

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. (Copan)

1. We begin a study that is fascinating but also disheartening.
 - a. This series examines the process by which modern civilization has casually shrugged off the anger of God. This sociological development is bewildering.
 - b. The momentous change has led to the unraveling of society's morality as mankind becomes desensitized to the control of the Almighty's wrath.
 - c. When unacceptable actions of modern behavior are seen one asks, "HOW can they believe or do or support such?" "WHY is their 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 today's 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" questions about today's news headlines.
 - d. There is good news in the midst of today's insecurity...one can find security from this societal terror only in the anger of Jehovah God.
2. Whoever preaches God's angry retribution upon sin and sinners is 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 as a belief embraced 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.

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

1. The critical question asks, "Upon what basis are we to accept teachings and beliefs?" This query leads to a discussion of the concept of "Truth" (John 18:38).
 - a. 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 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.
 - b. Unfortunately the concept of an absolute truth serving as an unerring guide for decision-making has been replaced. Its replacement leads only to greater sorrows and burdens. The tragic result means relief from worldly sorrow is impossible. This replacement is applauded by 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.
 - c. The current definition of "truth" is found in this quote: "*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).
 - 1) In modern civilization all of life is fluid. It is 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).

- 2) 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.
 - 3) Hence modern man seeks a "meaningful truth" that coddles his cravings and applauds his blasphemy toward Jehovah God. This is the short answer to the query "How can he do or believe that?"
 - 4) 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.
2. Truth is based upon the 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.
- a. When "meaningful truth" compromises morality, justice and ethics the results are devastating (See Hosea 4:1-10 as illustrative of this fact and then apply the principles of this text to modern society. This helps us understand how the deplorable condition of modern civilization has developed. The "Deconstructionist" began with an objective to destroy the absolute Truth of God's Scriptures but he has destroyed the very foundation of civilization!).
 - b. 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 fluid truth is that people find their problems are multiplied and security is missing.
 - c. 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.
3. A serious consequence of denying an absolute reality in matters of morality, ethics, justice and religious belief 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!

Attempting to evade the problems of fluid truth only 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. This basically means we live in a *non-existent reality*. It is maintained that there are various levels of reality but the only level that matters is one's "personal reality." Whatever one wishes to do is sanctioned by his "personal reality." 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.
- b. Another option is...*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. This teaches that man lives in a mirrored world of non-reality so what is seen is only the reality of our consciousness. It is not reality but only imagined.
- c. A third option 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 that denies reality. This 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.

3. We have moved from fact-based criteria to 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.

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

1. How can we explain this massive shift from an objective reality and an absolute truth to a delusional reality with its plastic truth? This process is devilishly designed to bring mankind either to a total rejection of Jehovah God's sovereignty or to nurture a callous insensitivity to the holy God or portray Him by a laughable perspective.
 - a. This tectonic shift in civilization's history has been subtle yet relentless. This change has the objective of a complete erasure of the Almighty Jehovah God.
 - b. The current struggle is not new. This same struggle is seen throughout the history of mankind. It is a cycle of devastation that is observed in the rise and fall of great civilizations. These civilizations ceased because the forces of evil captured the hearts and souls of those involved and extinction resulted (Isaiah 13-14).
2. 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.
 - a. The term "modern" is used in various phases to describe the transition—three broad categories detail civilization's transition: *premodern*, *modern*, and *postmodern* to help them navigate through large pieces of time and thought. This chart is a common illustration:

Premodernism

Modernism

Postmodernism

(Paganism to Christianity)	(Apostasy to Humanism)	(Feelings to Paganism)
<i>God and the supernatural realm</i> furnish 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 systems are suspect-whether religious or not. No universal foundation for truth, morality, human dignity exists. All is cultural.

b. 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).

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

a. The PRE-Modern Period

- 1) The beginning of this broad cultural survey is man’s moving away from paganism to accept the laws of the God preached by the Bible. This event was a transition of earth shaking magnitude as civilization’s decision-making matrix underwent a change (1 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Acts 17:6-8).
- 2) Mankind began to repudiate the inane pagan devotions and accept the fact of the one, sovereign God.
- 3) Life in the Premodern Period was dominated by a belief in the supernatural realm; a belief in God and His activity in human and cosmic affairs.
- 4) The decision-making matrix utilized during this period was the New Testament. Hence, the warning from Inspiration to the Church to test the teachings and teachers (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22; 1 John 4:1).
- 5) 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 the scientific method. The following epoch (the Modern Period) is 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. If the supernatural elements of Christianity cannot be validated by the scientific method it was maintained they cannot be “true” (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).
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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 as the church becomes corrupt. Mankind's trust moved from a confident assurance in the Almighty Jehovah God of Scripture and became focused upon mortal man's power—a trust based not upon faith in the supernatural Deity but upon an arrogance of mortal man.

