

The Decline of a Nation

A common thread in John Bunyan's 17th century Christian classic, The Pilgrim's Progress, involves his hero's wisdom (or lack thereof) in choosing companions as he travels on his long road through life, heading for the Celestial City (heaven).

At one point, Christian (the hero) meets an atheist who challenges the very destination itself. Because he sees no visible signs of the Celestial City, he is convinced it does not exist.

Christian also encounters a pious-looking fellow in a white robe who appears every inch the man of religious spirit and who claims to share the same destination.

Eventually, it becomes painfully clear that he is leading Christians away from, not toward the Kingdom of God.

Satan Has a Strategy to Control Nations

1. His strategy is based on conspiracy and deceit, which explains the basis of war. He does manipulate nations. **Revelation 12:9, 20:3, 8**
2. He is the promoter of world peace (by manipulating scripture); example, the first half of the Tribulation.
3. He is the chief opponent of the laws of divine establishment and seeks to break down freedom, marriage, the family, and the sovereignty of any nation where establishment, evangelism and Bible Christianity is functioning.
4. His policy is power politics: violence and change. Part of his function is to malign law and order.
5. He is the father of religion and liberalism. He is anti-military and pro-welfare state, pro-communist and against free enterprise. He is against marriage and the family.
6. Religion is part of Satan's strategy. Religion is the creation of Satan's genius to counterfeit the plan of God. Religion is man seeking to use his own merits, his own works to gain the approbation of God.

Satan's Counterfeits of the plan of God in Religion include:

1. Gospel – **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**
2. Ministers – **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**
3. Doctrine – **1 Timothy 4:1-3**
4. Communion Table – **1 Corinthians 10:19-21**
5. Spirituality – **Galatians 3:2-3**
6. Righteousness – **Matthew 19:16-28**. The Mosaic Law is distorted into self-righteousness, which rejects faith in Christ for relationship with God. This self-righteousness is based on morality.
7. Self-righteousness – **Matthew 23:13-36**
8. Power and dynamics (miracles, healing, tongues) - **2 Thessalonians 2:8-10**
9. A system of gods – **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**

False Teachers are Part of his Strategy – 1 John 4:1-3

1. They have a phony, hypocritical façade. They are do-gooders who “love” everyone, being all things to all men apart from any standards based on Bible doctrine. **Matthew 7:15**. They seek to stimulate your ego. **Romans 16:18**.
2. They use human public relations systems and flirtation to court believers. **Galatians 4:17-18; 2 Timothy 3:5-7**.
3. They appeal to human ego, arrogance and pride to distract believers from grace. **2 Corinthians 10:12**.
4. They promote idolatry as a part of Satan's communion table. **Habakkuk 2:18-19**. The worship of the image of the Virgin Mary is idolatry.
5. They promote legalism as a system of spirituality. **1 Timothy 1:7-8**. They encourage people to gossip.
6. They possess a false spirit. **1 John 4:1-3**. They are inspirational but do not function by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Satan is very much involved in your life and in the life of every other human being who has ever existed. The purpose of his involvement is to destroy our relationship with our Creator...the ultimate design being to destroy the one eternal possession that we have...the soul. Jesus made this observation...

John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.*

The Bible reveals a three-fold plan of Satan and the methods he uses in his war of destruction. Every human being is the target. But even though this enemy is powerful and deceptive we each have the weapons to defeat him to protect our souls.

Satan's Three-Fold Plan

The three-fold plan of Satan in his war against our soul involves progressive levels or steps. Each level is designed with the intent to further entrap us.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 *¹ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron;"*

**The first level (step) in Satan's plan is to...
undermine the "truth" of God and the reality of spiritual things.**

The design and intent of this first step is to lure us away from "the faith" and the true realities of life...so that we will be open to Satan's seductive deceptions.

Ignorance and confusion about spiritual things are Satan's most powerful weapons. A person who is ignorant or confused about God and His truth becomes vulnerable to every deceptive suggestion of Satan. But we must be warned...ignorance in God's court is not nine-tenths of the law. This is why the Bible sternly warns...

Philippians 2:12 *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*

Spiritual ignorance opens the door for Satan's second level of attack.

**The second level (step) in Satan's plan is to...
introduce his "seducing doctrines" that appeal to our rebellious human
nature**

Satan is a good liar and a spiritually ignorant person who is a good listener. Satan can make it all sound so good that the urge becomes irresistible to "go for it".

His appeals touch the things that humans beg for: self-independence, pleasure, success, fame, to name a few. He fully understands our human pride, our lusts, our ambitions as well as the basic needs and desires of our flesh, mind, heart and soul.

Satan knows exactly what we want and offers to provide everything that we desire. His offerings, however, are weak and temporary substitutes for God's fulfilling and permanent provisions.

James 1:13-15 ¹³ *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*

**The third and final level (step) is Satan's plan is to...
bring us to total submission and control**

The final goal of Satan's plan is to bring us to the point of a "seared conscience". At this point our conscience is so hardened that, no matter how extreme it may be, there is nothing we view as wrong or sinful. We have now fully surrendered to all of Satan's deceptions.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 ¹ *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars **seared in their own conscience** as with a branding iron,*

Self-justification now replaces guilt. Self-righteousness and arrogance now replace the fear of punishment. A person with a seared conscience no longer has feelings toward God or His eternal laws. Spiritual truth and reality are no longer of interest and are not pursued. This person is content with being outside of God's authority and fellowship...to be under Satan's

control...although the person may be deceived into believing that he or she is actually in control of their own life.

Simple logic regarding life no longer exists. It is replaced with a reprobate mind...one that is spiritually perverted and void of spiritual reality. Once that occurs Satan has completed his goal for total control over our life.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

1. “**Spirit**” - taught to Paul personally by God the Holy Spirit.
2. “**Says**” - to speak, communicate, report.
3. “**Later**” - the negative volition that the church can expect in the future.
4. “**Times**” - a period of time or human history (end of the Church Age).
5. “**Some**” - believers
6. “**Fall away**” - withdraw from and reject the teaching (truth, absolutes) of the Word of God.
7. “**Paying**” - to pay close attention to something, to follow. When anyone rejects the truth, Satan steps in with deceit, lies, error and false doctrines. It started in the Garden of Eden and has continued down through history. Satan will say or do anything to get us to reject Bible Doctrine.
8. “**Attention to**” - Gradually, people believe the lie over the truth. Emotional experience has taken over as the reality of the spiritual life. Deceitful spirits use emotion to make Christians think they are under the influence of the Spirit.
9. “**Spirits**” - evil spirits or demons paying attention to what the “spirit” says rather than the Holy Spirit.
10. “**Doctrines**” - teaching instructions now that he has their attention. He can teach what he really wants them to believe. Now they accept whatever doctrines the demons want them to believe.

² by means of the **hypocrisy of liars** seared in their own conscience as with a **branding iron**,

1. “**Hypocrisy**” – playing a stage role (used in a negative sense), play-acting, and pretend, outward show.
2. “**Liars**” – speaking falsely (they are especially dangerous because they play a role that puts their victims off the scent (like actors who play parts so well that their words have a ring of truth to them). The believers who depart from doctrine are taught false doctrine (or learn false doctrine).

The ultimate source of that false doctrine is deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons. The means by which this occurs is from the source of false teachers, who are called here “liars”.

False teachers are liars because the things that they teach are lies. It does not matter whether or not the false teachers know or what they believe, they are wrong and it does not matter. What they teach is still a lie!! Ignorance is no excuse, not even for those who mean well – they are sincerely wrong.

3. “**Branding iron**” – to brand with a red hot iron. This is an idiom “to be seared in the conscience” – unwilling to learn from one’s conscience. To refuse to listen to one’s conscience. How can these believers do this? They do not believe they are doing anything wrong. *Note vs. 2 below.*

Note verse 2

- a. When you reject the truth, you must accept what is false. You have no other choice.
- b. Sin, human good, and the function of evil destroy the perfect standards placed on the conscience by the teaching of the Word of God.
- c. When we reject the Word of God, we reject the standards of the Word of God.
- d. When we reject the standards of the Word of God, we continue to live on the basis of whatever other standards are available.

- e. The only other standards available are the standards of our sin nature (whatever we want to do) or the standards of Satan, called the Doctrine of Demons.
- f. When we reject God's standards, we seal with the searing of a branding iron, false standards in our soul.
- g. This process is known in Scripture as "hardness of heart" or building scar tissue on the conscience of the soul. The scar tissue becomes so thick that no new divine standards can break through the buildup of false standards.
- h. Therefore, these false teachers have belief systems they will not give up. God can only break through this system of false standards by personal and historical disaster.
- i. The result of having this false belief system is that they make legalistic and hypocritical demands on other believers.

Colossians 2:4 I say this in order **that no one** may **delude** you with **persuasive argument**.

- 1. **"I say this"** – Greek "**houstos**" - I am saying this. Refers to what has just been said. We must always be alert to the possibility of **falling** to false teaching no matter how well established we think we are.
- 2. **"That"** – purpose clause
- 3. **"No one"** – referring to **false teachers** coming along behind him to try and persuade them that there is more to learn than Church Age doctrine.

Who were these false teachers? They were called "Judaizers" or those who believed that the Age of Israel was not about to end and that the Mosaic Law must be included with the mystery doctrine of the Church Age to give the believer a complete picture of God's plan.

- 4. **"Delude"** – Greek "**paralogizomai**" – means to reason off to the side. It denotes a clever argument, impose upon, deceive, circumvent. It may be accomplished by withholding some of the facts.

“Persuasive argument” – persuasive speech, art of persuasion, one word in the Greek refers to the skill of using words to gain a desired end, whether good or evil. Satan is the master counterfeiter.

5. **Galatians 1:6-7** ⁶ *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*
6. **Galatians 1:9** *As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.*
7. **Galatians 2:4** *But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.*
8. **Galatians 5:7-8** ⁷ *You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you.*
9. **Galatians 5:18** *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*
10. **Galatians 6:12** *Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

Four Divine Institutions

They are designed by God for the good of mankind and for the survival of the human race.

