

ERASING THE ANGER OF GOD

Truth has become a function of personal preference, not correspondence to objective reality... The final appeal in many disagreements is often a statement such as: "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me." This is an implicit denial of a common reality.

We begin a study that is fascinating but also disheartening. This series examines the process by which modern civilization has casually shrugged off the anger of God. This sociological development is bewildering. The momentous change has led to the unraveling of society's morality as mankind becomes desensitized to the control of the Almighty's wrath.

This erasure of God's anger is the result of an intricately woven strategy connecting various positions and thoughts and behavior mores. The ribbon of that connection has led to the decadent civilization which now exists. This decline of our civilization's foundation is given an appearance of legitimacy by the "intellectuals." This in turn provides a philosophy for those seeking to remove themselves from the boundaries of biblical morality that will justify even the most egregious actions.

When unacceptable actions of modern behavior are seen one asks, "HOW can they believe or do or support such?" "WHY is this decision-making matrix given any credibility?" Asking these "HOW" and "WHY" queries leads to the disheartening aspect of this study...those who have accepted the philosophical tenets of the prevailing dogmas of civilization do not find a joyous freedom but a reality of terror. When you connect the dots of the development of today's prevailing philosophical thinking, you begin to understand the "HOW can they" and "WHY are they" perplexities that headline today's civilization.

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 seen in the fact that genuine security is found in the anger of Jehovah God.

However an escape from a terror of reality by trusting in the reality of the anger of a righteous God is bitterly rejected by the majority in the modern world. The reason is simple. If one admits that God does operate from a righteous anger then one must admit God's presence and His sovereign reign and rule. But this is the conclusion that is so disagreeable by the modern mind it is instantly and bitterly denied.

If the existence of the sovereign Jehovah God of the Bible (whose laws are binding upon all humanity) is detestable then it will be understood why the anger of the Holy God is even more loathed. There are not enough terms or phrases to describe the contempt that many feel toward the biblical concept of God's holy wrath upon sin and evil. This concept is the "match in the dynamite shed."

Whoever preaches God's angry retribution upon sin and sinners is immediately scorned and cast in the most contemptible way so as to "delegitimize" the biblical truth.

Instead of viewing the anger of God as a resource for comfort and security this character trait is viewed by the modern mind as a belief embraced only by the savage, antiquated, ignorant and unspiritual. Consequently the magnificent Jehovah God of the Bible is placed on the same level as the pagan gods and no distinction is made to show the ignorance of such confusion.

Consequently there is a deliberate rejection of the doctrine of God's holy anger and a cruel denunciation of those who believe and teach it.

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 of the concept of "Truth." Such was Pilate's perplexity in his decision-making when he asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38).

The standard for defining truth was, and continues to be, the Holy Bible (the 66 books of inspiration). Jesus prayed that mankind would be governed by this revealed truth, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). It is this universal, objective, absolute Truth that transcends national borders, languages, cultural mores, and man-made religious beliefs. Only this universal Truth is able to guide mankind to joy and happiness.

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 practically means relief is impossible. This replacement stands 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.

The current definition of "truth" is found in this quote: "*Truth as perspectival: Furthermore, truth is a matter of perspective or context rather than being something universal. We do not have access to reality—to the way things are—but only to what appears to us.*" (Copan).

In modern civilization all aspects of life are fluid—ever changing. Consequently there are absolutely no absolutes (a self-contradictory fact that is maintained by the elites of intelligence as they commit the arrogant blunder of affirming an absolute negation).

Since there is no absolute, over-arching standard that applies equally to every nation, language and culture 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 toward Jehovah God. This is the short answer to the query "How can he do or believe that?"

This "meaningful truth" denies the absolute biblical Truth. Those using meaningful truth as the benchmark for a governing conveniently finds the decision-making norms and behavior mores are ever-changing and relative. Therefore, the pagan's truth is just as valid as the Christian's truth.

According to this position truth must always be based upon the person's social and cultural background. What is true for one person or group may not be true for another. This conveniently provides an excuse for tolerating any belief or behavior as long as you find such acts embraced by a "group." Hence, immoral issues are no longer anathema but should be embraced by society and insulated by legislation and enshrined as a "human right." This explains why immoral issues are applauded and those opposed to immorality are castigated.

When "meaningful truth" infects and compromises morality, justice and ethics the consequent results are total destruction (See Hosea 4:1-10 as illustrative of this absolute fact and then extrapolate the principles of this text to modern society and understand the deplorable condition into which modern civilization has devolved. The "Deconstructionist" began with an objective to destroy the absolute Truth of God's Scriptures but he has destroyed the very foundation of civilization!).

Seeking to replace the absolute Truth of the Bible with man's transitory truth is problematic. Those seeking to destroy absolute Truth and reconstruct some vague, fuzzy and nebulous rules of behavior encounter stubborn resistance from life's true reality. The real sorrow that results from this transitory truth is that such find their problems are multiplied and the sought security is missing.

The irritating problem that will not go away is that reality is not very cooperative. Reality has a way of reminding man that there is absoluteness about earthly existence. Try as one might to reconstruct absolute truths so that a fluid truth emerges it cannot be done. The annoying fact remains that absolute truth is constant.

There is a serious consequent of denying an absolute reality in matters of morality, ethics, justice and religious belief. This irritating reality is IF truth, meaning, and objective reality do not exist THEN all religious beliefs and moral codes are subjective. The inevitable reality of this philosophy is there are absolutely no absolutes!

In rejecting the satisfaction of an absolute devotion that leads to true joy they have accepted a nebulous subjectivity that devolves into absolute anarchy and brings a terrible tribulation!

The attempted get-around of this problem by advocates of fluid truth presents even greater problems. Many today who are seeking to castigate biblical Truth and reconstruct "meaningful truth" have decided the best way to accomplish their devilish objective is to advocate that "reality" is not what applies on a universal basis...*a non-existent reality*. It is maintained that there are various levels of reality but the one all-governing level is "personal reality." Whatever one wishes to do is sanctioned by his "personal reality." Conversely whatever one wishes not to do is easily excused by saying "That is not my personal reality. It may be your personal reality but it is not mine." This conveniently sanctions anything that "I" want to do and censors everything "I" find unpleasant.

The convenience justifying behavior and belief by one's "personal reality" does not work. It is the modern equivalent of "Dr. Smith's magical snake-oil." Gullible minds accept both the snake-oil and the personal reality philosophy. And both deliver devastating disappointment and a tragic emptiness of the soul at the end. The satisfaction which these deluded souls sought to find is a mirage...it is non-existent.

Those disappointed by their "personal reality" are unable to accept the absolute Truth of God's inspired Scriptures. These just will not believe there is a universal binding Truth for behavior and beliefs.

Another option is proposed...*a denial of reality*. This is offered as an option to those disappointed by their failed "personal reality." The amazing thing is that this second option is worse than the first! It is comically tragic. Basically the elite intelligentsia maintains that man lives in a mirrored world of non-reality. It maintains that what is seen is only the reality of our consciousness. It is not reality but only imagined.

