



# 50 Days of Wisdom

Volume 13: Days 601-650

## Introduction:

### The Only Source of Wisdom

The twentieth century produced an information explosion unparalleled in human history—instant access to volumes of knowledge at the click of your mouse. Yet with all we have learned and with all that's been written, man's wisdom is still impotent to answer life's most basic spiritual questions like: How did we get here? Where do I go when I die? What is the meaning of life?

I once read a book by a psychiatrist on how to deal with depression. A section entitled *"Reprogramming Your Conscious Mind"* particularly caught my attention. Her first suggestion was that every time you have a negative thought, shout, *"Cancel!"* She also recommended sleep programming by playing a tape recording all night that contains lots of positive feedback. During the day, according to her, you should listen to positive music.

The doctor also thought it would be helpful to cultivate a meaningful spiritual philosophy. She said you need to find a belief system that works for you; any will do, but be sure to avoid people who talk about sin and guilt. Her final recommendation was to find the light in yourself. Unfortunately, that is the best human wisdom can do.

### True Wisdom Begins with God

God defines wisdom this way: *"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding"* (Job 28:28). That verse describes saving faith. And both fearing God and departing from evil take place initially at conversion. So you begin to be wise when you fear God by trusting in Him and repenting of your sins. As long as you have only human wisdom—or, to put it in James' words, *"earthly, natural, demonic"* (James 3:15)—you cannot know God or true wisdom. Without that critical first step, there is no relationship to the Giver of all wisdom and understanding.

On the other hand, if you have submitted to the gospel in repentance, you know the *"only wise God"* (Romans 16:27) as your Father. His book of wisdom is open to you as a Christian. The indwelling Spirit of wisdom illuminates to you the wisdom of His Word so you truly can be wise.

Why then do we still have a sinful tendency to look first to man's wisdom and virtually ignore the sufficiency of God's wisdom found in the Bible? I think if we truly understand the stark contrast—

the absolute opposition of one to the other—we will leave behind the elementary understanding of the world and embrace the riches of divine wisdom.

### **Human vs. Divine Wisdom**

Today your thinking is attacked by worldly philosophies and methodologies in an attempt to divert you from the Word of God, which is the only source that can satisfy the deep needs of the human heart. It's not a new attack; the Corinthian believers had the same problem. They were strongly influenced by the prevailing ideas of their day. When they became Christians and were awakened to the revelation of God, they were exposed to an obvious conflict.

Paul, describing that conflict, said, *"The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"* (1 Corinthians 1:18–20). While the first-century philosophers viewed the wisdom of God as foolishness, in truth, God exposed their so-called *"wisdom"* as foolish. That opposition makes the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God incompatible. They are mutually exclusive.

God has given man the ability to study, analyze, categorize, and develop the physical resources of this earth to benefit physical life. But that's where his wisdom ends. Because of sin, his mind is totally unable to discern the spiritual dimension. He has no power to change his own heart, no understanding to solve his spiritual dilemma, and no resources to satisfy his soul because he is spiritually dead.

The wisdom of men makes no contribution in the spiritual dimension, and it doesn't need to make a contribution. God's wisdom is rich and infinite. It needs no supplement.

### **True Wisdom Is Divinely Revealed**

First Corinthians 2:7 says, *"We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory."* The Greek word translated *"mystery"* doesn't refer to something strange or puzzling; it's a technical term for the kind of truth man has not previously known but is now revealed. The truth that God saves sinners through the substitutionary sacrifice of His Son is now plain for all to see.

However, no one can come to that truth by himself because of sin. *"A natural man [an unconverted person] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised"* (1 Corinthians 2:14). Divine wisdom can't be empirically deduced by analyzing data and physical evidence (verse 9). It comes only as a gift God gives when His Spirit reveals His Word to individuals.

First Corinthians 2:10 says, *"To us God revealed [His truths] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."* The Holy Spirit—the divine Author of Scripture—searches the deep recesses of God's Person and knows the mind of God perfectly. Therefore, He

is able to reveal God and God's will completely. The Bible contains all the wisdom man needs for solving all the spiritual struggles, problems, and issues of life.

Those deep things of God, Paul says, *"we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words"* (1 Corinthians 2:13). You have a resident Truth Teacher to enlighten you about essential spiritual truths. The Holy Spirit takes God's Word—the Word He has revealed and inspired—and illuminates it for those in whom He dwells. You can rightly appraise the Word, but only when you rely on the Giver of the Word.

Paul concluded, *"We have the mind of Christ"* (1 Corinthians. 2:16). You can understand if you are diligent and obedient to study and submit to it. Because it is revealed, its authenticity is guaranteed. Because it is inspired, its accuracy is guaranteed. And because it is illumined, its applicability is guaranteed.

Don't turn to human wisdom to solve spiritual problems. If the world had anything to offer, the best of its citizens would not have crucified the Lord (1 Corinthians 2:8). As a true believer, anchor all your confidence in the Word of God, the only source of true wisdom.

[By John MacArthur](#)

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Let's pray.

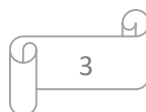
Father, we thank You for the great confidence that You have given us this wisdom—not because of our intellectual capability, but because by grace You have drawn us to the Savior. We thank You for the true wisdom.

And, Lord, we would pray this morning for anyone who may have some earthly wisdom but not the true wisdom; who may have the thought that they have arrived at a certain level of understanding and comprehension, but they lie against the truth, for they truly know nothing, for the best that they can know is earthly, sensual, and demonic. It is nothing but a part of the world order ruled by Satan and cannot elevate them beyond it. O Lord, may they know Your wisdom, the true wisdom, the spiritual wisdom that You give to those who come into a right relationship to You through Jesus Christ, who reverentially fear You, who worship You as an awesome God, and who are committed to obey.

Father, we pray that no one would turn their back on the true wisdom for the false, that those of us who have that true wisdom would pursue it in every dimension of our life so that in shaping us it makes manifest the very life of Christ, that others may see and believe. We pray in His dear name. Amen.

[By John MacArthur](#)

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The Truth in Love,

*Mark Paul* – (Servant of God)

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## How to Use This eBook:

**Simply read one message each morning.** (For a further understanding of the message content and context, click on the provided web link at the end of each message.)

Starting each morning in this way is how you “walk and talk with God in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8), just like Adam and Eve did in the garden.

This process yields many benefits:

1. The early morning Bible study will be your spiritual breakfast (manna), which will nourish your soul throughout the day.
2. The early morning Bible study will fill your Holy Spirit's sails and propel your spiritual ship in the right direction throughout the day.
3. The early morning Bible study is the method that God uses to speak to you personally as the Word comes down through the Bible study.
4. Since prayer is the method that man uses to communicate with God by sending up his thoughts and concerns, the early morning Bible study sermon will put you in prayer mode throughout the entire day.
5. The early morning Bible study will produce many questions but will also provide all the answers. *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you."* Matthew 7:7.
6. The early morning Bible study is a demonstration of honoring and worshiping God.
7. Each Bible study guarantees your transformation into a more spiritually mature Christian through the renewal of your mind. *Romans 12:2.*
8. By following this process each morning, you will not only hear God speak directly to your heart through these messages, but you will soon become a mature, cast-iron soldier, saint, servant, and son or daughter of the Most High God.

## Additional Notes:

1. It is recommended to share one message each day with your family, perhaps during mealtime.
2. To maximize concentration while listening to the audio files, it is helpful to read along with the audio transcript.
3. It is also beneficial to cut and paste transcript texts that are important to you while listening and then re-read those texts in the evening.
4. Please share this eBook with others; however, altering this content in any way is not permitted.

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Day 601

## The Delusion of Mysticism

Righteousness is gained only through the work of Christ and given only to those who depend solely on that work. Christ is all you need. However, not only were there rationalists who said, *“You need Christ plus human wisdom,”* but there were those who said, *“You need Christ plus legalism.”* They were the Judaizers, the ones holding onto their Judaism, who wanted to impose all that external stuff on Christians, which was but a shadow and not the substance. And there were also those mystics, and they’re still around, who come along and tell you, *“Somehow you’re falling short of the best that God can give you; you’re getting cheated out of your ultimate prize because you’re not living on a higher, mystical, intuitive, spiritual plane. You need Christ plus so much more.”* Many people have accused me of being devoid of the Holy Spirit because I have never spoken in tongues. This accusation stems from my failure to recognize that some believe the Spirit is performing a miracle ministry in this age, and if I don't acknowledge this, they believe I'm quenching the Spirit of God. They claim that I somehow oppose the Spirit of God, depriving Him of His influence and power in my life. They say that I need to be open to deeper and higher experiences, to more intuitive spiritual realities. I've had strange conversations with people who claim that Jesus communicates with them, and they ask me if I've ever experienced such intimate conversations. They shake their heads at the poor, deprived guy that I am, because I've never had these kinds of experiences. There are people who talk about conversations they have with angels, conversations they have with the Lord, and things the Lord says to them. And when someone asks me if I've ever had any such conversations, I respond, *“No, but God speaks to me constantly; He speaks to me every single day. In fact, He speaks to me every single time I open the Bible and read one word. And He speaks crystal clear, and I know exactly what He is saying. He speaks to me every time I recite a verse in my mind or out loud. He speaks to me every time I think of a biblical thought and a biblical truth.”* But somehow, I'm being cheated, and something profound is missing because I haven't had a mystical experience. Paul deals with that in Colossians 2:18. *“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize.”* There will always be people who insist that you need more than Christ. You require human wisdom, legalism, or a higher, mystical, intuitive, spiritual level to truly experience God. However, Scripture is all you really need, because Christ is everything. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-329\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Everything** – [TOC](#)

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Day 602

## When is Salvation Impossible?

Christ's bodily resurrection is a fundamental doctrine because salvation depends on it. What does Scripture say about salvation? *“If you believe in your heart that God”* – what? – *“raised Him from the dead, you’ll be saved.”* If you don't believe in the resurrection, salvation is impossible. The Bible says that justification is by faith; that's also a fundamental doctrine. God doesn't justify the

godly; he justifies the ungodly. That is a shocking statement to those in legalistic religions who try to earn their way to heaven. How can God justify the ungodly? This is achieved by attributing to them a righteousness that is not their own. In other words, those who seek acceptance before God based on their own righteousness or works will fail. God can only save those who trust in Him for the imputed righteousness He grants through Christ. This is precisely the very opposite of the doctrine of salvation in the Roman Catholic system. It is at the heart of what is fundamental. Therefore, what is fundamental is clearly biblical and pertains to salvation, which aligns with the core principles of truth: The concept of a triune God encompasses an incarnate God-man who serves as the Savior, leads a sinless life, and thus serves as the ideal substitute. He undergoes a substitutionary sacrificial death, rises from the grave, ascends to heaven, and receives the right hand of the Father as a reward for accomplishing salvation. This accomplishment brings God complete satisfaction, and He eagerly awaits His return to establish His kingdom. You have to understand justification. Romans 10 says about the Jews, *“They do not know about God’s righteousness, so they seek to establish their own.”* Anyone who attempts to reach heaven through their own merit, through a religious system, or through good works and morality will ultimately end up in hell. That was the Reformation battle. Martin Luther discovered that the just shall live by what? By faith. And the entire Catholic system began to crumble. According to Romans 10:4, what the Jews didn’t know was that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes. Christ comes along, the law is set aside, and Christ becomes the end of trying to reach God through the law for all who believe. Scripture clearly reveals all these biblical doctrines related to salvation, forming the fundamentals that require belief. Does this relate to your life? It does, because you can’t even enter into eternal life, into the life of God, unless you believe these things. And then, as you walk in these doctrines, as you grow in the knowledge of these doctrines, and as you learn more and more about these things, the expansive exposure to the truth of these doctrines throughout your Christian life is what the Spirit of God uses to sanctify you. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU272\)](http://GTY.org) – **Delivered by Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

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Day 603

### **Defilement of the Mind**

Sins of the mind are dangerous. For instance, a man who refrains from fornication due to fear of detection may persuade himself that it's acceptable to indulge in his own fantasies, believing that no one will ever uncover such a personal transgression. The fact of the matter is that the sin he deliberately entertains in his mind may be a thousand times more evil than anything he would ever think of doing before others. Scripture says his guilt is the same before God, as if he had acted it out. That’s why his conscience is so demanding, so relentless. You see, to indulge in sins of thought, to indulge in those kinds of things is to molest your conscience directly. This leads to an ongoing sense of guilt and a loss of joy. Those whose thoughts are impure cannot have pure consciences. Evil thoughts inherently carry guilt. When the thoughts are defiled, the conscience immediately is defiled, and the conscience screams. To the pure, said Paul to Titus in chapter 1 verse 15, *“All things are pure, but to those who are defiled, nothing is pure, but both their mind*

*and their conscience are defiled.”* Defilement of the mind leads to defilement of the conscience. Nothing damages the conscience more than the habit of indulging in evil thoughts. Regrettably, once initiated, the practice quickly becomes effortless. It's worth noting that this sin doesn't require any opportunity to commit. It doesn't require any particular person, object, or location. Sins of the mind can happen anytime, anywhere, under any circumstance, and that is why when you begin to cultivate sins of the mind, you are putting yourself in an absolutely terrorizing situation because you can't escape it. There are some sins you can flee, but not the sins of the mind. So, it's destructive beyond anything else. You think that it's okay because it's not on the outside, and everybody believes all is well. And the truth of the matter is it is worse on the inside because it's undetected by others and therefore breeding habitual iniquity by engaging the mind, the emotions, the desire, the memory, and the imagination. Those are thought sins. Your soul will be drawn towards sinful habits that tend to follow a certain pattern. Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny. It's a tragic thing. That's why it's crucial to consistently hear the Word of God and remain sensitive to sin. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-129\)](http://GTY.org) – **Keeping a Pure Mind** – [TOC](#)

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Day 604

### **Putting an End to God**

In 1980 there was a new book out called *The Changing of the Gods*. Naomi Goldenberg's subtitle is *Feminism and the End of Traditional Religion*. Listen to what it says: *“The feminist revolution will not leave religion untouched. Eventually, all religious hierarchies will be filled with women. I imagine women functioning as rabbis, priests, and ministers. I picture women wearing clerical garb and performing clerical duties. And suddenly, I saw a problem. How could women represent a male God? Everything I knew about Judaism and Christianity involved accepting God as the ultimate male authority figure. Congregations would have to stop seeing God as male. And what could these women priests, ministers, and rabbis read to their communities? They certainly could not use the Bible. A society that accepted large numbers of women as religious leaders would be too different from the biblical world to find the Bible relevant, let alone look to it for inspiration. God is going to change. We women are going to put an end to God. As we assume leadership roles in fields such as government, medicine, law, business, the arts, and finally religion, we will ultimately bring an end to God. We will change the world so much that He won't fit in anymore. I found this line of thought most satisfying. I had no great connection to God anyway. He never seemed to be relevant. Reflection on His cultural demise left me with no sense of loss, yet there was a magnificence attached to the idea of watching Him go. I felt part of a movement that would challenge religions that had been enforced for millennia. What will happen to God in His last years? The end of God and the transformation of religion were of major significance to human life, so I returned to graduate school to study the end of God. The feminist movement in Western culture is engaged in the slow execution of Christ and God. All of the roles that men and women have been taught to consider as God-given will be reevaluated. All feminists are making the world less and less like the one described in the Bible and are thus helping to lessen the influence of*

