



Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us  
**Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil**

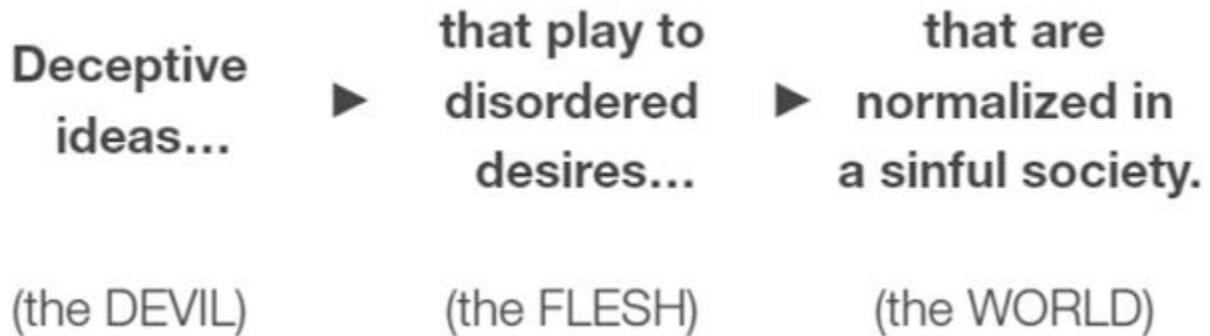
- LIE#1:** God uses shame to correct me and change me.
  - LIE#2:** God is not concerned with my everyday life, only the things I do for Him.
  - LIE#3:** Women are not Created to be Leaders
  - LIE#4:** You **MUST** be Married to Please God
  - LIE#5:** All I Need is God, Who Needs Friends.
  - LIE#6:** God Doesn't Speak to People Today. It was just for Biblical Times.
  - LIE#7:** A Man is the Priest of His Home and a Covering for His Family. All a Woman needs to do is be Submissive.
  - LIE#8:** God is angry.
  - LIE#9:** I Have to Earn God's Love
  - LIE#10:** God Hates Divorced People
  - LIE#11:** God Doesn't Care What I Do With My Money
  - LIE#12;** If God is all powerful, why do bad things happen?
  - LIEW#13:** I Need Jesus. But....
- It is our perception of love that causes us to disbelieve God's love for us...**  
 The sin underneath all our sins is to trust the lie of the serpent that we cannot trust the love and grace of Christ and must take matters into our own hands.—**Martin Luther**

8/17<sup>th</sup>  
 Week #15 Summer of Lies Series: How Lies are Told to Us  
**LIED to by: Ourselves**  
 Join the Wednesday Night Crew along with Pastor Orleen, Pastor Robin and Michelle Ingram in the auditorium at 6:30PM to face this lie and find His truth.

**Week #14: How Lies are Told to Us**  
**LIED to by: The Devil**

**ASK:** Following Jesus is...  
 Lifestyle  
 Journey  
 War?

“Three enemies of the soul: The world. The flesh. The Devil.”  
 (“Live no lies” John Mark Comer. Waterbrook press)



- ASK:** How smart is man? What are some statements that declare our brilliance?
- “Trust Science.”
  - X
  - X



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I. LIE (Deceptive Idea) : **Man’s Wisdom Knows No Boundaries**

A. Tower of Babel –

**Genesis 11:1-9**

*Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. <sup>2</sup> And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. <sup>3</sup> Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. <sup>4</sup> And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us **make a name for ourselves**, lest we **be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.**”*

*<sup>5</sup> But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; **now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.** <sup>7</sup> Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” <sup>8</sup> So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

- Note of condescension? ☺
- They were directed to “fill the earth”
- Pyramid – ziggurat, with steps that lead to a divine being shrine at the top that “is in the heavens”
- Shinar (modern day Iraq)
- Why built? Make their name. Keep them from scattering.

**Genesis 1:28**

*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

**Genesis 9:1** God’s Promise to Noah

*So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.*

B. Titanic – They do not need life boats for all on board as this ship will never sink.

**TRUTH:** “Man Cannot Acclaim the Authority of God.”  
(The Naked and The Dead)



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**C. Bolstering the Lie: The Worship of Intelligentsia**

Process: SHIFT the influence of belief in Christ.

**SHIFT:** Identify the Catalysts. Gather the Leaders. Declare a Decision. Engage a Group. Implement.

**#1. MOVE them from the majority to the minority.**

While 49 percent of millennials and 65 percent of American adults as a whole still identify as “Christian” in national surveys (though we’re hemorrhaging millions of young people each year), a recent in-depth analysis by the Barna Group, a Christian think tank, put the number of young adults who are “resilient disciples” at **10 percent**.<sup>14</sup>

**“Cognitive Minority”**

Not ethnic minority.

“Meaning, as followers of Jesus, our worldview and value system and practices and social norms are increasingly at sharp odds with those of our host culture. We face constant pressure, from both the Left and the Right, to assimilate and follow the crowd.”

Comer, J. M. (2021). [Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace](#). Form.

**#2. SHIFT their place in culture is from a place of honor to a place of shame.**

- “Token” due to our deliberate decision to not stand up for biblical equality.
- America’s Christian history being downplayed to the point of disappearing.
- The embracing of that “Christian history” being seen as political.
- Yale. Harvard. Began as pastoral training schools.
- The church is now seen as part of the PROBLEM instead of part of the solution.
- Being a Pastor was a calling of honor.
- Churches were respected.
- Christians were trusted to do the right thing due to the influence of faith in Christ.

“Most people today want nothing to do with faith in the public square. The church is seen as part of the problem, not the solution. What’s more, with the radical moral reversal around human sexuality, gender, and the life of the unborn, we now have the moral low ground in many people’s eyes; Jesus’s vision of human sexuality is perceived as immoral by a large swath of the population.” Comer, J. M. (2021). [Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace](#). Form.

**#3. LABEL them to promote widespread tolerance to a rising hostility.**

We have gone from a trusted group of people.

To an odd group people.

To a dangerous group of people.

“As a threat to secularism’s alternative vision of human flourishing.”

“At the risk of mixing metaphors, the literary motif used by the writers of Scripture for this kind of a cultural experience is that of exile.”

Comer, J. M. (2021). [Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace](#). Form.



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Once we by the LIE that we are so much smarter than... “cannot trust scripture” easier to buy the related LIES:

**LIE:** We are smarter than our ancestors.

- **Chronological snobbery**

Add to that what sociologists call “**the myth of progress,**” the quasi-religious Western dogma that human beings are evolving toward a utopian future, where we will at long last shed the tired constraints of religion and superstition (which are the same thing) and embrace our destiny as enlightened individualists, finally free to enjoy our lives, one flat white and Tinder date at a time (that is, if AI doesn’t wipe us out before we develop the technology to upload our consciousness to the cloud and live forever in the singularity).<sup>1</sup>

**LIE:** There is no moral truth. Only Relativism (what works for you)

With all our education, advancements in science, worldwide community, exploding technology...why can't we make headway in fixing society's problems?

Bigotry. Greed (Narcissism). Misogyny. Visceral Wrath.

**John 8:32**

*And you shall **know the truth**, and the truth shall make you free.”*

**1 John 2:21**

*I have not written to you because you do not **know the truth**, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

**D. Template of Temptation:**

**Genesis 3:1-7**

*Now the serpent was more **cunning** than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.*

**NOTE:** Cunning =

Because of the NT and the development of Christian theology, it is most common for people today immediately to think of Satan as the serpent in Ge 3, but the Israelites never made that connection. We cannot recover what Adam and Eve would have thought about the serpent, but the **ancient Near Eastern literature gives us an idea of some of the images that came to mind for the Israelites living in their time and culture. Foremost is the association of the serpent with life and death.** Likewise, the serpent is wise, is connected with disorder, and can be the enemy of God—perspectives that are meaningful in this context. Keener, C. S., & Walton, J. H., eds. (2016). *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (pp. 29–33). Zondervan.

**NOTE:** Angel of light

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15**

*<sup>13</sup> For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

Dons a disguise we find acceptable.

<sup>1</sup> Comer, J. M. (2021). *Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace*. Form.



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*And he said to the woman,*

**ASK:** Why was the enemy in the garden to begin with?  
Adam was sitting right next to her, why not address him?  
Why didn't Adam state Eve was not there at the time this rule/directive was made?

*“Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”*

**NOTE:** Questioning our **knowledge** of God.  
Goal = Confusion, Distortion.  
(Biblical knowledge, Prayer, Holy Spirit's help is a must.)

<sup>2</sup> *And the woman said to the serpent,*

**NOTE:** Take that captive...HAVE NO RELATIONSHIP WITH EVIL

*“We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;  
<sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,  
God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”*

<sup>4</sup> *Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.*

**ASK:** When the enemy **cast doubt** on the intent of the LORD?  
On our **relationship** with the LORD. On our **knowledge** of the LORD?  
Questioning God's motives.

<sup>5</sup> *For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**”*

**ASK:** Wisdom – When does the pursuit of wisdom become a lie?  
When the enemy **cast doubt** on:  
The intent of the LORD  
On our relationship with the LORD.  
On our knowledge of the LORD.  
God's Character (Questioning God's character...He wouldn't do that to you!?!?)

All to RECONSTRUCT God's directives.

<sup>6</sup> *So when the woman **saw** that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

**NOTE:** The role of desire in temptation. It is not just visually appealing.



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Besides the 5 senses...Ego was involved.

Appealing to our human needs and desires and adulation.

**Senses:** Sight. Smell. Sound. Taste. Touch.

**1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*

<sup>7</sup> *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

**NOTE:** Consequence

Their relationship with the LORD has now been forever changed.

Jesus = bought that innocence back.

**John 10:10**

*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

**1 Peter 5:8**

<sup>8</sup> *Be sober (self controlled), be vigilant (watchful); because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

**Luke 22:31**

*And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.*

!Tried same method w/Jesus: (see Matt. 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4).  
Temptation of Christ

### Closing:

- **Flynn Effect – “now we know better”**

James Flynn, a psychologist from New Zealand’s University of Otago, asserted that IQ tests have been on the rise in Western industrialized countries since the 1950s by a growth curve of about three points per decade. **His original thesis: we’re smarter than our grandparents.**

It fit like a glove with the pervasive idea—or really, belief—that **progressives are, by definition, ahead of the evolutionary arc of human history, the intellectual leaders (read, superiors) of humanity, and that conservatives are, by definition, behind on the Darwinian trajectory.**

Like all good lies, this idea is full of truth.

So, yes. We are a bit savvier today.

But people regularly cite the Flynn effect as proof we’re getting smarter not just in some things but in everything. By this logic, people who believe in ancient ideas like the devil or, for that matter, Jesus himself are looked at with contempt and treated with the same intellectual incredulity as those who believe in trolls.

Never mind the fact that the Flynn effect has proven to be a fluke.



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Even Flynn himself eventually realized that his findings didn't give the whole picture. By his original calculation, high school graduates in 1900 would have had an IQ of about 70, but our great grandparents weren't mentally handicapped; they just thought differently than we do today (less conceptual, more concrete). Not to mention, if the trend he found had continued, by now we would all be giving Bradley Cooper's character from *Limitless* a run for his money.

More recent data actually suggests that the average IQ level has been *falling* in the West—not rising—since the 1990s.

Other research says that human beings are no more intelligent than we were thirty thousand years ago. Our cumulative knowledge has grown by leaps and bounds, yes, especially around trolls and rock formations; **but knowledge is not the same thing as intelligence, which is still not the same thing as wisdom.**

**2 Timothy 3:7**

*always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the **truth**.*

[Is Jesus smarter than Stephen Hawking? Jeff Bezos? XXX?]

But consider this: What if Jesus knew the true nature of reality better than we do? What if his perception was even more acute than that of Steven Pinker? Or Sam Harris? Or Stephen Hawking? What if he was the most intelligent teacher to ever live and his insight into the problems (and solutions) of the human condition is the most piercing to date? What if our Western world is actually blind to a whole dimension of reality? Ignorant of what many consider to be common sense? What if we're attempting to solve the problems of the world without dealing with the root cause? What if, for all our science and technology and political theory, we're actually oblivious to—or worse, willfully ignorant of—the facts? What if Jesus and the writers of the Scripture—not to mention many ancient luminaries outside Jesus's tradition (such as Socrates, Confucius, and the Buddha), most leading thinkers throughout history, and still most people outside the West—have eyes to see something we regularly miss?

What if?<sup>2</sup>

**John 8:44**

*<sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

**Evagrius Ponticus 4<sup>th</sup> Century**

Evagrius generated the most sophisticated demonology in all of ancient Christianity. And the most surprising feature of Evagrius's paradigm is his claim that the fight against demonic temptation is a fight against what he called *logismoi* {pronounced, lo-gee-smee}—a Greek word that can be translated as “thoughts,” “thought patterns,” your “internal narratives,” or “internal belief structures.” They are the **content of our thought lives** and the mental markers by which we navigate life. For Evagrius, these logismoi weren't *just* thoughts; they were thoughts with a malignant will behind them, a dark, animating force of evil.<sup>3</sup>

**2 Corinthians 10:4-6**

*<sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, <sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

<sup>2</sup> Comer, J. M. (2021). [Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace](#). Form.

<sup>3</sup> Comer, J. M. (2021). [Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace](#). Form.



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When is the last time the enemy has lied to me?  
What are my flags that tell me I know this is a lie? (it's gotta go well beyond feeling)  
How comfortable do I feel within the structures of this world's philosophy?  
Am I stuck in a self-defeating cycle?  
Am I playing tug-of-war with worldly desire?  
Is my mind just tired?  
Do I carry the weight of the world?

The biggest lie we can swallow is that there is no demonic entity that is at war with humanity.

Explain the exploitation and torture of children.  
Even the animal population does not torture nor exploit their young.

### Matthew 4

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.*

<sup>3</sup> *Now when the tempter came to Him, he said,  
“If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”*

- IF = Questioning His authority
- **Physical needs – God’s provision**

<sup>4</sup> *But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”*

<sup>5</sup> *Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and said to Him,*

*“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down.*

- IF = Questioning His authority
- **God’s protection**

*For it is written:*

*‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’  
and,*

*‘In their hands they shall bear you up,  
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”*

- Adds Scripture to his evil argument. Deception, angel of light.

<sup>7</sup> *Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’ ”*

<sup>8</sup> *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”*

- No IF!
- **Human glory – Self aggrandizement**



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<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Evagrius: His handbook had five hundred entries; yours can have five.

**When the lies come, don’t open a dialogue with them.**

**Just “change the channel” to truth. Resist by redirection.**

**Evagrius and the ancients called this *antirrhesis*, or “countertalking.”**

Comer, J. M. (2021). *Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace*. Form.

**Prayer Works:**

- Obsessive Thought
- Toxic Sensations
- Overwhelming Feelings: Overwhelming Emotion(s)

**What’s the thought, feeling, and/or sensation?**

*That this mouse will harm me.*

**What’s the lie beneath the thought, feeling, and/or sensation that reveals your attachment?**

*I AM NOT SAFE. That the mouse is more crafty and more dangerous than a human.*

**What’s the truth?**

**Isaiah 49:15-16a**

*“Can a woman forget her nursing child,  
 And not have compassion on the son of her womb?*

*Surely they may forget,*

*Yet I will not forget you.*

<sup>16</sup> *See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;*

**What’s the thought, feeling, and/or sensation?**

**What’s the lie beneath the thought, feeling, and/or sensation that reveals your attachment?**

**What’s the truth?**

**Proverbs 16:6**

In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the Lord *one* departs from evil.

**John 16:13**

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

**John 17:17**

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

**1 John 2:21**

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.



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**1 John 3:18**

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

**1 John 4:6**

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

**1 John 5:6**

And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

**NOTES:**

**Identify the Catalysts**

- Who or What Drives the Process
- Holy Discontent
- Growing Dissonance (what they say they believe in but it doesn't match actions)
- Person(s) with Influence
- Internal – pastor or talented leader
- External – Study groups, etc.
- Care for the catalysts

**Gather the Leaders**

- Discernment
- Pay attention to your own response to the catalyst.
- Study scripture
- Biblical Literacy
- Bring in Experts
- Pray
- Task Force

**Declare a Decision**

- Write a paper
- Sermon series
- By Law change(s)
- Membership meeting
- Kindness



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- Clarity is key (what exactly is changing, growing, moving)

### Engage Congregation/Group

- Pastor through the process
- Be intentional
- Give many opportunities to discuss and process
- Provide your resource list
- Meet one on one with leaders in the group
- Sermon series
- Seminars
- Pastoral Care

### #5). Implement the Change

#### III. We Are Living In His World

- 1 John 5: 19

“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”

- 2 Corinthians 11: 14

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.”

- John 12:31 (Jesus speaking with the Greeks)

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”

- 2 Corinthians 4:4

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

- e.g. ADAM&EVE

#### Genesis 1 overview

##### Gen. 1:26

“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the earth

27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male & female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Vs. 31a And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

#### Genesis 2 details

##### Gen 2:15

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** it and **take care** of it.

