

Maintaining Faith In An
ATHEISTIC WORLD

FAITH

IS THE

VICTORY

DICKSON

Faith Is The Victory

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Preface

This is the victory that overcomes the world, OUR FAITH.

(1 John 5:4)

We must not forget the meaning of the above statement. John was writing at the beginning of an era of world history wherein Christians were about to venture. It would be an era where the “ideology” of the Christian faith would be tested to its very core. In fact, we could interpret the meaning of Revelation 2:10 to read as follows: *“Do not fear those things that you will suffer. Behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison so that you may be tested. And you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful [even if it means] death and I will give you the crown of life.”*

In the latter part of the first century, Christians were moving into the onslaught of the religious persecution of the state. As the result of this persecution, many Christians would eventually be served up to lions after being handed over to the authorities and thrown into a coliseum of lions for entertainment. All this would be considered legal by the gods of Rome. Throughout this ghastly persecution, many Christians around Rome would hide in the burial places of the catacombs under the city of Rome where they would live in fear of being discovered. This persecution of Christians would continue off and on until A.D. 311 when Caesar Constantine eventually accepted a form of Christianity and signed the Edict of Toleration. He then went even beyond this edict with the signing of the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313 that legalized the Christian faith throughout the Roman Empire. From the end of the first century, until the signing of the Edict of Toleration, it was a long and hard journey for those who believed in Jesus as the only Lord God of creation.

But this was only one threat that Satan launched in order to eradicate the Christian faith from the hearts and minds of early Christians. The greater threat against the Christian faith came in the form of a change in the minds of people concerning their relationships with one another and God. This was the apostasy of gnosticism. The word “gnosticism” came from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning “to know.” The gnostic assumed that he or she had a greater connection with the spiritual inner self through special “spiritual” insight. This special insight supposedly allowed one to have a special personal relationship with Higher Powers. The “spiritual elite,” therefore, started to compare themselves with one another in their personal relationships with God. It was in reference to this that Paul wrote, *“For we dare not class or compare ourselves*

with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Co 10:12). They were not wise in reference to the true knowledge of the God of creation, and the incarnate Son of God who came into this world.

This was actually a system of religious narcissism that began to make its way into the Christian faith before the close of the first century. Since there arose those who thought that they had a special connection with God through their special religious insights (knowledge), the apostle John prepared the defense for all Christians in general to combat this apostasy as Christians moved into the second and third centuries. Specifically throughout the letter of 1 John, the apostle continually used the phrase “we know” in reference to Christians in general, not to a specific “class” of Christians. “*By this **we know** that **we know** Him*” (1 Jn 2:3). “*By this **we know** that we are in Him*” (1 Jn 2:5). “*By this **we know** that it is the last hour*” (1 Jn 2:18). “*But **we know** that when He appears, we will be like Him*” (1 Jn 3:2). “***We know** that we have passed from death to life*” (1 Jn 3:14). “*By this **we know** love*” (1 Jn 3:16). “*By this **we know** that He abides in us*” (1 Jn 3:24). “*By this **we know** the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*” (1 Jn 4:6). “*By this **we know** that we dwell in Him and He in us*” (1 Jn 4:13). “*By this **we know** that we love the children of God*” (1 Jn 5:2). “*And if **we know** that He hears us, whatever we ask, **we know** that we have the petitions that we have asked from Him*” (1 Jn 5:15).

Within the very heart of gnosticism was the theology that one could exalt himself to be the central authority of his faith through the special insights he supposedly had in reference to that which he considered to be spiritual. Through a “spiritual” narcissism, the individual could assume that through his or her special “knowledge,” one disciple could exalt himself or herself over the majority who did not have this special insight. John lived in an era of Christian faith where this arrogant belief and behavior was rising among Christians. This apostasy would not reach its zenith until the middle of the second century. However, when it did capture the minds of thousands, it is estimated by biblical historians that approximately half of Christianity was carried away with this narcissistic religiosity.

We have now come to our own history today where it is believed in almost all religions around the world that the individual “believer” has the right to claim to be the authority of his or her own faith. Religion is centered around one’s self in reference to the meritorious performance of religious rites and rituals. As a narcissistic world citizenship assumes that the individual is to be the center of a “facebook/youtube/instagram” society, religion has followed suit. Today, religion is more about my faith, my church, my experiences, my

personal relationships with God, my service and my personal fulfillment in experiential assemblies. The more one focuses on himself, the less he focuses on Christ and the gospel of His salvation that He brought into this world.

Religion, therefore, is molded around what pleases the individual. Worship from a heart that has been humbled by the gospel of the incarnate Son of God has now turned into a self-satisfying “worship hour” moment of being mesmerized by the entertainers of the religion. This is a subtle digression away from an obedient response to the God of creation. Nevertheless, it is the way of those who have convinced themselves that an experiential assembly is to be considered evidence that God was present within the four walls of a cathedral. When the mesmerized walk away from an experiential moment in assembly, it has been a satisfactory existential encounter with one’s self. The assembly has not been the expression of a heart that has been poured out in response the gospel of the Son of God. The “hour of worship” has moved from a moment of prostrating one’s self before the God of the gospel, to seeking what one would get out of his or her religious performances.

When we become the center of attention in our “worship,” then we know that we have become a part of a new gnostic movement wherein man has become the center attraction. When worshipers seat themselves on the thrones of their own hearts, then we know that King Jesus has been dethroned. This is the new gnosticism of a narcissistic generation who has discarded the moral paradigm of a God who is the Creator of all things.

As you move through the concepts of this book, I have sought to remind all of us that if we do not accept the entirety of the truth of the Scriptures concerning who God is, then we have created a god after our own imagination who works according to our pleasure. This created god is not the God who draws spontaneous worship out of our hearts. This god is simply an imagined god whom we would accept in order to release our narcissistic beliefs and behavior. Therefore, in reference to defining this god, we would, as did the prophets of Israel, consider him to be no god at all. He would simply be an addition to the catalog of baal gods that cluttered the minds of Israel, and subsequently moved Israel away from the one true and living God. We are atheistic in reference to such gods. Millions around the world, however, have become atheistic religionists by placing their faith in this god who does not exist outside the limitations of their own narcissistic thinking.

It is my prayer that you meditate through the pages of this book. I have sought to challenge your thinking in reference to your belief in the God of creation. If in any area one may have accepted beliefs that attack this God, then he or she has moved into being a religious atheist. He or she has thus

moved into being the sole authority of moral standards in a paradigm of faith that is far removed from the authority of the word of God. When we have progressed to this point in faith, then there is no return. There is no return unless the God of heaven does something drastic that will shock us into the reality that we are simply specks of dust on an earth that are passing away. But if God should do such, we must keep in mind that only a remnant will be preserved, just as only a remnant came out of all Israel. The vast majority of religionists will be washed away as God seeks to again purify the world civilization of atheistic religionists.

In this book I have ventured into the philosophy of history in reference to the social paradigm of the West that is presently in the throes of a social paradigm shift. This sociological shift is essentially void of any religious sentiment. It is basically atheistic. Therefore, it is void of a sense of fear of the God of creation. And since the present social turmoil of the West is free of accountability to a God who will bring all men to account for their behavior, then I have felt it necessary that we understand the philosophical ideology of those who would disturb society for their own gain.

We must always understand the culture of our society in reference to the God of creation. Our belief in this God must at least be the primary foundation upon which we understand what is real in this world. Belief in a God who created the world must be the core of our world view.

It is necessary to understand these things in reference to our own culture in order to understand the effect our culture has on our faith. If we do not understand what is going on around us in our culture, then we will invariably end up with a religion that has been dictated to us by the majority of our society. This is how King Solomon led the people of God astray. He married the women of the nations around Israel who believed in an assortment of gods. In this way he led the people of God to accept gods that were contrary to the one true and living God. Therefore, if we are not cautious about these matters in our times, then we too will conform to the gods of the religions around us, and subsequently, we will end up diluting the power of the gospel, if not denying the God who revealed the gospel. If we do this, then we will essentially become atheists in reference to the gospel. We will often remain religious, but we will be religious atheists.

However, if our faith is based on the word of God, then the foundation of our faith is solid and unchanging. Our faith is objective because it is based on that which we can read in our Bibles (Rm 10:17).

***They exchanged the truth of God for a lie,
and worshiped and served the creature
rather than the Creator.***

(God the Holy Spirit - Rm 1:15)

In January 2019, David Bowles made a statement in a prominent US newspaper that was later repeated on the American TV program, *Meet the Press*. The statement is representative of the world view against which Christians must struggle in reference to their faith that is based on the Bible. Bowles' statement was made in the context of political matters, but represents the neo-liberal thinking of Western civilization. He stated, "Why do people support [President] Trump? It is because people have been trained from childhood to believe in fairy tales" Bowles went on to explain what he believed was one of these fairy tales: "Show me a person who believes in Noah's ark," Bowles continued, "and I will show you a Trump voter."

1 OUR WORLD VIEW

Our concern is not in reference to politics, but in reference to the world view of most citizens of the developed world, particularly the West. The world view of most people of the world is not based on a belief that the Bible is an inspired record of history, and certainly, not a God-given standard of moral values. It is believed by the majority of the world to be a book of fables. For the neo-liberal West, this is an unfortunate conclusion that leads civilizations to build their moral values on the inventions of man. According to the neo-liberal West, belief in the Bible is a hindrance to the ideology of progressive (liberal) thinking. It is a hindrance to social and economic growth.

This is the world in which we now live. It is a world citizenship that has either given up a knowledge of God, or never had such knowledge in the first place. Such societies have narcissistically established

their own moral codes of behavior according to what pleases man. God is not a central factor in establishing the civil and moral values of nations throughout the world.

The eyeglasses through which we understand all that we believe to be real is what is referred to as our “world view.” Our world view is how we understand the world around us and how we should relate with one another as world citizens. We establish our world view by considering all the facts we learn from study and experience. Most of the time, these facts come to us through the literature we study. From the assimilation of all these facts and experiences, we establish what we consider to be truth, and thus, the truth of our world view determines our behavior. Our world view becomes the foundation upon which we write our moral and civil laws.

A good example of the importance of our world view is what we believe in reference to the origin of all life, as well as the origin of the universe in which we live. In reference to all origins, we have only two options: First, all life that now exists came into being as a result of a Creator. Second, life came into existence as a result of the spontaneous generation of the atoms of the material world that over billions of years assimilated by chance into the biological function of life that we now experience in our world. Which option we choose in reference to the origin of life is the major building block of our world view.

How we view all that is around us is the primary foundation upon which we build our world view. It is necessary, therefore, that in this world in which we live today, Christians must define their world view. If one lives in an isolated village in the middle of Africa, he or she may have little concern for what his or her world view is in reference to life. This does not mean, however, that the isolated villager has no world view. He or she does. And it is upon the foundation of this world view that decisions and behavioral patterns are established even within those who cohabit in the isolated village.

If one lives in a business/industrial village somewhere in the world, his or her world view is central to existence in a complex society. In the developing world, society as a whole seeks to develop in a world of behavioral competition. Though competition may not be a key part of

the social structure in some jungle village, it is a primary function of life for those who live in the social structure of the business/industrial world. In fact, without a sense of competition it is difficult to survive in the business/industrial world.

Therefore, it is important to understand our own world view because our world view governs how we interact with one another in society. Whether we live in an isolated village, or in a suburban residential center of some metropolitan area of the world, our world view, whether consciously or unconsciously, determines how we behave with our fellow human beings. It is imperative, therefore, that as Christians we are conscious of how we understand the world in which we live because this understanding determines how we will relate with one another as Christians, as well as with the unbelievers among whom we must live. Paul recognized this challenge when he wrote to the Christians in Achaia. He wrote that Christians must associate with those of the world, for the only alternative is “*to go out of the world*” (1 Co 5:10).

But more importantly, understanding our world view will determine how we carry on with our responsibility to preach the gospel to the world. In the case of those who promote some type of religious belief that harbors teachings that contradict the world view of the Bible, the adherents of these teachings actually hinder the implementation of their faith. We are convinced that there are some antagonistic philosophies of the Western world view that have been adopted by Western religionists. These are those philosophies that work contrary to the existence of God, as well as the truth of the gospel. Because of this infusion of Western ideology into some Western religions, some groups thrive in a social environment wherein many of the adherents of some prominent religious groups actually believe that Noah’s ark is a fable. And beyond this, there are many in such groups who question the Bible teaching that our very existence is the result of a God of creation.

2 IMMEDIATE ATTACKS

We speak of things that are more philosophical than theological. We seek to reason with those in the camp of unbelievers in order to defend better those in the camp of the believers. We have found that many theological authors have some difficulty understanding the reasoning of unbelievers because they are so committed to the experiential function of their own faith, which supposed experiential evidence is totally rejected by unbelievers. For this reason, some “Christian” writers have difficulty dealing with the onslaught that unbelievers are making against the world view of those who believe in a God who created this world. We have found that many religious writers are so focused on writing “feel good” books about their own personal experiences that they are out of touch with the real world in which their readers live. They thus leave their readers vulnerable in answering the questions that unbelievers launch against the faith of believers. The argument of “what-Jesus-has-done-in-my-life,” carries no rational weight in the mind of unbelievers who contend that Jesus’ turning of water into wine was simply a children’s Bible-class fable.

We must better understand the world view of unbelief if we are to guard ourselves from being deceived by what may appear to be scientifically or philosophically true. There are many points of the unbeliever’s world view that definitely deny the faith of those who believe in the Bible. Our efforts to understand the thinking of unbelievers assumes, therefore, that we must deal specifically with those points that inherently deny the inerrancy of the Bible, and specifically the truth of the gospel. When we better understand the world view of the unbeliever, then we can conclude that there are some who hang on to the name “Christian,” and yet, they have adopted various points of the world view of the unbelieving world that attack the gospel. In doing this, they themselves have attacked the gospel. In the world of religion in which we now live, many of the attacks against the gospel are now coming from religionists, not self-proclaimed atheists or agnostics.

Our purpose for understanding the thinking of unbelievers, there-

fore, is imperative because this is the origin of some points in the thinking of some religionists who have succumbed to the world view of the unbelieving world. The better we understand the position of the unbelievers, and specifically the world of the scientists of our day, the better we will conclude that there is a real attack by religious people against the gospel in these times. In the developed world almost all graduates from universities have sat at the feet of professors who deny the Bible to be infallible. The result is that we now have a citizenship of these cultures that is basically antagonistic to the Bible. This skepticism in reference to the Bible is now so great that few of those who believe in the gospel actually realize that there is a war going on between science and the faith of those who believe in a creative God of the universe.

But the opposition is more pronounced in reference to the new wave of religious tolerance that is currently spreading around the world among all people of faith. In order not to be misunderstood, we must state firmly that religious tolerance must be a central part of our world view. Every person has a right to believe what they so desire in reference to their faith. This right (freedom) to be religious according to one's own heritage or traditions is simply the world in which we live. It is also a part of the gospel, because one must voluntarily respond to the love of God that was revealed through the incarnate Son of God. There can never be any government intimidation in reference to one's obedience to the gospel. Likewise, there can never be intimidation by a religion that is promoted by the majority of the citizenship that one obey the gospel.

Obedience to the gospel must always be a voluntary response to the grace of God, though obedience to the gospel is absolutely necessary in order to be saved. This freedom to obey cannot be challenged by those who believe in a God who created all things, and subsequently offered His incarnate Son for the salvation of those whom He created. However, if one does not believe in a God who created and was incarnate in the flesh, then certainly he will have no concern about obeying moral laws beyond what he dictates for himself.

Tolerance does not assume the acceptance of the beliefs of a religious world that is filled with that which is not true, especially that

which is contrary to the gospel. Unfortunately, in democratic societies, citizens are often pressured into being tolerant of all religions in order to maintain a separation between faith and state. If in a democracy a particular politician seeks to be elected, he or she must maintain a policy of tolerance toward all faiths that exist within the democratic society where he or she is seeking the votes of the people. However, though this may be necessary to maintain unity in a state that is comprised of many religious groups, this is not the way it is with God and the gospel. His people have no right to compromise the gospel.

Those who are in a covenant relationship with God because of their obedience to the gospel can tolerate the religionists in the community who have not obeyed the gospel. However, they cannot accept the teaching of those who do not accept the Bible as the final authority in all matters of faith. Christians can tolerate religious Hindus, but they cannot accept the beliefs of Hindus, and at the same time, maintain a covenant relationship with God. The entire book of Hebrews was written on this matter. If a Christian would forsake any points of truth in his gospel-founded world view, then he or she has turned away from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (See Hb 2:1-4; 6:4-6).

The camp of believers today has some inherent struggles in being consistent in reference to their relationship with other faiths. This is particularly true in reference of some who would seek to compromise the gospel of God's grace. We have even discovered that the secular philosophies of the unbelieving world are so strong in many societies that many of those in the camp of religion have succumbed to humanistic explanations for origins in order to be accepted by those of the secular world. Subsequently, there are some who have tolerated other religions that have no consideration for the incarnate Son of God who gave Himself for redemptive purposes. They have been so tolerant that it is believed by some that salvation is simply based on the merit of meritorious good works. Whether intentionally, or unintentionally, there are a host of philosophies today that are promoted by the religious world that actually originated from the minds of unbelievers. Many of these beliefs have been accepted by those who profess to believe in the Bible.

