

# WitnessKit Bible Study

## Class 13

### The Danger of Famine for the Word

# Psalm 19:7-14 Purposes for the Word

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the simple;**
- 8 the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening the eyes;**

# Psalm 19:7-14 Purposes for the Word

**9 the fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring forever;**

**the rules of the LORD are true,  
and righteous altogether.**

**10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the honeycomb.**

# Psalm 19:7-14 Purposes for the Word

**11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.**

**12 Who can discern his errors?**

**Declare me innocent from hidden faults.**

**13 Keep back your servant also from  
presumptuous sins;**

**let them not have dominion over me!**

# Psalm 19:7-14 Purposes for the Word

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**Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.**

**<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth  
and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable in your sight, O LORD,  
my rock and my redeemer.**

**Psalms 19:7-14 (ESV)**

# We should take warning from the Bible's example of a famine for the Word of God,

## Reasons to take warning

For these reasons:

1. Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.
2. The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.
3. Famine for the Word led to the famine of siege and captivity.
4. Only a remnant kept God's Word and fulfilled His good purpose.
5. Temporal judgment is a natural consequence of abandoning God.

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

- Good King Hezekiah was King Manasseh's father. Manasseh was born late in Hezekiah's life. Isaiah's prophetic ministry helped King Hezekiah withstand the Assyrian army. The Assyrian army took over the northern kingdom of Israel and all the fortified towns of the kingdom of Judah. Only Jerusalem was spared. Hezekiah led the nation back to God.
- Isaiah predicted a famine for God's word.

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

God announced the famine in Isaiah 29:9-14,

- before 700 BC for the southern kingdom,
- and in Amos 8:11-12, around 750 BC, for the northern kingdom.

The northern kingdom fell to Assyrian captivity during Hezekiah's reign, while Isaiah was still prophet in Judah.

- Amos 8:11-12: <sup>11</sup> “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land—



# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it." Amos 8:11-12 (ESV)

Isaiah 29:9-14: <sup>9</sup> Astonish yourselves and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink!

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

**10 For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers).**

**11 And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." 12 And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read." Isaiah 29:9-12 (ESV)**

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

- Manasseh became king of Judah after King Hezekiah's death. He reinstated Baal worship and violent idolatry in the land, including human sacrifice. Tradition tells us he killed Isaiah the Prophet. 2 Kings 24:4 tells us "he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not forgive."
- From the death of Isaiah around 681 BC to the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry in 626 BC, God was silent. Jeremiah's ministry began right at the threshold of the judgment of the Babylonian conquest.

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

The Babylonian conquest brought a new kind of silence—where people were taken captive and forced to serve a foreign emperor—for 70 years, until God delivered them and restored them to the land. We often fail to realize how brutal the conquest was. The Babylonians took wave after wave of captives. After the final sack of Jerusalem, the total of all they took captive was about 4,600 people because they killed so many of the population, Jeremiah 52:28.

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

- The Babylonian Conquest brought a new kind of famine—in the siege of Jerusalem, people starved to death.
- There was a direct chain of events from famine for God's Word to physical famine.
- Jeremiah 19:8-9 and verse 15 describe that horror.

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

- God sent Nahum to prophesy about Assyria sometime during the 663-612 BC time—probably while Jeremiah's ministry was underway. God sent Zephaniah around 630 BC.
- But during the years after Manasseh, the nation of Judah failed to understand Isaiah's message and failed to repent, until the reign of Josiah.

# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

- According to Isaiah's words, God's silence included the human inability to understand His book. Isaiah's scrolls survived, but the people could not understand. Isaiah 29:11-12 <sup>11</sup> And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." <sup>12</sup> And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

# Worldview Affects Reading Ability

- When people adopt worldviews that deny the connection between cause and effect or the existence of truth, reading skills for understanding the Bible are lost.
- The denial of the possibility of miracle makes the Bible hard to understand.
- A loss of focus on objective right and wrong makes the Bible hard to understand.
- The way people think affects the way they read.



