

Notes on Eastern Mystic Religions: Influence of Eastern Religions on Western Culture; Increase in Supernaturalism in Entertainment; Religions Plagiarize the Bible for Their Credibility yet Each Attacks Judaism & Christianity

Notes on Eastern Mystic Religions

1. There is a trend in our country to acknowledge spiritualism, the belief that spirits of the dead communicate with the living usually through a medium, an exercise in demonism and the occult.
2. Involvement in occult practices always eventuates in demonism and drug use. Through trances, ideas are formulated about what God ought to be like, rather than, through Bible study, discovering God's revelation of what He is.
3. In Eastern mystic cults, all things Western are seen as decadent. All those who are Western in their culture or their worship are seen as enemies of their concept of god.
4. Hindu's consider Christianity and Judaism to be an attack on Brahman and Gandhi, to Muslims on Allah and Muhammad, to Buddhists on Dharma and Buddha, to Confucianists on Jin and Li, and by Taoists on Tao and Lao-tzu.
5. In our survey of world religions, the hallmark of each is legalism. But these are outside the realm of Christendom. Yet tragically within the boundaries of Protestantism we find denominations that ostensibly subscribe to salvation by grace but insist upon works for its verification.
6. The one factor that is common to all religions is legalism and much in the New Testament is a polemic against it.
7. One passage in particular contrasts the bondage of legalism with the freedom of grace in which the son of Hagar – Ishmael, and the son of Sarah – Isaac, are used allegorically as equivalents to these polar opposites.
8. Before proceeding, it is necessary to distinguish between a parable and an allegory.
 - 1) Biblical parables are short fictitious stories that illustrate a moral attitude or doctrinal principle. The characters always involve humans or angels but without use of proper names.
 - 2) Biblical allegories always refer to historical people and events and use their proper names. In the allegory the individuals provide a parallel between two levels of meaning.
9. In Galatians 4, Paul stipulates in the context that he is presenting an allegory between legalism and grace and Ishmael and Isaac provide the parallels.
10. In order to address this allegory we must observe the context in which it is found; it runs from Galatians 4:19 to the end of the chapter, verse 31.

Galatians 4:19 - My little children [τέκνιον, *teknion*: toddlers: saved but short on doctrine], I am enduring labor pains [ὠδίνω, *ōdinō*: spiritual anguish] until Christ is formed in you.

11. The Galatian believers were born-again having received their spiritual birth through the teachings of Paul. Since then, they had not grown spiritually. Until they grow up and acquire occupation with Christ, they will remain vulnerable to the legalistic propaganda of the Judaizers who insisted that in addition to faith in Christ, works were also necessary.
12. In the Church Age, a person can hear the gospel from a multiplicity of sources but, once saved, he must grow in grace if he is to have meaningful impact in the Invisible War as a good soldier for Christ.
13. Any denomination that claims its followers are saved by grace but must depend on works for its assurance is legalistic. As Paul states in Romans 11:6, "If it is by grace, it is no longer by works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."
14. To grow spiritually a believer must learn the content of Scripture through intensive study of the Word under a qualified pastor-teacher. To learn how to evaluate contemporary history demands that it be viewed through the prism of Bible doctrine.
15. Galatia was a region in central Asia Minor that contained the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.
16. The believers in Galatia were involved in legalism and because of this Paul contends he is still having labor pains which will continue until they advance to the level of **υἱός, huios**: full-grown, spiritually mature believers.
17. Occupation with Christ enables the believer to utilize the thinking of Christ. In so doing, his thoughts, decisions, and actions reflect the mind of Christ which glorifies the Lord.