

THE BIBLE AS HISTORY
A SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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**The Ridge in Jerusalem over Which the Scapegoat was Sent
Leviticus 16**

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The Babylonian Captivity to the Restoration

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Chapter 20

The Restoration

Leaders of Men

In the story of the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem six individuals are prominent.

Jewish Leaders

Zerubbabel
Ezra
Nehemiah

Gentile Rulers

Cyrus
Darius Hystaspes
Artaxerxes Longimanus

- Zerubbabel left captivity for Jerusalem when Cyrus came to the throne c. BC 535. After an interval of twenty years he was able to finish the rebuilding of the temple in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.
- Ezra returned to Jerusalem from Babylon about eighty years after Zerubbabel, c. BC 458, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. His major desire was to restore the Law in the life of the people. The story of Esther took place a few years before the time of Ezra.
- Nehemiah went up from Susa, located 150 miles east of the Tigris River, in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, c. BC 445. He helped to rebuild the walls of the holy city and set up the gates. After returning for a period to Susa, Nehemiah made a second visit to Jerusalem. Soon thereafter the prophet Malachi closed the canon of *Old Testament Scripture* with his prophetic utterances.
- Cyrus (about 576 BC - July, 529 BC) was a king of Persia, famous for his military prowess and mercy. He is considered to be the first significant king of Persia, and the founder of the vast Persian Empire.
- Darius Hystaspes was the son of Hystaspes, and Persian Emperor from 521 to 485 BC. The principal source for his history is his own inscriptions, especially the great inscription of Behistun, in which he relates how he gained the crown and put down the rebellions.
- Artaxerxes Longimanus was king of Persia from 464 BC to 424 BC. He belonged to the Achaemenid dynasty and was the successor of Xerxes I. He is mentioned in two books of the Bible, Ezra, and Nehemiah. He allowed the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. He was followed on the throne by his son Xerxes II.

Coming Home

As soon as Cyrus released the royal edict to go home, the responsibility for their safe return was entrusted to Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel, and therefore represented the royal family of Judah. Jeshua was the hereditary high priest. Together these men reflected what would be combined in the person of the Messiah, who while King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14), would also be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb 5:10). More than fifty thousand people came together to go home cured of their idolatry, never more to roam.

“I’ve wandered far away from God,
Now I’m coming home;
The paths of sin too long I’ve trod,
Lord, I’m coming home.

Coming home, coming home,
Nevermore to roam,
Open wide Thine arms of love,
Lord, I’m coming home.

I’ve wasted many precious years,
Now I’m coming home;
I now repent with bitter tears,
Lord, I’m coming home.

I’m tired of sin and straying, Lord,
Now I’m coming home;
I’ll trust Thy love, believe Thy Word,
Lord, I’m coming home.

My soul is sick, my heart is sore,
Now I’m coming home;
My strength renew, my hope restore,
Lord, I’m coming home.

My only hope, my only plea,
Now I’m coming home;
That Jesus died, and died for me.
Lord, I’m coming home.

I need His cleansing blood, I know,
Now I’m coming home;
O wash me whiter than the snow,
Lord, I’m coming home”.

William Kirkpatrick

A New Name

Most of those who returned to Israel were from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. As a result, from this time forward the people would be known as the Jews because of the predominance of people from Judah. About eighty years later six thousand more people would return to Palestine while the larger portion carried into captivity remained in Chaldea, Persia and Media. In this way the “missionary era” of the Jews began. Like the Messiah, they became “*a light to lighten the Gentiles*” (Luke 2:32) and a witness of God to the ends of the earth. And so the journey began. Seven hundred miles from Babylon to Jerusalem would be covered in four long months under a hot burning sun. But they finally made it home. After resting, within a year work began on the rebuilding of the temple.

Opposition to a Holy Work

In the course of building the temple, the Samaritans offered to labor with the Jews in the sacred work. The Samaritans were the descendants of the Assyrian colony established by Shalmaneser in the district of Samaria. The request to help was refused. Angered by being rejected, the Samaritans began to oppose what they once wanted to support. Such is the sin of pride. Unless self is involved in a prominent way, what was once supported, is suddenly hated and opposed. When Daniel was the head of this opposition, in the third year of the reign of Cyrus, he held a solemn fast as recorded in chapter 10 of his work, and was given some amazing visions of coming events, as per Daniel 11-12.

The Reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis

While reconstruction of the temple continued, so did the opposition on it throughout the reigns of Cyrus and his successors, Cambyses, called Ahasuerus and Smerdis, called Artaxerxes. A man with a violent temper, Cambyses was not without a sense of humor, which he used to a strategic military advantage. Knowing of the inordinate worship of animals by the Egyptians, it is recorded that he gathered a large number of cats, dogs, sheep and other sacred animals and placed them in front of his army. The Egyptian soldiers would not use a single weapon with the possibility of hurting one of the animals, and so Cambyses won an easy victory. On another occasion when he came across an Egyptian celebration he asked what was the source of the joy. He was told that a god had revealed itself to the people. Asked to meet this god, Cambyses was taken to the bull, Apis. So enraged was Cambyses, he stabbed the brute beast, which was then carried back to its stable to die.

A Letter to Hurt

In the reign of Smerdis, called Artaxerxes, the successor of Cambyses, the enemies of the Jews wrote a letter to the king stating that Jerusalem had always been a rebellious city, and that it should not be allowed to be rebuilt. “*Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort*” (Ezra 4:8). Finding the substance of the letter to be valid in part, a formal order was issued stopping the work of restoration. The great drama can be reviewed in several Acts.

- Act I The Writing of the Letter *Ezra 4:11 This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. 12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. 13 Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. 14 Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; 15 That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed. 16 We certify the king that, if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.*
- Act II The King's Reply. *Ezra 4:18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me. 19 And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. 20 There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them. 21 Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me. 22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? 23 Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.*
- Acts III A New Letter of Appeal to the New Ruler Darius. A few months later when Darius Hystaspes came to the Persian throne, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah exhorted their countrymen to go back to rebuilding the temple, if for no other reason than to remove the drought that was consuming the land. God was judging His people for building their own homes while allowing the temple to lie in ruin. While the work was in progress, Tatnai, the Persian governor of the district visited Jerusalem. When he learned that Cyrus had once passed an edict authorizing the work, he caused a search to be made for the official document. People looked in the archives at Babylon, and then in Achmetha, or Ecbatana, the capital of Media, where it was finally discovered. Brought before Darius, he gave new orders that the work should resume and there would be public funding to underwrite the project.

Ezra 6 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written. 3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; 4 With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expences be given out of the king's house:

5 And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, everyone to his place, and place them in the house of God.

- Acts IV The Work is Resumed. *I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed. 13 Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. 14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia” (Ezra 6:12-14).*
- Act V. The rebuilding of the temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius. *“And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. 16 And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, 17 And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses. 19 And the children of the captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month (Ezra 6:15-19).*

About twenty years had passed since the rebuilding of the temple had begun. Now a date for computing the termination of the captivity can be established. From the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, when young Daniel had been carried captive, to the issuing of the decree of Cyrus was seventy years. From the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the holy temple, to the rebuilding of the same was also seventy years. If there is a spiritual lesson, it is that what God gives, He takes away, but what He takes away He might be pleased to restore. Such is the nature of grace.

Two Post Exilic Prophets

The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah took place during the days of Zerubbabel. They both exhorted the people to work, as they spoke of the coming Messiah. When people wept because the rebuilt temple was not as glorious as the one built by Solomon, Haggai announced that the Messiah would come to His holy temple. The personal presence of the Branch of Jesse would fill it with more glory than the first. *“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6-7).*

The fulfillment of this prophecy is found on the day of Pentecost, following the ascension of Christ. *“And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:7-11).*

In like manner the prophecies of Zechariah are full of promises that were fulfilled.

Vision one. In one of his visions Zechariah witnesses God the Father commanding a sword to be lifted against the Shepherd and His brethren *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones” (Zechariah 13:7).*

Vision two. In another vision men look in agony on the Lord of Glory whom they have pierced. *“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).*

Vision three. A third vision finds the Messiah riding into Jerusalem on an ass, but as a conqueror. *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zechariah 9:9).*

Vision four. In a fourth vision the whole earth worships the Messiah, and on the bells of the horses there is the inscription, *“holiness unto the Lord.” “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowl's before the altar” (Zechariah 14:20).*

By studying the *Old Testament Scriptures* the divine and human nature of the Messiah was revealed. Spiritual humility is needed by the *New Testament* church when it comes to assuming what the *Old Testament* saints did not know about the Messiah, for Jesus was able to take the *Scriptures*, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, *“He expounded unto them [the two disciples on the Road to Emesus] in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).* Of Abraham, Jesus said to some Jewish leaders one day, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).*

A Word of Warning

Because communication was maintained between the Jews in Jerusalem and the Jews in exile in Babylon, Jeremiah was able to give spiritual counsel. Issuing a word of warning Zechariah exhorted them to leave a city devoted to destruction without delay. Those who did not listen to the prophetic voice lived to regret it. In time the Persian army besieged Babylon. The people of Babylon suffered greatly from famine. An internal genocide began. Women and children were massacred.

Only a favorite wife and one female servant were spared for each man. The prophecy of Isaiah against Babylon was fulfilled. *“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: 9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments” (Isaiah 47:8-9).*

Given to Pleasure

When a soul is given to the principle of pleasure, life is lived in a careless manner. Self-talk and self-deceit takes place in the mentality of the mind. The heart tells itself it is alone, for the presence of God is not felt, though God’s presence cannot be dismissed. To such foolish souls God has a word of warning. Judgment will come suddenly.

Doctrine of Pleasure

1. For some women having children is considered to be a great pleasure of life.
 - *Genesis 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?*
2. The poor of Israel could eat with pleasure from the vineyard of a neighbor provided it was not to excess.
 - *Deuteronomy 23:24 When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.*
3. God takes pleasure in the heart that is upright.
 - *1 Chron. 29:17 I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.*
4. Political rulers render decisions based on the good pleasure of their hearts.
 - *Ezra 5:17 Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.*
5. In times of spiritual revival, God’s people are exhorted to make a confession of their sins, discern the will of the Lord, and do what pleases God.