# Manasseh's reign of terror brought God's silence.

- Notice that the ancient Israelites needed God's message for their time. They were facing powerful enemies who were determined to take over their land. The Assyrians and the Babylonians, and later the Medes and Persians and later yet the Greeks and Romans had maniacal dreams of conquering the world. Each emperor carried out those dreams through brutal warfare, and brutal repression after conquest.

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

- Jeremiah 1 & 2 Chronicles 34: The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in the **13<sup>th</sup> year** of King Josiah's reign. In the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah's reign, the young king began to seek God. In the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, the king purged the land of idols. Then in the 13<sup>th</sup> year, God began to speak again through the prophet Jeremiah. By then, the Babylonians were becoming strong and judgment was near.
- The people had become accustomed to God's silence. They did not believe Jeremiah.

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

There were several turning points in Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, while there was time for repentance. God promised to hold off the Babylonians if they repented. In each instance, the leaders and the people made the wrong decision.

God defines "stupid" in their responses—  
Jeremiah 4:19-22 <sup>19</sup> My anguish, My anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh the walls of My heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent, for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

**20** Crash follows hard on crash; the whole land is laid waste. Suddenly My tents are laid waste, My curtains in a moment. **21** How long must I see the standard and hear the sound of the trumpet? **22** “For My people are foolish; they know Me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.” Jeremiah 4:19-22 (ESV)

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

- The famine for the word caused people to become “stupid”—to know how to do evil, but NOT how to do good. The good purposes of God’s Word were lost in the silence.
- Part of the people’s evil response was to silence the messenger.
- Jeremiah 18:18<sup>18</sup> Then they said, “Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us strike him with the tongue, and let us not pay attention to any of his words.” (ESV)

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

In regard to Old Testament Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 says, <sup>6</sup> “Now these things (recorded Old Testament events) took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. ...<sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.” (ESV) ALL the Scriptures were from God, for our instruction, so that we would follow good examples and would not follow bad examples, and so that we would remember His good principles.

God does not wish for us to make the same errors others made in the past. He does not wish for us to experience a famine for His Word.

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

- When worldviews rule out communication from God, humankind becomes, as God said, “stupid.” Humankind forgets how to do good, and learns how to do evil. Evil choices lead to ignoring or misunderstanding looming threats, just as the ancient Judeans ignored the threat of Babylon.
- Because we live in unstable times, we need God’s advice more than ever. We need to know how to do GOOD, not evil. We need God’s wisdom for our safety in a dangerous world.

# The silence lasted until the threshold of judgment.

- The biggest dangers from the worldviews of modernism and postmodernism are two kinds of famine for God's Word.
- One kind of famine is a worldview that makes understanding the Word impossible.
- The other kind of famine is political repression that would silence the principles of God's Word.
- How can we obtain God's wisdom if we cannot read and apply His Word?



# God's Word Stands Forever.

Isaiah 40:1-9

- 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.**
- 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.**
- 3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

# God's Word Stands Forever.

Isaiah 40:1-9

- 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
- 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

# God's Word Stands Forever.

**<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry!"**

**And I said, "What shall I cry?"**

**All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the  
flower of the field.**

**<sup>7</sup> The grass withers,  
the flower fades**

**when the breath of the LORD blows on it;  
surely the people are grass.**

# God's Word Stands Forever.

**8 The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God  
will stand forever.**

**9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald  
of good news; lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear  
not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your  
God!"**

Isaiah 40:1-9 (ESV)

# Only a remnant kept God's Word and fulfilled His good purpose.

- During the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah, a remnant—a tiny fraction of the population—kept God's Word. They kept the actual scrolls. They kept the words in their hearts. They kept the ideas to sustain them through 70 years of captivity, and they communicated the ideas to their children and grandchildren.
- God kept them alive in the captivity.
- The Bible survives today because of those faithful few. Every individual matters—forever!

# Only a remnant kept God's Word and fulfilled His good purpose.

We have a command from God to be the remnant in our generation.

- 2 Timothy 2:1-2, <sup>1</sup> You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (ESV)

# Only a remnant kept God's Word and fulfilled His good purpose.

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (ESV)

# Only a remnant kept God's Word and fulfilled His good purpose.

- God breathed His Word for us—to make us able to do every good work.
- Teaching=*didaskalia*=instruction, doctrine, the basic truths and how they fit together
- Reproof=*elegmos*=defining errors, pointing out mistakes in thinking and actions
- Correction=*epanorthosis*=how to fix the problem, how to change from error to truth
- Training in righteousness=*paideia*=discipline or training for growth and maturity



# We should stay aware of attempts to silence God's word in our generation

Attempts to silence God's Word.

