

## THINKING THAT GOD IS LIKE MAN! Bobby Witherington

### PSALM 50:16-21

*"But to the wicked God says: What right have you to declare My statutes, Or take My covenant in your mouth, Seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you? When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; **You thought that I was altogether like you;** But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes,"*

Psalm 50 is attributed to Asaph. In this particular section of Psalm 50, God is depicted as addressing "the wicked." "The wicked" addressed in these verses were those who hated "instruction," who cast God's "words behind," themselves, who consented with thieves, were partakers with adulterers, who gave their "mouth to evil," who used their tongues to frame "deceit," who spoke against their "brother." They did the evil things cited, at least, in part, because they had a wrong concept of God!

Please note verse 21. After citing the evil things they did, God said "These things you have done, and I kept silent; **You thought that I was altogether like you...**" Because they had done these terrible deeds, and God had momentarily "kept silent," they concluded that God didn't really care — that God was "like" them! They were guilty of the sin of mentally humanizing God!

So, it was then, and so it is now! Forgetting that God created man in "His own image," Gen. 1:27-28, they go about trying to mentally create God in man's image — in **their** own image! When this occurs, in the language of 2 Tim. 3:13, "evil men and seducers...wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Romans 1:20-32, which vividly describes the moral and spiritual degradation of the ancient Gentile world, sets forth the process whereby mortal man tends to dethrone God and enthrone self. Please observe that Paul herein described a people who once "knew God," but who did "not glorify Him," neither were they "thankful." Consequently, their "foolish hearts were darkened," v. 21; they professed themselves to "be wise," but "became fools," and they "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like corruptible man — and birds, and four-footed animals and creeping things," vs. 21-23. From that point, it was downhill all the way! God "gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves," v. 24; they began to worship and "serve the creature rather than the Creator," v. 25. "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions," with the women exchanging "the natural use for what is against nature," v. 26; men left "the natural use of the woman," and "burned in their lust for one another," v. 27; they ceased to "retain God in their knowledge," v. 28, and became "filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness..." v. 29-32.

Regarding the verses just cited, it would be virtually impossible to fully describe every sin herein mentioned without producing an x-rated article. But keep in mind the fact that inherent in the sordid spiral herein described was man's tendency to humanize God in their own minds. However, the tendency on the part of man to think of God as if He were "like" man is as common today as it was in the days when the Bible was being penned. In the following paragraphs we shall cite a few modern examples of this occurring.

**MANY ARE OFTEN INDIFFERENT TO RELIGIOUS ERROR, SO THEY CONCLUDE THAT GOD IS INDIFFERENT TO RELIGIOUS ERROR.** In brief, they are thinking that God is "like" they are! However, in the short letter to the church in Pergamos, in Rev. 2:12-17, the Lord rebuked the members of that church, in part, because some of them held "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans," which the Lord said, "I hate," Rev. 2:15! The apostle John wrote, saying, "whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God," ...2 John 9! The apostle Paul wrote, saying, "Now I urge you, brethren, **note** those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and **avoid** them," Rom. 16:17. It is obvious that God is not indifferent to religious error.

**MANY ARE OFTEN INDIFFERENT TO RELIGIOUS DIVISION, SO THEY CONCLUDE THAT GOD IS INDIFFERENT TO RELIGIOUS DIVISION.** In fact, one noted preacher publicly voiced his gratitude for the existence of so many religious denominations so that each person can "worship in the church of His choice!" However, Jesus **prayed** that all who believe on Him through the "word" of His disciples would be "one," John 17:20-21, and He even **died** to make it possible for both Jews and Gentiles

to be reconciled unto God in *“one body,”* Eph. 2:16, which is *“the church,”* Eph. 1:22-23, the church Jesus built, Matt. 16:18, and purchased with His *“own blood,”* Acts 20:28.

**MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT TRUSTWORTHY, SO THEY CONCLUDE THAT GOD CANNOT BE TRUSTED!** However, God is a God Who *“cannot lie,”* Tit. 1:2. The Bible says, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promises...,”* 2 Peter 3:9. In fact, the Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies (many of which took on the form of a promise), which have been fulfilled exactly as promised! In order to show *“to the heirs of His promise the immutability of His counsel,”* God *“confirmed it by an oath,”* so that *“we might have strong consolation,”* and that we might flee *“for refuge to lay hope of the hope set before us,”* a hope which serves as *“an anchor of the soul,”* Heb. 6:17-19.

**MANY PEOPLE ARE THEMSELVES INDIFFERENT TO MARITAL INFIDELITY, SO THEY CONCLUDE THAT GOD IS INDIFFERENT TO THE SAME!** Disregarding the plain instructions of Jesus (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:6-9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18), many people marry, divorce for any cause, remarry, and keep repeating the process, thinking nothing of it. In fact, with some people it is all a joke, with some speaking nonchalantly of entering into their “starter marriage!” However, God plainly said that *“He hates divorce,”* Mal. 2:16, and He gave many instructions to both husbands and wives concerning **how to keep their marriage intact.**

**MANY PEOPLE ARE INDIFFERENT TO THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF LOST SOULS, SO THEY CONCLUDE GOD IS TOO!** However, God *“so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,”* John 3:16. The Bible says that *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,”* Rom. 5:8. Indeed, Jesus tasted *“death for everyone,”* Heb. 2:9. God has never been indifferent toward the lost, and neither should we be!

**CONCLUSION:** Many, many examples could be cited which illustrate the sad fact that it is very common for sinful man to ascribe their own attitudes and thoughts to God, little realizing *“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that he should repent...,”* Num. 23:19. God plainly said *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts,”* Isa. 55:8-9. It is a fatal mistake for man to try to mentally humanize God, and then conclude that whatever he does is approved by God. In fact, the Bible was written so that we might learn **what** to think, and **how** to live. We must never try to bring God down to our level; to the contrary, we should try to *“be holy”* because **He** is *“holy,”* 1 Peter 1:16. God is not like us. Morally and spiritually, **we** should try to be like God!