

# ACCEPTING THE ANGER OF GOD

## LESSON ONE: ERASING THE ANGER OF GOD

We begin a study that is fascinating but disheartening. It examines the process by which modern civilization has casually ignored the anger of God. The momentous change has led to the unraveling of society's morality. The current rejection of God's anger is an intricately woven strategy connecting various positions and thoughts and behavior mores leading to the decadent civilization which now exists.

There is good news in the midst of today's prevailing darkness...one can find security from this societal terror. The paradoxical twist upon which this good news is possible is in the fact that contented security is found in the anger of Jehovah God. Instead of viewing the anger of God as a resource for comfort and security this character trait of the Almighty God is viewed as a concept held only by the savage, antiquated, ignorant and unspiritual.

### EXPLORING THE QUERY, "WHY CAN PEOPLE ACCEPT THE UNACCEPTABLE AND EMBRACE THE REPREHENSIBLE?"

The critical issue of this discussion is framed by the query, "Upon what basis are we to accept teachings and beliefs?" This query leads to a discussion on the concept of "Truth" (John 18:38). The standard of defining truth was, and continues to be, the Holy Bible (the 66 books of inspiration).

Unfortunately the concept of an absolute truth serving as an unerring guide for decision-making has been discarded, redefined, and replaced. Today all aspects of life are fluid. There are absolutely no absolutes. Each is permitted to make his own choices with the only qualification being that he is "comfortable" with his choices.

Hence modern man seeks a "meaningful truth" that coddles his proclivities and applauds his blasphemy. This is the short answer to the query "How can he do or believe that?" This "meaningful truth" denies the absolute biblical Truth. This means that in matters of morality, ethics, justice and religious beliefs all becomes subjective. There are absolutely no absolutes! This means that reality is not really "real."

Some maintain a *non-existent reality* by claiming there are levels of reality but the one all-governing level is "personal reality." Another option is...*a denial of reality* by which it is maintained that man lives in a mirrored world of non-reality; all is imagined. A third option is...*altered reality* by which a person could look at something in such a way as to alter reality.

### EXPLORING THE QUERY, "HOW CAN PEOPLE ACCEPT THE UNACCEPTABLE AND EMBRACE THE REPREHENSIBLE?"

How can this massive shift from an objective reality and an absolute truth to a delusional reality with its plastic truth be explained? This process is devilishly designed to bring mankind to a total rejection of God. This change has the objective of a complete erasure of the Almighty Jehovah God.

The term "modern" is used in various phases to describe the transition. There are three broad categories into which the current civilization's transition is detailed. Historians, philosophers, theologians, sociologists, and many others use the terms *premodern*, *modern*, and *postmodern* to help navigate through large pieces of time and thought.

Premodernism (up to 1650)	Modernism (1650-1950s)	Postmodernism (1960s - present)
God/the supernatural realm furnishes the basis for morality, human dignity, truth, and reason.	Morality, human dignity, truth, and reason rest on foundations other than God (reason, science, race, etc.).	All metanarratives (systems or grand stories) are suspect-whether religious or not. No universal foundation for truth, morality, human dignity exists.

#### The PRE-Modern Period

The Premodern Period began when man moved away from paganism to accept the laws of the God preached by the Bible. The entire decision making matrix underwent a change (1 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Acts 17:6-8). Life in the premodern period was

dominated by a belief in God and His activity in human and cosmic affairs (Acts 17:11).

The decision-making matrix utilized during this period was the New Testament. Those listening had to make a decision—Are these true? The answer involved at least two methods of analysis and internalizing the truth found.

- ✓ *The correspondence method of truth* judged if the message corresponded to the observable phenomenon in the world, then the story is accepted as truth.
- ✓ *The coherence method of truth* assured there were no contradictions.

These two forms of analysis guiding mankind in a matrix of decision making that led civilization out of the darkness of pagan superstition and moral anarchy into the light of freedom and joy.

When “truth” is tested by valid criteria then it is established as credible and trustworthy and provides security (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22; 1 John 4:1).

The Premodern Period believed that God furnished the basis for moral absolutes, rationality, human dignity, and truth. It was a basic principle that the starting point for knowledge and wisdom was God. Two critical points of the premodern period are Jehovah God and the inspired message from God (the Bible).

