

CHAPTER 12

Spiritual Elements to Evangelism

1. Reasons Why People Have Not Yet Come to Christ:

- a. Sample reasons:
 - 1) **Ignorance:** they have never heard the Gospel, Rom 10:14-15.
 - 2) **Sin:** some root of sin has hardened their hearts to spiritual things, John 3:20.
 - 3) **Deceit:** they have been deceived by false teaching about salvation, 1 Tim 4:1.
e.g. They may think that they are already saved, even though it is not by faith alone...
 - 4) **Pride** (rebelliousness): they do not want to humble themselves before the Lord, 1 Pet 5:6.
- b. Complimenting spiritual reasons:
 - 1) God may be hardening their hearts, Prov 1:28-29, Isa 6:10
 - 2) Satan may be blinding their eyes, 2 Cor 4:3-4

2. God's Work of Conviction:

Introduction: The spiritual element of conviction is one that the evangelist does not control directly:

- 1) We may use particular verses that should lead to conviction of sin
 - 2) We may be "prayed up" for sharing the gospel
 - 3) But only God and his Word can judge the secret intentions in the heart of man, Rom 2:16; Heb 4:12-13
- a. The Gospel convicts lost people:
 - 1) Of "sin, righteousness, and judgment," John 16:8
 - 2) Of "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come," Acts 24:25
 - b. The Gospel reveals the hidden motives of men
 - 1) "When God will judge the secrets of the hearts of men," Rom 2:16
 - 2) "For the word of God... is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart," Heb 4:12

Spiritual and expectant evangelism must be aware of God's hidden working in the heart:

- 1) Discerning the receptivity of the person being engaged with the gospel
- 2) Seeking to apply principles of God's Word with love and power to "cast down every argument ... that exalts itself against the knowledge of God," 2 Cor 10:5

3. Profile of the Open Heart:¹⁰⁷⁵

These are characteristics to look for while sharing the Gospel...

- a. He will "receive" the evangelist, Matt 10:40; John 13:20 (cf. John 1:12)
- b. He will listen, Acts 16:14; 1 John 4:6; cf. Luke 10:16
- c. He will hear the Word:
 - 1) Hear and act upon the Word, Matt 7:24-25; Luke 6:47-48
 - 2) Having a hearing of faith, Gal 3:2, 5
 - 3) Hear and believe, John 5:24
- d. He will be a "man of peace," Luke 10:6
- e. He will display a contrite heart toward sin (versus arrogance or indifference):
 - 1) The afflicted soul, Isa 58:10, cf. Psa 22:24-26; 116:10
 - 2) The afflicted and needy, Ps 74:21
 - 3) The brokenhearted, Psa 34:18; 147:3; Isa 61:1
 - 4) The contrite and lowly of spirit, Isa 57:15
 - 5) The humble and contrite of spirit, Isa 66:2
 - 6) The broken and contrite heart, Psa 51:17
- f. Even lost persons may display a spiritual interest:
 - 1) The devout or pious men in Jerusalem before Pentecost, Acts 2:5

¹⁰⁷⁵See also Chapter 8, "Prime Candidates for Evangelism" and "Those Not Ready to Listen to the Gospel," also Chapter 18, "Levels of Openness," "The Open Person," "Profile of an open heart."

- 2) The godfearers (τοῖς σεβομένοις) throughout book of Acts, Acts 10:22; 13:43; 17:4, 17
- 3) Came to Jerusalem to worship, Acts 8:27

Discussion: Some high Calvinists take the previous characteristics as showing that God is working in persons prior to their hearing of the Gospel (hence undermining the *sola Scriptura* of salvation). If we accept that God must needs work in, with, and by His Word, then another explanation needs to be sought. Two possibilities:

- 1) They are seeking the God revealed within them (Rom 1:19) and in their consciences (Rom 2:14-15)—if so, this needs to be reconciled with Rom 3:11

Answer: Sure revelation does not constitute a redemptive seeking after, especially before the hearing of the gospel, which is the power of God.

- 2) God is at work outside of His word, which opens up a problem with Heb 4:12-13, the need for evangelism, God working through sacraments, etc.

Comment: This option does not appear to correspond with the *sensus plenior* of Scripture.

It is clear that the devout, the pious, and the godfearers are not those who say, “Lord, Lord” (Matt 7:22-23). Thus we see levels of saved and lost people being described in the Bible via the Parable of the Sower and in other places (a lost godfearer and a saved carnal Christian). Very interesting! Also note that the Apostle Paul worked harder than the other apostles (1 Cor 15:10).

4. Spiritual Problems in Evangelism:

Introduction: There are spiritual problems with a lack of understanding or misplaced understanding that must be surmounted in evangelism.

a. A misunderstanding of spiritual things:

- 1) Misunderstanding the spiritual application of an example, John 3:4; 4:11, 15
- 2) In fact, this was why Jesus spoke in parables, using word pictures, so that those not meant to understand would not, while to others it would be revealed, Matt 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-13; Luke 8:9-10
- 3) By contrast the Centurion who understood the spiritual nature of things, and was commended for it. In Luke 7:6-9 Jesus said he had great faith, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”

b. Misplacing the power behind miracles:

- 1) As coming from Satan, Matt 12:24 (cf. Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15)
- 2) As coming from the men themselves, Acts 14:13

Only God through the gospel can overcome these spiritual blind spots, 2 Cor 4:2-3

5. Biblical Presuppositions—from General Revelation:

Introduction: Differentiation between General Revelation, Natural Revelation, and Special Revelation:

- a) **General Revelation**—God’s revelation to all men, at all times, in all places, which is non-salvific, e.g. Psalms 19:1-6; it leads only to sure judgment (Rom 1:20) and further depravity (Rom 1:21; cf. Psalm 36:1-4)
- b) **Special Revelation**—God’s revelation of Himself directly (as to Moses), through His Son (when He was on earth), and through His Word. *Sola Scriptura* limits salvific revelation in God’s dealings with man to the Word of God, the Bible, Psalm 19:7-13 (the theme of Psalm 119).
- c) **Natural Revelation**—the belief that general revelation contains the possibility or opportunity for salvation outside of special revelation (i.e. the Gospel or the Word of God), often attributed to Thomistic theology (Thomas Aquinas).