Because Christians have often been intimidated by the majority, it

is incumbent on us to bring to light some of these philosophies that are inconsistent with teachings that are revealed in the Bible in reference to God, and specifically, those philosophies that attack the very core of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When speaking in reference to “non-Christian” religions, we must be cautious that we do not accept the gods of those who deny the incarnation of the God of the Bible. If we accept these gods, then we will inherently deny the gospel.

We have also discovered that many who believe philosophies that attack the gospel, sometimes do not actually realize that they are harboring teachings that are against the gospel. However, we believe that they would realize their anti-gospel thinking if they would consider the contradictions that exist between secular philosophy and the gospel. But some have simply accepted the fact that their belief in the gospel, and the philosophies that contradict the gospel, is thinking with which we must live as Christians in this secular world.

Some do not want to voice the contradictions between a secular world view and the gospel lest they are accused of believing what the scientific world considers religious fables. And in a democratic society, some seek to be tolerant to the point of believing that everyone will end up in heaven on the basis of being a good person. But in believing this, they are denying the necessity of the gospel of grace. In this matter they would rather compromise their faith than stand firm on the historical facts of what the Bible teaches concerning the gospel.

3 TRUE BELIEVERS

One of the unfortunate struggles that Christians have in a world of unbelief is that the philosophy of the unbelieving world has often become the standard by which society establishes norms for moral behavior. Since the rise of the god of science a few centuries ago, this has been a particular problem for those who believe that the Bible must always be our final authority in establishing moral conduct. Unfortunately, we have discovered that many Christians have accepted some of the moral norms of unbelievers, and thus in many ways have con-

formed the behavior of their faith to the thinking of an unbelieving world.

The preceding is such a problem in the modern world that anyone who would question the invasion of either atheistic, or at least agnostic philosophies into the realm of “Christianity,” are considered unscientific. This is a constant challenge against those who believe in the historical statements of the Bible. In the context of this discussion, therefore, we understand that the word “believer” refers to **one who unquestionably views the Bible as the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct**. This is especially true in reference to the biblical claim concerning origins.

The true believer understands that the history of the Bible is infallible. He or she understands that there is absolutely no scientific “truth” or “fact” that would contradict the existence of the Son of God in reference to His incarnational offering on a cross two thousand years ago. The historical claims of the Bible in reference to the origin of all things are without question, and thus any “scientific” hypothesis that would come forth from the field of science that contradicts the Bible must be considered false. If a supposed scientific hypothesis, or supposed fact, is presented as the final truth in any matter of morals or history, then that hypothesis must be considered false if it in any way contradicts the moral standards of the Bible. This must be the position of the believer. If it is not, then the Bible cannot be trusted in reference to history. It cannot be considered a final standard for determining moral behavior. It cannot be considered the inspired word of God.

The point of our concern, therefore, is to consider the fact that some believers may have accepted as either “truth” or “fact” some supposed “scientific” hypothesis that is contrary to the Bible, and thus is an attack against the gospel.

We live in a world where the scientific world has forsaken the Bible to be any final authority in matters of science or philosophy. For this reason, therefore, Christians must assume that these two fields of study—science and philosophy—will move our civilization away from God. If we are led to question the truth of the gospel of the incarnate Son of God, His atoning death, and gospel ascension to the right hand

of the Father in heaven, then we must understand that our faith as defined by the Bible is gone. Therefore, any philosophy or supposed scientific fact that would lead us to question a Bible-based fact or historical statement must immediately be rejected. For the Christian, the Bible must not be considered just another book of religion. It must be considered the only book of a faith that is pleasing to God (Hb 11:6).

4 THE GOD OF CREATION

We must never forget that in any move away from the God that is defined in the Bible, it is a move into the realm of unrighteousness that is defined in the Bible (See Rm 1:28-32). The reason for this is simple. One moves away from God because he or she is often seeking an escape from moral accountability. He is at least seeking to behave narcissistically according to his own codes of moral behavior. The Bible can never stand as a final authority in a society of either atheistic philosophies or narcissistic religiosity.

For those who are seeking to establish their own moral norms, the Bible becomes a hindrance to their moral move away from any standards of morality because it is a reminder of being accountable to a final Judge of our behavior. In the mind of the liberal progressive, therefore, there can never be a constant standard of morality. Such is simply contrary to the thinking of the liberal.

The definition of a “liberal” is one who is seeking to be liberated from any standards of moral authority. And since the Bible seeks to be the final moral standard of authority in all matters of morality, then the Bible must, in the minds of the liberal, be discarded. Since the Bible establishes a constant moral standard, then the Bible must at least be marginalized by the liberal in reference to its influence on society. In order to do this, the first attack against the Bible is to affirm that the Bible is a book of fables.

Those who have moved away from the God of creation, and subsequently created a god after their own imagination, usually do not consider any moral standards in the Bible to be unchangeable. If they

do look back from where they once believed in the Bible, then they will look back and realize that their move into unbelief was not painful. It was not painful because there was no violation of one's conscience in reference to the breaking of any moral laws. Unbelief is like a cancer that unknowingly grows within the body. This was the path to moral apostasy that was followed by Israel through the many times in their history when they walked away from God. Therefore, these things concerning their apostasy "*were written [in the Bible] for our learning, so that we through patience and encouragement of the Scriptures might have hope*" (Rm 15:4). We must remember that "*these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*" (1 Co 10:11).

A moral cancer has grown in many places in the present world of Christendom over the past centuries. With the rise of the "science god" there has come also the demise of the word of God as the final research library to establish moral standards of conduct. This does not mean that people have knowingly become "religious atheists" in reference to the moral standards of the Bible. It simply means that people who once believed in a God of creation now believe in a god who cannot create, or at least a deistic god who supposedly manipulates innate matter into motion and life. These religionists are now harboring and abating those philosophies that are contrary to the world view of the Bible. In their efforts to conform to the philosophical and scientific world in which they live, they have sacrificed on the altar of humanism their own faith. They are truly "*of those who draw back to destruction*" because they are walking away from King Jesus (Hb 10:39).

Because of the impending destruction that awaits all who would deny the gospel of the one true and living God, we would repeat the warning of the Hebrew writer that was directed to all those who were walking away from King Jesus: "*We must give more earnest attention to the things that we have heard so that we do not drift away*" (Hb 2:1). "*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened ... if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame*" (Hb 6:4,6). "*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the*

truth [of the gospel], *there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*” (Hb 10:26).

5 THE WORLD OF ATHEISTIC RELIGION

We set forth the propositions of our study in order to challenge the thinking of those who have turned away from faith in the God who can create. If we remind ourselves that we believe in a God who can and did create, then we are reaffirming our faith. If our world view is based solidly on the Bible, then our study in these matters will be both refreshing and reassuring. However, if we discover in our world view points that contradict any truth of the word of God, then this study must be an opportunity to restore our faith to the foundation of the word of God. Therefore, we would be negligent in our responsibility as Christians if we did not continually allow ourselves to be challenged in these matters. We must continually challenge ourselves in these matters in view of the following moral decline that once led to the termination of an entire civilization by the One who created the world:

... because even though they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful. But they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools (Rm 1:21,22).

We live in such a world today. It is quite discomfoting to realize that history is indeed repeating itself. We live in a world where the scientific world **does not glorify God as a God of creation**. Belief in an impotent God has actually become a central point in the world view of many who would consider themselves to be Christians. There is a reason today why many “Christians” do not live in gratitude of a creative God who was incarnate into the flesh of man. If one does not appreciate the extreme journey of the God of creation who came forth from existence in spirit into the flesh of man, whom He created for redemptive purposes, then there is little encouragement on the part of

man to live in gratitude for that which was accomplished on a cross.

Because society often accepts unquestionably the pronouncements of the modern-day scientific world, the citizens of society often establish their moral codes of conduct on the foundation of the philosophical conclusions of science. Subsequently, Paul wrote to the Roman disciples, “*their imaginations and their foolish hearts*” become darkened to the righteousness of God. They profess to be wise in their own thinking, but actually they have become foolish by rejecting the fact that the world is the result of a creating God. We must not forget that it was God who said that the scientist who does not believe in God is actually a fool: “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’*” (Ps 14:1)

Therefore, we would ask why such antagonistic beliefs against true Bible faith are now propagated around the world against the faith of those who seek to remain with the Bible as the foundation of their faith? The apostle Paul gave a simple answer: “***They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped [narcissism] and served the creature [man] rather than the Creator***” (Rm 1:25). When the standard of God is removed from the center of reference of our world view, it is then that men “*suppress the truth in unrighteousness*” (Rm 1:18). It is then that we become the center of reference to our own “faith.” We subsequently exalt our own knowledge over the truth of the Bible. We establish our own religiosity that is based on our own desires. When the moral values of our narcissistic religiosity do not conform to the majority, then we change our moral values.

In our humanistic narcissism, we lead ourselves to exclude the knowledge of God as we exalt our own knowledge. This is the world in which we now live. We live in a world where narcissistic scientists have bowed down to the god of science, believing that science has the answers for all situations of life. When this science god has created within us the fear of infecting our own selves, then it has accomplished the task of attacking the very behavioral nature of Christianity, that we consider one another by not forsaking assembly with one another (Hb 10:24,25). If a Christian exalts this science god in his own world view, then the gospel that brings us together into a common fellowship no

longer plays the primary role of motivation in our lives.

The text of Romans 1:18-32 was written in order to remind us all of an era in history when humanity became evil. Humanity became evil through narcissistic religiosity, that is, giving up a knowledge of the one true and living God in order to worship gods that people had created after their own imaginations (Rm 1:25,28,29). Romans 1 is a literary picture of the sociological conditions that led to the demise of a world civilization several millennia in the past.

Romans 1 was God's dissertation about the depraved social conditions of a world civilization that existed before the flood of Noah's day—which in a state of denial the unbelieving world today declares to be a fable. The main points of Romans 1, therefore, are God's justification for wiping away that civilization of humanity, as well as Israel of old when the people forsook the standard of the word of God in order to establish their own moral standards (Hs 4:6).

We would certainly be naive Bible believers if we did not understand that our present world is headed in the same direction. We must not forget that individual societies within the whole world civilization do not become morally better because they believe more in the Bible. They become morally worse because they have rejected the Bible and the God who is identified therein. Gods are created by religionists around the world, but these gods must not be confused with the God of the Bible. When all the societies of the world digress together into moral degradation, it is then that we become as the world civilization that existed at the time of Noah (See Gn 6:5).

6 THE ATTACK OF RELIGIOUS ATHEISM

Romans 1:18-32 is a statement of warning to all humanity today that if we give up a knowledge of the God of creation, then we are doomed. And since the world is giving up a knowledge of the God of the Bible, then we assume that we are definitely in trouble. We might add that it is not simply giving up a knowledge of "God," but the giving up of a knowledge of a God who can create. When we substitute for

creation another source for origins, then we are on our way to denying the God of the Bible. We will often retain our religiosity in this atheistic move away from God. If we move away from the God of creation, then we have created in our minds an impotent god who is not the source of the universe and all life.

There are certainly numerous gods in the minds of religious people throughout the world today, but there is only one God of creation. This one God must be the God who is the original source of all things, and especially the source from which came the incarnate Son of God. If He is not, then he is a god we have imagined after our own religious ingenuity.

It is significant that God the Holy Spirit directed the hand of Paul to include one penetrating statement in the context of Romans 1 that went straight to the reason why humanity was without excuse when it came time for God to bring judgment upon an entire civilization. In the context of Romans 1, the Holy Spirit did not want us to miss this critical point in reference to what causes such human tragedies. Therefore, in the context of the subject of Romans 1, verse 20 is not simply a statement to read. It is a serious thought to contemplate, and thus, reflect on continually as we study through the subjects that follow in this book.

For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood [perceived] by the things that are made, even His eternal power and divinity, so that they are without excuse.

The God of creation did not leave Himself without witness. His existence is continually revealed through the things that He created (See At 17:24-28). The psalmist was correct: *“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork”* (Ps 19:1). The declaration of the preceding statements is overwhelming. It is overwhelming because we live in a world today where much of the religious world believes “in a Higher Power,” but this power is impotent. He is simply a power in which to believe, but does not have the power to create and control that which He creates. He cannot do what the

Holy Spirit claimed He could do in Hebrews 11:3:

By faith we [true believers] understand that the universe was formed by the word of God, so that the things that are seen were not made of things that are visible.

We must continue to reflect on this necessary truth that one must believe in order to be considered a “true believer.” If one denies this truth, then he may continue to be a religionist, but he or she is not a true believer according to how the Bible defines a believer. This may be difficult for many religionists to accept. Nevertheless, **those who profess to believe in the God of the Bible must come to the conclusion that all that now exists was created out of that which formerly did not exist.**

No matter what comes forth from the mouths of the majority of the scientists of the world, this proposition of truth must never be questioned, or denied. Believing in a God who created all things is the foundation upon which the gospel is based. If such a God is impotent, and thus cannot create, then the good news of this God being incarnate into this world is simply foolishness. If we believe in a god who cannot create, then we are “religious atheists” according to the God who is defined in the Bible.

As we travel down this road of reckoning, it is imperative that we draw a “creative line” between true faith and a religious faith that questions a God who has the power to create, as well as resurrect. Any philosophy that comes forth from the field of science that contradicts this truth, must be considered false. Any religion that arises wherein there are theologies that question creation or resurrection, is atheistic, and subsequently an attack against the gospel. Any philosophy that strikes a creative God out of the picture of establishing moral standards, must be considered false.

It is not that the Holy Spirit did not see this threat always present in our world. The fact that He did see the threat necessitated that true believers be challenged continually in these matters. He knew that we would continually be challenged in our faith by those who would deny

the God of the Bible. Fearfully, therefore, we believe that long ago we moved into a philosophical and scientific world that has invaded the “faith” of many who profess to be “Christian.” It is because of this invasion that the very core of the gospel of Jesus Christ is under attack.

In view of the following exhortation by the Holy Spirit through Paul in Romans 1, a better definition could not have been made to explain atheistic religion. It was in reference to this religiosity that Paul warned Timothy in the following words:

*O Timothy, guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and opposing arguments of what is **falsely called knowledge** [science], which some professing have **strayed concerning the faith**” (1 Tm 6:20,21).*

We use the word “atheist” in reference to those religionists who do not believe that all life is the result of a God who can create and resurrect. We could also use the word “agnostic” in reference to those who may be ignorant of the word of God on this matter, but still hold on to a sprinkling of faith in Jesus. But if one does not believe in the God of creation, he will deny the miracles of the Bible, and eventually the incarnation of the Son of God. For the sake of consistency, he must deny the resurrection of Jesus. In reference to biblical definitions, therefore, he is an atheist in reference to the God of the Bible.

We must dig deeply into the inner core of our world view on these matters. The problem is that when the majority of those who profess to be “believers,” have accepted those propositions that deny the creative God of all things, then that majority seeks to lead us astray. When a world of religionists does this, then the religion of the world becomes an atheistic religion that intimidates the rest of the world to create gods that actually exists only in the minds of men. And then, what comes next is inevitable.

God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gn 6:5).

We know what came next in this narrative. If we believe what came next was not actually a childhood fable, then we know that as this cancer of atheism grows in the civilization of the world today, the world is again headed for the same fate as those who lived during the days of Noah. It is inevitable.

7 ALTERNATIVE ORIGINS

*So they all ate and were filled.
And they took up twelve baskets
full of the fragments that remained.
(Mt 14:20)*

The entire validity of Christianity is based on the historical truth of this one statement. The centrality of the Christian world view finds its foundation in the meaning of what historically took place on this occasion when Jesus of Nazareth fed 5,000 men, plus women and children, in a wilderness somewhere in Galilee. The importance of this historical event is so central to the truth of the existence of God, and the claim that Jesus is the Son of God, that this is the only miraculous event of Jesus that is mentioned by all four historians of Jesus' ministry (See Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-14). We could certainly conclude that if one does not believe in the twelve baskets full of leftovers, then he or she does not have the faith that is pleasing to God (Hb 11:6). The baskets were indeed full, but if one does not believe this, then his faith is empty.

The purpose for which the apostle John wrote his history of Jesus emphasizes the importance of this event in reference to who Jesus of Nazareth really was. In his document to explain to the disciples of Jesus who lived many years after this event, John recorded seven specific miraculous wonders of Jesus. He did so for the purpose that the followers of Jesus believe that Jesus "*is the Christ, the Son of God*" (Jn 20:31). Both Jesus and John wanted to take the disciples far beyond simply being disciples of Jesus as a religious leader. John wanted

us to understand that Jesus was not only the Messiah (Christ), but also the Son of God. Throughout His ministry, Jesus had claimed, “*I came down from heaven*” (Jn 6:38). He also claimed, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*” (Jn 14:9). And even more definitive, Jesus claimed, “*I and My Father are one*” (Jn 10:30). The twelve baskets full of leftover fish and bread after the feeding of approximately ten thousand people validates all these claims.

