

a large measure of error in doctrine upon these subjects; the action and reaction of the two upon each other being speedy and manifest.

In other words, the doctrine of the Son, while absolutely vital to orthodoxy, has less immediate effect on the conduct and direction of religious practice than has the doctrine of man. It is, in the long run, of far greater significance but in the immediate the latter is of more pressing consequence. We will think about it for awhile and try to browbeat everyone to agree with our opinion!

B. Early philosophical assessments: Man

1. Contrasting Graeco-Hebraic ideals....

While the Greek philosophers spoke much of man's innate worth, etc., the commanding Grecian ideal was the near-worship of the body. Survival meant more to the ancient Greek than culture and only as culture became a survival tool did it fit well in his hand. As we have noted before, the polytheistic gods of Greece and Rome were men--at their best in the body--but at their worst in morals, etc. The human being in bodily form was at the center of Grecian society.

The Hebrew view was markedly different. It was centered on a theocratic ideal and a divinely given law. The will of God was more consuming and the values of life were oriented to God-consciousness. This was not such a god as had been known to the Graeco-Roman world...but an invisible god who is not limited to bodily functions. Hence the Hebrew world did not do much "body building" and did nothing such as the Olympic games where the chief intent was the deifying of the body.

In a hopeless oversimplification you may say that in the Hellene ideology Man was the world, in the Hebrew culture Man was the part of the world most responsive and most responsible to the Deity.

2. Man in the polytheistic society

We continue to generalize when we tell you that in the polytheistic society man was, at best, the foil of the gods. In ancient Babylon he was created from the blood of the rebel god and the other gods were perpetually unhappy with him ever since. His only hope was to find some deity like himself and hope that god was powerful enough to defend him and would protect him. Man was a pawn in pagan society in general and whether more victimized in the polytheistic society or the animistic orders would be hard to say. In neither is one given any real hope of redemption.