and a progenitor of God’s chosen people. It is clear that the god of Islam, who they claim is the God of Abraham, is not the same god that we worship. I have often

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wondered why people frequently refer to Yahweh as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but it is clear to me now they wish to make the point that God was Ishmael's creator, but he did not make him the child of promise. Isaac, not Ishmael, was to be a progenitor of Jesus the Son of God.

The above will arouse great anger in Muslims, for they consider us infidels and unbelievers because we believe in a Trinitarian God. They have believed from the very beginning – we are to be either converted by force or be exterminated. In the Middle Ages, Muslims set out to conquer the world and spread their religion. They did conquer the area around the Mediterranean. When they tried to conquer Europe through Spain and Eastern Europe, they were turned back by Charles Martell, Ferdinand and Isabella (in Spain), and Jan Sobieski in Vienna. The Muslims eventually ceased their efforts to conquer the Christian world after Vienna.

It is very important to recognize the behavioral correlations of the followers of the gods they worshiped. There has never been a cessation of killing by the Muslims throughout their history. Mohammed was a general and spread his religion by the sword. In contrast, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob asked people to believe in God because he loves them and has their best interests at heart. God also accredited himself with signs and wonders – something that has been said that Allah has done, but not in the same ways that Jesus did. Muslims try to claim miracles, but a review of the miracles attributed to Mohammed indicates that they are not true miracles. Notable in absence are the miracles of healing and raising the dead. Mohammed was not resurrected from the dead, although it is claimed he ascended into heaven.

The Koran denies Jesus is divine, and it also asserts that Allah does not have a son. The Koran is right in saying this because Allah is only a created being – not the one true God who has always existed.

One of the popular efforts to exonerate Islam these days is the politically correct statement which claims only the terrorists are extremist Muslims. There is considerable evidence against this. All Muslims have the potential to become terrorists. All one has to do is to look at their behavior in Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria and other Muslim countries. Very often Christians are murdered, their homes burned, and their churches destroyed – by nice, sweet, kind Muslims. These are ordinary citizens who are carrying out the terrorism. The persecution of Jews and Christians is too widespread to blame it on a

small group of fanatics. You will note that I said, while they may not be fanatics they have the potential to become so if aroused by fanatical leaders.

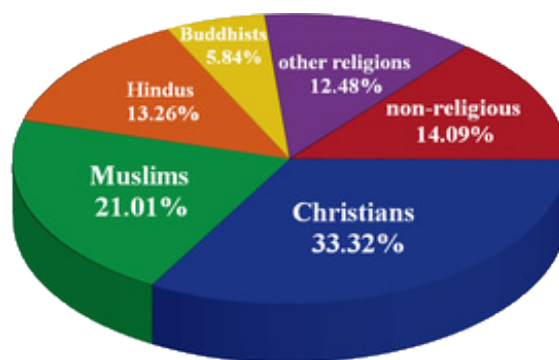
I have former students from Iran, presently Muslim physicians. They have been very caring, and apparently believe we worship the same God. I have tried to let them know we do not worship the same God, but to no avail. They continue in their Muslim ways. I have always loved them just as I love all my students, and they respond to that love. But they have not, by faith, made Jesus lord and believed in their hearts he was resurrected from the dead. What amazes me even more is they have supported my ministry. I have long felt they were not far from the kingdom of heaven.

I want to emphasize the most important difference that exists between Christianity and all other religions and is that God, The Holy Spirit, comes and lives in us when we by faith make Jesus Lord and Master of our lives. This is a personal relationship and allows us to converse with God. This is not true of any other religions. If a spirit comes and lives in a believer of another religion, it is one of the spirits of the world. Hinduism is a religion that worships demons. When practitioners of Yoga utter their mantras they are communicating with their divine, for they are uttering sounds that are representatives of god(s) and call upon him(them) to invade them. Since they are not calling on Yahweh, they can only be calling on the god of this world. The chanting prayers of Islam are done five times a day. The prayers are the same each time and extol Allah. Allah is great (Allahu Akbar) is a repeated statement. Their prayers are not a conversation.

In conclusion, it is clear the thing setting Christianity apart from all other religions is that God comes and lives in us. Since he installs himself in us supernaturally, it is also clear we have a personal relationship with him. We can, therefore, relate to him as we do all other persons. We can converse with him, make our petitions, and praise him for his beneficence and love.

Having read Christopher Hitchens, a man who claims to be an atheist, Marxist and a devotee of the enlightenment, I realize his political religion (Marxism) wishes to take as many people to Hell as it can (although he does not believe this). It is obvious that Satan is working through him as he does in all other religions. He wishes to stamp out all religions, but especially Judaism and Christianity for they are the truth.

As I write this, I am reminded over and again that there has been a hatred of Jews in many cultures over time.



My father, who was a strong Christian, often spoke derisively of Jews, although he had few contacts with them. At the same time I lived in a neighborhood where there were several Jewish kids who were close to my age. I always wondered why the other kids in the neighborhood persecuted them. This was before Hitler's rise to power.