We are not shallow in our understanding of what actually took place on that surreal occasion when Jesus stood among His disciples and the multitudes who had followed Him into the wilderness. Counting men, women and children, there could have been as many as ten thousand people in the multitude. The number was incredible, which makes Jesus’ statement somewhat ridiculous when He said to His disciples, “*You give them something to eat*” (Mt 14:16). The statement sounded ridiculous to the disciples at the time because His immediate disciples still had no idea who He really was. To them, He was a great religious leader to whom they would give their loyalty. But they did not realize that an incarnation of God stood in their midst.

At the time, Jesus was leading His immediate disciples into a reality that their loyalty to Him must be far greater than following Him as a great religious leader. There have been great religious leaders as Confucius, Muhammad and Buddha who have led millions of people throughout the centuries. However, Jesus was more. The fact that He is more is proved by two fish and five loaves of bread that ended up being twelve baskets of leftovers.

Therefore, consider what actually took place on that day in the wilderness that was so surreal that the disciples had a difficult time comprehending what had actually transpired. On the occasion, there was one young boy who evidently had some forethought. He took with him on the wilderness seminar “*five barley loaves and two small fish*” (Jn 6:9). We wonder why this young boy had in his possessions these five loaves of bread and two fish? Could it have been that it was now time for Jesus to set up the scenario to reveal to everyone that He was more than a religious leader?

We must preface what actually took place with what John previ-

ously stated in John 4:24: “*God is spirit.*” In the beginning of John’s document on Jesus of Nazareth being more than a carpenter from Galilee, John revealed some realities that would have actually been quite inconceivable for the disciples to comprehend at the time of the feeding. We must keep in mind that the document of John was written at least thirty years after the event of the loaves and fish.

John wrote that we, as Jesus’ disciples, should conclude these many years after the event what he revealed in John 1:1: “*The Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” Therefore, the Word that became flesh was initially spirit as God before the creation of the world because He was God (Jn 1:14). But John did not stop with an inspired dictionary of who this Jesus was whom we now follow. “*All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*” (Jn 1:3). This truth is overwhelming if we consider ourselves “Christians” and followers of One who was first as God in eternal spirit. God the Holy Spirit, through the hand of Paul, was more definitive of this truth: “*For by Him [the Word] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth All things were created through Him and for Him*” (Cl 1:16).

So we go back to the bread and fish. Those fish at the time were surely dead, but they had once been living in some water. The bread had been cooked from living grain. So we start with fish and bread that had been providentially made available for a historical event that has become the center of our world view as Christians.

Throughout the great feast of compassion on that day in the wilderness (Mk 6:34), the text says that everyone ate and was filled (Mt 14:20). And then something marvelous happened, which at the time, was surely so surreal that the disciples had a difficult time processing it in their minds: “*They took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained*” (Mt 14:20).

It takes little mathematics to figure out why this one historical event stands between one simply being a disciple of a famous person called Jesus, and one totally throwing himself down before this God in the flesh. The occasion started with five loaves of bread and two fish. But when the event was over, they ended up with twelve baskets that

were completely full of leftover bread and fish. **This was an event of creation!** And, **only God can create. Standing in the midst of those several thousand people in that wilderness place was the incarnate Creator of all things.** He was the Creator of all who stood there that day. In the future, therefore, we are assured that He will again bring to life all those who die before He comes again.

We are not “Christian” because Jesus pronounced some great spiritual teachings for living. Any religious leader can do that. We do not follow Jesus because He was some renowned Jewish Rabbi who generated and led a spiritual movement among Jewish people in the first century. Many religious leaders have had great teachings and led great movements of humanity throughout history. Jesus was far beyond some famous religious leader. We follow Jesus because He was the incarnate Creator who came into this world in the flesh of man (Jn 1:14). **It was because He was God in the flesh that the cross of redemption means more than an accidental death from the hands of a mob.**

Jesus was not a martyr. He was God in the flesh who had created those who drove nails through His incarnate flesh on a cross outside Jerusalem. If one does not believe this, then this would mean that one believes that Jesus was nothing more than a great religious sage of His time. It would mean that one follows Christ as the Muslim follows Muhammad, or a Buddhist who follows Buddha. But the fact is that Jesus was truly God on earth. Jesus thus has a right to demand our total commitment, not because of what He said, but because of who He is.

We must follow this reasoning to its limit. If this miracle of creation on the occasion of the wilderness experience did not actually happen, then we have been deceived. Our imagination of Jesus as being someone beyond this world has carried us away to believe a fable. But if there were twelve full baskets, then this was God in the flesh who was the Creator of all life on earth. The fact that He started with five and two, and ended up with that which could be counted only as baskets full of leftovers is proof that He was the Creator of all things who stood on earth in the midst of that multitude.

Life originated at the command of God in the beginning. If one would seek an alternative to the existence of life on the earth, then that

search is a denial of the God who stood in the midst of several thousand people in Galilee and created twelve baskets full of leftovers from five loaves and two fish. Those twelve baskets will always validate the fact that the One to whom we have given our lives was the actual incarnate God who originally created all things.

If one believes that life originated from another source than the One who stood among the disciples in the wilderness, then he or she is not a true believer in the Son of God. If one believes that it was only a fable that there were baskets full of leftovers, then he has denied the gospel. If Jesus were not the origin of all life, then it would be foolish to believe that He can bless with eternal life those who believe on Him. If the Son of God had no power to originally create all life, then He has no power to give life.

But we believe. We believe that Jesus was God incarnate who came into this world in order to offer us eternal life. Such was the theme for the document of John: *“These [miracles] are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name”* (Jn 20:31).

8 BODILY REJUVENATION

Jesus did not expect us to believe that He was the Son of God because He said He was. We must not forget that before and after Him, many religious leaders had and do make the same claim to fame. The problem is that the claims of such leaders are denied by the continued existence of their tombs that are marked with their names and present with us today. But in reference to the claim of Jesus being the Son of God who created all things, His tomb was empty three days after His death, and thus His empty tomb will always be a testimony that what He claimed about Himself was true.

Because the tomb was empty, the Holy Spirit made a statement in Scripture through the hand of Paul that offered evidence that Jesus was more than a man. He was certainly more than a respected Jewish Rabbi of His day. The following is thus an evidential statement: *“His Son*

Jesus Christ, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,” Paul wrote, was **“declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead”** (Rm 1:3,4). There was a declaration that was made by the resurrection of Jesus. It was not that He became the Son of God by the resurrection. He was already the Son of God at the time of the resurrection. In other words, there would have been no resurrection if He were not the Son of God.

We must take into consideration with this statement of Paul what Jesus claimed throughout His ministry: *“My Father loves Me because I lay down My life so that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again”* (Jn 10:17,18). What else would we expect from the Son of God? We understand that Jesus had the authority (power) to take up His life (resurrection) after it was handed over to Joseph of Arimathea for burial after He was crucified (Jn 19:38). But the meaning of the resurrection of His body was more than just a resurrection. There was a declaration of something in the event that testified something greater than the event itself.

Keeping in mind that Jesus was the incarnate Son on earth of the Godhead in heaven, we must assume that something unique would be associated with the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus’ body defines the nature of every miracle throughout Jesus’ ministry that He worked in reference to the healing of physical bodies. There were many cases where Jesus “restored” to the natural function of life those who had some physical infirmity. But John used one particular bodily resurrection that illustrated that Jesus of Nazareth was God in the flesh. This was the proposition that John sought to affirm in recording seven principle miracles that Jesus worked throughout His ministry (See Jn 1:1,2,14).

- **The regeneration of the body:** At the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem there was a certain man *“who had an infirmity thirty-eight years”* (Jn 5:5). We are not told if he was born this way, or became a cripple from some unfortunate accident in his childhood. Regardless of the origin of his infirmity, this particular man had been laid by friends

at the pool of Bethesda for some time. He was a physically paralyzed person who needed others to move him from one place to another throughout his life. Since he was regularly taken to the well-known pool of Bethesda, everyone in Jerusalem knew who he was and that he had been crippled for years.

And then on one opportune day, Jesus came by and said to him, “*Do you want to be made whole?*” (Jn 5:6). The question assumes that he was not whole, that is, there were functions about his body that did not operate naturally because there was something missing in his bones and muscles. Therefore, bone and muscle tissue that had to be changed, or possibly created, in order for him to be made whole. All this meant that he was not whole at the time Jesus met him. Something more was missing in his body that was needed in order for him to walk. So without any religious ceremonies, Jesus then said to him, “*Rise, take up your bed and walk*” (Jn 5:8). And he did.

In order for this man to do this, the creation of bones and muscle had to happen if his body was to function normally. If the body cells already existed, then at least the reforming of bones and muscles had to take place in order that the man walk. However, we can assume that Jesus did not simply stimulate the body to function with preexistent body cells. There was more to the healing than the stimulation of muscles and straightening of bones in order that the body of the man function correctly. Creation could have been necessary in order that his body have the wholeness of all that was necessary for him to walk.

During His ministry when the paralytics needed to be healed, there was not only the rejuvenation of the body cells that already existed, but the creation of all that was necessary in order to make the body function, including all the nerves that were involved in making muscles function. On the other hand, for the body to function properly, it could possibly have been a simple realignment, or readjustment of existing tissue. If so, then Jesus had to be the Creator who stood before those who would be healed.

Jesus was the Creator of those bodies that had been subjected to the physical environment of this world. He could thus manipulate all that which He created. He could move existing muscle, bones and

tissue into proper order in order that the body function normally. Only the One who brought bodies into existence out of the dust of the earth could do such. If one would be a true believer in Jesus as the incarnation of the Creator on earth, then he or she must seriously consider these things (See Jn 1:1,2,14; Cl 1:16). Every miraculous work of Jesus throughout His ministry was evidence that He was the original source of all that existed.

When we speak of the resurrection, therefore, we are speaking of bringing back into life flesh that was previously in a state of death. If Jesus' body was killed on a cross, which indeed it was, then there had to be supernatural power within the control of the Son of God even while He was outside His body which was dead on the cross. His supernatural power was not contingent on His living existence as Jesus of Nazareth. This was never the way it was throughout His ministry. When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at the time of His baptism, it was then that Jesus went forth with the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit (See Lk 4:14). Jesus was the incarnate Son of God in the flesh, but it was God the Holy Spirit who empowered Him in the flesh.

Jesus was put to death in the flesh on the cross (1 Pt 3:18). However, He was "*made alive by the Spirit,*" by which we would assume the work of God the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of the body of Jesus (1 Pt 3:18). In other statements it reads that He was raised by the Father (Ep 1:20). The resurrection miracle, therefore, was a cooperative effort on the part of the entire Godhead. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit worked as one in order to restore to life the body of Jesus that was in a tomb somewhere outside Jerusalem. Since the body was prepared on earth for the indwelling of the Son of God (See Hb 10:5), then the existence of the body did not determine the existence of God the Son.

While the incarnate body of God the Son was in the tomb, the Son of God in the spirit did not cease in His function to declare to all those who were dead that the gospel plan of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit had been accomplished. Therefore, God the Son vacated His body at the cross (Mt 27:50). He allowed His body to lie in the tomb for three days while He, in the spirit, went to accomplish other gospel

business. During this time He went in the spirit “*and proclaimed [preached] to the spirits in prison, who once were disobedient when the longsuffering of God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared*” (1 Pt 3:19,20). In the spirit, the Son of God went and preached to those who were disobedient during Noah’s generation. He proclaimed to them what they actually missed out on by not listening to Noah, the preacher of righteousness.

- **The resurrection of Lazarus:** Prior to His own bodily resurrection, Jesus had to prove to the disciples that He had the power to do the same to His own body. Therefore, on His final trip to Jerusalem, the opportunity presented itself to do such to one named Lazarus. The events that led up to the resurrection of Lazarus are important.

Jesus was on His way for His final visit to Jerusalem. On the way, He informed His disciples that Lazarus had died (Jn 11:11). But Jesus informed His disciples of Lazarus’ death by using the word “sleep.” He said, “*Our friend Lazarus sleeps*” (Jn 11:11). So the disciples responded, “*Lord, if he sleeps, he will recover [wake up]*” (Jn 11:12). So Jesus informed them specifically that “*Lazarus is dead*” (Jn 11:14). Four days transpired between the time Jesus made the declaration to His disciples and the time He stood before the tomb of Lazarus (Jn 11:39). Therefore, there would be no question that Lazarus was truly dead.

What is important to notice in this bodily regeneration is what Jesus said to His disciples in response to their surprise that Lazarus was dead: “*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there [when he was still alive], so that you may believe*” (Jn 11:15). This seems to be an odd statement in reference to the death of Lazarus. If Lazarus were indeed dead, then something was up for the “sake” of the disciples. These disciples had accepted Jesus as the Messiah (Christ). By this time in the ministry of Jesus, Peter had already confessed that “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mt 16:16). But none of the disciples really understood who Jesus was as God in the flesh. It seems that they were still trying to comprehend the twelve baskets full of leftovers. Who He really was was too surreal for the comprehension of human minds.

So on this occasion, Jesus was glad for the sake of the disciples that He was not present while Lazarus was still on his sickbed. He did not want this to be just another healing, for the disciples had experienced healings throughout His ministry. He wanted this to be a biological rejuvenation to life of a dead body, a body that had been dead for four days (Jn 11:39). He wanted His disciples, and everyone in Jerusalem, to witness that He had the power to bring to life even a dead body that was already in the process of decay. There would thus be no speculation about the resurrection simply being a resuscitation.

This indeed would be a creation that was manifested in a resurrection, for the cells of the body of Lazarus had already broken down, and thus, were in the process of decay. His spirit had already returned to God (Ec 12:7; see Hb 12:9). All the body of Lazarus was present in the tomb, but the One who said “Come forth!” had the power to bring into function again those decayed cells of a body that had already started the process of returning to the dust of the earth. Only God can do these things, and such was Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh at this moment in time. If we would be true believers, therefore, we must not consider this event to be a fairy tale.

These things were written that people believe that Jesus was the Son of God (Jn 20:30,31). Very few science gods believe these things because historical events as this are totally contrary to the scientific method of study. Scientists throughout the world today believe that all these things are fables that were compiled into a book that is called the Bible. Almost all biologists around the world view as fairy tales events of the Bethesda healing and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. What transpired in these events does not fit into their world view, or their scientific method of study. They deny that both Lazarus and Jesus were actually raised from the dead.

We live in a world where science has been enthroned in the minds of men to the point that every school textbook reeks of atheism, especially in reference to Jesus’ claim that He was the Son of God. During every school day of the week children around the world are taught that which is an argument against what John wrote in the Holy Spirit’s textbook in reference to the lame man and Lazarus.

If one would profess to be a Christian, and yet harbor the world view of those scientists who deny the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda and the resurrection of Lazarus, then he or she has plagiarized the name Christian. Some have done so because they seek to compromise the foundation of their belief in Christ with the atheistic world of science. Those who do such, and yet show up at an assembly of Christians, are working to change Christianity into a religion as those throughout the world who accept Jesus Christ only as a prolific religious leader of a sect of Jews in the first century.

If we understand how Satan works in the minds of those who are willing to give up a knowledge of the truth, then we should not be surprised at this (See 2 Th 2:10-12). This is simply the world in which we live where Satan goes about “*as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pt 5:8). And in the case of the revelation of the supernatural through Jesus of Nazareth, he has done his work well.

9 RESURRECTION HOPE

How many times have we stood at the grave of a departed loved one and heard the words, “Dust to dust.” If the one who was being lowered into the dust of the earth was a Christian, then there may be an interesting scenario that sometimes exists among all those who are standing as mourners around the grave. It is often the scenario of two groups who have opposing world views. One group maintains a world view that is based on a sincere hope that the one being lowered into the grave will rise again. This group of witnesses believe as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who confessed to Jesus before He resurrected Lazarus, “*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day*” (Jn 11:24). This group of witnesses have a glorious hope that is consistent with their belief concerning the origin of all life on the face of the earth. They are there at the grave, therefore, because they have a consistent faith in things of the past that inspire hope for the future.

The Christian’s belief in the coming resurrection is based on his or her faith in a God who created from the dust of the earth the body of

those in whom He breathed the breath of life (Gn 2:7). As the first body of man was created from the dust of the earth in a moment of time, so it will be in a moment in time when every lowered body will be resurrected in the future. *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first”* (1 Th 4:16). This will all transpire *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised”* (1 Co 15:52). The Christian believes in a God who can both create out of the dust of the earth, and then, once the body returns to the dust of the earth, can create it again in a resurrection.

