

June 2023

Dear Brethren:

If someone does not know the One True God, but still yearns to have a happy and fulfilled life in this present world, what might he do?

Human beings apply themselves to all manner of activities to try to achieve contentment. For those of us who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, His inspiration through King Solomon addresses this very real *human dilemma*, when man seeks to satisfy his soul apart from a hope in a better future offered by his Maker:

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow (Ecclesiastes 1:14–18).

God inspired the entire Book of Ecclesiastes to highlight the *futility of human existence* in the absence of a greater spiritual purpose. No matter what might be achieved in a human lifetime—even using great wealth sincerely to try to do good—Solomon shows that the end result is nevertheless *empty and unsatisfying*. Man does not believe this to be true, but God—who is the One who made man—declares it to be a fact. God made the mind of man, intentionally, to exist with *a missing element*. Man was created in the image of God, for the express purpose of being born into the very God Family. That is his whole reason for being. Pursuing *that very spiritual goal* is the only one that will provide true contentment. Human beings can deny the existence of God all they want to—and they do—but that will never change the fact that their lofty pursuits in the flesh will never make them truly happy. They are "hard-wired" to need more. The very best that can be achieved in the flesh is that which Solomon penned, as God dictated to him:

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him? Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments

be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest (Ecclesiastes 3:22; 9:7–10).

This simply translates as: Use your limited time on this earth to be a good person and to enjoy as many things as you can *according to God's laws of wisdom*, because after you die, there is nothing else. It is quite a depressing life philosophy.

But the called people of God have received the miracle of *real understanding of a much greater purpose*. They are not like the masses of blinded humanity cut off from their Maker at this time, each of them out there striving in this world, trying to find real meaning and happiness. They are not ones who work vainly to try to supply that "missing ingredient" in their minds through their own altruistic human endeavors that never satisfy. They are ones who have been taught that they are here to train to become full members of the God Family, and their personal strivings are all pointed toward achieving *that singular goal*. It is the melding of God's mind with man's mind—by the begetting of the Holy Spirit—that finally *fills that void* and makes a human being truly complete. One day, according to the Plan of God, they all will have that opportunity. But for now, the majority of people in this world live in an existence of *vanity and vexation of spirit*.

## Recognizing Counterfeits

The enemy of man—Satan the Devil—understands these facts of our mental makeup and seeks to *leverage our yearnings* in order to undermine that potential of being born into God's Family. He capitalizes upon our natural impulses—our desires to create and to live within a paradise upon this earth—by offering to us *his own version* of that paradise. Of course, Satan's version of paradise is one which is absent of the One True God.

There are many human beings who simply live to satiate their carnal appetites, and live selfishly at the expense of everyone else around them. That is a big part of the natural carnal mind. But there are some who truly seek to rise above these base characteristics and to be part of something more rewarding. These are ones who have learned by hard experience that gluttony, adultery, and every selfish pursuit do not really satisfy. They earnestly seek something that is more fulfilling. What will these sincere ones do? They are still cut off from God for the time being, so they cannot acquire the Holy Spirit to satisfy that longing in their souls. That longing makes them ripe for deception, as Satan appeals to their impressionable natures to provide hope of satisfaction apart from God.

## Babylonian Social Planners

One major classification of these human beings, who—like King Solomon did—wield great power with their wealth upon this earth today, seek to parlay their incredible influence into fostering a world-ruling empire to solve man's problems. To them, "rulership by the people" within hundreds of nations around the globe is too messy and uncontrollable. They believe that democracy sounds good philosophically, but that there is no way to bring real peace and prosperity to the earth (and by the way, to save the planet from utter destruction) without "the best and brightest" simply taking the reins and using force to make it happen. Our self-appointed "betters" believe it is their duty to save us all from ourselves. Do not expect any of them to give up their own wealth as they tighten their stranglehold upon worldly institutions. No, creating a totalitarian world government "for our own good" will be sure "coincidentally" to preserve their own wealth and power. We will all be required to sacrifice our freedoms and standards of living "for the good of humanity," but they surely will get to keep their own. Some of them might actually be sincere. But sincerity does not change the fact that they are taking their marching orders from the god of this world, who is the one inspiring them to work *exactly opposite* to God's Plan for the good of humanity. It is an attempt to bring about the Millennium on their own terms, without Jesus Christ.