- *Ezra 10:11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.*
6. One form of divine judgment is enslavement, so that others rule with pleasure over God's people.
 - *Nehemiah 9:37 And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.*
 7. Sometimes rulers provide an example of excessiveness, by allowing the principle of personal pleasure to guide behavior, even to the point of drunkenness and shame.
 - *Esther 1:8 And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.*
 8. The rich who die suddenly, will find no pleasure in his house and wealth.
 - *Job 21:21 For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?*
 9. When a person is ill in bitterness of soul, food is not enjoyed.
 - *Job 21:25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.*
 10. It is possible to have a false sense of security, and that one's life of self-righteousness brings pleasure to God.
 - *Job 22:3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?*
 11. God takes no pleasure in any act or thought of wickedness.
 - *Psalms 5:4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*
 12. The principle of pleasure is associated with the righteous as well as the wicked. Those who practice doing wrong know only a fleeting moment of pleasure, while the righteous can shout for joy time and again, and be glad.
 - *Psalms 35:27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*

13. Christians should pray that God would build His church, because it pleases Him to do so.
 - *Psalms 51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*
14. The heart of the Christian should take pleasure in everything associated with the church, including art and architecture, music and drama.
 - *Psalms 102:14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*
15. Only those who please the Lord are properly entitled to worship and bless the Lord.
 - *Psalms 103:21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.*
16. God sovereignly chooses whom He will bind to rule and teach.
 - *Psalms 105:22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.*
17. The pleasure of serving God generates more pleasurable moments of service.
 - *Psalms 111:2 The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*
18. The Lord does not take pleasure in man for his outward appearance, but for a heart that fears Him, and hopes in His mercy.
 - *Psalms 147:10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.*
 - *Psalms 147:11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*
19. With those He is pleased with, and has pleasure in, God will reward with salvation.
 - *Psalms 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.*
20. The love of pleasure leads to poverty of soul and resources.
 - *Proverbs 21:17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*
21. It is possible to embark on a frantic search for happiness to no avail.
 - *Ecclesiastes 2:1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.*

22. God calls men fools, who vow a vow that is not honored.
- *Ecclesiastes 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*
23. As the body wears down and the passions subside, the time will come when what once gave great pleasure holds none.
- *Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;*
24. God knows how to turn pleasure into fear. There is the fear of disease. There is the fear of discovery. There is the fear of eternal damnation. There is the fear of an early death.
- *Isaiah 21:4 My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.*
25. The heart of the heathen, as ruthless as it may be, is still in the hand of the Lord to do His pleasure.
- *Isaiah 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*
26. In His sovereignty, God will do whatever pleases Him.
- *Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*
27. The Messiah suffered at the pleasure of the Father. This divine pleasure was not rooted in a sadistic feeling, but in the accomplishments that it would accrue on the other side of Calvary.
- *Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*
28. When a heart worships God in sincerity, pleasure will be found, even in the harsher demands of the religious life.
- *Isaiah 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:*
29. A denial of self-pleasure for spiritual worship brings divine blessings.

- *Isaiah 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*
30. The stain of sin is not something that can easily be washed off. To deny that the soul has done evil is foolish. In sexual sins, the heart becomes like a wild ass in heat, that smells the wind to find anything to mate with and will not be denied.
- *Jeremiah 2:22 For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD. 23 How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways; 24 A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? All they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.*
31. It is possible to sin in such a matter that God puts a curse on the life, and declares He has no pleasure in a soul. Coniah was such a man.
- *Jeremiah 22:28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?*
32. God knows how to shame those who engage in promiscuous behavior. One way is through public exposure of private parts.
- *Ezekiel 16:37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.*
33. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and in that truth lays the hope for a soul to repent of evil, and seek righteousness.
- *Ezekiel 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?*
 - *Ezekiel 18:32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*
 - *Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*
34. A covenant nation can become a divine disgrace.

- *Hosea 8:8 Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.*
35. God does take pleasure in the building of structures that honor Him.
- *Haggai 1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.*
36. When God loses His pleasure in a covenant people, He will not accept their worship.
- *Malachi 1:10 Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*
37. There are many fears that Christians have. Jesus has come to take away fear from the heart, and reassure individuals they shall be given a place in His kingdom.
- *Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*
38. In order to please the ungodly, and give them pleasure, secular ungodly rulers will hurt members of the church, as Felix hurt Paul.
- *Acts 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.*
 - *Acts 25:9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?*
39. An evil heart can know the judgment of God, agree with His justice, and still find pleasure in those who participate in evil with them.
- *Romans 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*
40. Following his conversion, Paul said he actually delighted in suffering for Christ for when he was weak in the flesh, he became stronger in the spirit.
- *2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*
41. The doctrine of election is based upon the pleasure of God, and not upon the merit of those who are the heirs of salvation.
- *Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

42. It pleases the Lord to make known unto men some facets of the mystery of His will.
- *Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*
43. The life of a Christian becomes more acceptable, as far as circumstances and duties are concerned, when it is realized that it is God working in the heart to do His will.
- *Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*
44. Christians should pray that God would make others worthy of the divine calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith in the heart with power.
- *2 Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*
45. When God moves to judge a soul, He allows the heart to believe lies in order that it might be damned, because it had pleasure in unrighteousness. One lie is the hopelessness of change.
- *2 Thessalonians 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*
46. God warns women engaged in sexual sins they are dead while they live.
- *1 Timothy 5:6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*
47. God has no pleasure with a works based righteousness.
- *Hebrews 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*
 - *Hebrews 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;*
48. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. God has no pleasure in any person who turns away from living the Christian life.
- *Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*
49. Divine discipline is different from human discipline, for divine judgment comes for the profit of the soul.

- *Hebrews 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

50. When a person is not immediately judged for the evil that is done, a false sense of security is adopted. From a divine perspective, God is simply allowing the soul to eat of sin, to nourish it for the day of ultimate judgment.

- *James 5:5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*

51. There is a reward for evil pleasure.

- *2 Peter 2:13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;*

52. The only reason given in *Scripture* for creation is the pleasure of God.

- *Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

The Deceit of Darius

In his conquest of Babylon, Darius might not have succeeded if it were not for an extreme act of self-sacrifice by one of his trusted officers. A man named Zopyrus had his nose cut off, and his ears and his body mangled, in order to present himself to the Babylonians as having been abused. The Babylonians believed his story and gave him command of their armies. Zopyrus then surrendered the city to Darius. The walls of the city were lowered, the many gates were removed, the houses were plundered, and more than three thousand individuals were impaled. At the time of these events, the holy temple in Jerusalem was being completed. A great shout of joy could be sounded in the throats of thoughtful Jews, “*Babylon is fallen!*” The city of Nebuchadnezzar never regained its former glory. Alexander the Great wanted to make it his capital, but that never happened. God had predicted the complete fall of the city, which has remained to this day.

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there” (Isaiah 13:19-21).

The War with Greece

Following his conquest of Babylon, Darius began a series of military adventures, which brought Asia and Europe into contact with each other, and changed the world. There was war between Persia and Greece. Having revolted against the rule of the Persians, Greek colonies were established on the shores of Asia Minor, often-called Ionians. Putting together a large force by land and sea, Darius marched to subdue the revolt. To his astonishment his fleet was wrecked at Mount Athos.

Another navy was built to patrol the Greek isles, while an army marched inland from Euboea to Attica. On the Plains of Marathon the Greeks and the Persians met. The Greeks were led by Miltiades, who won the great victory. Darius spent three years preparing for another campaign against the Greeks, but was prevented from further warfare against them by a revolt in Egypt, and an untimely death. His son Xerxes was his successor. Xerxes would try to accomplish what his father failed to do.

Like Father, Like Son

Xerxes, known to history as Darius Hystaspes, was one of the greatest of kings of the ancient world. As the ruler of Persia, he added to the Persian Empire – India, Thrace, Macedonia, and the islands of the Ionian Sea. At the time of his death, the Persian Empire stretched from the Indus valley to the Aegean Sea, and from the steppes of Scythia (Russia) to the cataracts of the Nile. Dividing his vast empire into twenty satrapies, or provinces, he appointed a satrap, or governor of each one. Large amounts of revenue poured into his coffers. There was wealth beyond belief.

Secular Religious Reform

It was during the reign of Darius that a famous religious reformer arose, named Zoroaster. He lived in the El-burz mountains from which, his followers claim, he was taken into heaven where the laws of God were revealed to him. To the Jews this belief sounded familiar, as indeed it was, for the original story was associated with Moses, the Lawgiver. At the core of the doctrinal position of Zoroaster was the belief in one eternal God. However, there were two principles, or angels in the universe, the one good and the other evil. The emblem of the good principle was light, called Ormuzd. The principle of darkness was called Ahriman. Between these contending principles a great battle was being fought, and would continue until the end of time, though good would eventually win. A day of judgment would follow. The devotees of each principle would be judged and separated forever, the one being rewarded and the other punished.

Ormuzd was always worshipped in the presence of fire, which was a cause of light, and especially the sun, which was believed to be the most perfect light in the universe. Darkness was feared, and hated, as the perfection of evil. The name of evil, Ahriman, was written backwards and upside down as a sign of disrespect. It is not hard to discern in this religion many elements from the Jewish faith, such as the unity of God, the doctrine of an evil spirit, the struggle between good and evil, the doctrine of the resurrection and last judgment, and the use of fire, or light, reflecting the Shekinah glory of God. Wherever Zoroastrian beliefs prevailed fire temples were constructed and temples with images were destroyed. When the Persians took Babylon, many of the image temples were destroyed, and prophecy was fulfilled.

