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The Evolved “Modern Pagan Man”



Paleontologists speak of Neanderthal Man, Australopithecus and many other pre-human forms that were supposedly forbearers to modern-day homo sapiens. All of this supposedly happened over many millions of years ago. Of course, removed from literal biblical interpretation, we know this whole field of study remains highly imaginative and speculative.

There is already a long legacy of the Bible having trumped scientific skepticism on many issues, whether historical, scientific or otherwise. All of the Bible has proven true, except that which remains unfulfilled ... or remains to be scientifically discovered or proven. As everything that has already been fulfilled or discovered has proven to be 100 percent accurate, it takes only a small leap of faith to acknowledge that the rest of the Bible that science still argues with will also prove accurate. That truism applies to science, therefore also to the theory of evolution. With respect to physical evolution, the Bible doesn't mention any different species of humans, sub-humans or any developmental biological stages of mankind. As it happens, there simply isn't any hard proof for the theory of evolution. It remains a religion.

Nor is there any difference between ancient humanity and that of today. Man's basic characteristics, both physical and temperamental, have not changed one iota.

With respect to humans, the Bible only makes one major racial distinction — that between Jew and Gentile. Even more importantly, the Bible makes one other distinction between humans — between the pagan and the righteous. It's here that we see the real evidence for evolution, although a spiritual version — paganism.

That's our launch point for our study. Virtually all anthropologists agree that today the earth's sphere is populated by the so-called modern man. In contrast, Bible prophecy speaks of the “Modern Pagan Man” of the end-times. Today, he is the fittest creature inhabiting and dominating the earth's new economic sphere.

Finding Ancient Pagan Man

To discover the “Modern Pagan Man,” let's first examine the character and behavior of the ancient pagan. The Bible offers a detailed description. However, to get a balanced and accurate picture, we need to do a brief word study. There is no specific word in the Bible for “pagan.” In fact, we cannot even find the word “pagan” in some Bible translations (for example, the King James Version, International Standard Version, American Standard Version and others). Why? Because it is a word that originated later in New Testament times.

Today, we commonly take the word “pagan” to mean a heathen person who worships other gods or idols and is outside the Christian or Jewish faith. In biblical times, a heathen was also a Gentile (though there were believers in God who were not Hebrew).



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Before Christ died for the sins of all and extended salvation to the Gentiles, the Gentiles and heathen were essentially the same. At the beginning of the New Testament era, most Jews still considered their newfound salvation through the Messiah as a progressive fulfillment of the existing Jewish faith (the religious world had not yet definably split into Jews and so-called Christians). It took a little while before it was broadly recognized that there were Christian Gentiles who were neither heathen nor Jewish. Therefore, at the start of the Church Age, only one Greek word was still used to describe both Gentile and heathen: *ethnos*. This word appears 167 times in the New Testament. The point of this is that in our study of the "evolutionary" pagan, we will only look to those verses of the New Testament where the word *ethnos* is clearly in the context of the newer sense of the word — "heathen."

A study of the Bible reveals many common characteristics of the "pagan." We will only review five of these. All are directly linked to the evolution of our materialistic "Modern Pagan Man."

1. Self Interest

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even

pagans do that?" (Matthew 5:44-47) In these verses, Jesus makes the point that the "pagan" person operates purely out of self interest. Pagans' actions are motivated by their own wants and pleasures, the personal pursuit of happiness and comforts. They only love those who love them and revile those who likewise repudiate them.

Today, some 2,000 years later, this pagan characteristic of self interest has greatly evolved and is now held up as the very force leading the world to betterment, continued progress and prosperity. In fact, supposedly advanced economic theories hold this impulse of "self interest" in high esteem, representing a rapid transition having taken place in basically less than a few hundred years. It is a foundational tenet of market-based capitalism, the term used for today's type of commerce (which, by the way, actually has little to do with capitalism in its original sense). The main result is that the entire world has become deeply commercialized. Increasingly today, commerce is the prime reason for existence and the very definition of life.

What does the Bible say about the "self interests" of "Modern Pagan Man?" It provides a clear message for societies who choose to define their existence in purely pagan terms ... in other words, societies that have given themselves over to the rule of economics and Mammon. Tyre

and Babylon are poignant examples. Neo-Babylon (in the era of Nebuchadnezzar) was all about business. According to studies, Babylonia was essentially a commercial civilization. Virtually all of the documents that have survived from this culture are business documents. Another prime example is the history of Tyre, the extreme commercialization of which the Bible itself provides clear documentation. (See January and February 2004 issues of *Midnight Call* for a broader review.)