You do not have to delve into the details of modern conspiracy theories to prove that this is true. In fact, some of you are doing way too much of that, and it is a distraction from your real Christian duty. (That also is a ploy of your enemy, by the way, trying to get you to focus upon the trivial.) All that you need to do is look at what God said would be true about Babylon the Great in the last days—before the return of Jesus Christ. (This will be a topic for the fall Holy Day season.) The diabolical system that Christ will destroy at His appearance is firstly an economic system (Revelation 18:3), designed to enrich a selected class of merchants who are dominating this world. It is secondarily political, social, militaristic, and a source of its own religious and educational philosophy (Revelation 17:2–6). Babylon of our time is not a physical nation in itself, but it is an ideological system that has permeated all nations upon the earth. Its influence is universal (Revelation 18:3) because the inspiration behind it comes from the enemy of man, who still sits upon the throne of this earth by God's allowance. Because this system is so pervasive, the only ones who can truly avoid being part of it are the ones who have God's revealed Truth and are rejecting the tentacles of its envelopment.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities (Revelation 18:4–5).

Coming out of Babylon does not mean sequestering yourself in a wilderness bunker. We are required by God to live in this world, yet to avoid being seduced by it (John 17:15). Part of our spiritual training is learning how to exist within a threatening environment without being absorbed and destroyed by it. Seeking to extract yourself totally from the game board will not produce the spiritual character that God is seeking in you. Jesus Christ existed and operated within the Babylonian environment of His day, manifested at that time by both the Roman Empire and the apostate Jews. You and I must commit to the same kind of endurance program. We do indeed exist in modern-day Babylon.

### **An Alternative Solution for Man?**

But what about certain people (and institutions) in this world *not called of God* but nevertheless seeming to manifest some admirable qualities? There are indeed some few who seem as if they do not agree with Babylonian totalitarianism and are sincerely striving to use their time and resources for "good causes." What do we say about them?

Before examining a specific case study to test this idea, remember our fundamental premise: Apart from a calling from God and the applying of effort toward being born into the eternal Family of God, *any other work or enterprise* will end in futility and disappointment—every single one of them! There is no exception to this rule.

But what about one particular multi-billionaire today who is in the news almost continually—Elon Musk? He appears to be similar to a Solomon-like character, because he is one of the richest men in the world and has shown an aggressive desire to use his wealth to tackle great projects for the betterment of humanity. Unlike most of the other billionaires whose philanthropy is being used to further that tyrannical, one-world, communistic regime of Babylon, Mr. Musk speaks against governments giving up their national sovereignty, and he has become a seeming champion of free speech and free institutions. These characteristics seem like a breath of fresh air, and it would be easy for the people of God to climb aboard his bandwagon. But beware! Once again, there is no plan purposed by any man outside of the specific will of God that will ever produce a good result in the end. None!

As cited in the *Christian Post* dated January 3, 2022, when Mr. Musk was asked if he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior, he replied:

Things like turn the other cheek are very important, as opposed to an eye for an eye. An eye for an eye leaves everyone blind. . . . As Einstein would say, "I believe in the God of Spinoza."

Well, who is this Spinoza, and what God did he believe in? Was it the One True Creator God? Not hardly! Spinoza's God is the very same "god" that Albert Einstein embraced. Since Einstein was likewise a man devoted to the betterment of mankind, what else can we decipher about this religion?

In an article by *The Washington Examiner* dated January 23, 2012, entitled, "Spinoza's God," it is reported that in 1929, a Jewish rabbi in New York cabled Albert Einstein to ask if he believed in God. Einstein's purported reply was, "I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings." This is a very telling admission about the spiritual orientation of both Albert Einstein and Elon Musk.

### **Who Was Spinoza's God?**

The first question is, who is Spinoza? Baruch (de) Spinoza was a seventeenth century philosopher who was born in Amsterdam of Portuguese-Jewish origin. He was considered one of the foremost thinkers of the Enlightenment, and he came to be considered one of the most important philosophers—and certainly the most radical—of the early modern period. He is said to have been inspired by Stoicism, Jewish Rationalism, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Descartes, which means that he absolutely *rejected belief in the real Creator God or in His inspired Word*. Spinoza was counted as a heretic by both Jews and Christians of his day.

From that same *Washington Examiner* article from 2012, we read about Spinoza's idea of God:

It's clear what Spinoza's God is not. He isn't the God of the Bible, the personal God of Spinoza's own Jewish tradition, or of Christianity, the one whose job description includes closely monitoring human affairs and miraculously intervening in them. What he is isn't so clear . . .

Everything is determined, not by God's will—He doesn't have one—but by our being, with everything else, an integral part of God's being. Nothing happens by chance. And there are no miracles. Asking God for one, asking that He suspend natural law for our benefit, is asking God to trip up God. But once we recognize this inexorable order as God's only providence, we arrive at a serene acceptance of the world, combined with a virtuous immunity to its petty distractions and snares, thus partaking of the true freedom which belongs to God.