- *Isaiah 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*
- *Jeremiah 50:2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.*
- *Jeremiah 51:44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.*
- *Jeremiah 51:47 Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.*
- *Jeremiah 51:52 Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan.*

Doctrine of Satanic Counterfeit

1. To counterfeit means to imitate, or copy something closely, especially with intent to deceive. Satan is a master at religious counterfeiting. The close parallelism between the basic tenants of Zoroastrianism and Judaism reveals this truth.
2. The *Bible* in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 warns of Satan's counterfeit: “*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.*”
3. Consider what Satan has counterfeited.
 - Satan has a counterfeit *Bible*. The *Book of Mormon*, the *New World Translation* of the Scriptures, and every occult, and cultist bible, has its ultimate origin in the mind of Satan.
 - Satan has a counterfeit doctrine. Specific doctrines of demons include celibacy, and forbidding eating certain meats. “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer*” (1 Timothy 4:1-5).
 - Satan has a counterfeit trinity.

The Unholy Father: Revelation 12:3. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

The Unholy Son: The Beast out of the Sea: Revelation 13:1 *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

The Unholy Spirit: The False Prophet: Revelation 13:11 *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

- Satan has a counterfeit temple. 2 Corinthians 6:15 *And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*
- Satan has a counterfeit religion, or system of beliefs. It is recognized by casting doubt on the Word of God, followed by a denial of the simplicity of God's word, and / or by misusing it. In the Garden of Eden, Satan cast doubt on God's word before openly denying it. In the wilderness while tempting Christ, Satan twisted Scripture to make it mean something it was never intended to mean.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Matthew 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

- Satan has a counterfeit morality. For those with a bent towards lasciviousness, it is called hedonism, Epicureanism, or in modern terms, the Playboy philosophy. For those with an inclination to religious asceticism, it is called legalism, or Pharisaism. All forms of morality, not rooted in faith, with the glory of God as its objective, is sin. Romans 14:23 *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*
- Satan has a counterfeit objective, which is to be glorified as God. Isaiah 14:14 explains. Said Lucifer, *"I will be like the most High."*

4. The Christian should not be surprised to find many *Biblical* concepts, and stories, embedded in the belief systems of other world religions, for Satan takes the truth to copy it before using it to deceive others. Nor should they embrace the other world religions simply because there is an element of truth in them. There is only one true truth, and that is Christ. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6).

The Spread of Zoroasterism

Darius accepted, and spread the beliefs of Zoroaster. The religion has found descendants in the people of Persia, called Parsees. It was in AD 936 that a group of Zoroastrians immigrated to Gujarat, in India, to escape the Muslim prosecution. In the 17th century, Parsees moved to Bombay, a port city in Western India. There they took part in shipbuilding, textile industry, as well as trade, and eventually prospered. The Parsees, both men and women, contributed a great deal to well-being of the Indian community. They built hospitals, orphanages, schools, factories, and fire temples.

One famous Parsee was Jehangir R.D. Tata, who established India's first air service, Tata Aviation, which later became Air India. The other was Sir Ness Wadia, who established the first wireless service connecting India and Britain. He was the first Indian Knighted by the British.

The Decline and Fall of Persia

Despite the religious overtones of Zoroasterism, there was no moral strength to purify the people. The royal court was characterized by excessive luxury and cruelty. The women of the court were known to be especially barbaric, and yet their influence was great. Because truth, and justice, and family values were not honored in society, the nation slowly declined, until it collapsed under the forces of the self-disciplined Greeks.

Then Came Xerxes

The successor of Darius was Xerxes, whose main objective was to establish his sovereignty over all his subjects. He is best known in history for his invasion of Greece. Herodotus, the Greek historian (b. BC 485), records that no less than five million Persians moved with him on his military expeditions. Josephus writes that the Jews were part of the body that marched. But it was to no avail. At Thermopyle, the Persians were opposed by Leonidas, one of the kings of Sparta, with only three hundred followers. Time and again the great masses of the Persian army was driven back, until twenty thousand were slain. The three hundred were finally betrayed and put to death. But then the Greek fleet at Salamis, under the extra-ordinary leader Themistocles, defeated the Persian fleet. Xerxes witnessed the battle from an elevated position on land.

“A king sat on the rocky brow
That looks on sea-born Salamis;
And men in nations lay below,
And ships in thousand; -- all were his.
He counted them at break of day;
And when the sun set, where were they?”

Xerxes left to return to Persia, fortunate to be alive. He left behind a trusted general, Mardonius, who fared no better than the king. In two separate battles, one on land the other on sea, one at Plateas in Boeotia, and by the sea at Mycale in Asia Minor. From this time on, no Persian army crossed the Hellespont. The son of Xerxes was Artaxerxes Longimanus who succeeded him. His reign lasted for forty-one years. The name Longimanus was given to him because of his hands. It is said when he stood they reached to his knees.

The Book of Esther

No survey of the Persian period would be complete without the story of Esther. It is widely believed among *Bible* scholars that the king of Persia, who married Esther, and made this Jewish lady queen, was Xerxes, called Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. During the formation of the canon of *Scripture*, there was concern about including Esther, since the name of God is not mentioned. However the providential hand of God is evident in all details. As the narrative unfolds, the king of Persia is living in splendor in his palace at Shushan, or Susa, where many parties were given.

When Queen Vashti refused to appear at one of the banquets, a political crisis ensued. Suddenly men grew afraid that the queen's defiance of the king's order would lead to social unrest, as ordinary wives defied their husbands. *"For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not" (Esther 1:17).*

The defiance of the queen led to a rapid series of events to unfold, including – the selection of Esther to become the most favored concubine, and then queen, to Ahasuerus; the refusal of the Jew Mordecai, to do obeisance to Haman the Agagite, or Amalekite, and counsel to the king; the royal decree to exterminate the Jews; the exposure of the plot by Mordecai; the intervention by queen Esther on behalf of her people; the exposure of Haman and his execution, and the survival of the Jews. Had the attempt to kill the Jews been accomplished in this the original holocaust the history of the world would have been different. But God was present to watch over a Covenant People.

A Question of Situational Ethics

There is one facet to the story of Esther that is disturbing to thoughtful individuals, for it concerns an ethical question. The initial presentation of Esther to the king, was so that she might sleep with him for one night, and satisfy his sexual needs.

"Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name" (Esther 2:13-14).

For this one night with the king, every maiden in the court was given whatsoever she desired. As she had been prepared by her uncle, and as the custom of the day permitted, Esther went in as a virgin to sleep with the king. *“So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign” (Esther 2:16).*

The surprising turn in the story comes when the king falls in love with Esther, to the point he is willing to make her queen, and she in turn is discovered to be a Jewess, who is willing to intercede on behalf of her people, at great risk to her own safety. *“And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti” (Esther 2:17).*

It seems that the sexual sins of Esther’s fornication, and the king’s multiple acts of adultery, for he was still married officially to Vashti, became overshadowed by the attempted holocaust. But what is to be made of the sexual sins of the covenant child Esther? And what is to be about Mordecai for he is not innocent either? It was he who encouraged his niece to sleep with the king. It was Mordecai who brought Esther to the court’s attention (Esther 2:5-8).

The Scriptures and Sexual Sins

1. God takes sexual sins seriously especially for the believer, because the body is declared to be His dwelling place.
 - *1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*
2. The apostle Paul made it very plain that sexual sins such as fornication, and adultery, are damnable sins worthy of the most severe judgment in time and eternity.
 - *Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness ... 21 of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*
 - *Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*
 - *1 Corinthians 6:13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

3. The sexual misconduct of the man in the church of Corinth led to him being placed under the sentence of death.
 - *1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

4. The covenant people of God are to keep themselves from sexual sins, for such is the will of God.
 - *1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:*

5. Apart from repentance, God's judgment falls surely and severely upon those who engage in sexual misconduct, and lead others into sexual sins.
 - *Revelation 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. ...16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*

6. Despite the divine prohibitions, despite the fearful judgments of God, despite the shame associated with conduct that violates the conscience and the moral law of God, the covenant people of God struggle with sexual sins, or abandon themselves to the passions that rage in the heart.
 - When Noah got drunk. His son Ham either took advantage of his situation and committed a homosexual act upon his person or mocked him in his drunken condition. The result was the Curse of Canaan. *Genesis 9:24-25 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. 25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.*
 - When Lot got drunk, his daughters lay with him in incest, to produce children. *Genesis 19:36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.*

- Lot was willing to give his two virgin daughters to be raped by the men of Sodom rather than let the homosexuals in the community violate by rape his guests. *Genesis 19:8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.*
- David lusted after Bathsheba, and then lay with her to produce a child, after which he had her husband Uriah killed, to cover up his deed. *2 Samuel 11:2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. ...*

17 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. 16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. 17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

- The sexual appetite of Solomon was so great he needed 700 wives and 300 concubines to satisfy him. *1 Kings 11:3 And he [Solomon] had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*
 - In the church of Corinth fornication was openly reported. *1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,*
7. Many more illustrations could be cited concerning the sexual sins of professing saints, but these are given to reflect, that across the centuries inappropriate sensuality has plagued the covenant people of God.
 8. When Esther was invited to sleep with the king for one night, when she was encouraged to do so by her uncle Mordecai, when Esther conceded to the proposition, and prepared herself for a night of lost virginity albeit with a rich reward, she did not hesitate.
 9. Only God can sort out the inner workings of the heart in this most difficult area. This much is certain from the story of Esther, and the teaching of Paul. God is sovereign over sin, and can make good come out of any form of evil. When Esther did become queen, and her relationship with the king was at least made legal she was able to do much good for her people, prompting Mordecai to ask “*who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*” (*Esther 4:14*).

The apostle Paul said, “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28). In His sovereign will, God can make good come out of evil.

- The taking of Bath-sheba to bed, and then to wife, led to the birth of Solomon.
- The loss of her virginity to the king, led to a queen’s position for Esther.
- The murder of Christ led to the salvation of countless immortal souls.
- The sentence of death for the man in Corinth, led to his repentance.

God knows how to make good come out of evil. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound (Romans 5:20). God is sovereign over sin.