A third option which some frantically accept requires an even greater disconnect with the objective reality surrounding us. This does not attempt to deny reality or to exist in a mirrored state of being that denies reality. This third option requires one to advocate an untenable position...*alter reality*. Such is illustrated by the following found in an internet post by Todd Kappelman:

We have been discussing changing views of truth and the problems these changes pose for Christians as we approach the twenty-first century. Recently a young woman at the University of Bucknell in Pennsylvania provided a perfect example of how modern men are different from their predecessors. This young woman believed that truth was a matter of how one looked at things. She, like so many others believed that two people could look at a given situation or object and arrive at different conclusions. While this is true to some degree, it is not true to the degree that the two truth claims can logically be contradictions of one another.

When she was pressed on her beliefs concerning reality, the inconsistencies of her philosophy were evident. She stated that everything was a matter of opinion or one's personal perspective of reality. When asked if this belief extended to physical reality, she said it did. She said that a person could look at something in such a way as to alter reality.

The example of the existence or nonexistence of her car was raised. She said that if she believed that her car was not in the parking lot and if another person believed that it was, it could be possible that it actually existed for one person and not for the other. When one first hears something like this, it sounds as if the person who maintains this position is joking, and could not possibly mean for us to take him or her seriously. However, the sad and frightening truth is that this individual is very serious.

This young woman is representative of a large part of our Western culture, men and women who tend to think unsystematically. The result of this thinking is that people often hold ideas that are logically inconsistent and contradict each other. The result is that persons professing to be Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, or even atheists are given equal degrees of credibility. Truth has become a function of personal preference, not correspondence to objective reality.

The effects of this new way of thinking are evident everywhere. When we attempt to speak to people on any controversial issue, whether it is political, ethical, or religious, we invariably are confronted with different approaches to truth. Some people accept divine revelation, some accept science, and others accept no final

authority. We have moved from a fact-based criteria to a feeling-based criteria for truth. The final appeal in many disagreements is often a statement such as: "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me." This is an implicit denial of a common reality.

Illustrating the absurdity of rejecting the absolutes of reality for any of these three options is a comment I read a number of years ago. The discussion was with one rigorously denying the fact of real, objective reality and maintaining that a "personal reality" was the acceptable position. In response to the angry denial of a universal, objective reality existing that applies equally regardless of culture, geo-politics, language, and gender, the reality of gravity was presented. "What happens to one jumping off of the Empire State building and screaming all the way down 'There is no such thing as gravity'? Be sure that the presence of a controlling objective reality will greet him at the bottom."

**Exploring the query,
"HOW can people accept the unacceptable and embrace the reprehensible?"**

Recognizing the above as a disturbing commentary on the current civilization, how can we explain this massive shift from an objective reality and an absolute truth to a delusional reality with its plastic truth? This transition has a clear process. This process is devilishly designed to bring mankind either to a total rejection of Jehovah God's sovereignty or to a callous insensitivity and a laughable perspective.

This tectonic shift in civilization's history has a clear definition. The change has been subtle yet relentless. This change has the objective of a complete erasure of the Almighty Jehovah God and replacing Him with the impotence of mortality. In the simplest of terms it is a constant spiritual battle for the souls of mankind.

The current struggle is not new. This same struggle is seen throughout the history of mankind. It is a cycle of devastation that has repeatedly been observed in the rise and fall of great civilizations. Those seeking to explain why great civilizations ceased to exist vainly look to tyranny, natural catastrophes, and an innumerable list of other causes. But they miss the actual cause—the forces of evil captured the hearts and souls of those involved and extinction resulted.

This repeating calamity was foretold of the great Babylonian Empire. The total erasure of that world power is now history (See Isaiah 13-14 where the Almighty's pronouncement of judgment is found. Especially note the complete erasure stated as in 13:19-22: *"And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there. But desert creatures will lie down there...Her fateful time also will soon come and her days will not be prolonged."*)

The assured erasure comes not because of racial tyranny or a devastating asteroid or an invasion by space aliens or a democratic government BUT because man rejected God).

Although the process of "HOW" this transition has occurred finds similarities in historical events there are new terms used to record the shifts in the recent developments.

In our civilization 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 them navigate through large pieces of time and thought. This chart is a common illustration:

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

and reason.

science, race, etc.).

morality, human dignity exists.

Each of these three categories is a fascinating study by itself but when these three periods are combined a timeline emerges. This timeline explains how our civilization has transitioned from an objective reality and an absolute truth (where there is absolute right and wrong and a godly fear of the Almighty God) to a delusional reality with its plastic truth (where there is a constant redefining and a fluidity of morality and each is urged to fashion what is “meaningful” to himself as the decision making compass in life).

A brief summary of each of these stages is necessary to understanding “HOW” this shocking transition away from absolute Truth has occurred.

The PRE-Modern Period

The beginning of this broad cultural survey is when man moved away from paganism to accept the laws of the God preached by the Bible. This preaching event was a transition of earth shaking magnitude as the entire decision making matrix underwent a change. This change is recorded in the Scriptures. See 1 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Acts 17:6-8: *“You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God...”* *“These men who have upset the world have come here also; and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”* *They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things.”*

The “premodern” phase describes the period in civilization where mankind began to repudiate the inane pagan devotions and accept the fact of the one, sovereign God. This period comes prior to the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Life in the premodern period was dominated by a belief in the supernatural realm; by a belief in God and His activity in human and cosmic affairs. The printing press had not been invented and the truth or falsity of the teaching was communicated through oral tradition and hand-written texts.

During the Premodern Period people were forced to decide if the stories that were shared among them were true or false. These discussions provided the foundation for decision-making that would validate claims and offers of a superior criterion for a satisfied life. Those honestly examining the teachings found a satisfaction they had long yearned to find (See Acts 17:11, 12 “they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men”).

It is important to consider the decision-making matrix utilized during this period. The New Testament proclaimed a message that had never been heard—that the Almighty God loved the world so much that He was willing to send His only begotten Son to die for erring man. This Deity was not the same as many would see in Temples that had been carved by man. Neither was He the frightening forces of nature evidenced in thunder, lightning, volcanoes, etc. But this Deity had come and perfected the way for man to be free from the horrors of sin and find a peace that “passes all understanding.” This marvelous message had been committed to writing and was universally available regardless of race, gender, nationality or language.

Once this message was presented, those listening had to make a decision—Are these true? Are these validated? This evaluation by those hearing would involve at least two methods of analysis and internalizing the truth found.

One method for determining the truth proclaimed is called the *correspondence method of truth*. If the story being told corresponds to the observable phenomenon in the world, then the story is accepted as truth. The second method is called a *coherence method of truth* in operation during this period. The coherence theory

would add to the correspondence theory the idea that all of the individual stories told over a period of time should not contradict one another.

These two forms of analysis became the primary means of evaluation for many centuries guiding mankind in a matrix of decision-making. These two tests form the matrix of decision-making that led civilization out of the darkness of pagan superstition and moral anarchy into the light of freedom and joy. It is not surprising that such a message resounded with the world's population and millions gladly received the message and rejected previous decision-making processes (*"how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God"*).

The Premodern Period is often pejoratively characterized as backward and inferior to modern society. It is labeled as the "Precritical" Period and that suggests people accepted any superstitious belief or practice. (Note: This view of the period being "precritical" is the influence of atheistic well-wishes seeking to denigrate faith in the Almighty and exalt mortal wisdom. But it is a false affirmative!).

