



"They feared Yahweh and served their own gods ..." – 2 Kings 17:33

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

SELF DECEPTION

This study will deal with man's rationalization of "right"/"wrong," and of subjective or conflicted thought and behavior. In short, we'll look at some of the variables that contribute to man's subconscious, often involuntary, "fall" into the mental condition of unbelief and loss of faith as a result of his refusal to deal with cognitive dissonance.

This phenomenon is likely the overarching reason for the difficulty we see in communication and teaching. It (cognitive dissonance) most certainly does impact logic and reason, and I think in fact is the primary affliction that leads to an "unsound mind." Once a man is taken victim by this mental state, it can grow more powerful within him day-by-day – often to a point of no return.

8. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:8

Cognitive Dissonance is the mental disharmony that results from the mind trying to hold two or more conflicting and opposing beliefs simultaneously. This dissonance torments the mind which needs things to make sense. The dissonance (disharmony) can be fixed by either changing one's belief (learning a truth or discarding an untruth), or by rationalizing (i.e., lying to yourself) about the facts.

Cognitive dissonance happens when an individual or a group attempts to harmonize (live with) known conflicting beliefs and/or behaviors. It becomes chronic when man is unwilling to be honest with himself. He may think himself a Christian, and yet his actions and/or true beliefs are those of a non-Christian. This is an inner conflict for which his mind needs to find a rationale or an escape. To a merchant who knows Christmas is pagan, but makes exceeding profit at Christmas, his excuse might be the profit. Anything can be rationalized for the sake of profit (i.e., the end justifies the means). To a Churchgoer who considers himself a Christian, practicing a pagan ritual like Christmas can be rationalized by telling himself that Jesus' name gets men-

tioned a lot, and it is a time of good cheer and well wishes. Never mind that the actual ritual is based on ancient Babylonian tradition of Nimrod's birthday and the Roman pagan tradition of Saturnalia ... and has nothing at all to do with Christ, Christianity, or Scripture.

2. *Thus says Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.*
3. *For the customs of the people are vain: for one cuts a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.*
4. *They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.*

Jeremiah 10:2-4

A Christmas tree? Yes, definitely! In fact, it could be any of a variety of man-made pagan idols. How can we claim to believe Scripture and at the same time believe in, or participate in, the ritual of the Christmas tree? To do so produces cognitive dissonance leading to self deception, rationalization, guilt, an unsound mind, and loss of faith.

MAN'S GREAT SIN

Perhaps the greatest cognitive dissonance is to believe in God but at the same time hate Him. A man's innate desire to make his own rules conflicts with his belief that God made the rules for life. Indeed, this was the sin that caused the fall of Adam. It is the greatest sin man can commit against God. It is man making himself his own god.

In this case the mind is asked to believe or entertain two conflicting things simultaneously (i.e., God is right, but I am more right). The brain doesn't like conflicting input, and therefore attempts to find or invent a remedy. In order to continue holding a conflicting action or belief, one may rationalize or ignore the facts by deciding that the information is unprovable, or unreliable, and therefore he is free to

ignore it. By ignoring the cognitive dissonance man can completely sidestep truth and logic, and this leads to loss of faith, inability to reason, and spiritual blindness ... a most serious condition that ruins lives.

This proclivity for blindness is contained in the very essence or nature of what it is to be an un-raised man. Its potential for development is like a virus in the un-raised man, and is cured only by faith. Thus, the need for man to be "raised" (spiritually awake – Jn. 3:5-6). If we are not "raised" we are prey to base tendencies. The "un-raised" man has an insurmountable obstacle when faced with cognitive dissonance. His mind cannot resolve it because he has no spiritual anchor. And since he is not "in Christ" he is an island to himself with no common foundation and no common approach in which to communicate and reason. The key to protecting one's self from this affliction is **simply truth**. It is the learning, and honestly accepting, of God's "way" instead of man's way.

BUILDING WALLS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

When a man's mind remains in a state of cognitive dissonance he is at odds with himself. He is conflicted. His mind needs a remedy, but finds none. The question is, will he be honest and resolve the conflict in his thinking or his actions, or will he lie to himself and deny reality? Persistent self deception cripples a man's brain so that it stops working properly. It can turn a man into one of "the walking dead" ... having chosen to be out of touch with reality.

The old religions of India, Egypt, Babylon, Rome and North Europe were helpful to kings and rulers because the myths resolved the mental dissonance in the minds of the citizens of those kingdoms. Minds disabled by myths cannot reason or analyze critically. They become easily tricked and controlled. Like the Wizard of Oz hiding behind a curtain while he bamboozled the citizens of Oz, rulers and kings need to hide behind the curtain of pagan mythology while they bamboozle their subjects. The old pagan religions were/are kept and taught by kings, priests (churches), and governments for this very purpose.