One can assume certain innate truths to be in the hearts of those whom the Gospel is shared, even if they won’t outwardly admit them. These are a part of general revelation (as it were, divine *preparatio evangelica*). It is not necessary to share these facts with the person. Rather, they can be a guide as you speak the Gospel with boldness.

a. Presuppositions concerning God:

- 1) **All people have a knowledge of God**, Rom 1:18-21 (cf. Isa 26:10)
 - a) v 18, “men who suppress the truth”

- b) v 19, “that which is known about God is evident within them”
 - c) v 19, “for God made it evident to them”
 - d) v 20, “have been clearly seen”
 - e) v 20, “being understood”
 - f) v 20, “so that they are without excuse”
 - g) v 21, “For even though they knew God”
- 2) Men stand in awe of God because of general revelation, Psa 65:8 (e.g. Jon 1:9-14)
 - 3) All people have seen the glory of God, Psa 97:6 (cf. Psa 19:1-4; 50:6; 52:15)
 - 4) “To Thee all men come,” Psa 65:2
 - 5) “He has set eternity in their hearts,” Eccl. 3:11 (cf. Acts 17:26-28)
 - 6) Acts 14:17, “and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”
 Acts 14:7 (BYZ), Καίτοιγε οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἑαυτὸν ἀφήκεν ἀγαθοποιῶν
 Literally perhaps, “And yet he has not lacked to testify of Himself allowing good to be done”
- b. Presuppositions concerning sin:
- 1) Everyone has a conscience that accuses and defends, based on the Law of God written in their hearts, Rom 2:14-15
 - 2) All people know of God’s righteous commands, and of the death penalty for sin, Rom 1:32

Translations of δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ in Rom 1:32

Wycliffe, Tyndale, Bishop’s	Rotterdam	Young’s, Darby, NKJ	CSB	Noye’s; ERV, ASV, NAS	KJV, Webster’s	NIV (1984); NET; ESV	NJB ²⁶	NAB ²⁶ (1991)	RSV	BBE	DRA ²⁶	NIRV
Righteousness of God	Righteous sentence of God	Righteous judgment of God	God’s just sentence	Ordinance of God	Judgment of God	God’s righteous decree	God’s ordinance	The just decree of God	God’s decree	Law of God	Justice of God	That God’s commands are right

Notice also, how the message taught in Rom 1:32 is reversed by the Latin Vulgate’s addition of a negated verb form (non intellexerunt):

Consider the three Latin versions:¹⁰⁷⁶

- VUC Rom 1:32 Qui cum **justitiam** Dei cognovissent, **non intellexerunt** quoniam qui talia agunt, digni sunt morte: **et non solum qui** ea faciunt, sed etiam qui **consentiunt** facientibus.
- VULM Rom 1:32 qui cum **iustitiam** Dei cognovissent **non intellexerunt** quoniam qui talia agunt digni sunt morte non solum ea faciunt sed **et** **consentiunt** facientibus
- NOV Rom 1:32 Qui cum **iudicium** Dei cognovissent, quoniam qui talia agunt, digni sunt morte, non solum ea faciunt, sed et **consentiunt** facientibus.

These changes are noticeable in the 1899 Douay-Rheims translation of this verse:

- DRA Rom 1:32 Who, **having known** the justice of God, **did not understand** that they who do such things, are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them.
- NAS Rom 1:32 and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.
- NKJ Rom 1:32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

¹⁰⁷⁶VUC=1598 Clementine Vulgate with 1880 glosses by Migne; VULM=1983 German Bible Society edition; NOV=1982 Nova Vulgata from Rome. This last version takes the prior version of the Vulgate and amends it to coincide with the Nestle-Aland 26th edition of the Greek New Testament, as part of John XXIII’s (and hence Vatican II’s) aggiornamento strategy in infiltrating and neutering the work of the Bible Societies (see my paper on “Worldwide Bible Translations and Original Language Texts”; available at: http://www.evangelismunlimited.com/ubs-spcu_text20090116b.pdf; and “Rome, Bible Translation, and the Oklahoma City Green Bible Collection”; available at: http://www.evangelismunlimited.com/rbt_paper20110611a.pdf).

The addition of the “did not understand,” completely negates the teaching of this verse, and its universal applicability to man in his natural state. There are several issues at stake in the interpretation of this verse, but this is the most obvious. This change adversely affects a presuppositionalist viewpoint, as man is made to not understand God’s law or His judgment of sin.

- 3) God’s judgment prepares people for the Gospel, Psa 58:11
- c. Some appear to be waiting to hear of Christ:
 - 1) Isaiah 25:9, 42:4,¹⁰⁷⁷ 45:24, 51:5, 60:9
 - 2) Note the parable of Christ which seems to parallel this teaching, Mark 4:26-29
 - d. However, some anthropological truths:
 - 1) All men are blinded to the light of the Gospel, 2 Cor. 4:4
 - 2) All men are spiritually dead and by nature children of wrath, Eph 2:1-3
 - 3) All men are under the empire of sin, etc., Rom 3:9-11
 - e. Conclusion:
 - 1) Although men have general revelation which points them to God, they need the special revelation of the Gospel in order to be saved:
 2. This Promise of *Christ*, and Salvation by him, is revealed only by the Word of God; neither do the Works of Creation, or Providence, with the light of Nature, make discovery of *Christ*, or of *Grace* by him; so much as in a general, or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the Revelation of him by the Promise, or Gospel; should be enabled thereby, to attain saving Faith, or Repentance.¹⁰⁷⁸

Likewise:

Only in Eden has general revelation been adequate to the needs of man. Not being a sinner, man in Eden had no need of the grace of God itself by which sinners are restored to communion with Him, or of special revelation of this grace of God to sinners to enable them to live with God.¹⁰⁷⁹
 - 2) God seems to juxtapose the absolute clarity of His words in Psalm 19:7-9 with the ever-present non-verbal and silent witness of nature.

¹⁰⁷⁷C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch spoke of this verse as indicating a “*gracia preparatur*.”

¹⁰⁷⁸*Second London [Baptist] Confession* (1677), Chapter 20, “Of the Gospel, and of the extent of the Grace thereof,” from William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. ed. (Valley Forge: Judson, 1959, 1969).

¹⁰⁷⁹Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 75-76.

The Non-Verbal Nature of Nature’s Revelation Highlighted in Psalm 19:3

Hebrew	Greek	ASV 1901	Young’s 1862f.	NJB ²⁸ 1985	GWN 1995	NIV 2011	NLT 2007	ESV 2016	English Geneva 1599	KJV 1611/ 1769	French Geneva* 1605	Darby 1885
אֵין דְבָרִים	οὐκ εἰσὶν λαλιαὶ	There is no speech	There is no speech,	No utterance at all,	Without speech,	They have no speech,	They speak without a sound	There is no speech,	There is no speech	[There is] no speech	There is not [in them] any language	There is no speech
אֵין דְבָרִים	οὐδὲ λόγοι	nor language;	and there are no words.	no speech,	without a word,	they use no words;	or word;	nor are there words	nor language,	nor language,	there are no words,	and there are no words,
קוֹלֵי בְּשִׁמְעָה קוֹלָם	ὧν οὐχὶ ἀκούονται αἱ φωναὶ αὐτῶν	Their voice is not heard.	Their voice hath not been heard	not a sound to be heard,	without their voices being heard,	no sound is heard from them.	Their voice is never heard.	whose voice is not heard	where their voice is not heard.	[Where] their voice is not heard.	[Neverthe-less] without that their voice is heard.	yet their voice is heard.
Implication		Voice not heard	Voice not heard	Voice not heard	Voice not heard	Voice not heard	They speak without sound	Have voice, but not heard	Voice is heard	Voice is heard	Voice is heard	Voice is heard

*From: “Il n’y a point [en eux] de langage, & n’y a point de paroles: [toutesfois] sans cela leur voix est ouïe” (*Toute la Sainte Écriture* [La Rochelle: Hertman, 1605], 212v).

