



<http://threshingfloor-radio.com>

“The Religious Spirit”

Part 1-Identifying The Religious Spirit

July 1, 2009

by Randy Maugans

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, {false...: or, one who foments strife}

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.-

2Timothy 3:1-5

Scripture References: Roman 12: 1-3. Matthew 23 (Jesus' treatise on the Pharisaic Religious Spirit)

One Definition:

A **religious spirit** (mindset) seeks to substitute **religious** activity for the power of the Holy **Spirit** and the grace of God in the believer's life. The primary objective of a **Religious Spirit** (mindset) is to have the church "maintain an outward form of Godliness, while denying the power of the Holy **Spirit**. (1 Tim 3:5) This is accomplished by seeking to replace true repentance and grace, with **religious performance and works**

The Religious Spirit:

- Operates in legalism
- Pride through works
- Manifests Control/Manipulation*
- Manifests a Critical Spirit---fault-finding, narrow criticism, setting up to failure syndromes, etc. :

Matthew 22: 15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

Matthew 22:23-29 and 34-40-the Saducees and Pharisees tag team Jesus to TEST Him.

- Operates through diversion-draws attention from the main point to peripheral issues---and ultimately to itself*
- Seeks to lead, or usurp leadership (headship in marriages, Biblical leadership in ministry)
- Inflicts guilt
- Manifests defilement.

Defile- to make unclean or impure: as a : to corrupt the purity or perfection of

- Related to the "**Python Spirit**" -**Acts 16**:

Python- (*putho, or pythia*)-In central Greece, at the foot of Mount Parnassus, lies the town of Putho, wherein lived the Delphian oracle, a priestess who chanted prophetic messages—oracles. Those seeking to know their future flocked to her. In Greek mythology, a serpent, Puthon, inspired and guarded the priestess, that is, the oracle. The god Apollo killed the dragon and, appropriating his name, called himself Pythius. He named the priestess/oracle the Pythia.

Python is the usurper, the keeper of the oracle, Apollo (Apollyon) (**Rev. 9:11** And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath **his name Apollyon**. {Apollyon: that is to say, A destroyer})

The religious spirit attempts to “hijack” the Gospel. It will bring a carnal, superficial, or diversionary aspect to the real message:

A TRUE vision and calling by the Holy Ghost is found in **Acts 16**:

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. **10** And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; **12** And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. **13** And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which

worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

(Note: that while Paul SAW a vision of a man, he met the woman, Lydia. The Holy Spirit used the man's image in the spirit to overcome Paul's orthodox religious conditioning regarding women)

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

16 ¶And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: {of divination: or, of Python}

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men (Paul and Silas) are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Here, the religious spirit attempts to attach itself to Paul's ministry by proclaiming a truth, but the truth is diverted away from Paul's message of Christ to Paul and Silas. The religious spirit (Python) uses this to appropriate to itself the works of Christ through the apostles---and to ultimately build a religious system that can be *merchandised*. Remember that this damsel "...brought her masters much gain by soothsaying".

Now, it was part of the Hellenistic culture in the regions to sell various idols, amulets, and accoutrements related to religious worship. The devil knew he couldn't stop the Gospel, so his strategy is to pervert and distort it into the idolatrous models of pagan worship. This is a consistent strategy that is documented in:

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; (this also occurs in Macedonia)

It is also a strategy found in the ministry of Christ:

Luke 11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

The religious spirit always rises up to distort or appropriate the WORD OF GOD!

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, {marketplace: or, court}

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison,

The religious spirit, once deflected will always go to the next level: intimidation, persecution, and then force! Note that this dynamic has never varied and will also play out in the tribulation with the martyrdom of the multitude who come to the truth!

Signs of the religious spirit:

- Attention to details, scrupulous in attention to matters of "forms"---perfectionism
- Uses "religious talk" to excess where casual conversational language is more suited
- Draws excessive attention to matters of personal "holiness"
- May exhibit a persecution complex/blames personal shortcomings on persecution
- Exhibits prudishness or holds altered or aberrant views of sexual roles.
- Ingratiates itself with leaders or more mature believers and gradually "lobbies" for changes/"corrections", or tries to shift the focus of leadership and members.
- Moves attention to others in the group with "needs" (perceived or real) and begins to fulfill those needs.
- Uses this "ingratiation" process to move into a position of criticism and control. Gives gifts/showers attention/overly helpful---with "strings attached"
- Attempts to alienate affections (husband/wife, leader/group, etc.
- Tries to isolate a person, or group of people to gain control.
- Will become hostile if criticized.
- Works one person or group against another.
- Operates in duplicity. Eventually LIES to cover up details which could expose it.
- Sets up situations as "tests" designed to trap a person in compromise.

- **A religious spirit is often a wounded spirit---one which has internalized the wounds of its host and now uses them to victimize others.** Many times the host will have suffered exploitation of a personal nature at the hands of a religious authority figure or a religious parent. These may be sexual, violent, or psychological abuse which were not taken to the cross for redemption. The host may exhibit many fine qualities, become a useful member of the community of faith, and appear to be a fully redeemed believer in Christ.

What will occur is that over time the wounds become strongholds for demonic activity which manifest in the tell-tale signs of isolation, control, criticism, and ultimately abuse. The religious spirit's goal is to DENY the work of Christ on the Cross all the while claiming to SERVE Christ.