In these arenas:

1. Public education
2. The legal system
3. Gay marriage
4. "Personal religion" politeness
5. The incitement-to-violence false accusation.

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In Public Education.

- Since the 1963 Supreme Court decision to prohibit school prayer, we have become accustomed to the silence of God's Word in public education. Students spend hours every day learning every politically correct idea, but they cannot learn the basis for right and wrong. Any concept built upon objective moral reality is out of bounds of discussion. For example, you can discuss condoms, but not waiting until marriage, or even marriage as a good idea.

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In Public Education.

- The last 20 years have seen the 10 Commandments ruled out of bounds of public school vision. Right and wrong are foreign concepts in the classroom.
- We are shocked by the nihilism and cynicism and hedonism of our students, but at least they are operating consistently with the moral vacuum that surrounds them. They are learning what they have been taught.

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In Public Education.

- Jeremiah 8:9b “Behold, they have rejected the Word of the LORD, and what kind of wisdom do they have?”
- The results are just arriving—a birthrate that is a recipe for future national poverty, as fewer and fewer children are brought up by both their parents, and the taxpayers must take up the slack.
- Children brought up in unstable environments struggle with many more issues in their adolescence, and find productivity more difficult, so the accumulated cultural results lag the decisions by about 15 years.

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# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- A judge in Alabama made a last stand for the Ten Commandments as a basis for law. He lost. (However, the good news is that he is once again becoming a judge.)
- Results showed up in Oregon. A murderer managed to confuse the jury on the definition of sanity, because his religion told him it was right to murder people of a certain ethnic minority. So could he tell right from wrong, or not? The answer to that question was a sanity issue. Without some kind of moral standard, such as “Thou shalt not murder” who can say? Can anybody tell right from wrong without a standard?

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- Letting “the group” set the standard is no help at all. If one group has supremacy as its belief about itself, its standard will be unfair to other groups.
- If the courts set the standard, there is no room for course correction when a judgment is wrong.
- Think about “separate but equal.” The courts set that wrong standard. It had to be corrected. The basis for correction was the Biblical belief in human equality before God and before the law. The supremacists in the population rejected that principle, but thankfully the judiciary corrected course.

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- Nowhere is this problem more obvious than the abortion court decisions. If the unborn are persons in the eyes of God, at any point in their gestation, then abortion-on-demand is mass murder.
- Because the idea of unborn personhood is a “religious idea,” the courts have ruled the idea outside discussion in any courtroom.



# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- But what if they ARE persons in God's eyes? Don't we need His wisdom about that? Should not the rules match the reality in a matter of life and death?
- Given that God judges nations which take innocent life, wouldn't matching reality with law prevent judgment? Not to mention preventing suffering?

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- When my second child was born, his grandparents brought his big brother into the room to see the new baby. In that room, my newborn searched with his eyes for his big brother when he heard his voice.
- I had no doubt whatsoever that he was a human being.
- Yet he could have legally been aborted minutes before. Is it possible that the judges of this country do not know a newborn is a human being?

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- If our laws do not protect newborns minutes earlier before that category shift, do they protect us? Do the laws have the same potential to disregard us if it seems to serve a political purpose?
- God's Word has a high view of human life. The simple 10 commandments have a high view of human life. Do we really want our legal system to rule the 10 commandments outside discussion?

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- We have a legal system where abortion is allowed at 9 months, while the baby is in the process of being born! Surely somebody in the court system realizes that it is a human at that point!
- If there are no standards, anyone can become politically expendable.

# Attempts to Silence God's Word In the Legal System.

- If “Thou shalt not murder” is not a standard for law, does anyone have a right to life? Does the national government have a right to remove life-and-death legal protection from human beings?
- What about those “inalienable rights” our Declaration of Independence talked about? Doesn't “Thou shalt not murder” relate to those rights?