We must clearly understand the world view of those Christians who stand at the grave of a departed brother or sister in Christ who believe in a future resurrection. They believe in the God of creation who created the first man Adam from the dust of the earth. If this God can so create, then the body of the saint who is lowered into the grave can be created again from the dust of the earth. If the resurrection to come will be *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,”* then the creation of the first body on earth was *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”* If the “moment” of one event is true, then both events must be true. We cannot deny the first “moment” in the beginning, and yet believe in the “moment” that is yet to come in reference to the dead. The time lapse of creation in the beginning will be no different than the creation that will happen again in the resurrection to come. The Christian’s hope in the coming resurrection, therefore, **is based squarely on his or her world view concerning the beginning of life in creation.**

But now we must return to the burial scene and venture into the world view of the assembled mourners who do not have the preceding world view. We must consider the world view of those who base their faith on the belief that life came into existence through a gradual development of some molecular substances of the sea that eventually resulted in the “first” homo sapiens on earth. The world view of this group believes that once some single-cell form of life was spontaneously generated out of the chance organization of molecular substances

in the sea, a primordial form of “life” then split into two cells. Over millions of years there was subsequently the splitting of this primordial cell form of spontaneously generated life into what eventually became land creatures, from which man eventually evolved. Over millions of years, and through the natural selection of those who were more suitable to survive in the harsh environment of this world, humans eventually evolved into what we behold them to be today.

This is the world view that is promoted by the majority of the scientific world, and is taught in schools and promoted through electronic media around the world. It is subsequently the foundation of the world view of all those to reject the belief of those who base their faith on a resurrection to come by a God who initially created all life in the beginning. There are those at the grave site, therefore, who may pretend that they have hope in a resurrection to come, but they deny the creation of the first human body of flesh from the dust of the earth.

So in the grave-scene audience there are those who are witnessing the lowering of the body into the grave, but according to their world view, believing that the lowered body is gone forever. They may have not considered this inconsistency in reference to the subject of their world view. Nevertheless, every funeral is a reminder of their contradictory belief in the philosophy of evolution that denies creation, and their futile hope of a resurrection in the future. Since life supposedly came into existence over millions of years of gradual development, then certainly when the preacher says, “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*” in reference to the lowered body, then silently in the minds of some there is scoffing at such words. The scoffers correctly conclude that if the body of a human took millions of years to evolve into the form in which it is at the time it is lowered into the grave, then certainly there is no rational justification to believe that that body will be “recreated” in resurrection in the future “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*”

If the scoffer is a Christian who supposedly believes the Bible, then he or she is maintaining a world view that is quite inconsistent if he or she denies the Bible claim of the creation of man from the dust of the earth. In such a world view there is a stark contrast between the

belief that affirms that life came into existence instantaneously at the spoken word of God, and the belief that assumes that life developed out of goo, then to the zoo, and finally to you over millions of years. Christians who have deceived themselves into believing this philosophy of the origin of life stand at the grave of their loved ones with a spirit of hypocrisy if they say “amen” to the message of the preacher. They supposedly believe that there will be an instantaneous creation from the dust of the earth of their loved one when Jesus comes again, but at the same time, they believe that Jesus could not have done this very thing in the beginning. **They fail to understand that creation and resurrection are inseparably linked to one another.**

So as a reminder, we must again consider John 1:1,3: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (Jn 1:1). The grave-side witness who believes that the body of the one who is being lowered into a grave of the earth would have no problem with this statement in his belief in “God.” However, if there were no creation of the first body from the dust of the earth, then his belief is actually in an impotent god who has no power to create again the lowered body from the dust of the earth in a resurrection event. So in order to clearly state the belief of the Christian, John continued, *“All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”* (Jn 1:3). This is a problem for the grave-side witness who supposedly believes in a resurrection, but at the same time has created in his mind an impotent god, who in reference to life, did not create life in the beginning. This person is trying to maintain contradictory beliefs concerning the Christian’s faith in creation and resurrection.

The one who believes that the origin of all life on earth was simply the result of chance actually believes in an impotent god who also cannot resurrect. Herein is revealed the hypocrisy of the grave-side witness who says “amen” to the preacher’s sermon concerning a resurrection that will take place *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”* In his world view there was no “moment” of creation in the beginning, and thus his “amen” is simply a vain utterance to put on a hypocritical face of Christian faith, for he cannot consistently believe in a future resurrection.

But just in case we did not understand John's aforementioned affirmation that this Word, the incarnate Son of God, was the initial Creator of those bodies that have been lowered into graves for millennia, God the Holy Spirit reaffirmed the same thought in another statement: "**For by Him** [the Word] **all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him**" (Cl 1:16). If indeed the God in whom the Christian believes worked as one in order to bring all things into existence "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,*" then certainly He can do the same in the last day in reference to the resurrection of all saints who have been lowered into graves.

If one maintains a world view that is based on the belief in a god who did not originally create, then it is entirely contradictory in his own world view to believe in a God who can create in the future through resurrection. It would be inconsistent for him to believe in a God who can resurrect "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,*" and at the same time believe in an impotent god who cannot create from the dust of the earth. In other words, **it is simply not possible for one who does not believe in the God of creation to also believe in any concept of resurrection.**

And now we understand why Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead. In reference to twelve baskets full of leftovers after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus revealed that He had the power of creation over the material world and animal life. But through the resurrection of Lazarus, He revealed His authority over all life, and that He had the power to create from the dust of the earth that which is life. So we can be assured, therefore, that He will do it again when He is revealed from heaven "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*"

10 THE DESTINATION OF ATHEISTIC STATES

The forefathers of America were not lacking in legislative genius when they inscribed the constitutional laws of America over two hun-

dred years ago. They were men of faith who embedded within the constitution biblical moral principles that would enshrine the civil rights that all men whom they proclaimed to be created were equal in the sight of God. They were thus able to draft a constitutional function on the foundation of biblical principles because they all believed in the God of creation who had Himself inscribed principles by which people should relate with one another on earth.

Though the foundation of legislative law of the founders of America based the constitutional function of government on divine moral principles, this has not been the case with most nations throughout history. Though many constitutions of various nations have been written after the principles of the West, most of these constitutions were written by men who have had little faith in God. The result of this has led to some unfortunate conflicts in reference to nations that have come and gone over the last two hundred years. Numerous constitutions were drafted by nations that they simply trashed when there was a paradigm shift in both society and demigods who rose up among the people.

The rise of the Third Reich of Nazi Germany in the last century is a good example. The year 2020 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the civil police state of the Third Reich of Nazi Germany and the end of WW II. Our cable television networks have for weeks shocked our minds with the horrors of a Nazi police state that marched across Europe, conquering one nation after another. After conquest, the Nazis unleashed an godly strangle hold on societies across Europe. When the BBC documentary of WW II was first aired in the early 1970s, the producers estimated that through the conflict and genocide that took place in both Europe and the Pacific during WW II, over fifty million people died worldwide throughout that war that ravaged civilizations around the world.

Many societies today have become expressions of a liberal atheistic world view, and subsequently have drafted constitutions with little or no emphasis on divine moral principles. This is nothing new in reference to the history of the civilizations of the world (See Rm 1:21-23). Since the core of any stable society must have a religion that is the expression of human faith, those societies that dismiss religion must

become civic states, that is, the cohesion of the people must be centered around and controlled by godlike figures on earth. For example, Kim Jong-un of North Korea is a demigod among those over whom he reigns supreme. He is the “supreme leader.”

The problem with liberal atheistic states is that under the supremacy of a civic god on earth, the state must become the religion, as is true of those states that function as communistic states. Such states become fascist in function with a demigod for a leader. The purpose of the police in such a state is to enforce the laws of the state on the people in order for the state to continue and the demigod to remain in power.

In a democracy, it is somewhat different. In a democracy, the people can change their leader if he becomes a demigod. Therefore, in a democratic state there is freedom to make choices concerning one’s faith. The role of the police in a democratic state is to enforce the right of the people to have the freedom to keep the constitutional rules of the rights of the people. When the leaders goes bad in an autocratic communist state, the autocratic leader seeks to change the people. But in a democracy, when the leaders go bad, the people change the leaders. It is the latter that is worth all struggle in order to preserve.

What led up to the rise of the Third Reich of Germany was a paradigm shift from democracy to a fascist atheistic state. Adolf Hitler was deified and worshiped, and a special police force, the SS, was commissioned to subjugate the people to the rules of the supreme leader and the laws of the civic state.

Throughout the seventy-fifth year anniversary of the end of WW II, we viewed documentaries with deep sorrow in the pit of our stomachs as the local television networks played one documentary after another of a holocaust when human beings sank below the level of animal instincts. It was deeply disturbing as the documentaries sought to remind us that we should never forget an era in the history of mankind when a self-appointed class of fascists became a civil police state, and subsequently, built extermination camps across Nazi controlled Europe in order to exterminate another faith and people. The atheistic fascists did so because they made themselves moral judges over millions of human beings whom they determined were a physically, mentally and

morally inferior race of people.

Over a decade before he launched his insane march across Europe, Adolf Hitler—who, according to the files of his personal doctor, was on amphetamines throughout the conflict—had convinced many of the German people that they were a special superior race of people. He advocated the assumption that the Germans were the superior Aryan race. He assumed that the Germans had descended from a special race of superior people who should reign with supremacy over all other races of people. Therefore, over a period of a decade, he subsequently convinced a majority of the German people that they were descendants from the Roman, Greek and Nordic Caucasians of Europe who were superior to all other people of the world, especially superior to the Jews whom he considered to be both morally and intellectually inferior.

Since the ideology of his assumption (Aryanism) was based on intellectual and moral superiority, he led many of the German people into thinking that since they were a superior race, then they had the right to control the world, and thus enforce their moral supremacy on others. In order to accomplish this goal, the German people had to distance themselves from the Jews. And in order to accomplish this distancing, each Jew had to sew on his clothing a “star” that identified a person as a Jew. Social distancing eventually led to the Jews being huddled into the ghettos, and then eventually, trained off to special camps where the social distancing would be finalized.

In the confusion of racial tensions today, it is often difficult for many to understand Hitler’s ideology of Aryanism. Moral distinctions in Aryanism were made in reference to a cultural caste system of origins and superiority, rather than skin color. Skin color was not a determining factor other than the fact that the Aryans always considered someone of color to be intellectually, culturally and morally inferior. This is why it was such an insult to Hitler during the 1936 Berlin Olympics when the African-American Jesse Owens won six gold medals before Hitler and the supposedly superior German athletes.

Therefore, we must understand that the holocaust of WW II had nothing to do with racial skin color, but with one man’s obsession to be the supreme leader of the world. In order to satisfy his obsession, Hit-

ler developed a hatred for a particular culture of people, the Jews, whom he determined to be an obstacle to his dreams. Therefore, the Jews had to be eradicated from the population of the superior Aryan race.

The Jews become a problem to the social and economic advancement of the Aryan race. Therefore, the Nazis determined that there had to be a final solution to the Jews' existence in German society. Within the Nazi party there were those who eventually came up with a final solution. The solution was not simply slave-labor camps, but extermination in "death camps." In particular, this solution was given birth from the evil mind of Adolf Eichmann and others who claimed that the Germans were morally superior to all other races of people, particularly the Jews.

Across German controlled Europe, death camps were subsequently built. One camp in particular exemplified the horrors of what a civil police state will become when it loses its moral compass. During its existence, the death camp at Auschwitz, Poland was the final destination for over one million human beings. Across Nazi controlled Europe people were packed into train cars to the point where there was little or no room to sit. Often for days these human cattle-car trains rolled across the German controlled countries of Europe on a one-way trip to the death camps, the largest of which was Auschwitz.

When the trains rolled into the internment compound of Auschwitz, the men were separated from the wives, mothers and children. On our televisions we witnessed in our living rooms the old Nazi movie clips of screaming children being ripped out of the arms of fathers. The men were then led off to be assigned special tasks to work as slaves in order to continue the war effort for Germany. Those who were not needed were locked down in barracks where they were often left to starve to death. The older men were consigned to another group, which group was destined to the same fate that was facing the "useless" women and children.

The train cars loaded with human stock continued to flow across Europe. At the height of the war there were so many people crammed into the housing of Auschwitz that special gas chambers were then constructed in order to be the final solution to what the Nazis considered to

be the Jewish problem throughout the German-controlled territory of Europe. In order to implement this solution, special buildings were constructed at Auschwitz. They came with “shower” heads for the “sanitizing” of those who poured into the camps. Zyklon B (hydrogen cyanide) was ordered in mass from two German companies and shipped to Auschwitz.

We watched the documentary of crowds of mothers with babies in their arms and children clinging to their mothers. They all stood calmly outside these “sanitizing shower houses,” having no idea what was in store for them. There was no concern on their faces as they waited for their turn to be called in order to be “sanitized.” They were told that they must obediently be “sanitized” in order to move on to the next stage of their “relocation.”

When it came the turn for several dozen women and children to be “sanitized,” they were shuffled into the dressing room where they were told to remove all their clothing. Clothes were then thrown into piles where enslaved camp laborers later sorted through them looking for gold or diamonds that had been sown into the linings of clothes. And then the now naked and humiliated women, with their children and babies, were directed to enter the “sanitizing” room. Once everyone was in the windowless room, the doors were slammed shut and locked behind them.

Even to this point not one of the innocent victims suspected that something was tragically wrong. They simply followed the orders of those who had policed them into a room in order to be “sanitized.” They assumed that water would come forth from the shower heads in order to give them a refreshing bath after the many days they had endured in the cattle-train cars.

However, Zyklon B cyanide pellets were dropped and a poisonous gas vapor began to fill the entire room. The now terrified human beings in the room began to die one by one in the horrific clutches of one another’s arms. The terror lasted only five to twenty minutes before silence haunted the room with the last gasping breath.

It was then time for the “burn squad” to do their grisly work of emptying the room of dead bodies. After the room was ventilated, the

now silenced victims were tightly clutched together in death. The enslaved burn squad had to use hooked poles to pry them apart in order to remove the dead bodies. The burn squad then dragged all the dead bodies from the gas chamber toward the next destination of this madness. After all hair was cut from the bodies, rings removed, and gold teeth were extracted, all gold fillings were removed from the teeth. The bodies were then thrown into ovens in order to be burned to ashes.

The “sanitization rooms” of Auschwitz were so efficient in mass murder that eventually there were not enough ovens to burn all the bodies. So the Nazi operators started digging large holes in the ground in order to stack bodies one upon another, and then burn them in mass. At Auschwitz, the killing reached the astounding efficiency of up to 1,500 human beings being gassed and burned every day. Of the more than 1,200 estimated death camps across German controlled Europe, about 1.2 million Jews were murdered at Auschwitz alone. The death camps were an efficient extermination (“sanitizing”) system to eradicate a race of people from all the Nazi controlled territory of Europe. In all the death camps, it is estimated that from 1940 to 1945 about six million Jews were murdered in order to expedite the rise of the Third Reich of Nazi Germany.

The dehumanization of an entire race of people was truly revealed through the behavior of those who had been convinced by the Hitler propaganda media that they were a superior race of people. The moral degradation was so complete, that after several weeks of murdering people in gas chambers, the leadership of the death camps realized that their German Nazi staff needed periodic breaks. So a special rest camp was set up where the staff, and their wives and children, could take time off and enjoy themselves together in a quiet forest atmosphere. Pictures were displayed on our television depicting smiling faces of the Auschwitz staff workers who were enjoying time on furlough before they had to go back to work murdering and burning innocent people they considered to be a subhuman race. There was no emotional attachment whatsoever with those men, women and children they gassed in those “sanitization” rooms. There was some concern on the part of one Nazi death camp official who wrote in a letter to his wife who

could not attend the retreat, “If only the Jews would become Christians.” We gasp at this statement. This is the depth to which religious atheism will descend into the very pits of hell. His understanding of Christian was so far from the nature of the God of heaven, that he had twisted his former Christian faith with atheistic state religion. Israel of old sank to such wickedness when in worship of their Baal gods, she even burned some of her own children in worship (See Jr 19:5; 32:35). While we lived in Brazil, the headlines of one morning newspaper read, “Parents Drown Their Babies In Sea In Worship Ceremony.” Israel retained their religiosity, but they created a god after their own moral degradation. They became a state of religious atheists.

It was Adolf Eichmann, the mastermind of the death camps, who said in his trial for his war crimes after the war, “It was the right thing for us to do at the time.” Eichmann was hanged for doing what he and thousands of Third Reich Nazis thought was the morally right thing to do in order to socially and economically advance their race of people by the extermination of another race. In order that his supposed Aryan race advance in this world, another race had to be ripped from existence.

During the recent January 2020 Golden Globe awards, Michelle Williams said in her acceptance speech for being voted best actress, “I wouldn’t have been able to do this without employing a woman’s right to choose [abortion].” She had ripped an unborn child from her womb in order to go on to be a famous actress. Nothing has changed since the Nazi death camps. The only thing that may have changed is that we have moved from gas chambers to a mother’s womb in the chambers of an abortion clinic. It is there that millions of innocent and unsuspecting children are being ripped away from life. As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany, children are now being ripped out of their mother’s womb, instead of a father’s arms, as it was in Nazi Germany. People as Michelle Williams still believe, “It is the right thing for us to do at this time.”

When the Russian troops eventually fought their way across Poland, and freed Auschwitz, they could not believe what they discovered. The world was suspicious of what was happening in the death

camp, but people did not truly believe the horror of the genocide that was taking place until they personally witnessed the heaps of dead bodies in the camps. It was simply difficult to believe that human beings could sink to such moral lows. But the rumors were all true. Humanity can sink so low morally that people will commit such dastardly deeds to one another. Even the citizens of the city of Auschwitz, who lived next door to the death camps, had no idea what was happening. They only witnessed the smoke that seemed to daily rise from the camp.