*Christ and God on humanity. Jesus Christ cannot symbolize the liberation of women. In order to develop a theology of women's liberation, feminists have to leave Christ and the Bible behind them. We have to stop denying the sexism that lies at the root of Jewish and Christian religion. It is likely that as we watch Christ and God tumble to the ground, we will completely outgrow the need for an external God.* Then she asserts, "*We must recognize the inner goddess as our psychic force. In this new era of changes for our gods, Christ and God will no longer behave as egotistical, spoiled children in our psyches.*" The End. Where did this all originate? In the garden of Eden. It's called the Curse of Eve. And the feminist movement is very much connected with homosexuality and its origins. Now, 44 years later, in 2024, take a look at our society and ask yourself: Have they been successful? Today we have a transgender movement, drag queen shows for children, men in women's restrooms, and men participating in women's sports, just to name a few abominations. These actions all aim to dismantle the roles that God has bestowed upon us, as well as God Himself. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2255\)](#) – **Empty Words** – [TOC](#)

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Day 605

### **The Purpose of God's Law**

The Bible is a very condemning book. The 5th chapter of Romans states that everyone died in Adam. We all inherited the sin nature from Adam. The revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, bringing retribution to those who do not know God and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, paints a frightening picture of the final future judgment that will fall on all sinners in Second Thessalonians chapter 1. They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the Lord and from the glory of His power. There are two aspects of eternal hell. One is sense—that is, real pain. The other is absence—the absence of God. That's real hell. You may argue, "*Well, didn't God send His law so we would have standards to live up to? And if you live up to those standards, we're going to be okay; we're going to get to heaven.*" That's the misunderstanding that is most popular in the world and equally a damning misunderstanding because, as holy as the law is, it's perfectly holy because it's simply a reflection of God; it's the ethics of God's nature codified, written out, and spelled out. The law, however, can't make us holy. The law can't deal with our sin, and it can't give us a way to escape condemnation. All the law can do is silence you when you assert any claim to goodness. All the law does is provide you with knowledge of sin. That's all that God's law does—show you sin. It's not the path to overcome sin. It's not the path to escape the condemnation that your sin produces. It cannot do that. It cannot alter your condition; it only reveals it. It cannot alter your condemnation; it can only enforce it. In fact, the law makes things worse because it expands the violations. Therefore, the law cannot reconcile anyone with God. Rather, the law increases our guilt and expands our sin. So there is condemnation, and only condemnation, for those who are subject to the law. This is because the law cannot save, nor can it remove the condemnation inherent in the written law. In other words, the law can't operate on human beings to any saving end. Condemnation focuses on the punishment that follows the sentencing, rather than just the judgment itself. This is a word that goes beyond sentencing to actual punishment. What is said here is this: There is no

punishment for those who are in Christ Jesus. In spite of all the violations, the breaking of God's law, and being in a condition where condemnation would be just, righteous, holy, correct, and deserved, in spite of our corruption and our belonging to the kingdom of darkness and Satan himself, we can be in a condition of salvation where there is no condemnation. There is absolutely, unequivocally no condemnation. That is the good news. That's the gospel. As sinful as you are, there is the possibility of coming into a condition in which there is no condemnation, not any at all. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-416\)](http://GTY.org) – **Giving Thanks to the Spirit** – [TOC](#)

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Day 606

### **How Bizarre is That?**

People in their identity sin groups, such as LGBTQ, are fortified, right? They're resistant. According to Scripture, their fortress becomes their prison, and their prison becomes their tomb. So what is our responsibility? We have to destroy all ideologies that are against the knowledge of God, any idea, any religion, any philosophy, any theory, or any viewpoint that attacks divine truth. As believers, we are waging a war against the lies that imprison people. What's our goal? 2 Corinthians 10:5 says: *"Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."* So let me ask you a question: How do you destroy a fortification of lies? There's only one weapon. What is it? Truth. It's all we have. And the more clearly you articulate that truth, the more it affects the fortification. Of course, you'll offend them, just as you would offend someone in a burning house if you grabbed them and yanked them out the front door before it collapsed on them. That is precisely what Jude 1:23 says: *"Snatch them out of the burning."* This is the spiritual war we're engaged in. It's a war against lies. So let me make it really simple. The premium is on how well you know the truth and how bold you are to proclaim it. In a sinful society, there is an essential connection between sin and lies, and as long as people can sustain their lies, they can maintain some self-justification for their sins. For those who die in the fortress of their own lies, there are eternally damning consequences. God is warning cultures and God is warning our nation. Go to Romans 1. What else can God say? *"Do you not see My judgment? In other words, "You have had a sexual revolution. That means I've taken My hands off of you. In some ways, I'm no longer restraining you; I'm letting you go the way your sins are taking you, without any restraint. You've experienced a sexual revolution that has become so deeply ingrained that people mistake it for normalcy. Then came the homosexual revolution, encompassing lesbianism and male homosexuality. And then there was the insanity revolution, leading people to believe things that are obviously and clearly not true. Look at what's happening to your society. If you keep going down this road, this wrath of abandonment will ultimately become eternal wrath."* It's almost as if we're standing at the gates of hell warning people, *"You can't keep going that way."* God has warned our entire culture. Therefore, the 2020 presidential election coming up next year is really a referendum on divine wrath because the Democrat platform aims to protect immorality, homosexuality, and insanity—all the things that bring wrath. Wow! How bizarre is that? Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM19-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **Telling the Truth in a Post-Truth World** – [TOC](#)

Day 607

## Principles of Wisdom

Being wise entails fearing God, guarding your mind, carefully selecting your companions, controlling your body, and watching your words. Proverbs 4:24 says: *“Put away from you a deceitful mouth.”* Tell the truth. When you speak, let it be the truth. *“And put devious lips far from you.”* Proverbs 5:2: *“Your lips may reserve knowledge.”* Let them speak truth; let them speak knowledge. Proverbs 6:12: *“A worthless person and a wicked man is the one who walks with a false mouth.”* Proverbs 10:11: *“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.”* There are numerous comments concerning the mouth. Let's summarize what Proverbs says about this: The lips of the righteous speak wisely. They endure forever. They are a fountain of life, a tree of life. They're like silver. They're satisfying. They feed others. They bring healing. They bring deliverance. They are patient, kind, wise, truthful, honest, pure, soft, gentle, slow to anger, and are mouthpieces for the Lord Himself. So, watch your words. On the other hand, the words of fools are crooked, foolish, violent, hateful, and full of malice. Too many words bring strife, ruin, slander, belittlement, gossip, and disgrace. They're like a scorching fire producing mischief and perversity. Another principle of wisdom: work hard. Proverbs 6:6 says, *“Go to the ant, O sluggard.”* You know what a sluggard is? We call him a flake today—a goof-off, lazy person. *“Go to the ant, O sluggard; observe her ways and be wise.”* People come to college and say, *“I want to make it in life. I want to have a career. I want to earn money.”* If you work hard, you will earn money; it's just that simple. If you don't, you won't. If you just want to lie around and loaf and float, your poverty will come in like a vagabond. Do you know what a sluggard or a lazy man is? He's a man with too many excuses, too many refusals, and too many postponements. Do you want to be poor? Then don't work hard. According to Proverbs 10:4-5, *“Poor is he who works with a negligent hand. But the hand of the diligent makes rich.”* There is a promise straight from God's Word. It all comes down to whether or not you are willing to pay the price for effort. There's no magic. In this world, hard work is the most rewarding thing in life. According to Proverbs, the lazy man will suffer hunger, poverty, and failure because he's sleeping through the harvest. He desires things, yet refuses to put in the necessary effort to fulfill them. He loves sleep; he's glued to his bed. Do you want to know the first principle of success? Get up, that's it. Second, get up early; third, get dressed; and fourth, get out of the house. Proverbs says that a man who pursues his work earns a good living, has plenty of food, is rewarded for his effort, and earns the right to have respect even before kings. Now that's a wise man. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(TMU135\)](http://GTY.org) – Pursuing Divine Wisdom – [TOC](#)

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Day 608

## We Can All Preach

Matthew 8:17 states, *“This fulfilled the words of Isaiah the prophet.”* What did Isaiah the prophet say? Isaiah 53:4: *“He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.”* The prophet

said that the Messiah would have the power to bring our diseases and infirmities to an end. Will Jesus heal all our diseases? Yes, in the future. However, He demonstrated His ability to do so during His time here on earth. By the way, Matthew 9:34 says, *"He cast out many demons."* Forget the healing gift; I would like to cast out demons. If I have a choice, I would love to do that. Could you imagine? I would approach every false cult and every false teacher, telling them, *"Come out of him,"* as they are all demonic and, according to 1 Timothy 4, are basically instruments of the doctrines of demons. The Old Testament says that all the gods of the nations are demons. Look, I don't spend a lot of time rebuking the cults because I think there are greater opportunities, but in Mark 1:34, it says of Jesus, *"He was not permitting the demons to speak because they knew who He was."* Jesus doesn't want any affirmation from demons. Why? Because the most dangerous form of religion is the one that affirms Christ and teaches lies. So if I had the power to cast out demons—and some people think they do—I wouldn't be going over to somebody and trying to get rid of the demon of post-nasal drip or the demon of heartburn. I'd be going to the headquarters of every false system, every false representation of Jesus Christ, and I'd be saying, *"Out. All of you."* But because I lack that authority, I must dedicate my life to combating them in a different way. This involves writing books, preaching sermons, and attacking those who falsely represent Jesus Christ. I haven't dedicated a significant amount of time to Buddhism and Islam, primarily because these religions do not use the name of Jesus Christ. But when they take on the name of Jesus Christ and totally misrepresent Him, that's beyond my tolerance, and I want to silence them. If I had the power to cast out demons, I could even fix the History Channel and the National Geographic Channel by casting out all the demons of evolution. If you turn on the History Channel and you hear anything about Jesus Christ, the gospels, the Bible, or God, you can be sure it's a pack of lies. Jesus doesn't want to be promoted by people who say nice things about Him and then lure people into the kingdom of darkness. Listen, Jesus was a preacher, folks. That's why He came to preach. The miracles only verified the authority and truthfulness of His message, but there was no salvation in the miracles; the salvation was in believing the preaching. None of us can heal or cast out demons, but we can all preach. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (41-6) – **Kingdom Power – [TOC](#)**

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Day 609

### **The Christan Exchange**

When you become a Christian, you exchange lying for speaking the truth and unrighteous fury for holy wrath. Anger is a retaliating spirit. Now, the only time anger is justified is when you defend God's holiness, as God has certain rights due to His divine nature. Ephesians 4:27 says that if you let yourself get angry, you will give place to the devil. So a person who never seems to have anything but an angry mood, an angry spirit, a bitter resentful heart, and an ugly kind of envious, jealous mood gives evidence that perhaps he's not a Christian at all and is nothing more than one who has provided the devil the opportunity to display himself. We should only become angry when God receives dishonor. Furthermore, when you became a Christian, you also exchanged stealing in favor of sharing. Stealing is a problem for everybody. Stealing is another aspect of

human depravity. The old man steals. But the new man doesn't. Ephesians 4:28 says, *"Let him that stole steal no more."* Stealing is taking anything that doesn't belong to you. The Bible talks about a lot of different kinds of stealing. For example, it discusses non-payment of debt, falsifying expense accounts, cheating on taxes, and not paying fair wages to someone who has worked for you. Jesus said, *"You'd better render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."* There are numerous ways to steal. And by the way, if you are a thief or someone who steals, I warn you from 1 Corinthians 6: *"Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral; nor idolaters; nor adulterers; nor homosexuals; nor thieves; nor the greedy; nor drunkards; nor slanderers; nor swindlers; will inherit the kingdom of God."* Thieves do not inherit God's kingdom. However, verse 28 tells us the opposite: *"Rather let him labor."* The Bible has a great deal to say about work. Second Thessalonians 3:10 says, *"If any would not work, neither should he eat."* God condemns that. You're to work. You're to work a good work. It should be unselfish, and the point is that when you're all done with this, you're doing it to give to those in need. In other words, work hard. But you're to work in order to give, not get. That's the idea. The natural approach is to get more and hoard your stuff. However, the New Testament principle emphasizes working harder and more diligently, doing good deeds, in order to accumulate more, which in turn allows you to give more to those in need. That's the whole biblical ethic. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (1930) – Principles of New Life – [TOC](#)

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Day 610

### The Trinity's Involvement

In John 3:7, Jesus says, *"You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again,' or 'you must be born from above.'"* The Spirit has to give you birth. How does that happen? Verse 8: *"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it and don't know where it comes from or where it's going; so is everyone who's born of the Spirit."* Therefore, you have no role in that. You contribute nothing. How could you when you are unwilling, unable, and completely deceived? And when somebody speaks the truth, you hate it. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is responsible for performing this heavenly work. Listen to Jesus in John 6:44: *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."* You're not going to come to Jesus unless the Father draws you and the Spirit gives you life. It requires the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit and the will of the Father. And Jesus said in John 8:36, *"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."* Here we have the whole Trinity involved. And how does somebody get out of this wretched condition? It's the drawing of the Father. It's the regenerating work of the Spirit. It's the freeing of the Son. So what does the sinner do? Well, he only has one option. He brings nothing. He offers nothing. So all he can do is cry out to God in mercy to save him. But in order to do that, the sinner must have come to the true recognition of who he is by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, who has convicted him of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as John 16 says. He must have come to the end of himself and all his self-confidence, so that he denies himself, and he must cry out for salvation, which is a gift of grace. Unless and until God moves, nothing changes. One final text is in 1 Corinthians 1:26: *"Consider your calling, brethren."* This is your

divine call to salvation. *“There were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.”* When the Lord started calling people, obviously He didn’t choose the wise, the mighty, or the noble. Verse 27 says: *“God has chosen the foolish of the world to shame the wise; God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen.”* Did you notice that the phrase, *“God has chosen”* appears three times? Why? Verse 29: *“So that no one may boast.”* Therefore, as a believer, you have no contribution. You can’t boast of your wisdom, your virtue, or your spirituality. You can only boast about God. What’s the culmination? God draws whom He chooses. The Spirit gives life. The Son sets free. And we’ve contributed nothing to it, so that we forever give Him all the glory. The only thing the sinner can do is cry out, like the man in Luke 18: *“God, be merciful to me”—what?—“a sinner.”* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-132\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Most Hated Christian Doctrine – [TOC](#)**