Nimrod, the "mighty hunter," and founder of Babylon, as well as his later Greek counterpart, Atlas, were "heroes"; "titans." They were considered great saviors because they stood between "heaven" and "earth." Contemporary images of Atlas show him holding the Earth upon his shoulders. This image disguises his original symbolism.

Under "Atlas Mythology," *Wikipedia* tells us that "In Greek mythology, Atlas was the Titan who held up the sky." Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons* tells us further that Atlas was the Greek counterpart to Babel's Nimrod. Atlas held "heaven" (God) upon his shoulders, thus he pushed "heaven" farther away from "earth" ... relieving Man from the oppression of God.

About Nimrod, Hislop tells us: "All tradition from the earliest times bears testimony to the apostasy of Nimrod, and to his success in leading men away from the patriarchal faith, and delivering their minds from that awe of God and fear of the judgments of heaven that must have rested on

them while yet the memory of the flood was recent. And according to all the principles of depraved human nature, this too, no doubt, was one grand element in his (Nimrod's) fame; for men will readily rally around any one who can give the least appearance of plausibility to any doctrine which will teach that they can be assured of happiness and heaven at last, though their hearts and natures are unchanged, and though they live without God in the world."

Paganism provides colorful saviors ("heroes") for all who look for an alternative to God. Once convinced that God is cruel and oppressive, their minds were conflicted. Compromised minds search to find remedies for that conflict. Atlas, like Nimrod, gave pagans an alternative and delivered their minds from the mental impasse (i.e., God is good, but can't be trusted).

"As a mighty benefactor of mankind, this individual (Nimrod) was deified; and ... the [conflicted] inhabitants worshipped him as the 'Elevator of The Heavens.' Now, what could more graphically describe the position of mankind and the proceedings of Nimrod as 'The Emancipator'?"

Does this not also mirror the image of the false Christ of the churches whose claim is to have "emancipated" man (earth) from the curse of Heaven's law?

"From this bondage (to God) Nimrod emancipated them. By the apostasy he introduced, by the free life he developed among those who rallied around him, and by separating them from the holy influences that had previously less or more controlled them, he helped them to put God and the strict spirituality of His law at a distance, and thus he became the 'Elevator of The Heavens,' making men feel and act as if heaven were afar off from earth, and as if either the God of heaven 'could not see through the dark cloud,' or did not regard with displeasure the breakers of His laws. Then all such would feel that they could breathe freely, and that

now they could walk at liberty. For this, such men could not but regard Nimrod as a high benefactor."

Nimrod and Atlas were/are popular symbols in occult societies like Freemasonry and Skull & Bones ... familiar to men in power in government and World Banking.

Churches, also, keep the legacy of the "Titans" or "Giants" alive by continuing the tradition of elevating the heavens away from man, offering a false "savior" to rescue men from a cruel God.



Colossal bronze Atlas,
Rockefeller Center, New York.

Churches, as agents of government, inflict churchgoers with "cognitive dissonance," teaching them that human rulers are for their benefit and more trustworthy than God.

Governments commit wicked acts and usurp God's throne, but churchgoers are told God wants them to "submit to" their rulers (Rom. 13:1). It is a conflict for men to believe that God wants them to support institutions that hate God. And unless a man can analyze this riddle and resolve the conflict in his mind he is left without something he can believe in. That's when he accepts the alternate tale of a Nimrod-type hero/savior like the false Christ of churches. Thus, the churches celebrate their savior's birthday on the traditional date of Nimrod's birthday ... i.e., Christmas.

As the numbers of these mental insults grow, they take their toll on men. The disease grows like a cancer developing into a state from which it is increasingly difficult to extract one's self. The churches, by claiming to be agencies of Christ, and then presenting Him as a modern Nimrod, have blinded millions of churchgoers who can no longer identify the real Christ of Scripture. The lion's share of my work over the years has been in helping people to "come out" from their state of cognitive dissonance; to stop giving credence to false authorities. Many have "come out" of the paralyzing state of mind and have shaken off the effects.

However, once a cerebral pattern of unresolved cognitive dissonance is established, with the passing of years it becomes increasingly, maybe even exponentially, more difficult to extract yourself from it and return to a state of sound mind and to "see" or accept truth.