b. The Modern Period

- 1) There is no specific starting point for the modern era. But all agree it began when the basic principles of Christianity were questioned and a belief in an omnipotent Sovereign God 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 cathedrals.
- 2) 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).
- 3) 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 disdain nurtured toward the supernatural revealed in the Bible.
- 4) This was a seismic shift in philosophical standing between the Premodern and the Modern. This 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.
- 5) 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 "Hmmmmm." Instead of admitting their mistake of rejecting God and returning to His governing this failure led mankind to shift from the Modern to the Postmodern).
- 6) Whenever the Modern Period began it started because mortals thought they were possessors of all knowledge and 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 scorned.
- 7) The period of Rationalism reflected a momentous shift from a confident belief in the supernaturalness of the Bible. Rationalism was marked by a naive optimism about human potential that fueled skepticism about Church authority and Christian doctrine (the corrupt Church encouraged this skepticism).
- 8) 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.
- 9) Modernism was convinced 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 was dismissed as childish innocence exploited by those seeking to gain power, prestige and wealth.

10) 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 serving as an operational rule was the belief 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.

a) 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.

b) The following comment offers a good summary of the Modern 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."

c) 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."

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

11) 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.

12) The elevation of man as "god" at the close of the Modern Period 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.

13) Many theologians of the Modern Period sought to devise a rational religion.

a) 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 illustrated by the advocates of "theistic evolution").

b) This rational thinking encouraged 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.

- c) Even though these doctrines were rejected the impact 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 casually 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 the Modern philosophical program there is absolutely no room for God or the Bible. 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.

- d) At the beginning of the Modern Period gone were the convictions regarding anything supernatural because only interpretations resulting in "natural" explanations were acceptable. 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 measured all things by himself—a total anarchy had been established.

c. The Postmodern Period

- 1) 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. 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 of Nazism, Marxism, scientism, or rationalism ended up as the foundations of inhumanity's degradation instead of humanity's crown.
- 2) These systems, supported by mankind's intelligence, proved to be total failures. Consequently some 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."
- 3) 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 with the Postmodern Period's rejection of all objective facts and a total reliance upon feelings as the governing in life.
- 4) 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!
- 5) The social revolution of the counter-culture movement elevated individualism to the absolute authority on a personal level but taught mankind was a part of the "circle of life force" of "Mother Nature" and hence connected to all earth. This removed the dignity and value of human life making it equal with the ageless dirt!

- 6) The social revolution spawned contempt toward all established mores (social, religious, civil). This led to many throwing aside any objective rules and devolving into personal anarchy for authority.
- 7) The promises of Modernism were abysmal disappointments. They failed at every point. They were indefensible. It was embarrassing.
- a) How could the secular humanists explain away their embarrassment? They definitely would not recant their repudiation of the supernatural and reject 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.
 - b) Accordingly postmodernists explained the failure of the modern philosophy was 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."
- 8) 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."
- a) This is an amazing leap for those who had once championed education and reason as the governing factors.
 - b) The postmodernist conclusion was simple: Since man is the measure of himself then ONLY man can determine reality. 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) 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 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."*
- 9) 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 to be repulsed is any authority in religious beliefs and practice).
- The inevitable consequence of the Postmodern philosophy is absolute despondency!
- 10) 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."
- 11) Tragically this same governing appeal to feelings instead of factual truth has swept the Church.

- a) 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.
 - b) The absoluteness of God's revealed Truth is casually waved aside with the mindless comment, "That may be true for you, but it is not true for me."
 - c) 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."
 - d) 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.
 - e) 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.
- 12) 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. Today many refuse to accept the fact that God can be angry.
- a) Our families live in a Postmodern world. Our children and grandchildren are affected by the Postmodern philosophies.
 - b) The Church is surrounded by Postmodern advocates and is under siege to surrender its absolute Truth and accept "accommodating feelings" as the governing standard.
 - c) It is argued by Postmoderns that only by conforming to the "felt needs" of the community can the Church survive.
- 13) Because of its emphasis upon one's personal reality the Postmodernist (unlike the Modernist) accepts religion.
- a) To the Postmodernist any religion is accepted and especially the "natural" religions found in aboriginal tribal units.
 - b) However anathema is Christianity and Judaism because these are "exclusive and intolerant" of all other religions.
 - c) The religious control for Postmodernism is "toleration."
 - d) 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.
- 14) The real tragedy of Postmodernism is thus 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!").
- a) 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!).
 - b) 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.