The city of Jericho may be another and even earlier example. Probably the most ancient habitation in the world and one of the most prosperous, it was the city selected by God to be the first conquered by the Hebrews as they entered Canaan. In fact, this city was the only one miraculously destroyed and the only Canaan conquest that was completely annihilated — women, children, livestock and all. God wanted it completely expunged. Why? Could it have reeked of generations of idolatrous commercialism? God didn't want any of Jericho's culture to rub off on Israel. Joshua even prophesied that whoever would resurrect this city of Jericho would suffer the loss of his first and second born (Joshua 7:26). Exactly as prophesied, this occurred 600 years later during the reign of Omri, when Hiel of Bethel did so (1 Kings 16:34).



Mostly today, lifestyles are defined by other baubles such as expensive Swiss watches, luxury cars, the latest gadgets, spacious, palatial homes and much else. To have them all is the epitome of the successful life, the trappings of elite existence. That's the implicit goal and value of a society of pagans.

2. Worry About Material Things

Pagans are totally consumed with material things, according to Scripture. "So do not worry, saying 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them" (Matthew 6:31–32 and Luke 12:29–30). By this definition, then, it would be pagan to only preoccupy oneself in the pursuit of possessions and lifestyle. Scripture refers here to only two items — food and clothing. In the society of that day, both defined lifestyle as well as the necessities of life. This verse therefore does not refer to mere subsistence. Clothing and food both have necessary functions. To attribute any other value to them is idolatrous and pagan.

Of course, in the modern age, lifestyle is defined by many more things than just food and clothes. To be sure, there are premium brands in clothing, top designer names, the latest accoutrements. The same is also still true for some foods. The finest wines are sought; the food brands that are the most effectively advertised are the ones people may strive to buy. Mostly today, lifestyles are defined by other baubles such as expensive Swiss watches, luxury

cars, the latest gadgets, spacious, palatial homes and much else. To have them all is the epitome of the successful life, the trappings of elite existence. That's the implicit goal and value of a society of pagans. "Running after these things" is today part of a highly sophisticated culture of branding, consumer surveys, advertising and psychological research. In this sense, there has been much change over the centuries and millennia. Here again we see evolution in progress to the "Modern Pagan Man." Viewing the massively endemic commercialization of America and other nations, it is hard to imagine that much more evolution could yet lie ahead.

3. Concern About Tomorrow

Societies that do not put their faith in God, by definition, must worry about the uncertainties of tomorrow. The Bible says that it should be otherwise: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:33–34). This verse is connected to the two verses before (Matthew 6:31–32), which speak of pagan practices.

In that context we understand that worrying about tomorrow is a "pagan" preoccupation of the *ethnos*. These worries about the uncertainties of tomorrow have driven a monumental amount of economic and financial evolution over past decades and centuries and have clearly added to the intensity of the commercialization of human life.

The introduction of insurance services is just one such example. No doubt, the vast array of insurance products available does provide useful services. Also, in recent decades we have seen a boom in sophisticated financial instruments that in turn have underpinned an unprecedented rise in global financial wealth. Many of these instruments are based on mathematical concepts that seek to overcome the uncertainties of tomorrow. Few people are either expert or aware of these trends in the wild jungles of advanced economic and financial innovation. Meanwhile, back on Main Street, life is clearly different as a result of these many services that cater to the "uncertainties of tomorrow." Today, no one would think of not having life, home or auto insurance. Most agree that it is unwise not to have an IRA or a pension to protect against the un-



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certainities of retirement. Just taking the few services mentioned leads to at least five different purchases on a monthly installment plan. To the extent that a chronic worry about the future has led to increasing commercialization and idolatry is clearly pagan. This intensification of "worries over tomorrow" is therefore an identifier of "Modern Pagan Man."

4. Self Indulgence and Debauchery

The Bible clearly refers to people who live lives of dissipation and indulgence as being pagan in character. Paul identified the Hebrews as having acted like pagans when they had parties and revelries while Moses was up on the mountain (Exodus 32). "Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry'" (1 Corinthians 10:7). Apostle Peter took the same view: "For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you" (1 Peter 4:3-4).