1. Volition: Freedom to choose (accountable for those decisions).
2. Marriage: One man one woman (to establish stability, authority and responsibility).
3. Family: A functional environment for all (different roles) (a place of security).
4. Nation: Freedom and responsibility. Nations must have a system of common law to protect the privacy, the rights and the property of individuals. It cannot solve economic and other social problems.

Enforcement of law and executions of justice – to protect from the inside. A strong military to protect from the outside. Example – the Muslims starting a “holy war” against Christians in order to further their own cause of rulership, tyranny, dominance, and suppression of the truth (evil in the name of God).

America has been the example of freedom and democracy. At one time, our belief system came from the Word of God and our leaders based their decisions on the Word of God.

Today, moral issues (even spiritual issues) are being debated by political parties using falsehood as facts.

Why the Decline of a Nation? Jeremiah 12:10-13

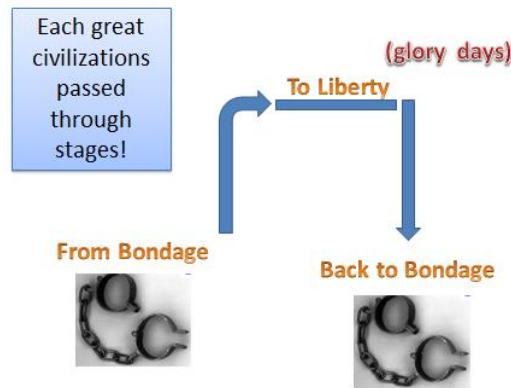
What we learn from the book of Jeremiah.

1. Idolatry
2. Fail to depend on God
3. A false scale of values
4. Disregard of Bible Doctrine
5. Illicit immorality, homosexuality, lesbianism

Lying becomes an acceptable alternative to truth. There is manifest hatred of God and His Word, a breakdown of the family and children defying authority. Dysfunctional families become the norm rather than the exception and have no respect for authority.

Conditions existing in Jeremiah’s day parallel the conditions which exist in our own country today.

“Sooner or later in life, we all sit down to a banquet of consequences” - Robert Louis Stevenson



The Failure of the Clergy - Jeremiah 12:10-13

The book of Jeremiah is one of the timeliest books in the Bible as far as our national entity is concerned. Conditions existing in Jeremiah's day parallel the conditions which exist in our own country today. This was the failure of the Jews with the result of SELF-DESTRUCTION.

1. Spiritual desertion.
2. National desertion – no respect for authority; no morals and standards.
3. Economic – you cannot take most of someone's income without destroying
4. their initiative.
5. Military – no visible military. What are you going to do when they show up at our door?
6. Social Life – a departure from divine laws and institutions. Marriage, family, nation (why are we here?).

Jeremiah brings out almost every principle which leads to national degeneracy and national destruction.

Jeremiah 12:10-13 ***"Many shepherds have ruined My vineyard, They have trampled down My field; They have made My pleasant field A desolate wilderness.***

No Nation can survive without a remnant of those who have a spiritual life.

1. **"Many shepherds"** – clergy in the Southern Kingdom. This describes one group of major contributors to the destruction of any nation.
 - a. **Prophets** - declared the unwritten Word (writers of the Scriptures).
 - b. **Priests** - responsible for the exegesis (teaching of the Word).
 - c. **Pastors** - carnal pastors.

This was understood by Joseph Stalin when in 1931 he declared that the US could be captured without firing a shot. He developed a 6-point plan. First one was to neutralization of truth. Satan is constantly trying to influence the clergy. When those who are responsible for the declaration of spiritual truth are neutralized, spiritual desertion moves into a nation.

2. **“Have ruined”** – doing the opposite of what they were called to do. The Hebrew teaches that the clergy had already completed their work of destruction. By now it was merely a matter of how the mechanics would be carried out.
3. **“My vineyard”** – In the Old Testament (Nationalism or National Entity) of the Jews “*vineyard*” is the Southern Kingdom of Judah. “*Product of the vineyard*” is the grape which depicts righteousness and joy; National prosperity is “*Maturity*”. As a result, the Jews, like all nations under God’s plan were designed to have great happiness and blessing. A condition which exists only where Divine Laws are followed.
4. **“Have trampled down”** – had contributed immeasurably to the destruction of the people.
5. **“My field”** – that which belongs to the Lord. He wants them to be blessed, but they have refused the means by which they could be blessed – spiritual growth.
6. **“They have made”** – means to establish (it’s running its course). The application of this passage to us today is obvious; Jeremiah knew when Judah would fall, we do not, but if we continue our present disastrous course, we will go into slavery, suffer military defeat, know economic depression, and lose all the freedom that we have cherished.
7. **“A desolate wilderness”** – the people have contributed greatly to the destruction of Jerusalem. They have trodden down God’s portion in five areas:
 - a. Spiritual
 - b. National Degeneration
 - c. Economic
 - d. Military – we are alive and in a free Nation because, periodically, freedom is fought for on the battlefield!
 - e. Social Life

¹¹ *"It has been made a desolation, Desolate, it mourns before Me; The whole **land has been made desolate**, Because no man **lays it to heart**.*

1. **"Land has been made desolate"** – **"Shamon"** Hebrew **"shaw-mame"** – "she made herself a desolation". Freedom can be perpetuated or destroyed. Having freedom does not mean that you will always have it.
2. **"Lays it to heart"** – no truth inside the soul. God has set up all the laws. Laws of economics, laws pertaining to the soul, spiritual life, laws of freedom. Man has no frame of reference or application of doctrine.

¹² *"On all the bare heights in the wilderness **Destroyers have come**, For a sword of the LORD is devouring **From one end of the land even to the other**; There is no peace for anyone.*

1. **"Destroyers have come"** – those with a personal agenda!
2. **"From one end of the land even to the other"** – National and Personal Divine Discipline.
3. ¹³ *"They have **sown wheat** and have **reaped thorns**, They **have strained themselves to no profit**. But be ashamed of **your harvest** Because of the **fierce anger of the LORD**."*
4. **"Sown wheat"** – invested capital (wheat).
5. **"Reaped thorns"** – nothing - they are overtaken with economic depression and there was a lack of human freedom. Loss of free enterprise means a loss of prosperity. Economic recession means an economic depression.
6. **"Have strained themselves"** – they work hard, but results in nothing.
7. **"To no profit"** – religious ritual means nothing to God.
8. **"Your harvest"** – Divine discipline or prosperity.
9. **"Fierce anger of the Lord"** – because of their negative volition toward doctrine.

Characteristics of a Leader

1. Self and group discipline.
2. Relaxed mental attitude under pressure.
3. A sense of responsibility plus moral courage.
4. Confidence in who and what God is, not in who and what you are.
5. Fairness to all (not prejudiced).
6. An understanding of others.
7. One who can organize, systematize and delegate.
8. Doctrine in the soul – filled with the Holy Spirit. Understands God's protocol plan for his life and seeks God's wisdom and direction not his own. Comparing Israel (586 BC) to America 2011

Prophet and Priest

1. Spiritual Desertion
2. National Degeneration
3. Economic
4. Military – no visible military
5. Social Life – a departure from Divine Laws & Institutions

The reason for the decline in Judah was the failure of the SHEPHERDS and the fact people neither took in Truth nor established it in their heart.

I cannot tell you how blessed I am to be an American Citizen. I love this Nation and highly respect all that our founding fathers did to establish this Nation upon Godly principles. However, as I look around at the spiritual condition of the Nation today, my heart grieves. The political, economic and social problems we encounter are the symptoms of the **Spiritual Deterioration of a Nation!** America's future is very much up in the air.

Jeremiah 23:1-3, 9-21; 23-32

Jeremiah 23:1-3 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are **tending My people**: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not **attended to them**; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds," declares the LORD. "Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply."

1. **"Tending My people"** - they are feeding false truth.
2. **"Attended to them"** – you have not come to them with real spiritual truth.

False Prophets: When, in the name of the Lord, false doctrine is proclaimed on a national scale, it results in national disintegration.

Jeremiah 23:9-21 "As for the prophets: **My heart is broken within my**, All my bones tremble; I have become like a drunken man, Even like a man overcome with wine, Because of the LORD And because of **His holy words**."

1. **"My heart is broken within me"** - the activities of the prophets grieved Jeremiah when he viewed them in the light of God's plan.
2. **"His holy words"** - appreciation of God and His Word (who He is). The 10 Commandments were the codex (an ordinance) for Israel's freedom.

¹⁰ **For the land is full of adulterers; For the land mourns because of the curse. The pastures of the wilderness have dried up. Their course also is evil, And their might is not right.**

1. **"Adulterers"** – pornography, physical and spiritual degeneration (unfaithfulness).
2. **"For the land mourns because of the curse"** – divine discipline.
3. **"The pastures of the wilderness have dried up"** – economic depression and spiritual food on the decline.

4. **"Their course also is evil"** – their thinking is Satan's thinking.
5. **"And their might is not right"** – living by the power of the old sin nature.

*¹¹ "For both prophet and priest are **polluted**; Even in My house I have found their wickedness," declares the LORD.*

1. **"Polluted"** – twisted truth.

*¹² "Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them, They will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it; For I shall bring calamity upon them, **The year of their punishment**," declares the LORD.*

1. **"The year of their punishment"** – 586 B.C. the Chaldeans conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and enslaved the people.

*¹³ "Moreover, among the prophets of Samaria I saw an offensive thing: They prophesied by **Baal** and **led My people Israel astray**."*

1. **"Baal"** – demonism.
2. **"led My people Israel astray"** – but they are still responsible for the decisions they make.

*¹⁴ "Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a **horrible thing; The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood**; And they strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one has turned back from his **wickedness**. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, And her inhabitants like **Gomorrah**."*

1. **"horrible thing; The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood"** committing adultery and walking in falsehood (carnality) and taught false doctrine from the pastors.
2. **"wickedness"** – Satanic and human viewpoint thinking.
3. **"Gomorrah"** – acceptance of homosexuality. No nation has survived the tolerance of homosexuality (v. 18).