Pastoral Counsel for Sexual Sins

For those who find themselves addicted to sexual misconduct in particular, and any other addictive behavior in general, the following pastoral counsel is provided.

- Seek continually, on the other side of the acts of evil for divine deliverance. Remind God the Father of the promise of the angels who told the shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus that He “*shall save his people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus said of Himself that He came to set the captives free. *Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 22 And all bare him*
- Seek for the practical wisdom needed to break the cycle of sin. *James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*
- Ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*
- Make no provision for the flesh. *Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.* Stop putting yourself in the path of temptation, and stop setting aside time for evil.

- Become accountable to a trusted person. *Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
- Remember that there is not a man or woman worth going to hell over. *Romans 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*
- Remember not only who you are, but to Whom you belong. *1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*
- Put no confidence in the flesh to subdue or overcome sexual passions. *Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision [converted], which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*
- Do not merely rely on the Holy Spirit to slay sexual passion, yield wholly to His sovereign work. *Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
- Do not doubt the reality of salvation, but hope in God. *Philippians 1 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*
- Believe there is a way of escape from temptation, and then use the simple solutions the Sovereign provides. *1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. In Scripture covetousness is declared to be idolatry. One of the root causes of sexual sins is covetousness, or an inordinate desire to have more than we should or something we should not have.*
- Run to the mercies of God as many times in a day as necessary, for God will forgive without limit the sincere repentant. *Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- Ask God to write His law upon your heart according to promise. Seek to have a principle within that will regulate attitude and actions. *Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

“I want a principle within of watchful, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near.

I want the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire,
To catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire.

From Thee that I no more may stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,
Grant me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.

Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make;
Awake my soul when sin is nigh, and keep it still awake.
Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy power impart;
The mountain from my soul remove, the hardness from my heart.

O may the least omission pain my reawakened soul,
And drive me to that blood again, which makes the wounded whole.”

Charles Wesley

- Practice the presence of God. *Psalm 139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*
- As time is taken to do evil, and give full expression to sexual passions, so give time to repentance. *Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.*
- Never call wrong right. Never justify what is being done, or the sins that have been committed. *Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*
- Seek to bring every thought into captivity for Christ. *2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

- Accept the consequences of your actions without comment. In as far as sexual sins are not easily overcome; the judgment of God will fall in some form upon the life. Receive the chastening of the Lord without comment. *Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

The Survival of the Jews

In matchless grace God preserved the covenant people. God can cause prosperity in the midst of adversity, as He can turn cursing into blessing. The Hebrew people, during this period, began to be called Jews (Esther 2:5), as they were dispersed through one hundred and twenty seven provinces of the Persian Empire, from the Indus to Ethiopia (Esther 3:8). They were allowed to retain their national laws and customs as a distinct people (Esther 3:8), though they were not without their personal enemies (Esther 9:1). So well did the Jews prosper, they were able to contribute a substantial sum to the royal court (Esther 3:9). Skilled in warfare, they were able to kill 800 of their enemies in two days, and another 75,000 throughout the empire in self-defense (Esther 9:6, 15, 16).

No doubt many Persians became proselytes to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *Esther 8:17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.*

Becoming a Jew

How does one become a Jew who is a Gentile? In the *Scriptures* a distinction can be made between a racial Jew, a religious Jew, and a regenerate Jew.

- A racial Jew is anyone who has the genes of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob in the bloodline. A genealogy helps to establish the racial Jew. The Jews became very proud of their racial heritage. John the Baptist warned the people of his day not to depend upon being a racial Jew for salvation, but to repent, and embrace by faith the Messiah. *Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*
- A religious Jew is someone who has embraced the faith of Judaism, with its ceremonial rules and regulations. In this sense many people became a Jew, such as those in the Persian Empire, or Ruth the Moabites, in an earlier time.

- A regenerate Jew is someone who has received Jesus Christ as personal savior, by believing that He is the Son of the Living God, and the Savior of the world. A regenerate Jew has nothing to do with racial heritage, or ceremonial ritualism, but everything to do with the Messiah. *John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Even Gentiles are declared to be the children of Abraham by faith. *Galatians 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

The Story of Ezra

In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Ezra, a descendant of the high priest Seraiah, began his return to Jerusalem, accompanied by no more than seven thousand others. Eighty years had passed since Zerubbabel and his company had returned to Jerusalem, which means a new generation must now take over the spiritual work. The glories of another generation cannot be passed on to the next, only the responsibilities. Ezra took his holy responsibilities seriously. Of particular concern to him was the establishment of the Law in the life of the Hebrew community. Gathering the people at the river Ahava, on the Euphrates, east of Damascus, Ezra proclaimed a fast. With the people humbled, hungry, and spread before him, Ezra prayed for God's protection on the journey home. It would take four months to cross the hot burning dessert. The journey was not made any easier by the treasures the people carried to dedicate in the temple, gold and silver vessels (Ezra 5:14-15). What Nebuchadnezzar had stolen, God was taking back.

A Sorry Surprise

Arriving in Jerusalem, Ezra was surprised to discover how the Law had been disregarded. Inappropriate marriage had taken place with idolaters. Drastic sins called for a radical change of lifestyle. The men had to be separated from their wives of idolatry if the purity of the Law of Moses was to be regained. Following a public confession of sins (Ezra 10:1-14), the strange wives were sent away, and an offering was made to the Lord. *Ezra 10:19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.*

A Student of Scripture

In addition to leading the people in moral reforms, Ezra taught the people to study, and honor the Scriptures once more. When the law was read in public, the people stood in respect. *Nehemiah 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people ;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up.* But Ezra not only read the Law, he interpreted. He explained the meaning of the verses so the people had understanding. *Nehemiah 8:8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.* As the people went away to their local communities', synagogues would be constructed for the study of the *Scriptures*, and for proper worship, with understanding. Religion had returned to the hearts of the people.

Unfortunately, there was a downside to this. Gradually an idea emerged, that besides the written Law, there was an oral Law which God had communicated but which was not recorded. The oral Law could only be known by tradition. And so the “*tradition of the elders*” was bound to be honored—until the time of Christ, who first violated them, and then spoke against them in the strongest of terms.

Matthew 15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Despite the teachings of Christ against the traditions of men, they continued to be honored. In the middle of the second century after Christ, Rabbi Judah, the son of Simeon, a well-respected teacher, collected the oral sayings or traditions, and wrote them down in the *Mishna*. Commentaries on the *Mishna* came next, called the Gemara. The Gemara, and the *Mishna* together, form the *Talmud*. The *Babylonian Talmud*, compiled by the Babylonian Jews, consists of twelve volumes.

The Story of Nehemiah

Thirteen years after Ezra arrived at Jerusalem, a zealous helper arrived on a visit. His name was Nehemiah. His father has risen to wealth and prosperity under the kings of Persia. Now his son had become a cupbearer to the king, with honor and influence. Longing to visit the city of his father, Nehemiah was allowed to go home, by the permission of Artaxerxes. What Nehemiah saw when he arrived at Jerusalem shocked him. He found the walls in disrepair, and crumbling. Moved to action, he stirred the people to repair the walls within fifty-two days. *Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.* This remarkable achievement was accomplished despite Samaritan opposition by individuals such as Sanballat, the Horonite, Geshem, the Arabian, and Tobiah, the Ammonite. So great was the leadership of Nehemiah in calling the people to reformation, a national covenant was entered into. So gracious was the heart of Nehemiah, that he took no salary from the State while acting as governor. Having promised to return within twelve years to Persia, Nehemiah kept his word and resumed his duties at court.

- *Nehemiah 2:1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.*

Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

- *Nehemiah 13:6 But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: 7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.*

A Return to Jerusalem

While Nehemiah went back to Persia, he was destined to return to Jerusalem on a second visit. During his absence, the people slid back to inappropriate behavior. Leading the way in open immorality was the high priest. He had proven to be unfaithful to his holy office, allowing Tobiah, the Ammonite, to have lodging in the chambers of the house of God. Nehemiah put an end to this practice, which led Manasseh, a grandson of the high priest, who had married the daughter of Sanballat, to go to Samaria where, on Mount Gerizim, he constructed a temple of rival worship. Nevertheless, Nehemiah continued to reform the people, even at the point of force. He was determined the Mosaic law would be enforced.

The Loss of Title, but Not Dignity

While the religious reforms continued, the royal families of Judah became more and more obscure. Genealogical records were carefully kept, but it was to no avail. The political power belonged to the strongest, and latest conqueror of the Middle East. The royal line declined, until at last its representative, and legitimate heirs, were found in the humble condition of a carpenter, in the obscure village of Nazareth.