# We should stay aware of attempts to silence God's word in our generation

Attempts to silence God's Word.

In these arenas:

1. Public education
2. The legal system
3. **Gay marriage**
4. "Personal religion" politeness
5. The incitement-to-violence false accusation.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Gay human beings are equal before God with other human beings. The Bible is clear about that.
- Marriage is an institution established by God from the beginning of the human race, and people have tried to change it from His prototype throughout human history, generally with very poor results.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Polygamy, for example, is a failure to accept God's plan
- for one man and woman to be faithful to each other so long as they both shall live,
  - with provision for their children's well-being until they are of an age to establish their own homes.
  - God's plan works for replenishing the earth. It prevents poverty. It works for the well-being of children. It is economically efficient and emotionally effective. It protects the helpless.



# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Polygamy results in many unmarriageable males in its social sphere, with a loss of civilizing influence upon them. God created equal numbers of males and females. If one male marries multiple females, other males are left out.
- Unmarried adult males **NEED** marriage. Marriage effectively channels their energies into productiveness.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Polygamy results in lower and lower marriageable age for females, because there are too few born to go around—and you can see that result in Iran and Afghanistan, where the legal age for marriage of girls is terribly and harmfully young.
- Polygamy is a pathological mistake. People make mistakes. God loves people. The Bible did not reject polygamists—God wants everyone to be saved.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- However, church leadership was restricted to monogamists in the Bible, even though polygamy was legal in the ancient world.
- The church messed up when they restricted that even further, to celibacy—marriage is GOOD for pastors.
- In ancient Israel, God commanded that kings in His land should not multiply wives for themselves.
- The kings of Israel messed up.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- One of the problems with a famine for God's word, is the failure to understand that God LOVES people who mess up.
- Everybody messes up something.
- God wants to fix the problems, not crush people.
- So the famine already occurring for God's Word is making the discussion of the Gay Marriage issue more difficult.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Easy divorce is another experiment away from the prototype God set for marriage. God has 3 grounds for divorce in the Bible: abuse, abandonment, and adultery. All three are serious faults on the part of the person who breaks up the marriage.
- We have seen the experiment in easy divorce for the last 40 years lead to fragmentation of huge proportions of families. Children from those situations suffer.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- God views marriage vows with extreme seriousness. He wants marriages to thrive.
- We know from research that many marriages in the pits of emotional dissolution can turn around and thrive if the marriage partners remain committed to each other, and if they avoid the three grounds for divorce. People can work through times of difficulty.
- Easy divorce is a mistake that motivates dissolution of marriages.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Gay marriage is similarly an experiment in redefinition of marriage different from the prototype God designed.
- It fails to account for the need of children for parents of opposite sexes. Both sexes of children need the parental example of both their same-sex parent and their opposite-sex parent to relate effectively to their culture.
- Children need both “kinds of” parents to be committed to their well being.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- They need to see both a Dad and a Mom committed to their future. Gay marriage cannot solve that problem.
- Not only do children need to see both sexes of parents committed to their well-being, they need to resolve to do the same for their children when they grow up and get married.
- Marriage is a platform for commitment to the well-being of children, generation after generation.



# The Gay Marriage Effect

- Because gay marriage is an experiment, and because there is a time-lag of a generation before results become clear, we don't KNOW the unintended consequences of such a sea change.
- What we do know: legalizing gay marriage will tend to silence God's Word in the legal system. It will lead to a worse famine for God's Word, because any book that suggests gay marriage might be a mistake will become politically forbidden to discuss the subject.

# The Gay Marriage Effect

- We have become so accustomed to the silencing of God's Word, that we do not even think this is an important part of the question of legalization of gay marriage.
- We should think again. God views the silencing of His Word as tremendously important.
- Our well-being as a nation depends upon our receptivity to His wisdom.

# We should stay aware of attempts to silence God's word in our generation

Attempts to silence God's Word.

In these arenas:

1. Public education
2. The legal system
3. Gay marriage
4. **“Personal religion”  
politeness**
5. The incitement-to-violence false accusation.