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Day 611

### **The Present Darkness**

It's widely recognized that the destruction of fathers leads to the destruction of society as a whole. The repercussions are devastating. You would think that the culture would wake up and understand the need for change. But instead of that, 65 percent of Americans recently surveyed are fine with babies born outside marriage, which means you’ve got a fatherless home and a wife with no husband. Sixty-five percent of people in America are fine with abortion. And you can throw this in: 66 percent are fine with homosexuality. Homosexuality is the ultimate perversion of manhood. It’s not only the ultimate perversion of manhood, but it also represents the end of society. When I say the West has fallen, I mean particularly because the United States legalized sodomy in 2003. In 2015, they legalized homosexual marriage. And here we are in 2022, witnessing the ultimate degradation of homosexuality: drag queens in elementary schools grooming children to be as perverted as a male could possibly be. The government is not only demanding acceptance for these individuals but also prioritizing them. Where you have homosexuality, you have the end of a culture. When homosexuality is legalized, as it has been in this country, when it becomes normalized to allow for marriage, and when it receives praise and elevation, you can be certain that the culture has fallen. So where are we? We are where we were before the Light arrived; we’re back in Greece and Rome. Deviant homosexuality permeated the Greek and Roman cultures. They had exclusive gymnasiums for men, where they engaged in various activities while naked. It was marked by debauchery, homosexuality, cross-dressing—every bizarre, unimaginable thing. There were catamites and pederasts; you can look them up. It was the worst of the worst, and it brought about the end of the Roman Empire and the Greek Empire. The fall was profoundly complete. We are now in the same place. This is nothing new. That was paganism, pre-Christian paganism. And now we are living in post-Christian paganism. So, how can we escape this situation without fathers? We can't. That's where we are, and Satan's relentless attack on the fathers got us here. You might believe that the situation can't get any worse than elementary school drag queens, but it can and will. It is perversity beyond

comprehension, but it will get worse. So that's the present darkness. But be warned, without Christ, Satan will someday say to all those who partake and promote of his darkness: *"Well done, devoted and evil servant! Enter into the hell of your master, forever!"* Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(49-30\)](#) – **From Darkness to Light** – [TOC](#)

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Day 612

### **Characteristics of Divine Peace**

Divine peace is the only real peace. It's a gift and always available. You can interrupt it, but you can restore it at any time. Furthermore, it is not dependent on circumstances. Look at 2 Thessalonians 3:16: *"Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance."* This peace is not subject to external influence. It's unaffected by anything that happens in the worldly realm. It's not built on any human relationship or circumstance. It's built on an unchanging, divine relationship, a divine plan, and a divine promise from an unfailing God who will secure you in Himself forever and do everything for your good. It's an unbreakable, unassailable, transcendent peace that is not like the world's peace. Jesus in John 14:27 says, *"My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid."* He's saying, *"There's nothing to fear; there's nothing to trouble you; I'm giving you a transcendent peace that is unaffected by any human circumstance."* Paul says I want you to have that kind of peace. No matter what persecution, trouble, sin in the fellowship, false teaching, or anticipation of Christ's return and impending judgment bring, I want you to experience an internal quietness, calmness, and tranquility that is absolutely unassailable, and I want God to grant you that so that in the midst of all the things in the world that are intended to tear you up and trouble your life, you live in a perfect calm. Secondly, his prayer is for you to know God's strength. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, *"Lo, I am with you always."* When you receive the Holy Spirit, you receive Christ and God; you receive the entire Trinity. He is saying, *"I'll always be there, and I'm with you for power."* That's the purpose. *"When the Holy Spirit comes upon you,"* Acts 1:8 says, *"you will receive power and strength."* And we require His presence for power and strength, as our own flesh lacks the necessary power; we rely on Him for our strength. We need His strength in temptation, to face the devil and demons, to be faithful and not defect, and to serve. We need strength for worship, perseverance, trials, and evangelism. You could sum it up by saying that we need strength and power to achieve spiritual fullness. We need spiritual power to become like God, to become like Christ. We need spiritual power to do everything. Philippians 4:13 sums it all up: *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."* All of that strength is available in Christ. It's all there. It can be interrupted, too. However, you can restore it if you trust the Lord, obey Him, endure His reproof and refinement, do good, walk in the Spirit, love Him from the heart, live by the Word, pray, and allow Christ to rule your life. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(53-17\)](#) – **Peace in Every Circumstance** – [TOC](#)

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Day 613

## They Have Been Bewitched

Paul, of course, was concerned about the people in his congregation who hadn't yet come to Christ. However, Paul was particularly concerned about the congregation's believers, who had become confused about the message. They began to believe that they needed to earn their salvation. And Paul says to them in Galatians 2:1: *"O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?"* And I would say today that most Christians in most churches are bewitched, and they're bewitched on this issue of the gospel. Therefore, Paul shifts his focus from the doctrine and targets those who perpetuate this fatal error. He makes several statements. Number one, they hinder the truth. False teachers arrive and begin to hinder, interrupt, and attack apostolic authority; they target the gospel of grace and the singular uniqueness of faith. They hinder you from obeying the truth. False teachers move you away from obedience to the truth of the gospel. The frightening reality is that a majority of Protestants surveyed today believe salvation is based on faith and works. That means the majority of Protestants are preaching a different gospel, and whoever preaches it is—what?—cursed. Secondly, false teachers are not of God. Paul is saying, *"This isn't coming to you from the God who effectually called you to salvation."* Indeed, individuals who have been effectively called and saved may lose their understanding of the gospel they believed in and were saved by. And many preachers, despite being true Christians who found salvation through the true gospel, are now embracing false doctrines. Thirdly, he says that false teachers contaminate the church. If individuals in the association of pastors, such as those from the Roman Catholic Church, the Mormons, a liberal church, or an Episcopalian church, believe that their good works will lead them to heaven, and you embrace them, you are bringing contamination into the realm in which you accept them. False teachers contaminate. Fourthly, the effectiveness of false teachers within the church is remarkable. Their greed drives them to seek out unstable individuals and entice them with promises of freedom. They need to be unmasked because they're deadly dangerous. Finally, they persecute true teachers. False teachers defend themselves by attempting to demonstrably undermine and discredit true teachers; it's a game they must play. If we do not wake up to the corruption of the gospel, this is going to get worse and worse. We've got to call it what it is. Condemnations for this error are not for godless atheists or for immoral agnostics; they're for so-called Christians who corrupt the gospel. We are the protectors of the church. Christ has given us the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit to fight against the assault on the gospel. It's impossible to forsake the pure gospel and not have forsaken the God who called you. We cannot be content that someone who holds to any work as a part of salvation is okay, because they're not. They have been bewitched. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (SC18-3) – **The Importance of Doctrinal Courage** – [TOC](#)

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Day 614

## What-Who-How-Why?

What is regeneration? It's eternal life. According to James 1:18, *"He birthed us."* It's to be born of God, to be born from above, to be given spiritual life, to be dragged, as it were, out of the grave to be awakened from the dead. But who regenerates us? Is there something we can do to pull it off on our own? No. Verse 18 also says, *"In the exercise of His will, He birthed us."* The reason that you have come to salvation is because God sovereignly turned on the light in you, dispelled your darkness, gave you life for death, light for darkness, sight for blindness, and truth for ignorance. Paul says in Colossians 1: *"He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."* This is all a work of God. So, the *"what"* is new birth, new life, and the *"who"* is God in the exercise of His own will. Then, how are we regenerated? *"In the exercise of His will, He birthed us"*—here's how—*"by the Word of truth."* What's that? The gospel. Romans 10:17 says: *"Faith comes by hearing the message concerning Christ."* Romans 10 also says, *"Whoever calls will be saved. But how can they call on one they've not heard? How can they hear without a preacher? How can they have a preacher unless somebody is sent?"* Therefore, we go and we preach because regeneration takes place by means of the Word of truth. Finally, why does God regenerate us? James 1:18: *"So that we would be a kind of firstfruits among His creatures."* Why did God do this? The answer is this: He wanted a gospel harvest. He desired to pick a gospel harvest from all of humanity, bringing it to heaven for His own joy and glory. Redeemed sinners are the love gifts that God gives to His Son, which the Son then gives back to the Father in eternity. This is a gospel harvest. Why is God giving life to the dead? He does this to gather together a gospel harvest for His own possession—to love, adore, serve, and worship Him in eternal fellowship with Him in heaven. That's the doctrine of regeneration. You must be born again, or you're not going to be in the kingdom. What would my question be at this point? What can I do to make that happen? Let me tell you what you can do. You can do what any sinner can do; you can ask. You can ask God in His mercy and in His grace to give you life. And the mystery of mysteries is that Jesus said, *"Him that comes to Me, I will never turn away. Seek, and you shall find. Ask, and it shall be given. Knock, and the door will be opened."* That's the mystery of it all. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-12\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Blueprint for Being Born Again](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 615

### **Confronting Error with Truth**

It's part of our responsibility to know the truth, and to know it well enough that when we see the error for what it is, we expose it and confront it with the truth. Well, in Acts 17, Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. But notice verse 16: *"His spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols."* There were statues of false gods everywhere. Now, a bricklayer in Athens would see the bricks. A street cleaner observes the state of the streets. And a preacher sees the spiritual condition. Paul saw religion, and His spirit was provoked and stirred up. He could not bear for Christ to be so dishonored. In verse 17, the pain was so great that it drove him into open public discourse. He came upon a group of Epicureans. They believed everything happened by chance. They believed that death terminated existence without any afterlife, accountability, or judgment. And so Epicureans lived it up because, hey, death is the end.

He then ran into the Stoics. They believed in pantheism: everything was God, God was everything, everybody was God, and everyone was the master of his own destiny. The people had created many gods, including an unknown god. So Paul introduced them to the true God. Who is the true God? Verse 24 says, *"The God who made the world, and all things in it."* Paul says, *"The Lord of heaven, Lord of earth, doesn't dwell in temples made with hands. He is transcendent. He is knowable, because I'm going to tell you about your unknown God. He is spirit. He is transcendent. Since He Himself gives all people life, breath, and all things, He is the Creator and does not need anything from human hands. He created every nation on earth from one man, determining their appointed times and habitation boundaries. He is the author of human nationality and human history. And while He is transcendent, he is also nearby. He's not far from each of us; for in Him we live, move, and exist."* He tells them that *"you can't worship a god that you've invented for your own purposes. You're not going to get away with that. Yes, God has overlooked the times of ignorance, and final judgment has been temporarily withheld. However, God is declaring that all people everywhere must repent. Repent of what? Repent of failure to worship the true God. And He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."* And then he tells them about the resurrected Christ, which is the divine authentication of Jesus' identity. Look, false gods, whether purposely identified or not, are still false gods. And when we see an error, it's our responsibility to expose it and confront it with the truth, just as Paul did. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(TMU290\)](http://GTY.org) – **Rejecting Heresy About God the Father** – [TOC](#)

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Day 616

### **Salvation Requires Security**

The first element of salvation is faith, and the second is atonement. There's a third element in salvation: it requires security. If God is going to save us, He has to keep us. Look at Genesis 3:22: *"Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now he might stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.' Therefore, the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden."* Obviously, the whole plan to rescue man is a grace operation. All of this comes from God's sovereign purpose. Here, grace manifests itself in a unique way. It already appeared in a sovereignly designed covering, a substitutionary atonement, a picture of the very Christ who would provide, and did actually provide the atonement for Adam and all the people before the cross, as well as since. However, what actually happened is that God said, *"Man has become like one of us, in the sense of knowing good and evil,"* not because God knows good and evil outside of Himself, but because man knows evil within Himself. God knows evil, but he never experiences it. Man knows evil by experiencing it. Man knows evil by feeling it, doing it, and thinking it. And now God is going to protect them from the temptation that could destroy them. He knows what man will do. He'll get back into the garden, find the tree of life, eat, and live forever. Since he's witnessed the brutal death of an animal, he will yearn for life. So he's in danger. He will find the tree of life, eat from it, and live forever in that evil state. The temptation to overcome death by eating would be overwhelming,

especially now that he had witnessed a gruesome death. Adam and Eve, by the way, deserved death. They deserved an eternal, living death. They deserved to suffer in their wicked state forever. That would have been a just punishment. Justice would leave them in the garden, allowing them to go ahead and eat from the tree of life and live forever. You say, *“Wouldn’t that be good?”* No, that’s hell—living forever in sin, living forever in corruption, living forever defiled. That’s hell. There wasn’t going to be hell for Adam and Eve; they were believers for whom God had made an atonement. But in their fallen state, they would go back and eat of the tree of life. And if they ate, they would never, ever die, nor would they ever be anything but wretched. *“Therefore, the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden.”* They never would have left voluntarily. So, God *“expelled”* them. Why did He do that? To protect them from hell. Not only does He provide atonement for them, but He also ensures their security. This illustrates the believer's protection from hell. Psalm 97:10 says, *“He preserves the souls of His saints.”* Atonement and security are both a result of God's grace. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-26\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Foreshadowing of Redemption – [TOC](#)**

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Day 617

### **God Alone Gives Life**

Some people say, *“We have to change the gospel message because we’re not getting results. We need a more effective message.”* But if you truly understand the glory of the gospel, you will know that the results depend on God. In the parable of the sower and the seed, what does it say about the sower? Nothing, absolutely nothing. It doesn’t say whether he uses his left hand or right hand to throw high, low, or curve balls. It didn’t say anything about the sower. What does it say about the bag he carried the seed in? Nothing; it didn’t say anything about that. What does it say about the method he used to throw it? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Why? Because it’s a parable about soil. It doesn't say anything about the seed, except that it represents the truth, the gospel. It’s not about your technique in throwing the seed. It's about the soil's condition. And I don’t do soil work. That’s Holy Spirit work. That’s what makes ministry so thrilling. If you get all wrapped up in results, you’re going to wind up preaching yourself and your technique and your style. You’re going to get caught up in your wardrobe and your shtick and your music and your cultural adaptations. The outcome is determined by God. That’s been the joy of ministry. I'm responsible for sowing. I’m not in charge of growing. I can’t give life. God alone gives life. So we see that if you understand the glory of the New Covenant like Paul did, it has all kinds of implications in your life. You will never get over the superior glory of the New Covenant; you will always understand the privilege of ministry as a mercy that you don’t deserve. You will commit yourself to a pure heart because you don’t want to do anything that would render you less useful in the proclamation of this glorious gospel. You will be responsible to accurately interpret the Scripture and never adulterate it. And you do know that the results depend solely on God, who gets the glory through the gospel. These are things that are so foundational. You see yourself as a clay pot, personally insignificant. You embrace the benefits of suffering, which bring out divine strength in human weakness. You understand that this is a gospel worthy of conviction, worthy of a life of integrity in which you

believe it, and that's exactly the way you proclaim it. I'm not looking for a reputation in this life. I'm not looking for success in this life. I'm far more concerned about an eternal weight of glory, about a faithfulness that will be rewarded in the future by a faithful God. I don't care about momentary light afflictions, and I haven't experienced much in comparison to many others. I don't focus on the visible, nor do I seek human explanations for my life. I want only divine explanations for my life. Paul truly understood the glory of the gospel. And so should we. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM11-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Glorious Gospel** – [TOC](#)