- ❖ Work: abad (aw-bad') to work, implied to serve, enslave, bond servant, compel, husbandman, keep, labor, bring to pass, servant, service, be wrought, worshipper.
- ❖ Take care: shamar (shaw-mar') to hedge about as with thorns, beware, be circumspect, **guard**, **protect**, attend to, take heed, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, save, sure wait, watch.



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Vs 16

“And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

## CHAPTER 11

### GENESIS 11

### COSMIC HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

Defining the term “mythology” is treacherous. Many formal definitions have been offered, and beyond those, one can find a wide variety of popular conceptions that impede fruitful discussion. Rather than offer yet another definition, it is more productive to identify the function of mythological literature. The mythology of the ancient world encapsulated contemporary thinking about how the world worked and how it came to work that way. It features the gods prominently because the ancients found the answers to their questions about the world in the divine realm. If we describe mythology functionally in this way, we can conclude that our modern mythology is what we call science. That is our culture’s way of encapsulating how the world works and how it came to work that way. Contrary to the divine orientation of the ancients, our scientific worldview is naturalistic and empiricist.

Genesis functions in Israelite society the same way that science functions in our culture and the same way that mythology functioned in the rest of the ancient world. Genesis offers an alternative encapsulation of how the world worked and how it came to work that way. Like the rest of the ancient world, it has a divine orientation rather than a naturalistic/empiricist one as is common today. But its view of the situation in the divine realm also makes it distinct from the mythology of the ancient world.

Consequently, studying the mythological literature of the ancient world can help us, whose cultural worldview tends toward empiricism, to make adjustments as we try to understand how a nonempiricist worldview works. The result is that we can be drawn out of the restricted perspectives that come most naturally to us. This is the value of the mythological literature for the study of the Bible.

**11:1** *one language.* A Sumerian epic entitled *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* speaks of a time when there was only harmony among people and “the whole universe in unison spoke to Enlil in one tongue.” Speech was then changed and “contention” was brought into it. Nothing else in this account parallels the tower of Babel, but it indicates that confusion of language by deity was a known theme in the ancient world.

**11:2** *moved eastward.* Geological and hydrological studies and migration patterns discernible from the fourth and third millennia BC suggest that there was a drying out of the southern alluvial plain as the Persian Gulf receded and a corresponding population movement into that plain toward the end of the fourth millennium BC. This period, known as the Uruk Phase, features technological advances in urbanization, architecture, technology and language that correspond to elements referred to in v. 3 (see note). *Shinar.* The Hebrew term (*shinar*) refers to the area that ancient Near Eastern texts refer to as Sumer. It covered the southern part of the Tigris-Euphrates River basin as far north as Sippar, where the rivers converge in the area of modern southern Iraq. Major cities of



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the region included Kish, Nippur, Shuruppak, Girsu, Uruk, Eridu and Ur. This is the area where urbanization developed and is the heartland of Mesopotamian civilization.

**11:3** *make bricks and bake them.* Stone is not readily available in the alluvial plain of southern Mesopotamia, so a logical economical choice is to use brick—there is plenty of mud. Mud brick, however, is not durable, so it was a great technological development to discover that baking the brick made it as durable as stone. This was still an expensive process, since the kilns had to be fueled. As a result, mud brick was used as much as possible, with baked brick used only for outer shells of important buildings or where waterproofing was desirable. No baked bricks have been found earlier than the Uruk period (latter part of the fourth millennium BC).

**11:4** *a city, with a tower.* One single architectural feature dominated the landscape of early Mesopotamian cities: towers known as ziggurats (see the article “Ziggurats,” p. 30). In the earliest stages of urbanization, the city was not designed for the private sector. People did not live in the city. Instead, it was comprised of the public buildings, such as administrative buildings, and granaries, which were mostly connected with the temple. Consequently, the city was, in effect, a temple complex. *reaches to the heavens.* Throughout Mesopotamian literature, almost every occurrence of the expression describing a building “with its head in the heavens” refers to a temple with a ziggurat (see the article “Ziggurats,” p. 30). It is this language, along with the indication that God “came down” (v. 5), that gives textual confirmation that the tower is a ziggurat. This would have been transparent to the ancient reader. In keeping with the negative results of the project here, the reader of Genesis will find a few of the omens in the *Shumma Alu* series remarkable: “If a city lifts its head to the midst of heaven, that city will be abandoned” (1:15), and “If a city rises like a mountain peak to the midst of heaven, that city will be turned to a ruin” (1:16). Yet Mesopotamian cities were regularly built on high ground, with the temple on the highest ground. The wording of these omens understood in the context of the omen series is essentially about exceeding natural boundaries to the effect that a city can overreach itself to rival sacred structures and thus bring about its own destruction. *make a name.* The ancient world placed immense value on the sense of continuity from one generation to another. In some cultures a person’s continued comfort in the afterlife was dependent on care from descendants in the land of the living. The details often involved memorial meals and various regular mortuary rites, but more important for this passage, they provided opportunity for the name of the deceased to be spoken. There is continued life and vitality as long as one is remembered. The building of monuments could also contribute to the desirable end result, as could achievements and adventures of various sorts. The important point here is that the desire to make a name in the ancient world is common to all. The more people who remember one’s name, the more secure is one’s existence in the afterlife. While there is nothing inherently evil or sinful in the desire to be remembered (e.g., God promises to “make your name great” for Abraham in 12:2 and David in 2Sa 7:9), this desire may become obsessive or motivate evil or sinful behavior. *scattered.* The fear of scattering is directly related (both syntactically and conceptually) to the previously stated desire to make a name. Remembrance takes place in the vicinity of the burial ground. Descendants who move away (as Abraham does in ch. 12) cut the ties of continuity between the past and the present. Though some have considered this desire not to scatter as disobedience to the blessing in 1:28, it must be recognized that the blessing does not relate to scattering, only to filling—far different issues. God scattered them, not because it was wrong for them to be together, but because their desire to retain continuity was causing them to launch flawed strategies.

GENESIS 11:4



## ZIGGURATS

Though they may resemble pyramids in appearance, ziggurats are nothing like them in function. Ziggurats have no inside. The structure was framed in mud brick, and then the core was packed with fill dirt. The facade was then completed with kiln-fired brick. Ziggurats were dedicated to particular deities. Any given deity may have several ziggurats dedicated to him or her in different cities. Furthermore, a given city may have several ziggurats, though the main one was associated with the patron deity of the city. Archaeologists have discovered nearly 30 ziggurats in the general region, and texts mention several others. The main architectural feature is the stairway or ramp that leads to the top. There was a small room at the top where a bed was made and a table set for the deity. Ziggurats range in size from 60 feet (18 meters) per side to almost 200 feet (60 meters) per side.

Most important is the function of the ziggurat. The ziggurat did not play a role in any of the rituals known to us from Mesopotamia. If known literature were our only guide, we would conclude that common people did not use the ziggurat for anything. It was sacred space and was strictly off-limits to profane use. Though the structure at the top was designed to accommodate the god, it was not a temple where people would go to worship. In fact, the ziggurat was typically accompanied by an adjoining temple near its base, where the worship did take place.

The best indication of the function of ziggurats comes from the names that are given to them. For instance, the name of the ziggurat at Babylon, *Etemenanki*, means “temple of the foundation of heaven and earth.” One at Larsa means “temple that links heaven and earth.” Most significant is the name of the ziggurat at Sippar, “temple of the stairway to pure heaven.” The word translated “stairway” in this last example is used in the mythology as the means by which the messenger of the gods moved between heaven, earth, and the netherworld. As a result of these data, we can conclude that the ziggurat was a structure built to support the stairway. This stairway was a visual representation of that which was believed to be used by the gods to travel from one realm to another. It was solely for the convenience of the gods and was maintained in order to provide the deity with amenities and to make possible his descent into his temple.

**Stele of Nebuchadnezzar looking at the design of Babylon’s ziggurat, Etemenanki, Babylon, 604–562 BC. Many also believe the Tower of Babel was a ziggurat.**

The Schøyen Collection, Oslo and London, MS 2063, [www.schoyencollection.com](http://www.schoyencollection.com)

At the top of the ziggurat was the gate of the gods, the entrance into their heavenly abode; adjoining the tower was the temple, where hopefully the god would descend to receive the gifts and worship of his people.

In summary, the project is a temple complex featuring a ziggurat, which was designed to make it convenient for the god to come down to his temple, receive their worship, and



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bless his people. The key for understanding the tower of Babel is to realize that the tower was not built so that people could ascend to heaven, but so that deity could descend to earth.

**11:5** *the LORD came down.* Precisely the reason the tower was built—for God to come down (see the article “Ziggurats,” p. 30). Unfortunately, rather than being pleased to take up his residence among the people, God finds it an occasion for counteraction. Rather than being pleased at the convenience, he is distressed by the pagan concepts inherent in the nature of the ziggurat.

**11:28** *Ur of the Chaldeans.* The city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia is well known in the literature of the ancient Near East, particularly prominent over the latter half of the third millennium BC. A temple already stood there in the late fourth millennium BC and its ziggurat (completed later) is the best preserved from ancient Mesopotamia. An early empire with Ur as its capital existed for about a century at the end of the third millennium BC founded by Ur-Nammu and solidified by his successor, Shulgi.

By some chronological schemes Abraham’s time in Ur and Harran coincide with the empire phase. Some have deduced that Abraham was an urbane socialite in this grand center of civilization and that Yahweh’s call required a substantial change in lifestyle. Even if it were true that Abraham was born in this highly civilized city, however, we cannot necessarily conclude that he was a city dweller. Ur had its share of herdsmen and farmers as any city did.

Controversy still remains as to why Genesis adds “of the Chaldeans.” Unfortunately we know little about the history of the Chaldeans at this period. During the mid-first millennium BC the Chaldeans ruled in southern Mesopotamia (Nebuchadnezzar), and consequently the Chaldeans are associated with Babylon by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. But prior to this period, the earliest substantial reference to the Chaldeans is in the ninth-century BC inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, when the Chaldeans are located southeast of Babylon near Elam.

A vague, earlier reference is in the campaign inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II, where the Chaldeans are referred to in passing. Their mention in Job 1:17 suggests that they were nomadic raiders at some point in their history, but it does not help locate them geographically.

Suspicion arises concerning the identification of Abraham’s Ur as the famous city in the south because the move to Harran does not seem a logical one from there. The distance is at least 700 miles (1,125 kilometers), and Harran is well off the beaten track for someone traveling to Canaan. If a town were 80 miles (125 kilometers) out of the way (especially traveling on foot), it would hardly be considered on the way. This geographic problem leads some to consider alternatives, and the literature of the ancient Near East preserves numerous other town names with some similarity to Ur. However, since the only Chaldeans we know of are from the south, the designation “of the Chaldeans” in relationship to Ur must be considered a later explanation placed in the text to help readers who were no longer familiar with the location of the town.

**11:30** *Sarai ... was not able to conceive.* Barrenness was considered a judgment from God in the ancient world. Ancient peoples did not yet understand the physiology associated with fertilization. They viewed the woman as a receptacle for male seed. Rather than supplying an egg to be fertilized, the woman was seen simply as an incubator for the child. Therefore, if man provided the seed at the proper time (they understood that timing was in relation to menstruation) and nothing came of it, the woman was seen to be a faulty incubator. But this defect would not be seen as simply a physical problem, since no illness, symptom or condition was simply physical. Deity was responsible for creation in the womb, and deity was the one who opened the womb.



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Sarai's barrenness would have potentially resulted in a fragile marriage (since failure to deliver children to the family was the most common cause of divorce), in societal shame (since her condition would appear to be the result of having angered a god so that she was therefore unable to fulfill her societal role), and in an uncertainty for the afterlife (since descendants were believed to sustain the deceased in the netherworld). In Abraham and Sarai's case, it also presented quite an obstacle to the covenant promise of having many descendants (12:2; 15:5).<sup>4</sup>

### **Date and Author**

**W**e have no certain information about the authorship of Genesis, though early Biblical tradition views Moses as having a significant role in transmitting and perhaps even formulating the traditions preserved in the book. The oral nature of ancient culture may suggest that actual written forms of the traditions came much later, though whenever they were produced, they maintained their connectedness to the authority figures, such as Moses, who were instrumental. Regardless of the date of the final writing, the text largely preserves its mid-second-millennium BC context and perspective.

### **Literary Setting**

Literary genres have rules and conventions by which they operate. Communication is jeopardized if we do not understand the parameters of the genre of the literature we are reading. How confusing it would be if we were reading a mystery in which the author gave every appearance of writing a biography! But at the same time, the features that indicate whether a literary work is a mystery or biography are to some extent culturally determined. The reason that genre categories work is that the categories represent a consensus of expectation among the readers.

When we approach a book like Genesis, we must be aware of what genres we will be encountering. But just as important, we must adjust our expectations so that we will come to those genres understanding the ancient conventions attached to that genre rather than imposing our own genre conventions on their literature.

Genesis contains cosmogony texts, i.e., texts that deal with the origins of key aspects of the cosmos. It also contains genealogies (e.g., chs. 5; 11; 36), founders' or ancestors' narratives (e.g., chs. 12–35), destiny proclamations (i.e., formal blessings and/or curses from father to son, e.g., chs. 9; 27; 49), conflict tales (e.g., chs. 4; 6–7; 11; 19; 34), battle accounts (e.g., ch. 14), and a narrative about the rise of a courtier from humble beginnings to a position of power (chs. 40–45). Some of these are unparalleled in the ancient world, and even when possible parallels exist, significant differences lead us to proceed with caution.

## **CHAPTER 1**

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<sup>4</sup> Keener, C. S., & Walton, J. H., eds. (2016). [\*NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture\*](#) (pp. 29–33). Zondervan.



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**1:1** *In the beginning.* In the OT “beginning” refers to a preliminary period of time rather than the first in a series of events. In English, we might refer to such an initial period as “the primordial period.” This leads us to conclude that the “beginning” is a way of talking about the seven-day *period* rather than a *point* in time prior to the seven days.

GENESIS 1:1

## CREATION AND EXISTENCE

If creation is the act of bringing something into existence, we must ask what constituted existence in the ancient world. In our culture, we consider existence to be either material (i.e., having molecules/taking up space and extending to energy and subatomic particles) or experiential (e.g., abstractions such as love or time). Those definitions, however, are culturally determined. By contrast, in the ancient world something existed when it had a function—a role to play.

In Mesopotamia one way to accomplish this was to name something, because a name designated a thing’s function or role. Thus, in the Babylonian creation account, bringing the cosmos into existence begins “When on high no name was given in heaven, nor below was the netherworld called by name ... When no gods at all had been brought forth, none called by names, none destinies ordained, then were the gods formed.” In Egyptian accounts existence was associated with something having been differentiated. The god Atum is conceptualized as the primordial monad—the singularity embodying all the potential of the cosmos, from whom all things were separated and thereby created. The Genesis account includes both of these concepts as God separates and names.

The actual Hebrew verb “create” (*bara*) also focuses our attention in this direction. In the Bible, only God can perform this action of bringing something into existence. What is even more intriguing is that the objects of this verb point consistently toward its connection to functional existence rather than material existence; e.g., God “creates” fire, cloud, destruction, calamity, darkness, righteousness and purity. This is much like the ancient Near Eastern way of thinking that it was more important to determine who controlled functions rather than who/what gave something its physical form. In the ancient world something was created when it was given a function. In the ancient world, the cosmos is less like a machine, more like a kingdom.

**1:2** *formless and empty.* Prior to creation the Egyptian texts talk about the “nonexistent.” In their thinking this nonexistent realm continues to be present in the sea, in the dark night sky, and even in the desert—places without role or function (see the article “Creation and Existence,” p. 4). In the Egyptian precreation state of nonexistence there are two elements: primeval waters and total darkness. In Hebrew, “formless” (*tohu*) is also used to refer to the desert (e.g., Dt 32:10). In general it designates a situation in which positive values such as purpose and worth are lacking. As a result, it is more appropriate to translate “without function” rather than “without form,” the idea being similar to the Egyptian “nonexistent.” This is also apparent in Jer 4:23, where the same pair of Hebrew terms is used to describe a nonfunctional, nonproductive state. *deep*. Hebrew *tehom*; it refers to the primordial or primeval sea. In the precreation period it covered everything. In creation it was pushed out to the edges of the cosmos, where it was restrained by God’s power. There it is identified as the cosmic waters of chaos that can be brought back at any moment if deity requires



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its services. Although the Hebrew word is the cognate of the Babylonian *tamtu/Tiamat*, it is not personified as a being associated with chaos, nor can it be considered a depersonification or demythologization that is dependent on the ancient Near Eastern texts. It is simply used to describe the “precosmic condition.”

**1:3** *Let there be light.* As God calls the cosmos into existence, it is important to remember that it is a functional existence, not necessarily a physical existence (see the article “Creation and Existence,” p. 4). In this case, though we think of light as having physical properties, the ancients did not think in those terms. They also did not think of all light as coming from the sun. “Daylight” was not caused by “sunlight”; although the sun, moon and stars were bearers of light, daylight was present even when these were hidden by clouds or an eclipse. Light was not considered something physical in the ancient world; rather, it was a phenomenon. Here in Genesis, light is identified with alternating periods of day and night. Since light is called “day” and darkness is called “night” (v. 5), the text indicates that the functional focus is time.

