

Our Choices: God or a Hole in the Ground

“Some years ago, the well-known astronomer Hugh Ross and I were taking part in a radio talk show at The Ohio State University. We were discussing some theme related to the origin of the universe when an irate woman called in and began to attack us with a volley of words. Her charge was that our conversation was really nothing more than a smoke screen for reversing Roe v. Wade and taking away a woman’s right to an abortion. Remember, we were talking about the origin of the universe.

“Throughout her tirade, she repeatedly insisted, ‘It’s my moral right to do what I choose to do with my body!’ Finally, when she paused for a breath, I said, ‘All right, ma’am, since you brought it up, I’d like to ask you a question. Can you explain something to me? When a plane crashes and some die while others live, a skeptic calls into question God’s moral character, saying that he has chosen some to live and others to die on a whim; yet you say it is your moral right to choose whether the child within you should live or die. Does that not sound odd to you? When God decides who should live or die, He is immoral. When you decide who should live or die, it’s your moral right.

“There was a pin-drop silence” (Ravi Zacharias in *The End of Reason: A Response to the New Atheists*).

To me, the amazing thing is that the abortionists will frequently claim to be Christians. In fact, they will claim the exclusive right to the message of Jesus and accuse Bible-believers of usurping His message for their narrow, joy-killing purposes.

When a person sets his mind to deny reality, after that,

anything goes. Nothing is a stretch for them thereafter.

A woman wrote to the editor of our local newspaper, attacking a piece I'd written (in which I had taken the traditional, orthodox position on the deity of Christ and the responsibility of His disciples to share the gospel) to say, "The Christ I serve would not be so narrow-minded."

I wrote back, "And where did you find this Christ of your very own? Because the only Christ I know about is the One revealed in Holy Scripture."

I think I know the answer to my question. She concocted a "Christ" of her own imagination.

Then, having created her own god, she is now free to have him stand for the very same values she holds. How convenient.

The image which Isaiah preached about comes to mind here.

"The workman melts a graven image, and the goldsmith spreads it over with gold, and casts silver chains. He who is too impoverished for such an offering chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks for himself a skillful workman to prepare a graven image that shall not totter" (Is. 40:19-20).

Does not the idolater see how ridiculous this is? Isaiah wonders.

He follows his little reverie with this blast: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants are as grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in. He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely shall they be planted; scarcely shall they be sown; scarcely shall their tree take root in the earth, when He will also blow on

them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away as stubble. To whom then will you liken Me, that I should be equal to him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one of them is missing" (Is. 40:21-26).

Isaiah is saying something like: "Use your heads, people! You can do better than this! Open your eyes! Look at the world around you!"

It's not like there is a pantheon of gods from which we are allowed to choose one of our liking. There are indeed religions galore, a veritable smorgasbord of choices of how and whom one will worship. But the actual choice is what it has always been: God or a hole in the ground.

Here's how the prophet Jeremiah put it:

"For My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

God or a hole in the ground.

That is and has always been the choice.

A cistern is a hole in the ground you dig yourself. At best, it contains stagnant water. But a broken cistern holds nothing. It contains air. It is empty, vanity and the essence of disappointment.

The living God presents Himself as "the fountain of living waters." Six hundred years later, the Lord Jesus told the city of Jerusalem as it was in the middle of one more of their interminable religious rituals, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the

Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38).

We recall the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? ... Seek the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near" (Is. 55:1-2, 6).

Religion may be a DIY project. But salvation and Truth are not. They are revealed, they are given, and they are bestowed.

On that Easter Sunday morning, there was a hole in the ground where a body had previously lain. But the stone had been rolled away to reveal that the One who had been its occupant was no longer within. The living Christ was up and a-loose.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20)

Ever since that day, people have been choosing whether to believe in that living Christ or to accept the hole in the ground as their alternative.

It's still the only choice. Dress it up any way we please, fancy up all those other religions, and we are still left with the choice of Jesus Christ or nothing, or hell, which is worse than nothing.

"There is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

No other name. No other way.

Nothing could be clearer than that. {eoa}

After five years as director of missions for the 100 Southern

*Baptist churches of metro New Orleans, **Joe McKeever** retired on June 1, 2009. These days, he has an office at the First Baptist Church of Kenner, where he's working on three books, and he's trying to accept every speaking/preaching invitation that comes his way.*

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