15 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets, 'Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood And make them drink poisonous water, For from the prophets of Jerusalem Pollution has gone forth into all the land.'"

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts, " Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD.

17 "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, " You will have peace"; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, ' Calamity will not come upon you.'

*18 "But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear **His word**? Who has given heed to His word and listened?*

1. **His word**" – anyone who understands the Word of God knows that these men are false.

POD*: The only defense you have against false doctrine is the truth.

*19 "Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, Even a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the **wicked**.*

2. **"Wicked"** – God employs natural disasters to discipline.

20 "The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it.

*21 " **I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied.***

1. "I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied" – Satanic counterfeit.

Jeremiah 23:23-32

23 "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off?

²⁴ *"**Can a man hide himself in hiding places**, So I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "**Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?**" declares the LORD.*

1. **"Can a man hide himself in hiding places"** – our minds.

*POD: Point of Doctrine

"Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD" – God knows what we think. He wants us to use His thinking and not our own.

²⁵ *"I have heard what the prophets have said who **prophecy falsely in My name**, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!'*

1. **"prophecy falsely in My name"** – I have had this great vision from the Lord.

²⁶ *"How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophecy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, ²⁷ who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of **Baal**?"*

1. **"Baal"** – a sign of apostasy.

²⁸ *"The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the LORD. ²⁹ "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which **shatters a rock**? ³⁰ "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "**who steal My words from each other**.*

1. **"Shatters a rock"** – Old sin nature.
2. **"who steal My words from each other"** – from error comes error.

³¹ *"Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.' ³² "Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the LORD, "and related them, and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit," declares the LORD.*

It is the Bible stored in the heart that delivers people!

As long as we have any freedom left, truth can be taught; as long as truth is taught, it can be taken in; and as long as truth is taken in, there is hope for our country.

The hope resides in any pulpit in this land where truth is taught.

Each great civilization passed through stages! From bondage to liberty (glory days) back to bondage! Historians have listed these in ten stages:

1. The first stage moves from bondage to spiritual faith.
2. The second stage moves from spiritual faith to great courage.
3. The third stage moves from great courage to liberty.
4. The fourth stage moves from liberty to abundance.
5. The fifth stage moves from abundance to selfishness.
6. The sixth stage moves from selfishness to complacency.
7. The seventh stage moves from complacency to apathy.
8. The eighth stage moves from apathy to moral decay.
9. The ninth stage moves from decay to dependence.
10. And the tenth and last stage moves from dependence to bondage.

These are the ten stages through which the great civilizations have gone. Notice the progression from bondage to liberty back to bondage. The first generation throws off the shackles of bondage only to have a later generation, through apathy and indifference, allow itself to once again be enslaved.

Romans 1:18-23

1. These passages teach us about the nature of man and the consequences of sin (due to our thought process). Understanding these passages will help us to share the Gospel with the unbeliever.
2. Remember: The unbelievers are spiritually dead and are unable to understand fully the Word of God.
3. America's future is very much up in the air. **Romans 1** tells us how leaders, nations and societies that once knew and honored God chose to turn away from Him.

¹⁸ **For** the **wrath** of God is **revealed from heaven** against all **ungodliness** and **unrighteousness** of men, **who suppress the truth** in unrighteousness,

1. **“For”** – “Gar” – certainly, by all means.
2. **“wrath”** – Greek “orge” “or-gay”. This is not an emotional response. Anger, indignation, wrath is used of the function of the justice of God in judgment on all His creation that violates His standards.
3. **“revealed”** – is being revealed – how? Judgment.
4. **“from heaven”** – the very throne room of God, where God sits in judgment as the Righteous Judge of the Supreme Court of Heaven.
5. **“ungodliness”** – Greek “asebeia” meaning irreverence, godlessness in the sense of dishonor and rejection of God instead of respect for God in worship. There is no respect for God. They are not interested in having a relationship with God. They do not honor God anyway. They go negative at the gospel hearing.
6. **“unrighteousness”** – Greek “adikia” – wrongdoing such as human good and evil. A right thing done in a wrong way is wrong. So we have a contrast of the righteousness of God and the unrighteousness of men.
7. **“who”** – refers back to all those men who reject God and live a life of wrongdoing and unrighteousness.
8. **“suppress”** – Greek “katech” – which means to hold back, hinder, prevent, hold down, suppress.
9. **“the truth”** – one truth, Absolute truth.

Romans 1:18-23

1. The love of God is made up of God’s integrity and grace.
2. The integrity of God is both His righteousness and justice.
3. The righteousness of God is revealed in the presentation of the promise of the gospel that those who believe in Christ will have God’s very own righteousness imputed to them.

4. The justice of God is being revealed in judgment against all those who reject the offer of God's righteousness and stand on the merits of their own righteousness.

Wrath

1. God does not get angry as man does; for God does not have emotions as man does.
2. God uses human language to explain His thoughts, decisions, actions, policies, and motives, so that we will have the ability to understand God.
3. The phrase "the anger of God" refers to the function of the righteousness of God that demands the execution of justice against those who reject the love of God.
4. Because of His great love, God offers His very own righteousness and eternal life to those who believe that He will give them these things.
5. Many creatures have rejected this offer from God's love. They do not want either God's righteousness nor God's life.
6. Instead they reject the love of God from their own free will and want only their own selfish, arrogant desires.
7. The righteousness of God demands that these creatures be judged by the justice of God.
8. Therefore, the justice of God judges what the righteousness of God has already condemned, and the righteousness of God condemns those creatures that reject the love and grace of God.

Suppress the Truth

1. The unbeliever who rejects God and suppresses the truth of the gospel in their own soul, even though they know it to be true.
2. They hold back, hinder, prevent, hold down, and suppress the truth, even though they have heard the truth about God's love for them.

3. They know that God loves them but they don't want to know. They do not want to face the reality that God cares about them and has provided eternal life for them.
4. Instead, they have to deny and hold down this truth in their soul. They must prevent this truth from becoming a reality to them.
5. The way in which they prevent the truth of God's love for them from becoming a reality is by continuing to focus all of their energy, attention, thoughts, and desires of their sin nature.
6. They are preoccupied with what they want instead of what God wants or has done for them.
7. Their sin nature continuously motivates them, so that they keep on seeking out their pleasures, doing the deeds of unrighteousness, performing the thoughts and actions of wickedness and evil, resulting in the practice of injustice toward others.
8. They cannot allow the truth of God's love for them to come into their thinking and be a reality, for this would destroy the world of illusion and delusion they have created for themselves.
9. They would rather live in the false reality that they have created than live in the reality that God loves them and has provided eternal life and blessing for them.
10. Therefore, from their own free will they reject the love of God, suppress the reality and truthfulness of his love for them, and choose to remain living in the unreality of their own sinful desires. I don't like what God has said – I'll create my own truth!

1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

1. **"because"** – tells us why.
2. **"is known"** – Greek "*gnosis*" – capable of being known. What can be known about God to the extent that He can be known i.e. what is evident, what can be clearly seen.

3. **“about God”** – that He is a God of love who offers eternal life to anyone who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and does all He can do without violating our volition.
4. **“evident”** – this refers to every human being. Greek “*phaneros*” has revealed, made known, shown, clear. A little pilot light. **2 Corinthians 4:3-4.**
5. **“made”** – revealed.
6. **“evident to them”** – God has revealed Himself to the mind of man (the unbeliever has no excuse). We are aware of ourselves, others, and that someone made the universe. Now it’s time to make a decision.

²⁰ For **since the creation** of the world **His invisible attributes**, His **eternal power** and **divine nature**, have been **clearly seen**, being **understood** through what has been made, so that they are **without excuse**.

1. **“since the creation”** – from the beginning God was revealed to the understanding and comprehension. Everyone has been able to comprehend and understand.
2. **“His invisible attributes”** – the unbeliever even has the ability to understand that God has certain attributes because of what God has created.
3. **“eternal power”** – in creation, God’s ability is not limited.
4. **“divine nature”** – all that He has done is perfect. Thus requires that the Creator of the universe must be older than the things He created.
5. **“clearly seen”** – by everyone. Greek “*kathorao*” to acquire definite information with the focus upon the process of perception; to learn about, being able to look down upon everything. You see clearly. He has a perfect view with his thinking.
6. **“understood”** – enough so every human being can be held accountable; to gain an insight into.
7. **“without excuse”** – since God exists and has proven that He does, the unbeliever owes God a hearing.

Being Understood

1. Man is able to look at the stellar universe and understand that someone must have created it all.
2. Since the creator is more powerful than the thing which he creates, man can understand that God has tremendous power. We call this omnipotence, being All-powerful.
3. Since the creator must be greater than that which he creates, man can understand that God is greater than the infinite universe. Therefore, we can understand that God is infinite – we can conclude that Whoever created the universe must exist longer than that which he created. We can this characteristic of God eternal life or eternity.
4. Since there is a great order and arrangement in the universe, we can understand that the creator has tremendous knowledge, wisdom, and organization. We call this ability omniscience – being all wise.
5. Since the universe seems to continue in the same manner day after day as it has always been done, this gives us a glimpse at the immutability or unchangeableness of God.
6. Since the idea of God exists no matter where we go in the world and since men universally believe in a divine being, this gives us the idea of the omnipresence of God.
7. Since all that God has created seems to do what it is supposed to do and continues to do so without fail, this gives us a hint of the sovereignty of God – that God's creation obeys His will.

²¹ **For** even though they **knew** **God they did not honor** Him as God, or give **thank**]; but they became **futile** in their **speculations** and their **foolish heart** was **darkened**.

1. “**for**” – because. Why is the unbeliever without excuse?
2. “**knew**” – Paul declared that God has made Himself evident to the mind of the unbeliever.