So what the Russian commanders did was to march every citizen of Auschwitz through the Auschwitz camp in order that they personally witness the dead emaciated bodies that were stacked upon one another in great heaps, waiting to be burned or buried. They wanted the residents of Auschwitz never to forget the stench of death and the horror of what those of an atheistic civil state could do when they exalted themselves above another race of human beings.

The Russian commanders then made the citizens of Auschwitz personally take up an emaciated victim, dig a grave, and give the person a proper burial. The experience was so horrific for some of the residents of the city that they were haunted with nightmares for years to come. The Allied commanders wanted the world never to forget what happens when people lose a sense of morality. Auschwitz must never be forgotten. We must never forget that when humanity forsakes the moral standards of God, the extremity of moral degradation is incomprehensible. Morally void humans will sink to the lowest possible level to where the imagination of a civilization thinks evil continually (Gn 6:5). We have had our own experience in Africa of this horror. In a little over three months one race of people hacked to death over 800,000 people of another tribal group. Hell was unleashed in those years in the country of Rwanda. It was a time when the savagery of a past century of genocide was brought over into the twentieth century.

The problem with religious atheism is that there is no conscience that would stimulate any sense of repentance in reference to the God of heaven. The laws of the civic state replace the Bible, and the supreme leader becomes the god of the people. This is what the Holy Spirit meant when He wrote through the hand of Paul, that a morally bank-

rupt people have “*their conscience seared with a hot iron*” (1 Tm 4:2).

11 STRUGGLE AGAINST STATE RELIGION

The dynamic movie, *Operation Chromite*, skillfully directed by John H. Lee, was released in August 2016. If the viewer can move past all the graphic action of the acclaimed movie, he or she will discover an ideological war that is still playing itself out today within several countries around the world. In fact, the conflicts of ideologies that were revealed in this movie have been the root cause of endless conflicts since humans have populated the world.

The setting of the movie was the Korean War that began in 1950. In that year, North Korea, with the support of Russia and China, invaded South Korea. In order to defend themselves, and subsequently retain the freedom of the Korean people, the commander and chief of the United Nations forces, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, covertly sent a team of several South Koreans behind enemy lines. The team was sent in order to secure a lighthouse that would mark the way for a coalition of United Nations ships to land on the beaches by evading sea mines that the North Korean forces had deployed in order to guard the harbor Incheon. The brave South Korean covert team accomplished their mission to light up the Incheon lighthouse beacon to guide the way for the nighttime landing of the ships, but they did so at a great cost.

- **There is an ideological conflict between faith and atheism.**

What is significant in reference to the movie is the ideological conflict that tore apart the Korean people into two very different civilizations. The atheistic ideology that resulted in this division is still at work today throughout the world, even in America. The America we once knew as a faith-oriented society is now faced with a rising dark cloud of atheistic anarchy that is moving aside the faith of the forefathers who built America.

The sides in this sociological conflict will continue into the future because atheism satisfies the narcissism of those who want to be in

power. The ideology of atheism also assumes that the individual has the right to determine his or her own moral standards. Such is the persistent nature of those who choose to give up a knowledge of the one true God and His moral standards. We would be very naive to think that this confrontation is based on race. Those who would believe that race is the root problem in the conflict are walking in the darkness of their own self deception. The confrontation is about power and wealth. A racial event may trigger an uprising, but we must not be confused that the social trigger itself is the problem. In the West, accusations of race are often the disguise of something far more significant that is buried beneath the social surface of a civilization that is living in the chaos of an economic paradigm shift.

What is transpiring in America is a class war. The middle class in America has been displaced by the economic rise of an upper economic class that now controls the majority of the wealth. What was formerly the middle class has become the lower economic class of a new two-class society. The lower economic class is now in a perpetual struggle to have a piece of the economic pie. But the upper one-percent class of the population is privileged, and thus, continues to maintain their bank accounts and stocks at the expense of the ninety-plus percent who cannot seem to get ahead. It is now that the one-percent class use their wealth to either gain or retain power.

But there is more to this paradigm shift that has now been transpiring for several decades. While growing up in America, the reason for the Korean War was never explained to us as youth. If it had, we probably would not have understood the global implications of two ideologies that were beginning to clash worldwide following the conflict of WW II. For us as the baby boomer generation, the Korean War was simply another one of those wars in which America involved herself. We subsequently interpreted the Korean War through the veil of the senseless Vietnam War. But the conflict in ideologies of the two wars was completely different. One was about preserving freedom and faith, and the other was about preserving privilege on the part of those who had economic interests. The brilliance of the movie, *Operation Chromite*, was in the fact that it revealed the tremendous ideological

conflict that struggled against one another in the Korean War. We are witnessing the same being played out again in many places around the world today.

Though the primary drama that was portrayed by the movie on the screen was the tearing apart of families, there was a specific ideological conflict that was tearing apart the Korean population. The origin of the ideologies that set the stage for the conflict came from the atheistic ideologies of Karl Marx (1818 - 1883) and Vladimir Lenin (1870 - 1924). The German philosopher Marx said, “The last capitalist we hang shall be the one who sold us the rope.” In contrast to this fascist ideology of Marx, Lenin said, “Fascism is capitalism in decay.” Therefore, he concluded, “**The goal of socialism is communism.**” Hitler of Germany accepted the ideology of fascism and Stalin adopted the world view of Lenin. WW II ended the influence of Hitler’s fascism. But at the same time it boosted Lenin’s communism around the world through the influence of Russia. It was this atheistic communism after WW II that spread to the people of the Korean peninsula.

Atheistic state communism emerged on the world stage through the adventurism of Joseph Stalin’s Russia. After the close of WW II, Russia and China sided with those of North Korea, and subsequently, started, through propaganda (lies), to invade the minds of all Koreans. As the malignant virus of atheistic communism began to make its way down the Korean peninsula, the South Koreans reached out to the United Nations in order to stop this ideological attack against their right to choose, specifically their right to choose faith over atheism. The UN subsequently came to the rescue of those who chose freedom and faith.

Therefore, there was more involved in the Korean conflict than demigods struggling for power. In the south, the Koreans fought to retain their right to choose, and in particular, their right to choose a God who created all things. Under the direction of the movie, John Lee skillfully brought out this conflict of ideologies that raged between the god of an atheistic state communism and the God of heaven. Lee’s subliminal and spiritual meaning of the words “brother” and “sister,” that were used by MacArthur’s covert team, indicated something beyond family relationships. The South Korean freedom fighters were

“brothers” and “sisters” who were engaged in a conflict between atheism and faith in God.

- **Consequences of giving up on God.** The Korean War was an event in history that renewed again the relevance of the revelation of the Holy Spirit in Romans 1:18-32. It was as if the words of this text were written specifically for this world conflict of ideologies that gave birth to the Cold War that eventually grew on the world stage after WW II. During the existence of the Roman Empire two thousand years ago, Romans 1:18-32 was a context that laid bare the naked truth of individual Caesars or kings of government who would become the god of a subjugated people. With the same emphasis, the Holy Spirit warned against those who would also make the state the “faith” of the people.

Though Caesar Nero personally assumed lordship when the Roman letter was written, he was not proclaimed such by the Senate of Rome. In the latter part of the first century, however, Caesar Domitian was eventually proclaimed lord by the state. Everyone, therefore, who did not proclaim Domitian as lord were considered insurrectionists of the state. The result was inevitable. Since Christians proclaimed only one Lord (Ep 4:5), this meant that in the eyes of the “deified” state of Rome, Christians were to be executed as insurrectionists. Throughout the second century, and into the third, many Christians, depending on the self-proclaimed deification of a particular Caesar, were cast into coliseums throughout the Roman Empire to be torn apart and eaten by lions because they would not confess Caesar as their Lord.

Paul wanted to forewarn all the Christians in Rome that these things were coming. Instead of making any prophecies concerning the specifics of the events to come, he focused his readers on the ideological world view of the people of any empire who would exchange the truth of God for the lie that either a fascist leader or communist state should become the god of the people. Paul thus left the prophecies concerning the events that would impact the Christians of the Roman Empire to the apostle John who wrote the letter of Revelation (Rv 1:1).

But in reference to the first readers of Romans 1, Paul indicated that the events of conflict would not necessarily come upon them in

their personal lifetime. Nevertheless, the conflicts between ideologies would eventually come in the lifetime of their brothers and sisters who would follow them. Therefore, the forewarning of Romans 1:28-32 was a historical warning to which we must refer from the time the ink dried on the original autograph of the letter of Romans. From the time Paul concluded the letter to the Roman disciples, the scenario of societies giving up a knowledge of God would be repeated several times throughout the history of humanity.

• **Mandated loyalty to demigods and states.** Germany was decimated by WW I. The Treaty of Versailles that was signed on January 20, 1920 in Paris, France between the Allied forces and Germany continued the decimation. Unfortunately, the Treaty hindered the economic recovery of Germany because of the restrictions that were placed on the people. The result was that for a decade after WW I, the German people languished in poverty. At the end of the 1920s, and into the first part of the 1930s, along came Adolf Hitler with promises of a prosperous future. Unfortunately, there was one class of the German civilization that needed to be eradicated in order to fulfill this dream. Since this economically privileged class of the Germans controlled a greater part of the economy, Hitler eventually made the decision to steal the wealth of this particular class of Germans. Therefore, through persistent political maneuvering, he eventually brought himself and his Nazi Party into power in order to do this very thing to the German Jews in particular, but also all Jews of Europe who fell under the control of the Third Reich.

Hitler realized that in order for him to be acclaimed as the sole authority over the people to accomplish such a dastardly deed, he had to deliver economic hope to the people in order to control the people. But in order to do this, all “faith” had to be instilled in him and his newly formed Nazi Party. This Nazi party had to be in power. Therefore, he believed that in order to save Germany from abject poverty, the people had to follow a fascist ideology. Hitler had to become the supreme leader of the people. In order to be proclaimed as such, faith in any other “god” must be removed from the hearts and minds of the

people. All political opposition had to be terminated. Contrary political views had to be crushed. As in China, the final standard for moral authority had to be invested in the state.

Hitler thus did as Paul wrote in reference to the rise of such aspiring demigods. He “*changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man*” (Rm 1:23). For the economically ravaged German people, Hitler became the “corruptible man.” Once he had exalted himself as the supreme leader, it was easy to accomplish the next step in creating an atheistic fascist state. So in strict obedience to the Nazi Party, the German people “*exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator*” (Rm 1:25). This is the road map of all demigods. This was the state of affairs in communist North Korea when a brave and faithfully committed team of South Koreans went behind enemy lines in order to turn the tide of the invasion of atheistic communism into South Korea.

- **The rise of the god of the state.** In a fascist state, the leader must replace faith in the God of creation with an unquestionable loyalty to himself as the leader of the state. Demigods can have no competition in the minds of the people. After the death of the demigod Hitler at the end of WW II, communism became the other god who was propagated around the world by Russia. What played itself out in the Korean peninsula in the early 1950s was that North Korea had accepted the state god of communism. The state became the “corruptible god” that was at the time preached by both Russia and China. There was a new god in town. It was not an individual demigod, but a system of social collectivism.

Fascism and communism are ideologically opposed to one another. Through fear, Hitler, the fascist, subjected the people with the power of his police force, the SS (the police of the state). But in contrast, Stalin convinced the Russian people that the state must reign supreme over the individual rights of the people. The state must become the god of the people, though fear must be the emotional lever to control the people.

During WW II, therefore, there was a stark contrast between the

motives of Nazi Germany and Stalin's Russia. Nevertheless, there is at least one common theme of the ideologies of both systems of civilization. In order to function as a government of society, **both were atheistic**. The instrument of control was through fear. In such situations, no heavenly God can take the place of a fascist demigod of the state, and no God can be worshiped who is above the state. Faith in a Supreme God of heaven must be erased from society in order that demigods can freely reign supreme on earth. The fear of the earthly god must be instilled in the hearts and minds of the people in order that the people be totally focused on the success of the communal state (communism). Whether with fascism or communism, therefore, atheism must prevail over belief in a heavenly God of creation.

After WW II, Russia began its relentless march around the world in order to propagate the ideology of atheistic communism. The state was preached to be the new religion of the people and the "savior" of the economically oppressed. This march continued into the peninsula of Korea, and eventually led to the division of the Korean people into two different ideologies. The god of the North would be the religion of atheistic communism. The people would thus exchange "*the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve*" Kim II-sung, with the state being the religion of the people. In the South, democracy would prevail wherein the people would retain their freedom to choose. And in their freedom, they would choose faith over any atheistic leader or ideology of the state.

- **Darkness cannot exist in the presence of light.** Today, as the International Space Station makes its journey around the earth every ninety minutes, throughout the years many photographs have been taken at night of North and South Korea. The lights of South Korea beam as a lighthouse beacon of the result of freedom and faith. As industrial power brought prosperity to the people of South Korea, the night lights of the country reflect the hopes of the people for the future. We must never forget that the industrial prosperity of the South was initiated and fought for by people who refused to relinquish their faith and freedom to either an atheist communist state or demigod dictator.

But the nighttime photographs of North Korea reveals a black hole in one of the civilizations of this world. Not only are the photographs of North Korea almost void of any night lights, the photographs would also metaphorically reveal a void of the light of the God of heaven. It is ruled by an atheistic leader who promotes an atheistic state cult. So we are reminded of this precious statement of Jesus: ***“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”*** (Jn 8:12).

Once the lighthouse in Incheon, South Korea was lit to shine its beacon for the entry of the United Nation’s landing on the beaches of Incheon, the Korean War began in 1950. In the movie, *Operation Chromite*, the last of the South Korean covert agents of the UN forces, who were sent in under the cover of darkness, eventually met their glorious deaths in order to deliver South Korea to what it is today as a free nation with the right to choose faith over atheism.

For just one example, the next time you use a device or appliance of the South Korean Samsung Company, think about the cost that a small group of committed South Koreans paid to make it so. Over three million Koreans died in the Korean War conflict from 1950 to 1953. Many dedicated South Koreans, and over 50,000 American soldiers, gave their lives in order that we have the blessing of the thousands of other South Korean industries.

Faith in the God of creation continues strong in South Korea. The North Koreans, on the other hand, have only the mortal god of Kim Jong-un, who will eventually die. And after him, another mortal will probably arise to continue the hopelessness of an atheistic state.

12 SOCIOLOGICAL PARADIGM SHIFTS

When a civilization of people loses its moral bearings, then the people have subjected themselves to endless moral paradigm shifts throughout their history. Moral standards within a civilization are necessary in order to maintain the stability and integrity of the people. It is the particular responsibility of the religious people of a civilization to

provide these moral standards. If the decision to establish moral standards is left to the secular state, or a vigilant and vocal minority, then as the culture of that state, or vigilant and vocal minority, changes, so also will change the moral standards of the civilization. The result will be that the citizens of the state will behave as the state dictates, or as the vigilant/vocal minority. Therefore, religion—though precarious as it may be—must be the determining foundation upon which any society maintains some consistency throughout the years of its existence as a civilization.

It is because of the stabilizing factor of the moral values of religion that works against any paradigm shifts in a civilization. If there is a shift, then the moral values must go along with the shift. The faith of the past must be discarded with all religion if the people are to be subjugated in heart and mind to the new ideology of the state. When the state starts dictating the behavior of the church, it is then that the people of faith within the state are in trouble. For example, during the Cultural Revolution of China between 1966 and 1976, Mao Zedong sought to eradicate all religion from the new atheistic communist state of China that he was seeking to establish. He saw religion as a threat to the communalization of the new socialistic China.

Since Zedong sought to subject the people to the mandates of a socialistic ideology, he had to dispel any Higher Authority in the minds of the people that would be above the authority of the state. However, long after the end of the Cultural Revelation, the Chinese government eventually apologized to the people concerning the negative effects that the Revolution of Zedong had on the country. Nevertheless, since the recent rise of President Xi Jinping, there seems to be a move back to the era of religious oppression that was wide spread under Zedong.

One of the local Chinese preachers, Huang Xiaoning, recently said in a news release, “The China Communist Party wants to be the god of China and the Chinese people.” Because of this new “cultural revolution,” many Sunday schools and youth ministries in some providences of China have been banned. Ying Fuk, the director of the Christian Study Center on Chinese Religion and Culture at the Chinese University in Hong Kong, recently said, “President Xi Jinping is trying to

establish a new order on religion, suppressing its blistering development [in China].” Subsequently, there has been the barring of many unapproved religious organizations. Throughout China, the government has implemented sweeping moves against all religions. Christian celebrations in many provinces have been officially banned. In fact, there is an effort going on at this time to retranslate the Bible in order to make it conform more to the sociological ideology of Marxist socialism. The Chinese people can no longer download any other versions of the Bible from the Internet.