In layman's terms, what this really means is that Spinoza believed in a powerful "god" who brought all matter of the universe into being, but is not a being who has any personality, plan, or expectation of human beings.

Many claim that this is not the philosophy of an atheist, but at the very least it certainly smacks of the notions of the agnostics. Spinoza ridiculed the Bible, seizing upon its "seeming" inconsistencies and anachronisms, and merely cherry-picked certain concepts from it, such as the Golden Rule—the simple moral imperative to love one's neighbor. He felt that the rest of the Bible was just organized superstition, and he advocated for *breaking the bonds of ecclesiastical authority* over society.

This "take" on God is actually a very clever way to acknowledge intelligent design by a powerful "being," while at the same time denying any obligation to think about or care about that God. The atheists (true God deniers) make the mistake of denying that *evident order* in the universe had any intelligent design at all. The Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 53:1). It also says:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:20).

Yes, the very existence of such complex life forms upon this planet, and such observable orderliness of *natural laws*—which defeat the slide toward chaos—is proof that some kind of intelligent force must have brought it all into being. Of itself, order *never* comes out of chaos by happenstance. Honest scientists know this. That is why any human being who tries to claim that the order found in this universe was just a "happy accident" is proven to be a fool.

But those attaching themselves to Spinoza's "god" have found a clever way to avoid this trap. They do not deny that there was a supernatural architect that caused everything that we know to come into existence. At the same time, however, they have no intention of being bound by the idea that this "power" requires anything from them. They believe that "god" created, but then left the scene with absolutely no constraints or future expectations upon that creation. Believing in Spinoza's "god" allows one to say that he believes in "god," but then to justify making up his own rules to define what is good and evil. It is a religion of humanism! In essence, it admits that some kind of power "created," but likewise claims that that power left us all to make our own way. We have no promise of salvation by any deity, so what happens is all up to us and dependent upon the choices that we make "as a species."

So this is what Albert Einstein and Elon Musk each said *informed* his own personal belief about God. They each believe(d) that we have only this present, temporary, physical

existence, and that there is no one to tell us what to do or to give us any hope thereafter. With that in mind, what is the very best that a human being with these beliefs might truly achieve in a physical lifetime upon this earth? No more than King Solomon described!

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. . . . If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place? All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? (Ecclesiastes 3:18–20; 6:3–8)

This is truly a hopeless existence, no matter how much one might achieve in a physical lifetime.

### **Grand Schemes of the Hopeless**

So, in this present evil world, the "grand planners"—the powerful merchants of the world who think they know better than anyone else—offer us a communistic, totalitarian "paradise," and we are admonished to buy into their program, or else.

But, on the other hand, what are we being offered by billionaire visionaries like Elon Musk? Anything better? Well, he advocates for the preservation of independent nations, democracy, and free speech. But he also believes that in order for humans to survive long-term, we need to become a "multi-planetary species." This seems to indicate that he foresees threats either other-worldly or else right here on earth today, which put the future of humanity in jeopardy. He is right about that, because Jesus Christ confirmed that in absence of a grand intervention, no flesh will survive (Matthew 24:21–22). Musk does not believe in biblical prophecies, but he seems to see the same *writing on the wall* about humanity's bleak future.

What is his solution? He certainly is not hoping and praying for the return of Jesus Christ to save us. No, being a humanist, his solution is to create human colonies on other planets and moons, so that all of our "human eggs," so to speak, do not remain in "one basket." To that end, he is investing billions in advanced space technologies and rocketry—surpassing anything that any governmental agency (including NASA) or any other private company has ever produced to date. The intent is to establish eventually a colony of a million people on the planet Mars, perhaps within the next thirty years. As far-fetched as that might sound, his technology companies have already gained a reputation for doing what many "experts" formerly thought to be impossible, and he is absolutely upending the global space industrial complex right now. It is very possible that in a short time, we could see a reusable super-heavy rocket (twice as powerful as any past spacecraft, including Saturn V) that could transport immense payloads to destinations away from earth. The prospect is also to accomplish this for a fraction of the cost of previous space missions. Making a huge-capacity cargo spaceship that is also reusable and reliable (like a jumbo airliner is today) would change everything. This has never been possible before. Until now, man has only been able to escape earth's gravity with very small payloads, making excursions to the moon—for instance—merely an expensive and impractical novelty. But we are now on the cusp of the kind of technological leaps that could finally break the bond of earth's gravity upon man.