GENESIS 1:6–7

### THE “VAULT” AND “WATER ABOVE”

The Hebrew *raqia* (“vault”) is of unspecified material, but in at least one text it refers to something solid (cf. Eze 1:25–26). It is the boundary between heaven and earth, and its main function is to hold back the water above. Some mountains are identified as intersecting the sky and perhaps holding it up. Mesopotamian literature at times suggests some sort of skin, but also speaks of the various levels of heaven having pavements, the most visible one being blue. Heaven and earth were kept in place by cables held by the gods.

In Egyptian iconography the sky is represented by the goddess Nut, whose body arched over the land. The Israelites portray no god, living or dead, as the sky, but their cosmic geography saw the sky as having a composition and role similar to what can be seen across the ancient Near East. We know from Ex 24:10 that they shared the idea of a pavement in God’s abode—and it is even of sapphire as in the Mesopotamian texts.

Intertestamental and rabbinic speculation sometimes focused on the material that the vault was made of and how thick it was. The church fathers likewise were united in their belief that the vault was solid. Though it may be surprising for modern minds to learn, the testimony of historical evidence shows that most people in the ancient world believed the sky was solid. The idea that it’s not is a thoroughly modern notion.

Pictorial representations throughout the ancient Near East portray waters above and below, which demonstrates that this was a common feature of ancient cosmic geography. In Mesopotamia the god Marduk assigns guards to keep the heavenly waters from flooding the earth. In Egyptian texts, the sun-god’s barque travels from horizon to horizon across a heavenly ocean. In the OT, the heavenly waters are sometimes called the *mabbul*, above which Yahweh is enthroned (Ps 29:10) and which are released in the time of Noah (Ge 7:10).

The concept of heavenly waters is the natural deduction to be drawn from the experience of precipitation. If moisture comes from the sky, there must be moisture up there. Thus the sky becomes the pivotal phenomenon associated with weather. Mesopotamian imagery refers to “breasts of heaven,” through which rain comes. Ugaritic



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texts use the symbolism of the clouds serving as buckets to deliver the rain. The OT refers to gates in the sky through which precipitation comes as “windows” used only for rain, not for the celestial bodies (e.g., Ge 7:11; 8:2; 2Ki 7:2, 19). Job 38:22 also poetically speaks of storehouses for snow and hail. All precipitation (including dew, see Pr 3:19–20) comes from above, and thus weather is regulated by the sky.

It should also be noted that an alternative interpretation of the Hebrew word *raqia* is that it refers to the living space created by the separation of the waters. In this case, a different Hebrew word refers to the vault.

**In Egyptian iconography the sky is represented by the goddess Nut, whose body arched over the land.**

Wikimedia Commons

**1:6** *a vault*. See the article “The ‘Vault’ and ‘Water Above,’ ” p. 6.

**1:9** *dry ground*. Nonexistence for the Egyptians was not wiped out in the acts of creation, but was pushed to the outer limits of the cosmos. Consequently their literature speaks of the primeval hillock that emerged from the primeval waters. Temples were sometimes understood as containing the original primeval hillock in the center of their sacred space. Mesopotamian literature does not speak much of the emergence of the land, but there is discussion of the collection of the waters to their appropriate place. In this feature, then, Genesis shows more similarity to Egyptian literature. It was common in the ancient world to think of the earth as a single continent in the shape of a flat disc. Likewise in Genesis, the waters are all gathered into one place, and land appears, presumably in one place.

**1:11** *vegetation*. The indication that the land produces vegetation is not a statement about the land being involved in creation. What is being created by God is a function whereby the land regularly and characteristically produces vegetation—the principle of fecundity whereby agriculture can exist and food can be grown.

**1:14** *signs*. The Hebrew word used for “sign” has a cognate in Akkadian that is used for omens, but the Hebrew has a more neutral sense. The author has emptied the elements of the cosmos of their more personal traits, as he did with the description of the precosmic condition; the sun, moon, etc. are not depicted as gods as they are in Near Eastern literature.

**1:21** *creatures of the sea*. In the mythologies of the ancient Near East a variety of terrible creatures inhabited the sea, and these are occasionally associated with the threatening forces of chaos that need to be defeated and harnessed by creator deities. The OT also refers to a number of different cosmic sea creatures (e.g., Ps 74:13–15; Isa 27:1). In Ps 74:13–14 the sea creature (Hebrew *tannin*) is portrayed with multiple heads and is parallel to Leviathan. This depiction of battle is also seen in Isa 51:9, where *tannin*, like “Rahab,” is defeated. Unlike the ancient Near East creation texts, though, Genesis shows no indication of a battle—only that *tannin* is created.

This is the first use of the verb *bara* (“created”) since v. 1, perhaps emphasizing that *tannin* is not some primeval chaos monster that must be overcome, but a creature being given its role (see the article “Creation and Existence,” p. 4) just like everything else in creation. Yet it ought to be viewed as a cosmic creature rather than a marine specimen. The passages in which the word may



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refer to zoological specimens (Ex 7:9–10; Dt 32:33; Ps 91:13) indicate a land creature or amphibian, not a sea creature as here.

GENESIS 1:26

## IMAGE AND LIKENESS

Throughout the ancient Near East, an image was believed to contain the essence of that which it represented. That essence equipped the image to carry out its function. In Egyptian literature, there is one occurrence of people in general having been created in the image of deity, but it is generally the king who is spoken of in such terms. The image is the source of his power and prerogative.

In Mesopotamia there are three categories of significance. (1) As in Egypt, the king is occasionally described as being in the image of deity. (2) An idol contained the image of the deity. (3) Monuments featuring the image of a king were set up in territories he had conquered. In an image, it was not physical likeness that was important, but a more abstract, idealized representation of identity relating to the office/role and the value connected to the image. When Assyrian king Esarhaddon is referred to as “the perfect likeness of the god,” it is his qualities and his attributes that are under discussion. The image of the god did the god’s work on the earth.

The Biblical view is similar as people were created in the image of God, embodying his qualities and doing his work. They are symbols of his presence and act on his behalf as his representatives. The two words used in the text differ in nuance. “Image” refers to the something that contains the “essence” of something else, while “likeness” is more connected to “substance,” expressing a resemblance at some level.

**1:28** *Be fruitful and increase in number.* Contrary to concerns about overpopulation that are evident in early Mesopotamian literature, in Genesis God desires that people multiply without restriction—they may fill the earth. In contrast, in the Akkadian Atrahasis epic, the gods are distressed because, with the multiplication of people, problems and “noise” also increase. The gods therefore send plagues, famine and drought to counteract the population explosion. *subdue it. Rule over.* The characterization of humans being made in the image of God and the functions listed here reflect a royal role for people since these descriptions would most frequently be applied to kings (see the article “Image and Likeness,” p. 8). They are given the responsibility of bringing order to their world. Again, this is in stark contrast to the role of humanity in the ancient Near East, where they are created to serve. Here we see the attribution to all people what was the sole prerogative of the king in the rest of the ancient Near East.

**1:29** *yours for food.* When people are created in other ancient Near East narratives, it is for the purpose of performing all the menial tasks necessary for providing food for the gods. God as the one providing food for people, rather than the other way around, is not absent from those other ancient Near East accounts, but the theme occupies a more central role here in Genesis (cf. also 2:8–9, where God planted a garden for food).



## CHAPTER 2

### GENESIS 2:2

### REST

The concept of divine rest is prominent in ancient Near Eastern literature. Deity's rest is achieved in a temple, generally as a result of order having been established. The rest, while it represents *disengagement* from any process of establishing order (whether through conflict with other deities or not), is more importantly an expression of *engagement* as the deity takes his place at the helm to maintain an ordered, secure and stable cosmos. The following aspects of divine rest can be found in literature of the ancient Near East:

1. The divine rest can be disturbed by rebellion.
2. The divine rest is achieved after conflict.
3. The divine rest is achieved after order-bringing acts of creation.
4. The divine rest is achieved in the temple.
5. The divine rest is achieved in part by creating people to work in their place and on their behalf.
6. The divine rest is characterized by ongoing control and stability.

Only point 3 is transparent in Genesis, though points 4 and 6 can also be defended. Given the connection between temple and rest in the ancient Near East, it becomes natural to see the Biblical creation of the cosmos as being configured in temple-building and dedication terms; the seven-day creation account culminating in divine rest should be understood as somehow parallel to the building of temples for divine rest. This course of analogy and logic results in the understanding that Ge 1 is framed in terms of the creation of a cosmic temple in which Yahweh takes up his repose. The seven days are comparable to seven-day temple dedications at the end of which the deity takes up his rest in the temple.

The temple on earth was considered only a type of the larger, archetypal cosmic temple, and there are many images and symbols that evoke the relationship between temple and cosmos. The temple is considered the center of the cosmos and is itself a microcosmos. In Egypt the temple contained within its sacred precincts a representation of the original primeval hillock that emerged from the cosmic waters. In Mesopotamia, the primary imagery of the temple was that it was the center of the cosmos. In Syro-Palestine, the temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain. This concept is represented in Ugaritic literature as well as in the Bible, where Mount Zion is understood as the mountain of the Lord (e.g., Ps 48) and the place where his temple, a representation of Eden, was built. In Isa 66:1 the Lord indicated: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?" Here God indicates that the man-made temple cannot be considered the true temple (cf. 1Ki 8:27). It is only a micro-scale representation of the cosmic temple. Ps 78:69 communicates a similar idea by indicating that the temple was built on the model of the cosmos. Ideas like these are also found in literature from Mesopotamia that compares temples to the heavens and the earth and gives them a cosmic location and function. It is evident, then, that Israel and her neighbors viewed the cosmos in temple terms and viewed the temple as a model of the cosmos or the cosmic temple.



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If the cosmos is being ordered as sacred space, then it is possible that a cosmological text could adopt the language of temple-building and temple-dedication. In a temple construction project, the structure would be built, and the furniture and trappings would be made in preparation for the moment when all was ready for the dedication of the temple. On this occasion, often a seven-day celebration, the functions of the temple were declared, the furniture and hangings were put in place, the priests installed, and the appropriate sacrifices made to initiate the temple's operation. Somewhere in the process, the image of the deity was brought into the temple to take up his repose. On the basis of all of this, Ge 1 can be viewed as using the metaphor of temple-dedication as it portrays God's creation (= making functional/operational) of his cosmos (which is his temple, Isa 66:1). The main connection, however, is the rest motif, for rest is the principal function of a temple, and a temple is always where deity finds rest.

**2:5** *no plant*. The description of an inchoate condition on the earth is paralleled in part by descriptions of a primeval condition in some ancient Near Eastern texts. Unlike Genesis, these texts consider the primeval condition of humans to be primitive and uncivilized. Like the ancient Near East, however, Genesis begins with a time when no irrigation or planting strategies were being carried out by people. In the ancient Near East this resulted in no offerings for the gods. In Genesis God plants the garden and puts people in it. The similarities show the common idea that creation accounts proceed from an unordered, nonfunctional beginning through an ordering process. It does not mean that God had not yet produced any plants.

**2:7** *formed a man from the dust*. The creation of humans from dust is similar to what is found in ancient Near Eastern mythology. In Mesopotamia, physical elements from the gods such as blood and flesh are mixed with clay, while in Egypt it is tears or breath. Genesis, by contrast, represents the divine element in human beings as seen in the image of God and the breath of life (closer to Egyptian than Mesopotamian thinking).

In the rest of the ancient Near East the creation of people focuses on archetypal and often corporate elements. Ge 1:26–27 could be viewed as corporate and generic rather than individual. Here in ch. 2 there are archetypal elements that are identifiable. Man is made from the dust, and since he will also return to dust (3:19), all people can be seen as created from the dust (see Ps 103:14). The creation of Eve from Adam's side (Ge 2:21–23) likewise expresses a relationship between man and woman that permeates the race. In these Adam and Eve are archetypes representing all of humanity in their creation, just as they do in their sin and their destiny (death) in ch. 3. Their function as archetypes does not suggest that they are not historical individuals; it only suggests that they function more importantly as representatives of the race.

**2:8** *a garden ... in Eden*. Verse 10 indicates that we should understand the garden as adjoining Eden because the water flows "from Eden" and waters the garden. The garden adjoins God's residence in the same way that a garden of the palace adjoins the palace. Eden is the source of the waters and the residence of God. The text describes a situation that was well known in the ancient world: a sacred spot featuring a spring with an adjoining, well-watered park. The word "garden" here should not make us think of vegetables or even necessarily flowers. Public gardens or a "country garden" convey the idea more accurately as indicating a park with careful landscaping, pools, watercourses, and paths winding among fruit trees and shade trees. Such arboretums, sometimes even containing animals of various sorts, were a common feature of palace complexes in the ancient world.



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**2:9** *the tree of life.* In Pr 3:16–18 the tree of life offers an extension of life, which suggests rejuvenating qualities. In the Gilgamesh Epic there is a rejuvenating plant that grows at the bottom of the cosmic river. In the Story of Adapa, the hero is offered food by the god Anu that is eventually identified as “food of life” and “water of life.” He refuses to partake, having been told it was food of death. Thus humankind is prevented from joining the gods in immortality. In Egyptian literature, Amun-Re is the god who created the tree of life, but no further information is given. *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* Nothing is known of this tree from any of the traditions of the ancient Near East. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the primitive Enkidu becomes wise (possessing reason), not by eating the fruit of a tree, but by engaging in sexual intercourse with a prostitute who was sent to entice and capture him.

**2:10–14** Most scholars would place Eden in or near the northern end of the Persian Gulf, based on the locations of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The distinction “in the east” (v. 8) merely indicates Mesopotamia, and is typical of primordial narratives. The flow of the rivers and the uncertainty of the location of the Pishon and Gihon (see note on vv. 11–13) has caused some to look near the source of the Tigris and Euphrates and some scholars have identified two other major rivers in that area that might qualify. In such a mountainous region the garden would be in an elevated valley, though for some, the imagery of a well-watered garden where humans do no work and life springs up without cultivation is more suited to the marshy areas around the Persian Gulf.

**2:10** *four headwaters.* Genesis uses a familiar picture of fertile waters flowing from the seat of deity. In Egyptian depictions two or four rivers flow out of the mouth of Nun, who represents the cosmic abyss. An ivory inlaid plaque from Assyria shows a central divine figure with four rivers flowing from him in four directions. He is flanked by two trees, and standing next to each tree is a winged guardian. It should also be noted that the idea of rivers flowing from the holy place is found not only in ch. 2 (which portrays Eden as the Most Holy Place) but also in Ezekiel’s temple (Eze 47:1). The picture is of a mighty spring that gushes out from Eden and is channeled through the garden for irrigation purposes. All of these channels then serve as headwaters, for the four rivers flow out in various directions as the waters exit the garden.

**2:11–13** *Pishon ... Gihon.* Attempts to identify these two rivers include: canals, other rivers of Mesopotamia (Balikh, Diyala, Zab, etc.), other rivers outside of Mesopotamia (e.g., Nile, Indus, Ganges), or larger bodies such as the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. Recent investigations have attempted to identify the Pishon as a major river that dried up in antiquity. This possibility emerges from the analysis of sand patterns and satellite photography, which have revealed an old riverbed running northeast through Saudi Arabia from the Hijaz mountains near Medina (which contains one of the richest gold mines in the region) to the Persian Gulf in Kuwait, near the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. As mentioned in note on vv. 10–14, others have identified the Pishon and Gihon as rivers in the area of Urartu. A final suggestion is that the Pishon and Gihon refer to the encircling cosmic waters. None of these options may be adopted with any confidence, though some are more plausible than others.

**2:15** *to work it and take care of it.* In the rest of the ancient world it was believed that humans had been created to serve the needs of the gods; the gods had grown tired of the drudgery of providing for themselves. In Genesis people also serve God but not by meeting his needs.

When people are assigned their function here, priestly terms are used in contrast to the royal functions given in 1:28–29. In the rest of the ancient Near East, caring for the needs of the gods



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was also a priestly function. In the OT, the priestly function involved maintaining the status of sacred space and providing for the proper worship and obedience to God’s requirements.

**2:20 names.** Names were not given randomly in the ancient world. A name may identify the essential nature of the creature, so that giving a name may be an act of assigning the function that creature will have. In Mesopotamia the assigning of function is referred to as the decreeing of destiny. Decreeing destiny by giving a name is an act of authority. In the ancient world, when a king conquered another country, the king he put on the throne was given a new name. In other cases, the giving of a name is an act of discernment in which the name is determined by the circumstances. In either case, Adam’s naming of the animals is his first step in subduing and ruling (see 1:28 and note). He is fulfilling the role that he had by virtue of being in God’s image (see the article “Image and Likeness,” p. 8), but it also leads him to realize that among the animals there is no social equal to share his function and place.

**2:22 rib.** In Genesis the woman was built from the side (Hebrew *tsela*) of the man (see NIV text note on v. 21). The Hebrew word is usually architectural, and is used anatomically only here in the OT. In Akkadian, the cognate term *tsela* is also both architectural and anatomical. Its anatomical uses generally refer not just to bone, but to bones and flesh (cf. v. 23).

