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No Ordinary God: A Christian Worldview Reset

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The world's rejection of the Christian worldview is rooted in its ignorance or rejection of the one true God. Thus, a moral recovery must follow a theological recovery—and that represents the true nature of our challenge.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God spoke these words: “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord . . .” [Jeremiah 9:23-24]. The highest aspiration of the human soul and mind must be to know the one true and living God, to enjoy Him, and to serve Him with gladness.

The good news is that a vast majority of Americans report a belief in God. Indeed, pollsters indicate that only a bare fraction of Americans are atheists or agnostics. If you take these data at face value, you would think America must be experiencing a great revival and spiritual recovery. This is hardly the case, however. Do Americans live as if they believe in a God of holiness who hates sin? Do Americans fear a God of wrath who shall surely judge sinners? Do Americans find their security in a God of omnipotence who holds all creation by the power of His might and the exercise of His providence? Do Americans believe in a God who created the heavens and the earth? Do Americans find their hope in a God who is rich in mercy? I think not; and the polls indicate not. The bad news is that the god in whom millions of Americans believe is not the God of the Bible.

A remarkable insight into the contrast of this apparent religious belief with genuine faith in the living God is found in a study of the British population. Like Americans, the great majority of Britons report a belief in God. The pollsters then asked a revealing question: “Do you believe in a God who can change the course of events on earth?” One man's response was taken as so indicative of the public's general view, that his answer became the title of the study. Do you believe in a God who can change the course of events on earth? “No,” he replied, “just the ordinary one.” Just the ordinary God, he said—meaning a god empty of identity and lacking in definition. This god provides an easy answer for a pollster, but is not a God who rules the universe, not a God who can change your life, surely not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—clearly not the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This man's response is, I believe, sadly indicative of modern belief in God. It is not a true belief at all, but superstition at best. We are standing once again where the Apostle Paul once stood at Mars Hill in Athens. Acts chapter 17 tells us that Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with the inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.”

Our message must be the same. “Men and Women of America, we observe that you are very religious in all respects. We have seen your altars and your crystals, we have heard your prayers and have watched your lives, we have observed your worship and heard your conversations. What you worship in ignorance, this we proclaim to you.”

The unavoidable truth is that most modern Americans do not know God. Ignorance of basic biblical truth is rampant and now expected. People are perishing because of a lack of knowledge. Remarkably, this is a problem inside, as well as outside, the church. Many church members are as ignorant of the true and living God as is the general public. Too many pulpits are silent and compromised. The ‘ordinary God’ of popular belief is the only God known by so many. The God of the Bible is as unknown in many pews as He is unknown in the world at large.

The problem is rooted in the godlessness of our age, and in the secularization of our culture. The disease is also present in so much of what is called modern theology. For too long we have had theologians who have told us that God is doing the best He can under the circumstances. For too long we have been told that we must outgrow the primitive belief in God found in the Bible. For too long we have been told that God is lacking the power to effect His will. For too long we have seen the God of the Bible replaced with the God of the modern theologians—a God who generally means well, but cannot accomplish His will. This God is a spectator, not a sovereign.

The one true God, the God who revealed Himself in the Bible, is a God who defines His own existence, sets His own terms, and rules over His own creation. The sheer shallowness of modern “spirituality” stands as a monument to the human attempt to rob God of His glory. Our much-needed worldview reset will require a comprehensive theological reformation—and that will start with a profound recovery of the knowledge of God.

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