- 2) It is obvious that Christians do not need to assert the latest apologetic arguments to prove the existence of God, or to prove the validity of the Christian worldview. God has already done this prevenient work through nature and conscience. Ours is to be obedient to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins to those that God supernaturally makes open to this message.

6. Times of openness:

Introduction:

While not wanting to be guided by the vain teachings of men, as God’s ways are above man’s ways, and his thoughts are above man’s thoughts...

There are certain crisis times in life, allowed by God, which sometimes allow people to be more open to spiritual things. These crisis times have been put on a continuum (Holmes' Stress Scale) by how much stress they put on a person. are also important times in which one may minister to others in tangible ways, as well as by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The book of Job, Elihu’s speech teaches us that God speaks to people in their consciences, through dreams and through difficult times (Job 33:14-28):

“Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, yet no one notices it. In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, That he may turn aside from his conduct, And keep man from pride; He keeps his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol.

“Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with unceasing complaint in his bones; So that his life loathes bread, And his soul favorite food. His flesh wastes away from sight, And all his bones stick out. Then his soul draws near to the pit, And his life to those who bring death.

“If there is an angel as mediator for him, One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him, Then let him be gracious to him and say, ‘Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom.’ Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youth vigor; Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him, That he may see His face with joy, And that He may restore his righteousness to man. He will sing to men and say, ‘I have sinned and perverted what is right, and it is not proper for me. He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, And my life shall see the light.’”

Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, To bring back his soul from the pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life”

The following indicates some of these times of stress. We should be aware of these as we minister the Gospel. Fred Jennings described these as “points of pain.”¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁸⁰From his comments in the Biblical Evangelism class at Crown College on September 17, 1992.

In modern psychology certain “points of pain” are placed on “Holmes Stress Scale” (it must be noted that this stress scale betrays its North American context, as it does not contain bombing campaigns, war, famine, torture, being a prisoner of war, being in a refugee camp, having house and property confiscated, etc.). I have included the top twelve stresses on Holmes’ scale:

Death in family	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage.....	50
Fired at work.....	47
Marital reconciliation.....	45
Retirement.....	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
etc.	

BTW, if God allows [or gives] stress, only God can take it away!

Deut 28:65, “And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul.”

7. Be Aware of Possible Spiritual Steps:

Introduction, Isaiah 5:1-2:

There seems to be spiritual steps in the reception of the Gospel (especially when seen from a human point-of-view, as identified by sociological analysis or the psychology of conversion).¹⁰⁸¹

It must be remember that conversion is a spiritual jump from blind to seeing. For example, some persons in the Bible jump from one extreme to the other:

- a) Demoniac from Gerasenes in Mark 5
- b) Woman at the well, John 4
- c) Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9
- d) Philippian jailer, Acts 16

Therefore the expansion of these steps:

- a) Does not to diminish the need for instantaneity of witness nor the fact of its corollary, instantaneous conversion.
- b) Nor do steps imply that human categories can and ought to be applied to evangelism, thereby easily trumping the divine work of the power of the gospel, Rom 1:16, by human types of persuasion, 1 Cor 1:17

¹⁰⁸¹The Engel scale follows the conversion process in a more systematic cognitive approach. This scale was originally proposed by Viggo Sogaard, and developed by his professor James Engel of the Wheaton Graduate School (James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton, *What’s Gone Wrong with the Harvest? A Communication Strategy for the Church and World Evangelism* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975], 45). The scale ranks eleven stages of Gospel awareness:

1) Awareness of Supreme Being but no Effective Knowledge of Gospel	-8
2) Awareness of Gospel	-7
3) Awareness of Fundamentals of Gospel	-6
4) Grasp the Implications of Gospel	-5
5) Understanding the Fundamentals of Gospel	-4
6) Personal Problem Recognition	-3
7) DECISION TO ACT	-2
8) Repentance and Faith	-1
9) NEW CREATURE	
10) Post-Decision Evaluation	+1
11) Incorporation Into [Local] Body	+2
12) Conceptual and Behavioral Growth	+3
13) Communion with God	+4
14) Stewardship, Reproduction (Internally and Externally), etc.	+5

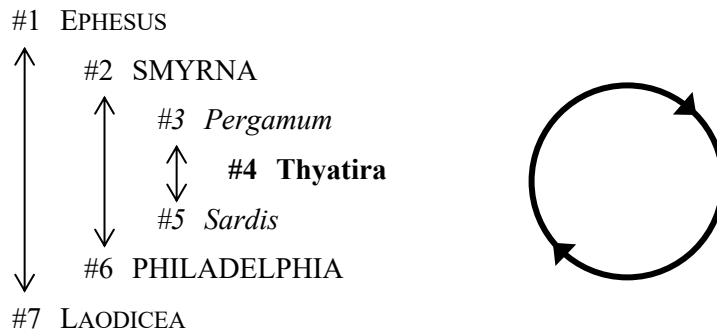
The following steps are expansions of the teaching of two elderly missionary women (Jeanne & Mabel) who spent 40 years of their lives in door-to-door ministry in Quebec to begin three churches—in a very difficult area. The metaphor used in Isaiah 5 is one of the farmer seeking to raise up a crop—a parallel idea to the NT parable of the sower.

- a. In sharing the Gospel, clear the ground of rocks: the hindrances of false ideas, Acts 14:14-18
- b. In sharing the Gospel, work the soil:
 - 1) The law is a tutor to grace, Rom 3:19-20; 7:5; Gal 3:24
 - 2) Set a foundation of repentance, Mark 1:4 (cf. Luke 3:3), 15; Luke 5:32; 24:47; Acts 20:21
 - 3) Warn the wicked to wake them up, Ezek 3:16-21, “You shall surely die!”
 - 4) “Break up the fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns,” Jer 4:3 (e.g. Isaiah 5:1-2)
 - 5) Gene Edwards writes, “It is impossible to witness effectively unless you give the Holy Spirit opportunity to prepare the heart.”¹⁰⁸² (i.e. the necessity of the Sword of the Spirit to be applied to the heart).
- c. In sharing the Gospel, sow the seed of the Gospel, Luke 8:11
- d. In sharing the Gospel, water the ground, 1 Cor 3:7.
Watering the ground is done through teaching of the Word.
- e. In sharing the Gospel, God must cause the growth, 1 Cor 3:7.
God’s working shows the need for prayer and continued nourishing from the Word.
- f. In sharing the Gospel, harvest of the crop, John 4:35-36; 15:16.
True repentance and faith in Christ leading to eternal life shows the maturation to salvation of the Gospel in the life of the open heart.

8. Encounters with Various Types of Christians:

A. A Look at Various Types of Churches using Rev 2-3 as a Baseline:

The Structure of these seven churches appears to be in the form of a chiasm



1) Understanding these churches as a chiasm:

Structurally:

Churches 2 (Smyrna) and 6 (Philadelphia) stand out as the chiasm because:

These two are the only churches of the seven that receive no warning
In both is mentioned the synagogue of Satan, and those who say that they are Jews and are not—yet in reverse order!

Church 4 (the center church of the chiasm) has the greatest expansion

What of 1 and 7?