**2:24 leaves ... united ... one flesh.** The text establishes a “flesh-line,” which is stronger than a bloodline and causes the man to seek her out. Woman is recognized as being of the same essence as man and therefore of serving as his ally in sacred space.

**2:25 naked.** In Genesis the nakedness of the humans does not appear to be a negative comment, though it is contrasted through wordplay to the craftiness of the serpent in the next verse (3:1), so it may refer to a relative naïveté. In contrast, ancient Near Eastern texts indicate that the primeval nakedness of people is a sign of a primitive, uncivilized condition. When Enkidu is civilized in the Gilgamesh Epic, he is clothed by the woman who civilizes him. The Sumerian text Ewe and Wheat opens with a description of primeval humans who are clearly primitive, and the text apparently considers that a negative. In this way there are similarities in how Genesis and the Mesopotamian texts describe early humankind, but there is a contrasting assessment of how their condition should be interpreted.

## CHAPTER 3

### GENESIS 3:1

#### THE SERPENT

In the Gilgamesh Epic, after Gilgamesh acquires the magical plant that will rejuvenate him, it is stolen by a snake. In the Story of Adapa, one of the guardians of Anu’s palace, where Adapa is offered the food of life, is serpent-shaped or accompanied by horned serpents, and he is the guardian of the demons who live in the netherworld. In Egypt, the serpent was associated with both death and wisdom. The Genesis account draws on both aspects in the wisdom dialogue between the serpent and Eve and with the introduction of death after the expulsion from Eden.



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Many Egyptian gods, especially the primeval gods, were represented in serpent form. Wadjet, a lower Egyptian deity, was considered the protector of the pharaoh and is represented by the *uraeus* serpent on his crown. The earth-god Geb had a serpent's head. The snake-god Apophis was considered the enemy of order. In addition, the idea that animals in general, and serpents in particular, could communicate with humans is common in Egyptian literature. Serpents in Egypt are also connected with occult wisdom. The *uraeus* is sometimes invoked as a magician.

Because of the NT and the development of Christian theology, it is most common for people today immediately to think of Satan as the serpent in Ge 3, but the Israelites never made that connection. We cannot recover what Adam and Eve would have thought about the serpent, but the ancient Near Eastern literature gives us an idea of some of the images that came to mind for the Israelites living in their time and culture. Foremost is the association of the serpent with life and death. Likewise the serpent is wise, is connected with disorder, and can be the enemy of God—perspectives that are meaningful in this context.

**3:5** *be like God*. One can imagine a variety of ways in which people might desire or strive to “be like God”—some commendable, others inappropriately ambitious or subversive. The aspiration targeted here is in the category of **wisdom**, a defensibly laudable pursuit. In the ancient Near East godlikeness pertains to the categories of splendor (Enkidu became handsome like a god) or immortality (Gilgamesh, Adapa). It is interesting that Gilgamesh and Adapa both encounter a snake figure and Enkidu achieves his godlikeness through a woman (who also gives him understanding). Gilgamesh and Adapa fail to achieve immortality, both through an inability to eat the necessary food.

These examples show that in the ancient world it was common for people to meditate on ways in which people succeeded and failed in becoming like deity. At the same time the differences are significant. In Genesis disobedience figures prominently, and the category of godlikeness is distinct. Furthermore, the consequences of the attempt differ. Adam and Eve do achieve a level of godlikeness (like Enkidu), but with significant negative repercussions. At the same time they lose their access to immortality (like Gilgamesh and Adapa) and also suffer in their lost relationship with God, which is not an issue in any of the others. This is then an excellent example of how the comparison between the Bible and the ancient Near East shows a similar landscape but with important variations in the essential nature of the issue.

**3:14** *God said to the serpent, “... Cursed are you.”* The Egyptian Pyramid Texts were designed to aid the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom on their journey to the afterlife. Among the over 700 utterances are several dozen spells and curses on snakes that may impede the king's progress. These utterances contain phrases that are reminiscent of the curse on the serpent in ch. 3. *crawl on your belly*. This statement is paralleled by frequent spells in the Egyptian Pyramid Texts that call on snakes to lie down, fall down, get down, or crawl away. Another spell says that he should “go with your face on the path.” These suggest that when God tells the serpent that he will crawl on his belly, there is no suggestion that the serpent had legs that he now loses. Instead, he is going to be docile rather than in an attack position. The serpent on its belly is nonthreatening, while the one reared up is protecting or attacking. *eat dust*. Not a comment about the actual diet of snakes but likely a reference to their habitat. Again the Pyramid Texts show some similarity as they attempt to banish the serpent to the dust. The serpent is a creature of the netherworld (that is why the



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pharaoh encounters it on his journey), and denizens of the netherworld were typically portrayed as eating dust. There is no suggestion that the Israelites are borrowing from the Pyramid Texts, only that these texts help us determine how someone in the ancient Near East might understand such words and phrases.

**3:23** *banished*. In the ancient Near East there is no time when “sin” begins; no point when humanity moves from a positive relationship with deity into a worse position; no sense of people once being in sacred space but then banished. It was common in the ancient world to portray “before” and “after” pictures with regard to human death and the relationship between God and humanity, but Genesis identifies different elements in the portrayal and reflects a different theology.

**3:24** *cherubim*. Cherubs are a class of supernatural creature generally functioning as guardians and typically portrayed in beast form rather than human form. They can be four-footed or upright. In cases where it can be determined, they appear to be composite (i.e., having characteristics of various beasts the way griffins or sphinxes did in other literatures).<sup>5</sup>

## II. God will not permit proud rebellious acts to succeed (5–8).

### A. *God investigates the activities of arrogant mortals (5).*

The second half of the passage reflects the first, beginning with the Lord’s investigation of the city and the tower that the humans had begun to build. The description, written very anthropomorphically, describes the Lord’s close interest and participation in human affairs. He did not need to come down to look at their work—in fact, **his coming down implies prior knowledge**. In the words of Cassuto, one could say that, no matter how high they towered, the Lord still had to descend to see it (*Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 2, pp. 230, 244–45). The Lord’s coming down does not alone strike this note of satire. The parallel construction of the cohortatives (11:7) reflects their plans made earlier. The point clearly is that the tower that was to reach the heavens fell far short.

The purpose of his coming down was “to see” the work. This is the second anthropomorphic expression in the line and announces that he will give the city a close investigation. The narrative is filled with condescension. In referring to them as *b<sup>e</sup>nê hā’ādām* (“sons of man”), he shows them to be earthlings. This view strikes at the heart of the Babylonian literature, which credited the work to the Anunnaki gods. According to Genesis, the work was terrestrial, not celestial.

### B. *God knows the danger of collective apostasy (6–7).*

Verse 6 records the results of that investigation: “And the LORD said, ‘If as one people all having one language they have begun to act this way, now nothing that they propose to do will be out of their reach.’ ” The similarity of style and wording to Genesis 3:22 is most striking. The potential for calamity is dangerous to the race, and God will prevent it. They will nullify the

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<sup>5</sup> Keener, C. S., & Walton, J. H., eds. (2016). [\*NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture\*](#) (pp. 8–13). Zondervan.



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purposes of God in favor of their own purposes, which are within reach. They will be at liberty for every extravagance if they can think only of their own confederation.

Continuing to speak, the Lord says, “Come, let us go down and confound their language so that they cannot understand one another.” The internal difficulty concerns the relationship of the word *nēr<sup>e</sup>dâ* (“let us go down”) with *wayyēred* (“but [the LORD] came down”) of verse 5. The critical approach is to divide the two elements into strata, but such a solution is not satisfactory. A. Dillmann saw simply a return to heaven first, then a reflection (comparing 3:22), and then the coming in judgment (*Genesis, Critically and Exegetically Expounded* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897] p. 393). This understanding may be the simplest. Cassuto takes *wayyō’mer*, “and he said,” as an explanatory connection of contemporaneous actions: “But the LORD came down ... thinking [*wayyō’mer*, lit. ‘saying’]: ... Behold, they are one people ... let us go down” (*Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 2, p. 247).

The second verb describes the actual purpose: “let us confound.” This confusion (*bālal*) led to the diversity of their understanding and thus to their dispersion. Bush explains this process:

This [confusion] was to cause a dispersion of the multitudes congregated at Babylon; an end which did not require for its accomplishment the instantaneous formation of new languages, but simply such a confusion in the utterance of the old, as should naturally lead to misapprehension, discord, and division. The dialectic discrepancies, however, thus originating, though perhaps not very great at first, would become gradually more and more marked, as men became more widely separated from each other, and by the influence of climate, laws, customs, religion, and various other causes till they finally issued in substantially different languages.  
[Notes, p. 179]

Once the understanding of one another was confounded, the division would be effected.

**C. God cuts off the expectations of such pride (8).**

“So the LORD scattered them from there across the face of the whole earth, and they ceased building the city.” Their greatest fear (v. 4) came on them (cf. Exod. 1:10, 12). The place of unity (*šām*, “there”) became the place of dispersion (*miššām*, “from there”). Their view was toward centrality; God moved them universally. The result of this dispersion meant that the city was unfinished as they had planned it. The rebellious race as a unified people did not fulfill their goal.

**III. Epilogue (9).**

In a marvelously clever etymological word play, verse 9 announces, “Therefore [that is why] its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the lip [language] of all the earth and scattered them across the face of the whole earth.” The formula ‘*al-kēn* with *qārā’* is quite common as an explanatory inference from a reported event and is used most often with place names. Here it introduces the meaning given by the Israelites for Babylon. The word *bālal* provided a satirical meaning of “confusion” for the proud Babylonians’ name. The story shows how this gate of the gods fell far short of expectations, ending in confusion and chaos.

The Lord thus scattered them across the face of the earth. The text need not imply that the confusion was immediately reached, or the scattering instantaneous. The narrator fixed this



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point from which the division of the peoples and the languages would begin and move ever further.

Irony may be seen in the beginning and the ending of this passage. The group at Babel began as the “whole earth” (v. 1), but now they were spread over the whole earth (v. 9). By this contrast the lesson was made clear: God’s purpose (9:1) would be accomplished, in spite of the proud defiance of humankind.

The significance of this short account is great. It explains to God’s people how the nations came to be scattered abroad. The import, however, goes much deeper. That it was Babylon, the beginning of kingdoms under Nimrod from Cush, adds a rather ominous warning: Great nations cannot defy God and long survive. The new nation of Israel need only survey the many nations around her to realize that God disperses and curses the rebellious, bringing utter confusion and antagonism among them. If Israel would obey and submit to God’s will, then she would be the source of blessing to the world. Unfortunately, Israel also raised her head in pride and refused to obey the Lord. Eventually, she too was scattered across the face of the earth.

On the personal level the text reveals the necessity of submissive obedience to the Word of the Lord and warns against resisting through pride. Those who humble themselves in this way before God, God will exalt; but those who exalt themselves, God will abase.

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The war is raging on, yet many of us feel like a shell-shocked soldier, lost and confused in the chaos of the battlefield. Our generation is living through three tectonic shifts in Western culture.

The first is *from the majority to the minority*.

While 49 percent of millennials and 65 percent of American adults as a whole still identify as “Christian” in national surveys (though we’re hemorrhaging millions of young people each year), a recent in-depth analysis by the Barna Group, a Christian think tank, put the number of young adults who are “resilient disciples” at 10 percent.<sup>14</sup>

Yes, 10 percent.

And that’s nationwide. In secular cities like Portland, where I live, the number is likely *much* lower.

While the church is not an ethnic minority (and it’s important for me to clarify that), we are what sociologists call a cognitive minority. Meaning, as followers of Jesus, our worldview and value

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<sup>6</sup> Ross, A. P. (1998). [\*Creation and blessing: a guide to the study and exposition of Genesis\*](#) (pp. 245–248). Baker Books.



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system and practices and social norms are increasingly at sharp odds with those of our host culture. We face constant pressure, from both the Left and the Right, to assimilate and follow the crowd.

Second, our place in culture is shifting *from a place of honor to a place of shame*.

Walk around the downtown core of any major American city, and just look at the buildings: carved into them is the language of Scripture. The Christian vision so penetrated our nation's early imagination that it was literally chiseled into the stone of our earliest architecture.

And while plenty of secular thought leaders gave shape to our nation as well, followers of Jesus were at the center of culture making. Many government leaders were Christians, most of the Ivy League started as pastoral training schools, and many intellectuals, scientists, and artists were believers in Jesus. Pastors were people of high standing. The church held a place of honor in the wider culture.

That time is a distant memory, if that.

Most people today want nothing to do with faith in the public square. The church is seen as part of the problem, not the solution. What's more, with the radical moral reversal around human sexuality, gender, and the life of the unborn, we now have the moral low ground in many people's eyes; Jesus's vision of human sexuality is perceived as immoral by a large swath of the population.

In a shocking twist, we are no longer the nice middle-class citizens wearing their Sunday best; we are the James Deans, the 1960s counterculture, the '80s Straight edge fringe.

Third is the tectonic shift *from widespread tolerance to a rising hostility*.

A growing number of our secular friends and neighbors think of us not just as weird—because we eschew premarital sex, give away a percentage of our income, and refuse to be held captive by a political party or ideology—but as dangerous. As a threat to secularism's alternative vision of human flourishing.

As the writer of Hebrews put it, "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood," so I shy away from saying we face persecution. But there is a kind of cultural and socio-emotional persecution that we live under and carry the weight of. It's exhausting. The stigma. The slander. The wound to our hearts.

At the risk of mixing metaphors, the literary motif used by the writers of Scripture for this kind of a cultural experience is that of exile.<sup>7</sup>

Proverbs 18:1

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He **rages against** all wise judgment.

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<sup>7</sup> Comer, J. M. (2021). [\*Live no lies: recognize and resist the three enemies that sabotage your peace\*](#). Form.



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Proverbs 19:3

One's own folly leads **to ruin**, yet the heart rages against the Lord.

**BABEL, TOWER OF** (בֶּלְכַל, *bavel*). A pyramid-like construction built in the plains of Shinar (modern-day Iraq). The name also refers to the narrative in Gen 11:1–9.

The “Tower of Babel” was an ancient construction called a ziggurat—a step-pyramid building with a shrine at the top reserved for a divine being. The people built this construction in the plain of Shinar to make a great name for themselves and to avoid being scattered over the face of the earth (Gen 11:4). God, however, disapproved of their plans and judged the people by confusing their language in order to scatter them (Gen 11:6–8). The story explains the origin of languages and the nations, especially Babylon (Gen 11:9).

**Construction**

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word (מִגְדָּל, *migdal*) translated “tower” (Gen 11:4) refers to elevated structures designed for protection (Judg 9:51; 2 Kgs 9:17; 2 Chr 14:7). Geographical and cultural context, however, suggests this construction was a ziggurat—from the Akkadian word *ziqqurratu* meaning “temple-tower.”

According to the ancient concept of universe, the mountain functioned as a pillar of the sky. With its base planted in the earth and its peak reaching the sky, the structure was the meeting point of heaven and earth. Because of this, people viewed the mountain as the place of divine residence and activity. In places of lower elevation—such as the plain in Gen 11:2—people built ziggurats as substitutes for mountains. The famous ziggurat at Babylon is called *Etemenanki*, meaning “The House of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth.” Other ziggurats also have similar names (Sarna, *Genesis*, 82).

Location	Name
Nippur	“The House of the Mountain”
Asshur	“The House of the Mountain of the Universe”
Larsa	“The House of the Link between Heaven and Earth”

The land of Shinar (11:2)—where the people built their city and tower—is located in ancient Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq). Although Mesopotamia lacked stone, it had some of the highest concentrations of bitumen deposits in the ancient Near East (Negev, *AEHL*). Bitumen is a blackish mineral used in the ancient Near East as a binding element, similar to asphalt. An Akkadian proverb records the use of “asphalt and bricks” in a building project (*ANET*, 425)

**The Narrative**



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*Sin of Babel*

Three interpretations regarding the sin of the people occur in Gen 11:1–9:

1. Disobedience. The people defied God’s command to fill the earth (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7) by settling together in Shinar (Gen 11:2).
2. Discontentment. The people—dissatisfied with their creatureliness—built a tower-temple to ascend it and become “like the gods” (Gen 11:4).
3. Pride. The people decided to make much of themselves (Gen 11:4) instead of the Creator.

*Theological Message*

- God is sovereign; He brought about His own plans and desires. Though the people gathered in one place, He spread them out across the earth (Gen 10:5, 18, 20, 30–32).
- God is gracious. He judged the people for their actions, but He also called Abraham to bless them (Gen 12:1–3). The very things the people sought—a great name and land (Gen 11:4)—He promised to Abraham (Gen 12:2). In Revelation, God gathers people from every tribe, language, and nation to His city where He and the Lamb are the temple (Rev 5:9; 7:9; 21:22).

*Placement within Genesis*

The Tower of Babel narrative marks the transition from the origin of creation (Gen 1–11) to the origin of Israel (Gen 12–50).

Chronologically, this narrative should come before the “Table of Nations” (Gen 10:1–32). The sequence, however, is consistent with other stories in Genesis which are ordered thematically, not chronologically (Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 243). Survey statements are given first followed by a detailed explanation.