In order for the state to demand the total loyalty of the people, the state must do what Zedong did during the Cultural Revolution. Unregistered churches were banned in China in those days, including house churches. Many church buildings were burned to the ground. In some ways, similar acts against religion are taking place today, not only in China, but in Western civilizations. One former missionary to China who worked for six years as an English teacher in China schools recently communicated to us, “The Christians in China are now scared.” Mao Zedong vowed to eradicate religion from China during the Cultural Revelation, and it seems that the same desire is being made today under Jinping in order to submit the hearts and minds of the people totally to the socialistic state. We are witnessing the same in the West as Marxist socialism is making its way into the political environment of America.

The reason for this move is simple. In order to implement Marxist socialism there must be total ideological conformity of the people to the mandates of the popular movement of the people. In the past year it has been reported that hundreds of unofficial churches and house churches in China have been shut down. It was reported by over five hundred Chinese church leaders that crosses have been torn down from existing church buildings and replaced with the flag of China. During the assemblies of registered churches, the government has in many places mandated that the people must sing patriotic songs. Minors have been barred from many assemblies lest they be influenced by an older generation that still clings to faith. The government of China has even marched right into the assemblies of the churches in order that Marxist socialism be honored.

We must not be fooled by atheistic religionists who would impose the control of the state under a shroud of public safety in reference to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, in opening up churches after the Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa, the government issued a directive that would control the behavior of the people in reference to their religious behavior. The assemblies of churches were restricted to fifty attendees—sorry for number fifty-one who just walked ten kilometers to be present at the assembly. During the assemblies, the government mandated registration of every member who attended the assembly and restricted singing during any assembly to only one person at a time. Of course, this would not affect Muslim assemblies. But in reference to churches, there could be no congregational singing.

The frightening thing about these and many other restrictions that were placed on churches throughout the country was that most of the religious population of the country did not push back against such restrictions because everyone was in a state of fear. Though the government consulted many existing religious leaders before issuing the mandates, the mandates were still the sole decision of the government.

Gone is the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. As in China, the people of South Africa feared lest the police of the state discover that they were violating the religious policies of the state. As a result, many members of churches have simply ceased to meet lest the assembled church break forth with joy, resulting in more than one person bursting out in song. In a recent BBC broadcast, the byline statement on a Covid-19 report read, “Religion is aiding the spread of the Covid-19 virus.”

In an effort to bring Christianity into compatibility with Marxist socialism, the present China government even seeks to control the training of those preachers who preach for government registered churches. All sermons that are preached in government registered churches must conform to the ideology of Marxist socialism. In order to implement conformity to this mandate, religious assemblies are often monitored by “official visitors.” If sermons contain any motivation that is not in conformity to Marxist socialism, then the preacher and members are often arrested. (Information about these efforts of the atheistic state of

China suppressing religion throughout the country can be researched through many websites on the Internet.)

Some might conclude that we are not respecting the world emergency of social distancing and restrictions on assemblies in order to control the spread of the present pandemic. This is not the case. As Christians, we must view all such matters through the revelation of the word of God, and then use practical common sense. It is common sense to conclude that the present Covid-19 virus will continue to infect the population of the world for many years to come. If the influenza pandemic over one hundred years ago is still with us today, then we must conclude that the Covid-19 virus will be with us into the future, unless a vaccine is discovered.

In view of this, each Christian must ask himself or herself several questions: If the Covid-19 is now permanently with the world civilization, then how should Christians social distance, and thus meet in assembly only in small groups? If social distancing and limited assemblies are with us indefinitely, then what affect will this have on the organic function of the body of Christ? If the organic function of the body of Christ is now greatly restricted through social distancing and restricted assemblies, then what? If world travel is greatly restricted, then what should Christians do in reference to going into all the world to preach the gospel? If one is worthy of the support of the church when he or she is teaching the gospel to others, then what should the church do in reference to those who can no longer minister the gospel to the world? Will the present lockdown also lockdown the preaching of the gospel? Is the organic function of the church restricted now only to the survival of the church? Is the church now in the days when the organic function of Christians is restricted only to immediate families as Noah and his family worked for almost one hundred years in order to build an ark?

13 THE RISE OF THE NEW SOCIALIST

If we are living in the West, we might think that this is something

that is happening on the far side of the world. But this is not so in these days as a moral paradigm shift is now taking place in the West under the banner of “Black Lives Matter” (BLM). This is not a movement in reference to skin color, but a moral paradigm shift in the West that is Marxist in its core value system.

Recent surveys have revealed that in the American movement, the BLM “party” is more popular than either the Democratic or Republican parties. It is more popular than religion, even the Pope. It has become a political party movement to change the American civilization. It is a party generally promoted by young people who oppose all who would disagree with their ideology. Those who are aligned with the movement are not interested in dialogue or conversation concerning differences of opinion. It is assumed that if one does not agree with the “woke” of the movement, then they are racist, or “white supremacists.”

The BLM socialistic movement is a moral paradigm shift in American culture. It is a political movement against which no existing political leadership in Washington is pushing back in reference to the inconsistent ideologies of the movement. One of the primary ideologies is to dispel with the current system of policing. But in reference to the foolishness of this concept, existing politicians seem to be conforming to the moral shift of the paradigm. There is no religiosity among those of this movement. It is agnostic/atheistic in ideology. We are reminded, therefore, of the present opposition of the China government against religion in China.

In the publication of official government religious material of China, there are four basic ideologies that are maintained by the China government in reference to all religion: (1) It is taught that the Bible is not the word of God. (2) Jesus was not born of a virgin. (3) The resurrection of Jesus is a myth. (4) There is no final coming of Jesus. If these foundational truths are extracted from the teaching of state-approved churches, then there is no such thing as Christianity. Religion thus becomes atheistic. So is the socialistic movement of America. Religion is now out of fashion in this movement as it spreads to other people around the world.

Regardless of any agnostic/atheistic movements in any civiliza-

tion, it is always as it was in the days of Noah. **Faith will never be eliminated entirely from a culture of the people**, simply because God created us with spiritual inclinations. Zedong failed in the Cultural Revolution of China to eliminate faith. Faith is strong in China today regardless of all the efforts of the present government to suppress the religiosity of the hearts and minds of the people. It will always be as a shop owner recently said to a BBC reporter on the streets of Wuhan, China, “It is our faith in God that will help us through the Covid-19 times.” Faith continued through the Russian Revolution. And regardless of the fanaticism of the present cultural revolution of the West, faith will continue. It will continue because people have enough sense to know that when times are out of control, then they conclude that only God can sort things out. It is always as Paul wrote to some who were in the seat of such social chaos in the city of Rome: “*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God*” (Rm 8:28).

Kim Jong-un of North Korea has adopted an approach to control the hearts and minds of the people of North Korea. He has assumed the position of a “god” among his people, believing that this admiration of himself as the “supreme” leader will continually keep the hearts and minds of the people away from any theology of religion. By assuming this role in the hearts and minds of the people, he suppresses the desire of the people to establish any moral standards according to some faith in a Higher Power.

What we are witnessing today in the West is a similar paradigm shift from the moral standards of the forefathers to a new moral order that is patterned after the desires of a growing atheistic and narcissistic society of citizens. What is transpiring in the American civilization is a cultural paradigm shift to Marxist socialism. Those who are promoting this ideology seek to establish an atheistic culture under the umbrella of “democracy,” though the movement denies the very elements that make democracies thrive. It seems that those of this political bias are doomed to relive the past of many failed atheistic civilizations that have gone down that same road.

When there is social chaos within a society, then that group within

the society who feel disgruntled with the existing *status quo*, will seek change. In order to implement this change, there is often rebellion that begins with marches that usually digress into uncontrollable mobs. But it must not be forgotten that a move to socialism in a society that has in the past been built on a democratic market economy, the rebellion is a movement of destruction. That which built the economy of the society must be destroyed by the Marxist socialist in order to bring in a new socialistic order. Old orders of policing the society that upheld the old order must be changed to some new system. A paradigm shift in policing is thus assumed in order that the old economic orders be dismantled. The old must be destroyed for the sake of the new.

In order for a paradigm shift to socialism to take place in a society that has traditionally been based on religious standards of the past, new moral standards must be implemented. It is assumed that the old standards led to the economic inequity within the existing society, and thus these standards must be sacrificed for a new system of moral standards. Therefore, the neo-Marxist liberals of the West today are seeking to take over the culture of Western civilization through a moral change of function of economics in society. In order to do this, they must destroy the existing moral standards of the past in order to bring in new moral standards that conform to a socialistic state. Everything, therefore, is on the table for destruction. The “woke” of the new movement is against anything with which there is disagreement. These are not movements for discussion, but “idiocracy” movements for destruction.

Since the policing of the past maintained the function of past standards, in the move to the new economic function of society, a new police force must be implemented. Adolf Hitler did this through his SS force who enforced the new economy and culture of the new Nazi Germany. As all such fascist policing is supposedly nonracial, Hitler’s police force revealed its true character by racially boycotting all Jewish businesses in 1933. We know where that story ended. It ended in the genocide of over six million Jews in death camps. When a state turns to systematic racism, as did fascist Nazi Germany, no good will result. We are not deceived into thinking that the present BLM is not racist. It is racist to the core of its ideology of behavior.

14 FAILURES OF THE WEST

The West is sociologically suffering as a result of the failure of at least three parties of people who had the responsibility to maintain the moral standards upon which Western civilization was established. Bible-based principles established and grew the West. But in the last half century those Bible-based principles that built the West have been eroded away by a new generation of agnostics and atheists who consider the Bible to be a book of religious fables. We would say that the present sociological chaos of Western civilizations reveals the failure of past generations to continue the Bible-based moral principles that built the West. But the past generations failed the present and future generations in at least three areas:

- **The parents failed to teach their children the commandments of God.** They failed to do what God commanded Moses in order to preserve the Israelite society until the coming of the Messiah: *“And you will teach them diligently [the commandments of the Lord] to your children and will talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up”* (Dt 6:7). The parents of Israel failed to continue these instructions, and thus the people eventually gave up a knowledge of the God who brought them out of Egyptian captivity (Hs 4:6; Rm 1:18-32).

Because we have copies of Bibles today that contain the history of Israel’s fall from God, we know that throughout their history the Israelite parents utterly failed to teach the commandments of God to succeeding generations. Western parents have done likewise. Western parents have utterly failed in this parental responsibility in order to continue a cultural stability that is based on faith in God. They have failed because they themselves as parents have long forgotten the commandments. In their own minds, God became an optional mental imagination who was subservient to their own desires. The unfortunate result is that their children who are now on the streets without Bibles in their hands, have rebelled against the moral standards of the Bible.

In past generations, the grandparents of the present generation walked the streets with Bibles in hand in search of those who would study the Bible with them. But the present generation would mock those grandparents who would walk the streets with Bibles in their hands. The present generation is out on the streets burning down the livelihood of those whom they believe represent the “oppression” of the past.

The parents of the present younger generation who are on the streets could not teach to their children what they themselves did not know. We must remember that societies build up over generations to a sociological paradigm shift. In reference to an eventual apostasy from a heritage of faith, each generation of parents fail in some way to continue the legacy of their own parents. As an example of this, the generation that is now passing away assigned the teaching of the Bible to religious professionals. Contrary to the personal responsibility of what was mandated to Christian parents, professional preachers and teachers and youth leaders were hired to do the job of the parents to teach their children in the home. The responsibility of the parents was consigned to those who were outside the home. Parents saw themselves as only bus drivers whose sole responsibility it was to get their children to the Bible class or youth activity.

However, a godless generation does not result from the failures of the immediate parents of that generation. Sociological apostasy usually takes place over more than one generation. When Paul spoke of a people who give up a knowledge of God (Rm 1:18-32), we must conclude that over several generations a civilization of parents become themselves delinquent in their responsibility to personally study and teach their children the word of God. This is the conclusion that we derive from the moral state of affairs that eventually came to fruition in the generation in which Noah lived (See Gn 6:5).

• **The educators of the West failed to pass on to their students respect for the moral authority of God.** Though some parents may have instilled in their children the fear of the God of creation, when the children went away to secular universities, the professors of those secular

systems of education bombarded the minds of the children with an alternative to creation. Atheistic evolution become the new “god” for the existence of all things. Young university students who first believed in the God of creation were intimidated into casting off that God who had revealed moral standards by which civilizations are preserved. The new god of science was introduced into the minds of innocent young people, and thus the moral standards of the Bible carried little weight in determining the behavior of the citizens. And since the economic inequity of the Western world has been supposedly attributed to a God who would allow such, it was easy for the new generation of the West to cast off that God in order that they create a new god by which they are allowed to determine their own moral standards.

It is for this reason that all Christians must be very alert whenever there is a sociological paradigm shift taking place in their country. These shifts are not God-oriented, and thus, what usually comes out on the back side of the revolution is a more atheistic society. Cultural revolutions are not generated by God-fearing people. They are generated by the masses who seek some earthly solution for their earthly problems.

Add to the preceding the socialistic Marxist ideology of the educators of Western universities. Not only have these educators forsaken belief in God, they have taught an entire generation that Marxist socialism will answer all the problems the present younger generation is facing. This generation of graduates, therefore, have been led to believe that university tuition debts will be cancelled and everyone will have a job. Society will supposedly enjoy financial equity when economic structures of the past are broken down.

What has happened to this generation of Western youth is similar to what Hitler accomplished with the youth of the generation of Germany in the 1930s. He knew that if he would direct the people to a future Nazi Germany, he had to turn the loyalty of the youth to the ideology of the Third Reich. For example, in his efforts to create a new generation of Aryan Germans, he established youth camps throughout Germany. During the youth camp sessions, young boys and girls were encouraged to adopt Hitler as their new “father,” and thus “breed” in order to produce his new Aryan generation of Germans. In one camp,

for example, out of the thirty-six young teenage girls who attended, thirty-five fell pregnant before they returned home. Stunned parents tried to regain the respect of their children, but it was too late. The younger generation turned against their parents in order to “pay homage” to their new father, Adolf Hitler. It was only a few years later that Hitler used this new generation of Aryans to launch war across Europe.

• **In order to produce a society that is a cult in reference to their new heroes, those who join the cult must be willing to give up everything, including their minds, and those closest to them.** The supreme leader of the cult (state) must be given total loyalty. Therefore, in order to receive total loyalty, the subservient must be separated from those with whom they are the closest. The younger generation must disengage from the generation of their parents.

In Western civilizations, there is a paradigm shift of loyalty from honoring and respecting those who would enjoy divine moral standards on the people, to those who are the celebrities of society. Since the celebrities present to the public a sense of success, then a narcissistic generation is easily persuaded to switch loyalties.

In the case of Hitler, Stalin and Kim Jong-un, worship of the demigod must be encouraged at all cost. Children are no longer allowed to be innocent, but must give total allegiance to the new moral order. In order for any cultic social order to come to fruition, the new moral order must attack the traditional moral values of the past. It is no longer a crime, therefore, to loot and burn that which represents the economic establishment of the past. Doing such within a society is justified by those who seek to implement a new moral paradigm. It is assumed that the strength of the movement of the people determines what is right for the people.

We must not forget that healthy societies do not seek to destroy their history. Our history identifies who we are in the present. Tearing down statues or burning books that represent our history, therefore, are efforts to deny who we are. If we tear down that which defines who we are in the present, then we are destroying who we are in the present. In fact, we will become an insecure society with a dubious future. If

we lose our identity, we will end up as cultureless zombies who have no idea where we are going.

Since mobs are the minions of extremists, the mob will always seek to cram their ideology down the throats of others. The mob's rejection of the past, by tearing down statutes and burning books, is always a diversion from the problems the people actually seek to correct in the present. We simply must not forget that extremists are never satisfied. The more they get their way, the more they want. There are never enough statues to tear down, historic movies to censure, or books to burn. If they receive no push back for desecrating the past, then they will simply push right over those with whom they disagree.

After Hitler had energized the youth, the German Student Union initiated during the 1930s the burning of all books that promoted ideologies that were contrary to Nazism. Books by Jewish authors, books by pacifists, or religious leaders and anarchists were burned across Germany. It was a literary purging by fire in order to restructure the education of the new Aryan society of Germany.

As with the Bolshevik revolution of Russia in 1917, the radical left Marxist/Leninist movement destroyed (burned) the ruling class (the privileged) in order to spark the Russian Revolution of the people. Hitler eventually did what we now witness among many of the rioters who have swarmed across the West. He authorized his Nazi Party to loot all that the Jews possessed. He mandated boycotts of Jewish businesses. Social revolutions often become mobs, and mobs always seek to burn the past in order to go into their future. Unfortunately, if a movement becomes a mob, then all discussions are concluded with those who would represent another point of view.

Such is not uncommon in the West as instigators of "marches" are financially supported by a coalition of financiers who feign to be supporters of the people. While they disguise their motives by feigning support of those who loot and burn, they seek to establish a new economic state wherein they can gain control through the power of their money. But in order to do this, the old economic order must be destroyed.

In a democratic market economy, the sponsorship of any movement must follow the majority of the people. Once the people are mov-

ing in the direction where the demigods can take control of the movement, then as the number of voters grow in their favor, the existing remnants of the past civilization are doomed to follow the majority vote. This was exactly how Lenin hijacked the Russian Revolution. Once the Bolsheviks (the people) rose up to dispel the Russian civilization that was historically controlled by the Czars, he then rose up as the elected leader of the movement.

