

## Why Pagans Worship Demons

### Commentary for April 15, 2022 — ... Because They Give People What They Want

What are the reasons people worship, or pay any attention to demons? One important reason is that pagan "gods"<sup>1</sup> RESPOND to evil people, making evil demands, to tempt them to do evil against others. The apostle Paul tells of this in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans when he tells what all our ancestors did:

**"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."**

• *Romans 1:21-23*

After they had done this, their separation from God increased. They went toward greater depravity. God does not respond to sinners, unless they have an attitude of repentance. However, lesser demonic "gods" **do respond**, flatter, and give such people "proofs" by telling them personal secrets about others<sup>2</sup> all to gain (false) trust and show their supposed power.

### **An Example**

At Fuller Seminary I took a course in 1986 called "Folk Religion." The course was taught by an experienced American missionary to India for almost two decades. After each lecture, discussion groups were assigned that met for several sessions.

The group I was in had a Christian student from Peru. He was in his early thirties from a remote native Indian tribe in Peru that received Christian missionaries among them. The entire tribe converted to Christianity from their old religion of animism.<sup>3</sup> He was sent to Fuller to study, learn, and minister to his tribe about their Creator God.

Missionaries came, but not just to visit. They asked to live among the tribe and teach them about their God. The missionaries asked about skin cuttings they saw on adults and children. Why did they do this? Tribal leaders told them: the creator God never communicated with us. Lesser gods did communicate and offered protection from other spirits who were very evil. They obeyed the spirits until they learned the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> Those "gods" (*elohim*, lower case, minor spirit beings) were and are real. Impersonating gods at present, people worship less powerful demons (Deuteronomy 32:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

<sup>2</sup> They are called "familiar spirits" in the Old Testament: Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:11; 1 Samuel 28:3, 7-9; 2 Kings 21:6, 23:24; 1 Chronicles 10:13; 2 Chronicles 33:6; and Isaiah 8:19, 19:3, 29:4.

<sup>3</sup> Animism is the belief that everything, even rocks, have a spirit that people can interact with. This tribe, in my opinion, was led to God and were wise people. Conversions of families and groups of people are found in the New Testament (Acts chapter 2, 31, 8:14-17, 10:44, 19:1-6).

The Peruvian student told the discussion group that before the tribe converted, the “gods” required every parent to cut the skin of babies and children into patterns for their “protection” from evil spirits, but only **if** they continue to worship the lying spirits who told the tribe to do so. This tradition was many generations old. Everyone hated the practice; everyone was scarred over much of their body: male, female, young and old. There were no exceptions. It protected the tribe from disaster; or that was what the lying spirits told the people.

Over time the missionaries told the tribe about the Creator, about Christ Jesus their Savior, His sacrifice for their sins, His resurrection and how God communicates through His written word, the Scriptures. The people were joyful (even the shamans) that their Creator and His Son can be known. The people have proper knowledge how to live. God does not require they cut their children. The entire tribe converted to Christianity.

The Peruvian man who told the story of his tribe’s conversion was among the first generation not to have cuttings and the scars. He had photos and showed them to us. The tribe wanted to learn more about the true God. His task was to be educated, return, and teach his people the Scriptures in their own language, and later perhaps have the Bible translated for them.

I am not a fan of missionaries for various operational and doctrinal reasons, but the Bible tells of conversions similar to those of the Peruvian tribe. After Jesus restored the sight of a blind man, the man was challenged by the Pharisees. The now-sighted man said to them: **“Now we know that God hears not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and does his will, him he hears”** (John 9:31). God honors their faith. Paul wrote:

**“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved** [Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21].

- **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?** [Hebrews 11:6] **and**
- **how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and**
- **how shall they hear without a preacher?** [Acts 26:17–18] **And**
- **how shall they preach, except they be sent?**

**as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!’** [Isaiah 52:7]

**But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias [Isaiah] said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report? [Isaiah 53:1] So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’**

**But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But Esaias is very bold, and says, ‘I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me’ [Isaiah 65:1].”**

• **Romans 10:13–20**

God will make Himself known to all people eventually, at a time when **HE** decides to do so. For most that will occur when they are raised to physical life for judgment. God will reach out and call all people: in nations, tribes, clans, households, individuals — even you and me.

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