There was an advantage to having the test for truth based on oral and written tradition. When one's "truth" is tested by valid criteria it is established as credible and trustworthy. This validation provides security. It is urgent that the truth upon which one bases belief and behavior be tested and proven as valid.

Hence the words from Inspiration, "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22) and again, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). It is significant that the Greek term translated in these texts as "examine" and "test" is the word *δοκιμάζω* (*dokimazō*). This term means to "discern." It refers to a very close examination. The text is urging mankind to be careful and not be gullible in accepting a standard of truth that is false and ill-suitable to govern life.

This careful testing by the two methods of correspondence and coherence described above reveals how civilization in that epoch viewed truth. This shows that in the premodern period there was a stringent criterion for accepting and governing truth in beliefs and behavior. Consequently this answers the wishful, but invalid, criticism that during the time of the gospel's explosion mankind operated with a savage and brutish intelligence.

The labeling of the Premodern Period as "precritical" reveals the bias of philosophers. The term is used to suggest wrongly that "truth" as a governing norm can only be based on a criticism by the scientific method. The period following (the Modern Period) will be characterized by application of the scientific method to validate all beliefs. The Modern Period is marked with constant criticism for all aspects of Christianity's faith and practice (the first target would be the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible because the enemies of God had to first destroy the revelation of God if they were to accomplish their dastardly mission).

It is during the Premodern Period that people in the West generally believed the Sovereign God of Judeo/Christian history furnished the basis for moral absolutes, rationality, human dignity, and truth. It was a basic principle of the Premodern Period that the starting point for knowledge and wisdom was God.

This period taught that God had provided the lens through which one could properly interpret reality and human experience. And this interpretative lens was the inspired Bible. By faith in God, the world could be rightly understood. By faith in the inspiration of the Bible, the unknown elements of earthly existence could be explained and a firm standard governing mankind was practiced.

Thus two critical points of the premodern period are Jehovah God and the inspired message from God (the Bible). Tragically these two foundational principles would be wrested by Satan in his devilish design to destroy mankind. Unfounded superstitions gained a controlling force as the knowledge of the Bible diminished. The temptation developed for civilization to trust feelings and fears of the spiritual unknown fueled superstitions. As the premodern period ends we observe Satan utilizing "religion" to further enslave mankind. Mankind's trust was moving away from a confident assurance in the Almighty Jehovah God of Scripture and becoming focused upon mortal man's power—a trust based not upon faith in the supernatural Deity but upon an arrogance of mortal man.

"The premodern period ends somewhere between the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century and the high part of the Renaissance in the sixteenth century. The major thing one should remember is that, with the advent of new scientific discoveries, the Western world was changing forever, and this would have far reaching impact on every aspect of life, especially religion" (Kappelman).

The Modern Period

The specific starting point for the modern era is debated but all will agree it began when the basic principles of Christianity were questioned and a belief in an omnipotent Sovereign God was in control of time was assigned to the naive. The cause of this transition is simple—a knowledge of the Bible was missing. Mankind was still very religious but very religiously ignorant. Religion had become mechanical and ritualistic and reserved for the solemnity of intimidating cathedrals.

With this transition civilization could be once again characterized as "darkened in their understanding." Had the Bible been taught and understood and followed, the blasphemous traits of the Modern Period would have never developed. The emphasis of the modern period can be summarized as: "If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it" (Ward).

Another mantra of the modern period would become "Man is the measure of all things." Although this statement is regarded as "new" to the Modern Period it is not. It is attributed to Protagoras a Greek philosopher who created a major controversy by stating, "Man is the measure of all things." This was interpreted by Plato to mean that there is no absolute truth and the only truth was that which individuals deem to be the truth (and modern minds plagiarized the ancient Greek boasting they had arrived at this "new" truth!). This comment is quite telling on the philosophical transition from the premodern to the modern. It emphasizes the caustic disdain that was nurtured toward the supernatural that is revealed in the Bible.

The citation of Protagoras provides a foundation for the concept of individual relativity. This would provide the basis for claiming the universe existed only because of natural/human influences.

This was a seismic shift in philosophical standing between the premodern and the modern. This would provided the working formula by which mankind would deny any supernatural influence and believe that he has 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. (Tragically this universal harmony and peace was never attained during the modern period even though the world united in song to advertize Coke or later years gathered and focused their "inner-minds" upon the living force surrounding earth as they joined hands, closed eyes and focused their inner-powers and serenaded the earthly gods with unison "Hmmmmmm." Instead of admitting their mistake of rejecting God and returning to His governing this failure led mankind to shift from the modern to the post-modern).

With the modern's emphasis upon mankind's intellect, innovation and inspiration some see the modern era as beginning in the Renaissance and Rationalism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; others, however, believe it began with the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whenever the modern period began it started because mortals thought they were possessors of all knowledge, strength and answers and therefore did not need to be bothered with the supernatural. The notion that the Bible held answers for the peace and progress of mankind's civilization was bitterly scorned.

The period of Rationalism reflected a momentous shift from a confident belief in the supernaturalness of the Bible. Rationalism's Period was marked by a naive optimism about human potential and reason that fueled skepticism about Church authority and Christian doctrine.

The mission of the rationalist was to present a convincing statement that human dignity, truth, and reason could be preserved without God. Besides the influence of Rationalism (with its emphasis on reason), there was also the influence of Romanticism (with the emphasis on feeling), Marxism (with the emphasis on economic equality and the power of the common man), Nazism (with the emphasis upon nationalism), and other utopian schemes that sought to displace God as the starting point for understanding and living. The Judeo-Christian worldview that had deeply influenced the West was now violently challenged.

A tenet exalted by modernism is the conviction that human reason, armed with the scientific method, is the only reliable means of attaining "true" knowledge about the universe. The belief in the Almighty God of the Bible is dismissed as childish innocence exploited by those seeking to gain power, prestige and wealth.

During the Renaissance Period mankind began to discover the means to harness the powers and resources of the earth. It was a time marked by remarkable inventions and discoveries that led to an optimistic humanism (a high confidence in mankind's intellect).

The Renaissance Period was followed by the Enlightenment Period where better telescopes and microscopes allowed men to unlock the secrets of the universe. The knowledge of these secrets led to the initial impression that the universe, and the human body, resembled machines and could be understood in mechanical terms. The basic premise that served as an operational rule established confidence in the theory that if man understands the "machines" of the universe then mankind can manipulate those elements and so design a "perfect world" where no disease, death or deformity would exist.

Validating this assumption is the constant messaging that IF earthly existence is the product of a mechanical pattern THEN such will be found repeated throughout the celestial planets. Hence there began an incessant campaign to foster and accept the delusional belief that once deep space exploration develops then there will be discoveries of innumerable celestial civilizations who are more advanced than the religiously hobbled population of earth.

The Enlightenment Period is marked by a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers and thinkers like Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Voltaire, Denis Diderot, John Jacques Rousseau, and Rene Decartes. The Enlightenment thinking fueled the subsequent rise of Modernism and was greatly enhanced by the scientific discoveries of Galileo and Newton, as well as the later works of Charles Darwin as a mechanistic worldview gained the support of scientific discovery.