During these times of socialistic transition, the socialistic news media is often on the payroll of the new economic elite. The news media must be on the side of their financial supporters in order to continue their business as a news media. Once the sociological paradigm has shifted, then the news media must become the media of the state, or it is banned by the state. It is at this time in a sociological paradigm shift that a tipping point has been reached. There is no turning back to the past.

In the Western scenario, those who are thirsting to take control are publicized by a socialistic news media that has generally adopted or condoned a far left socialistic movement. At the same time, the conservative news media wane in this sociological paradigm shift because they begin to lose the financial backing of the people. As the customers of the products of the corporate left are bought by the majority left, corporate sponsors withdraw from the conservatives. As the majority becomes stronger in buying the products of the corporate left, then the money moves to the news media that supports the left. Conservatives consequently lose their voice. A remnant of conservatives will remain in the civilization, but the new order is established and continued by the new moral paradigm of socialistic atheists.

The West is presently going through a moral paradigm shift. The protesters are now the new Bolsheviks of Russia who initially generated an economic paradigm shift in the early twentieth century. The new Bolsheviks of the West in this century are in a cultural revolution to discard the norms of the forefathers in order to establish a new moral order. Because of the weak leadership of the present Western leaders, a new cultural revolution is emerging out of the present social chaos. This cultural revolution will not subside simply because the present

leadership of the West has no moral stamina to push back against the tremendous sociological forces that are encouraging social and political change. It is now as the aged US Senator John Kennedy of the state of Louisiana said to his fellow political leaders, “Leadership needs to grow some guts.”

For the sake of votes in the present Western democratic environment, weak political leaders have bowed down to the threats of the neo-Marxist socialists who seek to rebel against the “privileged” in order to establish an atheistic socialistic society. Unfortunately, the new Marxist is usually ignorant of history in reference to socialistic societies. He does not realize that socialistic societies throughout history have always come to a dismal economic end. We are not without an example of this in the present with the country of Venezuela.

But socialists are rarely students of history. They usually cannot think beyond the next block on their march down city streets. They are usually narcissistically concerned only with things that affect them in the present. They are blinded to the new sociological paradigm to which they are condemning their children.

However, in the beginning of the movement, the idealistic socialist believes in the fictitious ideal that if all the wealth would be equally distributed, then we all would live in financial equality. But the new equality, as was proved by Russian communism, and presently in Venezuela, means that we will all live in poverty. Therefore, the sociological paradigm shift from a market economy wherein some are poor, is transitioned to an economy wherein everyone is poor, save for the few elite who control the newly established economic paradigm. Nevertheless, the new Bolsheviks are determined to mount their threats against the present gutless leadership of the West, as long as weak leaders do not push back, which they have no desire to do because of the votes. They, too, must move in the direction of their financial supporters.

As stated before, when a sociological paradigm makes its shift in a civilization, so also must the leadership of that civilization. And if the present sociological shift gives up a knowledge of God, then also will the leaders of the new paradigm. The leadership must conform to the ideology of the new paradigm in order to be voted into office. Oth-

erwise, a dictator must rise up and hijack the revolution, and take control of the people.

15 A CULTURAL REVOLUTION

As the rest of the world looks on, Western civilization is moving from the Christian-based moral standard of the past to an atheistic “moral” standard of neo-Marxist socialism. In fact, it would be quite frivolous to use the word “moral” when speaking concerning atheistic standards of conduct in this movement. The fact is that atheism does not present any sustaining system of moral standards, for the atheist concludes that what is right at the time one lives in history determines what is right for the time.

For the Bolsheviks of the Russian revolution in 1917, burning and destroying the economy of the privileged was justified in order that the people live as a society wherein everyone supposedly lived in equality. In reference to the social paradigm shift away from the inequity of the Tzars of Russia, the people sought to determine the standards by which they would live. In order to generate and perpetuate the movement, the old order had to be dissolved in order to make way for a new paradigm of atheistic socialism. With such sociological paradigm shifts, those who supported the old system of the privileged class, had to be eliminated from society lest they seek to revive the ways of the past. For this reason, it is believed that Vladimir Lenin ordered the execution of the Romanov family in 1918, the last royal family of the Czars of Russia.

In the paradigm shift of any faith-based society to an atheistic society, a cult-like mentality must be established among the people. It is for this reason that the leaders of the movement must present themselves as father figures to whose ideology all within the sociological cult must give total allegiance. No voices of opposition are to be allowed. Adherence to the regimentation of the new social order must be without question. A “Jim Jones” society of obedient adherents must be established in order to bring in the new social order. Statues, books and slogans of the old order must be destroyed lest the new order be

reminded of their past.

What is now happening in the sociological paradigm shift of the West is that “taking-a-knee” has become the new signal of one submitting to the new social paradigm. It is not uncommon, therefore, to see existing leaders and celebrities parading their loyalty to the movement by “taking a knee” in public. The Nazis demanded the stiff-armed salute. In South Africa, it was the upheld clinched fist. Regardless of the outward physical salute to the new movement, loyalty must be displayed in order that all those of the movement can identify themselves to be loyal revolutionaries.

We must not be confused with popular slogans that are used to promote allegiance to a sociological paradigm shift. Slogans as “Black Lives Matter” and “Defund the Police” are only planks in the platform of a movement that is actually a social revolution. What is transpiring in the West, particularly in the American West, is that a sociological paradigm shift is taking place, which shift is identified by the often conflicting beliefs of those who support the movement. Though there is often confusion among the ranks of the people concerning that for which they stand, antagonism against the beliefs and behavior of the past order brings the protesters together in their solidarity for a new social order.

But we must not be fooled by the crafty slogans and public “salutes” of the movement, which displays often refer to true problems within the past social paradigm. Whether collectively or individually, there is always a real thirst for power deviously embedded within any social revolution. Sometimes this thirst for power is so intense that the leaders of the movements often have little concern for the people as long as they succeed in banishing the existing leadership. Greed and power always accompany any social revolution. The people may generate the movement, but there are within the movement those who seek to take advantage of the revolution of the masses. Rarely, as in South Africa, does a forced revolution succeed without iconic leaders. The social and economic revolution of Cuba resulted when an iconic leader eventually arose among the rebels around whom the movement was continued and sustained.

What is transpiring in the West is a cultural revolution that will produce out of the present social chaos a completely different society in the future. The America of the past is fast dying away and will be consigned to history books. A new Western civilization is emerging that will not be recognized by the aged in these present times. It may take another generation, but the change that is now rapidly transpiring in the West will give birth to a new “America.” The social winds of change are in the air. For Christians, it is time to resort to their faith in order to transition to the other side. They may seek to disconnect their faith from the social instability of a paradigm shift, but they certainly cannot dodge the effects of what comes out on the other side. Christians must simply remind themselves that they serve a God who is today what has been forever, and will be forever.

Unfortunately in a democracy, when all slogans of “truth” are politicized, the slogans, not the past moral standards, determine the new moral for the new social paradigm. Politicians who ape the behavior of the public display of “salutes” to the revolution will be voted into power, and once in power, they will entrench the direction of the new civilization. Since in a democracy the politicians are voted into power, then it is inevitable that as this present generation grows in numbers of votes, the new order of the West will eventually morph into a new social paradigm. Such will exist until the next sociological paradigm comes along in history with a new cultural revolution. There is no such thing in history as a final cultural revolution that solves forever the problems for the people. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can do this. But since social, cultural or economical revolutions erupt out of social disorder because of economic inequity, then such revolutions are in themselves doomed to eventually fail if they are not built on divine moral principles.

We must not be deceived by elections when such paradigm shifts take place in democratic civilizations. We must not forget that Nazi Germany was established as a democracy after WW I. But then it digressed into a dictatorship. And once the dictatorship of Hitler was firmly in place, then it was time for drastic change within the citizenship of those who elected Hitler to be their leader.

In these times, and for those who still have a copy of the Bible in their hands, it is time now to start reading the history of Israel. The history of Israel is a revelation of how one demigod (king) after another rose up and took control of the people of Israel in one revolution after another. And as all revolutions that have given up faith in the one true God, no revolution in Israel brought the people closer to God. Josiah attempted to do this, but his efforts lasted only for a few years before Israel was back on her way to state and social doom (See 2 Kg 23). What is happening in the West today, therefore, is nothing new for those who know their Bibles.

16 DEMIGODS OF A NEW PARADIGM

As long as a society remains a democracy, the people determine their own future. Politicians in a democratic society are only along for the ride. They are initially the reflection of the desires of the society. However, dictators as Stalin, Hitler and Zedong were first democratically elected into office by the people. But the nature of their ideology moved them into being dictatorial demigods over the people who elected them. We are reminded of what happened when Solomon died and Rehoboam became the new king (demigod) of the people. The people pled with Rehoboam, *“Your father [Solomon] made our yoke grievous. Now therefore, make lighter the grievous service of your father and his heavy yoke that he put on us, and we will serve you”* (1 Kg 12:4). But Rehoboam rejected the plea of the aged fathers. He took the advice of the younger generation (1 Kg 12:8). He thus said to the people, *“My father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions”* (1 Kg 12:11). The son of a good king turned to be a dictator in only a few months, not years.

In order for a democratic society to initially determine its own will for itself, the people will vote into leadership the one who conforms to their desires. They will mock out of power any official who does not conform to their desires, which desires are often paraded by slogans.

We recently witnessed this when the mayor of the city of Minneapolis in America was mocked as he walked away from a riotous mob because he would not agree to the policy of the mob who cried out, “Defund the police.” In the next election, therefore, the mob will probably elect a mayor who will conform to their new paradigm of policing, if indeed they do not do away with the present form of policing. This is where the West is headed, if the present revolutionaries do not grow up and face reality in reference to the need for their police force. But if the existing form of policing is gone, then it is easy to go the way of a fascist state. In the case of Nazi Germany, Hitler established his own police force that was called the dreaded SS.

One would ask where are all the Bible-believing people in the marches of protest that are transpiring in the West. We can be assured that there are no Bible-believing people among those who have already established for themselves their own moral standards. The Bible represents a standard of morality that is contrary to the new moral order that is driven by agnostic/atheistic world views. Since the Bible represents a moral standard that is unchanging, then any society that seeks to establish its own moral standards must discard the Bible. This is what happened in Israel. God subsequently came to the people with the following statement:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge [of Me and My word], I will also reject you so that you will be no priest to Me. Seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children (Hb 4:6).

For those of us who are still Bible-believing people, then what makes us think that the same will not happen to Western civilizations that were originally established and economically grown on the foundation of the moral principles of the Bible? And if for one moment we might believe that the West is not moving into an atheistic era, then consider the final message of God to the Israelites whom He eventually terminated as an indigenous theocratic state in the land of Palestine:

Her priests [religious leaders] have violated My law and have profaned My holy things. They have put no difference between the holy and profane, nor have they showed any difference between the unclean and the clean. And they have hidden their eyes from My sabbaths so that I am profaned among them (Ez 22:26).

The religious leaders of Israel became agnostic or atheistic in reference to the God of heaven. As the religious leaders of the West are in a paradigm shift from a Bible-based faith to an experiential-oriented religion, so goes the last remnants of that which will preserve a nation. When the word of God no longer plays any central role in establishing the moral standards of a civilization, then that civilization is on its way out. Unfortunately, once a civilization reaches its moral tipping point, there is no turning back. When national Israel finally fulfilled her purpose of bringing the Savior into the world, whom the Jews rejected, it was time to mourn over the imminent termination of God's covenant with national Israel. This sentiment is behind the following words of the Son of God:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not. Behold, your house is left to you desolate (Mt 23:37,38).

17 NECESSARY SOCIAL PARADIGM SHIFTS

We are sure that by this time in this book the reader may have come to the conclusion that sociological paradigm shifts in a society always go wrong. But this is not the case. When certain injustices arise over time in a society, society itself begins to groan for justice. This is especially true in reference to the exploitation of the people as a whole. For example, social and economic control of the Russian society by the Czars led to the impoverishment of the people. After laboring all day in the factory, the labor force would get off work and go to

the bread lines in order to receive bread as payment for the day's labor. This system of oppression and exploitation persisted for years. But then one day the labor force walked out of the factory on a November day in 1917 and there was no bread. And that was it. That was the trigger that set off the Russian Revolution.

When the poor are oppressed to the point of having no hope for a better future, then the stage is set for a sociological revolution. This was the predicament that brought on God's judgment of Israel. The exploitation of the people by an elite class, who marginalized and used the poor to satisfy their own greed, was the economic tipping point at which time God determined to sift the privileged class out of His people.

The civilization of Israel originally existed in the land as a rural people who found comfort at the end of the day by enjoying the labors of their own hands. They could eat of their own labors every day. But after several centuries in the land, the rural culture of people eventually changed in reference to the production of the land. By ignoring the laws of God in reference to the economic equity that was embedded in the Sinai covenant, a rich class of the privileged arose within the economy, which class subsequently impoverished the rural population.

In bypassing the law of God that guaranteed equality among all the people, a growing elite class of the economic privileged arose, "who," according to Isaiah, "*enact unrighteous decrees, and who write misfortune that they have prescribed*" (Is 10:1). The rich elite made these unrighteous decrees "*in order to turn aside the needy from justice and take away the rights from the poor of My people*" (Is 10:2). It was this class of the rich elite who did "*not defend the rights of the poor*" (Jr 5:28).

The social result of this discrimination against the poor was that the privileged upper class were finally brought to judgment before God. The Lord God subsequently judged the rich: "*For you [rich] have eaten up the vineyard. The plunder of the poor is in your houses*" (Is 3:14). Every bottle of wine that was on the table of the rich was there because the rich had bought up through "corporate takeovers" all the vineyards of the land. Instead of the people owning their own vineyards and selling the labor of their hands, the rich elite bought the vineyards and

consigned the people to being indentured servants for the sake of the “corporate” elite who exploited their labors. In doing this, God convicted the privileged elite by asking, “*What do you mean that you beat My people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor?*” (Is 3:15).

In their greed to retain power over the people by taking control of the economy of Israel, the rich elite “*behaved themselves wickedly in their deeds*” (Mc 3:4). When the rich “corporate” owners of the vineyards and the land failed to honor the restoration of all land to the original owners according to the law of Jubilee, it was then time for a sociological paradigm shift (See Lv 25:8-55). It was then that God would through captivity take the land away from the rich class. And “*with righteousness He will judge the poor and reprove with equity for the afflicted of the earth*” (Is 11:4).

In the captivities that eventually extracted the riches of the country of Israel from the elite ruling class, the judgment of God was “*a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm*” (Is 25:4). God “*brings down those who dwell on high*” (Is 26:5). Until that time, the poor of a society need to remember, “*When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails because of thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them*” (Is 41:17). And herein is the irony of the social paradigm shift of captivity that eventually took the remaining Israelites from the promised land: “*Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard [of the Babylonians in 586 B.C.] left in the land of Judah the poor of the people who had nothing. And he gave them vineyards and fields at the same time*” (Jr 39:10).

Not all sociological paradigms shifts in a civilization result in worse conditions. On the contrary, when the poor of a society rise up because of economic inequity, and if the revolution is not hijacked by demigods, the democratic leadership of the shift will often deliver a new civilization that has corrected the inequity of the past. At least this was what happened when South Africa went through a historic social paradigm shift over a period of several decades.

During the 1960s, and to the middle of the 1980s, the society of South Africa was groaning in order to be delivered from the Apartheid

past of social and economic inequity. When the existing Nationalist Party finally enacted laws that would free the oppressed and exploited from the sins of the past, a whole new paradigm in South African society was unleashed. When Nelson Mandela was released in 1990 after twenty-seven years in prison, and the first fully democratic elections happened in 1994, the country was on a path to a new adventure in correcting the sins of the past in order to implement a new order for the future. This is not to say that there were not several bumps in the road along the way. Our personal experience while living in South Africa when this was happening was one of the most dynamic experiences of a sociological paradigm shift.

- **New system of party leadership:** Several things contributed to the South African social paradigm shift. The most important was that the African National Congress Party (ANC) was elected into power in 1994 through a democratic process. It was a party with one hundred years of democratic function behind it. This party democratically elected Nelson Mandela to be the first president of the new South Africa.

Throughout their history as a party, no one individual within the ANC party was allowed to assume control over the party. No demigods were allowed to take over that for which the party had struggled for a century to acquire. It was truly a party with democratic experience that could participate in a democratic government of the new social order.

- **New leadership character:** The second greatest reason why there was such a smooth transition from the past into the present paradigm was the character of Nelson Mandela. He did not have a character of retribution or revenge. He was a person of reconciliation and peace. He subsequently established the behavior of all those leaders of the country who would follow him. In order to establish the principle of being a leader of the people, he made the decision to run for only one five-year term in office as president, rather than becoming what most demigods become, that is, one election one time for one man for one life. He realized that he was establishing norms for the future, and thus

wanted to set an example that government must never be centered around one person.

This did not mean that there were some leaders after him who did not try to exploit the country through financial “state capture.” But these leaders have so far been weeded out on this journey of a new social paradigm. Most have ended up on trial for their behavior. But the character of Nelson Mandela as the rainbow prince of a new paradigm has continued unabated.