Thematically—the three central churches of the chiasm seem to portray distinct doctrinal downgrade

3—Pergamum—Orthodox, but with two suspicious subgroups:

“And you hold fast to My name,” Rev 2:13

“There are those who hold to the doctrine of Balaam,” Rev 2:14

“You also have those who hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,” Rev 2:15

¹⁰⁸²Gene Edwards, *How to Have a Soul Winning Church* (Springfield, MO; Gospel Publishing, 1962), 117.

4—Thyatira—False teachers have infiltrated leadership, the orthodox are a minority:

“You allow the woman Jezebel ... to teach,” Rev 2:20

“To the rest in Thyatira,” Rev 2:24

5—Sardis—A dead church with a past reputation and a few remaining faithful:

“You have a name that you are alive,” Rev 3:1

“But you are dead,” Rev 3:2

“You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments,” Rev 3:4

Because these seven churches existed simultaneously, and because Christ Himself spoke to each church individually, in a sense categorizing the church through the ages into seven types, as in a typological fashion in Rev 2-3, it seems consistent that they may be used as a grid to superimpose over the ebbs and flows of churches as we seek to understand the workings of Christ in the history of the churches.

Hence, there remains lessons for the believer in the contemporary church from these seven churches.

- 2) Understanding the various levels of true faith within the various churches:
 - a) Even in good churches, like Pergamum, there will be those who hold to false teaching;
 - b) In not-so-good churches, like Thyatira and Sardis, there will be those who remain within them, “as to the rest,” and “a few names.”
 - c) We will need to consider what we should say and do when we encounter these people in our evangelistic efforts.

B. Jesus spoke of false teachers in his Olivet Discourse:

“And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.’” Matt 24:4-5.

“Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.” Matt 24:11.

“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*.” Matt 24:23-26.

C. Further, Paul spoke of false teachers within the flock once he departed:

“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” Acts 20:29-30.

These words are errily reminiscent of the prophecy of Moses in Deut 31:

“Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?” Deut 31:26-27.

Further, Paul dealt very forcefully with the pseudo-apostles who were ministering to Christians with and among the many house churches of Corinth in 2 Cor 11:

“For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles [ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων].” 2 Cor 11:5.

“For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.” 2 Cor 11:13.

“For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise!” 2 Cor 11:19.

Hence, Paul prophesied that there were going to be local churches, and even large segments of churches that would depart from the faith in one way or another.

D. Peter spoke of these same men in 2 Pet 2, for example:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be

blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” 2 Pet 2:1-3.

“...*They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children.” 2 Pet 2:13-14.

“For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.” 2 Pet 2:18-19.

- E. There are so many of these prophecies regarding false teachers and false teachings in the New Testament that they will be considered in an appendix to this chapter (Please see the appendixes).

With all these prophesies and warnings in mind, it is scarcely reasonable to consider that there would not be large swaths within a church-like order that would drift from the gospel, especially when armed with the strong-arm tactics of a state-church model—no matter what may be their masterful guise or arguments to fidelity and orthodoxy!

- F. As concerns the existence of Christians who may be caught up in their churches for one reason or another:

- 1) Are they not like the righteous Lot, caught up in Sodom? (2 Pet 2:7)
- 2) Are they not the prey described in various passages?

“Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread, And do not call on the LORD?” Psa 14:4.

“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” Acts 20:30:

Consider the double-entendre on the word “disciple” in this verse; does it speak of disciples of the Lord or disciples of the false teacher?

In Acts 5:36-37, the followers of Theudas and Judas of Galilee are never called “disciples”

Further in Acts 15:21, when speaking of those who preach Moses, they are never called “disciples”

Also, the “myriads of Jews ... who have believed” are still called Jews in Acts 21:20

Therefore, it would be propitious to consider that the false teachers in Acts 20 are precisely going after “disciples” of Jesus, to draw them away to themselves!

- G. How may the reality of false teachers and false teachings influence our evangelism of those caught in their teachings?

- 1) Keep us humble—we have the same flesh and blood as any false teacher or false prophet; further we also have the same sin nature as them, therefore, outside the supernatural grace of God, we are prone to fall into the same exact tendencies!
- 2) We must be ready to receive clearly communicated true faith in Christ with an open heart, not being overly doubtful, and falling prey to “accusing the saints” as is the chief operation of Satan against the faithful, Rev 12:10:

Sometimes using exploratory questions with some people may not prove helpful, as they are sometimes confusing—See *Evangelizology*, Chapters 14-15.

- 3) According to 1 Thess 5:14, our job when encountering Christians who attend less than orthodox churches, for one reason or another, is not to cojole them to change churches, but to “encourage the fainthearted” with patience:

In a way, are they not “the servant of another”? Thus, ours is not to judge them, Rom 14:4

Our prayer should be that they hear the voice of Christ wooing them: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27.

- 4) Our goal should be to pray for them and to point them to Jesus and to the Word of God in whatever area may come up in the conversation—perhaps the Lord will allow them to “come to their senses” 2 Tim 2:26.

Chapter 12 Appendixes

Concerning False Teachers and Their False Teachings¹⁰⁸³

A. False Teachers—An Introductory Study:

- a. Sample passages to be looked at: Deut 13:1-5; Matt 7:15-20; 24:11, 24; Acts 20:28-31; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Tim 4:1-3; Titus 1:10; 2 Pet 2; Jude 4-16
- b. All NT authors spoke of false teachers, e.g.:
 - 1) Jesus prophesied the Coming of False Prophets, Matt 24:11, 24
 - 2) Paul warned of their coming, Acts 20
 - 3) Peter taught of false teachers, 2 Pet 2:1
- c. Three continua to keep in mind:

	God's Word	
Doctrinal Orthodoxy _____		Zeal _____
Critical Spirit _____		Compromise _____
Legalism _____		Licentiousness _____

1. Sample Titles for False Teachers:

- a. Antichrist, 1 John 2:18, 22; 2 John 7:
 - 1) Expansion on the Antichrist:
 - Lawless one, 2 Thess 2:8
 - Man of sin, 2 Thess 2:3
 - Mystery of lawlessness, 2 Thess 2:7
 - Son of perdition, 2 Thess 2:3
 - 2) Others will precede him in his evil:
 - Spirit of the Antichrist, 1 John 4:3
 - 3) In Revelation, there are several others in his Court of Evil (cf. Dan 7:5-23):
 - “The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit,” Rev 11:7
 - “A beast rising up out of the sea,” Rev 13:1; a.k.a. “the first beast,” Rev 13:12
 - “The image of the beast,” Rev 13:15
 - “The mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,” Rev 13:17
 - “The number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666,” Rev 13:18
 - “The beast and his image, and receives *his* mark,” Rev 14:9, 11
 - “The throne of the beast,” Rev 16:10
 - “The beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies,” Rev 19:19.
 - 4) The court appears to have three personalities:
 - “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet,” Rev 16:13
 - “The beast and the false prophet,” Rev 19:20; 20:10.
 - 5) These personalities have authority over armies
 - “The beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies,” Rev 19:19.
 - 6) The mastermind behind it all appears to be a spiritual being called, “the dragon” (Satan), who is accompanied by his angels:
 - “A great, fiery red dragon,” Rev 12:3
 - “The dragon and his angels,” Rev 12:7
 - “The great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him,” Rev 12:9
 - “The dragon who gave authority to the beast,” Rev 13:4

¹⁰⁸³These are preliminary notes. This topic seems to be unstudied in detail in most systematic theologies, although there is plenteous biblical information on this topic. May God also allow this field of inquiry to be studied!