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Day 618

### **A Corrupted Conscience**

Scripture is unmistakably clear about the problem of evil. All people are sinners, without exception. We know they're all sinners because everybody dies, and the wages of sin is death. While not all are equally sinful, they share a common bent and will pursue their wickedness if you allow it. Some will stop just short of the line. Force will be necessary to deal with those who cross the line. However, keep in mind that as you relax the laws against evil, there will be an increase in crime, particularly open and flagrant crimes. If you tolerate homosexuality, you'll have a flood of it. Humans are dangerous; they're deadly dangerous, and the job of controlling them becomes harder and harder. By the way, the rate of technological advancement also leads to an increase in crime. Now we have a whole new kind of crime: cybercrime. Whatever you invent, man will criminalize. This brings up a crucial point to consider. Since humanity is so deceitful, depraved, degenerate, dangerous, destructive, and deadly, how did God ever expect us to survive? Are we just a whole planet living out the Lord of the Flies? How did God expect us to get through this life with any measure of meaning and joy, fulfillment, or value? How did God ever expect us to mitigate these sinful passions so that we could civilize, socialize, and survive? Well, God put some restraints into human life. They are essential to civilization's survival. When these are carefully and strongly maintained, life is good and people enjoy their lives. When one assaults, corrupts, diminishes, or destroys those restraints, life becomes extremely difficult. Now the first powerful restraint that God has put into human life is the conscience. We know conscience exists because so many people are full of guilt, anxiety, fear, dread, and panic attacks. However, the conscience is a gift from God. Pain is also a gift. Pain says, *"Stop that or you're going to do some serious damage."* Pain is a warning system, and conscience is the same kind of mechanism. Conscience is not God's law; it is simply a trigger that basically acts to warn us that we are disobeying a law. If you don't deal with this fear, guilt, and dread, it can lead to various negative outcomes such as depression, alcoholism, drugs, and even suicide. Just as a fool experiences pain and continues to inflict it until he ultimately destroys himself without seeking help, sinners often disregard their conscience, allowing guilt and fear to drive them to their demise. So how does a person shut down their conscience? You misinform it. You take the true law of God, which is written in Scripture and written in the human heart, and you basically eliminate it, denounce it, diminish it, remove it, and replace it with another law. And if you do this generationally, you'll eventually raise generations of people whose conscience is now informed by damning lies. That's what

propaganda is: lies. And when a society declares, *"Let's get rid of the Bible,"* it's the first step towards misinforming an entire generation about what's right and wrong. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-80\)](#) – **Who's to Blame for the Riots?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 619

### **The Attack from Uniformity**

Regarding Jesus' second coming and the end of the universe, Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:3-4, *"In the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep (died), all things continue just as they were from the beginning of creation.'*" In this text, there are three attacks on Christ's second coming. 1. The attacks of the rejectors. 2. The attack from immorality. 3. The attack from uniformity. Let's now explore the attacks that arise from uniformity. At a certain point, the mockers need to appear as though they possess a certain level of science and rationality, which leads them to propose verse 4. They say this after they've said, *"Where's the promise of Your coming?"* which is ridicule. They say, *"For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."* This is the absurdity of their argument, which is rooted in the concept of uniformity or uniformitarianism, which says: Everything continues exactly the same all the time. Evolution drives everything at a consistent rate of speed. That's why they say, *"It may have started 2.5 billion years ago with a big bang of nothing, but it just keeps going and going, and it's been going for millions and billions of years. It's all the same."* They need an explanation, so they propose evolution, which is akin to saying you're a potato chip, and there's no further insanity involved than that. It denies the earth's fossil record, and it certainly denies God's word. Uniformity is a ridiculous argument. *"Everything continues the same way."* How do you know that? I read this week that some say there may have been a dramatic type of mass event 2.5 billion years ago. Really? Who gave that report? Somebody else says, *"No, there was one 450 million years ago."* Somebody else added, *"No, it's 375 million."* *"No,"* someone else said, *"252 million."* Someone else said, *"201 million."* I found all those numbers for the same event. And finally, someone else said, *"There probably was one 66.2 million years ago."* Wow! That number is more precise, so it must be the correct one. However, everything has remained the same for 66.2 million years. Christ hasn't yet come, so he won't. Therefore, they mock Him, asking, *"Where is the promise of His coming?"* They don't want Him to come. They don't want a Judge. The way they speak about the fathers suggests that they may be Jewish. *"The fathers"*—is a Jewish phrase for the patriarchs in the book of Genesis. They're going back to Genesis and back to creation. Hebrews 1 says, *"God spoke through the fathers and the prophets."* So they argue that nothing has changed since the patriarchs by saying, *"There's been no divine judgment yet, so there won't ever be."* Of course, they ignore the flood. So they argue from ridicule, immorality, and uniformity, denying the coming of Christ in final judgment. Romans 1:22 tells us about them: *"Claiming to be wise, they became fools."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-125\)](#) – **Reserved for Fire** – [TOC](#)

Day 620

## The Preachers Mandate

All pastors must be committed to training the next generation of ministers in Bible exposition, which means to read, explain, and apply Scripture within its original context. Expository preaching safeguards the transmission of truth in Scripture. What would make someone think that they need to bring the Bible into modern times? That's a huge mistake. You don't bring the Bible into modern times; you take the modern reader into Bible times, because if you bring the Bible into modern times, you've just changed the context, and the revelation has lost the original intent of God to put it in the context that He wanted it in. If you acknowledge the authority of His Word, it's your responsibility to ensure that everyone understands that what they are hearing is not your words, nor your rewording of those words, but rather the very Word of God in its original structure, characteristics, and context. One of the temptations in this modern culture is to take a Bible truth, push it into the culture, and redefine it in that context, when what you really want to do is the exact opposite. It's considerably more challenging to revert to the original context and create a reality that resonates with the hearer. That's the genius of great exposition: You feel like you're there. That's why we have commentaries; that's why we have so many study aids, because context is everything. So you're not the chef; you're the waiter. You want to get the meal to the table without messing it up. So first of all, being an expositor means that you affirm the authority of God over the mind of the hearer, and that needs to be very clear and very obvious, and you do that by staying in the framework of the very words of God. Secondly, in expository preaching, you affirm the lordship of Christ over His church. Christ is the head of the church. People don't tend to deny this verbally, but in practice, they do so by promoting the leader, self-promotion, and pride; by omitting certain parts of the Word of God that the church has received from the Lord; and by misinterpreting Scripture due to irresponsibility, superficiality, and even poor translation. But most frequently, the lordship of Christ over His church is hindered by bad preaching. One of the most frightening things that I think of is standing up and saying with all my heart that Christ is the head of the church, and then telling the church something He didn't say. When preachers handle the Scripture accurately, they are fulfilling their responsibility to let God speak and to let Christ lead. So, being an expositor means that you stay within the framework of God's words. And when you remain within the context of God's words, you are therefore acknowledging the authority of God and His Word and affirming Christ's lordship over His church. That is a preacher's mandate. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (PC22-2) – **The Enduring Legacy of the Puritans** – [TOC](#)

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Day 621

## The Greatest Restraint

I've been reading lately about nihilism. Nihilism is an extreme philosophical word. Here's what it means: *"Total rejection of established laws and institutions."* Another dictionary says, *"Total and absolute destructiveness toward the world at large, and even one's self."* This is a precursor to the

collapse of social order and what could be a bloody revolution. To prevent such a thing, God has provided humanity with four powerful restraints. The first is the conscience. Every human being comes into this world knowing the difference between right and wrong because the law of God is written in their heart. So conscience is the first level of restraint that God has provided for every single human. The second restraint that God has created is family. While conscience is a personal restraint, family is a relational restraint. Family is the building block of society and civilization. God has established the family to be a loving, truthful, exemplary place that restrains evil in the next generation. Therefore, the family becomes the divinely-given institution for restraining sinners. The third restraint that God has given to us is civil authority. This is a societal restraint. The primary duty of civil authority is the moral wellbeing of its citizens. It's for restraining sinners and rewarding those who do good so that we can be civilized; enjoy a measure of peace and joy in life and God's creation. God has given civil authority the ultimate threat, the sword, which must be occasionally used to restrain evil. And God supports that. Therefore, civil government is a God-ordained institution to restrain sinners. So the law of God in the heart has a threat called the conscience, which will pile on guilt. The family has a threat, the rod, which will discipline the disobedient child. And the civil government possesses an even more powerful threat, the sword, which can be a deadly force when necessary. Right now, however, conscience, family, and civil authority are under assault. The twisting of the law of God in the heart, the crumbling of conscience, the breakdown of the family, and the cultural attack on civil authority lead us to nihilism, the overthrow of all institutions, and a form of self-destruction. Is there any hope for our society? Yes. There's one final restraint. The final restraint is the church. That is a spiritual restraint. The real cure for problems in the world is to change human beings from the inside, because that's where all the sin comes from. And that's what the gospel of Jesus Christ does. Christians become the real restraint because we carry a message that transforms hearts. Salvation makes new hearts and the power of God then comes from the inside, overpowering that corruption. Not that we're perfect, but we have new desires, new longings, new aspirations, new hopes, and new direction. The church then offers the ultimate restraint, a transformed heart. As a result, the work of God in salvation is the greatest restraint of all. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-419\)](http://GTY.org) – **How God Restrains Evil in the World** – [TOC](#)

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Day 622

### Resting on Scripture

Many people hold the belief that the Bible lacks clarity. The Bible is so clear, however, that even unbelievers can see its truths, even though they have no previous background in any kind of Christianity or Jewish history. The Bible is so clear that the Lord did something only once, and I think He did it very purposefully. Listen to this, Revelation 1:3: *"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near."* Really? Revelation? Most people would agree that the book of Revelation is the most difficult to understand. However, this is the only instance in which Jesus has ever promised a blessing to anyone who reads and understands a book. Now, of course, all Scripture is not so clear

that it doesn't need an interpreter, right? The Lord has raised up teachers for the perfecting of the saints. The Bible is not so clear that everybody understands the full depth of it. Paul talks about milk and meat levels. Those are not different truths or different doctrines; they're different depths of the same doctrine. You can know enough about grace and faith to be saved and spend the rest of your life trying to plumb the depths of the doctrine of salvation, right? Scripture has its heights and depths of truth, which, like God Himself, motivate and increase diligent study, humble pride, and threaten attitudes of irreverence arising from what is on its own face simple, straightforward truth. It's bread at a table for a child, but it's gold buried deep for the mature. Scripture demands all our mental powers to grasp its transcendent truths. Sometimes it's challenging to understand. And because it's sometimes hard to understand, the untaught and the unstable distort it, as they do to their own destruction. This, of course, is the work of false teachers, and people are their victims. We've all witnessed dramatic theatrical preaching, which can be found everywhere. We've all witnessed individuals parading across various platforms, entertaining people with pseudo-spiritual discourse, and if there was any potential for a spiritual response based on faith and obedience, it seemed to be limited to the relationship between the individual listener and the preacher. That's a prostitution of the preacher's purpose. You want the people to interact with the Scripture. So show them what God is saying in His Word. Avoid captivating them with your presence. Do not let them be captivated with you; that is a failure. They must be captivated and interact with the Word, and thus with God. If you open the Word to them and they interact with it, not by telling them what the Word is saying, but by showing them, you are teaching them how to interpret the Scripture for themselves. Therefore, you are initiating a lifelong passion for your people to search the Scriptures for themselves. You're showing them what Scripture means, and you're showing them how they can find what Scripture means. Don't let them attach to you. Their faith and obedience must rest on the Scripture. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(SC20-1\)](http://GTY.org) – [How to Shine the Clear Light of Scripture](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 623

### **Our Resident Truth Teacher**

Everything that Jesus said was from God. However, some of the things Jesus said were beyond the comprehension of the disciples. But, after His crucifixion, John 12:16 says, *"But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him and that they had done these things to Him."* What gave them understanding? The coming of the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit's coming that enlightened them. That's why our Lord said in John chapter 16 verse 7: *"It's better that I go and the Helper come."* John 14:26 explains the reason for this: *"He will teach you all things." Jesus is saying, "There are things I've taught you that you don't understand. Some of them, you'll begin to understand after the resurrection. Some of them, you'll begin to understand after I rise and explain things to you. As the days progress and we discuss topics such as the kingdom and the 40 days leading up to the ascension, you will begin to understand some of them. However, to fully understand all that I have desired to reveal to you, the arrival of the Holy Spirit is necessary."* Here, He's not so much talking about what the Holy Spirit's going to do

in you as what the Holy Spirit's going to allow the disciples to do for you. This is primarily a promise that the Holy Spirit will enable the apostles and their associates to write the New Testament. The Lord will then reveal everything He couldn't say because the disciples couldn't handle it. That's what this promise is all about. Of course, there is an illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit for which I am profoundly grateful, and I'm sure you are too. And the Scripture lays it out for us. But furthermore, in First John 2 there is a promise, a statement of fact given to all believers. Verse 20: *"You have an anointing from the Holy One."* So how do we know the truth? We have an anointing from God. What do you mean an anointing from God? Something that comes down from God into our lives. Verse 27: *"As for the anointing, which you received from Him, abides in you."* Who is this? This is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who has descended from the Holy One to dwell within us, is the reason we no longer require human teachers. Why? Because we have an anointing that *"teaches you about all things."* So, it's a Him. It's a person. It's none other than the Holy Spirit. It's true that, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, right? He dwells in you. Your body is the temple of the Spirit of God. Your body, in reality, contains the Trinity in a spiritual reality—a spiritual presence. Therefore, you have a resident truth teacher who will *"teach you all things."* This is a gift beyond all gifts. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (43-76) – **The Illuminating Role of the Holy Spirit** – [TOC](#)