The churches tell us that law is the enemy of man ... but not all law, for state and federal laws are welcomed. They object only to God's law. Thus, another insult of cognitive dissonance for which the churches' provide a false remedy ... i.e., they offer a false Christ (the Nimrod of the churches) to emancipate churchgoers from God's law.

MAN NEEDS A COMMON APPROACH TO REASON AND COMMUNICATE

For Man, the certainty of being tricked and compromised through cognitive dissonance begins the moment he dismisses God as the common source of all that is right and good. God is man's connection to sanity. There is only ONE Lawgiver. Once a man settles his mind to the basic truth that GOD HAS NEVER GIVEN LEAVE TO ANY MAN, AGENCY, OR GOVERNMENT TO RULE OR MAKE LAW, he will begin to come alive spiritually.

Jesus, God's right hand, did not, and does not, "rule," nor does He make law. Instead, Jesus upholds his Father's law. Jesus is unlike any other king. He was vulnerable yet strong, meek but unafraid. He revealed truth instead of covering it up. He gave without taking.

David and Solomon are often referenced as examples of godly kings in Israel, but they weren't. Churches misteach the history of Israel's kings. Churches let people think that God wanted kings in Israel. But He didn't. History shows that no one is more godless and corrupt than human monarchs and rulers. They murder, steal, and deceive their way to their thrones or offices, and then they claim their appointment is by God ("The Divine Right Of Kings").

The era of kings in Israel was not God's system. Churchgoers don't realize this. Some even fantasize that the

British Throne is the continuing Throne of David being held for Jesus until He "returns" to Earth. That scenario is wrong in so many ways I can't begin to relate them. The fact is, Jesus is on his throne. He has been King since He was raised immortal over two millennia ago.

God's system prohibits mortal men from being rulers and lawmakers. But the churches teach that God approves it. This deception creates and perpetuates cognitive dissonance in churchgoers. It keeps them mentally off balance.

In 1 Samuel 8, God explains exactly what He thinks about man kings, rulers, and lawmakers. He forbid it in Israel. He was very clear when He stated that when Israel sought to have a king like the other nations, they rejected Him that He "should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). David was king in a system that rejected God. That system dismissed God like the US Government dismisses God. God cannot – does not – favor such a system. Churches, however, teach their followers that God commands them to honor and obey that system. It is their system, and it destroys faith and ruins lives.

David grew up in an apostate and idolatrous nation not unlike America today. Nonetheless, God loved David and communicated with him like He communicates with us today through Jesus – his Logos (communication). So, David was king in a system that had rejected God, but he still believed in God. So he, too, was a victim of the times.

We are to have no other gods (lawmakers) before Yahweh. Even Jesus, our immortal King and God's Right Hand, is no lawmaker. He upholds God's Laws. I cannot over emphasize the importance of understanding "**whoever makes your law is your god.**" The President, Congressmen, Supreme Court judges, lower court judges, city and county commissioners, ALL are gods based in a system of total idolatry. They are little gods, and voters who participate in the electoral system are also little gods. This system couldn't continue if citizens weren't mentally crippled with cognitive dissonance. The US Government is a God-hating institution. Politicians and agents of government think and act against God. And we must of necessity understand this!

The kings in Israel were men. They might have done better if they hadn't joined themselves to a system that usurped the throne of God.

There is another popular debate in our day, of "Conservatives" vs. "Liberals." It is a false and fruitless debate ... the result of cognitive dissonance. They are two sisters arguing, but neither is correct. The Pharisees were conservatives, and they killed Jesus. I learned a long time ago that Conservatives are usually more dangerous than Liberals. Both define themselves by a wrong metric, but the liberals are less organized and that makes them less of a threat. Conservatives are self-righteous zealots who follow power-mad political terrorists. Patriotism is dangerous because it diverts our focus away from God.

Once this is settled in a man's head, he will despise politics and all of the government-controlled agencies of propaganda. He will no longer be easily tricked into mental paralysis by having two conflicting beliefs simultaneously (i.e., government is ungodly, but God wants us to obey it). Anyone who is comfortable watching TV news has not yet settled the issue in his mind.

God is our only Lawgiver (Is. 33:22). David's kingship was NOT God's choice for Israel. David's political life and performance was bad, as was all of Israel's kings. But God worked with him even in his error. David was a victim of his time. He lived in a time when Israel had abandoned God and his laws. David, himself, to some degree, had to be ignorant of the system God gave through Moses.

MY FIGHT AGAINST COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

In the 1980's, early in my ministry, I was led to study the basic principles of law and freedom. My eyes were opened by some blockbuster truths that changed my life. One early revelation was that whoever makes your law is your god. That was basic ... and huge! Suddenly I could see major idolatry to which I had been blind all my life.