“He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,” Rev 20:2

7) Then a woman enters the picture...

“A woman sitting on a scarlet beast,” Rev 17:3ff.

“And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH,” Rev 17:5

“I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement,” Rev 17:6

“Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,” Rev 17:9

And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth,” Rev 17:18

b. Other titles for false teachers:

- 1) Antichrists, 1 John 2:18;
- 2) Deceitful workers, 2 Cor 11:13
- 3) “Deceivers,” Titus 1:10; “many deceivers,” 2 John 7
- 4) Diviners, Deut 18:14; Jer 27:9; 29:8; Micah 3:7; Zech 10:2
- 5) Dreamer, Deut 13:1, 3, 5; Jer 27:9; Jude 8
- 6) Empty talkers, Titus 1:10
- 7) Evil men, 2 Tim 3:13; cf. Psa 140:1; Prov 24:1; 28:5; e.g. Acts 17:5
- 8) False apostles, 2 Cor 11:13 (cf. Rev 2:2); aka. Super Apostles, 2 Cor 11:5; 12:11
- 9) False brethren, 2 Cor 11:26; e.g. Gal 2:4
- 10) False christs, Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22
- 11) False prophets, Deut 13:1-5, Matt 7:15, 24:11, 24, Acts 13:6, 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1
- 12) False teachers, 2 Pet 2:1
- 13) False witnesses, Psa 27:12
- 14) Impostors, 2 Tim 3:13
- 15) Prophets, Jer 14:14; 27:9; 29:8 (see below “Jeremiah on False Prophets and False Prophecy”)
- 16) Many rebellious men, Titus 1:10; or “many insubordinate,” Titus 1:10
- 17) Savage wolves, Acts 20:29-30
- 18) Seers, Micah 3:7
- 19) Servants of Satan, II Cor. 11:15
- 20) “Son of the devil, enemy of righteousness,” Acts 13:10
- 21) Soothsayers, Deut 18:14; Jer 27:9
- 22) Sorcerers, Jer 27:9

2. From Whence False Teachers Will Come?

- a. They will arise, Matt 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22
- b. Creep in unnoticed, Jude 4
- c. Come in among church (from the outside), Acts 20:29
- d. From among the church, Acts 20:30
- e. Go out from the church, I John 4:1

3. Motivation of False Teachers:

- a. They want to be sought, Gal 4:17
- b. They want primary position, 3 John 9
- c. Take others captive (control), Col 2:8
- d. To deceive or lead astray, Matt 24:11, 24
- e. To seduce others, Rom 16:18
- f. Exploitation, 2 Pet 2:3
- g. Draw away disciples after themselves, Acts 20:30
- h. Seeking to turn others away from the faith, Acts 13:8
- i. Unholy zeal, Matt 23:15

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on the sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” Matt 23:15.

4. Methods False Teachers Use to Promote Their Views:

- a. Disguising themselves as servants of righteousness, 2 Cor 11:13-15, Col 2:8
- b. Great signs and wonders, Matt 24:24
- c. Empty words, Eph 5:6; e.g. 1 Cor 15:14; cf. Isa 59:4
- d. Entice by fleshly desires and sensuality, 2 Pet 2:18
- e. Flattering divination, Ezek 12:24
- f. Futility and false divination, Ezek 13:6, 7; cf. Ezek 21:23

- g. Smooth words and flattering speech, Rom 16:18
- h. False dreams, Jer 23:32
- i. "The false pen of the scribe," Jer 8:8
- j. False prophecies and delusions, Lam 2:24
- k. False and deceptive visions, Lam 2:14; cf. Ezek 12:24
- l. False visions, Ezek 21:29
- m. Deceive, Matt 24:4, 5, 11, 24; Acts 13:10, 2 Cor 11:13 (cf. John 8:44); false words, 2 Pet 2:3
- n. Mislead, Matt. 24:11; "mislead the elect," Matt 24:24 (cf. Mark 13:22)
- o. Persuasive argument, Col 2:4
- p. Philosophy, Col 2:8
- q. Speaking perverse things, Acts 20:30 ("speak arrogant words of vanity," 2 Pet 2:18)
- r. Secretly introducing destructive heresies, 2 Pet 2:1
- s. Make crooked the straight ways of the Lord, Acts 13:10

5. Results of Following False Teachers:

- a. Believed in vain, 1 Cor 15:2
- b. Going astray from the faith, 1 Tim 6:20-21
- c. Fall away from the faith, 1 Tim 4:1
- d. Exploitation, 2 Pet 2:3

6. Warnings Regarding False Teachers:

- a. Be on guard, Acts 20:28
- b. Be on the alert, Acts 20:31
- c. Beware, Matt 7:15
- d. Reprove and do not pay attention, Titus 1:13-14
- e. Do not let them in your house or give them a greeting, 2 John 10-11

7. Methods of Noting False Teachers:

- a. Cause dissensions and hindrances [or offenses], Rom 16:17
- b. Test the spirits, 1 John 4:1-3
- c. Comparison with the Word of God, Deut 13; cf. Acts 28:32
- d. By their fruits, Matt 7:16-20
- e. They will follow their sensuality, 2 Pet 2:2 ("indulge the flesh," 2 Pet 2:10, e.g. 2 Pet 2:14)
- f. They serve their own stomach, Rom 16:18
- g. They are greedy, 2 Pet 2:3 (cf. 2 Pet 2:15)
- h. They despise authority, 2 Pet 2:10

8. Judgment of False Teachers:

- a. Their judgment is sure, 2 Pet 2:3
- b. According to their deeds, 2 Cor 11:15
- c. Cut down and thrown into the fire, Matt 7:19
- d. Swift destruction, 2 Pet 2:1
- e. To be put to death, Deut 13:5

B. Of False Teachings:

Introduction:

- a. The Origin of False Teachings:
 - 1) Not from God: "This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you." Gal 5:9
 - 2) "Deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons," 1 Tim 4:1
 - 3) From the devil, the father of lies, John 8:44
 - 4) For "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light," 2 Cor 11:14
- b. The Invasive Nature of False Teachings: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough." Gal 5:9
- c. Consider a Continuum:

"Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees [Herod]," Matt 16:6, 11 (Mark 8:15; cf. Luke 12:1)

Pharisees	Sadducees
Legalism	Compromise

1. Facts About False Teaching:

- a. Persuasive, Col 2:4
- b. Appearance of Wisdom, Col 2:23
- c. Promise freedom, 2 Pet 2:19
- d. Entitled: “Philosophy and empty deceit,” Col 2:8
- e. Reality:
 - 1) “Elementary Principles of the World,” Col 2:20
 - 2) Commandments and teachings of men, Col 2:22
 - 3) Are of no value against fleshly indulgence, Col 2:23
- f. Speculations and every lofty thing raised up against a knowledge of God, 2 Cor 10:5
- g. Perverse things, Acts 20:30; false words, 2 Pet 2:3; words of vanity, 2 Pet 2:18 (cf. Jude 16)
- h. Destructive Heresies, 2 Pet 2:1