The following comment offers a good summary of the modernism period: "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" (McCallum).

Gone was the conviction that Science's amazing governing originated in the created designs of God. Gone was the belief that mankind is "fearfully and wonderfully made."

At the end of the Modern Period mankind was completely captured by the false philosophy that "man is the measure of all things." And, this philosophy would lead mankind to the consequent affirmation that since man is the measure of all things then "man is capable of fashioning his own reality."

The sobering impact of this philosophy upon civilization is enormous. Mankind thus becomes his own "god." The Almighty Jehovah God is neutralized in the affairs of earth. The Almighty ceases to have any influence on decision-making and the only criterion is what man thinks.

Hence when asked "HOW can one believe or behave like that?" the answer is simple...man has become the measure of all things! The only decision-making criterion is what mankind thinks. Without the influence of Jehovah God, mankind's reasoning becomes vain.

The developments leading to the elevation of man as "god" at the close of the Modern Period largely resulted because of the acceleration of the scientific world. In natural science and physiological science and psychological science the status of human intellect rose to supreme authority because Jehovah God was removed. During this period mankind was indoctrinated by the error that science is able to explain everything IF it is given enough time and money for research. Many have come to believe there are no limits to the power of human reason operating with the partnership of Science and freed from religious beliefs and an immunity of a contorted mindset that results from following the Bible.

The Modern Period accepted as "truth" only what could be "proven to be true" by the scientific method.

Consequent to this rational approach many theologians of the Modern Period sought to devise a rational religion. This was a faith that could incorporate all of the considerations and discoveries and adoration deserving to the new science. Announced was a better approach to God's governing. Announced was a new approach to look at the Bible that would result in a belief system more compatible with the "new rationale thinking" of the Modern Period (this development is well illustrated by those advocating "theistic evolution").

This new rationale thinking established a suspicion about the oral and written truth claims of the premodern Christian religion. Doctrines such as the inspiration of the Bible, Creation, the virgin birth, the deity and supernaturalness of Christ, the resurrection and any other doctrines of Scripture could not be proved using scientific methods. There is no way to repeat the historical events of biblical miracles in a laboratory environment. Therefore, the credibility of the supernatural events was suspect and ultimately discarded.

Even though these doctrines were rejected the practicality of their denial would not be fully evident until the waning years of the Modern Period. In those years and in the following Post-modern Period, the full repercussions of the denial of Bible doctrines resulted in tragedy. Mankind morphed its religion into actions and beliefs contrary to the revealed Bible and blithely shrugged at their blasphemy. And why should they not do this? Since they believed they were the measure of all things they believed they were capable of deciding what Jehovah God wanted. And so at the close of the Modern Period and the beginning of the Postmodern Period decision-making was guided solely by feelings.

Of course, in this modern philosophical program there is absolutely no room for God or the Bible, and there is only antagonism for the Christian viewpoint and its morality. This whole system of thinking is also referred to as Secular Humanism. This system of Humanism has held great influence in our educational and political systems the last two hundred years.

At the beginning of the Modern Period gone were the convictions regarding anything supernatural because only interpretations resulting in "natural" explanations were acceptable. The slippery slope that mankind accepted at the beginning of the Modern Period led to Rationalism, Romanticism, Existentialism, Secular Humanism, and Multiculturalism. These factored into a philosophical shift repudiating anything that interfered with man's personal reasoning, feelings and moral freedoms. The supernatural was dismissed and the natural enthroned. At the conclusion of the Modern Period man tragically measures all things by himself—a total anarchy had been established.

The tragedy illustrating this deluded invincibility of Humanism is the British passenger liner RMS Titanic. Its construction was heralded as evidence of humanity's genius of engineering. A quote is reported to have appeared in newspapers and magazines from the 1912 period announcing that the RMS Titanic was a ship designed and constructed in such a way that "God Himself could not sink it!" (Lord). Then came the unthinkable, it sank in the early morning of 15 April 1912 after colliding with an iceberg. There were 2,224 passengers and crew aboard, more than 1,500 died, making it one of the deadliest commercial peacetime maritime disasters in modern history.

The POST-Modern Period

Postmodernism simply means "after modernism." Around the mid-twentieth century, certain philosophers began to question the assumptions of Modernism. They looked at the philosophical perspective that promised to bring "utopia" and found disappointment. The anarchy of Secular Humanism had elevated mankind as the ultimate governing but only greater sorrow and suffering resulted. During this historical timeframe the world had been shocked by the disasters of two world wars, hunger, famine, floods, infectious diseases and the threat of nuclear annihilation from the Cold War. Confidence in human rationalism evaporated in Auschwitz and the Soviet gulags. The systems or "grand stories" ("metanarratives") of Nazism, Marxism, scientism, or rationalism ended up as the foundations of inhumanity degradation instead of humanity's crown.

These systems, provided by mankind's intelligence, proved to be total failures. Consequently some philosophers decided that the philosophical framework of modernism was flawed and needed replaced. Thus began the transition from the Modern to the Postmodern Period. The evidences of 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 sociological impact of the counter-cultural revolution was significant. This phenomenon acted as the catalyst that fused together and ignited the various ungodly elements necessary to transition from the Modern Period’s emphasis on discovering objective data that would enthrone mankind as “god” with the Postmodern Period’s rejection of all objective facts and a total reliance upon feelings as the governing in life.

As the era is historically recorded we find here an interesting development occurring with this transition—in the Modern Period mankind was perceived as the superior being on earth and all things were to be used by him for himself. But with the transition to the Postmodern Period the superiority of mankind was removed. In the place of man’s ascendancy was placed the belief that “all” living and non-living elements on earth are totally equal in value. Hence some have suggested that the best thing for the earth is the extinction of mankind!

The social revolution of the counter-culture movement elevated individualism to sole authority on a personal level but taught mankind was a part of the “life force” of “Mother Nature” and hence connected to all earth. This practically removed the dignity and value of human life making it equal with the ageless dirt! And since dirt has been around longer than mankind, dirt is actually of superior value. Hence was born the inane idea that man must not use the natural resources of earth and laws must be fabricated to keep man from using earth’s natural resources.

This is substantiated by events of the era. The “folk” songs placed the social revolution and rejection of the establishment into every day context and the music infected the souls and consciences of the people. The staged sit-ins, love-ins, smoke-ins and any other “ins” that occurred in these years stressed the rabid self-serving individualism. The fact that the culture of the USA has not given up this ascendancy of the individual was illustrated in recent times (*The Atlantic*, June 2016) as some of those elected to the United States Congress childishly staged a sit-in protest because they were not getting “their” way.

So when we look to the time when the transition from the Modern to the Postmodern occurred we can say it was definitely during the turbulent years of the 1960’s. During this era there was contempt generated toward all established mores (social, religious, civil). This led to many throwing aside any objective rules and devolving into personal anarchy for authority.

You will remember that the driving tenet advancing modernism was the belief that reality was objective and that all men could (with sufficient scientific advancements) discover the principles of nature and unlock the secrets of earthly and celestial life. The Modern Period held that this discovery was possible only by education. There was the stress on higher education as Modernism believed that the more one delved into the fields of knowledge then the more one would grow closer to the pure truth of the universe. Hence, a paramount point during the Modern Era is the emphasis upon rational study and the application of truths discovered. During this era there were great debates and classical volumes written offering the “educated” conclusions.