# “Personal religion” politeness

- There are additional social forces that tend to silence God’s Word. One is the idea that it is impolite to talk about religion. Talking about religion is the KINDEST thing anyone can do, when that religion is the religion of the Bible. It is an eternally kind thing to create a pathway to eternal life.
- Everybody needs that pathway to be visible.
- Sometimes that means speaking up with the risk of being impolite. We should speak kindly.

# We should stay aware of attempts to silence God's word in our generation

Attempts to silence God's Word.

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# Incitement to Violence False Accusation

- The newest attempt to silence God's Word is the false idea that discussion of religion is an incitement to violence.
- If adherents of a religion encourage violence when someone disagrees with their beliefs, **THEY** are the ones in the wrong. They are the ones who should face legal restrictions, because advocating violence in response to words is wrong.

# Incitement to Violence False Accusation

- Discussion of religious beliefs is the only way to find truth. Truth matters.
- We may have to take a stand regarding legal matters in this arena. Freedom of religion includes freedom to discuss religions.
- The free exercise of religion in our Bill of Rights is primarily a freedom of speech issue. It is NOT a freedom to use violence as persuasion, but it IS a freedom to use WORDS as persuasion. We really need to be clear about this.

# We live in a dangerous world.

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- We live in unstable times.
- God cares about our well-being.
- His wisdom is a protection for us.
- We access His wisdom through His Word.
- It is worth our time and attention and effort to keep His Word from being silenced in our sphere of influence.
- We must be thoughtful and seek His guidance for ways we can accomplish that.



# The Bible Teaches

- An unexpected concept related to fear.
- We are told not to fear anything but GOD.
- We ARE to fear His judgment.
- The consequence of the famine for His Word in the Old Testament was national judgment.
- Failure to find His Wisdom can bring judgment as a natural consequence of failure to react appropriately to world events.

# Winston Churchill

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Winston Churchill wrote a series of books outlining events before and during World War 2. In *The Gathering Storm*, Churchill outlines the failure of the free nations of Europe to respond appropriately to Germany as Germany armed for war.

Germany built armaments. Hitler published his intentions. The free nations remained committed to pacifism and did nothing.

# Winston Churchill

- Some of their failure was a failure to access the wisdom of God's Word. Pacifism substituted for realism in understanding the Bible. Religious leaders picked isolated verses as their bases for politics, rather than understanding the entire book.
- And they ignored reality as war loomed in their faces.
- Result: Millions died.

# We need God's Wisdom

To avoid that kind of mistake.

# The Bible Teaches

- That **“The shields of the earth belong to God.”** Psalm 47:9
- If we want to be shielded from the international dangers of our time, we need God’s wisdom. We need to choose to be on His side.
- The Bible tells us how to do that. God is on the side of choosing life. God is on the side of those who love Him and who love His Law and His Word.

# The Next Slide lists a FEW

Potential threats to our well-being as a nation, and even to our existence as a nation. Each of these threats could become an agency of God's judgment against us if we fail to seek Him.

# We should notice a convergence of world events that could lead to

## Potentials for judgment through war

### Judgment through war:

1. Nuclear ambitions in Iran and proliferation potential.
2. Ongoing “cold war” with radical Islam.
3. The opportunism potential for radical Islam in the Arab spring.
4. Russian hegemony in Europe and the Middle East
5. Economic crises worldwide, leading to political instability.
6. Violent threats against Israel from organized agencies of terrorism.

These are not small,  
insignificant matters.

This list is serious. In some instances such as Iran's aggression, their intentions have been plainly stated, and we should take them seriously. Russia has many nuclear warheads, and a history of not respecting the value of life.

Our nation needs God's wisdom to be able to respond appropriately—and that does not mean a Bible verse here and there with a pacifist policy. The Bible is very realistic about war.



# Our nation has drifted far from a center in God's Word.

- It may not be possible to shift the direction back toward God's Word in a nationwide manner. It may only be on an individual basis for the near future.
- The nation chose a political party to be at the helm that booed God at their national convention. God noticed that.
- So each of us has a responsibility before God to be in His remnant, and to reach our own sphere of influence.

# We should choose to be in God's remnant by keeping the Word.

Value of being in God's remnant.