Mr. Raymond Cole believed that it was very likely that one of God's prophecies concerning the time leading up to the return of Christ might have spoken of the dispersal of human beings into habitats outside of earth's orbit:

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:31).

Mr. Cole's speculation always seemed too far-fetched to be true, especially if we thought that the end of this age would occur "soon." Technology simply has never allowed any civilians except for "the super-rich" to travel into space, and that has only been a novelty. How long would it take before other-worldly bases of operation could become a possibility, let alone routine? But here we are now, with some of these most ingenious individuals making that prospect look possible for the first time in human history. You may yet live to see a day soon when man finally breaks the shackles of the earth's gravity.

If that happens, it will be an act of rebellion against God, who specifically placed man upon this earth to be his domain. But God likewise has permitted man to rebel in many other ways over the last six thousand years. Most of what man has done with his God-given talents are acts of rebellion. The only question is, how far will God allow man to go before the end finally comes? Be very careful about assuming that you know the answer. You do not, and neither do any of us.



## Babylon Then and Now

The original Babylon was a kingdom established by Nimrod in the land of Shinar (Genesis 10:8, 10; 11:2). The very essence of that kingdom was an attempt to institute their own grand plans in opposition to God's instruction:

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Genesis 11:4).

We know what God wanted them to do, because, in the end, He forced them to do it, even against their will:

So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city (Genesis 11:8).

This shows that God wanted them to "scatter" around the globe according to predetermined national boundaries that God had determined for them. They refused to do that, and decided instead to "stay together" in a single, unified civilization where they would make *a name for themselves*, meaning, a civilization that would glorify themselves, not God. It was an endeavor of rank rebellion against God's will. But how and why did God intervene to stop it?

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech (Genesis 11:6–7).

So God took away their unified language as a means to stop their defiant work. They became forced to do exactly what God had commanded originally—to disperse around the earth into their assigned national domains. Language was the tool God used at that time to effect that change. But why did He intervene when He did?

Verse six confirms God's thinking, that if He did not intervene, "nothing will be restrained from them." This does not mean that God had given man the power to do anything and everything that he ever wanted, such as making himself into God. But it does show that God did indeed give man *the mental capacity to do very impressive things*, physically. They had set their sights upon building a tower that would "reach to heaven." We do not know what that actually entailed physically, but it was a project that likely would have allowed man to achieve his goal of corralling all human beings into a totalitarian one-world civilization

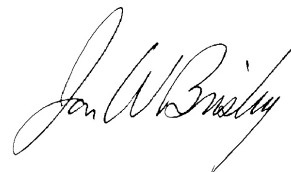
and bringing on *the end of the world* way too soon. God set things in motion to require six thousand full years to bring humanity to the brink of its own extinction. Had Nimrod (and Babel) fulfilled his own dreams, this likely would have pushed mankind to that brink much sooner.

Fast forward to our present day: Mankind has finally overcome God's *temporary barrier* of the confounding of the languages—through technology—so that anyone today can communicate with and collaborate with anyone else around the globe. And human beings once again have been pooling their resources to try to "build a tower" to reach to the heavens. That "tower" assuredly includes a new worldwide, totalitarian "Utopia." But is it possible that this rebellious work of man also includes the idea of a rocket ship that will finally allow man to break free of the physical constraints that God placed upon man so long ago, which have kept him tethered to this earth until now? Maybe so, maybe not. But *the spirit of rebellion* is exactly the same as has always existed, and it is being inspired by the very same spiritual enemy who was there to influence Nimrod. There is truly nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

How far will God allow mankind to go in his rebellion before the end of the age? We do not know. But if God said that—short of divine intervention—"nothing" would be restrained from him, might this imply that man could actually be permitted to disperse many of God's children outside of earth's atmosphere, requiring Jesus Christ to recover them from the heavens at His return (Matthew 24:31)? Perhaps not. Maybe this is merely symbolic language. Time will tell as we witness what man actually "achieves" in coming months and years.

The important point to remember always is that there is no human endeavor on this earth that is worthwhile or will ever be fulfilling outside of the calling of God to be born into His divine, eternal Family. No other aspiration will satisfy. No grand plan or seeming accomplishment will ever fill that longing which God placed in the soul of man. All of these endeavors, no matter how sincere or altruistic, are still acts of rebellion against man's Maker. Worship of the God of Spinoza will never satisfy. Only the sincere worship of the One True God will ever bring real satisfaction to humanity.

Your friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the text "Your friend and servant in Christ Jesus,".

Jon W. Brisby