I also learned that government claims to authority based on the "consent of the governed" is an illusion and a farce. John Locke and Fredrick Bastiat showed me that men cannot delegate authority that they don't have. In other words, how can men who have no authority to hurt, steal, or murder, grant authority to politicians, soldiers, and policemen to hurt, steal, and murder? A man cannot grant or give what he does not have in the first place. Thus, government's claim to authority via "consent of the governed" is a lie; a farce. This, and a thousand other crazy things, is what happens to men when they distance themselves from God.

I learned that every man has the God-given right to defend himself from anyone (including government) who designs to hurt him unlawfully. Anyone who acts to harm me puts himself in a state of war with me. In a state of war I have liberty to defend myself even to the point of killing my assailant if it is called for.

Thus, God Himself is the only power I can trust to govern me. In fact, God is not only fair and just, He is also sympathetic and caring. He, alone, is qualified to be Lawgiver and Sovereign. No one else!

I read works by John Locke, Lysander Spooner, and Fredrick Bastiat – all available for free now on the Internet. On my Library web site (benwilliamslibrary.com) I published some of these works. In my *Newsletter Archive, July – Oct 1993*, you can find reprints of sections of Spooner's *Natural Law and No Treason*. Under *Recommended Reading* you can find Spooner's *No Treason*, and Bastiat's *The Law*. Both are excellent. These, along with John Locke's treatise *Of Civil Government*, helped me understand law and freedom.

With these basic common sense salvos, and others like them, many errors in my thinking process were corrected ... which, in turn, made it possible for me to understand the writers of the Bible. Most of them wrote about law. The Bible is not about religion. It is about man's responsibility to the laws of life ("the law of liberty" - James 1:25 & 2:12). God created us free to do anything we want as long as we don't hurt our brethren or compromise God's will. Dealing with enemies, assailants, and those who put themselves in a state of war against us is, on the other hand, a different consideration. Thus, the world is divided into at least two parts: 1. brethren, and 2. enemies (those who hate God and

have no inhibitions against hurting others).

God's laws (like Spooner's terms "Science of Justice" and "Natural Law") are common sense protections and remedies to problems caused by enemies of God and Man who think it is OK to hurt innocent people or take advantage of others by coveting what is not theirs.

There are innate enabling variables that, like a virus, activate man's potential for unbelief and unsoundness of mind. These stem from unresolved cognitive dissonance. For example: dishonesty, peer pressure, fear, lack of confidence, and pride ... these are pits into which many fall.

Cognitive dissonance is a major tool used by intellectuals to destroy faith in God and build their power over the masses. They have invested much time and experimentation in perfecting their devious deceptions and accusations designed to create doubt. Their well-polished, hypocritical trick questions and insinuations are exercised in the "institutions of higher learning" as well as churches and political debates. Catholic priests, for example, and Rabbis, do not believe the Bible is true. They are like politicians who advertise Democracy and The Constitution while they secretly know it is only a ploy to deceive and subjugate gullible citizens. Nonetheless, the superstitions, beliefs, and loyalties are useful to the rulers because they create mental disharmony (dissonance) in the minds of their prey, making them into simpletons who accept whatever they are told and lack the intellectual acumen for critical thinking.

THE DISSONANCE OF THIS AGE

The greatest cognitive dissonance was created by the Serpent System which caused men (Adam) to distrust God, thus destroying faith. When a man loses faith it changes him. It kills him spiritually.

In this current age (New Covenant Age) the great offending cognitive dissonance is the way churches teach their deceptive theology and claim it is Bible based. According to church theology Jesus is our Savior and Lord, and yet He had to fly away to outer space and leave us here under attack by "the Devil." That pagan theology creates a faith-killing conflict in the minds of churchgoers.

So the way theologians and churchgoers rationalize their way out of that conundrum is to twist Bible truth to turn God into the real enemy. In order to think of Jesus as their Savior they must invent a scenario from which He saves them. He obviously didn't save them from the church-invented "Devil." But they teach that He did save them from God who was going to burn them all in the church-invented "Hell." They teach that Jesus caused God to turn his wrath away from them and give them a pass at the end of the age, at the church-invented "judgment day." This is non-Biblical.

I cannot begin to quantify the extent of damage caused by church teachings invented by real devils to destroy faith in God. Only truth can set us free and liberate our minds from wrong beliefs which cause cognitive dissonance.

Believe God. Believe God's Son, Jesus. Believe in truth. May God grant you light, clarity, faith, and courage.

Ben Williams