Reveling, debauchery, bacchanalian feasts and wild sensuality were seen as being part of the worship exercises of the pagans. (The Amplified Bible also mentions frivolousness and hilarity.) These aspects of paganism are highly promoted today. Why? It's good for business ... good for economic growth. Morality is not the relevant question. Revelry and frivolity adds to economic growth whatever forms it may take. And businesses on the leading edge in this regard often are the most successful. Television programs and movies that cater to this trend are an example, and many more could be listed. It's part of a sophisticated economic culture. Increasingly, these pagan "lifestyle" activities may include mindless entertainment, drugs, pornography ... and much, much more. The "Modern Pagan Man" guiltlessly consumes and indulges.

5. Ultra Competitiveness

The Bible pictures pagans as being competitive. They are seen vying for the fulfillment of their personal wants. As already reviewed, "they run after" the things they want (Matthew 6:31). Jesus indirectly points to another competitive behavior of the pagans: "[...] whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be

your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20: 26-28). Apparently, He said this while in Jericho — the city rebuilt from the ruins of ancient Jericho. In contrast, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors" (Luke 22:25). By inference, pagan society is marked by "oneupsmanship," the desire to be the "top-dog" as society would define it, and to rule over others. Achieving these goals requires competitive behavior.

Of course, we recognize that competition is one of the most venerated principles on earth today ... for better or worse. Of course, nothing is wrong with striving for improvement if the motivations are healthy and balanced. However, the type of competitive behavior identified here is the jungle rule, "survival of the fittest." It is a type of competition that is devoid of charity or love for others. This form of competitiveness is deeply imbedded in pagan society — our society. Even something as simple as buying a security on a stock exchange for the sake of gain embodies the notion that one person's success can only come at the price of another person's misfortune. Be that as it

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Having reviewed just five of the pagan characteristics of ancient mankind we indeed see proof of evolution. Yes, all the basic characteristics of mankind remain the same. Yet, we do see that there has evolved a modern, sophisticated pagan. Anyone who truly understands the workings of the great global commercialization that reigns today must face the true extent of the paganization of today’s world. Brief as our description has been in this article, the world of “Modern Pagan Man” sets a stark contrast to the primitive heathen of ancient times.

Does the society we see today already witness the “Modern Pagan Man” that the Bible depicts during the endtimes? And, if so, what does the future hold for the modern pagan?

The Endtime Pagan

The Bible prophesies many things that will happen to the “Modern Pagan Man” and his endtime world.

“*Ethnos*’ will rise up against ‘*ethnos*’” (Mark 13:8, Luke 21:10). The word *ethnos* here is commonly translated as “nation.” In other words, there will be much unrest, warring and competition as pagans will rise up against pagans. The *ethnos* will be holding

Israel in bondage during the latter days and will be judged (Acts 7:7), this being the same period referred to by Jesus as the “time of the Gentiles” (the time of the *ethnos*) (Luke 21:24). The pagans will set up vain systems that conspire against God: “Why do the nations (*ethnos*) conspire and the peoples plot in vain?” (Acts 4:25, Psalm 2:1). They are going to be angry that God will unleash His wrath upon them and reward the saints. Revelation 11:18 clearly says the *ethnos* are destroying the earth. What form of destruction referred to here is not clear. On balance, it seems to be referring to physical destruction. Could this include such phenomena as pollution, environmental damage and other results of overconsumption? The pagans are the ones who are in alignment with the endtime commercial and political regime portrayed as Babylon the Great found in Revelation 17–18. It is the *ethnos* who “drink of the wine of the wrath of Babylon the Great’s fornication” (Revelation 14:8, KJV). All pagans are deceived by the sorceries of this global regime of which the “merchants were the great men.” (Revelation 18:23).

Thoughts to Ponder

The descriptions of the *ethnos* in the last days already align with what we see unfolding in the

world today. Surely, an anthropologist examining the records of the time described in Revelation 17–18 would name that era the time of the “Modern Pagan Man.” It is clearly a civilization marked by extreme consumption, endless wants, materialistic idolatry and a fixation on wealth. The evolution of this “pagan” is truly advanced. But this description already fits the description of the human species of our time.

How many of us might find similarities with the modern pagan way of life? It is an important and timely question. Only the *ethnos* (and the surviving Jews) are the ones who in the end — after the Great Tribulation — finally come and worship before God. “...for all ‘*ethnos*’ shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Revelation 15:4, KJV).

After all, “Every knee shall bow,” says the Bible (Isaiah 45:23). All the *ethnos* will sing a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10). (MC)