I recently learned there was anti-Semitism in Germany long before Hitler. Bismarck was quite anti-Semitic. Islam's anti-Semitism is particularly virulent. Now, it is a fact that God chose Israel to carry his message into the world. Jesus was Jewish, but he was also the Son of God. His conception, birth, life, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension are so unique that his claim to be God is accredited. The most important part of his existence is that his Holy Spirit comes and lives with and in us. Islam can make no such claims for its founder.

Finally, I have one last thought that is of importance. Our mind is supernatural. God is supernatural. It is, therefore, important to recognize Paul's statement in Colossians 1:21-23, "I have become its (the church's) servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." None of the gods of the world can make this claim.



## Personal Notes

Things have not been well with me. I have deteriorated further and am less able to move around and do the things I used to do. My wife has been heavenly good to me, and wants to do things that I still can do. I will see two physicians about the pain I have next week. I hope to get some help with it. Until then I have been having to use a walker to get around. It relieves my pain when I walk so I am appreciative of the relief I get since I can be more mobile.



I am teaching a class in my church of "Old Folks." Most of them are younger than me, but some are my age. One of our ladies (she handled the finances

of the department of psychiatry where I taught) is still working at 88 years of age as a cashier at a local store. The rest are retired. I have been teaching them some fundamental theology. The class is most grateful. They have told me how much they appreciate what I am doing. For instance, I recently helped them understand the various forms of reformed theology, as well as John Wesley's version of Armenian theology. Although most of them had been Methodists all their lives they had never been taught the differences. They were surprised at five point Calvinism and could not conceive of a faith without free will.

I have had a wonderful time teaching at the seminary this fall. My course is "Managing Stress and Crisis." I only have two students, but they are two of my favorites. These two have taken most of my courses and are both very bright; they do quite well. Since they interact with me, my classes are more like discussion groups than didactic presentations. One of the students has Lyme disease, but is doggedly continuing after missing one class. She hopes to be a chaplain. The other is a young man who is the primary advisor in a Christian alcohol rehabilitation program. He is very successful in bringing many of his patients to sobriety. He gets better than the 35% that AA gets. He is a recovered alcoholic himself so he has insights that help him deal with the denial and rationalizations alcoholics use. He, like me, is able to be tough with these unfortunates, but does not feel guilty about doing it.

I have to say that I have really enjoyed teaching all of my life. It does not matter if they are boy scouts, college students, nurses, medical students, graduate physicians, conference attendees, or seminary students. When I get in front of a class, I am transformed, especially since I became a Christian. I forget myself and concentrate on passing on the knowledge I have accumulated in a comprehensible way. I love my students and want them to succeed. I have had only one student that I could not reach in my entire seminary experience. That they appreciate my efforts is reflected in their evaluation of my courses.





***The God Delusion,*** by Richard Dawkins, was published by Mariner books, 2008. Richard Dawkins is a self-proclaimed atheist, but actually has a religion. He worships Darwinism. Darwinism is a science religion that does all it can to stamp out any opposing

religions. He tries to convince us that Christianity is a delusion, i.e. a false idea or belief system.

His chapter titles are:

1. **A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS NON-BELIEVER** which is what he is.
2. **THE GOD HYPOTHESIS** which is what he thinks religion is—a hypothesis which is all that Christianity is.
3. **ARGUMENTS FOR GOD’S EXISTENCE.** He lists, especially, Thomas Aquinas’ proof, plus a number of others.
4. **WHY THERE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY NO GOD.** Here he posits his Anthropic principle, which he considers the basic Darwinianism argument for God’s non-existence. (5) He then writes about the **ROOTS OF RELIGION** using Darwinism as one argument against God’s existence.
5. **THE ROOTS OF MORALITY** is his next argument believing that man is inherently good and given the right social circumstance with always behave in a good way.
6. **THE GOOD BOOK AND THE CHANGING MORAL ZEITGEIST.** He contrasts the morality of the Old Testament with that of the New Testament. He cannot conceive of a loving god who practices genocide.
7. **WHAT’S WRONG WITH RELIGIONS?**



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**WHY BE SO HOSTILE?** Here he lists fundamentalism, absolutism, homosexuality, and the sanctity of human life, and how moderation fosters fanaticism.

8. **CHILDHOOD ABUSE AND THE ESCAPE FROM RELIGION.** He considers teaching children religion early in life is a form of abuse.
9. **A MUCH NEEDED GAP.** Here he tries to justify his point of view.

This book is an amusing effort of an atheist to justify his religion. He does not understand the real reasons people hold tenaciously to their belief in God. He does not realize that it is Christ in us that convinces us God is real, and that our futurology includes a belief in eternal life based on the promises of God. The Apostle Paul said one does not understand spiritual things without the Spirit. William James said that one of the changes occurring with conversion is to perceive truths we have not perceived before. Dawkins ought to try asking Jesus into his life – then he can understand why we believe.

***God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything,*** by Christopher Hitchens, is published by Twelve, 2009. Hitchens is a Marxist! Marxists are said to be atheists. There is one problem – this is that Marxism is a political religion. Political religions are basically humanistic: Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism and other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. He writes persuasively, but not convincingly. I had to read his and Dawkins books while trying to remain objective in considering their arguments. After reading both books I am still convinced that God is good, and that I am not deluded.



***Christ...in you!***