1. God always has a faithful remnant who hold the key to a brighter future.
2. God is not restrained to save by many or by few.
3. Twelve apostles created a growth pattern for reaching the whole world with God's word.
4. We can seek God's wisdom to accomplish the same objective.
5. God wants to reach the world with His Word.

# God always has a faithful remnant who hold the key to a brighter future.

- In the time of the Babylonian captivity, the remnant kept God's Word until the time of restoration to the land.
- In the fall of the Roman Empire, the Christians survived and kept God's Word for centuries, while the Empire dissolved into isolated pockets of civilization.
- When nations abandon God's Word, individuals keep it. God is with those who love His Word.

# God is not restrained to save by many or by few.

- During the beginning of King Saul's reign in ancient Israel, the nation was in danger from the Philistines, who had confiscated almost all the Israelite weapons, and had prevented any blacksmith from working in Israel so that no swords or spears could be made. Jonathan the son of Saul had one of two metal weapons in the army. He went on the offense against the Philistines, with these words...

# God is not restrained to save by many or by few.

- “Perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few.”—1 Samuel 14:6
- We have a similar promise from Jesus regarding the gates of hell from Matthew 16:18 “Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell will not overpower it.” Gates are defensive structures. We have a mandate to go on the offense against the gates of hell.

# Twelve apostles created a growth pattern for reaching the whole world with God's word.

- The Apostles went on the offense against the gates of hell, and reached the entire Roman Empire in one generation. They were very few in number, but God was with them.
- We can reach our generation with God's Word if He is with us in the effort.
- We have many tools at hand for that purpose. This is not merely a task for people in the ministry. The early Christians went everywhere proclaiming the Word. We all have a sphere of influence.

# We can seek God's wisdom to accomplish the same objective.

- Because the human population grows exponentially, it is possible that half the total human population is alive right now.
- We have ways of reaching out with the message that the Apostles lacked, from radio to Twitter.
- We have leisure time the world has never known—unlike previous generations who had to spend the vast majority of their time laboring for food.

# God wants to reach the world with His Word.

- God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”—2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)
- Matthew 28:18-20<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)



# We can take steps to accomplish God's objective.

## Steps toward reaching the world with God's Word

1. Study His Word daily.
2. Become technology-proficient for the purpose of sharing His message.
3. Create items with the message imbedded.
4. Pray for an open door, and walk through it when it opens.
5. God promised to reach some of every nation and people and language; no better time than now.

# Study His Word daily.

Give God the best time of your day for that purpose. It may be lunch time or first thing in the morning, or during naptime for the family, or in lieu of happy hour. Choose a consistent time and stick with it. Make this a priority. Finds a place and time where you can have quiet.

It is fine to read devotional materials, but not to the neglect of the Word. If you only have time for one, read the Word. If you don't have time, make time. Figure it out.

# Become technology proficient for the purpose of sharing His message.

- We live in a technologically advanced world. People all over the world use technology. If we place the message where they can find it, even people in closed nations may find God.
- Here is a promise from Revelation 5:9-10.
- <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” (ESV)

# Become technology proficient for the purpose of sharing His message.

- God plans to reach people from closed nations. He promises that His purpose will be accomplished. We can participate in that quietly, by becoming proficient in the use of technology.
- And we can reach out to our neighbors as well. There are no limits to what God can do, if we are brave enough to try to be His ambassadors.

# Create items with the message imbedded.

- Here is a list of the kind of items that we can create that will reach people with God's message: Videos, Tweets, books and ebooks, films, paintings, music, essays, conversations, blogs, websites, cards, calligraphy. The list could go on and on. Ask God to give you creative ideas with His Word at the center.

# Pray for an open door, and walk through it when it opens.

- You have talents and spiritual gifts direct from God. He wants to prompt you to use them.
- Discipleship multiplies. If you reach two people and they each reach two more, seven people, including yourself, will have been reached. Even if 25 people reject the message, the two who accept it can multiply it.
- You can gather people to Him, even by such simple ideas as inviting them to church, or opening a conversation about spiritual things.

God promised to reach some of every nation and people and language; no better time than now.

Today is the day of salvation. Now is the time to start taking steps. Plan the goals and write them into your calendar. Start.