2. Key Doctrinal Departures Common to False Teachings:¹⁰⁸⁴

- a. The Person of Christ, 1 Cor 12:2-3, 2 Cor 11:4, 1 John 2:22-23, 4:1-3, 2 Pet 2:1, 2 John 7, Jude 4
- b. The Person of the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor 11:4
- c. The Trinity, 2 John 9
- d. A Departure from the Gospel, 2 Cor 11:4 (cf. Gal 1:8-9)
Usually coming through the addition of works, Col 2:20-23, 1 Tim 4:3, Titus 1:10
- e. A Departure from Scripture, 1 John 4:6

3. Reiterating Some Results of Following False Teachings:

- a. Many will follow, 2 Pet 2:2
- b. Exploitation, 2 Pet 2:3
- c. Loss of full reward, 2 John 8
- d. Believing in vain, 1 Cor 15:2
- e. Goning astray from the faith, 1 Tim 6:20-21
- f. Falling away from the faith, 1 Tim 4:1

Concluding Thoughts about False Teachers and False Teachings:

Let us not allow ourselves to become obsessed with false teachers and their false teachings...

Rom 16:19 (ESV), “but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.”

Further advice gleaned from Jer 23:21:

Jer 23:21 (ESV), “I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.”

Don’t try to outrun a false teacher—They will outrun you and tire you out

Don’t let them frame the question—You will then be off your message

Don’t even focus on their false teaching—You will be viewed as a negative person with a negative message

Rather, focus on the truth!

Jer 23:22 (ESV), “But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.”

¹⁰⁸⁴See chart on progression of false teaching in *Charts for a Theology of Evangelism* (Broadman, 2007).

Addendum

On the Richness of Jeremiah on This Topic Jeremiah on False Prophets and False Prophecy

Introduction:

- A. “You will know them by their fruits,” Matt 7:16
- B. Quickview of the problem, Jer 5:30-31
- C. Jeremiah includes some telling narratives concerning his own prophesying versus that of the false prophets:
 1. In his own city of Anathoth, 11:21-23, “Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, so that you will not die at our hand,” 11:21
 2. A woe to himself for his prophesying, 15:10-11, “Woe to me, my mother, that you have borne me as a man of strife and a man of contention to all the land!”
 3. Passhur the priest has Jeremiah beaten and put in the stocks (near where he was street witnessing, 7:2ff., cf. 11:6), 20:1-6
 4. Jeremiah’s complaint, 20:7-18:
 - a. “I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me,” 20:7
 - b. “Cursed be the day when I was born,” 20:14
 5. Jeremiah tells Passhur of impending trouble from Nebuchadnezzar, 21:1-14
 6. Various death threats against Jeremiah:
 - a. “When Jeremiah finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, ‘You must die! Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord saying, ‘This house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate, without inhabitant?’?” 26:8-9
 - b. “Then the priests and the prophets spoke to all the officials and to all the people, saying, ‘A death sentence for this man! For he has prophesied against this city as you have heard in your hearing,’” 26:11
 - c. “No death sentence for this man! For he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God,” 26:16
 7. Story of King Jehoiakim slaying the prophet of the Lord, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim, 26:20-23
 8. Hananiah contradicted the prophecy of Jeremiah. Jeremiah prophesied Hananiah’s death within a year, and he died, 28:1-17

I. Regarding False Prophets:

- A. Titles for Those Providing False Spiritual Counsel:
 1. Diviners, 29:8; 27:9; 29:8
 2. Dreamers, 27:9
 3. Priest, 23:11
 4. Priests, 2:8
 5. Prophet, 23:11
 6. Prophets, 2:8; 5:13, 31; 23:16; 27:9; 29:8
 - a. “Prophets of Samaria,” 23:13
 - b. “Prophets of Jerusalem,” 23:14, 15
 7. Rulers, 2:8
 8. Scribes, 8:8
 9. Shepherds, 12:10
 10. Soothsayers, 27:9
 11. Sorcerers, 27:9
 12. Those who handled the law, 2:8
- B. Spiritual Information Regarding Those Providing False Counsel:
 1. Location:
 - a. “Even in My house,” 23:11
 2. Did not Seek the Lord:
 - a. “Did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’” 2:8

3. Not sent by God:
 - a. "I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them," 14:14
 - b. I did not send these prophets, but they ran; I did not speak to them but they prophesied," 23:21
 - c. "Yet I did not send them or command them," 23:32
 - d. "For I have not sent them," 27:15
 - e. "Listen now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, and you made this people trust in a lie," 28:16
 4. Were Involved in sin:
 - a. "Transgressed against Me," 2:8
 - b. "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely," 6:13
 - c. "'For both prophet and priest are polluted; even in My house I have found their wickedness,' declares the Lord," 23:11
 - d. "Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; And they strengthen the hand of evildoers, so that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah," 23:14
 - e. "'Because they have acted foolishly in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and have spoken words in My name falsely, which I did not command them; and I am He who knows and am a witness,' declares the Lord," 29:23.
 5. Prophecy falsely:
 - a. "Prophecy falsely," 5:31
 - b. "But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie," 8:8
 - c. "Prophecy falsehood in My name," 14:14
 - d. "Propheying in my name," 14:15
 - e. "You and all your friends to whom you have falsely prophesied," 20:6
 - f. "How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart," 23:26
 - g. "They prophesy a lie to you," 27:14
 - h. "But they prophesy falsely in My name," 27:15
 - i. "For they are prophesying a lie to you," 27:16
 - j. "You made this people trust in a lie," 28:16.
 6. "Rule on their own authority," 5:31.
- C. Regarding their audience:
1. "They strengthen the hand of evildoers," 23:14
 2. "Those who despise Me," 23:17
 3. "Everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart," 23:17
- D. Judgment of the False prophets:
1. "'Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them, they will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it; for I will bring calamity upon them, the year of their punishment,' Declares the Lord," 23:12
 2. "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, 'Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood and make them drink poisonous water, for from the prophets of Jerusalem pollution has gone forth to all the land,'" 23:15
 3. "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "Who steal My words from each other. Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares,'" 23:30-31

II. Regarding False Prophecy:

A. Spiritual Authority:

1. "Prophecied by Baal," 2:8
2. "They prophesied by Baal and led My people astray," 23:13.