Even when the antiscientist could not validate his claims with facts he still maintained there were such truths but they were not yet discovered (Hence the evolutionist debated the creationist by insisting the existence of a “missing link” in the supposed evolutionary chain and affirmed that when this missing link is eventually discovered it will show the naiveté of the Christian worldview of creation. And so there is the never ending search for the “missing link” which has been recognized as futility by some who now adopt the evolutionary “gap” hypothesis.).

But...the glorified tents of Modernism were abysmal disappointments. They failed at every point. They were indefensible. It was embarrassing.

How could the secular humanists explain away their embarrassment? They definitely would not recant their repudiation of the supernatural and spurn their commitment to secular humanism. These factors continued to dictate the matrix of their decision-making process. But there was a nagging problem with their philosophical compass...they had to explain the failure of Modernism’s promises. This explanation transitioned civilization from the Modern to the Postmodern Period.

Accordingly postmodernists explained the failure of the modern philosophy because it followed the erroneous assumption that there is such a thing as "objective truth." Those seeking to explain Modernism's embarrassing failure assumed the self-contradictory position that there is no absolute, objective truth that can be learned and whose tenets will guide mankind to the desired "utopia."

This "educated" explanation is a tragic comedy!

Since the secular humanists could not explain their blasphemous tenets through sound and rational reasoning, they decided that "reality" is a mirage and that the "truth" guiding every person is personal and created by one's "personal reality."

This is an amazing leap for those who had once championed education and reason as the governing factors.

The postmodernist has been influenced by the ungodly philosophies preceding him (Romanticism, Rationalism, Existentialism, Determinism, Secular Humanism, etc). His conclusion was simple: Since man is the measure of himself then ONLY man can determine reality and since all have differing life experiences then ONLY each individual can determine what his reality is to be. So, language, culture, psychotherapy, the advances of science and other personal factors are to be recognized as viable and accepting governing.

Undergirding this retreat from modernism was a denial that there is a truth reaching beyond national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries! 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 like this: "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me." This also explains the correctness of Copen's statement cited above that *"Truth as perspectival: Furthermore, truth is a matter of perspective or context rather than being something universal. We do not have access to reality—to the way things are—but only to what appears to us."*

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 claim to seek education and enlightenment but now they boast that "true reality" is knowing NOTHING except one's personal reality.

Mankind is viewed as a product of his culture and only imagines he is self-governing. While Modernism depended upon "reason" for its progress, Postmodernism now declares that all reason is flawed and affected by bias and therefore totally untrustworthy. Thus all information, even hallowed scientific information, can no longer be trusted (especially is there to be repulsion toward any authority in religious beliefs and practice). The inevitable conclusion of this postmodern philosophy is the denial of all reality!

The true Postmodernist cannot absolutely affirm that ANY facet of earthly existence is real—the color of the sky, the morality or immorality of behavior, the civics of obeying laws, the practice and beliefs connected with religious devotion. In fact, the true Postmodernist cannot be absolutely convinced that HE is real and not an imagined perception!

The inevitable consequence of the Postmodern philosophy is absolute despondency!

The advocates of Postmodernism realize the bleak abyss into which they are leading others. The postmodern thought embraces, affirms, and lives with philosophical, theological, and even scientific chaos. Instead of offering mankind a philosophy that leads to order and peace, mankind is abandoned to a life of terror.

Illustrating this is the following comment by Todd Kappelman in his *"The Breakdown of Religious Knowledge"*: "Earlier we used an example from advertising; suggesting that products were marketed based on their claims to be superior to what a competitor might offer. If we use this example again, postmodern methodology appeals more to a person's feelings than to his or her sense of factual truth. Cars, tennis shoes, and other products are marketed on image. The best car is not necessarily the one that has been made to the highest standard; rather the best car is the one that can bolster the image of the driver."

Remember this observation as it exposes the operating compass in our current civilization: "Postmodern methodology appeals more to a person's feelings than to his or her sense of factual truth."

Tragically this same governing appeal to feelings instead of factual Truth has swept the Church. Today's Church no longer has as its paramount purpose the preaching of God's absolute Truth BUT the incessant mission to offer mankind what feels good! The "old order" has been replaced by the Postmodern action. The absoluteness of God's revealed Truth is casually waved aside with the blithe comment, "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me."

Consequently the Church in the Postmodern Period is drastically different from "the Church my parents and grandparents attended!" It is distressing to observe how 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." The governing standard is not what God desires (John 4:24) but what makes for "fun."

Illustrating the infectious touch of Postmodernism upon the Church is the following narrative. A local church was going to host a seminar to help encourage men to exert biblical principles of male leadership. Since the men's seminar was being hosted by a church and conducted in a church building and funded with money from the church treasury one would expect the emphasis of the presentations to be on learning biblical truths that apply to men as leaders. But this is thinking from the "old school." When the program was published there was an illusionist, a band was scheduled to play, a secular movie was to be shown, board games were planned, a series of meals and "snacks" were set and it was planned to have "after hours chat" for those who wished to stay longer. Oh, there was the briefest of mentions about three sessions to discuss men's feelings about leadership roles in our culture. At some assemblies appointed speakers went to invite the community and these were given a list of talking points to cover in their announcements. At the beginning and the end the talking points stressed, "Tell them if they come they will have fantastic FUN!" The total focus of the planning committee, the announcements, and those ensuing events was a focus on FEELINGS and not facts.

The effects of this type of thinking may be seen in our contemporary ethical dilemma. While it is true that people from various ethnic, geographic, and other time periods place different values on certain behaviors, it cannot be true that any behavior is acceptable dependent only upon the individual's outlook. The effect of postmodern theories on Christian truth claims is that the creation accounts found in Genesis, and the stories about Christ in the gospels have been reduced to one cultural group's account of reality. Christians, argue many postmodernists, are free to believe that Christ is God if they like. But their claims cannot be exclusive of other people's beliefs. Truth may be true for one person and false for another.

Furthermore, Christians are expected to tolerate contradicting truth claims and to look the other way if certain ethical behaviors (abortion, homosexuality, etc.) do not suit their tastes. Postmodernism, and its companion rampant philosophical relativism, should be among the foremost concerns of any Christian who wishes to engage his or her culture and ensure that the gospel of Christ has a fertile context in which it can take root and grow in the future (Kappelman).

Today's Christians live in a postmodern world. They may deny such a conclusion but it is true. They may say "That's not me" and be absolutely correct but that does not remove them from the environment and consequences of Postmodernism. Postmodernism reveals the utter chaos, confusion, distress, depression and hopelessness that is found in a civilization where God has been thrown away! Tragically this has altered religious beliefs regarding the anger of God—many refuse to accept the fact that God can be angry.

Our families live in a Postmodern world. Our children and grandchildren are affected by the Postmodern philosophies. The Church is surrounded by Postmodern advocates and is under siege to surrender its absolute Truth and accept "accommodating feelings" as the governing standard. It is argued by Postmodernists that only by conforming to the "felt needs" of the community can the Church survive.

