

AWAKENING AFTER 'AWOKENING'

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Wokeness Defined

Though the word 'woke' is a new word, there is nothing new about wokeness. Wokeness is a worldwide movement to place immorality on the same footing as morality and atheism on the same basis as faith in God. It goes back as far as the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve chose to guide their lives by their own ideas of good and evil to ignore their dependence of God and on His counsel. (This is what is meant by 'eating of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil'.)

The Descent Of Man

The Descent of Man is brilliantly explained in the early chapters of the Book of Romans. Though written in the first century it exactly describes life in the world of the 21st century. It shows how we choose to repress the knowledge of God, avoid the truth of His existence and providences and fail to recognize our accountability to Him. We refuse to worship God, to acknowledge our debt to Him, are not grateful to Him, ignore His counsel, act as if He did not exist and go our own way.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools. ... Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.” (Romans 1,18,21,22,24)

Paul describes how God gives us the freedom to ignore Him, knowing as we do this, we drift further and further away from His glory and help. When we refuse God's assistance and fatherly guidance and shut Him out of our lives, He permits us to go our own way and our behavior becomes increasingly more decadent. Immorality become the norm and wokeness the prevailing code of conduct. Paul points out that this descent of man deeply saddens God and provokes His anger.

Paul's words perfectly describe today's woke culture. Notice that the problem begins with repressing the truth and not retaining the knowledge of God and His ways and ends in decadence and depravity. The greatest truth about a human being is the He is made in the image and likeness of God to know love and serve Him. A society that represses this central reality of our existence cannot flourish or achieve happiness.

After Wokeness Comes Awakening

Paul does not end his discussion of the descent of man with the sad note of the wrath of God. On the contrary he shows how God has stepped into history to bear that wrath (punishment) upon Himself on the Cross. *While the descent of man provokes God's wrath – the misery of man provokes his compassion.* This compassionate intervention by God now opens the way for all people to be restored to His favor and blessing and to be transformed by His life – if only they turn back to Him and receive His gift.

In full awareness of the gross immorality of the culture in which we live, Paul uses the sad description of the fallenness

of our world not to leave us in despair, but to point us to the amazing rescue plan that God has opened for us through the Cross. He uses the description of the descent of man to launch the greatest explanation of the gospel ever written. Yes, the world is full of darkness and horrendous evil, BUT GOD has entered the darkness. Jesus has overcome Adam's disobedience by His own obedience and has taken on himself the sin of the world.

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3.21-24)

God's Compassionate Response

The wokeness, rebellion and immorality of the present world order has provoked God's compassionate response. His response to the present immorality of the world is neither to exhort us to self-righteousness nor to burden us with religiosity.

But before He explains how God's compassionate intervention of placing the sin of the world upon Himself, Paul first explains how self-righteousness does not remove the cancer of sin from our sin-filled nature. It simply *conceals* our immorality, because those who self-righteously criticize others do similar things themselves.

The two natural responses to our immorality are self-righteousness or religiosity. Neither have any power to restore us to God care nor to remove our innate corruption rebelliousness. (See Romans 2) Then he explains how religion – even biblical religion – that presents God's highest standards cannot liberate us from sin or

restore us to God. The standards of religion can only show us our sinfulness and need of God's forgiveness, mercy and help. *It is only by turning to God Himself and receiving the benefits of His Atoning work that we can be restored to His favor. And it is only by receiving His Spirit that we can be liberated us from the innate sinfulness of our rebellious Adam nature.*

A Christian response to the wokeness of this present world is neither to self-righteously criticize those ensnared with immorality, nor to burden them with religious regulations but to invite them to come home to the love of God through the way He has opened on the cross and to receive His transforming life.

The wokeness of these times then becomes the perfect opportunity for the gospel to be freshly presented and declared to this generation. Wokeness can become the launching pad for a new Awakening.

Let's make it abundantly clear that when we invite this generation to be reconciled to God we are not calling them back either to self-righteousness or to religion but to be restored of God our Father through His work in Jesus and to receive a new nature to replace our old sin-filled nature. There is no religion nor self-righteousness in this - only a sincere return and contact with God who loves us and made us for Himself.

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4.23-24)

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