3. **“God”** – Lord Jesus Christ. They knew that He went to the cross and died spiritually for them. Jesus was God.
4. **“they did”** – consequences of man’s mentality.
5. **“honor”** – to glorify, praise, to describe to a person what is due Him. (see note #1 below).
6. **“thanks”** - To be thankful, feel obligated to, thank.
7. **“futile”** - worthless in thought, empty reasoning.
8. **“speculations”** - In thoughts, opinions, reasoning. A system of logic (inward reasoning) so their rational systems of thinking was designed to suppress truth (absolute) to get to truth. Their belief system of right and wrong.
9. **“foolish”** - Pertains to a lack of capacity for insight and understanding it’s not going to get them anywhere.
10. **“heart”** - Kardia – referring to the faculty of the soul where doctrinal thinking takes place(used for the total inner man].
11. **“darkened”** - To become dark. See Note #2 below.

Note #1 – Romans 1:21

- A. Rejection of Jesus Christ is dishonoring to God for three reasons.
 1. Rejection of Christ attempts to make God the Holy Spirit a liar, because it says that His revelation of the saving work of Christ to the soul of the unbeliever really is not true.
 2. Rejection of Christ dishonors God the Father, because it rejects His plan of salvation.
 3. Rejection of Christ dishonors God the Son, because it rejects His sacrifice for every member of the human race.

- B. The unbeliever cannot, does not, and will not honor, respect, or obey God in any way unless they believe in Christ.
- C. Faith in Christ is the first time any person obeys God and obedience is the first sign of respect.

Note #2 – Romans 1:21

A. **Ephesians 4:17** *This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles [unbelievers] also walk, in the futility of their mind,*

1. When you reject truth, a vacuum pump opens in your mind and sucks in what is false. The pressure on the outside is greater and the vacuum on the inside sucks up every false idea, every false doctrine, everything that is distracting to you.
2. Once you reject Bible Doctrine, you lose your common sense and your instincts for survival.
3. The Greek work “*mataioo*” means nothingness, worthlessness, futility, emptiness and therefore refers to vacuum.

²² **Professing**, to be **wise**, they became **fools**,

1. **“Professing”** – “Phaskw” “fos-ko” assert claim, to affirm, pledge (we have it together). But they don’t. The unbeliever who rejects the gospel has to justify his rejection.
2. **“wise”** - So they have to consider themselves far too clever (intelligent) and bright to believe in this kind of superstition (a word used against the gospel to justify their rejection of truth). They build up their own opinion of themselves to support their self-justification of rejection of the gospel and love of God. How? Through academic learning, philosophy, etc.
3. **“fools”** - Show to be foolish (thinking of an unbeliever). They do not teach doctrine, but attempt to explain Christianity in terms of philosophical speculation without the truth of Bible Doctrine as the means of establishing the norms of life. Intellectualism is meaningless

and often very harmful. If you take God out, you can't have a right view of knowledge and you can't have the right ethics.

Introduction to Verse 23 – The unbeliever has the chance of sharing and participating in the glorification of God. Yet he exchanges this opportunity for the worship of idols and images of his own creation.

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

1. “**exchanged**” – the unbeliever gives up what God has done for him. Truth for a lie.
2. “**glory**” – which is shared with those who believe in Christ.
3. “**incorruptible**” – it cannot be destroyed, changed, improved, degraded, or diminished.
4. “**an image**” - Substitutes for truth with other things and not worship of the true God. Then you make important decisions on how I feel and on what I think. Divine viewpoint thinking verse human viewpoint thinking. There is no middle ground. It is one way or the other.

ATTACKS on the BIBLE

Why did God write the Bible? To reveal Himself and His purpose for us: What He wants us to think and do. Most people don't care about God, and they are not interested in what He wants. That is why they attack the Bible. From this body of truth (doctrine) we learn to live the Christian Way of Life!

Attack #1 – IT WAS WRITTEN BY FALLIBLE MEN.

The assumption is that it cannot be relied on or trusted because perfect God was not its true author. The Bible is divinely inspired.

2 Timothy 3:16: **God breathed** – Revelation topside down. Absolute truth. This claim was not invented by the church but is the claim the Bible makes about itself.

All Scripture is ***inspired by God*** and ***profitable*** for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

1. **“inspired”** – “*theopneustos*” “*theos*” God “*pneuma*”(God-breathed).
2. **“by God”** – God is the source.
3. **“profitable”** – has a purpose (to change lives). Advantageous, beneficial.

Attack #2 – IT CONTRADICTS ITSELF.

This simply is not true. Any possible contradictions are dismissed with proper hermeneutical study.

Titus 1:9: There are many difficult passages, but we can understand what God is communicating. God did not give us passages to confuse us but help us.

Titus 1:9 holding fast the ***faithful word*** which is in accordance with the ***teaching***, that he may be able both ***to exhort*** in ***sound doctrine*** and to refute ***those who contradict***.

1. **“faithful”** – trustworthy, reliable, sure, true, unfailing.
2. **“word”** – Logos – doctrine, teaching
3. **“teaching”** – which means in accordance with or on the basis of instruction, to be sound, healthy; in good health.
4. **“to exhort”** – Greek “*para keteo*” means to call, call for, summon, encourage. Exhortation causes spiritual:
 - A. Concentration
 - B. Understanding
 - C. Motivation
 - D. Decision
 - E. Growth

When I teach, I should impart information but also force those listening to make decisions for or against the Word.

5. **“sound doctrine”** – we must learn (know) correct doctrine so we can spot false doctrine.
6. **“those who contradict”** - the pastor does not have the right to expose anyone in the congregation who is in carnality. Why? The privacy of the priesthood applies to the members of the Royal Family.

Attack #3 – IT IS FULL OF ERRORS.

The Dead Sea Scrolls closed the gap leaving only 400 years between the original manuscript and the copies and left the world waiting to see how accurate the Old Testament was. Had the text been translated accurately? A most definite YES!! There were no errors in the original manuscripts.

*Psalm 19:7-8 The law of the LORD is **perfect, restoring the soul**; The testimony of **the LORD is sure**, making wise the simple. The **precepts of the LORD are right**, rejoicing the heart; The **commandment of the LORD is pure**, enlightening the eyes.*

1. **“perfect”** – lacks nothing, no flaws in the Bible. It will not mislead you.
2. **“restoring the soul”** – help us stay on course.
3. **“the Lord is sure”** – it can be relied upon.
4. **“precepts of the Lord are right”** – infallible rules for living (ethical living).
5. **“commandment of the Lord is pure”** – it is opposed to all evil practices (human viewpoint thinking).

Authenticity of the Bible

Over 2,000 times in the Old Testament alone are clauses such as **“And God spoke to Moses,” “the word of the Lord came unto Jonah,”** and **“God said.”**

Moreover, the Bible claims to be a record of the words and deeds of God, viewing itself as God’s Word.

The mere fact that the Bible claims to be the Word of God does not prove that it is such, for there are other books that make similar claims.

The difference is that the Scriptures contain indisputable evidence that they are the Word of God. One reason the Bible is different from other books is its **UNITY**.

Although this book was composed by men, its unity betrays the hand of the Almighty.

The Bible was not written in one generation but over a period of about 1,500 years by more than 40 different human authors.

These authors came from a variety of backgrounds, including Joshua who was a military general, Daniel, who was a prime minister, Peter was a fisherman, and Nehemiah was a cupbearer. They had different educations and cultures.

The authors of various books wrote in different places, such as the wilderness (Moses), prison, (Paul), and Patmos (John's exile).

The Biblical writings were composed on three different continents: Africa, Asia and Europe.

It was written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek. The contents of the Bible deal with hundreds of subjects, many controversial.

Yet, the Bible is unified. From beginning to end, there's one unfolding story of God's plan of salvation for mankind.

This salvation is through the person of Jesus Christ, John 14:6. Jesus Himself testified that He was the theme of the entire Bible. And yet there is complete unity or harmony that cannot be explained apart from inspiration.

The unity of the Scriptures is only one reason among many that supports the Bible's claim to be the divine Word of God.

Other support that can be explained in detail is the testimony of the early Church, the witness of history (fulfilled prophecies), archaeology, and the evidence of changed lives throughout the centuries, to name just a few.

Attack #4 – IT IS NO LONGER RELEVANT.

The Bible addresses the deepest needs and issues of every person of every generation of mankind.

Romans 15:4 For **whatever was written in earlier times** was written **for our instruction**, that through **perseverance** and the **encouragement** of the **Scriptures** we might have hope.

1. “**whatever was written in earlier times**” – all Scriptures are written for the instruction of the Royal Family of God because the completed canon of Scripture belongs to us as *spiritual royalty*.
2. “**for our instruction**” – the spiritual growth of the Church Age believer is dependent upon instruction. This means that learning doctrine for oneself is only beneficial up to a point.
3. “**perseverance**” – patience, endurance, fortitude.
4. “**encouragement**” – God wants us to have confidence in life.

He wants us to have confidence in Him, in what He says, in what He promises to do for us and has done for us. Confidence is a system of thinking. Confidence comes through the agency of the Scriptures. You cannot have confidence in God unless you know what the Word of God says. You cannot have faith in the promises of God unless you thoroughly understand the promises of God and the One who has made the promises.

Confidence in God only comes through the teaching of the Word. Confidence in God requires perseverance in the study of the Word of God. You don't hear it once and get it. You have to hear the promises of God many times before you finally stagger not at the promise of God. This is exactly what happened to Abraham. He heard Jesus Christ tell him again and again that he would have a son from his own loins, but it took him eighteen years before he had absolute, unwavering confidence in the promise of God.

Confidence in God, from the Scriptures, also requires encouragement from the Word of God to keep pressing on in the spiritual life regardless of failures, setbacks, sins, or the circumstances of life. The Scriptures can only provide comfort and encouragement to those who persevere in learning Bible doctrine. There is no “one time” Bible class that provides encouragement for the rest of your life or comfort for the rest of your life. You have to hear the Word of God over and over again before you build up confidence, comfort or encouragement in your soul.

5. **“Scriptures”** – that we would grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no greater task, no more difficult task, and no more rewarding task than to study and understand the thinking of God as contained in the Word.