The Last Word

Soon after the days of Nehemiah, God spoke one last time before a long silence shrouded the divine voice. The last prophet of the Old Testament era was named Malachi. Like so many others before him, Malachi rebuked the sins of the people, and called them to repentance. The priests in particular were preached against, for they had allowed the marriage covenant to be violated. Divorce was far too common. The people worshipped without heart, and were careless in the manner in which they approached God. Malachi reminded the people that God would move to discipline His people. But then in grace, He would restore them to favor. The Messiah would come, and before His coming there would be a forerunner in the spirit and power of Elijah. This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist. The Old Testament ends with the great promise of a redeemed people being realized. *Mal 3:17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

Supplemental Material

Basic Bible Doctrines

Doctrine of Fear

The New Testament Teaching

1. Personal standards, mixed with fear of social disapproval, may prohibit holy behavior. When Joseph discovered Mary was with child, he was fearful of taking her to wife.
 - *Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*
2. When a Christian's conduct is above reproach, and the motives are pure in the sight of God, there is no reason to fear the slanderous comments of others.
 - *Matthew 10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.*
3. Legitimate fear is a sanctified terror of the omnipotent God, who has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell. God would have us fear Him, so there can be freedom to love and obey Him, with a clear conscience.
 - *Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
4. Illegitimate fear is emotion which produces daily apprehension because the mind says to itself that individuals are nothing more than an animal.
 - *Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows*
5. Unexplained phenomena causes the heart to be fearful.
 - Jesus walking on the water. *Matthew 14:26 And when the disciples saw him [Jesus] walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.*
 - Zacharias being able to talk. *Luke 1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.*
 - The healing of the sick. *Luke 5:25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.*

- The casting out of demons. *Luke 8:37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.*
6. God uses fear to help restrain many expressions of evil. The enemies of Christ were cautious in condemning His ministry, because they feared the reaction of the people if they gave an answer to a question Jesus had for them concerning John the Baptist. The Lord asked what was the origin of his ministry. The Pharisees thought about the matter, and decided they could not answer.
 - *Matthew 21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.*
 7. Holy angels can produce fear in the hearts of men.
 - The unconverted. *Matthew 28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*
 - The converted. *Luke 1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.*
 8. Holy angels try to calm the fears of the saints, both men and women, by assuring them of their good intentions.
 - **Women comforted.** *Matthew 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.*
 - **Men comforted.** *Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*
 9. Those who learn to fear God will enjoy divine mercy.
 - Divine mercy. *Luke 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.*
 10. When a Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit and prays, God can be served without fear of men.
 - *Luke 1:67 And his [John's] father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;*

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

11. Illegitimate fears are overcome, embracing the following facts of faith.

- Knowing the Lord has a geographical, and occupational will for every life. *Luke 5:10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*
- Knowing the Lord will avenge His own. *Luke 18:2 There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night*
- Remembering to Whom the believer belongs will help to calm fears. *Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba [Papa], Father.*

12. Sometimes divine healing will come when fear is cast out, and permission is granted to have faith in a healing miracle.

- *Luke 8:50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.*

It must be kept in mind that permission must be granted for faith to be exercised, otherwise there is danger in developing faith in faith, which is a work of the flesh. A perfect example of this can be found in the life of Catherine Marshall. After suffering for several years with a case of tuberculosis, God gave Catherine permission to believe she would be healed. And so she was.

13. Remembering the promise of Jesus, minimizes fear of the future. He will give the kingdom to those who love Him.

- *Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*
- *John 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*
- *Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

14. Those who will not fear God by choice, might be forced to fear Him by circumstances. Jesus predicted a time when the hearts of men would fail “*for the powers of heaven shall be shaken*” (Luke 21:26). In AD 70 this prophecy was literally fulfilled, and will be fulfilled again at the Second Advent.
15. If a conscious choice, and circumstances do not cause the heart to learn to fear God, the heart will become so adamant that even in death, God is cursed. When Jesus was placed on the Cross he was crucified with two other men. One man began to curse, and was rebuked for not fearing God. “*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?*” (Luke 23:40) In Romans 3:18 the apostle Paul writes of hardened individuals saying, “*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*”
16. Though the heart of the Christian might know the emotion of fearing others, the Christian is still compelled to do what is noble and right, illustrated in the actions of Joseph of Arimathaea.
- *John 19:38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.*
17. When the heart is most afraid, Jesus will come to comfort His people. He always has. He always will.
- *John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*
18. If the question were asked, “*How does a person learn to fear God?*” the Scriptures provide an answer.
- The performance of miracles can cause the heart to learn to fear God. The miracles the apostles performed were designed to cause men to fear God. Miracles are not a form of mass entertainment, or to attract a crowd. Miracles are meant to induce a holy terror of the Almighty. *Acts 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*
 - Divine discipline can cause the heart to learn to fear God. The premature demise of Ananias and his wife illustrates this point. *Acts 5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.*
 - Preaching the gospel can produce fear of God in the heart, though it does not always lead to a conversion. *Acts 24:25 And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*

- Demonic activity, not handled properly, can cause the heart to fear God. *Acts 19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.*
- Remembering the severity and justice of God can induce the heart to learn to fear God. *Romans 11:20 Well; because of unbelief they [national Israel] were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:*
- Public accountability will produce a godly fear. *1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*

19. When the church fears God, there are some wonderful results.

- There is peace in the congregation as spiritual growth takes place. *Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*
- Holiness is perfected. *2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*
- Genuine repentance takes place. *2 Corinthians 7:11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*
- The capacity to receive a fallen brother is found. *2 Corinthians 7:15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.*

20. It is normal to be fearful due to the fall. Even the apostle Paul confessed to his personal fears.

- *1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*

21. Though natural fears are normal, they are to be minimized, and overcome by faith.

- Confidence that the will and work of the Lord are being done helps to overcome fears. *1 Corinthians 16:10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.*

- Suffering for the sake of righteousness tends to eliminate fear. The apostle Paul noticed that his suffering caused other believers to become bolder in witnessing. *Philippians 1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*
22. There are spiritual fears of concern that mark the sensitive and mature Christian's heart.
- The loss of the simplicity in Christ should be feared. *2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*
 - A congregation marked by sins of the tongue and mind is something to fear. *2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:*
 - Not receiving all the promises of God should be of spiritual concern. *Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*
23. The conclusion of the matter is that the Christian life is to be worked out in an atmosphere of fear and trembling, which means it is to be taken very seriously. *Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*
23. A godly fear is not the same as a fleshly fear or the fear produced by self-doubts, sin, Satan, or the world.
- *2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*
26. Fleshly fear is characterized by the following.
- An inordinate terror of death. *Hebrews 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*
 - An inducement of terror in others, verbally, or physically. *1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*
27. Christ has come to deliver individuals from the fears induced by the Fall.
- Christ delivers believers from fleshly fears by His faithful work of redemption. *Hebrews 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

- Christ delivers believers from fleshly fears by encouraging them to pray and to affirm faith. *Hebrews 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

28. Godly fear is visibly recognized.

- Godly fear is identified by gospel obedience. *Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*
- Godly fear will produce a sense of the presence of God. *Hebrews 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake :)*
- Godly fear is accompanied by a sense of humility. *1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*
- Godly fear will move to save others. *Jude 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

Doctrine of Balaam

1. Balaam was an ungodly prophet who lived at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia.
 - *Deuteronomy 23:4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.*
2. Although he was identified with the Midianites, Balaam possessed some knowledge of the true God. Balaam gave honor to the Lord for his prophetic gifts but in the end he was absorbed with himself.
 - *Numbers 31:8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.*
3. In the year BC 1401, the Israelites encamped in the Plain of Moab. Balak, the king of Moab, united with the Midianites to drive the Israelites away. He wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites for money.
 - *Numbers 22:5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:*
4. Despite his initial apprehensions over the lawfulness of cursing the Israelites, Balaam decided to speak whatever the Lord gave him. Balak agreed.
5. Seven altars were prepared, upon each of which Balak and Balaam offered a bullock and a ram. Three times Balaam started to speak against Israel, and three times his cursing was turned to words of blessing, and magnificent prophecies.
 - *Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*
6. Realizing that he could not curse the Israelites, Balaam suggested that the Israelites be led into acts of sexual immorality (Numbers 31:16).
 - *Numbers 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.*
7. Balaam's life came to an end when Balaam sided with the Midianites in a pitched battle against the Israelites.

- *Numbers 31:8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.*
8. The *Word of God* looks upon Balaam as an evil person full of evil deeds. Jude 11 warns about The Error of Balaam, which is trying to make merchandise out of God's people.
- *Jude 11 Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*
9. The Way of Balaam is the great sin of simony, or commercializing the gifts of God.
- *2 Peter 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*
10. The Doctrine of Balaam is to abandon godly separation in favor of worldly conformity. Balaam taught Balak to corrupt people he could not curse by encouraging them to marry Moabite women, and so commit spiritual fornication.
- *Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*
 - *Numbers 31:15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.*
 - *Numbers 22:25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.*
 - *Numbers 23:8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?*
11. The Tragedy of Balaam is reflected in that he was a man who could have been used in a positive way in the service of the Lord. His soul was sensitive to spiritual matters, and he had contact with God in a most unusual way, until the day greed was found in his heart.

Doctrine of the Vow

1. By definition, a vow is a strong verbal oath, taken in the sight of the Lord, that a certain action will, or will not be performed. There is usually a condition involved.
 - *Genesis 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on. 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*
2. God remembers the vows that are made, and expects those who make them to keep them.
 - *Genesis 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.*
 - *Numbers 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*
 - *Deuteronomy 23:21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.*
3. When the Mosaic Law was established, provision was made for the offering of a voluntary offering, to visualize a vow.
 - *Leviticus 7:16 But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten:*
4. The sacrifice made in association with the vow had to be a pure offering, without blemish to indicate the sincerity, and purity of the heart.
 - *Leviticus 22:21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.*
5. Either a man or a woman could take the Nazarite vow, which caused them to be set apart from others for the service of God. The obligation was either for life, or for a defined time. The term “Nazarite vow” comes from the Hebrew word *nezer*, meaning to be separate.

- *Numbers 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:*
6. During the course of keeping the Nazarite vow, there was to be the separation from strong drink, and the hair was not to be cut.
- *Numbers 6: 3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. 5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.*
7. Sometimes a very foolish vow can be made, such as the vow of Jephthah.
- *Judges 11:30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, 31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. 36 And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. 37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. 38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. 39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, 40 That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.*
8. Sometimes an honorable vow can be made, such as when Hannah dedicated her child Samuel to the service of the Lord.
- *1 Samuel 1:11 And she [Hannah] vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him [Samuel] unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head [in compliance with the Nazarite vow].*

9. Sometimes a religious vow can be used as a covering for treachery, as in the case of Absalom who plotted to take the kingdom from his father David.
- *2 Samuel 15:7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. :8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. 9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. 10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.*
10. As an act of genuine worship, making vows to God is an acceptable form.
- *Psalms 65:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*
 - *Psalms 76:11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*
 - *Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.*
11. Only a fool would break a vow made to God.
- *Ecclesiastes 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*
12. It is far better not to ever make a vow to God, than to make one, and break it.
- *Ecclesiastes 5:5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*
13. It is not wrong for a vow to be made to God. However, a vow should meet some criteria.
- A biblical vow should come from the heart.
 - A biblical vow should be rooted in righteousness, whereby the glory of God is in view while others are blessed.
 - A biblical vow should be thoughtful and obtainable.
 - A biblical vow should be definite in scope and easy to be remembered.
 - A biblical vow should be kept at all cost.