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Day 624

### **The Father's Duty**

The first lesson that fathers must teach their sons is to fear God. The second lesson is to guard their mind. You are responsible as a father for the mind of your child. When the assault on the human mind is at such a level as it is today through the media, the job of guarding the mind of your young person and teaching him how to guard it is indeed a formidable task. In Proverbs 4:23, the father says to his son, *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."* Why must you guard your mind diligently? Because everything in life originates from it. And from that comes your conduct. Therefore, it's the father's responsibility to instill truth, virtue, faithfulness, honesty, integrity, loyalty, and love in his son's mind. Fathers, you are the guardian of your child's mind. You must keep the right stuff going in and the wrong stuff out. It's your duty before God to protect your son's mind and that of all your children as well. What tremendous responsibility fathers have. This means that we must shield our children from the harmful influences they encounter. That's the negative. The positive aspect is that we need to ensure they encounter the content we desire to occupy their minds. Therein lies the benefit of a godly education, Christian training, and exposure to the teachings of the Word of God. That is the duty of the father. Therefore, teach your son to fear your God and guard his mind, for out of it comes their conduct. The third lesson that a father must teach his son is to obey his parents. Teach your sons to obey what you say. That means discipline. If you love your son, you discipline, reprove, and rebuke him. If we are to have dutiful, faithful sons who carry on a righteous pattern, they must learn to obey their parents, and discipline is part of that. Proverbs 10:13 says, *"A rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding."* When your son doesn't do what you want him to do,

you use a rod. Later on in Proverbs, it says if he has rebellion in his heart, drive it far from him with a rod. This is discipline, not done in anger but done in love. Proverbs 3:12 says, *"Those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines."* And this discipline is done for the purpose of conforming your son to wisdom, breaking self-will, removing foolishness, delivering him from spiritual death, and making him a delight to his parents; all of those things are taught in Proverbs. So, teach your children to obey and use a rod to reinforce, because God says physical punishment done in love is a strong corrective. And if they learn to obey their parents and their parents are advocating the law of God, they will then learn to obey the law of God. Therefore, all children must be taught to guard their minds and obey their parents. That's the father's duty. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-71\)](http://GTY.org) – **Crucial Lessons for a Wise Father** – [TOC](#)

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Day 625

### **A Proper View of God**

David had made a truthful assessment about his sin in Psalm 51. And this is exactly where true confession must start. Number one, I deserve judgment. Two, I plead for love. Three, I need deliverance from my guilt. Fourth, I accept full responsibility, and I cannot change myself. Now that's a broken and a contrite heart, isn't it? That's the foundation of true confession, and that's where all confession must begin, with the proper understanding of sin. Secondly, true confession starts with proper understanding of God. You have to also understand God. You see, true confession recognizes God isn't after some external behavior. God isn't concerned that you just look good on the outside. God is after pure desires, a pure heart, and holiness on the inside. Only that pleases Him. True confession acknowledges God's high standard of holiness—that God wants holy longings, holy motives, holy desires, and a pure inside. Another attribute of God is God's power. And David acknowledges the power of God to do what he can't do—that God is powerful enough to change him and cleanse him. Some doubt God's power to cleanse and change their sinful habits. David didn't doubt it at all. Another thing about God that he affirms is God's goodness. He knew God wanted him happy. God is a loving God, and God receives pleasure when His children rejoice. That's His goodness. He had received God's chastening for his sin, but he knew that God wanted to relieve the burden. He knows that God is good, and He wants His children happy, thankful, joyful, and rejoicing. Do you believe in that kind of God? When you go to confess your sin, do you go to a holy God? Do you go to a powerful God who can make you clean? Do you go to a God who is so good He wants you to be restored because He wants you to be rejoicing? Another attribute of God is God's forgiveness. David knew that God was a forgiving God. He is confident that God forgives the true confessor. He knows that if you confess your sins, God is faithful and just to forgive your sins. That's not just a New Testament truth. That's the character of God. David also understood that God was faithful, that He would grant him a clean heart if he asked, and that God would renew that steadfast spirit, not taking away His presence or removing His spirit. God had made a covenant with him. God had said, *"I'm going to make you one of my own. I'm going to give you my spirit. We're going to have a relationship. If you come to me, I will reaffirm that relationship and remain faithful to it. You might not always be, but when*

*you come back, I'll be there. I'll always be there."* So what must we understand about God when we confess our sins? That God is holy, powerful, good, forgiving, and faithful. In addition to a proper view of sin, true confession always requires a proper view of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-78\)](#) – **How to Confess Your Sins** – [TOC](#)

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Day 626

### **What's Heaven Like?**

We live in an affluent culture, so heaven doesn't seem to have much appeal to us. We have everything we want. We live in the best environment in the world. However, in other parts of the world, life is very difficult, and heaven is very important because the heart has to have hope. But heaven doesn't seem nearly so attractive to you, does it? You live in a world where you can even buy what you don't have money to buy and charge it. So how do you get to the place where, all of a sudden, heaven has appeal to you? Not some kind of phony heaven, invented by people who just want to sell books and make money; but how do we get a perspective on heaven that makes heaven attractive enough that we can literally say to somebody, *"You need to go there, and not to hell"*? Learning about heaven is really important. I'll just give a list of reasons why: our Father is there, our Savior is there, our family is there, our name is there, our life is there, our inheritance is there, our room is there, our citizenship is there, our reward is there, and our treasure is there, laid up in heaven. Everything we have eternally is there. So what's heaven like? According to Revelation 4, the first reality of heaven is that the throne of God dominates it. Every being in heaven, including angelic and redeemed humans, gathers around the throne and, first and foremost, worships God as Creator. Understanding this is crucial. If you diminish God as Creator and buy into evolution, you have just assaulted heaven. You have just stormed the gates of heaven, and you want to put a stop to the worship of Him as Creator. However, chapter 5 expands the picture and introduces another element to this worship. Suddenly, the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, emerges from the throne and receives worship. So two things are going on in heaven: God is being worshipped as the Creator, and Christ is being worshipped as the Savior and Redeemer, and everything centers on that amazing throne. And then John says in Revelation 21 and 22: *"I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth passed away."* The day is coming when the entire atomically super-charged universe will implode on itself and blow itself out of existence, and God will create a new heaven and a new earth called the eternal state. Isaiah and the writers of the New Testament talk about heaven in its final form. It has a capital city called New Jerusalem. According to verse 3, God is dwelling there with His people: *"He will dwell among them. They will be His people. God Himself will be with them. He'll wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain."* So imagine the most wonderful experience you've ever had in your life, multiply that by 100,000, and then imagine that for every moment, forever. What's heaven like? Perfection. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(RE1505\)](#) – **Desiring Heaven Above All Else** – [TOC](#)

Day 627

### Which Path Leads to Heaven?

The Lord ends what's called *The Sermon on the Mount*, and it's "make up your mind time" on the mount. The whole sermon is a series of sharply defined contrasts between false religion and true religion. It lays out that there are two kinds of religion, two kinds of righteousness, and two pathways to follow. Pathway number one is: "I'm good enough to please God so that I can earn my way into heaven." That's one possibility. The other possibility is: "I am so bad that I can't do anything to earn heaven. Therefore, I must beg God for mercy and grace." So there are only two types of religions: the religion of human achievement, which holds that you can earn your place in heaven by being a good, religious, and moral person, and the religion of divine accomplishment, which holds that you are powerless and must rely on God's mercy and grace to save you. Now, we know which one of those is true: salvation is by grace alone. They don't mix. What you do doesn't earn you heaven; what Christ did earns you heaven. It's not your works, your righteousness, your religion, your morality; it's all of grace. That's why there's a command in Matthew 7:13: "Enter through the narrow gate." It's an echo of Luke 13:2: "Strive to enter the narrow gate." What is this talking about? Assuming you believe in Christ. You believe He is who He says He is. You believe He died, rose again, and provided salvation on the cross, paying in full the penalty for the sins of all who believe. The only thing left then is for you to enter the gate. However, the Sermon on the Mount describes two gates. There's a narrow gate, and there's a wide gate. Both gates say, "This is the way to heaven." However, one is true, while the other is a lie. We know that Satan invents all false religions, disguising himself as an angel of light. False religion doesn't say, "Join our religion so you can go to hell." All religion says, "This is the way to paradise; our religion will take you to heaven." False religion serves as a welcoming gateway for everyone. You can come in without any restrictions, bring anything you want, and come in with a group. You are welcome to join the group and embark on a journey that promises heaven but ultimately leads to hell. It doesn't require or ask anything personal. You just join the group, and you buy into whatever the teaching is. You undergo the ceremonies and become a part of the group on the broad road that leads to Hell. On the other hand, there exists a narrow gate that functions as a turnstile, and each individual is admitted one at a time. I often say this: "The kingdom of God advances one soul at a time." Only one soul at a time enters the narrow gate. That's why the command is, "Enter the narrow gate." Because that's the path to Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Therefore, which path leads to heaven? The narrow gate, and you must enter alone. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (RE1506) – **Heaven: The Future of Christians – TOC**

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Day 628

### Assurance of Salvation

We know that salvation is secured on the one hand by the divine and eternal sovereign purpose of God. We are also secured, on the other hand, by the continually faithful intercession of our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. You understand those two things. And they are in perfect harmony. But we could add the affirmation of Scripture. Paul asks a question in Romans 8:35: *“What shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* His answer? Nothing—tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, nothing. This is an affirmation that our salvation is secure. It also says in 1 Peter 1, verse 3, that we have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and we have been given an inheritance. What kind of an inheritance is it? *“An inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”* He’s saying that when you get this inheritance, it’s permanent. Verse 5 then continues, *“We are kept by the power of God through our saving faith, and we will someday be revealed in the last time.”* So whom God saves, He glorifies. That is the promise and affirmation of Scripture. But let’s ask another question: If our salvation is secure, can we experience that security? Can we know that we are secure? What’s the answer to that? Yes. How can we know our salvation is secure? Somebody might say, *“Well, I remember the day I signed a card, walked the aisle, raised my hand, or got baptized.”* But that doesn’t do it, and therefore, most people do not truly enjoy the security of their salvation. So how do you know? How can you really enjoy security? Well, security is the fact that we’re secure, but assurance is the feeling that we know that. And assurance is a blessing, just like any other blessing, that is forfeited in disobedience. So whenever you see someone who’s not sure whether they’re saved, you have several possibilities. One, they’re not saved. Two, they’re not blessed with assurance because they’re walking in disobedience, and that blessing is forfeited just like all other blessings. Thirdly, they’re being buffeted by Satan, who is the liar of all liars and is seeking to cause them to doubt what, in fact, is true. Fortunately, there are two basic ways the New Testament teaches that we can experience security or assurance. Number one is what we’ll call pure doctrine. True assurance comes only to those who abide in the true biblical doctrine of Christ. Internal assurance comes when there is no deviation in our doctrine, when we affirm the Christ of the gospel and the gospel of the Christ. Number two is pure living. Pure living is the key to experiencing assurance in your salvation. You’ve got to be able to look at your life, and if you are ever to know assurance, you must see a pattern of holy living in your life. If you don’t see that, there’s no way that you can logically conclude that you’re saved. Assurance of your salvation is only experienced through pure doctrine and pure living. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(DOC-13\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Doctrine of Salvation: Assurance – TOC**

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Day 629

### **Crimes Against the Holy Spirit**

The most serious crimes against God occur in corrupt worship. Exodus, chapter 32, tells the story of the golden calf. Aaron is the one who has led them into this. Verse 4 says: *“He took the gold from their hands and fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into a golden calf and said, ‘This is your god, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.’”* The golden calf was a false

representation of the true God. They were worshiping the true God in a false form, transforming the glory of God into a blasphemous misrepresentation and image. And how did that work out for them? It was a disaster for them. There was a massive slaughter. People were killed on the spot. Brother rose up against brother with a sword and hacked his own family member to death, carrying out the mandate of God to punish the worshipers who had corrupted worship. It's worth repeating. The most serious crimes ever committed against God are committed in corrupt worship. That takes us to the point where we need to say the charismatic movement continually dishonors God in its false forms of worship. It dishonors the Father and the Son, but most specifically, it dishonors the Holy Spirit with irreverent ideas and actions, untrue beliefs, false claims, false promises, and fleshly behaviors. It's corrupt worship, and it's ground for judgment. How severe is this? Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, *"You have attributed the works of the Holy Spirit that I have done to Satan."* In other words, they said Jesus did what He did through the power of Satan. It's fair to say that the reverse has been happening in many places in the charismatic movement. They attribute the works of Satan to the Holy Spirit. Once, the works of the Holy Spirit had been attributed to Satan. Now it's reversed. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the triune God, is not to be trifled with. It's dangerous to all who offer corrupt worship. It's dangerous to declare things that the Holy Spirit has not done, has not said, or would not participate in as works of the Holy Spirit. That is not a small matter. It's a radical seriousness in dishonoring the Holy Spirit that apparently escapes these people. Among Hindus is the Kundalini cult. They have certain body movements that appear to be perhaps best explained by demon possession. These body movements are exactly the same as those of people in the charismatic movement, exhibiting extreme behaviors that are commonly observed in so-called revivals. This is paganism. This is the work of Satan. This is the work of the kingdom of darkness, and it is not to be attributed to the Holy Spirit. Tragically, those claiming to be most devoted to the Holy Spirit are following patterns that blaspheme His name and align with those interacting with demons. Attributing to the Holy Spirit deeds He did not do, words He did not say, and experiences He does not author is a very serious crime against God. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (TM13-1) – **Strange Fire** – [TOC](#)

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Day 630

### **Our Ambition Never Changes**

The Apostle Paul had a legitimate ambition to please the Lord, to lead the church, and to preach the gospel, and that is an honorable ambition. That was his highest goal, to be pleasing to God. And we must also set pleasing Him as our highest goal. But to please Him, you must understand what pleases him. Right? So we begin with scripture, where the Lord has revealed his will. Beginning with scripture helps us find what pleases the Lord. We then let the spirit of God develop those convictions of scripture in us until they begin to show up in our behavior, and increasingly, they become the passion and the driving desires of our hearts. This is not something we should resurrect every year as a New Year's resolution; it's something we should live every single moment of every single day to be pleasing to him. People who don't attend churches where

they receive this teaching often struggle to live a life without a clear understanding of what pleases the Lord. So Paul had one ambition in life, and it was the highest goal possible: to please the Lord. Let's take a look at the widest expression of that in this life and the life to come. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:9, *"This is our ambition, whether at home or absent."* He's not referring to our presence at home or at work. No. This is something very much beyond that. Earlier in verse 1, he says, *"If the earthly tent, which is our house, is torn down, if we die, we have a building from God."* He is talking about another body in the next life. He's talking about going to heaven, receiving a glorified body. In this earthly house, we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly body. We long for the heavenly life, the heavenly body, and the heavenly glory. When he talks about being at home, he means being here, in this life, and therefore absent from our heavenly body. He is saying that whether at home, meaning in this life, or absent from this life in the presence of the Lord, our ambition never, ever changes. Paul had a strong desire to leave the world. Any believers should. But he was faithful to the calling of God. He was diligent, sacrificial, relentless and driven by all the right motives. He said, *"To live was Christ; to die was gain."* That means it was wonderful to be here, but it was far better to depart and be with Christ. It meant for him, as it does for all believers, a new resurrection body, sinless perfection, the fulfillment of redemptive purpose, holy immortality, the fullness of eternal life, all the glories of heaven, and, most of all, being home with the Lord. Paul is saying, *"Whether we're at home here and absent from there or at home there, our ambition never changes."* That is the universal desire of the believer on earth and in heaven: to be pleasing to the Lord. It is the highest and only goal, and it has the widest expression, both in time and eternity. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-413\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Believer's Ambition** – [TOC](#)