	Survey	Explanation
Creation of Heaven and Earth	Gen 1:1–2	Gen 1:3–31
Creation of Adam and Eve	Gen 2:1–3	Gen 2:4–25
Wickedness from Adam to Noah	Gen 5:1–32	Gen 6:1–4
Judgment and Mercy	Gen 6:5–8	Gen 6:9–22

Genesis 10:1–32 is the survey of the various nations, and Gen 11:1–9 is the explanation about why the nations do not speak the same language even though they have the same origin.

*Parallels to Other Literature*

The “Tower of Babel” narrative has parallels to *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian account of creation (Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 470–71). This document details the construction of a temple for Marduk, a chief deity:

“When Marduk heard this,



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Brightly glowed his features, like the day:  
 “Construct Babylon, whose building you have requested,  
 Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it ‘The Sanctuary’.  
 The Anunnaki applied the implement;  
 For one whole year they molded bricks.  
 When the second year arrived,  
 They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu.  
 Having built a stage-tower as high as Apsu,  
 They set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil, [and] Ea.  
 In their presence he was seated in grandeur.”

(ANET, 68–69)

Enuma Elish	Tower of Babel
They raised high the head	its top in the heavens
Let its brickwork be fashioned	Come, let us make bricks
Habitation for Marduk	Place of God’s visitation

Both accounts share similar language about the height, material, and function of the tower-temple.

*Literary Features*

Genesis 11:1–9 features an alternating structure and a chiasmic structure.

The alternating structure (Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 176) divides the narrative into two parts: The Words of the People (Gen 11:1–4) and the Words of the Lord (Gen 11:5–9). This emphasizes the shift from the human perspective to the divine perspective. It also demonstrates the futility of the creaturely plans over against those of the sovereign Creator.

- Words of the people (Gen 11:1–4)
- A One language and a common speech
- B “Come, let us ...” “... and let us ...”
- C “Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower”
- D Let us “make a name”
- E Lest we be scattered over the face of earth
- Words of the Lord (Gen 11:5–9)
- A’ One people and one language
- B’ “Come, let us ...” “... and let us ...”
- C’ Ceased to build
- D’ Its “name” was Babel
- E’ The Lord scattered them over the whole earth

Genesis 11:1–9 also has a chiasmic structure (Kikwanda, “The Shape of Genesis 11:1–9,” 18–32). A chiasm is an ancient compositional technique in which words and themes are layered. In the outline below, layers A and A’ are parallel. They have similar wording and make a similar



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comment about language and the world. Layers B and B' are parallel. "There" refers about the location of the people's gathering and dispersion. Layers C and C' are parallel and so on. The chiasitic structure gives the narrative a sense of progression up to and down from the climax at letter G: "the Lord came down ..." (Gen 11:5). God's visitation is the turning point in the story.

A "the whole world had one language" (Gen 11:1)

B "there" (Gen 11:2)

C "each other" (Gen 11:3)

D "Come, let's make bricks" (Gen 11:3)

E "Come, let us build ourselves" (Gen 11:4)

F "a city, with a tower" (Gen 11:4)

G "the Lord came down ..." (Gen 11:5)

F' "the city and the tower" (Gen 11:5)

E' "that the men were building" (Gen 11:5)

D' "Come, let us ... confuse" (Gen 11:7)

C' "each other" (Gen 11:7)

B' "from there" (Gen 11:8)

A' "the language of the whole world" (Gen 11:9)

The narrative also features irony—the mismatch between intentions and outcomes.

Humanity's Intentions

God's Outcomes

Build a tower and city (Gen 11:4)

God causes them to abandon the city (Gen 11:8)

Gather to avoid being scattered (Gen 11:4)

God scatters the people (Gen 11:8)

Tower will reach the heavens (Gen 11:4)

God must come down to see it (Gen 11:5)

Build a tower-temple so God will visit (Gen 11:4)

God visits in judgment (Gen 11:7)

Make a great name (Gen 11:4)

City is called Babel (sounds like the Hebrew word for "confusion") (Gen 11:9)

The sounds of the words in Hebrew reinforce the structure and irony.

שֵׁם (*shem*) "name" (Gen 11:4, 9)

שָׁם (*sham*) "there" (Gen 11:2, 9)

נִלְבְּנָה (*nilbenah*) "let's make bricks" (Gen 11:3)

נִבְרָלָה (*novlah*) "let us confuse" (Gen 11:7)

בַּשָּׁמַיִם (*vashshamayim*) "heaven" (Gen 11:4)

מִשָּׁם (*mishsham*) "from there" (Gen 11:8)



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בְּבֶלֶל (*bavel*) “Babel” (Gen 11:9)

בְּלָל (*balal*) “confused” (Gen 11:9)

הִפְצִיטָם (*hephitsam*) “scatter” (Gen 11:9)

פְּנֵי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ (*peney kol-ha'arets*) “face of the whole earth” (Gen 11:9)

### Tower of Babel in the New Testament

The New Testament does not contain any direct reference to the tower-temple constructed at Babel. It does, however, record the reversal of God’s judgment. In his article “Pentecost and Glossolalia,” J. G. Davis observes several allusions between Gen 11:1–9 LXX and Acts 2:5–13.

God “confounds” (συγχέωμεν, *syncheōmen*) the people’s “languages” (γλώσσων, *glōssan*) so that they cannot understand each other’s “speech” (φωνήν, *phōnēn*) (Gen 11:7 LXX). God breaks their unity, and as a result the people “scatter” (διέσπειρεν, *diespeiren*) (Gen 11:9). In Acts, the disciples speak in other “languages” (γλώσσαις, *glōssais*) (Acts 2:4). The crowd hears this “sound” (φωνῆς, *phōnēs*) but is “confounded” (συνεχύθη, *synechythē*) (Acts 2:6). God “scatters” (διεσπάρησαν, *diesparēsan*) the disciples to the nations to unify Jew and Gentiles under the Gospel (Acts 8:1, 4).

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JOHNNY CISNEROS

**BABEL, TOWER OF, CRITICAL ISSUES** Examines hypotheses for the origin, date, and composition of the Tower of Babel story (Gen 11:1–9).

### Overview of Source-Critical Issues

The biblical account of the Tower of Babel appears to reflect firsthand historical knowledge of Mesopotamia, although in a highly literary fashion. The text is enmeshed with historical points of reference, both physical and conceptual, yet it does not seem to be primarily concerned with providing a historical witness according to the modern conception of history.

Some aspects of Gen 11:1–9 exhibit reliable connections to the story’s Mesopotamian setting. For example, the descriptions of kiln-fired brick and bitumen accurately reflect the



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building materials of Mesopotamia, where stone was uncommon (Sarna, *Genesis*, 72). For Israelites in Palestine, the more usual building materials were sun-dried clay bricks and stone. In addition, most scholars connect the tower in Gen 11:1–9 with ancient ziggurat structures, the remains of which have been found throughout Mesopotamia. Ruins at the site of ancient Babylon include an impressive ziggurat called Etemenanki, part of the Esagila temple compound dedicated to the god Marduk. Two Babylonian rulers, Nabopolassar (626–605 BC) and Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BC), are reported to have made improvements to Etemenanki during their reigns. In addition, there is literary evidence for a much earlier temple complex in Babylon that was destroyed by Sargon of Akkad in 2350 BC.

Despite the presence of features that seem to reinforce the text's authenticity as a document of the ancient Near East in general, additional elements appear to support the account's uniqueness as a composition of ancient Israel specifically.

The majority of scholars see the Tower of Babel story as a contribution to the Old Testament's general theme concerning the city/empire of Babylon, which represents behaviors that Yahweh opposes and thus comes under His judgment. According to this view, Gen 11:1–9 is a polemic against Babylon both specifically and paradigmatically, and it is therefore no surprise to find in the text historically based Mesopotamian features. Beyond this point, however, the scholarly opinions diverge.

- Some scholars (e.g., van Seters, LaCocque) hold that the Tower of Babel account developed as a literary construct (in the Yahwist source, ca. sixth century BC) to encourage Babylonian captives.
- Another prominent view (advanced by Speiser) proposes that Gen 11:1–9 is dependent on Mesopotamian myths that have been adapted to an Israelite purpose (or, at least, that the story originated in Babylon and was carried to Israel). This second view also supports a Yahwist source, but with an earlier date of composition (ca. 10th century BC).
- A third approach affirms that Gen 11:1–9 portrays actual and historical events—or at least that this text cannot have originated in Babylon but is an authentic Israelite composition. Scholars who take this view (e.g., DeWitt, Garrett, Kitchen) generally recognize Moses as the author and support a date in the second millennium BC.

(For a survey of theories of origin, see Westermann, *Genesis*, 540–42.)

### **Yahwist Source**

The Documentary Hypothesis—scholarship's prevailing view of the Pentateuch's composition—recognizes four sources underlying Genesis—Deuteronomy and generally attributes the Babel account to the Yahwist source. There is no consensus on how the Yahwist source developed, when it should be dated, or how it should be characterized (Römer, *The Elusive Yahwist*, 9–27).

Some scholars conclude that the Yahwist material could not have been authored before the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BC. Van Seters finds strong support for this view in the Babel account: "It [Gen 11:1–9] is the strongest indicator of the dating of J's history to the late Babylonian exile period" (van Seters, *Yahwist*, 33). This conclusion is based partly on the idea that Gen 11:1–9 was inspired by the exiles' encounter with the glories of Babylon, including the massive Etemenanki ziggurat (mentioned above). LaCocque, for instance, believes that the Tower of Babel story is "speaking of a situation dramatized by the exile in Babylon of the sixth



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century ... when the Judean captives were filled with awe before the city of Babylon and its ziggurat” (LaCocque, *Captivity*, 4–5).

Alternatively, Speiser holds that the Yahwist source-material derives from around the 10th century BC. He considers the story behind Gen 11:1–9 to have been borrowed from the *Enuma Elish* (Speiser, *Genesis*, 75). Similarities between the texts include:

**Enuma Elish**

**Genesis**

“For one whole year they molded bricks”

“Come, let us make bricks and burn them through” (Gen 11:3)

“They raised high the head of Esagila toward Apsu [heaven]”

“let us build a city and a tower with its head in the heavens” (Gen 11:4)

(Enuma Elish translations by Speiser; Pritchard, *Ancient Near East*, 34)

The extant copies of the *Enuma Elish* are from the first millennium BC (later than Genesis purports to have been written), though the work likely originated early in the second millennium BC (Speiser, cited in Pritchard, *Ancient Near East*, 28).

**Mosaic Authorship**

Scholars who reject the Documentary Hypothesis (and other source-critical theories for the Pentateuch’s composition) generally suggest that the Babel account is a legitimate report of actual events at some point in history. Supporters of this view argue that the Pentateuch demonstrates an intricate and coherent structure that belies the assumptions of the Documentary Hypothesis. In addition, they argue that the Pentateuch accurately evinces the world of the ancient Near East in the second millennium BC (Kitchen, *Reliability*).

Confessional readers of the Old Testament commonly view Moses as the human author of the Pentateuch (including the Babel account). However, many scholars who posit a compositional unity acknowledge that the process likely included various sources that are unavailable to us, similar to the sources mentioned in the historical books (e.g., Num 21:14; Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18; 1 Kgs 11:41; 2 Chr 16:11; Ezra 4:11). These advocates conclude that it is reasonable to consider Moses to be the primary compiler, author, and editor of the Pentateuch, although there are clear indications that later editorial updates took place (e.g., the reference to “Dan” in Gen 14:14).

Within this view, the second-millennium BC time frame for the composition of Gen 11:1–9 corresponds with reports of the Babylon temple that Sargon destroyed in 2350 BC. DeWitt has proposed that the builders were from the Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III), which preceded the Old Babylonian empire and occupied the same region (DeWitt, “Historical Background,” 16–21).

In a variation on Mosaic authorship, Garrett proposes that the Babel account provides the conclusion to an “ancestor epic core”—a literary pattern attested in the Atrahasis Epic. According to Garrett, Gen 11:1–9 probably existed in an early source that documented the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur (making it a much older text than van Seters allows). As the primary author of the Pentateuch, Moses may have incorporated this narrative with other sources (such as the toledoth material and Gen 1:1–2:3) to form what Garrett calls “the original ancestor epic



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core” of Gen 1–11 (Garrett, *Rethinking*, 190). The pattern of an “ancestor epic core” consists of “a prologue, a triadic narrative which describes some threat to the central characters, and a conclusion, with transitional material between each major section” (Garrett, *Rethinking*, 120–21). As in the Atrahasis Epic, humanity’s survival is a major topic of concern in Gen 1–11. Both texts also provide a resolution to the problem of survival. In Genesis 1–11, the final threat to humans comes from their desire to coalesce at a city and a tower instead of filling the earth as God had commanded them (Gen 1:28; 9:1). The Babel account ends with a confusion of language and a dispersal of humanity—thus completing the threat/conclusion cycle in Gen 1–11 (Garrett, *Rethinking*, 125–26).

Garrett’s theory seeks to explain the placement and contribution of Gen 11:1–9 in a way that is consistent with nonbiblical writings from the ancient Near East. However, it differs from views that regard the Babel account to have been inspired by Mesopotamian texts (i.e., Speiser, *Genesis*) or to have arisen from the much later period of the Babylonian exile (i.e., van Seters, *LaCocque*).

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DANIEL E. MOORE<sup>8</sup>

### We need to realize:

- We have an enemy
- He hates us
- We are living in his world

### CTK: The Kingdom Triad...The Enemy’s Kingdom

Mention the Kingdom Chart

#### I. We Have An Enemy

You mean he’s real?

Not just the opposite balance of good in us, but a literal real entity?

Remind you: Spiritual being having a physical experience

My litmus test: Child abuse (prey on our children)

<sup>8</sup> Moore, D. E. (2016). [Babel, Tower of, Critical Issues](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.



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Having a hard time believing this, hang with me

SATAN: (*sah-tahn*);

- An opponent, or the Opponent  
the hater; the accuser; adversary, enemy; one who resists, obstructs, and hinders whatever is good.

- Wanted to be God, was thrown down from heaven with a third of the angels. Which are now called demons, demonic spirits.

(Revelation 12:7-9 “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angles fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angles with him.”) ( Also in Isaiah 14:12-15)

- Hell was created for them.

(Matthew 25:41...Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”)

- *Satan* comes from the verb which means “to be an opponent,” or “to withstand.”  
As a noun, *satan* can describe any “opponent” (2 Sam. 19:21-22).  
However, when the form *ha-satan* (the Adversary) occurs, the translation is usually “Satan,”  
**not his name, but his accurate description: hateful enemy**

- Since Satan is the Hater, he is all the more opposed to God, who is love.

(1 John 4:7-8

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 3:10 & 14c

“This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of god; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. 14c “Anyone who does not love remains in death.”)

- Mankind did not witness Satan’s beginning, but by God’s design shall see his end, one of ceaseless torment and humiliation

(Isaiah. 14:16a “Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate:”

Ezek. 28:12c-19

“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz, and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper; sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching all the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”

Rev. 20:10



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“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”).

- Unbelief is a product of belong to the enemy

*John 8:42-45*

*“Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but He sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”*”

### II. He Hates Us

John 10:10a

“The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy...”

1 Peter 5:8

“Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Luke 22:31

“And the lord said, “Simon! Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.”

- e.g. ADAM&EVE

Genesis 1 overview

Gen. 1:26

“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the earth

27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male & female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Vs. 31a And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

Genesis 2 details

Gen 2:15

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** it and **take care** of it.

- ❖ Work: abad (aw-bad’) to work, implied to serve, enslave, bond servant, compel, husbandman, keep, labor, bring to pass, servant, service, be wrought, worshipper.
- ❖ Take care: shamar (shaw-mar’) to hedge about as with thorns, beware, be circumspect, **guard**, **protect**, attend to, take heed, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, save, sure wait, watch.

Vs 16

“And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”



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Created Eve, as it was not good for man to be alone

Gen 3:1-6

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”

Vs. 4

You will not surely die” the serpent said to the woman. (5) For God knows that when u eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Vs 6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

ASK: Why was the enemy in the garden to begin with?

Had Adam forsaken his duties?

Is Eve daft?

How could she fall for such an illusion? \_\_\_\_\_?

The Enemy’s methods:

- The encounter with the enemy

Step #1: Dons a disguise (angel of light) that the woman would find acceptable

Step #2: Outwits the inexperienced woman through confusion & distortion.

Did He really say?

Do you think that is what He really meant?

QUESTIONING God’s motives.

Step #3: Satan redefines God to Eve.

He cast doubt on God’s plan/order/instructions.

QUESTIONING God’s character.

(A process he personally knows, he is seeking to distort her image of God.

“He would not want you to do without.” )

Step #4: He reconstructed God’s directives.

(“You will not surely die! You will become....

Step #5: He elevated the role of humanity to be like God.

(Which was his sin = self aggrandizement)

(“You will become LIKE HIM!”)

Appeals to our flesh, our human nature

1 John 2:16 (Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life)

(“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”)

! Tried same method w/Jesus: (see Matt. 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4).

Temptation of Christ

**III. We Are Living In His World**

- 1 John 5: 19

“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”

- 2 Corinthians 11: 14



## Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.”