Doctrine of War

1. The symbol of war is a red horse.
 - *Revelation 6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*
2. War between Satan, and his demons, and the angels of God, once took place in heaven.
 - *Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*
3. Though war is horrible, God has approved it on certain occasion.
 - *2 Samuel 22:35 He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*
 - *Psalms 144:1 A Psalm of David. Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*
4. Civil war has always been part of the history of nations.
 - Judges 12:1-6
 - Judges 20
 - 2 Samuel 2:12-31
 - 2 Samuel 3:1
 - 2 Samuel 20
 - 1 Kings 14:30
 - 1 Kings 16:21
 - Isaiah 19:2
5. There are times when war is prohibited.

2 Chronicles 11:4 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.
6. Sometimes war can be, and should be averted, as per Joshua 22:11-34.
7. In times of war much foolish boasting takes place.
 - 2 Kings 18:19-36
 - 2 Chronicles 13:4-12

8. War leads to terrible acts of violence, including the extermination of the enemy.

- Numbers 31:7-17
- Deuteronomy 2:33-34
- Deuteronomy 20:13-18
- Joshua 6:21,24
- Joshua 8:24-25
- Joshua 10:2-40
- 1 Samuel 15:3-9
- 1 Samuel 27:8-11

9. Some wars are considered by God to be justified.

- *Exodus 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. 14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*
- *Deuteronomy 3:21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. 22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.*
- *1 Samuel 17:45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.*
- *Psalms 18:34 He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

10. God will not hesitate to use war as a form of severe divine judgment against His enemies, and even against His own.

- *Exodus 23:24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.*
- *Leviticus 26:17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.*

11. War is repulsive to God. Because David was a violent man, he was not allowed to build the Holy Temple.

- *1 Chronicles 22:8-9 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. 9 Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.*
12. War brings fear and panic to a people.
- *Exodus 15:14-16 The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.*
13. Since all things are in the hands of our sovereign God, He is free to threaten defeat in war for the unrighteous.
- *Deuteronomy 32:25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.*
 - *1 Samuel 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.*
 - *Isaiah 30:15-17 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. 16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.*
14. Prior to going to war, individuals are wise to receive counsel (Josh. 22:10-34; Judges 7:10-11; 2 Samuel 16:20; 17:1-15; Psalms 48:4-7; Revelation 11:14; 20:18).
15. Wisdom is required in war (Proverbs 21:22; 24:6; Ecclesiastes 9:14-18; Luke 14:31-32).
16. War causes great agitation (Amos 2:2).
17. Many are killed, or neglected in times of war, including innocent women and children (Isaiah 14:19; 18:6).
18. The evils of war are numerous (2 Samuel 2:26; Psalms 46:8; Isaiah 3:25-26; 5:39-30; Jeremiah 4:19-31; Amos 6:9-10).

19. One day God will cause all wars to cease (Psalms 46:9; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).
20. Until Christ comes there will be wars and rumors of war (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9).
21. Warfare is used in a figurative way to speak of the spiritual conflicts of the saints.
22. Spiritual warfare is not after the flesh (2 Corinthians 10:3).
23. Christians are to wage a good spiritual warfare before God (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
24. Spiritual warfare is called "*the good fight of faith*" (1 Timothy 6:12).
25. The believer fights against many things:
 - the devil (Gen. 3:15; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 1:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:17).
 - the flesh (Romans 7:23; 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11).
 - spiritual enemies (Psalms 38:19; 56:2; 59:3).
 - the world (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4-5).
 - death (1 Corinthians 15:26; Hebrews 2:14-15).
26. One part of the spiritual warfare of the believer is emotional in nature, as opposition arises from friends, or families (Micah 7:6; Matthew 10:35-36).
27. The spiritual war that the Christian engages in is carried on:
 - under Christ, who is the Captain of the faith (Heb. 2:10).
 - under the banner of the Lord (Psalms 60:4).
 - with great faith (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
 - with a pure conscience (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
 - with a heart which is steadfast in the sphere of faith (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:9; Heb. 10:23).
 - with sobriety (Jude 1:3).
 - with due consideration (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:8).
 - with sobriety (1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8).
 - with a mindset willing to endure hardness (2 Timothy 2:3, 10).
 - with a spirit of self-denial (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).
 - with absolute confidence in God (Psalms 27:1-3).
 - with earnest prayer (Psalms 35:1-3; Eph. 6:18).
 - without earthly entanglements (2 Timothy 2:4).
28. Those who merely profess a Christian faith will not persevere in the hour of spiritual conflict (Isaiah 9:3).

29. Because every believer has been enlisted in the spiritual conflict of the ages he must engage the enemy and stand firm (Philippians 1:30; Ephesians 6:13-14)
30. The saints are exhorted to be zealous in war (1 Timothy 6:12; Judge 1:3).
31. In the hour of battle there is
- comfort (Isaiah 4:11-12; 51:12; Micah 7:8; 2 Corinthians 7:5-6; 1 John 4:4).
 - divine help from the Father (Psalms 118:13; Isaiah 41:13-14).
 - divine protection (Psalms 40:7).
 - strength from God (Psalms 20:2; 27:14; Isaiah 41:10).
 - strength from Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Timothy 4:17).
 - divine deliverance (2 Timothy 4:18).
32. In all things there is to be thanksgiving (Romans 7:25; 1 Corinthians 15:57).
33. Spiritual war requires protective armour
- The belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14).
 - The breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14).
 - The preparation of the gospel (Ephesians 6:15).
 - The shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16).
 - The helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8).
 - The sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
 - ❑ Called “the armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11).
 - ❑ Called “the armor of righteousness”
 - ❑ (2 Corinthians 6:7).
 - ❑ Called “the armor of light” (Romans 13:12).
34. The armor which the Christian wears is
- not carnal (2 Corinthians 10:4).
 - mighty through God (2 Corinthians 4-5).
 - required (Ephesians 6:13).
 - to be put on. (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:4). To be on the right hand and left, an idiom meaning” to attack “and to defend” (2 Corinthians 6:7).
35. Strategic victory in spiritual war is from God (1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14). Victories shall be won
- through Christ (Romans 7:25; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Revelation 12:11);
 - by faith (Heb. 11:33-37; 1 John 5:4-5);
 - over the Devil (Romans 16:20; 1 John 2:14);
 - over the flesh (Romans 7:24; Romans 1:25; Galatians 5:24) and
 - over the world (1 John 5:4-5).

- over all that exalts itself (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- over death and the grave (Isaiah 25:8; 26:19; Hos. 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

34. Those who overcome in spiritual warfare will

- eat of the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17).
- eat from the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7).
- be clothed in white clothing (Revelation 3:5).
- be pillars in the temple of God (Revelation 3:12).
- sit with Christ on his throne (Revelation 3:21).
- have a white stone, and in it a new name written (Revelation 2:17).
- have power over the nations (Revelation 2:26).
- have the name of God written upon them by Christ (Revelation 3:12).
- have God as their God (Revelation 21:7).
- have the Morning Star (Revelation 2:28).
- inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).
- be confessed by Christ in the presence of God the Father (Revelation 3:5).
- be sons of God (Revelation 21:7).
- not be hurt by the Second Death (Revelation 2:11).
- not have their names blotted out of the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).

The Crusade and Medieval Christianity

1. It was not until the eleventh century that the pacifism of the early church died out and the glorification of the fighting man, the knight, took its place.
2. A partial explanation for this change can be found in the influx of Germanic people with their martial spirit. The clearest example of the outlook which resulted from the fusion of the barbarian religion of war and the Christian belief in peace, was the crusade.
3. In 1095 Pope Urban II urged his listeners to undertake a holy war under the auspices of the church to free the Holy Land from pagan control. The appeal succeeded, and the First Crusade was launched.
4. This campaign resulted in the conquest of Jerusalem (AD 1099), and the establishment of European states in the Middle East. There were more crusades to bolster these outposts, but by 1291 the last of them had fallen to the Muslims.
5. The crusades were the most obvious example of the merger between violence and holiness which took place in the medieval church.
6. The liturgy was expanded to include the blessing of battle standards and weapons. Knights were consecrated in a sacral fashion through ceremonies based on old pagan customs.
7. There were new religious orders, such as the Knight's Templars, founded for the purpose of first protecting pilgrims, and then fighting the enemies of God.
8. Western peoples came to look upon groups that professed another faith as enemies of the kingdom of God who should be destroyed, or converted. It was considered wrong to show mercy to these people, and the code of the just war could be suspended when fighting them.
9. A favorite text of the crusaders summed up this attitude: "*Cursed is he who keeps back his sword from bloodshed*" (*Jeremiah 48:10*).
10. The acceptance of violence by medieval Christians is demonstrated by the theologians of the time, who tended to believe that war was a necessary condition of society. Aside from minor sects there was little consideration of non-resistance.
11. Scholars such as Gratian, and Thomas Aquinas, expressed the just war teaching in a manner that made it useful for aggressive action. Perhaps their greatest weakness was not what they wrote, but what they did not write. They composed reams of material on the doctrine of angels, but few lines on the problem of violence. Consequently the discussion of war was left to those who looked on it favorably as an aspect of chivalry.
12. The "heroic" knight of the time became the basis of later glorification of war. Geoffrey Chaucer illustrates this point of view in the *Canterbury Tales*, where the knight is the natural leader of the pilgrims, and is endowed with all that is graceful and noble in an individual.