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Day 631

### Teach Your Children

The fifth chapter of Ephesians tells us something about submission. Now, it starts out with the wife's submission to the husband. Then to the submission of the husband to the wife—his submission takes the form of his love for her. He submits to doing whatever is beneficial and a blessing to her; that's his submission. Ephesians 6:1 then instructs children to submit to their parents. And that is critically important. Parents must ensure that their children learn to be obedient to them; this is a crucial aspect of training them. Children are not naturally going to obey their parents—not at all. We must teach them respect, teach them obedience, and discipline them for disrespect and disobedience. That's all implied in verses 1 to 3: *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord."* So how would children know what was expected of them unless the instruction that is given in the Bible was imposed upon them? Harvard University conducted a study a few years ago that identified crucial factors in predicting delinquency in children aged five to six. Here are the necessary factors for preventing delinquency. The first factor is the father's fair and consistent discipline. The second factor is the mother's supervision; she was present with the children wherever they were and actively participated in their activities. Thirdly, the mother and father's affection for each other was demonstrated. Fourthly, the family's cohesiveness was

demonstrated, with the father, mother, and children united in life. This is a revolutionary concept in our current culture. A father's discipline, a mother's regular, consistent, daily supervision, a father and mother's affection for each other demonstrated, family cohesiveness, and time spent together. However, when these factors were present, the child was healthy and whole. A medical doctor conducted another test, and his study identified five essential elements for healthy parent/child relationships. The first element is love, particularly parental love for each other and their children. The second element is discipline; it should be regular, just, and firm. The third was consistency. The fourth was an example. And the fifth was a man at the head of the home. He said this: *"The vast majority of neurotics, both children and adults, grew up in homes where there was no father, or the father was absent, or the father was weak, or the mother was domineering."* Therefore, when the world examines parenting from a medical and sociological perspective, it highlights the paramount significance of these factors. This is accurate, as it aligns with the teachings of the Bible. Love, discipline, consistency, example, a man in the home, father's discipline, mother's supervision, and mother and father with affection for each other and family togetherness—that's all biblical. In fact, Ephesians 6:4 tells us very concisely how to raise our children: *"Don't provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* In other words, teach your children what the Bible says. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-385\)](#) – **Parents, Do Not Provoke Your Children** – [TOC](#)

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Day 632

### **How the Lord Builds His Church**

There are people who say the church has failed. What do they mean when they say that the church has failed? Do they mean that God has failed to redeem His elect? Or do they mean that God has failed to provide a redemption that's adequate for His elect? Or do they mean that somehow those whom God chose and named and for whom Christ died have not been able to be gathered in because of some human failure? Listen, there's only one way the church could fail, and that would be by failing to be obedient to the pattern that God has established in building His church. And if this is the case at a particular church, God will find others to carry out His work and gather His people. Another way to look at it is that the end has already been determined. Those who would be saved were known to God before anyone ever existed. And their names were written down. They are the elect. What God purposed to do, He will do. So He will build His church, and He will gather in His people. How does He accomplish this, and what means does He employ to utilize us in the process? And if He does have a means by which He does it, has He revealed it to us? Well, the good news is that He has revealed the means He uses to build His church, and the answers to these questions are clear and precise. It's not an obscure answer. It's not debatable. It's not complicated. It's not even difficult. Given the abundance of conferences, conclaves, strategies, books, and seminars on *"church growth,"* one might assume that Scripture leaves this mystery unsolved, leaving us with insufficient information, necessitating the development of various strategies from a human perspective to build the church. Nothing could be further from the truth. And yet there are pastors, church leaders, and groups of people all over

the world who chase every church-growth strategy and every church-growth fad offered by every clever entrepreneur and marketer, reading every imaginable survey and every analysis of cultural perceptions, trying to do everything they can by every device to increase the number of people in their building. So you can try the world's strategies and assemble the tares, or you can follow the divine means revealed in Scripture and gather wheat according to God's plan. However, in Acts 2:39, there is a practical illustration of how the Lord builds His church, and nothing has changed. The process of building a church involves the Lord calling the elect to Himself. The church grows as the Lord gathers His children—first among the Jews, referred to as “*you and your children,*” and then the Gentiles, “*all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.*” That's how the Lord builds the church. He gathers His own elect. That's redemptive history. So some may fail to be obedient to the pattern that God has established in building His church, but God will never fail to redeem His elect. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-455\)](http://GTY.org) – **Marks of Real Church Growth – [TOC](#)**

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Day 633

### Looking for a Church?

First-generation churches fight for the discovery and establishment of the truth. Second-generation churches often strive to uphold and even expand the truth. However, many of them fall into the category of third-generation churches, characterized by apathy. Their members come from a Christian home. They come from parents and grandparents who came from Christian parents. They've been raised in the church but they didn't fight for the truth. They just kind of got handed the truth. So how do you avoid the danger of spiritual privilege? And how do you fight against the tendency to be apathetic in that situation? Michael Griffiths, the British writer, said, “*Christians collectively seem to be suffering from a strange amnesia. A high proportion of people that go to church have forgotten what it's all about. Week by week they attend the services in a special building. They go through their particular time-honored routine. They give little thought to the purpose of what they're doing. The Bible talks about the bride of Christ, but the church today seems like a ragged Cinderella, hideous among the ashes.*” Pretty graphic. The ragged Cinderella has lost its beauty due to a failure to understand the priorities in the spiritual life of the church. If we're going to recover the passion and the zeal for the truth, we've got to focus ourselves on the right things. And let me say this as simply as I can say it: you have to focus your attention away from yourself. Building a church around felt needs is utterly contrary to Scripture. Focusing on you, your problems, your dilemmas, your circumstances, and your situations is counterproductive. And while it may intend to help you, the unintended consequence is that you become the one being worshiped. That's a problem. You are the center of attention and the center of focus. The unintended consequence is that if you feel like you don't have any specific needs, or if they're not meeting those needs effectively, you may conclude that you don't need a church. If the church fails to meet your needs, you may decide to leave. Therefore, we must return to the core principles of the church. You want to go to church to get lost in wonder, love, and praise. You want to go to church to forget about yourself, to set yourself aside, and to lose yourself

in the glory and wonder of God. What you need in a church is a God-centered preacher, a God-centered teacher, and God-centered worship. When you're looking for a church, that's what you want. You want to be one of those who are consistently being brought before God into the very throne room of heaven to see His glory, His majesty, the wonder of who He is, His righteousness, and His holiness. It's really sad when people don't understand the full glory of God because if you don't understand the depth of the being of God, you can't rise to the heights of praise. And that's what dramatically alters your life. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(91-4\)](http://GTY.org) – **Fundamental Priorities of a Good Church** – [TOC](#)

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Day 634

### How to Understand Parables

Parables illustrate spiritual truth when they are explained, but they have a primary role of judgment. It's a judgment on those who rejected Jesus' clear teaching. But parables were also merciful. There's a mercy element in this judgment because if Jesus keeps speaking to the crowds in clear, unmistakable terms and keeps explaining Scripture and proclaiming objective doctrinal truth, their judgment increases. In Luke 12, Jesus told a story about a slave who knew His master's will and didn't do it. He said when the master comes back, he's going to receive many lashes. This is a picture of someone who had a gospel opportunity and rejected it. This is one who was going to be flogged. Jesus ends by saying: *"To whom much is given"*—what?—*"much is required."* That's talking about judgment. If I keep giving truth to these people who reject it, it only increases their judgment. Therefore, the practice of speaking in riddles and parables carries both a curse and a mercy. Concealing truth is a judgment tempered with mercy so that He doesn't add guilt upon guilt upon guilt. Think about this: There is not another parable in the entire New Testament told by anyone but Jesus because parables are for judgment, and only Jesus can render that judgment. And His parables are the same today. For believers, they illustrate the truth because we understand them. How do we understand them? Because they're explained to us, and also because we understand the whole of Scripture, the whole gospel, and salvation. Even when we don't have a recorded explanation, we understand the parables; not because we've been given some mystical insight but because all 40 parables are about the gospel. They're all about salvation, and the more you understand the fullness and richness of salvation, the more you will understand the parables. If you had to choose between a story and a doctrinal presentation, take the doctrinal presentation every time. Why? Because the story is less. You could take any aspect of salvation, any aspect of the gospel, and whatever aspect of the gospel is relayed in a parable, and if you know the Word of God, your understanding of the gospel truth far outstrips the simplicity of the parable. They do illustrate, but they are less than the full glory of that truth. The most important thing to understand is that all parables relate to the gospel and salvation. And all parables are more than an absolute statement of fact, but nevertheless, all truth is understood by logic. Emotion, sentiment, or feeling cannot comprehend truth. All truth is apprehended by a rational grasp of facts that are put together in a reasonable argument leading to an ultimate truth. This is what we do. Every sermon is an argument. I've been arguing with you right now. I've been

presenting an argument. I've been making a defense of how to understand parables. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-464\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Purpose for Parables** – [TOC](#)

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Day 635

### **Who is Your Neighbor?**

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, *“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.”* So what should the two priestly people in this parable do? Leviticus 19:34 says, *“Love the stranger as yourself.”* That’s what a priestly person would do. But these two pass by on the other side. With complete indifference, they shun him as he’s lying there in critical condition. Therefore, they have no love for either the man or God. Because if they loved God, they would obey and love the stranger, love the neighbor, and show mercy and kindness. The point is simple. You would expect a priest, who represents God and represents the people to God, to love God enough to do what God said and love people enough to do what they needed. They didn’t love God or others. They are a representation of that kind of self-righteous religious system. Here are two typical priestly people who are in the Jewish system, who are self-justified and appear to be righteous to those around them, but they don’t love God or others. So we’ve just met two people who don’t have eternal life because they don’t love the Lord their God or their neighbor. Our Lord has just indicted the Jewish religious establishment in the story, and now He introduces a hated person: *“A Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion.”* This is shocking because Samaritans were considered evil, mostly because they intermarried with non-Jews. What’s the point? Two men, representing the Jewish establishment, who thought they loved God and loved others as themselves, had absolutely no love. The system is bankrupt. These people trying to justify themselves are lying, and they are deceived. Two men were religious and failed to meet the requirement for eternal life. They didn’t love their neighbor, strangers, or their enemies. But this one man, who is an outcast, this invention of Jesus, demonstrates the quality of loving your neighbor as yourself. He takes center stage in the story, and this is just really shocking to the one who is listening because what the Samaritan does is so extensive. That’s the whole point of this. This is lavish love. What’s our Lord saying here? This is loving your neighbor as you love yourself—that’s what you’d do for you. This is love without limit, without boundaries. That’s the whole point. This is what he would do for himself. This isn’t about, *“Who is my neighbor?”* or, *“Who qualifies to be loved?”* It’s about *“Am I a neighbor who loves in an unqualified way?”* So, who is your neighbor? Everyone in your path, all the time, anyone with a need is to be loved lavishly, sacrificially, generously, tenderly, limitlessly, and kindly, as long as the need exists. You should love everyone, even if they are your adversaries. Who loves like that? Nobody. The purpose of this story is to make people feel guilty for not loving God and others perfectly and then to run to the One who alone can provide forgiveness for that sin and eternal life. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-466\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Most Misunderstood Parable** – [TOC](#)

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Day 636

### **Because He Lives, We Live!**

Every aspect of salvation depends on Christ's resurrection, even bestowing eternal life. In John 14:19, Jesus says, *"Because I live, you will live also."* Therefore, our life depends on His resurrection, as our existence as Christians also depends on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us life, who regenerates us, who takes up residence in us, and enables us to sustain a permanent, everlasting faith and an everlasting life. And if Jesus doesn't rise, there's no coming of the Holy Spirit. Forgiveness of sins is also dependent upon the resurrection of Christ. The book of Acts says: *"Because He rose from the dead, He provides the forgiveness of sins."* The destruction of Satan is another result of our Lord's resurrection. Because He rose, He rendered powerless the devil, who had the power of death, and freed all of us from Satan's grip eternally. His resurrection is the evidence that He conquered Satan. His resurrection also provides Him as our Intercessor, the one who lives to make intercession for us, to sustain us into eternal glory. What is His intercession? It's His sustained support and prayer to the Father on our behalf that secures our eternal salvation. All that we have as believers, from the gift of eternal life to the defeat of Satan to final glory, is a direct result of the resurrection. Without the resurrection, no one can attain eternal life. Because He lives, we live. Therefore, the resurrection affirms the Word of God, that He provides forgiveness of sin; it affirms the Son of God, that He sent His Spirit; and it affirms the salvation of God, that He bestows eternal life. In addition, it also affirms the existence of God's church. It's the resurrection of Christ that establishes the church. He is alive, and He lives in His church. The risen Lord lives and gives to His church apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teaching pastors to build up the body to conform to His own image. The true, living church is in union with the living Christ. The religions of the world inevitably look back to some originator, some source, some person who is dead. However, this is not the case for the church of Jesus Christ. We don't trace our history back to someone who is dead; we live in the presence of Him who is eternally alive. The true church is alive. Despite all that it endures and suffers, it is alive. The resurrection life of its Lord is the very life of the church. Because He lives, we live. What transformed the Apostles? What took that little band of followers of Jesus to the place where they literally turned the world upside down with the message of Jesus as Lord and Messiah? One event: the resurrection. And that became the message of the apostles—a message that essentially established the church and continues to advance it. How important is the resurrection of Jesus Christ? It vindicates the truthfulness of the Word of God, the deity of the Son of God, the completion of the salvation of God, and the establishment of the church of God. Because He lives, we live! Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (81-76) – **The Full Impact of the Resurrection** – [TOC](#)