The Postmodern mindset seeks to destroy and then reconstruct every facet of civilization that we have known. It seeks the end of history, of law, of Judeo-Christian religion and many other aspects of daily life that previous generations accepted without question and took for granted.

Like Modernism, Postmodernism looks with contempt and scorn upon the Bible. The Postmodernist is consumed with the mission to "deconstruct" biblical foundations and after destroying the biblical foundations

they launch a campaign to destroy all disciplines founded upon the biblical principles (Law; Justice; Government; Civility). Postmodernism is anti-Bible, anti-west and anti-capitalist. The movement places an imbalanced emphasis upon ethnicity, the disenfranchised. It glorifies diverse and conflicting cultural origins. This diversity is viewed as the superior governing ethic and each individual is permitted to fashion his own "personal reality."

Because of its emphasis upon one's personal reality the Postmodernist (unlike the Modernist) accepts religion. To the Postmodernist any religion is accepted and especially the "natural" religions found in aboriginal tribal units. However, even though Postmodernism says all religions are to be accepted, anathema is Christianity and Judaism. This is because these are "exclusive and intolerant" of all other religions. The religious control for Postmodernism is "toleration." The New Age Movement has become very closely allied with Postmodernism and in many ways its metaphysical tenets were used to secure Postmodernism.

The New Agers happily announced their belief in a supreme, spiritual and supernatural deity. BUT it was not the Jehovah God of Scriptures. Consequently Postmodernism has accepted "god" BUT NOT the holy, righteous, and ONLY God of Scriptures. The God of Scripture was excluded from reality and human experience. Resulting from this erasure of the universal biblical Deity is the conclusion that we cannot speak of any universal truth, reason, or morality. We only have fragmented perspectives that are determined by our personal reality.

The real tragedy of Postmodernism is summarized: Postmodernism maintains that all written texts—historical, literary, biblical, legislative, or otherwise—have no inherent authority. Postmodernism views these written texts as reflecting the writer's bias, culture, and civilization era. Consequently any written text can be blithely ignored ("I know that is the law but if you don't like the law you do not have to follow it!").

Postmodernism argues that language shapes our thinking. So language creates a plastic truth because words may have a personal reality to one that is not held by another. This plastic vocabulary results in truth being an individual perspectival event. Accordingly, truth is a matter of individual perspective or common community context rather than something universally transcending cultural borders. We are relentlessly told long and strong that we do not have access to reality—to the way things actually exist—but only to what appears to our personal desires.

Illustrating the absurdity of this "personal reality" defined by postmodernism's plastic words is the great sexual orientation debate of 2016 (aka "the bathroom debacle"). This nasty squabbling was initiated because of a proposal by Obama's administration to define "sex" in the most ridiculous way. By this regulation Obama forced a change in the historical meaning of the word "sex." For decades, across multiple federal statutes, Congress consistently used the term "sex" to refer to an individual's status as male or female. This status was determined by a person's biological sex at birth. There was no question. But in Obama's coerced regulation, his administration's Health and Human Services redefined "sex" to include "an individual's internal sense of gender, which may be male, female, neither, or a combination of male and female, and which may be different from an individual's sex assigned at birth." What an absurdity! (Unruh).

Note: This illustrates how a "community reality" is decided—the powers that be dictate and decide the community's reality. It is the Orwellian "Big Brother" dressed in the Stars and Stripes of the Red, White and Blue! Tragically this community reality has invaded and controls the Church so that the community's "felt needs" dictate the doctrine and practice and preaching of the Bible.

The greatest tragedy of these silly principles of Postmodernism is the nurturing and support of skepticism toward even the most absolute reality (the color of the sky is not "blue" but could be any color you wish!). And now Postmodernism has evolved to the absurdity where there is skepticism as to whether you are really a boy or girl!

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

Consider how this impacts our educational systems. The honest postmodernist brings an unbelievable anarchy to the classroom. A good illustration of this is in the situation my youngest daughter faced in the Second

Grade. Her spelling words were determined by the class and not the teacher and there was no right or wrong way to spell the words!

According to postmodernism the student's interpretation is just as important as the written work itself, or its author. If the student asserts a literary work is inferior then the work is to be rejected (Some have displayed this very action as they deemed certain university texts as repugnant and racist and so they feel exempted from studying them. BUT they still want the highest passing mark for the course!).

Illustrating this chaos of Postmodernism is a report from June 1, 2016.

Some Yale University students are demanding changes to the English Department curriculum: specifically, they don't think it should feature so many English poets who were straight, white, wealthy, and male. "It is your responsibility as educators to listen to student voices," the students wrote in a petition to the faculty. "We have spoken. We are speaking. Pay attention."

The "Major English Poets" sequence, a mandatory two-course commitment for English majors, is particularly problematic, according to the students. These classes cover Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, John Donne, John Milton, Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, and T.S. Eliot. It's not the most diverse line up, to be sure, but it's the one that best reflects history the way it actually happened. Inarguably, these are the most influential poets in the English language. But students think this sequence "creates a culture that is hostile to students of color" (Soave).

If Postmodernism is honestly followed then no textbooks are required! The student's interpretation is just as important as the teacher's. According to postmodernism all are equal with one another and the student's personal reality is equal with the instructor's personal reality. All the instructor is doing is voicing his personal reality but that does not have to be accepted by the student. So honest postmodernism removes the professor! The professor, his lectures and assigned class materials are NOT requisite for course completion. In fact, according to postmodernism the class, students, instructions, materials, and room DO NOT even exist as an objective reality!

In postmodern educational philosophy the student's feelings of self-esteem are considered far more important than the acquiring of any particular body of knowledge (since general knowledge is untruth). Obviously with such an approach, students may feel great about themselves but suffer gross ignorance.

If this is true in secular education just imagine the horrors of anarchy that are found in the spiritual realm? Postmodern views all knowledge, all religion and all religious experiences as the reflection of personal bias and culture. So it is "improper and invasive" to question what another person believes or does. The ramifications of this development condemn the Church for any evangelistic efforts and regulate the Church to only a "social" level of operations! No longer is the Church to proclaim the holiness of God and require sinful man to turn around and obey God so he can find the peace that passes all understanding. This explains why many Churches today have hushed the holiness of God and censored the call to be distinctive and exclusive in following God's commands.

Perhaps the greatest enemy of Postmodernism's skepticism is its perspective of the Bible. In the field of literary analysis the Postmodern interpretation abandoned the grammatical-historical method for understanding texts. The feeling is that all written texts, including the Bible, simply represent a certain cultural outlook. The texts and authors reflect only their personal and cultural bias and such does not "fit" all contexts. We are thus encouraged to read with the "hermeneutic of suspicion" striving to look for the smallest kernel of truth while rejecting the narrative's bias. This means that neither the text nor its author has any real significance. In fact, the interpreter or reader is just as important and authoritative as the author.

It is the reader's duty to provide the proper meaning.

This hermeneutic of suspicion is evidenced in a number of ways that are used to further the deconstruction of biblical beliefs and principles (One of the first postmodern hermeneutics called upon Bible students to accept only the "red-letters" of the Bible as authoritative words! And this assertion in itself exposes the utter absurdity of their spiritual anarchy seeking a governing only for what is personal reality).