Renaissance and Reformation Developments

13. The technological and political changes of fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe created the conditions in which many Christians were forced to reconsider their attitudes toward war. The major technological change was the development of cannons. These were able to destroy medieval fortresses and, when adapted for field use, made the knight obsolete.
14. The Middle Ages saw not only new methods of warfare, but also the rise of larger dynastic monarchies. The territorial ambition of these states led to large-scale warfare.
15. Christian humanists, such as Thomas More, and Erasmus condemned the new violence. They pointed out that Christ did not advance his kingdom by force, but through love and kindness. Erasmus reminded his readers that once wars are accepted as just, they tend to become glorious.
16. The humanists accused the church of missing the true meaning of *Scripture*, and instead becoming the obedient servant of ambitious, bloodthirsty princes.
17. The early Protestant Reformers (Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin) did not add their voices to this protest, however. In fact, when religious fanaticism was added to the new munitions, the religious wars that followed the Reformation were some of the most violent in all of European history.
18. Only one group of Reformers, the Anabaptists, practiced nonresistance. They advocated a literal return to the Sermon on the Mount, and an imitation of the peacefulness of Christ.

Total War and the Modern World

19. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) settled the last major European religious war, and ushered in a period when dynastic monarchs, on the pattern of Louis XIV, gained great power.
20. The states, led by these kings suppressed local war bands, and organized standing armies. These actions threatened the nobles, because their traditional position was based upon military service, and now they were losing this function. In an effort to preserve their status they became the officers of the new forces, and thus became an interest group who encouraged a larger military establishment.
21. The most famous of these nobles were the Junkers, in Prussia. Such individuals continued the medieval notions of chivalry, honor, and martial virtues.
22. During the eighteenth century there was much criticism of war, but with the coming of the French Revolution, a new wave of violence swept over Europe.
23. Napoleon diverted the revolution into a campaign to build a vast empire. He formed an alliance between nationalism and democratic idealism. His idea of organizing the entire nation for the purpose of warfare was ominous for later times.

24. Although defeated, he wielded great influence through his example, and the humiliation he created among those he defeated.
25. Challenged by the Napoleonic victories, a Prussian military instructor, Karl von Clausewitz, articulated the theory of "*total war*." He believed that it is necessary to push conflict to its "*utmost bounds*" in order to win.
26. At the time he expressed these ideas, the industrial revolution began increasing the power of armaments so that an enemy could be totally defeated in a manner never before possible.
27. Christians, in the nineteenth century, responded to the danger caused by new armaments by encouraging international cooperation, and humanitarian endeavors.
28. Despite a strong current of nationalism, these attempts led to international gatherings, including the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907.
29. These meetings produced a series of recommendations protecting the rights of prisoners of war, insisting on care for the sick and wounded, ensuring the rights of neutrals, and attempting in other ways to limit the cruelty of war.
30. The forces that worked toward harmony and peace failed however, and with World War I, Clausewitz's view moved closer to reality.
31. The two sides used mines, machine guns, poison gas, submarines, and aerial bombardment, thus taking the conflict to land, sea, and air.
32. The churches supported the war. The rhetoric of leaders such as Woodrow Wilson, made them feel that they were involved in a crusade to help humankind.
33. But reality came home to these church people, when, after the Peace of Versailles, which ended the conflict, nothing seemed to go as planned.
34. Totalitarian regimes came to power in many countries, and the Great Depression spread among the liberal democracies of the West. The years between the global conflicts were characterized by a spirit of weariness, and pacifism, in the United States, and Western Europe.
35. The League of Nations, organized for the purpose of keeping peace, was unable to prevent another crisis, and the world was plunged into the maelstrom of another war.
36. The attitude of Christians toward World War II was closer to the just war theory.
37. The struggle differed from the First World War, because it was a clash between antagonistic social and political systems.

38. Fascism, with its bizarre biological racism, led many former Christian pacifists, including Reinhold Niebuhr, to urge believers to participate in the conflict. New technology produced weapons that made war more destructive than ever before.
39. The atomic bomb seemed to represent the ultimate in destructive capability.
40. When the war ended, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union continued to threaten world peace.
41. The United Nations has tried to keep peace, but the arms race has become a fact of life, and the production of weapons has been woven into the texture of modern technological society.
42. The situation is made even more difficult because of a decline in Christian influence in a more secular society.

Christian Responses to War

43. As history demonstrates, it is difficult to formulate the Christian position on war. The early church, certain Christian humanists, and the majority of Anabaptist have taken a nonresistant, or pacifist stance.
44. The majority however, have followed Augustine, and claimed that certain wars are just. Denominations, including the Church of the Brethren, Quakers, and Mennonites maintain a nonresistant position, but the larger groups such as Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Reformed, adhere to the just war interpretation.
45. In certain rare instances Christians have even supported crusades. The medieval popes urged such action against the Turks, and in the twentieth century some fundamentalist Protestants in the United States have supported such an attitude toward the Soviet Union.
46. One of the more interesting developments in recent times is the effect that the threat of global conflagration is having on Christian attitudes toward war.
47. Leaders in many denominations have come to realize that the use of nuclear bombs makes a mockery of the just war position, because they automatically result in the slaughter of noncombatants.
48. In the minds of these “*nuclear pacifists*”, such weapons invalidate war as a rational policy.

Doctrine of Bitterness

1. There are many matters to become bitter about. Money issues can be the root of great bitterness as people have different ideas of who should get what, and how money should be spent. When Esau discovered that his father had given the family blessing to Jacob, he screamed with a bitter cry over his loss.
 - *Genesis 27:34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.*
2. Social injustice leads to resentment and bitterness. The lives of the Jews in Egypt were made bitter with hard work.
 - *Exodus 1:14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor.*
3. God is aware of those experiences in life that can leave the soul bitter. Often He is moved to show mercy.
 - *2 Kings 14:26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.*
4. A bitter spirit will lead to bitter words. Sometimes, the innocent are the object of bitter words.
 - *Job 13:26 For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*
 - *Psalms 64:3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*
5. A bitter spirit will only lead to more bitter experience in life unless this emotional disorientation of the soul is brought into captivity for Christ. What a person sows they will reap. In the area of immorality, the writer of Proverbs saw the end of loose living for both men and women.
 - *Proverbs 5:4 "But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.*
 - *Eccl 7:26 And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.*
6. Sin is essentially a very bitter experience. Sometimes people think God is punishing them in a personal way, when the reality is that the natural consequence of evil is punishment enough.

- *Jeremiah 2:19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.*
- *Jeremiah 4:18 Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.*

7. Christian husbands are warned not to become bitter with their wives.

- *Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

8. The tongue is to be guarded so that it does not try and produce both sweet and bitter words, for that cannot be done.

- *James 3:11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?*

The rhetorical question demands a negative answer. No matter how hard a person may try to be sweet, or silent, if there is bitterness in the heart over some issue it will surface, and find expression.

9. The person who has bitterness in the heart should not be proud of that fact.

- *James 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*

10. All bitterness in the heart of the believer is to be put away, and not ventilated.

- *Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.*

11. A person knows if there is bitterness in the heart. .

- *Proverbs 14:10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.*

12. If bitterness is allowed to remain in the heart, and is not arrested, and dismissed, it will spring up and defile many.

- *Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*

13. Ironically the word of truth can be very bitter.

- *Revelation 10:9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.*

The only way to make the *Word of Truth* sweet again, is to redirect the thoughts so they are godly thoughts, and consistent with the mind of Christ, and reflect the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness and meekness.

Doctrine of Witchcraft and Demonism

1. When God established the nation of Israel as a theocracy He wanted no rivals. All false gods were to be destroyed, along with individuals who tried to lead people into the world of the occult.
 - *Exodus 22:18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*
 - *Deuteronomy 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.*
2. Despite the divine prohibition, the art of speaking with the dead, and seeking out spirits from beyond the grave persisted in Israel, and periodically was encouraged.
 - *Isaiah 8:19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? 20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*
3. It is possible for a person to be energized by, and promoted by the demonic world.
 - *Acts 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.*
4. There is no basis for making a distinction between White Magic and Black Magic. God condemns it all. Nothing about Black Magic or White Magic is innocent.
5. Sorcery is associated with false prophecy, which is why those in the charismatic movement, and those involved in eastern mysticism should be especially cautious, for they open themselves to the spirit world in an unusual way by suspending their minds.
 - *Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus.*
6. Witchcraft, and all who are involved in the occult are enemies of the Cross, and hostile to the gospel.
 - *Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.*
7. When the witch of Endor conjured up Samuel from among the dead (1 Samuel 28:15), it was a matter of God manifesting His absolute sovereignty over everyone and everything.

8. Samuel was allowed to appear to Saul to the surprise of the witch (1 Samuel 28:12), which indicates that normally, when the occult practitioner is in charge, nothing unusual will happen.
9. Though he was disturbed from his soul's rest, Samuel was well informed of the situation, and of future events. How much those who are with the Lord know about the affairs of earth is a matter of interesting speculation. The Catholics go too far in saying some dead saints know a lot about the affairs of those on earth to the point they can change the outcome through prayer to themselves.
10. What is more certain is that some of the fallen angels, called principalities (Romans 8:38), have a vital interest in the gospel message. If Christ is the Son of God, if He has crushed the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15), if the Christian message of salvation by grace through faith alone is true, then these principalities will be eternally damned, just as some are now reserved in chains of darkness.
 - *Jude 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*
11. Demons are addressed in a number of different ways in the New Testament.
 - They are called "unclean spirits". *Matthew 10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Mark 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;*
 - They are called "wicked (or evil) spirit". *Luke 7:21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.*
 - Paul calls them "deceiving spirits". *1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*
 - *John refers to "the spirit of error" and "spirits of demons". 1 John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*
 - *Revelation 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

- Luke describes one demon as a “*spirit of divination*”’ *Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:*
12. When a devil or demon possesses a soul, great harm is done to the body in the form of mental and physical illness. Christ has power to cast out the devil and bring healing.
- *Matthew 17:14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. 18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.*
13. Surprisingly enough the enemies of Christ accused Him of being in alliance with Satan's kingdom, including his demons.
- *Mark 3:22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.*
 - *John 8:48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*
14. The charge of being in league with Satan was also made against John the Baptist.
- *Matthew 11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.*
 - *Luke 7:33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.*
15. The works of Jesus, His personal goodness and righteousness showed the claims against him were not true. Christ will always be victorious over Satan and his kingdom.
- *Matthew 12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.*

- *Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:*

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

16. The power Jesus had to cast out demons was invested in His disciples.

- *Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

17. The power of God to cast out unclean spirits has not ceased. God is still sovereign over sin, Satan and sickness. However, superstition should not drive belief in the Divine Healer. God heals according to faith, and prayer, and His own good pleasure. When Paul was in need of healing God said “No” to his repeated requests.