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Day 637

### **Johah, A Book About God**

What do we learn in the Book of Jonah? That on the surface it's about Jonah, but underneath, it's all about God. What does the story teach us about God? Firstly, the story reveals God as the ultimate hero. He's the one who rescues Jonah. He's the one who gives Jonah the message. He's the one who makes the people hear the message, believe the message, repent and be converted, and come to worship Him. It's about God. But if you break it down, first of all, it's about God as the sovereign Creator. It's God, you see, who initiates and incites the storm. God prepares the fish. God has the fish swallow Jonah. God makes sure Jonah survives. And God designs the fish to throw Jonah up on the land. It's God, even before all of that, who started the wind that set the storm in motion. It's God who then calms the sea. It's God who grows the plant that shelters him. It's God who sends the worm that eats the plant. It's God who whips up the scorching wind the next day. It's God who does all of this. It's God who has power over creation. Even the pagan sailors recognize God as the Creator. Surprisingly, the only person in the story who resists God is Jonah. The sailors don't resist God, the Ninevites don't resist God, only the prophet of God. You firmly believe that God should choose someone else, but God's purpose is to accomplish great and significant work through individuals who, from a human perspective, would be discarded. And this should serve as a source of encouragement for all of us, given our inherent imperfections. Second, we not only learn that God is the Creator who controls everything sovereignly, but we learn that God is a supreme judge. The message that Jonah was to give was the message of judgment: forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed by divine fury and divine wrath. Recognizing their doom was imminent, the Ninevites repented. And that takes us to the third and final element that we learn about God, and that is that God is a gracious Savior. His lovingkindness is not limited by our prejudices, our pride, or our indifference. He extends his lovingkindness, compassion, and grace not only to good people but also to brutal, murderous, and idolatrous pagans such as the Ninevites. Those three truths are always the heart of the gospel. God is the Creator of all of us. We have sinned against our Creator. Wrath and judgment have been pronounced upon us. But we have been given the gospel, which offers us forgiveness through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, in the book of Jonah, you not only see the heart of the gospel, but you see the heart of God. The Creator God, sinned against, warns about judgment and fully forgives those who repent and embrace Him. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-393\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jonah: The World's Greatest Fish Story** – [TOC](#)

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Day 638

### **God is For Us!**

If we're in Christ, there'll never be any condemnation. We have been delivered from condemnation, judgment, and punishment. What shall we say in response to this act of generosity? What shall we say about a God who loves us to the limit of His capacity (which is infinite), who can't love us more and can't love us less? What's our response to that? I mean, it seems so overwhelming, merciful, and gracious that we wonder if it's even possible. Well, there are two hypothetical possibilities: God could decide to reject us, or we could decide to reject Him. Can either of those happen? Could it be possible that at some point in time, God says, "*You know,*

*I've been working with you for a long time? You're making no progress. I give. I'm weary of your disappointments and your transgressions. I'm weary of teaching you the same lessons over and over again, which you don't seem to be able to learn. You embarrass Me. You bring dishonor on My name and My church. I've really had enough, and My holiness demands that I not tolerate any more of it, so we're done. Your salvation is canceled.*" I think we all could understand that. On the other hand, it's also possible that you might say, *"God, I'm kind of tired of the way You are operating. Does life have to be this hard? Does my husband have to be that stupid? Do my kids have to be that disobedient? Do my bosses have to make life this miserable? Do I have to be this ill? Does it ever end?"* I can understand the hypothetical possibility that somebody's going to say, *"I've had all I can take,"* especially if they were promised the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel. But can either of those things happen? Can God stop loving us? Is there something that can make Him stop loving us, or is there something that makes us stop loving Him? No, listen to Paul in Romans 8:31: *"If God is for us, who is against us?"* Even if we are against ourselves, God is for us. That's one of the greatest statements in Scripture. *"God is for us."* Did you hear that? I think sometimes even Christians think God is against them, or He's neutral, or He's just in a constant state of disappointment. No, *"God is for us."* He knows we're weak and sinful, that we fail, we stumble, and we fall short. We don't love Him or serve Him the way we should, but He is for us. And the proof is found in verse 32: *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"* This is the greatest proof that God is for us. God loves us, and because He loves us, He sent His Son. He gave Him as a sacrifice on our behalf. He did not spare His own Son. Literally, He required of His Son the most horrific, unimaginable sacrifice, and He did it for people who were ungodly. Yes, our great God is for us! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-167\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Triumph of Divine Love** – [TOC](#)

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Day 639

## **Two Types of Wisdom**

The Apostle James has some marvelous teaching on the subject of spiritual wisdom. In James 3:13, the Word of God says, *"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."* Cicero, the philosopher said, in 52 B.C., that wisdom is the best gift of the gods and is the mother of all good things. And Scripture certainly would affirm that. But the best illustration I know of is regarding King Solomon. In 1 Kings 3:5, *"The Lord came to him in a dream at night and said to Solomon, 'Ask what you wish Me to give you.'" Remarkable opportunity. "Then Solomon said, give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine?" "And God said to him, I have done according to your words.*

*Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.*” He was the wisest man ever because he asked for the right thing. When Solomon was given the unbelievably wonderful privilege of receiving from God anything he asked, he asked for the best thing; he asked for wisdom. And what he got was an immense capability to understand this world. However, in the book of Ecclesiastes, he said all of that wisdom without the knowledge of God is vanity—emptiness. But he pursued the right thing: wisdom. However, when it was all said and done, wisdom was a little better than folly, and wisdom really wasn’t that great because all of the worldly wisdom that he had could not satisfy the need for spiritual wisdom. So, worldly false wisdom is unfulfilling. But it’s more than that. Human wisdom, more than just being unfulfilling, is negatively wicked. Why do people want wisdom? Jealousy, selfish ambition, and arrogance. It’s a selfish motivation. There are people who want to pursue wisdom for their own selfish reasons, out of bitter jealousy, to ascend above someone else, or who are just plain arrogant. It’s not of God. It is selfish, self-centered, ego-fulfilling, and driven by personal gratification at any cost. It lacks the selflessness, meekness, and gentleness that verse 13 talks about. Therefore, proud, selfish motives often drive the pursuit of natural, earthly wisdom. They arrogantly assert that they possess wisdom, but in reality, they lack it. Why? Because the only source of true wisdom is God’s spiritual wisdom, which comes exclusively from above. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (80-79) – **Spiritual Wisdom** – [TOC](#)

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Day 640

### **The Significance of Rainbows**

One of the most extraordinary and beautiful natural wonders is the rainbow. It intrigues everybody. And rainbows have fascinated people throughout the ages. Scientifically, a rainbow is an arc of concentric colored bands that develops when sunlight interacts with raindrops. It all has to do with the angle with which the sun shines through the different raindrops. Beyond their scientific explanation, rainbows have inspired myth and mystery worldwide. There are a number of very strange and evil myths surrounding rainbows. The homosexuals have even adopted the rainbow as a symbol of their perversion. So, is there meaning and significance in a rainbow? Well, it does have immense significance and meaning. According to the Bible, there is really no message in the sun, moon, or stars. While they are signs, Genesis 1:14 specifically refers to them as signs of seasons and days. In other words, they are calendar signs. The sun, the moon, and the sky indicate to us nights, days, and seasons. They simply provide consistent reference points for days, weeks, months, and seasons. The constellations, which are pagan astrological inventions, have no connection to the Bible. God would never place paganism in the sky. There’s only one thing you will see in the sky that’s a sign, only one thing that God has placed there to give a spiritual message, and that’s the rainbow. Listen to Genesis 9:8-13: *“Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, ‘Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the Flood,*

*neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.'* And God said to Noah, *'This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.'*" The only sign in the sky is the rainbow. And it's a spiritual message of the covenant between God and man. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-263\)](http://GTY.org) – **God's Rainbow Covenant** – [TOC](#)

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Day 641

### **The Doctrine of Conversion**

It's important for Christians to understand the basics of the great doctrine of conversion. Therefore, we need to know what the Bible has to say about being converted, about being transformed. However, in today's world, there appears to be a growing disinterest in all forms of doctrine. It's a rapid, accelerating movement that has a great indifference to sound doctrine. In fact, there are many books being written today that attack the idea of conviction and clarity about a truth and attack sound doctrine as if it is some kind of carnality or some kind of pride, as if it is an intrusion into spirituality. Books such as these are rapidly infiltrating the church. And recent surveys indicate that there is a fast-growing interest in this kind of spiritual experience that knows very little of the church, very little about doctrine, and very little about biblical interpretation. In fact, the latest kind of approach to this is that people don't want to go to church; they want to be the church. They don't want to hear doctrine; they just want to live it out. Well, it's pretty hard to live out something you don't understand. Yet, the trend today is to give people an experience without truth. But the Bible is crystal clear that we need to have information. And not just information, but interpretation. We must understand the things that the Bible affirms. And one of the things that the Bible affirms is that when a person is saved, when a person comes into the knowledge of God through faith in Jesus Christ, there is a conversion. And 2 Corinthians 5:17 sums it up: *"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation."* That's regeneration. But immediately upon that comes this idea of conversion: *"The old things passed away. Behold, new things have come."* New, not in time but new in character, new in quality, not in sequence but in essence. This is conversion. When you are in Christ, you experience a regeneration. From our perspective, this process is passive. That's what God does to us. But coupled with that regeneration is a conversion in which we are experiencing a new kind of life where the old things are gone and everything is new. There is a putting off of the old self and a putting on of the new self. It's a renewal; the mind is changed, the new self being renewed in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness connected to the truth. So it's important to know that salvation is two sides of one great divine miracle. The side in which we are passive is regeneration; the side in which we are

active is conversion. We experience the power of the truth that changes us so that all the old things pass away, such as lust, corruption, and deceit. And the new self is characteristically Godlike, Christlike, righteous, holy, and conformed to the truth, to a true knowledge of God. And the biblical way to describe this spiritual transformation is conversion. Repent (turn) and believe! [GTY.org \(90-299\)](#) – **Spiritual Transformation** – [TOC](#)

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Day 642

### **Be Sanctified!**

What is God's will for us? According to 1 Thessalonians 4:3: *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified."* That's God's will for us between our justification and our glorification. From the time of your salvation to the time of your entrance into heaven, God's will for you is that you be sanctified. It's of grave concern to the Lord that we be sanctified; that means to be separated from sin unto God, from sin unto holiness. We are to be increasingly like Christ. We are to live lives that are essentially heavenly rather than earthly in that they manifest all the virtues that belong to the Lord and the saints in glory. Listen to Colossians 3:1-4: *"Since you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."* We are called to live the risen life. And how are we to reach the world? By leaving the world. Verse 1 says, we are to live lives by *"seeking the things above."* Verse 2: *"Setting our minds on things above, not on things on the earth."* Christians have all died in Christ and have risen in Christ, and we live in newness of life. That is who we are. We are new creations, spiritually alive from the dead in Christ. Therefore, we need to live consistently with that identity. This is who we are, and it sets the standard for how we are to live. To sum it up, look at verse 17: *"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."* Everything you do in word and in deed should be consistent with your identity in Christ and should be an expression of gratitude to God the Father for what He has done. This means you need to live a heavenly life. Seek the things above. Set your mind on the things above—the things that are heavenly, the virtues that belong to the perfect God, the perfected believers, and the holy angels. Live above the world; leave the world so that you can reach the world. However, if you're going to live the risen life and leave the world to reach the world, you're going to have to deal with what remains on earth of your sinfulness, and that requires some very dramatic and consistent practical action, in addition to a strong nature. Paul is saying, *"Not only do you want to reach up for all the virtues that define holy living in heaven, but you want to remember that you have to deal with the fallenness that still remains in your own life, fallenness that will show up through the instrumentation of your human body—your mind, your speech, and your actual conduct."* Why? Because, *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-51\)](#) – **Killing the Sin in Your Life** – [TOC](#)

## The Truth in Love

What I'm about to say will surely offend those who are devout Catholics and those who believe that Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. Some will read it as unkind and unloving, but nothing is more loving than the truth. To let somebody perish in a false system isn't loving at all. To rescue people out of a damning and false religion is the only loving thing to do. And there's a lot at stake here. However, some evangelical Protestants recently got together with Catholics, and they came up with a document called *"Evangelicals and Catholics Together."* And they said, *"We need to embrace each other and carry out this gospel mission together."* What is at stake here is whether or not we evangelize Roman Catholics. There are one billion of them in the world. Are they a mission field, or are they our co-laborers for Christ? That changes everything. Yet, the mood of evangelicalism today is to embrace them. But reclassifying the Pope and Roman Catholics as believers isn't that simple. It has massive implications. It has implications that literally overturn centuries, if not millennia, of missionary effort and martyrdom. In the long war on the truth, the most formidable, relentless, and deceptive enemy has been Roman Catholicism. It's an apostate, corrupt, heretical, false Christianity, and a front for the kingdom of Satan. The true church of the Lord Jesus Christ has always understood this, and even through the Dark Ages, from 400 to 1500, prior to the Reformation, genuine Christian believers set themselves apart from that system and were brutally punished and executed for their rejection of that system. Those believers throughout those centuries, along with genuine and discerning believers today, understand this is a false system; it has a false priesthood; it has a false source of revelation; and it has a false tradition in the magisterium. It has illegitimate power granted to it by this magisterium. It engages in idolatry through the worship of saints and the veneration of angels. It conducts a horrific exaltation of Mary above Christ and even God. It conducts a twisted sacrament of the mass by which Jesus is sacrificed again and again. It offers false forgiveness through the confessional. It calls for the uselessness of infant baptism and other sacraments. Motivated by money, it has invented purgatory. It exploits indulgences, selling forgiveness in exchange for money. Their false gospel of works teaches that your good deeds contribute to your salvation. Their abomination of idols, relics, and prayers for the dead. Their perversion of forced celibacy, and it goes on and on. But, at the top of the pile of all of this is the papacy. The Pope, as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, has effectively usurped Christ's headship over His church. The Reformers have always understood this and they declared it with unabashed boldness, and most were put to death for it. They saw in the Antichrist the Pope. Why? Because they had some special insight that the final Antichrist was actually to be a pope? No. Because the Pope personified everything that the Scripture described the Antichrist to be. The reformers knew—as any true student of Scripture knows—that the Pope stood at the top of an illegitimate system and, particularly, at the top of an illegitimate priesthood. And we stand with the reformers. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-291\)](http://GTY.org)  
– The Pope and the Papacy – [TOC](#)