B. Message:

1. In relation to God:

a. Indicates a forsaking of God:

- 1) "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters," 2:13
- 2) "'You forsake the Lord your God, and the dread of Me is not in you,' declares the Lord," 2:19
- 3) "For they have turned their back to Me, and not their face," 2:27
- 4) "They have lied about the Lord," 5:12
- 5) "Because you have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood," 13:25

- 6) "Because they have forsaken Me," 19:4
 - 6) "Who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams, which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal?" 23:27
 - 7) "Listen now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, and you made this people trust in a lie," 28:16.
- b. God calls it sin:
 - 1) "My people have committed two evils," 2:13
 - c. Taking the name of the Lord in vain:
 - 1) "The prophets who are prophesying falsehood in My name," 4:14
 - 2) "The prophets who are prophesying in My name," 4:15
 - 3) "For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; and I have not sent them," declares the Lord," 29:8-9.
2. The message is man made:
 - a. The message relies on broken cisterns:
 - 1) "To hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." 2:13
 - 2) "But where are the gods which you made for yourself?" 2:28.
 - b. Prophesying from their own minds:
 - 1) "They are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds," 14:14
 - 2) "They speak a vision from their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord" 23:16
 - 3) "How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal?" 23:26-27
 - 4) ""The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the Lord. 'Is not My word like fire?' declares the Lord, 'And like a hammer which shatters the rock?' 'Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,' declares the Lord, 'who steal My words from each other.' 'Behold, I am against the prophets,' declares the Lord, 'who use their tongues and declare, "The Lord declares,"" 23:28-31.
 3. The message is blatant idolatry:
 - a. "Who say to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth,'" 2:27
 - b. "For your gods are as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to the shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal," 11:13
 - c. "The Lord of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced evil against you because of the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me by offering up sacrifices to Ball," 11:17
 - d. "They taught My people to swear by Baal," 12:16
 - e. "Because you have forsaken Me and made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built high places of Ball to burn their sons and daughters in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind," 19:4-5.
 4. Message does not include repentance:
 - a. "You shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord, do men fall and not get up again? Does one turn away and not repent? Why then has this people, Jerusalem, turned away in continual apostasy? They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return. I have listened and heard, they have not spoken what is right; no man has repented of his wickedness, saying 'What have I done?' Everyone has turned to his course, like a horse charging into battle,'" 8:4-6
 - a. "Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; And they strengthen the hand of evildoers, so that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah," 23:14.
 4. Content of the message—PREACHING THE APODOSIS (e.g. the "positive message" only):
 - a. "You will have peace," 4:10 (God is announcer here)
 - b. "They have lied about the Lord and said, 'Not He; misfortune will not come upon us, and we will not see sword or famine,'" 5:12
 - c. "Saying, 'peace, peace,' but there is no peace," 6:14
 - d. "This is the Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," 7:4
 - e. "Saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace," 8:11

- f. “You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place,” 14:13
 - 1) Here we find an example of preaching the apodosis without preaching the protasis (cf. Deut 28)
 - 2) Note the clear example of this misplaced emphasis in their murder plot against Jeremiah for his preaching, 26:8-9. They ignore that he was sharing all that God had told him (e.g. Acts 20:27), 26:2, “Do not omit a word!” They ignore that Jeremiah was primarily preaching the protasis, 26:4-5, with 26:6 being the apodosis
 - 3) Note Jeremiah’s clear example of preaching both protasis and apodosis regarding keeping the Sabbath, 17:21-27.
- g. “You will have peace,” 23:17
- h. “Calamity will not come upon you,” 23:17
- i. “I had a dream, I had a dream,” 23:25
- j. “You will not serve the king of Babylon,” 27:9
- k. “You will not serve the king of Babylon,” 27:14
- l. “Behold, the vessels of the Lord’s house will now shortly be brought again from Babylon,” 27:16
- m. “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I am going to bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord’s house, which king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. I am also going to bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who went to Babylon,’ declares the Lord, ‘for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon,’” 28:2-4
- n. “Thus says the Lord, ‘Even so will I break within two full years the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations,’” 28:11.

III. Results of Following False Council:

- A. It is shameful:
 - 1. “So the house of Israel is shamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests and their prophets,” 2:26
- B. Vain Results:
 - 1. “Walked after things that did not profit,” 2:8
 - a. This vanity could be for salvation—i.e., their counsel would not save the Jews from their enemies
 - b. This counsel could be guiding a way of action—e.g. vain methodologies
 - 2. “But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit,” 2:11
 - 3. “There prophets are as wind, and the word is not in them,” 5:13
 - 4. “They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially,” 6:14
 - 5. “They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially,” 8:11
 - 6. “Because you have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood,” 13:25
 - 7. “They are leading you into futility,” 23:16
 - 8. ““Nor do they furnish the people the slightest benefit,’ declares the Lord,” 23:32
- C. The false teaching will bring its own correction:
 - 1. “Your own wickedness will correct you; and your apostasies will reprove you,” 2:19
 - 2. The people also to whom they are prophesying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword,” 14:16
- D. Does not further sanctification (as Paul reiterated in Col 2):
 - 1. “When I have fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the harlot’s house. They are like well-fed lusty horses, each one neighing after his neighbor’s wife,” 5:7-8
 - 2. “As for your adulteries and your lustful neighings, the lewdness of your prostitution on the hills in the field, I have seen your abominations. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will you remain unclean?” 13:27
 - 2. “So that no one has turned back from his wickedness, all of them have become to Me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah,” 23:14
- E. Stirs Up the Antagonism of God:
 - 1. ““Therefore will contend with you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and with your sons’ sons I will contend,’” 2:9
 - a. The antagonism of God involves multiple generations!
 - 2. “In vain I have struck your sons; they accepted no chastening,” 2:30
 - 3. ““Why should I pardon you? Your sons have forsaken Me and sworn by those who are not gods. ... Shall I not punish these people,’ declares the Lord, ‘And on a nation such as this shall I not avenge Myself?’” 5:7, 9
 - 4. The bones of leaders will be dug up and shamed, 8:1-2

5. "Therefore behold, I will surely forget you and cast you away from My presence, along with the city which I gave you and your fathers. I will put an everlasting reproach on you and an everlasting humiliation which will not be forgotten," 23:39-40
- F. Calls down God's judgment of the people:
1. "For they prophesy in order to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out and you will perish," 27:10
- G. Calls the judgment of nature down on the people:
1. "Be appalled, O heavens, at this, and shudder, be very desolate," declares the Lord, 2:12
 2. "'Shall I not punish these people,' declares the Lord, 'and on a nation such as this, shall I not avenge Myself?'" 5:9.