*Hebrews 4:12 **For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

1. **“for”** – **“gar”** introduces the reason why the Word of God is the critic of our motivations. Doctrine judges our motivations.
2. **“the word”** – Logos, message, teaching, referring to Scripture.
3. **“God”** – the message spoken by God.
4. **“is living”** – alive (His Word is life for us). The Word is made alive by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Then it helps us make the right decisions and take the right actions in life that God intended.
5. **“active”** – powerful. It is truth. Its truth gives power. It means “pertaining to being effective in causing something to happen. It is able to bring about, to make things happen.
6. **“sharper”** – having the capacity to cut efficiently.
7. **“any two-edged sword”** – Sword *“machaira”* (double-edged) the purpose and function of a sword is to cut open the surface of a person and get deep inside of him. The purpose of the Word of God is no different. It is designed to go beyond the surface of the spiritual life, that is, the outward functions that other people see, and get deeper into our soul and spirit.
8. **“piercing”** – penetrating. The Bible penetrates to the very core of the problem. The Word of God is effective in stating and carrying out God’s reflections and thoughts. It cuts through all the garbage, confusion, excuses, rationalizations and traditions.
9. **“as far”** – measuring; how far the action of penetrating occurs.
10. **“soul and spirit”** – human spirit.

11. **“both joints and marrow”** – Here the contrast is between the outward connection of bones at a joint with the inner most substance of the bone. Its marrow..

- a. The writer continues his thought with another medical analogy, referring to the joints and marrow. The joints are analogous to two believers living next to each other, who are jointed together by their common belief in Christ (the ligaments). The marrow of each bone refers to the inner thoughts, reflections, and beliefs of that believer. The joints refer to the outward surfaces of the bones that meet and live next to each other. The marrow refers to what is inside each of the bones.
- b. The Word of God can penetrate beyond the surface life of how we interact with other people and penetrate into what we really think about others.
- c. The Word of God is able to discern and judge our deepest and most secret thoughts. It is able to discern and judge our longings, desires, and the most hidden thoughts that no one else knows about.
- d. The Word of God is able to correct us in the deep things of our soul without anyone else knowing about it.
- e. The Word of God is able to discern and judge every thought we have ever had or will ever have.
- f. We have a parallel thought in **1 Corinthians 4:5** *Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.*
- g. The Word of God is able to discern and judge between those believers who have truly rejected what it says deep down in their soul and those believers who have truly believed God's Word deep down in their soul. The evaluation throne of Christ will bring our true attitude to light for all to see.
- h. Therefore, since the Word of God is able to do and will this, we must make every effort to enter into that place of rest.

12. **“able to judge”** – thoughts and motivations.
13. **“thoughts”** – thinking, reflection and ideas.
14. **“intentions”** – motivation, knowledge and insight.
15. **“the heart”** – the place where the Word of God is believed, stored, processed and applied to life.

Do We Take The Word Of God For Granted?

We live in a country that was founded on solid Scriptural principles. Many of the foundational principles that were put into law were based on sound Bible doctrine. Men and women risked their lives to establish this Republic; they left family and friends behind because they wanted freedom. They wanted to establish a country where men and women could worship freely and not under the constraints of a Federal Government that dictated their beliefs.

The most important foundational element in both the founding and continuation of this country is the word of God. Anyone can own a Bible and most people have a Great Bible somewhere in their living area or on a nearby shelf. However, it is blatantly obvious that they are rarely, if ever, opened. As many people the world over starve for food to nourish them physically so most Americans today are starving for the word of God to nourish them spiritually.

Let's be honest, spiritually this country is bankrupt! We have left our “first love” as the Ephesians left their “first love” (**Rev. 2:4**). Billions of people worldwide live in countries where it is illegal to own or even read a Bible and yet, as Americans, we have a mass of Bibles but don't read or study them. Bible believing Christians once changed the culture.

Today, it's the culture that changes the Christians. What's the missing element? Sound Bible study and doctrinal teaching. It is painfully obvious in the 21st century that we DO take the Word of God for granted? We've been so blessed materially that we have taken our eyes off of our spiritual stature, or lack thereof. We need to turn back to the solid foundational doctrines our nation was founded upon. We ought to be thankful for the preservation of the Word of God and we ought to express that thankfulness by dusting off that old Bible and bringing it to bear on the culture around us.

Though many cultures have been and are still orally based cultures, what distinguishes a culture is what it writes down and passes on. A written word has a stability and preservation that makes it unchangeable and accessible to later generations. This is one reason it was necessary that the revelation of God be written down. The Old Testament and New Testament are just that “testaments”. The word “testament” comes from the word “testimony” and is often used in courts of law for the witness’s report of eye witness events. The written word is thus, a testimony, a measuring stick by which all things must be spiritually judged. What benefits can we have from a written word?

There are five benefits of the written word.

First, *a written word calls to mind an original message.* When an event happened in Biblical history, God often told a prophet to record what happened. In these cases, the written record perfectly describes all that the Holy Spirit deemed necessary for us to know and interpret the event correctly.

Secondly, *a book groups together the various writings received.* By this we can see the full counsel of God as the books were accumulated and compiled into one book, the Bible. Study of similar passages and the progressive unfolding of God’s plan can be seen once the various writings are grouped together in one book.

Third, *the written word works independently of the writer.* Thus, the written message is superior because of its mobility. In spite of the imprisonment of its editor, the book sped past gates and iron curtains, reaching in course of time the most diverse circles; further, it proved itself capable of easy reproduction. The prophet may disappear; God continues to speak by the inspired text.

Fourth, *the written message is universal, indestructible, and ubiquitous.* With the ease of printing the Bible today, the message of the written word is becoming increasingly universal. While the original message from the prophet or apostle may have been limited to a small audience, with numerous copies of the Word nearly everyone can have a copy and read it for himself. Thus, the Word is seemingly everywhere available.

Fifth, *the reading of the written word makes the reader responsible for the content.* The atheist insists that God produce some type of miracle to satisfy him and prove to him His existence. However, God does not take orders from man. When asked for a sign, Christ proclaimed, “*They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them*” (**Luke 16:29**). God has given His written word

into history. Isaiah says, *"Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?" (Isa. 45:21)*. Thus, all men, of all tribes, tongues, and nations are responsible for the written word. A sign will not be given because even if it were fallen men would reinterpret the sign into his false framework of unbelief (**Luke 16:31**).

Attack #5 – YOU CAN'T TAKE IT LITERALLY.

People who say this usually don't believe in absolutes; to them everything is relative.

2 Peter 3:3-4 compared to Matthew 5:18.

2 Peter 3:3-4 *Know this first of all, that in the **last days** mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."*

1. **"last days"** – present time.

Matthew 5:18 *"For **truly** I say to you, **until heaven and earth pass away**, not the **smallest letter** or stroke shall **pass away** from the Law, **until all is accomplished**."*

1. **"truly"** – "*a-men*" is the transliteration of the Hebrew amen – expressing affirmation. Confirming something said before as truth (that is totally reliable). "It is true so be it".
2. **"until heaven and earth pass away"** – and it is going to pass away.
3. **"smallest letter"** – not one iota or one stroke (*keraia*) and a stroke tittle, would be seen in the difference between a "p" and an "r". The smallest letter; the least stroke of the Hebrew alphabet is the *yod*. It is no bigger than our apostrophe – like the dot over an "i".
4. **"pass away"** – be changed (destroyed).
5. **"until all is accomplished"** – demands of the Law. History comes to an end.

***POD:** WE MUST NEVER TRIFLE WITH EVEN THE SMALLEST PART OF SCRIPTURE.

2 Timothy 2:16-17 *But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,*

Attack #6 – NO ONE CAN KNOW FOR SURE WHAT THE BIBLE MEANS.

It can have any interpretation. The Bible has only ONE correct interpretation. When using proper hermeneutical procedures, the correct interpretation of scripture can be assured.

2 Peter 1:17-21; 1 John 5:13.

2 Peter 1:17-21 *For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

Verse 17 – referring to the transfiguration – “I was there, I saw, I heard”.

Verse 19 – see explanation below.

1. “is” – to become nothing secret – not one’s own private thoughts (divine viewpoint not human viewpoint).
2. “one’s own interpretation” – there is only one interpretation of any passage. It’s not their opinion or thinking (not your frame of reference).
3. “moved” – “forced” Greek “*phero*” to bear or carry. A nautical term which has the idea of a ship being moved along by the wind with a definite charted course.
4. “Holy Spirit” – not dealing with fables but the Mind of Christ.

2 Peter 1:19 *And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.*

Explanation:

Peter makes three points in this verse:

1. The written Word of God is more reliable than the spoken Word of God.
2. It is important for us to pay attention to the written Word of God.
3. We need to persevere in learning the Word of God until we reach the point of occupation with the person of Christ.

Peter comes to a remarkable conclusion – we have something provided for us as Church Age believers, which is better than the voice of God directly to mankind. We have the written Word of God contained in the New Testament Scriptures.

1. God has magnified His written Word above and beyond His own person, declares **Psalms 138:2**.
2. The written Word of God is alive and powerful, declares **Hebrews 4:12**.
3. *“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the Word of our God stands forever,”* declares **Isaiah 40:8**.

“Man shall not live on bread only, but by means of every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” declares **Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has an eternal title as the Word of God, **Revelation 19:13**, *“He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”*

God has put His Word in writing and made His written Word more important than anything else that exists, including Himself. Why? This is a guarantee of His eternal virtue and integrity. God’s virtue and integrity depend on God keep His Word, doing what He says He will do and keep His promises to His creatures.

Satan has declared that God *will not* keep His Word; that God *will not* provide salvation for His creatures; that God *will not* give eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Why is the written Word of God more reliable than the spoken Word of God?

People don't always hear everything that is said and cannot always repeat it completely word for word without leaving anything out. But with the written Word there is an exact historical record of exactly what was said, and what was promised by God.