- *2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Doctrine of the Conscience

1. It is possible to feel guilty about some matters where no guilt is present.
 - *1 Corinthians 10:25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:*
2. While others may give wrong meaning to social practices, there need be no sin in the soul if the same situation can be done to the glory of God.
 - *1 Corinthians 10:27 27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*
3. If the participation in a specific event will violate the conscience of someone else, or give offense, it is better to demonstrate social grace, and refrain from giving offense.
 - *1 Corinthians 10:28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:*
 - *1 Corinthians 10:29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*
 - *2 Corinthians 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*
4. Every believer is called upon to renounce secret sins, questionable practices, and a deceitful handling of *Scripture* that would justify the unthinkable. The purpose for such a renewed conduct is to be able to have a good conscience in the sight of God.
 - *2 Corinthians 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*
5. With a good conscience the heart will want to engage in good deeds towards others.
 - *1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:*
6. It is not easy to hold onto a good conscience, for there are many enemies of the soul seeking its downfall and destruction.
 - *1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

7. One of the grand objectives in the Christian's life is to have a pure conscience so that belief and behavior match.

- *1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

8. It is possible for the conscience to become insensitive to the point it is likened to being seared with a hot iron. Nothing touches the conscience when it becomes this hardened.

- *1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

Neither fearful threats of exposure, nor faithful warnings of ultimate damnation, neither the tragic consequences of others, or the wretchedness of public shame, and exposure, will stop the soul from sinning when the conscience is seared, and the heart is hardened.

9. Paul was able to maintain a good conscience before God, following salvation.

- *2 Timothy 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

10. Some of the most tragic words in the Bible are these: “*and conscience is defiled.*” The conscience is defiled because there is no longer anything considered holy or sacred.

- Unbelief defiles sacred time—it no longer exists
- Unbelief defiles sex—marriage is no longer the place for intimacy
- Unbelief defiles life—for life is easily destroyed almost before it begins
- Unbelief defiles the Moral Law—it is no longer binding (Romans 13:8,9).

- *Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

11. Because sin has defiled the conscience, redemption is necessary. But what can cleanse the conscience? Good works? Animal sacrifices? No. Only the blood of Christ, applied to the soul, by faith.

- *Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*
- *Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
- *Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

12. God offers to give men full assurance of faith provided they have clean hearts.

- *Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

13. Believers must pray for one another to have a good conscience.

- *Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.*

14. It is commendable when a Christian endures wrong actions, and attitudes, because his conscience is turned towards God.

- *1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*

14. By having a good conscience, sinners can be put to shame.

- *1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.*

15. Gospel obedience produces a good and clear conscience before God.

- *1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Doctrine of Repentance

1. The word “*repent*”, when used in a general sense, means literally ‘*to change one's mind.*’ The word is used this way of God.
 - *Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*
2. When used of man, true spiritual repentance speaks of a sense of personal ‘*guilt*’ with the hope of God's mercy. There is a sense of deep *regret* for the act of transgression committed.
 - *Matthew 26:75 And he [Peter] went out and wept bitterly.*
3. Repentance demands a deep *sorrow* for sin, and a turning away from it, to obey God. There is a fundamental change in one’s life.
 - *Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* (cf Luke 5:32)
4. In the *Old Testament* the classic case of repentance is that of King David, after Nathan the prophet accused him of killing Uriah the Hittite. and committing adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. David's prayer of repentance for this sin is found in Psalm 51.
5. In the *New Testament* the keynote of John the Baptist's preaching was, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matthew 3:2).
6. To the multitudes, John declared, “*Bear fruits worthy of repentance*” (Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8). It is not enough to simply say you are sorry.
7. When Jesus began His ministry, He took up John's preaching of the message of repentance, expanding the message to include the good news of salvation: “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel*” (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15).
8. In the preaching of Jesus, the truth is revealed that repentance and faith cannot be separated. By repentance, a person turns away from sin; by faith, a person turns toward God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Such a twofold turning, or conversion, is necessary for entrance into the kingdom
 - *Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
 - “*Unless you repent,*” said Jesus, “*you will all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3, 5).

9. This is the negative, or judgmental side of Jesus' message. The positive, or merciful message is seen in these words in Luke 15:10. *“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents”*.
10. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, His disciples continued His work of preaching the necessity of repentance and faith.
- *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*
 - *Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.*
11. Repentance has many facets, some of which have more to do with the will than the emotions. There is an old saying, “Actions speak louder than words.” Another saying declares, “I cannot hear what you are saying because I am too busy watching what you are doing.”
- ❖ Repentance is a turning from wickedness and dead works.
 - *Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*
 - *Hebrew 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*
 - ❖ Repentance is a turning toward God and His glory.
 - *Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - *Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*
12. Repentance will lead to eternal life.
- *Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

13. When a person truly repents there is a new ability to comprehend spiritual knowledge of the truth.

- *2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

14. Repentance is associated with

❖ prayer

- *1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;*

❖ belief

- *Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

❖ baptism

- *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

❖ and conversion

- *Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

15. Repentance is accompanied by

❖ humility

- *Matthew 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

16. Repentance is God's will and pleasure.

- *Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?*

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

- *2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

17. Repentance is God's command.

- *Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*
- *Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

18. Repentance is a gift of God's sovereign love.

- *Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*
- *Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*
- *Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*
- *2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

19. Apart from gospel repentance no one can be saved, sanctified, or have any peaceful assurance of salvation.

- *Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Doctrine of Jealousy

1. As an emotion, jealousy [Heb. *qanna'* (kaw-naw), *to envy, to have a zeal*] is ascribed to God as a divine attribute, and so need not be a sinful emotion.

The Father is Jealous

- *Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*
- *Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:*
- *Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*
- *Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,*
- *Deuteronomy 6:15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.*

The Apostle Paul was Jealous for Christ's Sake

- *2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The Holy Spirit is Jealous

- *James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? [Lusteth, *epipotheo* (ep-ee-poth-eh'-o); *potheo* (to yearn); to dote upon, i.e. intensely crave possession (lawfully or wrongfully):*

2. It is possible to provoke the Lord to jealousy.

God can be provoked to jealousy through idolatry.

- *Deuteronomy 32:16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.*
- *Deuteronomy 32:21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*

God can be provoked to jealousy through sins of immorality.

- *1 Kings 14:22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.*
 - *Psalms 78:58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*
3. Unsanctified jealousy can lead to irrational behavior with tragic consequences, such as public examination and shame.
- *Numbers 5:14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.*
 - *Numbers 5:30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.*
4. In the *Old Testament* era Joshua warned the people of God of the consequences of presumptuous sin.
- *Deuteronomy 29:20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.*
 - *Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.*
5. In the *New Testament* era the Church is not to provoke the Lord to jealousy.
- *1 Corinthians 10:22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?*
6. God is pleased when individuals are zealous, and thus jealous, for His holy name.

Phinehas honored the name of the Lord among the people of His generation.

- *Numbers 25:11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

The prophet Elijah was jealous for the cause of the Lord in his generation, and so apposed the prophets of Baal.

- *1 Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (cf. 1 Kings 19:14).*

7. God is jealous to protect His own character.

- *Ezekiel 39:25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;*

8. As God is jealous to protect His name, so He will move to protect all that He uses for His own glory.

The Land of Palestine

- *Joel 2:18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.*
- *Zechariah 1:14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.*
- *Zechariah 8:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.*

The Nation of Israel Prior to AD 70

- *Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

9. In order to bring many in the nation of Israel to repentance, God once provoked the people to jealousy, by showing special favor to the Gentiles.

- *Romans 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*
- *Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

10. When individuals do not arrest the slightest outburst of unsanctified anger, or jealousy, the potential increases for self-destructive, and other destructive behavior.

- *Proverbs 6:34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*

11. There is an unforgiving element to jealousy, for a key component is anger.
- *Psalms 79:5 How long, LORD? Wilt thou be angry forever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*
12. A jealous person is a mean person, in as far as they consider, and manifest their jealousy.
- *Song of Solomon 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.*
13. Because jealousy is such a strong emotion, the Lord is presented as going forth with such passion to war against His enemies.
- *Isaiah 42:13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.*
 - *Ezekiel 16:38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.*
 - *Ezekiel 16:42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.*
14. If God is gracious, He will show the believer that which arouses His jealous anger.
- *Ezekiel 8:3 And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy....8:5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.*
15. God first warned national Israel about His jealous rage, and then He demonstrated it through the Assyrians, in 721 BC, and then the Chaldeans, in 586 BC.
- *Ezekiel 23:25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.*
 - *Ezekiel 36:5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.*

6 Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

- *Ezekiel 38:19 For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;*

16. The jealousy of God is intense, and the destruction of His enemies complete.

- *Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.*
- *Zephaniah 3:8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.*

17. On a personal level, there are many examples in Scripture of the self-destructive nature, and other destructive consequences of jealousy.

- Cain was jealous of Abel's offering before the Lord.
- Sarah was jealous that Hagar was able to bear children and she was not.
- The brothers of Joseph were jealous because God and man favored him.
- Saul was jealous of David because the women of Israel sang his praises.
- Joab, a captain of the army of Israel, was jealous of the position of Abner, and found an occasion to kill him.
- The Ephraimites were jealous of Gideon, and then of Jephthah, the ninth judge of Israel.
- The elder son of the rich man was jealous of his younger brother's favor with the father after returning home from a life of debauchery.
- Sectional jealousy existed between Israel and the tribe of Judah.