- John 12:31 (Jesus speaking with the Greeks)

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”

- 2 Corinthians 4:4

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

### Where are you today with this information?

#### INVITATION:

- Wondering if this is true: Spiritual being having a physical experience  
*Salvation area of altar*

- Maybe you are like Jessica. Ended up walking this yellow brick road because you were exploited.

It was imposed upon you.

Today is the end of your wondering.

Today is the end of your erroneous acceptance that it is your fault. Today is the end of that guilt & shame.

Today is the end of the protective wall built up because you felt so shafted....

Today is the day to JUMP off this road

### 1 John 4:4 He that is in you is GREATER than he that is in the world

Use in closing

Ephesians 2:1-5

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgression—it is by grace you have been saved.”

Hebrews 4:15

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was w/o sin. So let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

### “2 Chronicles 16:9

**“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”**

2 Timothy 2:24-26

“Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their sense and escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive to do his will.”

(Job 1:7 enemy tells God he has come from ‘roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.’)

Vs 11: But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has and he will curse you and die

Appeal to the flesh—“the tree was good for food”—



## Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil

Appeal to the eyes -- "It was pleasant to the eyes"— psychological part of man, to his mind.

Appeal to pride -- "And a tree to be desired to make one wise"—this is an appeal to the religious side of man.

Difference is what they produce because you take on the form of whom you worship.

### Discipleship Shared: Whatever God Does In You He Wants To Do Through You

Living Usable

**90 Days of Discipleship: Lose Your Life to Find It**

**Matthew 16:24-27**

*Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done"*

**The Wednesday Nights of Winter, 6:30PM, F.L.C. auditorium**

**John 13...Washing disciples feet (1-20) • Foretells of the betrayal (21-30)**

**New Commandment to love one another (31-35)**

*31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

**John 13:36** (Jesus foretells Peter's Denial)

*36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."*

- *"Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward."*

Three years prior, Peter answered the initial call:

**Matthew 4:18-20**

*18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

#### **WORD WEALTH**

**13:36 follow**, *akoloutheo* (ak-ol-oo-theh-oh); Strong's #190: To accompany, go along with, go the same way with, follow one who precedes. A is in union with, and *keluethos* is a road. *Akoloutheo* is being on the same roadway with someone. Since the word was used for soldiers, servants, and pupils, it can easily be transferred to the life of the Christian. In 78 Gospel occurrences it is used 77 times of following Christ. Metaphorically, it is used for discipleship (Matt. 9:9; Mark 9:38).<sup>9</sup>

**Jesus and Peter John 21**

*15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." 19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."*

The initial invitation to salvation in Christ marks us as His disciple.

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

*13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

As we walk in this relationship with Him, something else happens: We are invited to come to the end of ourselves and allow Him to work through us what He has done in us. Jesus repeats this foretelling...for the rest of His Disciples:

**John 14:12** *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."*

<sup>9</sup> Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., Jn 13:34). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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**Mark 3:13-15** (this is the same power entrusted to us in John 14)

*13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons.*

**KENOSIS** [keh NOE sis]—a theological term used in connection with the dual nature of Jesus as fully human and fully divine. The word comes from a Greek verb which means “to empty” (Phil. 2:7). The NASB translates this passage, “He emptied Himself,” but the KJV and NKJV express it, “He made Himself of no reputation.” The Bible teaches that our Savior was both fully divine and completely human during His earthly life. But nowhere does Scripture explain exactly how Jesus’ two natures co-existed. Theologians have struggled for years to explain this mystery. “The Kenosis” describes the fact that, according to Philippians 2:7, when God’s divine Son became human He voluntarily laid aside His divine rights to function as God. Jesus did not stop being God, but He chose not to exercise His powers as God, choosing instead to become fully dependent upon the Holy Spirit for His power to live and minister. It is this great truth which underscores the fact that Jesus not only lived a sinless life on human terms (yet retaining His nature as God), but He provided a model for His call to us to minister in His name (as mere humans). It is an effective model not because He was “merely human,” but because He chose to minister in the Spirit’s might, voluntarily confining Himself to those resources. Thus, in commissioning His own to prayer and ministry, Jesus says of His follower, “The works that I do he will do also; and greater than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12).

Jesus has lived out the pathway for redeemed humans to live in the resources of the Holy Spirit and minister in His Name with supernatural expectations—not in their strength or wisdom, but His—a wisdom and grace He demonstrated in His ministry<sup>10</sup>

**NOTE: RECONFIGURE. INSTEAD OF DOING THE FIVE AREAS OF INFLUENCE THREE DIFFERENT TIMES, DESCRIBE THEM WITH ALL THEIR DETAILS ONE AT A TIME. SEEMED TO JUMP AROUND TOO MUCH**

### Discipleship Shared: Whatever God Does In You He Wants To Do Through You Submission: 3 Kingdoms – MY Kingdom

RF: Meditation • Prayer • Fasting • Study • Simplicity • Solitude • Submission • Service • Confession • Worship • Guidance • Celebration

PJH: Committing to Hear God’s Voice • Water Baptism • Communion • Forgiveness (walking in the Spirit of) • Feeding on the Word of God • Maintaining Integrity of Heart • Abiding in the Spirit • Living in Submission • Practicing Solitude • Living as a Worshipper

RECAP: PRACTICING LIVING IN GOD’S KINGDOM

TESTIMONIES: Reading one verse a day and DOING IT

### Submission: 3 Kingdoms – MY Kingdom

#### God’s Kingdom:

- The kingdom of God is not just heaven, a place.
- Or the church, his people.
- They are meaningless w/o & a more accurate definition is: The kingdom of God is **HIS AUTHORITY.**

#### How do we live in His Kingdom/THIS AUTHORITY?

- We praxis scripture: Application of a skill. Eternal Habits.

#### MY KINGDOM:

THE GIFT: Large gift, wrapped nicely. Have someone open.

You’ve been given a kingdom at creation...Your Kingdom.

A gift of love that came wrapped up in a box of free will.

#### I. Just WHAT Have We Been Given?

##### FreeWill

##### **Gen. 2:8-17**

<sup>10</sup> Hayford, J. W., Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Hayford’s Bible handbook*. Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers.



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*<sup>8</sup> Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup> The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*<sup>10</sup> A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin<sup>[a]</sup> and onyx are also there.) <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

*<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

**II. So HOW do we live in this world?**

CHOICE: Free Will      To Chose      Who to listen to

- *Because who we listen to is who we trust*
- *Who we trust is who we really love*

**John 14:15** *“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”*

We are ETERNAL Spiritual Beings having this PRESENT physical experience  
 Given control of our own kingdom  
 We get to choose who we listen to...

- God will not do what He expects us to do:

Our responsibility **Romans 12:1-2**

*“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to rest and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**A. FIVE Sources of Influence**

1. God/Christ **Colossians 1:15-20**

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by[a] him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

2. The Enemy      USE? Genesis 3:1-13

**(Revelation 12:7-9)** *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, **8** but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

( Also in **Isaiah 14:12-15**)

➤ **1 John 5: 19**

*We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*



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➤ **2 Corinthians 11: 14-15**

*And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

➤ **John 12:31** (Jesus speaking with the Greeks)

*Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out*

➤ **2 Corinthians 4:4**

*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

3. Evil People **Proverbs 21:10**

*The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes.*

4. Life **Matthew 5:45b**

*For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

5. Own Choices **Joshua 24:15**

*And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

**James 1:22**

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

**“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”**

These are the influences

**ASK:** So HOW do they influence us???

- ❖ By singing to us...Singing to us to follow them...to give way to them
- ❖ To YIELD to them...They want your Kingdom

**B. Power of Yield**

Yield = Give right-of-way.

**ASK:** Who holds this? (You do, given at creation.)

**YEILD:**

1. To God

**Ephesians 4:22-24**

*to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

**Hebrews 11:25** (Moses)

*choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*

Yield statement:

- I will not obsess about my old life: feeling lesser than/better than or in old desires to engage in things that hurt Christ.
- I will do things that Christ did.
- I will repent when I have sinned.
- I will invest in my relationship w/Christ so I can fall more in love.
- I will make the choice on how to act by the illuminating light of scripture. (removing emotions from decision making.)



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2. To the Enemy

**2 Corinthians 11:14**

*And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*

Yield statement:

- This is not wrong.
- It's really not that bad.
- No one will know.
- I'm only going to try it.
- Why R U getting your undies in a wad, it's not that big of a deal.

3. To Evil People

a. Ones you know

**Galatians 5:19-21**

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Yield statement:

- Two reactions: They affect you w/o your choice. (e.g. drunk driver)
- Or you lie to yourself: They are not THAT bad.

b. Ones you are tricked/abused by

**2 Corinthians 11:13, 15**

***13** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **14** And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. **15** So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

Yield statement:

- Don't be so judgmental. They would not state it on TV or put it in print if it was not real!
- Nothing. You were exploited. Abused. (FEAR)

4. To Life

**Matthew 5:45b**

***44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Life happens)*

Yield statement:

- "Why me, Lord? I'm a Christian."

We are not exempt from life because we love Christ.

You do not get a special 'go directly to heavenly life' pass when you fall in love with Him.

One that we can wave above others heads.

We LIVE in the enemies territory. Don't act like you don't. (It's embarrassing...can you deal w/sovereignty?

Which means: Do You TRUST HIM?

5. To Own Choices -Carnal man

**Galatians 5: 13**

*For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*



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Yield statement:

- “Just this once.”
- “It is no big deal.”

**We hold the power of Yield so what are we suppose to do with it? PURSUE GODLY PRINCIPLES**

- ✓ Do you know Your Heavenly Father is constantly looking throughout the earth to see whose committed heart needs strengthening?

**2 Chronicles 16:9a**

*For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.*

*The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. What a fool you have been! NLT*

**C. The Power of Pursued Principles**

**You take on the form of whom you worship.**

1. GOD

**1 Timothy 4:7-8**

*Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly.*

*8 “Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”*

2. THE ENEMY

**James 4:7**

*“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

*So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

**1 Corinthians 5:6-8**

*Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

REMINDER: **1 John 4:4** He that is in you is GREATER than he that is in the world

3. EVIL PEOPLE

Oprah-type:

**John 7:24**

*“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”*

**1 Corinthians 15:33**

*Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”*

Abusive –type:

Ruins good character

4. LIFE



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He holds us in the palm of his hand, REALLY?

**Isaiah 41:13**

*For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."*

**This is where you will answer: "Do I believe God is sovereign?"**

Do I trust Him?

Or do I seek explanations of why this is happening?

Do I look for whose fault it is?

Do you not think someone who loves you so intimately will let you know, in that intimacy, if you have offended Him (sin)? Benefit of daily conversations w/Him.

(Haughty **Prov. 21:4** "*Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!*")

5. OWN CHOICES (SELF)

Repentance

**John 9:31**

*We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.*

**Galatians 5:16**

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

**Hebrews 5:14**

*But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

Solid food eaten develops Fruit of the Spirit. (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, & self control... grows as we yield into Him.)

Solid Food = Scripture

Eaten = learn it, believe it, understand it, believe it, DO it

PRODUCES FRUIT

Constant use:

- 1.) Do something you do not want to do & do it regularly: Devotions, Exercise
- 2.) Deprive yourself of something pleasant: Ice Cream, Shopping
- 3.) Demand definite quotas/performance of yourself: What end result am I looking for? Goal Setting
- 4.) Do something difficult: Take a class, Teach, Make new friends, Tithe
- 5.) Do not put things off: START

**Galatians 6:15** "*neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation/changed life.*"

**KEY to Yield: Have TRAINED themselves to distinguish good from evil.**



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**Hebrews 5:13-14**

*<sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

**We hold the power of yield in one hand, the power of pursued principles in the other:  
what are we going to do with them???**

## **Obedience**

***Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?***

"His servants ye are to whom ye obey."

[Romans 6:16](#)

The first thing to do in examining the power that dominates me is to take hold of the unwelcome fact that I am responsible for being thus dominated. If I am a slave to myself, I am to blame because at a point I yielded to myself. Likewise, if I obey God I do so because I have yielded myself to Him. **Yielding to Jesus will break every form of slavery in any human life.**

The first thing to do in examining the power that dominates me is to take hold of the unwelcome fact that I am responsible for being thus dominated. If I am a slave to myself, I am to blame because at a point I yielded to myself. Likewise, if I obey God I do so because I have yielded myself to Him.

Yield in childhood to selfishness, and you will find it the most enchainning tyranny on earth. There is no power in the human soul of itself to break the bondage of a disposition formed by yielding. Yield for one second to anything in the nature of lust (remember what lust is: "I must have it at once," whether it be the lust of the flesh or the lust of the mind) - once yield and though you may hate yourself for having yielded, you are a bondsman to that thing. There is no release in human power at all but only in the Redemption. You must yield yourself in utter humiliation to the only One Who can break the dominating power viz., the Lord Jesus Christ - "He hath anointed me...to preach deliverance to all captives."

You find this out in the most ridiculously small ways - "Oh, I can give that habit up when I like." You cannot, you will find that the habit absolutely dominates you because you yielded to it willingly. It is easy to sing - "He will break every fetter" and at the same time believing a life of obvious slavery to yourself. **Yielding to Jesus will break every form of slavery in any human life.**



## Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil

### *Delusions of Mediums and Possessions*

*And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. (Acts 16:16)*

**2:13 Submission** is the theme of this section (1 Pet. 2:13–3:7). The natural response is to demand rights and refuse to yield to another person; it is a supernatural response to give up rights and yield. True submission involves refusing to seek self-interest and instead assuming voluntary commitment of service to others (Phil. 2:3, 4). This volitional submission is seen in several spheres of relationships: citizens to government (1 Pet. 2:13–17); slaves to masters (vv. 18–25); and wives to husbands (1 Pet. 3:1–7).<sup>11</sup>

Paul was grieved because this girl was a medium. A spiritualistic medium commits the greatest psychological crime in the world, that is, the greatest crime against the soul. Drunkenness and debauchery are child's play compared with spiritualism. According to the Bible, it is possible for a man or woman to make himself or herself a medium through which unseen spirits can talk to seen men and women. Beware of using the phrase "Yield, give up your will." Be perfectly certain to whom you are yielding. No one has any right to yield himself to any impression or to any influence or impulse; immediately you yield, you are susceptible to all kinds of supernatural powers and influences. There is only one Being to whom you must yield, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ; but be sure it is the Lord Jesus Christ to Whom you yield. In religious meetings it is the impressionable people who are the dangerous people. When you get that type of nature to deal with, pray as you never prayed, watch as you never watched, and travail in communion as you never travailed in communion, because the soul that is inclined to be a medium between any supernatural forces and himself will nearly always be caught up by the supernatural forces belonging to Satan instead of by God. Insanity is a fact, demon possession is a fact, and mediumship is a fact. The Bible says regarding the false Christs ". . . if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). So beware to whom you yield. When once a nature is laid hold of by the sovereign power of God and recognises to Whom he is yielding, then that nature is safeguarded for ever. Beware of impressions and impulses unless they wed themselves to the standards given by Jesus Christ.

"All power is given unto Me," said Jesus; "and I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy."<sup>12</sup>

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### **Luke 6:27-31**

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes our cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you and if anyone takes what belongs to you do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you."

What is the power: vs. 35b

"Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High."

### **Philippians 4:8-9**

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice."

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman's Study Bible* (1 Pe 2:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>12</sup> Chambers, O. (1996). *Biblical psychology: a treasure chest for Christian counselors*. London: Simpkin Marshall.



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What is the power:  
And the God of peace will be with you.”

**2 Peter 1:3-11**

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make very effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

2 Timothy 3:1-5

Having a form of godliness...

Colossians 3:1-14

Luke 22:29

“I confer on you a kingdom..”

Sin is “Darkness is the assertion of independence rather than God-dependence.”

G.E. Ladd

Parable interpretation: Does this apply for this age or the age to come? What does this require of me today.

**Saturday night:** After I set up the concept of owning our own kingdom, I will call you up and we can do an interview type testimony of how someone invaded your kingdom as a teen and you were left to deal with that on your own the best you could. How God’s hand was there but you still made your own choices.

How you met Jesus and the choices you made then to deal with this act of violence. Then, how God asked you to be a vessel of forgiveness in the perpetrators life.

Many choices by you, yielding your life into God’s design.

I will ask any women who would like to stand and state they are ready to yield their choice into God’s Kingdom to stand, I will ask you to pray over them.

We have black bracelets for them to come up and get. Not sure if there will be need for altar prayer. We can mention the prayer room is open after the session?

If the service is lending itself to an outright altar call, we will do that and pray with women at the altar. Which it easily could.

Really not thinking the prayer room will be needed unless there is some counseling needed.



## Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil

**Colossians 2:13–15** tells us that Jesus Christ’s triumph over sin and evil powers was accomplished in “it”—that is, in *the Cross*. This text, joined to and studied beside others (**Eph. 2:13–16**; **Gal. 3:13, 14**; **2 Cor. 5:14–17**; **Rom. 5:6–15**; and **Rev. 12:10, 11**), firmly establishes Jesus’ suffering, shed blood, sacrificial death, and resurrection triumph as the only adequate and available ground for ransom from sin, reconciliation to God, redemption from slavery, and restoration. The Cross is the sole hope and means for full reinstatement to relationship with God and rulership under Him—to “reign in life” (**Rom. 5:17**). To avoid presumption or imbalance regarding the message and ministry of the present power of the kingdom of God, we must focus on and regularly review two points; the source and the grounds for the delegation of such authority and power. 1) God’s sovereign authority and almighty power is the source from which mankind derives any ability to share in the exercise of God’s kingdom power. 2) But even more important, seeing sinful, fallen man had lost all claim to his early privilege of rulership under God, let us remember the *grounds* upon which all kingdom privilege or power may be restored and by which such spiritual ministry with authority may be exercised.