1 John 5:13 *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that **you may know** that you have eternal life.*

Great Advice for Parents

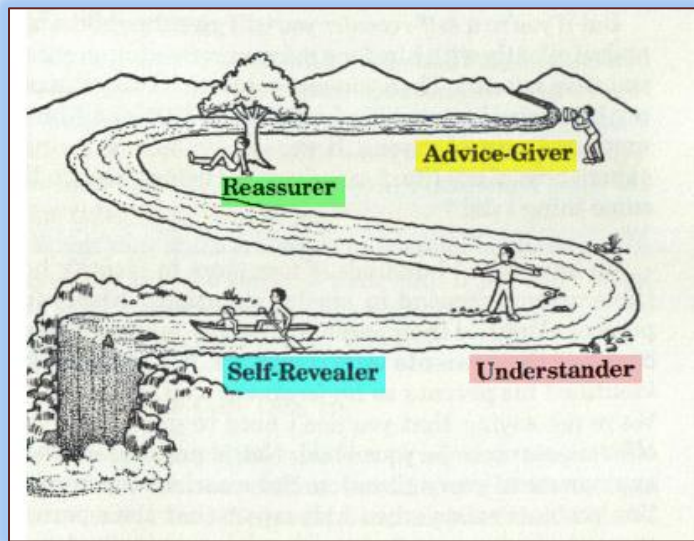
Control and Support (Children)

1. The **permissive parent** offers high support and low control. This parent has the ability to make the child feel loved but makes little effort to control his behavior.
2. The **neglectful parent** provides low control and low support. This parent leaves the child alone, ignoring his responsibility to love the child and control his behavior.
3. The **authoritarian parent** provides high control and low support. This parent makes little attempt to love the child but works hard to control his behavior.
4. The **authoritative parent** offers high control and high support. This parent is able to make a child feel loved while adequately controlling his behavior. This is the one you want to be.

What's Your Communication Style?

1. The **advice-giver** is far removed from the emotional crisis. He shouts, "Row harder! Why did you get into the water in the first place? What a stupid kid! I told you not to do it. Didn't you read the warning signs?"

2. The **reassuring-giver** is closer to the situation and responds, “You were a good kid. Your mother and I love you.” Of the last three people who went over the falls, two survived. Good luck!”
3. The **understanding-giver** steps into the water and says, “Hey, the current is very strong here. You really are in trouble, aren’t you? Let me see if I can get you some help.
4. The **self-revealer** gets into the boat with the child and immediately starts paddling to safety.



Deuteronomy 6:1-19

There are three key warnings from this passage:

1. Obedience as an evidence of love and reverence for God.
2. Warnings against forgetting the Lord.
3. The need of the transmission of God’s truth to the coming generations (godly parenting).

We need to give them the knowledge of the Word of God so they will have knowledge of the God of the Word.

Deuteronomy 6:1-19

1. "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it.

This is Moses' last words to the Jewish people before entering the Promised Land.

The primary charge of God given to Moses is to teach believers to obey His commandments. The commandments were the very foundation of life, telling man exactly how to live and to show man how to live a full and victorious life.

- A. How to worship and serve Him.
- B. How to live our lives.
- C. How to be a good father or mother.
- D. How to raise children.

*2 so that you and **your son and your grandson** might **fear the LORD** your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and **that your days may be prolonged**.*

1. "**your son and your grandson**" – remember Pharaoh's attempts at compromise.

- A. Worship God but do it in Egypt (Exodus 8:25).
- B. Worship God but go far away (Exodus 8:28).
- C. Worship God but leave the children in Egypt (Exodus 10:8-11).

Just maintain a borderline position. Don't separate yourself from the cosmic system (no total separation).

2. "**fear the LORD**" – The word "fear" means to honor and revere God to such a point that a person worships Him. The person who truly fears God surrenders his life to serve God and obey His commandments. But the word means more than just reverence and honor. It means to respect the justice and judgment of God and to fear what God can do to a person if he disobeys the commandments of God.

3. "**that your days may be prolonged**" – more enjoyable or abundant life.

³ *"O Israel, **you should listen** and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.*

1. "**you should listen**" – "Shaw-ma" is the Hebrew word and it means to hear and understand, to hear with discernment; to hear and obey (teaches authority). Hearing is a protection against hardening of the heart (mind) and it begins with listening.

The foundation for obedience is hearing God's truth (vs. 3-4).

The clearest and loudest words our children ever hear are those of our own example.

- A. Children who live with critical parents learn to be critical.
- B. Children whose parents scream and argue learn to do the same thing.
- C. Children whose parents find or make excuses to serve the Lord (study and apply doctrine) will find it easy to do the same.

#1 To hear and obey

⁴ *"**Hear**, O Israel! The LORD is our **God, the LORD is one!***

1. "**Hear**" – To hear and obey. The point is that we really have not heard unless we are following through with obedience and acting on the precept of Scripture. Knowledge that is without obedience is only partial knowledge without understanding. It constitutes information without spiritual understanding and insight. **Prov. 19:12; Prov. 12:15**

A proper perspective about God is vital and fundamental to our love and obedience to Him and our ability to trust him. Without this knowledge embedded in our hearts we will pursue the false gods of the world; we will experience the emptiness of materialism and fall for one of the many traps of Satan. To truly know the Lord is to desire to obey.

2. "**God, the LORD is one**" – refers to His essence (unity of the Trinity). He is our sufficiency – our only One.

#2 The nature of obedience is love for God. Verses 5 & 6

⁵ *"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your **heart** and with **all your soul and with all your might**.*

1. “**heart**” – “*lebab*”: to give ourselves to Him with no strings attached. This is the tough one, not because the Lord is so hard to love, but because we are so prone to self-love and selfish pursuits. Teach them and show them how to walk. When we struggle to obey, it is simply and plainly the age old problem of conflicting masters and treasures of our hearts. **Matthew 6:19-24**

2. “**might**” – “*me-ode*”: it means full strength. All the strength of a person. It means to use up one’s strength to the point of exhaustion.

*⁶ “And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be **on your heart**;*

1. “**on your heart**” – Totally committed i.e. have them to memorize the Word; to be in the center of your thoughts and the object of your devotion. Not merely legal or mechanical but spiritual and reflective.

- A. Spiritual not mechanical.
- B. Central not peripheral.
- C. Primary not secondary.

#3 The Reproduction of Obedience – verses 7-9

Teach and model the Word because they are not automatically taught to children. Divine Viewpoint should be the subject around the house. This forms a natural progression.

*⁷ and you shall **teach** them **diligently** to your sons and shall **talk of them** when you **sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.***

1. “**teach**” – *personally* – what our children learn in Sunday school and church is important, but we can’t rely on this alone. This passage is speaking to parents, not the church. Training is first and foremost the responsibility of the parents. Again, this stresses modeling. What one says is rarely as influential as what one does.

2. “**diligently**” – though parents have many other important tasks and responsibilities, none are more important and with greater implications than this responsibility. It must not be taken lightly. Accurately is included in the word “**diligently**” which means “*to sharpen*” and the “*to teach clearly*”, accurately. Our teaching must be clear and precise.

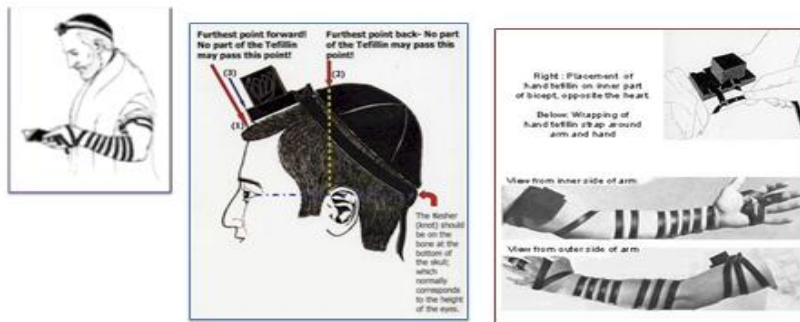
3. **“talk of them”** – *repeatedly*. These verses indicate teaching is not a once-in-a-while or a one-time effort. It goes on all the time. The secret to learning is repetition.

4. **“you walk....when you rise up”** – *naturally*. It is to be done when we sit, walk, lie down, and rise up. In other words, we are to look for teaching opportunities by word and by example through the everyday activities of life in the home. Parents should teach their children:

- A. The principle of authority and responsibility.
- B. Self-discipline.
- C. Respect for privacy.
- D. Respect for the right of others.
- E. Good manners.
- F. The system of morality.

⁸ "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead."

As a strong witness and testimony before the public he was to bind the commandments on his hands and forehead.



Tefillin - are a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the [Torah](#), which are worn by observant Jews during weekday morning prayers.

⁹ " And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

You can see the importance of Bible Doctrine: hand-head-gate-door post. Educating children is an absolute necessity. Education is not just teaching facts and principles or just passing along information. It is living out the truth before the children.

The **Mezuzah** is a small case in which a small hand written scroll of parchment (called a klaf) is placed. The scroll contains the words of the "Shema Israel" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) passage, in which God commands Jews to keep His words constantly in their minds and in their hearts.



The scroll also contains another passage (Deuteronomy 11:13). The passages are written in Hebrew, and contain 22 lines of 713 painstakingly written letters.

The meaning of the Hebrew word **Mezuzah** is simply "a doorpost". The meaning of the words "Shema Israel" is "Hear Israel".

On the back of the scroll, a name of God is written. The scroll is then rolled so that the first letter of the Name (the letter Shin) is visible (or, more commonly, the letter Shin is written on the on the upper exterior of the case).

Every time you pass through a door with a **Mezuzah** on it, you kiss your fingers and touch them to the **Mezuzah**, expressing love and respect for God and his commandments.

The **Mezuzah** is not, as some may think, a good-luck charm, nor does it have any connection with the lamb's blood placed on the doorposts in Egypt. Rather, it is a constant reminder of God's presence and God's commandments.

#4 Warning Regarding Obedience. Don't be like the world. Verses 10-19. 1 John 2:15

¹⁰ "Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build,

¹¹ and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied,

God has given us all we need to fulfill His protocol plan for our lives. All can have victory.