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Day 644

## The Priority of Parenting

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, *“One generation plants the trees, then the next generation enjoys the shade.”* That is about creating shade for your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There are many parents who are fearful for their children because of the way life is going in the world. In many ways life is getting more difficult. And while it certainly is getting worse—because evil men always get worse and worse—this is the cycle of all of human history. Every generation of believers in every nation has lived at some point in the decline of society. We have the sense today that we may be experiencing the death of our culture and civilization, and not only in our own country, but around the globe. While we watch the destruction of the family, we are very aware that the foundation of social sanity and well-being is being destroyed. Society and civilization cannot survive the death of the family, and the assault on the family has been going on in our nation for about 50 years. It’s a war far more deadly and destructive than any Middle Eastern war. With the death of the family, civilization just disintegrates. It collapses into a black hole of social chaos, criminal behavior, selfish narcissism, sexual perversion, rebellion, and anarchy. And everybody experiences personal emptiness, to one degree or another. The assault has been systematic and planned, and it has affected every aspect of human life. It has settled in the very highest places in our land, educationally and even politically. We have people in high offices who are trying to destroy the family by allowing for abortion and same-sex marriage. We have candidates running for office who advocate for that. Laws of our nation now allow the killing of unborn children, divorce, homosexuality, and same-sex marriage. You name it; it’s all okay. So the question is: *“How do we raise our children as Christians in this kind of environment?”* Well, what is it that our children need most? Number One: Salvation. Number Two: Sanctification. They need to be saved from sin and death and hell, and they need to be sanctified, separated from sin. They don’t need behavioral control; that’s a short-term issue. The goal of parenting is not to raise a child who is feeling good about himself or herself and has a measure of self-esteem. The object is not politeness. The object is not to raise a child that is somehow isolated from the culture around them, because no matter how much you try to isolate a child, the flesh is not restrained by isolation. Our goal is their salvation and sanctification, and those are spiritual ministries; therefore, they are spiritual objectives. Therefore, the knowledge of God is what is to be taught to your children, not just to know the Lord, but to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And they must also be taught to love others as much as they love themselves. What your child needs most of all is salvation and sanctification. And that’s a work of God that is only accomplished in the heart of a child through the proclamation of divine truth. Thus, proclaiming is the priority of parenting. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-482\)](http://GTY.org) – **Creating Shade for Your Children, Part 4** – [TOC](#)

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Day 645

## The Woman of God

The Word of God gives explicit instructions on the subject of being an excellent wife in Proverbs, chapter 31. And it's amazing how our society has changed in its perception of a woman and her role. I don't mean that it has changed over the several thousand years since Proverbs 31 was written, but it has changed dramatically in the last 20 or 30 years. During my own lifetime, there was a portion of my life in which our society could at least understand and affirm the pattern of an excellent wife, as given in Proverbs 31. But, in the last 30 years or so, our society has moved so far from these principles that it may seem almost ludicrous to imagine a woman of the eighties fitting into the mold of the standards given by God in Proverbs 31. So, after thousands of years, there has been a monumental shift in the role of womanhood. Well, what kind of a woman does our society now honor? Who is the honored woman of the eighties? Who is the prototype woman of the eighties? What is the modern superwoman like? If our society and our culture could design a woman, what would that woman be like? Well, let me see if I can't pull it together for you. She would work at a job, build her own career, demand, and get equal pay with men. She would refuse to submit to her husband, demanding equality with him in everything. She would have an affair or two or three, a divorce or two or three, an abortion or two. She would definitely exercise her independence. She would make sure that she was eminently fulfilled herself. She would rely on her own resources. She would not want her husband or children to threaten her personal goals. She would have her own bank account. She would hire a maid or cleaning service. She would eat out at least 50 percent of the time, with her family or without. She would make cold cereal and coffee the standard breakfast fare for the family and quick-frozen meals the usual dinner fare, and she would certainly expect her husband to do half the housework. She would appear tanned, coiffured, aerobicized, and brimming with muscle. She would be shopping to keep up with the fashion trends and make sure she could compete in the attention-getting contest. She would put her children in a day-care center, making sure that each one also had a TV in his or her room, so that when they were home, they wouldn't interrupt her routine. She would be opinionated. She would demand to be heard from and be eager to fulfill all of her personal ambitions. The world would applaud her, but she wouldn't be able to stay married or happy, and her kids would most likely become involved in drug use. However, she would be the woman of the eighties, far removed from the woman of God depicted in Proverbs 31. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-50\)](http://GTY.org) – **An Excellent Wife** – [TOC](#)

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Day 646

### Here's the Problem

For whom did Christ die? Well, I'm confident most people in churches would quickly answer, "*He died for everyone.*" Most people believe that on the cross, Jesus paid the debt for the sins of everyone because He loves everyone unconditionally and wants everyone to be saved. That's not what the church has historically believed. But that's what the present version of the superficial church believes. That sinners, all of them, have had all their sins atoned for—potentially, and that's the key word, if they will just acknowledge Christ and accept the gift of salvation. Therefore,

our task is to persuade sinners to accept the salvation that Christ has already fully purchased for them on the cross. Since Christ died for everyone, everyone can believe and should believe and must believe if they'll only will to believe. So in a contemporary concept, we should work on the sinner's will, believing that the sinner has both the responsibility and the ability to activate saving faith all on their own and believe. It's just a matter of moving their will. That's the popular idea, and that means that hell is full of people whose salvation was purchased by the death and resurrection of Christ. It means, then, that everybody in hell and heaven had the same thing done for them on the cross. The lake of fire will be filled with eternally damned people whose sins were actually atoned for on the cross. So the people in hell had the same atonement as the people in heaven. The difference was the people in heaven self-activated their will to accept that atonement; the people in hell did not. Now, if that sounds strange to you, it is. That Jesus died and paid in full for the sins of the damned, and paid the penalty of divine justice for them—just as He did for the redeemed—is a very strange notion. That means the sinner then decides whether the universal potential death of Christ applies to him or not. That view would say that Christ died to make salvation possible, not actual. The sinner, then, makes the choice. Christ then didn't really purchase salvation for anyone; He actually died on the cross and in some way removed a barrier to make salvation a potential. You will not find such language anywhere in the New Testament or the Old. The message that this would send to sinners goes like this: *"God loves you so much that Christ died for you. Won't you let Him save you? The final decision is up to you. In fact, God loves you so much that He gave His Son, and hopefully when you see the sacrifice that Christ made, you will be moved emotionally to love Him back by accepting Him."* Now, the problem with this is glaring. Here's the problem: According to Scripture, sinners are born spiritually dead in their trespasses and sin, and separated from God's life. They are blind and in a state of perishing eternally. They are double-blind because the god of this world, Satan, has also blinded their minds. In their natural state, sinners cannot understand the things of God—they are foolishness to them. That means the sinner, on his own, can't do anything to save himself. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (90-363) – **For Whom Did Christ Die?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 647

## The Story of Man

God created the universe with all of its diversity and variety as we now know it in six 24-hour days. And the peak of creation came on day six—the creation of man and woman in His own image. There was no evolutionary process. God created man, the supreme point of creation, in His own image, which means with self-consciousness, personality, rationality, intelligence, creativity, and the capability for relationships. And then He gave man sovereignty over all the created world and its vast and rich resources. That was the culmination. The real story begins with the creation of man because history is not about matter, stars, planets, the earth's topography or geography, or animals. The real story is the story of man; everything else was scenery for the story of man and his redemption. You could simply say that all of time is divided into two categories: Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:3, the creation of the universe, and Genesis 2:4 to

the rest of history, the story of man. So chapter 2, verse 4, points forward. The scene has been set, the stage has been made ready, and man takes the center stage and becomes the subject of all the rest of Genesis and all the rest of human history. This is the beginning of man's story. So in that perfect garden environment, God created man and woman. Verse 7 says, *"The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground."* In other words, God created him from the same fundamental elements that form everything else. *"He then breathed into his nostrils that breath of life, and man became a living being."* Notice that God didn't make man out of a monkey or an ape or a baboon; God made man out of dust, the same elements that make up the ground. Man did not evolve; God created him. There is no testimony anywhere on the pages of Scripture that man evolved; it's always God who formed him, created him, and made him. And man's home was the garden—the special garden that God made for his joy and delight. So, what did Adam do in the garden? He served God as the caretaker of that magnificent garden. And someday when we get to heaven, do you know what we're going to do forever? We will also serve the Lord. What will we do? Well, there won't be anything broken, so there won't be anything to fix. There won't be anything wrong, so there won't be anything to make right. There won't be anybody out of line, so there won't be anybody to correct. So, preachers, teachers, and biblical counselors will all be out of business. But we will serve in heaven and have a vocation somewhat like Adam had—a vocation that expends no energy, a vocation that never makes us weary, and a vocation that always brings us delight and blessing. Rejoice! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-227\)](http://GTY.org) – **Man in the Garden of God** – [TOC](#)

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Day 648

### Your Greatest Testimony

Let me put it to you simply: If you're going to win that battle against sin, if you're going to be a holy person, if you're going to be a righteous person, it's going to have to take place in your own heart. That's where the battle has to be fought. You have to be able to say what Job said, *"I'm righteous. I've examined myself. I've looked at my motives, I've looked at my heart, and I don't buy your accusations of sin."* Why? Because if you don't win the battle over sin on the inside, sooner or later it'll show up on the outside. You cannot conceal it; it's impossible. You're not that clever, you're not that alert and you're not that disciplined. If you're losing the battle on the inside when nobody knows, where nobody sees, and you know you're not righteous there, it will show up. You can be certain of one thing: your sins will eventually be revealed. A man in the New Testament, Paul, was being attacked by enemies. False teachers had come into the Corinthian church, and they wanted to teach lies, as false teachers always do. They were attempting to discredit Paul and destroy his credibility as a pastor. They were accusing him primarily of having a secret hidden life of shame. In other words, he was a phony; he was a hypocrite. That sums up their attack. And that's the worst that could be said—that underneath the surface of this apparently godly, faithful proclaimer of the gospel, there was a secret, hidden life of shame, and he was nothing but a hypocrite. You know, there are people in the ministry for whom that's true. They're in there preaching and teaching, and under the surface there's a hidden life of shame.

And they said that of Paul. And what does Paul say to defend himself? Look at Second Corinthians 1:12: *“Here’s our confidence: the testimony of our conscience.”* Paul says, *“I’m telling you, I’ve looked inside, and here’s the testimony of my own conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God.”* In other words, *“This holiness and this godly sincerity come by the grace of God, not by the wisdom of my flesh. But I am telling you, my conscience tells me that we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially toward you in a way that is holy and godly.”* There you have the safest place you’ll ever be because that’s the highest earthly court. God is the highest heavenly court, but the highest earthly court is conscience. Let me tell you something: nobody on this planet knows what’s in my heart; nobody, and nobody can hold me accountable there. So that’s where the battle is won or lost, and if you’re losing it there, you’re going to lose it externally, because you can’t conceal it. Your private sin will eventually come to light. Therefore, listen to your conscience; it’s your greatest testimony. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (TMU207) – **Dealing with Private Sins** – [TOC](#)

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Day 649

## The Day of the Lord

Zechariah, in approximately 520 to 518 BC, prophesies the theme of the coming Messiah. And he gives Israel this amazing vision of the wonderful future that Israel has in the plan of God—a future of national salvation when the Messiah comes to establish His kingdom and fulfill all the promises given to the Patriarchs, David, and all the prophets in the past. And sadly, instead of hearing the word of the Lord that came through Zechariah, they eventually murdered Zechariah and continued, even after the restoration of Jerusalem, on their apostate journey—all the way to the arrival of Messiah, whom they rejected, and beyond that, through human history until now, and until the future when they will be saved. That is yet to come. But, in a broader view, Chapters 12, 13, and 14 probably have no equal in the Old Testament for their scope. It’s one of those prophetic passages that you just find rising above all others in terms of the breadth of what it covers. The actual events are world-embracing in these three chapters. It includes the world confederacy that forms against Israel and Jerusalem. It includes a prophecy of the victory of God’s people empowered by the Lord and then the conviction of Israel as a nation by the Spirit of God; the restoration of the gospel as they look on Christ, and the One they rejected becomes the One they now acknowledge as their Lord and Savior; the cleansing of the hearts of the nation; the purging of the land from idolatry; the elimination of false prophets; and the time of tribulation is here, the time of Jacob’s trouble; the partial success of the nations invading Israel and besieging Jerusalem; the second coming itself, the appearance of Messiah as He comes for His people, rescues them, saves them, establishes the messianic kingdom, punishes the ungodly nations and all the ungodly in the world, establishes His throne and has a feast to celebrate that. It’s just a massive amount of eschatological information that is touched on by this prophet Zechariah in this section. Perhaps a simple little phrase is the key to it, and it’s the phrase *“in that day.”* It appears 16 times in 12, 13, and 14 and refers to the Day of the Lord. The prophets talked about the Day of the Lord—the day when the Lord establishes His reign, the day when the Lord judges. The Day

of the Lord is an eschatological term that has to do with judgment. There is the day when God allows man to have his time on Earth. There is a day when God allows Satan to be the prince of the power of the air, the God of this world, but there is coming the Day of the Lord when He intervenes with worldwide judgment, and that is the day that is referred to 16 times as in that day, the day when Christ returns as Judge and Savior to destroy the ungodly and to establish His glorious kingdom for those that belong to Him. And Zechariah prophesies in that day, that Israel will be among those who belong to Him. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-445\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Salvation of Israel** – [TOC](#)

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Day 650

### **The Truth Which Saves**

By way of reminder, all religions, without exception, as well as false forms of Christianity—and there are many of them—teach that people are delivered from judgment and saved from divine punishment by their own works: works of morality, works of religion. Of course, this is Satan's biggest deception, a lie that has permeated the planet throughout human history since the Fall. The gospel—the true gospel of salvation by faith alone, apart from works—had been buried under the mountainous, monolithic power of the Roman Catholic Church for a thousand years, until the Reformation. The Reformation was all about recovering the fact that salvation was by faith alone and not by faith plus works, as the Roman system had always and still says. We cannot misunderstand the gospel without dishonoring God, dishonoring Christ, dishonoring the Holy Spirit, confusing the church, and losing the power of our mission in the world. We must understand the true gospel. Here we are five hundred years after the Reformation, and the professing church of Jesus Christ is still trying to figure out the gospel; not surprising since Satan works very hard to overthrow the truth and place error where the truth has been removed. So in every generation, we're always fighting for the true gospel. Today, the majority of evangelical Protestants think salvation is by faith and works. That's why there was a Reformation, to undo that heresy. And here we are again needing that new Reformation. It's not only people who are false Christians who believe that salvation is by faith and works, but there are true Christians who have been bewitched, as we see at the beginning of Ephesians chapter 3, "*O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?*" who have been bewitched, who have been disturbed by believing a distorted gospel, even though they themselves were converted by believing the true gospel. It's possible for true believers to be bewitched and confused, accept a false gospel, and therefore be ineffective and virtually useless in the proclamation of the true gospel. Back in the first century, Paul had planted churches in a number of cities by preaching the gospel of grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. But some Jewish people, claiming to be believers in Christ, had come with the message that believing in Christ is not enough; you must be circumcised according to the law of Moses, and you must adhere to all the prescriptions that are in the Mosaic law. Salvation, they said, is a matter of faith, but also a matter of works. Paul

says this is a distortion of the gospel. It's another gospel that is not a gospel at all, and anybody who preaches this distorted gospel should be damned. He says that twice back in chapter 1. So we have to go back and make sure we understand the gospel. And Galatians is a book for all believers, in all places and at all times in church history, to cling to the truth and proclaim the truth alone which saves. That salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-19\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Adoption of the Believer** – [TOC](#)

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The Truth in Love,

*Mark Paul*

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