13

### Week 4: Principles for Kingdom Living (Kingdom Values, The Kingdom of Me)

Matthew 18:1-9	Humility
Matthew 18: 21-35	Unforgiving Servant (Forgiveness)
Matthew 20:1-16	Generous Landowner (Reward is up to God. Whether you’ve known Him 15 yrs or 1.)
Matthew 21:33-46	Possessing God’s stuff w/o treating it as His. Self centered belief.
Matthew 22: 1-14	Marriage Feast (No favorites. Invitation to Heaven given to all.)
Matthew 25: 1-13	Ten Virgins (Anticipate, Prepare, Watch)
Matthew 25:14-30	The Talents
Matthew 25: 31-46	How you treat His children is How you treat Him.
Luke 19:11-27	You are held accountable to invest, use, care for the talents He gives you/sends you

### Extra:

#### Kingdom Sayings

Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28  
 Matthew 11:12, Luke 16:16  
 Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20  
 Matthew 16:19  
 Matthew 18: 1-4; Mark 9:36,37; 10:15; Luke 9:47,48; 18:17  
 Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17  
 Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27  
 (Matthew 13:10-17)  
 Insight(Matthew 13:11)  
 Prepare us for truth of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:12-13)  
 Bless those who heard them (Matt 13:16)

### Parables

#### I. Understand what a parable is and why Christ used them.

#### What:

Parable: Story or Illustration told to make a specific point.  
 fable, story, moral tale, tale, folk tale, legend, allegory

(Gk. *parabole*, lit. “a placing beside”)

A parable is a lesson from daily life that teaches a spiritual truth. Jesus often told parables to provide an understanding of life, especially life in God’s kingdom. Thirty-five percent of all gospel teaching is written in parables. Effective teaching method.

Jesus used parables to teach about God’s Kingdom.  
 42 stories told by Christ to illustrate a truth.

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<sup>13</sup>Hayford, J. W. 1997, c1996. *Praying in the Spirit : Heavenly resources for praise and intercession*. C1996 by Jack W. Hayford. Spirit-Filled Life Kingdom Dynamics Study Guides. Thomas Nelson: Nashville



## Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil

Additional 33 brief sayings and metaphors.

Christ, himself, identified certain stories w/the Kingdom and the gospels identify these as parables.

7 of these are in Matthew 13 (Mark and Luke)

KINGDOM PARABLES

9 PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING (only in Matthew)

Kingdom Values next week

So Why:

Mark 4: 10-12

<sup>10</sup> Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him, “What do your stories mean?”

<sup>11</sup> He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secret about the Kingdom of God. But I am using these stories to conceal everything about it from outsiders, <sup>12</sup> so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled:

‘They see what I do,

but they don’t perceive its meaning.

They hear my words,

but they don’t understand.

So they will not turn from their sins

and be forgiven.’\* (Isaiah 6:9-10)

<sup>10</sup> cBut when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. <sup>11</sup> And He said to them, “To you it has been given to <sup>d</sup>know the <sup>4</sup>mystery of the kingdom of God; but to <sup>e</sup>those who are outside, all things come in parables, <sup>12</sup> so that

<sup>f</sup>“Seeing they may see and not perceive,

*And hearing they may hear and not understand;*

Lest they should turn,

*And their sins be forgiven them.*”

### Matthew 13:34

<sup>34</sup> Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables. <sup>35</sup> This fulfilled the prophecy that said,

“I will speak to you in parables.

I will explain mysteries hidden since the creation of the world.” Psalm 78:2

Two thoughts on this:

1. Gracious = That Christ would speak in ways so those who did not want to know Him would be confused and would not be judged for failure to respond to what He taught.
2. Judicial = Their refusal to acknowledge Christ as the messiah. He preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29) outlining the choice they needed to make.\*

**\*5:1–7:29 The Sermon on the Mount** is the first in a series of five discourses about the Christian life, both present and future. Its basic premise is that the Christian life has no neutral zones free from God. The Lord is sovereign, all-powerful, and omnipresent. Believers do not *make* Him the Sovereign or Lord of their lives; He already *is*. Whether or not they are living as His subjects does not affect His sovereignty; their obedience or lack of it simply determines what kind of kingdom subjects they are.

He did miracles.

John the Baptist announced Christ was the messiah.

Christ stated He was the messiah and, still, they doubted.

This is when Christ began to speak in parables. When they refused to acknowledge Him and by their choice, they went their own way.

Jesus’ parables were a teaching method designed to reveal spiritual truths in such a way that those who wanted to respond would understand and receive more (vv. 9, 12, 43). Those who chose not to respond would not completely understand, and what little understanding they did have would disappear.

### II. Dissect parables to find information about the Kingdom of God.

(Matthew 13 – Kingdom of Heaven as the Jewish readers avoided using God’s name.)

**The Parable**

**Expected Form**

**Unexpected Form**



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The Sower 13:3–9, 18–23	Messiah turns Israel and all nations to Himself.	Individuals respond differently to the Word’s invitation.
Wheat/Tares vv. 24–30, 37–43	The kingdom’s righteous citizens rule over the world with the King.	The kingdom’s citizens are among the men of the world, growing together until God’s harvest time.
Mustard Seed vv. 31–32	Kingdom begins in majestic glory.	Kingdom begins in insignificance; its greatness comes as a surprise.
Leaven v. 33	Only righteousness enters the kingdom; other “raw material” is excluded.	The kingdom is implanted in a different “raw material” and grows to fill the whole personality with righteousness.
Hidden Treasure v. 44	Kingdom is public and for all.	Kingdom is hidden for individual “purchase.”
Priceless Pearl vv. 45, 46	Kingdom brings all valued things to men.	Kingdom demands abandonment of all values.
The Dragnet vv. 47–50	Kingdom begins with initial separation of righteous and unrighteous.	Kingdom ends with final separation of the unrighteous from righteous.

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**Signs of Greatness: Being Led By The Spirit**

*“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust (desires) of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16*



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*BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT...to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. Romans 8:5-14*

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**The Holy Spirit leads by:**

1. Prompting, an inner witness: Titus 2:11-13
  - 2.) Knowing the HEART of God & ‘Building’ in us the mind of Christ: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
  - 3.) Always in harmony with scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21  
 (NOTE: The similarity of the job description of Scripture & of the Holy Spirit.)
  - 4.) Teach and Remind: John 14:26
  - 5.) Point out truth (Give direction in our lives): John 16:13a; Luke 4:1; Acts 10:19-20, 16:6-7
  - 6.) Prophetic (Forth-telling of scripture): John 16:13b-14
  - 7.) Feels guilty when we sin, concerned with Christ’s standard of righteousness & God’s judgment: John 16:8-13
  - 8.) Opposed to sinful desires: Galatians 5:17-18; 1 Peter 2:11
  - 9.) Exhort believers: On sin, backsliding, perseverance, sonship: Romans 8:13-16
  - 10.) Holy Spirit voice becomes ‘weaker’ the longer the believer resists His promptings: Romans 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19
  - 11.) Results in spiritual death when rejected & Results in spiritual life when obeyed: Romans 8:6-13
- 
- GOSPEL OF JOHN: Belief VS. Unbelief (compiled by Pr. Orleen Haseltine)

**SESSION III**

**There Is No Place Like Home: Understanding His Kingdom**

- Things like:

Persistent prayer is valued by God.

Joy grows in the presence of JC.

Forgiveness brings freedom. (Jas 2:12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,)

You are given talents and expected to use them.

How you treat His children is how you treat Him.

Humility is highly valued.

We respond to His kingdom as individuals and held accountable as individuals.

His kingdom demands we value it the most, we must abandoned all other values in the face of this.

- Due to the resurrection, we can experience eternal praxis, eternal established practices here on earth.

**I. WHAT is the Kingdom of God?**

Use: Colossians 1:13

“For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

**THE DEFINITION**

ASK: What is the KoG?

His church

His people

ASK: When will it come?

ASK: How will it come?



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- Scriptures:

O.T.:

Isaiah 2:4

“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

Isaiah 11:6-11

“The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people.....”

N.T.:

After the imprisonment of John the Baptist, Jesus moved to Galilee (Capernum).

Matthew 4:17

“From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

5:20

“For I tell you unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

7:21

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

13:11

“He replied, ‘The knowledge of the secret of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.’ (This is why he speaks in parables.)

6:10

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Luke 22:24-30

“A dispute rose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Matthew 25:31,34

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separate the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then, the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me



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something to drink, I was a stronger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and came to visit me.”

Present:

Romans 14:17

“For the kingdom of god is not a matter of eating or drinking but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,”

Future:

Matthew 25:34

“Then, the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”

Realm:

Present: (Which we are now in, as Christians)

Colossians 1:13

“delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Luke 17:20,21

“The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, “Lo, here it is!” or ‘There’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

Future:

2 Peter 1:11

“will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Matthew 8:11

“Many will come from the east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 12:41,43

“will gather out of his kingdom all cases of sin and all evil doers...then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

SO...What is the KoG?

Western ideology = A realm over which a king exercises his authority.

“A state or monarchy the head which is a king; dominion; realm”

OR

The people belonging to that realm.

Webster:

**king·dom** [kɪŋdəm]

*n*

1. **monarch's territory:** a state or people ruled over by a king or queen
2. **sphere of activity:** a realm or area of activity in which a particular thing is thought to dominate
  - *the kingdom of professional tennis*



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3. SCIENCE **highest classification for natural things:** any of the three groups, animal, vegetable, and mineral, into which natural organisms and objects are traditionally, as opposed to scientifically, divided

Kingdom may be:

A realm over which a sovereign exercises his authority

A people who belong to that realm

This subject can become so confusing because we do not embrace the complete definition:

The rank, quality, state, or attributes of a king; royal authority, dominion; monarchy; kingship.

Hebrew: Malkuth

Greek: Basileia

Both = the rank, authority, and sovereignty exercised by a king.

Secondary meanings

Primary = the authority to rule, the sovereignty of the king

Reign

Psalm 103:19

The Lord establishes his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”

Psalm 145:11

“They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might.”

Psalm 145:13

“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endure through all generations.”

Daniel 2:37

“You, oh king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;”

\*Luke 19:11-27 (Parable of the ten minas (reap what you did not sow, ten minas)

“While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said: ‘A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’ But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’ He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money in order to find out what they had gained with it. ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’ The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’ His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’ Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow. His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’ Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas. ‘Sir’, they said, ‘he already has ten!’ He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them – bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

Believe, seek, act prepares the groundwork for growth of more belief which leads to more seeking which leads to more action.



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(right before the triumphal entry)

What was the noble man seeking?  
A realm?  
Servants? People to rule?

Authority.

Mark 10:15

“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

What are we receiving?

Matthew 6:33

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be to you as well.”  
(what shall we eat, drink, wear)

What are we seeking?

The kingdom of God is not just heaven, a place.  
Or the church, his people.  
They are meaningless w/o AUTHORITY

Which has been handed down to us via JC  
(find scriptures where)  
?matt. 10:5-8

Matt. 28:18

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” JC

Some passages refer to the KoG as a realm, place  
Some as a present reality  
Some as a future reality

And it is all three

**II.** What are we to do with it?  
(second h.o.)

Spend your life time learning, living, exercising in it.

LIVE scripture

Wrap up three sessions:

Closing prayer:

John 17:15-

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.  
They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth.  
As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”



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Some promises are require future praxis.  
Some promises are immediate, present praxis.

**Live** scripture

When it tells us to forgive, we struggle and forgive

Tithe

Pray

Pray for healing & then trust

Wait on God

Sometime it takes the supernatural to do this

John 14:23

“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Vs 25

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Remind you of the book ends:

Love....Self Control.

Greater things than these John 14:12

1 Jn 5:12 “He who has the son has life, who has not the son has not life.”

**So let’s ACT like it!**

Ephesians 3:10-11

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. therefore go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matt 18:18

Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, loose...

John 20:21

Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you’

Luke 9:1-6 & 10:1-20

Commissioning of the 12 & 70



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Luke 22:24-30

“A dispute rose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

Heirs Ephesians 2:19-22

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. and in him you, too, are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

While Jesus began teaching His disciples about the authority He was giving them, the victory was not fully realized until the Cross. Look up these verses on our authority in Christ: Luke 10:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 1:20–22; 2:6. Where are we seated? Colossians 2:10, 13–15

NKJ

<b>WOMEN AND THE PARABLES OF JESUS</b>		
<b>Parable</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Application</b>
The lamp under a basket (Matt. 5:14–16; Mark 4:21, 22; Luke 8:16, 17).	To the disciples.	Life and words should give personal testimony to God’s redemptive and transforming grace.
The marriage (Matt. 9:15; Mark 2:19, 20; Luke 5:34, 35).	To the Pharisees and the disciples of John.	Joy will be found in Christ’s companionship.
The patched garment (Matt. 9:16; Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36).	To the Pharisees and the disciples of John.	Jesus did not come to adapt to the old order of legalism but to make all things new.
The children in the marketplace (Matt. 11:16, 17; Luke 7:31, 32).	To the multitudes concerning John the Baptist.	Those who rejected Jesus and John could not be pleased. Beware of focusing on personal whims.
The leaven (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20, 21).	To the multitude on the seashore.	Beware of sin that makes its way into life to corrupt and draw away from the good and true.



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The pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45, 46).	To the disciples.	The relative value of the gospel exceeded all else.
The wedding garment (Matt. 22:10–14).	To the chief priests and the Pharisees.	Keep your life pure and holy.
The wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1–13).	To the disciples on the Mount of Olives.	Always be prepared and watchful.
The wedding feast (Matt. 22:2–9; Luke 14:16–23).	To the chief priests and the Pharisees.	Do not reject God’s invitation to salvation.
The lost coin** (Luke 15:8–10).	To the Pharisees and scribes.	Remember Christ’s love for sinners and His determination to draw them to Himself.
The persistent widow (Luke 18:1–8).	To the disciples.	Persevere in prayer.
**Biblical women often wore a <i>frontlet</i> (Heb. <i>semedi</i> ) on their foreheads. this adornment was made of coins (perhaps part of the woman’s dowry) and signified betrothal or marriage. The monetary value of the coins was not as important as the sentimental value and symbolism of commitment.		

Jesus gave us dominion over the demonic realm

To those who feel that we should not use the personal pronoun “I” but instead ask the Lord to silence evil spirits, my answer is simple and biblical: Nowhere in Scripture is that procedure taught nor practiced. It sounds very pious but it is erroneous.

Jesus gives us authority over the demonic realm. We do not need to ask for what is already given. That such authority is given to all God’s servants is clear in that it was not only given to the twelve apostles (Luke 9:4) but also to the seventy other disciples (Luke 10:1f). Since they were disciples of Jesus but not part of the apostolic band, they can be seen as representatives of Christians in general.<sup>10</sup>

When the seventy returned from their witnessing ministry, they were not bashful in referring to *their* authority over demons as it was evidenced in their ministry. They exclaimed, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name” (Luke 10:17).

Jesus, far from rebuking them for “arrogance,” affirmed their words. After declaring the fall of Satan that He beheld in the spirit realm, which was evidently directly connected to their ministry (v. 18), He joyfully declared, “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents [interesting in light of Genesis 3!] and scorpions [Rev. 9:1–11], and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (v. 19). Their authority, *exousia*, delegated to them by Jesus Himself, was greater than the power, *dunamis*, of the enemy. They had nothing to fear (v. 19).

The only caution Jesus laid upon them was to maintain balance in their life, ministry, and priorities. While it was a cause of rejoicing to know that the enemy was subject to them (vv. 17–18), it was more important to rejoice in their relationship to God and His kingdom (v. 20).



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In the only case outside of the Gospels where the Scriptures describe a one-on-one deliverance “session” from demonization (Acts 16), the apostle Paul followed the exact pattern of deliverance ministry practiced by the seventy. To the demons afflicting the slave girl of Philippi he declared, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” Luke writes, “And he came out that very hour.”