### **The Modern Period**

The Modern Period questioned the basic principles of Christianity and a belief in God was seen to be naive. The cause of this transition is simple—a knowledge of the Bible was missing. Mankind was still very religious but very religiously ignorant.

With this development civilization could be once again characterized as “darkened in their understanding.”

The emphasis shifted from God to man. These phrases summarized the shift: “If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it” and “Man is the measure of all things.”

A seismic shift from understanding truth was replacing truth in the revelation of God to truth as that which individuals deem to be the truth occurred. Contempt was nurtured toward the supernatural revealed in the Bible.

Mankind would denied any supernatural influence and believed that he had the intellect, inventiveness, and potency to do anything—even bring universal harmony and peace and joy—hence the concept of “utopia” entered the world’s vocabulary and influenced the world’s political and belief systems.

Modernism exalts the conviction that human reason, armed with the scientific method, is the only means of attaining “true” knowledge about the universe.

“Modernism sees no reality other than what man’s senses can perceive. Belief in the supernatural (called superstition) has no place in this rationalistic world. Modernism sees humans as autonomous material machines. Humanity is able to progress to a bright future by the use of science and reason.”<sup>1</sup> Mankind thus becomes his own “god.” The only decision-making criterion is what mankind thinks.

The modern period accepted as “truth” only what could be proven to be true by the scientific method.

This new thinking established a suspicion about the oral and written truth claims of the premodern Christian religion. At the close of the modern period and the beginning of the postmodern period decision-making was guided solely by feelings.

### **The POST-Modern Period**

Postmodernism developed when man’s intelligence proved to be a total failure. Some decided that the philosophical framework of modernism was flawed and needed replaced. Thus began the transition from the modern to the postmodern period. This new philosophy began to be seen on the street by the 1960s as the countercultural revolution sprang from the antidisestablishmentarianism of the “flower child generation.”

The glorified tenets of modernism were abysmal disappointments. They failed at every point. They were indefensible. It was embarrassing. How could secular humanists explain away their embarrassment? They definitely would not recant their repudiation of the supernatural and spurn their commitment to secular humanism. But they had to explain the failure of modernism’s promises.

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996, 19-44.

The failure was explained as due to the erroneous assumption that there is such a thing as "objective truth." They decided that "reality" is a mirage and that the "truth" guiding every person is personal and created by one's "personal reality."

It was denied that there exists a pure truth that reaches beyond national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries does not exist! Hence truth is purely a personal matter—what is truth to one may not be truth to another.

This explains HOW the final resolution in many disagreements is often a statement such as: "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me."

In the frantic attempt to salvage any vestige of philosophical and intellectual support for the rejection of the supernatural, the "educated" have now accepted a reality of total ignorance! They now boast that "true reality" is knowing NOTHING except one's personal reality.

Thus information can no longer be trusted (especially is the repulsion of any authority in religious beliefs and practice to be felt). Instead of offering mankind a philosophy that leads to order and peace, mankind is abandoned to a life of terror.

Tragically this same governing appeal to feelings has swept the Church. Today's Church no longer has as its paramount purpose the preaching of God's absolute Truth BUT the incessant seeking to offer mankind what feels good! Postmodernism has "crept unawares" into today's pulpit, Bible Classes, doctrines, worship actions and has transformed the pure and holy worship into a marketplace atmosphere asking churchgoers to place an order to their "personal taste."

Today's Christians live in a postmodern world where God has been thrown away! The postmodernists is consumed with the mission to "deconstruct" biblical foundations and after destroying the biblical foundations launch a destructive campaign to destroy all disciplines founded upon the biblical principles (Law; Justice; Government; Civility). Postmodernism is anti-Bible, anti-west and anti-capitalist.

The postmodernist accepts religion. Any religion is accepted and especially the "natural" religions found in each tribal unit. However anathema is Christianity and Judaism. This is because these are "exclusive and intolerant" of all other religions. The religious control

for postmodernism is "toleration." Postmodernism has accepted "god" BUT NOT the holy, righteous, and ONLY God of Scriptures.

Postmodernism argues that language shapes our thinking. So language creates a plastic truth. Thus truth is a matter of individual perspective or common community context rather than something universal and transcending cultural borders.

The rejection of the commonly held belief that written texts possess authority and the perspective that "personal reality" determines actual truth, fuels chaos in society and Church.