# We must love God by keeping His Word for these reasons:

## Reasons to Keep God's Word

1. Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him.
2. Keeping His Word is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings.
3. Keeping His Word is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.
4. Keeping His Word is worthy of persuasion because, through sharing the Word, we also love others.



# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- In the parable of the Sower, two groups of people missed their opportunity to find God—those on the hard path who did not understand the message and could not remember what they could not understand, and those in rocky ground who did not grow any roots.
- In John chapter 15, Jesus compares us to a vineyard, where He is the vine and we are the branches. The vine has the roots. He says we must abide or remain or **STAY** in Him to be fruitful. A key concept is **KEEPING HIS WORD**.

# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- John 15<sup>1</sup> “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit he takes away (*or a better translation would be lifts up, to the light*), and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean **because of the word** that I have spoken to you.
- (Notice that the Word has a cleansing power. The vine is the source of the roots for the branches. We have to have roots to live spiritually.)

# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- **<sup>4</sup> Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**
- (We abide in the Vine in practical ways through immersion in His Word, just as Psalm 1 recommends meditating upon it day and night.)

# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- **6** If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7** If you **abide in Me, and My words abide in you,** ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.
- (Here we see the importance of His Word, once again. It gives us access to the Source for answered prayer. It gives us fruitfulness—grapes! Accomplishment of His purposes in our lives.)

# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- **9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you.

# Abiding in Him

- John Chapter 15 reveals to us that He views us as His friends! Abiding in Him includes keeping His commandments—keeping His word. Abiding in Him is the source of joy and for power to love one another in the self-forgetting manner that He demonstrated to us. He laid down His life for us. He demands that we love others similarly.

# Abiding in Him

- We must have His power to be able to do that, whether it is the process of unselfishly earning a living for the family, or falling on a hand grenade to protect buddies in battle, or witnessing to others who may intend us harm.
- We are called to become like Him, and we must abide in His word to keep that calling.

# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. **17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another. (ESV)



# Keeping His Word grows our roots as we abide in Him—John chapter 15.

- It is the way we have answered prayer. It is the way we have the fruits of His Holy Spirit in our lives—lifting us above our circumstances and natural inadequacies. It is the way we reach others for Him. If we are immersed in His Word, He can help us find the words for others.
- It is also the way we can face the reality of the attitude problem of our surrounding world.
- The Bible is realistic about resistance to the Word.

The Word is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings—John 15.

- **18** “If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. **19** If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. **20** Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. **If they kept My word, they will also keep yours.**

Keeping His Word is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings—John 15.

- Here we notice that the Word is the pathway to find God. If the Word is disrespected, we owe it to our friends to try to turn that around. For their good, they need to find the pathway in the Word.
- We also notice that Jesus Himself was disrespected by those who disrespected God’s Word, and He was the evidence of perfection before their eyes. Our perfection is not the issue—the Word of God is the issue.

Keeping His Word is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings—John 15.

- People will criticize for all kinds of reasons. They will even CREATE reasons to criticize. Our world is focused on style, and style changes and is totally arbitrary. We must not allow “style” to silence us. We must continue to go for “substance.” The Substance is the Word.
- The Word is uncompromising about the reality of sin—even though it is a fabulous treasure holding the power to overcome sin. When people only get the sin-part-of-the-message, they naturally resist what they think they cannot help.

It is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings—John 15.

- **21** But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father also. **24** If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. **25** But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

It is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings.

- The cause of the hostility was the sinful nature of the listeners. People don't like to face their sins. People develop all kinds of defense mechanisms to keep from facing those matters. Some of those defense mechanisms include attacking the messenger.
- They need to listen long enough to hear the rest of the story—the fact that God only wants them to face those things so He can take sins away! He LOVES them. He will always love them.

Abiding in the Word is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings—John 15.

- If we allow our perfection (actual lack thereof) to become the roadblock to obeying God about His Word, that is a mistake. Jesus was perfect, and that was not enough to remove this barrier to communication—because the barrier was within the people who were listening and reacting negatively.
- We can expect hostility, and we can still love. He demands it—Not easy! We need His power.

It is the watershed between those who find God and those who “go with the flow,” of their surroundings.