*¹² then watch yourself, lest you forget the LORD who brought you from the **land of Egypt**, out of the house of slavery.*

#5 Prosperity Can Lead To the Danger of Forgetting God

1. “**land of Egypt**” – Egypt is a symbol of the world. The world system will offer you a lot. It is God who delivers us from the enslavement of the world.

*13 " You shall **fear only the LORD** your God; and you shall worship Him, and **swear by His name**.*

1. “**fear only the LORD**” – The opposite of forgetting God is to fear; respect, honor and serve Him only.

2. “**swear by His name**” – we are to openly declare ourselves to be a follower of God; to be a strong witness of God.

14 " You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,

#6 Prosperity Can lead to the Danger of Compromise

Surrounding neighbors would always be inviting God’s people to participate with them in their false worship.

15 for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

The answer to compromise.

16 " You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

#7 A Warning Against test the Lord by Rebellion and Disobedience

17 " You should diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you.

The answer to the danger of testing God – OBEY HIM. Do what is right in the eyes of God; not your eyes.

18 "And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to give your fathers,

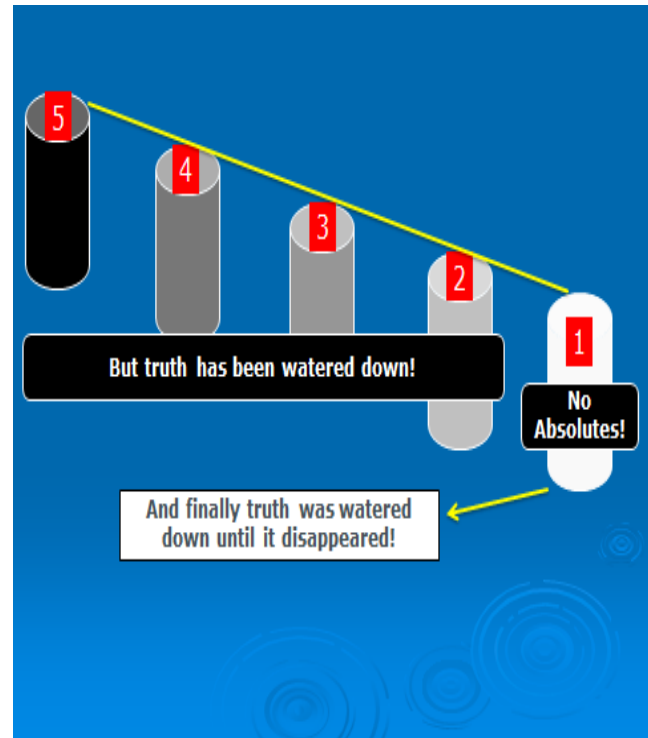
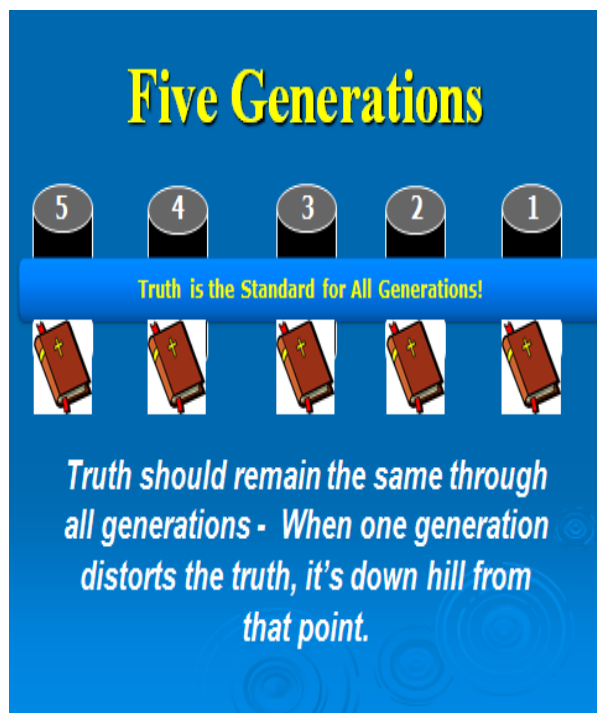
#8 This is a Warning Against Losing sight of Godly Goals. A warning against failing to live purposely for God.

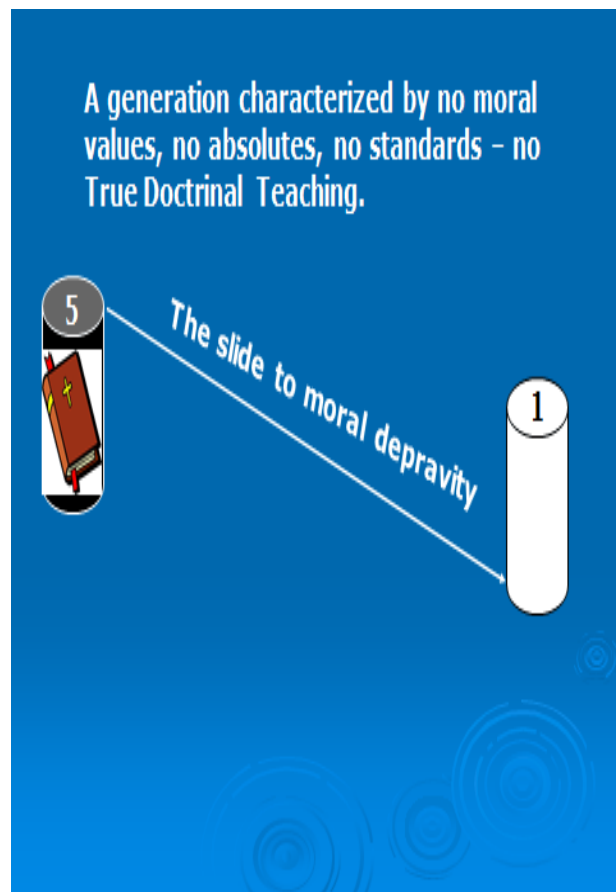
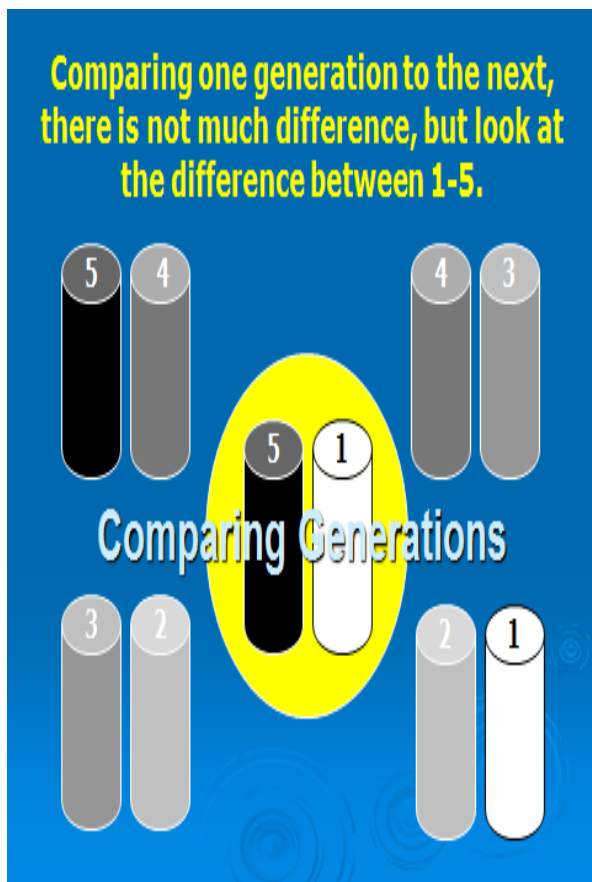
If we obey God, then things will go well with us and we will inherit the promised land.

¹⁹ by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

We must never lose sight of why we are here. We are not simply here as earth dwellers to pursue our own selfish goals. Rather, we are PILGRIMS. The minute we lose sight of the pilgrim mentality, we are in danger of becoming absorbed in the world.

The result is that we fail as parents, because we have first failed as God's children ourselves.





Deals with what the happy man does not do!

Psalm 1:1-6 ¹ How **blessed** is the man who does not **walk** in the **counsel** of the **wicked**, Nor stand in the **path** of **sinners**, Nor sit in the **seat** of **scoffers**!

1. “**blessed**” – Greek – blessednesses. Also, it is used to denote greatness and fullness.
2. “**walk**” – means to conduct one’s self. Used of one’s moral, spiritual life, and it shows that this has become his fixed habit.
3. “**counsel**” – means advice, purpose of design. The happy man does not live according to the advice and goals of the ungodly. He relates to God’s counsel and goals. Happiness is not found in a lifestyle that leaves God out.
4. “**wicked**” – ungodly. It means to be loose and un-regulated. Not influenced by God.

5. “**path**” – way. Course of life. The happy man first. Rejects the mentality of the world and then the life style of the world.
6. “**sinner**” – to miss the mark. It refers to those who have failed with respect to God’s character and standards.
7. “**seat**” – the term involves pride and resistance to correct.
8. “**scornful**” – mockers who refuse correction being wise in their own eyes.

Deals with what the happy man does do!

² ***But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.***

1. “**but**” – Means “on the contrary”. A strong contrast. ***Romans 12:1-2***
2. “**delight**” – A longing – concentration. A word that describes the whole inner man. It refers to studying God’s Word.
3. “**in the law**” – ***Psalm 33:10-11; Psalm 73:24***
4. “**meditate day and night**” – It’s counterpart in the New Testament. ***James 1:9-12***

Deals with the character of the happy man.

³ ***And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.***

1. “**he will**” – refers to the godly man in his inner life.
2. “**tree planted**” – “growing” – substantial, enduring.
3. “**streams of water**” – watercourses which are used to irrigate gardens. To be near the waters was the essence of security, productiveness, and survival.
4. “**not wither**” – His happiness is not short-term.