Once again we come to understand “HOW one can believe or not believe a certain way?” It is easy to believe or not believe in a certain way IF our perspective is guided by the “hermeneutic of suspicion.”

Exploring the transition away from a fear of the anger of God

The above has given the briefest summary of the “WHY?” and “HOW?” of this momentous transition that has impacted the current world’s civilization. This transition is not found in one nation or geographical quadrant of the world but is global. The Postmodern Philosophy has infected our entire world. Dorothy’s comment to Toto was “Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.” This has become a popular phrase to describe one’s changed situation—reality has dramatically changed.

Certainly this is applicable as we look at the disquieting transition from the Premodern to the Modern to the Postmodern. Perhaps a better commentary on this transition is provided by the Old Testament prophet as he looked at a similar transition that had captured his nation. *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!... You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, that what is made would say to its maker, ‘He did not make me’; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘He has no understanding’?”* (Isaiah 5:20-21; 29:16).

Several factors highlight this damning transition...

The rejection of absolute. Modern civilization now believes there is no universally, over-arching standard of ethics and morality. This has resulted in the Bible being rejected as the supreme authority for decision-making processes. The acceptance of superstition’s control in the current culture is basically the level and intensity that existed prior to the Premodern Period. There is slight devotion to the Almighty’s presence.

People still “go to church” but the zeal for the Lord is lacking. Worship is a time for ritual attendance but non-involvement and no internalization of life changing truth. Worship is a time to doze off and check social media until the requisite actions and obeisance are performed. Worship is an “event” that is planned by the “Worship Committee” to make everyone feel good and have “fun.”

This has developed because people did not know and obey God’s revealed Word! They have turned the heartfelt devotion of true Christianity into a heartless ritual.

All is ritual and ritual is all-consuming. “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’” (Matthew 15:7-9)

A decision-making matrix governed by feelings and not objective, absolute Truth. When there is no universal truth then there are no absolutes in morality, religion, or civility. Because the absoluteness of biblical texts is surrendered, truth and ethical behavior are no longer decided by asking “What saith the Scriptures?” (Romans 4:3) but “How do YOU feel about this matter?” and “What is YOUR opinion about this matter?” Thus is provided the governing of behavior from one’s “personal reality.” This shift from objective truth to emotional truth eventually leads to a cancerous deterioration of society’s values which maintain the society’s existence.

A loss of objective truth leads to a failure to correct decision-making matrix. The proper decision-making matrix is found by discerning truth. But with no recognized truth man’s decisions leads to the postmodern chaos.

When one discerns the truth he is required to make certain his position corresponds to the known world and follows a coherent consistency in actions. In order to discern Truth one must be a student of truth. This requires reading and studying the Bible as it is God’s revelation and guide. The Psalmist proclaimed, “O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). How tragic that this attitude does not control the hearts of mankind today!

Today’s Postmodern proclamation announces “O how I love my FaceBook, Twitter, Snapchat!” How many hours are spent on social media venues? How many hours are spent in Bible study? It is no wonder that society takes its governing from FaceBook/Twitter/Snap Chat instead of the Bible?

Great tragedy awaits those who profess devotion to the Almighty but who refuse to read and study God's Book! Their destiny is announced by the prophet, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest" (Hosea 4:6). These are the same ones who assembled to worship God yet their devotion lacked sincerity, "They cry out to Me, "My God, we of Israel know You!" (Hosea 8:2). The Proverb writer correctly observes, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law" (Proverbs 29:18).

There are many in our current civilization who are not "happy." Why? The postmodernist has a list of quack cures, but the only cure is for one to turn to God and delight in the study and meditation of God's Law (Psalm 1). A horrifying ignorance controls the postmodern period.

The fact that decision-making should be from the perspective of objective truth is obvious to all except to those who want chaotic anarchy in society. Notice how objective truth influenced decision-making in the transitions summarized above.

The Premodern Period challenged the decision-making process of paganism. It was characterized "as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:17-21). The emphasis in the Premodern Period was decision-making based upon the knowledge of biblical revelation in order for mankind to find peace and harmony in the world.

The Modern Period was characterized by dismissing the supernatural revelation and elevating the knowledge of mortal minds (interestingly this same conflict was addressed by Inspiration in 1 Corinthians 2 where the world viewed the "foolishness of God" as grossly inferior to the "wisdom of the world."). During the Modern Period every aspect of the supernatural revelation was challenged and treated with contempt. At the conclusion of the modern era the ignorance and superstition of mankind's futile wisdom was elevated to the deciding criterion to guide mankind to peace and harmony in the world.

The Postmodern Period is characterized by a decision-making process that is based upon NO knowledge but only feelings. The postmodern man decides everything solely on the basis of his feelings and the notion that any restrictive boundaries and exclusive groups are repudiated. The emphasis is upon a "globalization" where every language, culture, nation, and belief system can be practiced and somehow this universal toleration will result in peace and harmony in the world.

This "toleration" of the postmodern man is the full-grown evil of the 1960's counter-culture guru Jean Paul Sartre slogan "It is forbidden to forbid!" The tragic life of Sartre well illustrates the impending disaster for the postmodern.

Sartre's public status was fueled by the post-WW2 environment. His philosophy of existentialism gave a basis to the idiocy that if all minds would get together in perfect harmony then world peace and happiness would result. His was "a challenging doctrine of individualism in which each human being is seen as absolute master of his soul if he chooses to follow the path of action and courage" (Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988, 231).

Hence accepted and applauded is the social revolutionary dogma that the individual is the ultimate "rule" in the decision-making matrix of culture. One is not to be hobbled by decisions made by others and no governing standard is to supplant the individual's desires.

The seeds of Sartre's godless individualism would eventually germinate in the countercultural revolution of the 1960's and devilishly infect the minds and decision-making matrix of that generation. Consequently a generation developed a decision-making matrix based upon a radical individualism and the rejection of the established norms.

Sartre's individualism is common in today's Postmodern decision-making is illustrated by a 31 year old woman who birthed a baby before being married. Listen to her postmodern decision-making matrix:

"God has a plan for everyone. The baby was a surprise. And I was like, you know what? This is meant to be...A lot of people gave me a hard time for having a baby before getting married, but who are they to judge?...You always have those few haters who are going to be negative in every situation. At the end of the day nobody is perfect. You have to do what's good for you" (Juneau).

Thus the decision-making matrix of modern civilization began when pagan ignorance was replaced with divine revelation but that revelation was replaced with mortal intelligence and then that worldly wisdom was replaced with the personal feelings and opinions of a self-guided anarchy! A full cycle of pagan ignorance to pagan ignorance! A cycle of ignorance and destruction and empty existence!

The flawed decision-making matrix presents the premise that reality can be "personalized." A personalized reality is used to applaud uncivil behavior. Consequently what appears as "sin" to some is not really "sin" to others because of their perspective. The notion that there is one universal rule for all mankind was rejected because multiculturalism convinced mankind that diversity is wonderful and should be encouraged. And such applauded diversity as all accepting and never exclusive.

The prevailing thought is "I'm OK and you are OK" regardless of what we believe or practice so just "Let it be" and "Imagine" the perfect world that we can create if tolerance is practiced and ridiculous allegiance to the Bible is removed!