The greatest focus of postmodern's skepticism is its perspective of the Bible suggesting the Bible represents a certain cultural outlook and such does not "fit" all contexts. We are thus encouraged to read with the "hermeneutic of suspicion" striving to look for the small kernel of truth while rejecting the narrative's bias.

## EXPLORING TRANSITIONING AWAY FROM A FEAR OF THE ANGER OF GOD

Much to the chagrin of postmoderns is the fact that long ago wisdom announced, "That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Simply put...there is nothing "new," there is no "cutting edge" philosophy that leads to momentous discoveries.

In Genesis 3:4-11 we find an unsettling ancient narrative for the postmodern mind. At the beginning of time Satan sought to present...

- ✓ A philosophy that was anti-Supernatural and that would separate mankind from the holy God—*"You surely will not die!"*
- ✓ A "personal reality" that contradicted God's revelation—*"The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise."*
- ✓ A campaign of misinformation designed by the "hermeneutic of suspicion"—*"The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God."*
- ✓ Consequently the absolute truth was questioned, suspected as false and replaced with man's "personal reality"—*"She took from its fruit and*

*ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."*

- ✓ A twisted, delusional personal reality replaced the absoluteness of God's revelation—*"The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God."*
- ✓ Only increased sorrow, worldly grief, harsh living conditions and a separation from Jehovah God resulted. Consequently peace and harmony were banished—*"He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life."*

Christians must *recognize* the tragedy; *reject* this philosophy; *refuse* to associate with those living by this philosophy; *understand* there is no acceptable compromise with this philosophy.

The current rejection of God's anger is an intricately woven strategy connecting various positions and thoughts and behavior mores leading to the decadent civilization which now exists. This evolution in the decline of our civilization's foundation is given an appearance of legitimacy by "intellectuals." This provides a philosophy that will justify even the most egregious actions to those seeking to remove the boundaries of biblical morality and doctrine.

### **EXPLORING THE CHALLENGE OF POSTMODERNISM'S IMPACT UPON RELIGIOUS BELIEF**

We live in a challenging time. Long held beliefs are being discarded in favor of "new, progressive" understanding. The absolute beliefs, values and foundations which have established a foundation of strength and progress are being rejected. We are facing monumental upheavals in every facet of civilization. Especially is this true regarding the Church and the values of Scripture that have long been believed and used the decision-making matrix for daily living.

Unfortunately the concept of an absolute truth serving as an unerring guide for decision-making has been discarded, redefined, and replaced. Its replacement leads only to greater sorrows and burdens. The tragic result is relief is impossible. This replacement has arisen upon the applause of man's arrogance and asserts that man's wisdom is so much superior to foolish superstitions rooted in antiquated cultural norms and gender and racial biases. Man does not necessarily want to replace the concept of the supernatural. He simply wants a supernatural that tolerates and coddles his choices—a supernatural that always permits and never punishes. In order to fashion such a supernatural presence mankind must ignore the fact that the sovereign God Almighty possesses a righteous anger when its revelation is not followed.

"The sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). This complimentary notation serves as a clarion call to Christians living in the postmodern world.

- ✓ We need to "understand" the times and not simply lament the immoral developments. Citing the deplorable disintegration of the Christian values and mores is not going to resolve the situation. Christians must "understand" the "how" and the "why" of the current times.
- ✓ We need to possess "knowledge" as to what to do. This knowledge is provided by the Bible. It is not provided by tradition or ritual or inherited beliefs. This knowledge is not recited as a catechism learned as a child. It is a knowledge that results from knowing God's Word and applying that to every day decisions.

### **EXPLORING THE REQUIRED RESPONSE**

A devilish attack is facing Christians today. In the modern decision-making matrix absolute truth, objective meaning, and objective reality do not exist. All decision-making is made on the basis of "What makes YOU feel good."

Where does the Church fit in this cultural upheaval? If the Church maintains the absolute truth of Scripture and proclaims the Word of God, as it has in previous generations, then the Church finds itself in a most uncomfortable environment because such a message is loathed by the postmodern mind. Consequently some begin to think that the Church must modify its message so it will become "current" in its environment. Thus modifications begin regarding basic doctrine and practices and even preaching and teaching are subjected to this cultural revision. The cry is for the Church to become "more relative" and less "dogmatic."