5. “**prosper**” – to carry through to a successful completion. Shall be successful (happy). What men regard as success has little to do with God’s view of success.

Deals with the ruin of the ungodly.

*⁴ The **wicked** are not so, But they are like **chaff** which the wind drives away.*

1. “**wicked**” – They have not rejected men’s counsel nor have they rejected the lifestyle of the world. No love or delight in God’s Word. They are not productive or successful.

2. “**chaff**” – Good fell to the ground – chaff was blown away. Meaning – the ungodly are unstable.

*⁵ Therefore the wicked will not **stand in the judgment**, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

1. “**stand in the judgment**” – Not the Bema Seat but the Great White Throne Judgment.

*⁶ For the LORD knows the **way of the righteous**, But the way of the wicked will **perish**.*

1. “**way of the righteous**” – Watches over and cares for them.

2. “**perish**” – They will be permanently and eternally separated from God.

Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 ¹ I **urge** you therefore, brethren, by the **mercies** of God, **to present your bodies** a living and **holy sacrifice, acceptable to God**, which is your **spiritual service of worship**.

1. “**urge**” – “*porakaleo*”: to urge strongly, appeal to, exhort, encourage. All Church Age believers should be doing something but they may or may not be doing it.

Focus on the truth. Make a commitment of the total person. Paul is emphasizing the importance of individual volition and personal responsibility.

The communicator of the Word of God cannot make you do anything; he can only ask, urge, exhort, and demand. What you do with your spiritual life is your business. It is a private matter between you and the Lord. No one can or should try to force you to live the spiritual life.

2. “**mercies**” – “*oiktirmos*”: display of concern over another’s misfortune.

A. Paul urges us to do what God wants because of the compassion, mercy, love, kindness, and goodness of God.

B. God does not have to put up with our selfishness and sinfulness, but He does.

C. God has always been and will always be compassionate to us.

D. Because of His patience and mercy, and not holding our sins against us, we should want to reciprocate to God’s love with our obedience to His will.

E. Our response to God’s love for us in compassion, mercy, and love is our reciprocal love for Him.

F. Our reciprocal love is manifested in what we do, not in what we say. Anyone can say, “I love God” and it be totally meaningless. However, the person who obeys the will of God and does what God wants, that person truly loves God and has come to understand the love that God has for him.

G. All compassion, grace, mercy and love come from God first. We respond to that love. **1 John 4:19**, “*We love because He first loved us.*”

H. Because God has loved us in eternity past and has been compassionate to us as believers in time, Paul urges us to do something to respond to the love which God has for us.

3. “**to present your bodies**” – to make something available to someone without necessarily involving actual change of ownership; to make available, to provide.

“**Complete Person**”

A. We offer our bodies by our positive volition to the Word and will of God.

B. We offer our bodies by saying “no” to the temptations from the lust pattern of the sin nature.

C. We offer our bodies by executing the will of God and not saying or doing anything to cause another believer to sin.

D. We offer our bodies as a holy sacrifice by using the recovery procedure of the rebound technique of **1 John 1:9** whenever necessary, in order to maintain that status of holiness that God demands.

E. We offer our bodies as a living sacrifice by living the spiritual life that God has designed and provided for us.

F. We offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God by making daily decisions to learn and execute the will of God through perception, metabolization, and application of the Word of God.

G. If we learn the Word of God, God is pleased.

H. If we obey the Word of God, God is pleased.

I. If we rebound when necessary, God is pleased.

J. If we apply doctrine, God is pleased.

K. If we grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord, God is pleased.

L. If we control our desire to sin through the motivation of personal love for God, God is pleased.

M. If we do all these things and therefore execute the unique spiritual life of the Church Age, God is pleased.

N. Then our entire spiritual life of learning and executing the will of God in the power of the Spirit will be an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

4. **“holy”** – God-like, set apart.

5. **“sacrifice”** – our response to God’s love and compassion is the offering of our bodies as a living, holy, well-pleasing sacrifice to God.

6. **“acceptable to God”** – scripture demands us to stop thinking from the perspective of human viewpoint.

7. **“spiritual”** – pertaining to being genuine, in the sense of being true to the real and essential nature of something; genuine, true “this is your true worship” our worship of God is to be rational not emotional. That means thinking the way God wants us to be able to think, understand, learn and know His plan and will for our lives. We serve God every time we use our mental ability to focus on God, think about God, learn about God, and then act upon the knowledge that God has provided for us.

8. “**service of worship**” – because of what He has done for you (Cross-work).

² And do not be **conformed** to this **world**, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may **prove** what the will of God is, that which is **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect**.

1. “**conformed**” – “*syschematizo*”: to form or mold one’s behavior in accordance with a particular pattern or set of standards; to shape one’s behavior, to conform one’s life; to be stamped out of a mold.

In order to live the spiritual life (Church Age believers), we have to be formed, fashioned or molded into the same spiritual life that our Lord Jesus Christ had during His 1st Advent.

2. “**world**” – “*aion*”: refers to Satan’s cosmic system, his system of thinking. Searching after the wisdom of this world “cosmic system” (human viewpoint). Do not let your thinking go this way. We are shaped and molded in our behavior by the system of beliefs we accept. Satan’s system is not designed to provide happiness or understanding. An example would be money. Money will make me happy but after years and years, they wondered what went wrong. It did not make them happy.

3. “**transformed**” – “*metamorphoo*”: to change in a manner visible to others; to change inwardly in fundamental character or condition. Reshaped as a vessel of honor. It starts with what you think.

God changes us by changing our thinking.

A. You cannot change others. People change themselves.

B. People only change themselves through the help and grace of God. We cannot change ourselves.

C. People don’t want to change because the sin nature loves itself and doesn’t want to change anything about it.

D. But once we believe in Christ, the power of the sin nature is broken and we have the freedom and opportunity to change ourselves.

E. The Holy Spirit has several ministries to us that help us change ourselves.

1. The filling of the Spirit gives us the power to change.

2. The teaching ministry of the Spirit gives us the information we need to believe in order to make the change.

3. The sealing ministry of the Spirit gives us the eternal security we need to make the change safely without worry.
4. The regeneration of the Spirit has given us the foundation upon which to build the change.
5. The baptism of the Spirit has already made the positional change for us.
6. The spiritual gift from the Spirit gives us something to do after we complete the change.

4. “**renewing of your mind**” – starts with rebound and moves to circulating the Word; total renovation.

To make our transformation from the thinking of the cosmic system to the thinking of the spiritual life requires a complete renovation of our thoughts.

- A. The renovation of thought takes time, lots of time. If you are saved at age twenty, you cannot change in a couple of years what it took your sin nature twenty years to form in your soul.
- B. The renovation of thought is painful psychologically, because it means accepting the fact that almost everything you believe is wrong and has to be fixed. Most people’s arrogance prevents them from admitting how wrong they have been all their life.
- C. The renovation of thought means doing away with systems of self-justification, self-deception, and self-absorption by which we have lived all our life.
- D. The renovation of thought means positive volition to doctrine even when it is not completely clear, when it confuses you and frustrates you.
- E. The renovation of thought requires repetition – hearing the same thing (thought) time and again until you are sick of it but cannot forget it.
- F. Every thought from Satan’s system of thinking has to be replaced with the true, correct, and accurate thinking of Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:16** *“but we have the thinking of God.”*

5. “**prove**” – on the basis of testing (we have to be tested to prove that what we believe is true.

- A. The easy way through learning, believing and applying the Word.
- B. The hard way through volitional responsibility and divine discipline.

6. “**good**” – refers to the plan of God.

7. “**acceptable**” – doing a right thing in a right way.

8. “**perfect**” – what is complete, what is mature (the mature believer proves that what God has designed in the spiritual life is perfect).

*2 Timothy 2:15 **Be diligent** to **present** yourself **approved** to God as a **workman** who **does not need** to be **ashamed**, **handling accurately** the word of truth.*

1. “**Be diligent**” – “*spoudazo*”: to be especially conscientious in carrying out an obligation; be zealous, eager, take pains, make every effort. So, study, exercise, exert oneself. Diligence is motivated by personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ. It requires consistency in studying.

2. “**present**” – “*Paristemi*”: to represent someone to someone.

3. “**approved**” – being genuine on the basis of testing, tried, true, genuine; make every effort to concentrate, to give priority to the Word. Approval requires diligence in holding fast to the orthodox doctrines of Christianity. Impersonal love for all.

4. “**workman**” – laborer such as an agricultural worker. It moves one involved in the routine, ordinary things of life. (necessity, hard work) Studying and teaching the Word of God is hard work. It requires constant concentration and constant studying.

5. “**does not need**” – has no need.

6. “**ashamed**” – now or then. Having no need to be ashamed. Only use of this word in the Bible.

7. “**handling accurately**” – cut a path in a straight direction or cut a road across the country that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through so that the traveler may go directly to his destination (straight to the goal).

Believer's Responsibility to His Country: Romans 13:1-7

Divine Institution #4: Nationalism

1. Believers have the responsibility of obedience to the laws of the land, criminal and civil code.
2. Example of civil code: Driver's license, dog license, building permits, and so on. Not keeping pigs in your back yard in the city. This infringes upon the rights of others.
3. The exception is where the common law of the land is superseded by activities of a dictatorship whereby the common law is no longer in effect but the will or the desire of ONE INDIVIDUAL or ONE ORGANIZATION within that national entity rules—justified basis for revolt.
4. Believers have the responsibility of participation in civic affairs. We are not to withdraw from civic affairs because we are believers, but our EMPHASIS is witnessing for Christ and giving out doctrine. The ONLY SOLUTION to man's problems is:
 - A. Regeneration.
 - B. Knowledge of Bible Doctrine translated by faith into "*epignosis*" – full knowledge, useable.
5. Believers have the responsibility of paying taxes. **Romans 13:6-7**
6. Believers have the responsibility of participation in the defense of their country. **Romans 13:1-7; Joshua 6:21, 8:24.**
7. Remember, FREEDOM demands responsibility.