IV. Calls to Action in Light of False Teaching:

- A. In relation to the false counsel:
1. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you,' 23:16
 2. "So do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you," 27:14
 3. "Thus says the Lord: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you," 27:16
 4. "Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon, and live! Why should this city become a ruin?" 27:17
 5. "For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; and I have not sent them,' declares the Lord," 29:8-9.
- B. In relation to God's Word:
1. "O generation, heed the word of the Lord," 2:31
 2. "Behold their ears are closed and they cannot listen. Behold the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them; they have no delight in it," 6:10
 3. "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us'? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. The wise men are put to shame, they are dismayed and caught; behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord," 8:8-9
 4. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to bring on this city and all its towns the entire calamity that I have declared against it, because they have stiffened their necks so as not to heed My words,' 19:15
 5. "Because for me the word of the Lord has resulted in reproach and derision all day long," 20:8
 5. "They speak a vision from their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord" 23:16
 6. "But if they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people, and would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds," 23:22
 7. "'The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?' declares the Lord. 'Is not My word like fire?' declares the Lord, 'And like a hammer which shatters the rock?' 'Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,' declares the Lord, 'who steal My words from each other.' 'Behold, I am against the prophets,' declares the Lord, 'who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.'" 'Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams,' declares the Lord, 'and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish the people the slightest benefit,' declares the Lord," 23:28-32
 8. "For you will no longer remember the oracle of the Lord, because every man's own word will become the oracle, and you have perverted the words of the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God," 23:36
 9. "Thus says the Lord, 'Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah who have come to worship in the Lord's house all the words which I have commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word! Perhaps they will listen and everyone will turn from his evil ways, that I may repent of the calamity which I am planning to do to them because of the evil of their deeds.' "And you will say to them, 'Thus says the Lord, "If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, to listen to the words of My servants the prophets whom I have been sending to you again and again, but you have not listened; then I will make this house like Shiloh, and this city I will make a curse to all the nations of the earth,"'" 26:2-6.
- C. In relation to the cultural religiosity:
1. "Thus says the Lord, 'Do not learn the ways of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs from the heavens although the nations are terrified by them; for the customs of the peoples are delusion . . .'" 10:2ff.

D. In relation to their sin:

1. "Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved," 4:14.

E. An invitation:

1. "You shall say to this people, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death,'" 21:8.

Concerning Politically Correct Recipients of the Gospel

Introduction: Are there certain people, certain religions, or certain groups that are out-of-bounds for evangelism? In an age of ecumenism and tolerance and in a day when churches are signing non-proselytism agreements, how does the Bible speak to the issue of the recipients of the Gospel?

1. For the sake of understanding the boundaries of toleration, let us try to identify ways to determine a politically correct recipient of the Gospel
 - a. Do they say that they are members of another church?
For example: "I'm Catholic!"
 - 1) In which case, one has to determine whether salvation in that church is in accordance with the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - 2) The mere fact of questioning the salvific teachings of another church, however, flies in the face of Christian toleration
 - 3) There is the added problem that the individual may not know, may not care about, or may not even accept the means of salvation as taught in their own church
 - 3) The Evangelical and Catholics Together Statement of 1994, for example, decried the idea of Evangelicals evangelizing among Catholics,¹⁰⁸⁵ as did the 1994 Colson-Neuhaus Declaration.¹⁰⁸⁶
 - b. Do they say that they are baptized?
For example: "I was baptized when I was younger!"
 - 1) In some sacramental and some Evangelical churches, baptism is salvific or equivalent to being "born again"; hence, for those groups the baptism answer should end the Gospel conversation
 - 2) Again, from a biblical standpoint, baptism is a non-salvific ordinance, thus this question becomes a mute point

¹⁰⁸⁵"Today, in this country and elsewhere, Evangelicals and Catholics **attempt to win 'converts'** from one another's folds. In some ways, this is perfectly understandable and perhaps inevitable. In many instances, however, such efforts at recruitment undermine the Christian mission by which we are bound by God's Word and to which we have recommitted ourselves in this statement. ...At the same time, our commitment to full religious freedom compels us to defend the legal freedom to **proselytize** even as we call upon Christians to refrain from such activity" ("Evangelicals and Catholic Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," in Keith A. Fournier, with William D. Watkins, *A House United? Evangelicals and Catholics Together: A Winning Alliance for the 21st Century* [Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994], 346).

¹⁰⁸⁶"There is a necessary distinction between evangelizing [non-Christians] and what is today commonly called proselytizing or 'sheep stealing.'" For "in view of the large number of non-Christians in the world and the enormous challenge of the common evangelistic task, it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community." Thus, "We condemn the practice of recruiting people from another community for the purposes of denominational or institutional aggrandizement" (Geisler and MacKenzie, *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 493).

- c. Do they say that they believe in God?
For example: "I'm Jewish!"¹⁰⁸⁷
 - 1) If we were to broaden the parameters of faith and conversion, some would say that a mere belief in God is all that is needed to be saved
 - 2) Questioning a person who believes in God about their salvation is deemed not politically correct
 - 3) However, it is clear that belief in God is not enough, as "even the demons believe" in a monotheistic God and shutter, James 2:19
 - d. Do they say that they are a Christian, and yet have no assurance of salvation?
 - 1) Is the biblical doctrine of assurance of salvation a strong enough that it can be the foundation upon which personal evangelism can be built (i.e. the "Assurance Questions")?
 - 2) Does therefore a Christian involved in personal evangelism have the right to "teach" or "edify" another Christian who does not believe in assurance of salvation?
 - 3) In what way is assurance of salvation a salvific issue?
 - 4) Note the issue of assurance of salvation in the Baptist Faith and Message.¹⁰⁸⁸
 - e. Conclusion: Any attempt to restrict the potential recipients of the Gospel to a certain underclass restricts both the universality of the Great Commission and the universal need of salvation by grace through faith alone
2. The Bible is clearly universalistic as to the necessity for evangelism
 - a. The above Great Commission notes on the universality of recipients of the Gospel holds true, all need to hear
 - b. The above "Profile of the Open Heart" compels the Christian to share with anyone who will listen to the Gospel
 - c. The necessity for all Christians to regularly share the Gospel following the example fo the New Testament also bears out the universality of the recipients
 3. On the other hand, non-proselytism agreements are:
 - a. Reminiscent of the admonitions against the Lollards and the Methodists, "Stay out of my parish!"
 - b. Imply that the elements related to salvation and conversion in a statement of faith are not relevant in light of denominational cooperation

¹⁰⁸⁷Consider for example, the thirteen point creed of Rabbi Moses Maimonides: "In a special introduction to the Sanhedrin, he for the first time defined and formally laid down the Jewish creed:

- (1) That there is one God, a perfect being, creator and preserver of all things;
- (2) That he is the sole cause of all existing things, and consequently one, and that such a unity as in him can be found in none other;
- (3) He is not corporeal;
- (4) He is eternal;
- (5) That he alone is to be worshipped without any mediator;
- (6) That God had appointed prophets;
- (7) That Moses was the greatest prophet of God, to whom revelation was delivered in a most complete manner;
- (8) That the law and tradition were from God;
- (9) That both can never be changed;
- (10) That God is omniscient, always beholding the acts of men;
- (11) That he rewards and punishes the acts of men;
- (12) That the Messiah shall come out of the house of David;
- (13) That the dead shall rise.

"[This creed, which is found in the Jewish ritual, is repeated every morning by the orthodox Jew]." (Friedrich Wilhelm Schultz, "Maimonides," in Philip Schaff, ed., *A Religious Encyclopedia* [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1891]: 3:1387)

¹⁰⁸⁸"All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" ("V. God's Purpose of Grace," par 2, Baptist Faith and Message 2000; available from <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/default.asp>; accessed 14 Aug 2002; Internet).

- c. Imply that the Christian should not obey the Great Commission and share the Gospel “in the whole world ... to all creation” (Mark 16:15)
- d. Imply a theological subjectivism, by which all roads lead to heaven, either within the scope of identified Christianity or even often outside of it!