c) Postmodernism 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. This condemns the Church for any evangelistic efforts and assigns 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.

d) Perhaps the greatest target of Postmodernism’s skepticism is the Bible. The feeling is that all written texts, including the Bible, simply represent a cultural outlook. The texts and authors reflect only their personal and cultural bias and the text 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.

e) Once again we come to understand “HOW one cannot 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.

1. 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).

2. Several factors highlight this damning transition...

a. A rejection of a moral absolute. Modern civilization 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 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 (Matthew 15:7-9).

b. A decision-making matrix governed by feelings. 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.

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

1) 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 (Psalm 119:97). How tragic that this attitude does not control the hearts of mankind today!

2) 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?

3) Tragedy awaits those who profess devotion to the Almighty but refuse to read and study God's Book! Their destiny is announced by the prophet (Hosea 4:6; 8:2Proverbs 29:18).

3. The Premodern Period challenged the decision-making process of paganism (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.

4. The Modern Period was characterized by dismissing the supernatural revelation and elevating the knowledge of mortal minds (1 Corinthians 2).

5. 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. This leads to the repudiation of any restrictive boundaries and exclusive groups. 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 is an impossible reality.

6. The "toleration" of the Postmodern man is the full-grown evil of the 1960's counter-culture guru Jean Paul Sartre's slogan "It is forbidden to forbid!" 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).

7. 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. It was a full cycle of pagan ignorance to pagan ignorance; a cycle of ignorance and destruction and empty existence.

a. 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 was rejected because multiculturalism convinced mankind that diversity is wonderful and should be encouraged. And such applauded diversity as always accepting and never exclusive.

b. 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 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.

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! (Judges 3:7; 17:6; 21:25)

When decision-making is based on 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"!

c. 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 elements. This vehemence is especially seen toward any teaching that is exclusive and restrictive of cultural behavior and belief.

8. 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.**

1. The Postmodern advocate wishes to be original and cutting-edge and progressive. But such wishes are 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.

2. One text highlights the Postmodern tragedy

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

- ✓ 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."

3. 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!

Reject this philosophy.

Refuse to associate with those living by this philosophy.

Understand there is no acceptable compromise with this philosophy. The marching orders for those seeking to be faithful to God command (Ephesians 5:11, 12).

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

4. 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 because we made a personal choice to follow the Bible.
5. 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 a sad redundancy in the history of man's civilization.

Exploring the challenge of postmodernism's impact upon religious belief

1. We live in a challenging time.
 - a. Long held beliefs are being discarded in favor of "new, progressive" understanding.
 - b. The absolute beliefs, values and foundations which have established a foundation of strength and progress are being rejected.
 - c. 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.
2. "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 Period.
 - ✓ 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.
3. 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 been turned upside down. They are totally twisted from what God has commanded (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).
 - a. In the modern decision-making matrix absolute truth, objective meaning, and objective reality do not exist!
 - b. 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."
 - c. Today people have been urged to define "truth" as only what is personally relevant to them. The devilish design is to convince everyone that since truth is 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.

d. 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.

4. Where does the Church fit in this cultural upheaval?

a. 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.

b. Such a message is loathed by the Postmodern mind.

c. Consequently some begin to think the Church must modify its message so it will become “current” in its environment.

1) 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 in the Church’s community. 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!

2) 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”!).

3) 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.

d. Modern man is eager to find 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.

He wants a supernatural that always permits and never punishes.

This innate yearning for a controlling supernatural force complicates the Postmodern worldview.

1) In order to fashion such a supernatural presence mankind must ignore the fact that the sovereign God Almighty possesses a righteous anger. The Postmodern mind is seeking a “god” who does not throw “temper tantrums” when His commands are disobeyed.

2) In order to provide this spiritual presence 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.

3) The Postmodern worldview understands that if there is any allowance for God’s anger then it collapses. For this reason the Postmodern mind has contrived a “god” that is all loving and never angry. There is some allowance of the divine anger but it is minimal and there is absolutely no acceptance of the reality of such a divine attribute.

4) The anger of the Almighty God is admitted but not accepted!

5. 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).

