

The American Gospel...that damns men's souls

Christian nationalism and patriotism do not aid the work of Christ in the world. These actually oppose the gospel of grace and seeking peace according to Romans 12:18. Claims that Christian faith call us to safeguard political rights and civil liberties as we reform government and culture are evidence of unique American idolatry.

Aaron erred in leading the people to commit idolatry in the wilderness, appealing to lusts of the eye and the flesh. America's modern day 'golden calf' is much more sophisticated. This idol attracts reverence by appealing to the pride of life. Even sincere and well meaning persons practice this idolatry, bowing to the pressure to mix nationalism and patriotism with the gospel of Christ. Either these persons do not discern truth from error according to 1 John 4:6 or else they willfully refuse to put away idols of man's making. It is my prayer these will obey the true God by forsaking these idols.

National idols revered by many American Christians include the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights. But these are not divinely inspired documents and are not used by the God of the Bible to further His work in the world. These documents do not carry the weight or possess the divine value many try to invest in them. (This remains so despite so called "ministries" that push this idolatry, making false claims that secular documents and American history demonstrate divine mandate.)

When idols are in the hands of the carnal and deceived —truth is compromised — leading ultimately to claims it is Christian duty to join activist causes to defend and maintain "freedoms," "liberties" and "natural rights" —rights claimed God provides through natural law. Therefore, citizenship requires loyalty to idols of the false gospel.

Standing alongside this idol is another —the popular belief that mere men are anointed with the divine mantle. "Founding fathers" are spokespersons for "God given rights and freedoms." This idol calls the church to remember, defend, and propagate the words and work of these fallible men. This idol attempts to wed itself to the pure, perfect truth of the one and only gospel that provides true freedom —the only gospel that provides spiritual freedom and liberty by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

These idols offer a false gospel which is another gospel, a different gospel (Gal 1:8). The most egregious demonstration of the American gospel is the claim that shed human blood works hand in hand with Christ's shed blood. One idolatrous symbol of this false gospel is expressed by the bumper sticker, "Only two defining forces have ever died for your freedom..." The God of the universe is a defining force? This is pure Star wars!

Yet, there is no biblical connection between armed, physical combat and Christ's gospel that secures freedom from sin. Despite claims, fighting for earthly peace does not make it possible for anyone to witness for the gospel of peace. It is Christ alone, through the work of the Holy Spirit, who assure the gospel is presented and biblical faith secured—even when the environment of that witness is hostile. ***Man does not protect God.***

Christ's death on the cross did not secure earthly rights or civil freedoms. The Bible does not teach that in modern times it is any nations' prerogative and duty to reduce divinely-bought ***freedom*** from ***sin*** by including human-bought ***civil*** and ***political*** freedom.

Born again souls are spiritually freed from the eternal penalty of the second death while still enduring life in this fallen world—even to the extreme of suffering in hostile and tyrannical cultures. It is not true that Christ's death and resurrection gained a way to avoid suffering earthly injustices; it is not true that the gospel means anyone is called to use the Bible to justify aggression in the name of Christ's peace.¹ This evidences idolatry.

When Bible believers ignore their practice of unconscious idolatry in embrace of this false gospel these are guilty of leaving their first love; they are off course in the race Paul calls them to run in order to earn maximum eternal reward according to 2 Tim 2:4.

While much must be said about how to handle dangers living in the fallen world, we are called to stand against the tide of *any* idolatrous belief or practice. I am reminded of the corrective church marquee, "Christians don't fight for victory —We pray for it" (Unity Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN). Paul admonishes us to live Galatians 2:20 lives. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal! Christ does not endorse the American Gospel.

¹ This is not the same question as, "Does God permit a man to defend himself when confronted by ***immediate*** danger of being ***killed.***" But In domestic civil incidents and on foreign military fields Americans have now abandoned any reasonable sense of "defense" —instead justifying embrace of ***offense*** as the application of ***defense*** —and claiming the Bible directs this.