The decision-making matrix of "personal reality" encourages one to scorn the Supernatural's boundaries. By refusing the absolute concepts that supernatural revelation has given to mankind, the postmodern man demonstrates a practical biblical atheism. He does not deny the existence of the Jehovah God of the Bible but he simply dismisses the Divine as having any relevant impact in daily life. One political celebrity characterized this as being able to "compartmentalize" his religious profession and being able to practice a profligate lifestyle. He saw no conflicts in this decision-making process because he saw no absolutes governing his life.

This rationalization of a "compartmentalization" decision-making matrix in life is dependent upon accepting the fact that one's "personal reality" justifies any behavior. This explains the incredulous behavior in the postmodern world. The "WHY" and the "HOW" rhetorically asking for an explanation of postmodern behavior are answered with this point.

Whenever one believes that he can decide personal choices by his "personal reality" and that "personal reality" is fluid and not restricted by objective absolutes, then chaotic anarchy governs society and permits even the most heinous behaviors! (But, again, this situation is not a new development in earthly living. It is simply a rerun of a past civilization as described in Judges 3:7; 17:6; 21:25).

When decision-making is based upon this indefinable "personal reality" we have elevated personal anarchy to authority. This is the practical consequence of the statement "man is the measure of himself"!

This degradation of the decision-making process in society is fueled by the "hermeneutic of suspicion." This encourages all to suspect and reject long held beliefs and practices. The postmodern mind is hostile to any "old fashioned" political, religious or legislative element and especially to any element that is deemed exclusive and restrictive of cultural behavior and belief. This explains why the Postmodern mind is unwilling to accept the historic established mores of belief and behavior and seeks to remove all ethical and moral boundaries. And the tragic footnote is that the Postmodern campaigns to "release" mankind from the "oppressive" constraints of ethics and morality have largely succeeded as God's anger has been erased!

**Exploring a fact that postmoderns wish to ignore...
this transition phenomenon is not unique.**

The Postmodern advocate wishes to be viewed as original and cutting-edge and progressive. But such is simply another delusional "reality"!

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. ALL, EVERYTHING, man does now in the present "has been done." Mankind may use different costumes, different vocabulary, and different vehicles to disperse their blasphemy BUT it is only a rerun from previous civilizations. Man can try as hard as he wishes, but he will not outmaneuver God.

Although the Bible is filled with numerous illustrations of this fact, I want to highlight one that is found at the beginning.

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

- ✓ A philosophy that was anti-Supernatural separating mankind from the holy God—*"You surely will not die!"*
- ✓ Man was offered a "personal reality" contradicting 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 replacing the absoluteness of God's revelation—*"The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God."*
- ✓ 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 that is consequential to those living by postmodernism—it is a delusional and damnable philosophy that offers only a moment of peace and an eternity of horrors!

Christians must *reject* this philosophy.

Christians must *refuse* to associate with those living by this philosophy.

Christians must *understand* there is no acceptable compromise with this philosophy. The marching orders for those seeking to be faithful to God command: "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them" (Ephesians 5:11, 12).

There is to be *no* approval, association, and allowance for the insidious practice and acceptance of the Postmodern Philosophy.

Only the Bible provides us with true knowledge and revelation. Even though we live in an ungodly world ruled by selfish anarchy we are not to live as the world. We are to be different from the world. How? We are to be different by a personal choice to follow the Bible.

The evil transitioning from reliance upon God's revelation for decision-making in life's choices to that of a decision-making matrix from a self-willed arrogance leads to disaster in every facet of life (culturally, politically, ethically, morally, religiously, etc). This is an absolute reality (even to those who dismiss absolutism)

and this is sadly redundant in the history of man's civilization. This tragedy is willingly ignored by those who excuse their ignorance by saying "I hate history!"

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 as the decision-making matrix for daily life.

"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 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 resulting from God's Word and applying to every day decisions on a global footprint.

A devilish attack is facing Christians today. This campaign has been on-going for several centuries. Its success is painfully clear. The absolute standards for thought and culture have become turned upside down—totally twisted from what God desires (2 Corinthians 10:3-6 and note this portion, *"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ"*).

In the modern decision-making matrix absolute truth, objective meaning, and objective reality do not exist! This means all religious beliefs and moral codes are strictly personal and subjective. Consequently all decision-making is made on the basis of "What makes YOU feel good."

Today people have been urged to define "truth" as only what is personally real. The devilish design is to convince everyone that since truth is relative and subjective then absolute tolerance is required. Therefore, in the spiritual realm, one cannot be told that he is doing anything immoral. This "tolerance" permits and leads to a damnable idolatry where man remakes God to be whatever is needed at the moment.

We are beginning to observe the application of this subjective truth in civil matters as people are being told to ignore any civil law they do not like or they feel is biased against them.

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. Such a message is loathed by the Postmodern mind. Consequently some begin to think the Church must modify its message so it will become "current" in its environment.

Modifications begin regarding basic doctrine and practices and even preaching and teaching are subjected to this cultural revision. What begins with a call to change the messaging of the pulpit and classes inevitably brings a change of mores—the unacceptable teaching becomes accepted and the repugnant action is embraced. The distinct message of the Lord's Church is hushed as the anger of God is erased!

The cry is for the Church to become "more relative" and less "dogmatic" (this phrase is used to cast contempt on those who maintain that reason is required in our response to God). Such approaches fail to accept the absolute truth that if the Church changes the New Testament patterns it changes from God's Church to an assembly of idolaters (1 Corinthians 10:14 appropriately commands "flee idolatry"!).

Psalm 11:3 asks what the righteous can do if the foundations have been destroyed. While the threat of postmodern relativism may be something new, it is not the first time that God's People have seen a concentrated effort to destroy the foundations of truth. The Premodern, Modern, and Postmodern tests for

truth all reveal that mankind knows there must be an overarching truth to govern decision-making and guide one into peace and harmony. The only answer to this yearning is the truth that is offered by Jehovah God.

John 8:32 assures that you can know THE TRUTH and the truth will set you free! Knowledge of this truth is the only avenue to true freedom. This encompasses the entirety of God's revelation—the Bible.

Modern man is eager to find some kind of permission for his decisions to replace God's decision-making matrix with a relative, subjective truth matrix fabricated by worldly wisdom. Man does not 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. This innate yearning for a controlling supernatural force complicates the Postmodern worldview.

In order to fashion such a supernatural presence mankind must ignore the fact that the sovereign God Almighty possesses a righteous anger when His revelation is not followed. The Postmodern mind is seeking a "god" who does not throw "temper tantrums" when His commands are disobeyed. In order to fabricate this controlling supernatural force the Postmodern "god" must be all accepting and never condemning. Thus it is essential to develop a "personal reality" that is dismissive of the anger of God.

If there is any allowance for God's anger then the postmodern worldview collapses. For this reason the postmodern mind has contrived a "god" that is all loving and never angry. There is some allowance and slight admission for the divine anger but it is minimal and there is absolutely no acceptance of the reality of such a divine attribute. The anger of the Almighty God is admitted but not accepted!

This is the reason this current series is so critical. To those struggling with the painful, objective reality that a nebulous truth provides only emptiness, we urge you to "come and see" the reality that provides an objective truth that guarantees a peace that passes all understanding (John 1:46).

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