- **New culture of reconciliation:** Probably the greatest thing that promoted a smooth transition from the Nationalist Party of the past, and its autocratic control of the country since the latter part of the 1940s, was that both parties agreed to establish in the transition the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. Simply defined, this was a committee of people before whom everyone of the past had the opportunity to confess their sins of the past. The committee was led by Desmond Tutu, one of the predominate religious leaders of South Africa at the time. The South African sociological paradigm shift was subsequently seated deeply in religious beliefs. And because it was, the people never lost sight of their faith and religiosity that stabilizes a society.

The Truth and Reconciliation experience was indeed a heart wrenching process that was televised throughout the nation. It was difficult to listen to perpetrators of the past confess to their victims their sins of oppression. But throughout the entire ordeal, Africa in general revealed one of her deepest characters that seems to make the African culture stand apart from most of the world. As was the forgiving character of Nelson Mandela who languished in prison for twenty-seven years, there is always forgiveness to be found in Africa. During the Truth and Reconciliation process when past policeman and politicians confessed up that they had murdered the sons of parents who were present, the parents through tears forgave those who had murdered their sons and daughters. The people moved on.

It was truly “truth and reconciliation.” We have witnessed throughout the world that if there is no confession and forgiveness in any sociological paradigm shift, then the new order is cursed with

unforgiveness. A lack of forgiveness always leads to bitterness. And bitterness will remain as long as there is no confession on the part of the offending parties.

The rest of the world would learn a great deal from the South African people who struggled for almost a century in order to come to a new paradigm wherein the people could live in freedom, and thus determine for themselves their own future. Out of their sociological paradigm shift has come a God-fearing people. Nobody, including those of the Apartheid past, ever wanted to go back to the Apartheid behavior of the past. It is a credit to the society as a whole that repentance and forgiveness was genuine, and thus the society is moving into the future with hope that is determined by the vote of the majority.

This does not mean, however, that South Africa has cured the cause of racism in the country. There are still places in the country where racism is practiced, and hard at work to keep people ethnocentrically divided from one another. There are politicians in minor parties who generate prejudice by playing the “race card” on every occasion they can in order to retain supporters. Even the “black lives matter” movement has come to South Africa. But the movement has come as an effort of all races to continue to work together for a more united people. It is not a movement to promote black aspirations, for almost all the people are people of color. What is sought is an effort to promote the aspiration of every citizen to continue the struggle to bring the country together as the “rainbow” nation.

At any time in the history of a civilization when the people turn to the Lord God with a repentant heart, God is ready to forgive and bless. At one point in the history of Israel, the people had the opportunity to repent. A sociological tipping point had been reached. It was at the time when Solomon completed the temple in Jerusalem. The Lord came down and said the following to all the people:

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Ch 7:14).

Unfortunately, only a few years after this statement was made at the inauguration of the temple, Jeroboam took ten tribes and separated them under his own rule in the northern part of Palestine. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was left with two remaining tribes in the south. It was then that the stage was set for the eventual termination of Israel as a free nation in their own land. Sin had already been embedded in the culture of the people, which sin would lead the nation into the rejection of God and His will for the people.

Once the Assyrians and Babylonians had taken the people into captivity in 722/21 B.C. and 586 B.C., only a repentant remnant was allowed to return to the land. But when they returned, the land was first under the control of the Medo-Persian Empire, and then the Greeks, and finally the Romans at the time of the coming of the Messiah. The returned remnant never again enjoyed the freedom of being an independent Israel as a nation in the land of Palestine. In fact, until the time that God finally terminated His covenant relationship with the people as a nation, they were referred to by the world as a race, that is, the Jews. When Jesus came into the world, the people were referred to as “the Jews,” which identity is used throughout the records of the ministry of Jesus.

It was the responsibility of the returned remnant in 536 B.C. to maintain some identity of Israel until God fulfilled her purpose for existence. God had made a promise to Abraham that from his seed the Savior would come into the world in order to bless the world with reconciliation through the blood of the cross (See Gn 12:1-3). When the time was fulfilled for this offering (Gl 4:4), then it was time to terminate the covenant with national Israel. But the remnant of Israel (the Jews) that existed at the time of the coming of the Seed, mostly rejected the Seed (Jn 1:11). Nevertheless, national Israel had fulfilled her purpose. The Son of God, the Blessing, had come in order to deliver all those who would by faith obey the good news of His offering. But once the gospel was revealed, then God gave Israel another forty years between the cross and A.D. 70 before He finalized national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

We are now waiting for the time when this present world finishes

her purpose for being created. Once this purpose has been finalized, then we assume that this world also will be terminated in order that those who live by faith in obedience to the gospel will continue into the next social paradigm. And truly, the next sociological paradigm shift will be a catastrophic event (See 2 Pt 3:10-13). It will be then that we will move into a new social paradigm wherein *“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And there will be no more death nor sorrow nor crying. Nor will there be any more pain, for the former things,”* at that time will *“have passed away”* (Rv 21:4).

18 THE END OF THE WORLD

Jesus came in order *“that through death **He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”*** (Hb 2:14,15).

Keep that statement in mind as we journey into what we assume might be one of the only statements of Scripture that could give some hint concerning the social conditions of the world before the end of all things at the final coming of Jesus.

The Hebrew writer clearly revealed the purpose for the first coming of the incarnate Son of God into this world. He came to deliver all of us who were held in the bondage sin. The serendipity of deliverance from this bondage was deliverance from the fear of death through a future bodily resurrection. Therefore, the gospel, and the preaching thereof, frees anyone of humanity who would seek to be delivered from both the bondage of sin and physical death. The deliverance from the bondage of physical death will transpire in the last day when all who are in graves will hear the voice of King Jesus when He comes to finalize all things.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus prepared those who were in the bondage of death. *“This is the Father’s will who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day”* (Jn 6:39). Therefore, *“the hour is coming in which all who*

are in the graves will hear His voice, and will come forth” (Jn 5:28). Jesus gave hope to those who were walking in the bondage of physical death. Therefore, He promised that there would be a time when they would come out of their graves.

The gospel message of the bodily resurrection makes the gospel of the atoning cross make sense. Now consider this. Those who are in the bondage of sin and physical death can have hope only when they hear and obey the gospel of the cross. Their experience of resurrection from the grave of baptism is prophetic of the time in the future when they will experience the gospel of the final resurrection of the body. The gospel of the cross, therefore, makes no sense unless there will be an eventual deliverance from the bondage of physical death. There is thus an inherent truth in this: **When the gospel of the cross and resurrection cease to be preached to those on this earth, then there is no reason to continue a world that is in the bondage of the fear of death.** The end of the world will come when the world population ceases to be the opportunity for the populating of eternal heaven with gospel-obedient people.

Now we must venture into speculation as to when this end of the world will come. This introduces us to the message of Revelation 20. The background for what is revealed in this text was introduced with one statement that Jesus made concerning the purpose for His incarnation into this world: *“How can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will plunder his house”* (Mt 12:29).

During His earthly ministry, Jesus was in the business of binding Satan in order to plunder his house. The plundering was finally realized at the cross, and subsequently revealed to the world by the apostles on the day of Pentecost (At 2). The binding began when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Three days later He was raised from the death in order to give hope to all those who were living in the bondage of sin and the fear of death.

A permanently dead Savior would be no Savior at all in reference to sin. Neither would this Savior give any hope of a future resurrection. The incarnate Son of God was the Lamb of God who came to take

away the sins of the world, which redeeming sacrifice was declared effective by the resurrection (Jn 1:29). He is thus the resurrection and the life for all those who would obey the good news of His incarnate offering at the cross (Jn 11:25,26).

It was when the seventy disciples returned from being sent out by Jesus on a limited commission that the light started to come on in their minds concerning the power that would be released through them in their future mission. They began to understand that Jesus was the One who would bind the power of Satan, and thus cast him down. Upon their return to Jesus, the disciples rejoicingly reported, “*Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name*” (Lk 10:17). Jesus knew that they needed a life experience of what was to come.

Now we must not forget that Jesus saw in the near future the event about which He spoke to the disciples at that time: “*I saw Satan fall from heaven as lightning*” (Lk 10:18). Now we must not miss the metaphor of this statement. This statement is not talking about the literal fall of Satan as an angel from heaven. That subject was explained in other texts (See Rv 12:7-9). In this text Jesus revealed Satan’s fall from having the power of the fear of sin and death over man. His fall would be **as** lightning strikes from the heavens. Lightning strikes with a flash, in a moment, and in the twinkling of an eye. What we must not forget is that at the cross when Jesus said, “*It is finished,*” Satan fell as a flash from his throne of power over humanity (Jn 19:30).

In response to this statement, and the disciples’ experience of casting out demons on their limited commission, Jesus referred them to a promise of power that He would give to them in the near future. “*I give you **power to tread** on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing will by any means hurt you*” (Lk 10:19). This statement rings with metaphors, though one thing is literally clear. What Jesus would eventually give to His disciples would eventually empower them over all the power of the Devil. Therefore, we are reminded of what Paul wrote to the Roman disciples concerning this power: “*I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power of God unto salvation** to every one who believes*” (Rm 1:16).

Paul’s Romans 1:16 commentary on what Jesus said to the sev-

enty is revealing. **It is the power of the gospel that strikes down Satan from his spiritual reign over humanity.** All those who hear and obey the gospel have been delivered from the bondage of sin, as well as the fear of death. They are free from any power that Satan might have to influence their lives in any manner. This message is so clear and powerful in reference to the ministry of Jesus, that when Jesus was coming to the end of His earthly ministry, and with the cross within sight, He proclaimed to His disciples, *“Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out”* (Jn 12:31). At the atoning death of the cross, Jesus cast down Satan as lightning and bound him with the gospel of God’s grace. The disciples would continue the casting down through the power of the gospel.

Now we come to the book of Revelation that was written several decades after the casting down of Satan from his reign over men through the power of sin and physical death. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, He *“disarmed principalities and powers. He made a public display of them, triumphing over them”* through the power of the gospel (Cl 2:15). We who have obeyed the gospel thus reign in this life with our King (Rm 5:17; 2 Tm 2:11,12). Therefore, *“in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”* (Rm 8:37).

In this age of preaching the gospel nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rm 8:28-39). **We are presently living in the age where Satan has been cast down, and thus is bound by the “chain” of the gospel.** He no longer reigns supreme over humanity through the power of sin and the fear of death. He may go about as a roaring lion (1 Pt 5:8), but he has no power over the gospel-obedient servants of King Jesus. Satan has been cast down. He has been imprisoned by the gospel. He is kept down by the gospel.

So John reveals in Revelation 20 that this age that began at the time of Satan’s casting down through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross, will continue until the Son comes again. This is indeed the “one-thousand-year gospel reign” of King Jesus. In order to emphasize this gospel reign, the book of Revelation is a series of seven repetitious cycles of the reign of the Son of God that started with His

mission to come into this world in order to wage war against the enemy of humanity. Each vision takes the reader closer to the finalization of all things before King Jesus arrives again on the scene to take home into eternal glory His people.

Revelation 20 is the last of the seven cycles of this gospel war in reference to the victory of the Messenger from heaven over all the power of Satan. It is at the conclusion of this vision that John takes us to the end of all things. The incarnate Son of God initially came with power over Satan who had deceived the world from the days of the Garden of Eden. The binding “chain” was revealed at the cross, and subsequently preached to the world by the early disciples. This gospel “chain” was preached in order to deliver from the fear of death those who had to walk in this world that is infested with the consequences of Adam’s fall.

As a Messenger from heaven, the incarnate Son of God came with a gospel “chain” by which He could bind *“that old serpent who is the Devil and Satan”* (Rv 20:1,2). The Messenger from heaven *“bound him for a thousand years”* (Rv 20:2). *“Then he cast him into the abyss and shut him up, and set a seal on him so that he should not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished”* (Rv 20:3). Those who have turned from the deception of the roaring lion *“lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”* (Rv 20:4). *“But the rest of the dead [who did not obey the gospel], did not live until the thousand years [of the gospel reign of Jesus] were finished”* (Rv 20:5).

We are now living in the thousand-year reign of King Jesus. Those who have obeyed the gospel, and thus experienced the first resurrection from the waters of baptism (Rm 6:6), now reign with King Jesus (Rm 5:17; 2 Tm 2:11,12). Those who have not experienced this first resurrection—those who have not obeyed the gospel—will not be raised until the time when Jesus comes again. It is then that the prophecy of what Jesus revealed in the context of John 5:25-29 will come to pass. On that occasion, Jesus said to His surprised audience, *“Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth”* (Jn 5:28,29).

We conclude, therefore, that we are now living during what is de-

scribed metaphorically in Revelation 20 as the one-thousand year reign. This is not a specific duration of years in consecutive 24-hour days. Those who move into literalities in reference to understanding the letter of Revelation, not only violate the principle of figurative language (metaphors) by which John said he wrote the book, but they also find themselves caught up in endless contradictions (See Rv 1:1; 22:6). This is especially true when the literalists try to consistently understand Revelation 20. To be consistent, they must put literal chains in the hand of Jesus. They must find some literal dragon. They must find some abyss, or bottomless pit, which is an impossibility. They must consider the one thousand years to be literal 24-hour days, which one thousand years, therefore, have already passed since the binding of Satan took place at the cross in A.D. 30.

Therefore, in order to be consistent in our understanding of Revelation 20, we must understand that the one-thousand-year reign is **metaphorical of the era in which we are now living**, which era is now at least two thousand years in length. This is the “gospel dispensation.” This dispensation started at the cross and will continue until the gospel is no longer preached or received by those of this world. Once this time comes, then it is time for the end of this world.

Now if our preceding conclusions are correct, then we are left with a challenge to understand the last sentence of Revelation 20:3: “*And after that [the one-thousand-year reign] he [Satan] **must be released for a little time.***” We would suggest that the interpretation of this “loosing of Satan” be understood in view of some deductive conclusions. Therefore consider first that the purpose for the creation of the world, and all humanity, was to produce for eternity those who would live by faith. During the one-thousand-year reign, these would be those who believe on Jesus and obey the gospel in order to experience the first resurrection. We are living in this time of opportunity wherein the gospel is freely preached in order to produce candidates for heaven.

Satan is bound by the gospel throughout this “one thousand” year dispensation. He and his kingdom of darkness are continually kept bound and down when the gospel is preached to all the world. When the church is evangelistic, therefore, the kingdom of Satan is weakened

by each person who obeys the gospel. But when the church fails in its responsibility to preach the gospel, then the reverse is true.

The one thousand years of gospel evangelism will thus continue until Satan is loosed. If Satan is bound by the gospel, **then he is loosed when the gospel is not preached.** The loosing of Satan, therefore, can happen when two things occur within the civilization of this present world: (1) When people become unreceptive to the preaching of the gospel, as it was during the days of Noah, then Satan reigns through deception and lies (See Gn 6:5). (2) When disciples stop preaching the gospel, then people are no longer able to hear and obey the gospel. If people do not experience the first resurrection through obedience of the gospel, then they will remain “dead” until the final coming when Jesus concludes the existence of the world.

In both of the preceding cases, the purpose for which the world was created is terminated after the “little time” when Satan has been allowed to run free without being bound by the preaching of the gospel. It is then that the one thousand-year dispensation is finished. It is then that it would be time for Jesus to come and terminate this world. Therefore, **when the world is no longer receptive to the gospel, or the gospel is no longer preached, “then comes the end.”**

One of the frightful realities about the Covid-19 pandemic is that the preaching of the gospel, outside the Internet, was/is greatly hindered. There was/is almost no personal preaching of the gospel during the lockdown. The draconian restrictions that were placed on those whose responsibility it was/is to preach the gospel hindered public preaching in many places around the world. For the Christian, his or her understanding of “lockdown” meant that the preaching of the gospel was often terminated at different places in this world. Because of the hysteria that was produced by the news media and Internet, people were stricken with fear. Thus in fear they brought themselves into the bondage of their own homes.

People now speak of a new era in which we must behave differently in our relationships with one another. Because of the harsh restrictions that are now placed on the assemblies of churches, Christians are moving into an era where one-another relationships are being

strained. Is this the new era in which people will refuse to obey the gospel because they are afraid of coming into contact with others at the Lord's Supper in assembly? Are the assemblies of the disciples impossible because of social distancing? Has Satan been loosed into the world where the one-thousand-year gospel reign of King Jesus is almost brought to a close? If so, then Satan has truly been loosed from bondage.

If the preceding thoughts are all true, then at least one thing has been aroused in the hearts of those who know and love King Jesus. They feel as John concluded the book of Revelation after witnessing in the visions all the despair that was coming upon the early Christians by the atheistic state of the Roman Empire. John concluded, "*He [Jesus] who testifies these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so [John responded], come, Lord Jesus*" (Rv 22:20). If in the post pandemic era the world is so full of restrictions that we cannot function as the organic body of Christ, then we would agree with John. "Lord Jesus, bring on what's next."

But if the Lord seeks to sift out of this world more residents for eternal heaven, then we will struggle on with the preaching of the gospel through every means possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**