- **26** “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. **27** And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.
- John 15:1-27 (ESV)
- His power is available through His Holy Spirit and His Word.



It is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.

- Luke 10:38-42<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.  
<sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.  
<sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

It is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.

- <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” (ESV)
- Abiding in the Word is our priority above routine and necessary living activities.

It is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.

- Abiding in God's Word is our priority in church selection and attendance. All kinds of churches are out there that substitute many time-consuming activities and most of them are very good things to do, and many of those things are recommended by the Bible for us to do.
- But abiding in the Word is the priority for churches. If a church does not abide in the Word, look for another church. If you cannot find such a church, host a Bible study somewhere. Start something.

It is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.

- Jesus made an amazing promise in John 8:31-32, speaking to Jewish leaders who believed in Him:  
**31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32 (ESV)**
- We often hear only the second part, about knowing “the truth and the truth will set us free,” but the first part is the critical point. **“IF YOU ABIDE IN MY WORD, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

It is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.

- We need to abide in God's word, and we need to study it carefully—not superficially. Often modern people read the Gospels superficially in regard to the word “Jews.” John chapters 7 and 8 are quite helpful, revealing that the word was used for the leaders among the people—in a context where everyone was ethnically and religiously Jewish except for the Roman overlords. In John 7, the people were called “the people” and in other locations, the Roman leaders were called “the Romans.”

It is our priority, above all the other matters in our lives that consume time.

- If you read the Gospels and they sound prejudiced against Jews, substitute the words “political leaders” and you will see that the books are not prejudiced.
- In fact, the problem in the New Testament church was actually prejudice against Gentiles. The church worked through that problem during the course of writing of the New Testament books, and God’s Word spread to the whole world as a wonderful result. God does not show partiality.
- So read carefully. Read often. Read it all.

Keeping God's Word is worthy of persuasion because, through sharing the Word, we also love others.

- The topic of this class is “Famine for God's Word.” When a culture or a worldview turns away from God's word, those who keep God's word need to persuade other individuals to **return to respect for God's Word.**
- The Old Testament Prophets had that task. The New Testament churches had that task. People who love God today have that task.

Keeping God's Word is worthy of persuasion because, through sharing the Word, we also love others.

- Part of that task is studying God's Word. (There is a Bible reading plan on the homepage of the WitnessKit.)
- Part of that task is understanding how other people think. Part of that task is building paths from other worldviews back to the Word.
- Part of that task is listening to friends to find out their attitudes and beliefs.
- Part of that task is being brave enough to speak up, and loving enough to take the risk of speaking up.



# Persuasion brings us back

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To the topic of our WitnessKit. The field of study that builds paths from worldviews to the Word is called Biblical Apologetics, or “Defending the Faith.”

It is not “Defending the Faith” in terms of laws and physical battles.

Rather it is defending the faith in terms of thinking patterns and persuasive words.

# Persuasion brings us back

Part of our efforts to abide in God's Word need to include the study of Biblical Apologetics. It is a lifetime study along with a lifetime study of the Word itself.

The next slide lists starting point books for the field of study. These books should prepare you for more advanced books, such as the bestseller, *Signature in the Cell*.

# Fields of Study for Biblical Apologetics

The Fields of Science and Math	Bridge from Science to the Rest	The Field of Philosophy of Science & of Religion	Law and Ethics	Religion
<i>Of Pandas and People</i>	<i>Bones of Contention</i> by Marvin Lubenow	<i>He Is There and He Is Not Silent</i>	<i>Darwin on Trial</i>	<i>The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict</i>
A Beka Books Biology Text	<i>The Case for a Creator</i>	<i>Postmodern Times</i>	<i>The Wedge of Truth</i>	<i>The Case for Christ</i>
Resources from Discovery Institute	Resources from the Institute for Creation Research	<i>The God Who Is There</i>	Resources from Biola University's Apologetics Program	<i>Answering Islam, the Crescent in the Light of the Cross</i>
Associates for Biblical Reseach-- archaeology	<i>WitnessKit2 God and Creation</i>	<i>Escape from Reason</i>	<i>Reason in the Balance</i>	<i>WitnessKit3 Religions and Biblical Christianity</i>