14

III. The Specifics of Submission (see **1 Pet. 5**)

**1 Peter 5:6-11**

*6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the*

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<sup>14</sup>Murphy, E. F. 1997, c1996. *Handbook for spiritual warfare* (Page 36). Thomas Nelson: Nashville



## Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil

*dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

There are **seven basic areas of life** that require submissiveness on the part of mankind. Each merits a whole range of development and bears far more Scripture support than the brief list of references given here. But this simple outline serves as a framework for further study. New Testament life, in which the fullness of God's love for man has been revealed, summons submission at these levels of relationship:

### A. Submission to God the Father

**Heb. 12:5-9** *5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?*

*“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.*

*6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”*

*7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

*9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?*

**Jas. 4:6,7**

*6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

### B. Submission to the Truth

**Rom. 10:1-4** *on receiving God's provision of righteousness through Christ alone, without works*

*Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

C. Submission to the Body of Christ. This refers to:

#### 1. Jesus as the Head

**Eph. 1:20-23** *20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

**Col. 2:18-19** *18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions,[a] puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*

#### 2. Local eldership and church government

**1 Cor. 16:14-16**

*14 Let all that you do be done in love.*

*15 Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— 16 be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer.*

**Heb. 13:17**

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

#### 3. Individuals of the membership

**Eph. 5:21** *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

**1 Pet. 5:5** *Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

### D. Submission to parents

**Luke 2:51** *And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.*

**Col. 3:20** *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

**Eph. 6:1-3** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first*



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commandment with a promise), **3** “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

### E. Submission to civil authority

#### Rom. 13:1-7

*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*

**1 Pet. 2:13-23** **13** *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants[c] of God. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. 18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

### F. Submission to employers

**Eph. 6:5-7** **5** *Bondservants,[a] obey your earthly masters[b] with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,*

**Col. 3:22** *Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.*

### G. Submission to roles as husband and wife

**Eph. 5:22-33** **22** *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

#### Col. 3:18,19

*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*

### CLOSING:

#### Philippians 2:5-11

**5** *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,[a] 6 who, though he was in the*



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*form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,[b] being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

“His example calls you and me to discover the power release and growth that will only happen in and through us if we properly learn the spirit of submission. The path down (submitting) is the way up (receiving authority). Even then, all authority in the spiritual realm is only to be exercised in the Spirit and with the attitude of a servant:”

### IV. The Spirit of Submission (see Ps. 37)

Any truth can be stretched over the rack of cold, literalistic application and made into a dried hide of demanding duty. However, New Testament life is not designed to wrap man in newly developed legal demands but rather to fill man with new possibilities for living in the love of God by the outflow of the Holy Spirit (see **Rom. 5:5** *and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*) The enunciating of the basic-to-life principle of submission can be responded to in fear, in doubt, in presumption, in love, in trust or in understanding. **To select the wise response and avoid the foolish requires a wholehearted openness toward the Holy Spirit.** Only He can lead us into the living of any truth. We need to be mindful that:

**A.** The Spirit of submission is not cowardly (see **2 Tim. 1:7** *for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control*). He will not produce passive, insensitive saints who flop before anything in supposed submission.

We are not to submit to:

1. Satan (**1 Pet. 5:8-9** *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*).

2. Flesh (**1 Cor. 9:24-27** *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control,[a] lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*.. We are to make no provision for it.

3. Legalism (**Gal. 2:4-5** **4** *Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.*.. It is always in opposition to the gospel.

**B.** The Spirit of submission is not confused (see **Acts 4:15-21** **15** *But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, 16 saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” 21 And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened.*

**5:26-42** *Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.” 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to*



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*these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.* **33** *When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. 34* *But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. 35* *And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. 36* *For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. 37* *After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. 38* *So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; 39* *but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!"* *So they took his advice, 40* *and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41* *Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. 42* *And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.*

This deals with the question "How does one submit to conflicting authorities?" The apostles satisfied both God and rulers, submitting unto both. They did not submit to demands of silence, but they did submit to scourging with joy.

**C.** The Spirit of submission is not contentious (**1 Cor. 11:16***If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.*).

**D.** The Spirit of submission is not comparatively competitive. **2 Corinthians 1:12** *For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.*

warns against the ugliest aspects of a spirit of competition, while **Proverbs 27:17** *Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.* recommends the best aspects of "sharpening" one another by interactive activity.

### PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP from the book "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster

Submission! What is His goal in asking us to be submissive?

(His Goal is Freedom: To lay down the terrible burden of always having to get our own way. The freedom to give into each other. Only in submission can we distinguish between genuine issues and stubborn self-will.

WE are Free to not respond. (Say nothing)  
We are Free to value other people.

Mark 8:34

<sup>34</sup> When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, <sup>b</sup>"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself (don't give in to your self ambitions), and take up his cross, and follow Me.

? What is your definition of Submission

? Self Denial

Who gives us direction on this path?

Does this mean loss of our identity?

John 21:19 Jesus instructed Peter to 'Follow Me'...did he lose his identity?

Acts 9:16 Did Paul lose his identity exercising submission?

Matthew 10:39

<sup>39</sup> If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give it up for me, you will find it.

<sup>9</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.



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No! We find it!

Matthew 23:8

<sup>8</sup> Don't ever let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters.\* <sup>9</sup> And don't address anyone here on earth as 'Father,' for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father. <sup>10</sup> And don't let anyone call you 'Master,' for there is only one master, the Messiah. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you must be a servant. <sup>12</sup> But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Living against the grain of the world.

John 13:15

<sup>15</sup> I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

**3:18 To submit** (Gk. *hupotasso*, lit. "to line up under") suggests a voluntary relinquishment of one's rights to another. Paul always used this term to describe the role assignment of a wife to her husband (1 Cor. 14:34; Eph. 5:21, 22; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1). The concept suggests mutual submission and intimacy, thereby promoting a union ordained by God with love as the binding agent. Love characterizes the servant leadership of the husband, and love awakens the submissive cooperation of the wife (see chart, Role Relationships Between Men and Women). Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can a woman truly relinquish her desires and line up under her husband's leadership (see 1 Pet. 3, Submission; chart, Submission).

### Authority

#### A Challenge to Authority

**Sooner or later, almost all leaders have their authority questioned. Sometimes they are challenged directly, but more often indirectly by rumor and innuendo.**

Jesus faced a direct challenge to His authority from the chief priests and elders, the top leadership in Israel (Matt. 21:23–27). In this instance He didn't argue with them, but simply tossed the ball back into their court. He showed that one very effective way of responding to threatening questions is to ask questions in return.

But observe two aspects of the interaction between Jesus and the Jewish leaders:

1. *The motives of the challengers.* The scribes and Pharisees had no interest in an honest understanding of the nature or source of Jesus' authority. They were only concerned with protecting their own interests and power. In light of their behavior, you might ask yourself whether you ever question or resist people in authority over you because you are afraid or jealous of them.
2. *The security of Jesus.* Jesus was neither upset nor caught off guard by His attackers. For one thing, He had endured their criticism before, and no doubt expected it to increase. But He also knew with absolute certainty about the very thing that His challengers were attacking: He knew who He was and whose authority He wielded (28:18). His response is a reminder that intimidation is something we allow to occur. People may threaten and confront us, but only we allow ourselves to feel fear. **The real question is, Are we certain who we are as followers of the King?**

#### A Symbol of Authority—and Responsibility

Those in authority should hold that authority as a trust on behalf of others. That's what the stones on Aaron's breastplate symbolized (Ex. 39:14). The gems were a reminder that the priests were representatives of the tribes of Israel. Whatever Aaron and his descendants did, whatever choices they made, whenever they wore the breastplate they were to keep the people in mind.

In a similar way, if you hold authority, you should weigh carefully and frequently your responsibility to those who depend on you. Authority is as much a privilege as a right. You may enjoy its "perks," but you also need to fulfill the obligations and honor the trust that others have placed in you.

#### Empower, Not Overpower

One of the most important things authority figures can do is to make it possible for those under them to act responsibly, wisely, and independently. Moses did that by giving the Hebrews God's laws (Deut. 4:5). As a result, the Hebrews had the potential to become a great nation of "wise and understanding people"



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(4:6).

This is a useful lesson for anyone in authority today. If we view authority as merely telling others what to do, then we'll slowly train subordinates to become passively dependent, waiting for their next orders. But if instead we view authority as an obligation and opportunity to invest in others and help them develop their expertise, then we can empower them to exercise their own judgment and skills.

### **Lessons on Authority**

Sooner or later every authority figure will probably face a challenge of authority. Moses faced one from two major Israelite leaders, who happened to be his sister and brother. How he handled the situation, including his plea for God to deliver his sister, Miriam, from leprosy (Num. 12:13), proves instructive. There are several lessons to be gained about the nature of godly authority and the challenges people in authority face:

1. *Subordinates often find authority difficult to accept.* Even outwardly submissive people and close associates may harbor jealousy and suspicions about an authority figure. These issues may be unspoken, but nonetheless they can create a low-level current of dissatisfaction.
2. *Rebellion against authority is not necessarily related to any particular failure on the part of an authority figure.* Resistance to authority is not always a well-considered response to a lapse of leadership. Sometimes it can break out almost spontaneously as a result of imagined grievances.
3. *Rejection of authority can be infectious and contagious.* It's interesting that the challenge by Miriam and Aaron immediately preceded the people's refusal to enter Canaan (Num. 13–14) and Korah's rebellion (Num. 16). Rebellion can spread through gossip, half-truths, and emotional appeals. Because of the sin nature, people have a tendency to join with others in rejecting authority. In fact, rebels often become folk heroes.
4. *Authority needs to be tempered by humility.* The text points out that Moses was a leader with humility (12:3). That's a good model to follow. Especially when faced with "rebellion," authority figures need to respond with prayer, humility, and dependence on God's wisdom and strength, whatever else they may do. The primary goal is not simply to reassert one's power or overcome opponents—though those may be necessary—but to act in a way that honors God's purposes and name.
5. *Christians are always called to mercy, even as they administer authority and justice.* When Christ was attacked by angry people, He responded mercifully, even if He also used strong words. In the same way, He calls His followers to show mercy and love toward opponents. Often when people challenge authority, it creates an opportunity for correction and clarification. Thus conflict can result in stronger and better relationships through the mercy, love, and power of Christ.

### **Positive Authority**

Authority can be used in ways that bring liberty to people, not just limitation.

Sometimes people think of authority as nothing more than telling others what they cannot do and keeping people in line. But in God's instruction to Moses (Ex. 6:13), we are reminded that authority can bring freedom to others when it is applied wisely and under the Lord's direction.

For example, a judge can use authority to release an innocent person from jail. A high school principal can use authority to obtain resources so that teachers are able to teach effectively. A manager can use authority to reward a worker's performance and encourage creativity and excellence.

So in its best use, authority can be affirming and supportive rather than controlling and punitive. How are you inclined to use authority?

### **Spiritual Authority**

If you exercise leadership among other believers, you'll want to carefully study Paul's comment about his authority (2 Cor. 13:10). Like many of us, Paul liked to be in charge, and he felt frustrated when people failed to follow his lead, as the Corinthians had. As an apostle, he had spiritual authority over them, which at times led him to deal severely with them (1 Cor. 4:21; 5:5; compare Titus 1:13).

But it's important to notice how Paul exercised his authority, especially as he grew older in the faith. He didn't lord it over others or try to use his authority to personal advantage. Nor did he abuse his power by using it to work out his own anger. Instead, he recognized that spiritual authority is given "for edification and not for destruction" (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10), for building others up, not for tearing them down.

Is that how you use your position and authority? Do you exercise leadership in order to accomplish the best interests of those who follow you? As they carry out your directives, are they built up in Christ, or torn down?

### **The Transfer of Authority**

The transfer of authority is always a delicate task. Changing leaders can be a time of great stress for an



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organization, as old alliances and political forces vie with new ones to determine who will shape the future.

The death of Aaron (Num. 20:22–29) was a major event in the life of Israel. He was not only high priest for the nation but the nation's first high priest. Furthermore, he had been Moses' primary spokesman (Ex. 4:16; 7:1). He was also Moses' brother.

Aaron's successor, Eleazar, was his third son. Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's two older sons, had been consumed in the Lord's anger after offering "profane fire" before the Lord (Lev. 10:1–3). Thus Eleazar was, in a sense, the "third choice" for the position of high priest.

Despite these and other factors, the transition from Aaron to Eleazar went smoothly. Perhaps it was because God Himself oversaw the transfer of power. Scripture tells of several other transitions, not all of which went as smoothly.

### **Under Authority**

The centurion pointed out that, like Jesus, he was also "a man under authority" (Matt. 8:9). The encounter between the two suggests several lessons of authority and leadership:

1. *Effective leaders willingly admit when they need help (8:5).* The centurion faced a problem that went beyond his own considerable power. But he was willing to go outside his resources to enlist Jesus to deal with the situation.

2. *Effective leaders respond to matters of the heart and spirit (8:6, 8).* The centurion was moved by compassion for his suffering servant, and perceived that Jesus had insight and power that went beyond a physician's skill.

3. *Effective leaders are able to approach others on their terms (8:5, 8).* The centurion came in faith, pleading with Jesus to help his servant. As a Roman officer, he could have ordered Jesus, or offered Him money. But instead, he approached the Lord in a manner consistent with His nature.

4. *Effective leaders understand and accept the nature of authority (8:9).* The centurion understood what submission is all about. When he issued a command, his soldiers simply obeyed. He recognized that Jesus had the same authority over illness.

5. *Effective leaders invest trust in those under their authority (8:9–10).* Great leaders display great faith in their people. The centurion trusted that Jesus could do what He said He would do.

6. *Effective leaders know whom to trust (8:10).* Trust is only as useful as the trustworthiness of the one in whom it is placed. The centurion's faith was marvelous because it was invested in the right person—Jesus. Leadership based on blind faith, either in others or in a system, is foolhardy.

In light of these observations:

- Do you rely too much on your own competence, or do you honestly assess both your strengths and your weaknesses?
- Do you respond to people only in terms of "the facts," or are you sensitive to the feelings and unexpressed needs of others (as well as your own)?
- Are you willing to meet and work with people on their terms, in their arena? Or must everyone come to you and play by your rules?
- Are you willing to be in charge, but unwilling to submit?
- In whom and in what do you place your faith?

For more on this topic, see SUPERVISION, "*The Godly Use of Power*," page 390.

Thomas Nelson Publishers. (2001). In *What does the Bible say about... The ultimate A to Z resource fully illustrated* (pp. 26–29). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

### **Supervision**

#### **Stick to Your Word**

One of the most difficult tasks that anyone in authority faces is to take disciplinary action against people for violating organizational standards. Whether the discipline involves a mild verbal warning or a career-ending firing, there is no way to make it easy. But in God's severe discipline of a blasphemer (Lev. 24:13–14), we can see two important principles that may help to make discipline more consistent and effective:

1. *Enforce standards from the beginning.* God had already told His people that He considered blasphemy a capital offense (Ex. 20:7). This case involving Shelomith's son (Lev. 24:10–12) was the first major test of that law. God followed through on His warning by instructing Moses to carry out a sentence of stoning. In effect, God was making an example of the young blasphemer.



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The principle here is to make expectations clear and then start tough. There's no point in letting improper behavior slide, hoping it won't happen again. It invariably will. But if people can see that there are definite consequences for noncompliance, they are likely to think twice before violating the policy.

2. *Hold everyone to the same standard; don't play favorites.* The fact that the text names the offender's father as an Egyptian (Lev. 24:10) is significant. Perhaps some among the Israelites thought that the severity of the man's punishment was due to his racially mixed background: he was the son of a foreigner; he had cursed Israel's God; so of course he would be punished by stoning.

But God made it clear that there would be no double standard: "*Whoever* curses his God... *whoever* blasphemes the name of the Lord... the stranger as well as him who is born in the land" would be punished (Lev. 24:15–16, emphasis added). God had no intention of playing favorites.

How consistent is your discipline, if you are in authority? Justice for all means justice for each one.

Certainly there are times for mercy and taking into account extenuating circumstances. But fairness demands that even these be exercised evenly.

### **The Godly Use of Power**

Because history includes many cases of people in authority abusing their power, some people are skeptical about the nature of power. They have concluded that power by its very nature is corruptive. But while the Bible is realistic about the tendency of sinners to abuse power, it also gives examples of rulers who used their authority wisely and with godly integrity.

Although it is generally believed to refer prophetically to the Messiah, Psalm 72 also sets forth principles for a godly use of power. The piece was composed either by or for Solomon, who exercised more power during his reign than any of the other Israelite kings, including his father David. Psalm 72 suggests a number of practical ways a ruler can use power:

- To judge with righteousness and justice.
- To bring peace to the people, and to restrain crime and violence.
- To bring justice to the poor and the children of the needy, and to allocate resources in a way that is compassionate.
- To undo the work of oppressors, and to prevent the powerful from hurting the little people.
- To gain the respect and support of his citizens.

That is how a ruler can exercise power. On the other side of the power equation are those affected by the leader's use of power. They include:

- The people of the nation, who will respond with respect and admiration.
- The poor among the people.
- The children of the needy, who have little stake in the community.
- Those who oppress others, who will be hindered in their abusive tendencies.
- Neighboring nations, who will pay respect.
- Many areas of life are affected:
  - Nature and agriculture.
  - Human relationships.
  - The economy.
  - International relations.
  - The future.

If you are in a position of authority and power over other people, consider the influence you have, and how you can use it in ways that honor the Lord. Are there changes you need to make in the way you exercise authority? Are you living up to the godly ideals of Psalm 72?

For more on this topic, see ENCOURAGEMENT, "*Encouraging the Boss,*" page 124.

Thomas Nelson Publishers. (2001). In *What does the Bible say about... The ultimate A to Z resource fully illustrated* (pp. 389–390). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



Summer of Lies – How Lies are Told to Us  
**Week 14 Lied To By: The Devil**