

Madness, Blindness and Confusion of Heart

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If you are like myself and have been in the church of God for many years, I'm sure you've probably viewed the world in general from a "church of God" perspective. What I mean by that is, having grown up in the church of God my entire life, I've always viewed the world around me as being under the sway of Satan; not going God's way, not in His obedience and not going in the right direction and with individuals who are deceived. But over the past few years, I honestly have to say there are times that I have been amazed and scratching my head at what I would call a world just going insane. Just watching things get crazier and crazier.

To cite an example, I know over the last few months Rick Railston has mentioned in his announcements several times that the world is just getting crazier by the day and I would have to totally agree with that. Again, my entire life growing up in the church of God, I've always viewed the world as being deceived and going in the wrong direction, but lately in the last few years I'm seeing a level of craziness that I would say is militant and aggressive. What I mean by that is—to phrase it in my own way as I think of it in my own head—it's the hippy perspective of,

"I'm going to do my thing and you do yours and we'll all live and let live—I'll do my thing and you do yours".

Maybe they're going down ideas that you thought were nuts but it wasn't this aggressive approach. What we're seeing more and more today is an aggressive, militant kind of madness that is:

"Not only are we going to reject basic common sense but we are going to force you to do the same thing. We're going to force you to comply and if you don't comply then we're going to punish you for not complying and going along."

That's the "crazy" that our world is going in today and it seems to be getting more and more severe as we go forward in time.

If you're like me, sometimes you sit back and look at this and ask, "what's going on and how do we explain this?" What's really taking place?" As we all know, coming from a church of God perspective, if we really want to explain what's going on in the world, we have to look at it through God's eyes—through a spiritual perspective and look to His Word for the answers to explain what's going on. What we're going to see today is the Bible clearly explains to us why we are seeing this level of militant, aggressive "crazy" going on in our world and why it's just getting worse and worse and progressively increasing as we go forward in time. It explains to us that this was prophesied to happen.

We're going to see the Bible explains the *how* and *why* this is taking place. We will then look at what we need to do in our personal lives to avoid being sucked into it.

If you would like a title for this sermon it's:

Madness, Blindness, and Confusion of Heart

As you might have already guessed, I pulled that title directly out of scripture which directly addresses this issue. We will begin with Deuteronomy 28, a very familiar section of scripture that we have all looked at many times. Most all of us are aware, this is the chapter very often referred to as the "blessings and cursings" chapter, as the first half of the chapter is this list of wonderful blessings that God promises the nation of Israel. That is, if they consistently and faithfully obey the letter of the law and try to follow them to the best of their understanding. He would shower them with all of these positive blessings. The second half of the chapter is the opposite. If you ignore His laws and insist on going the other way, things are going to get progressively worse and then it lists out all the bad things that are going to happen to you if you insist on disobeying and rebelling. It's later in this second part of the chapter of the verse we are going to focus on but let's first start to get the context in verse 15. This is right when it transitions into talking about the curses.

Deuteronomy 28:15 *"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: (NKJV)*

He's saying that if you start disobeying here are all the bad things you can expect to happen. You can see that one of these things—the curses He's talking about—is the nation losing its collective mind and literally just going crazy and losing common sense. That is one of the curses stated. In verse 28 you'll see what I'm talking about.

28) The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

29) And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. (NKJV)

He is specifically telling them that one of the curses that will happen from continued disobedience is *madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. Let's look up some of the definitions for some of these words to paint a clearer picture of exactly what He is telling them they are going to suffer. The definitions I'm about to read to you come from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Warren, Baker and Eugene Carpenter. All of these definitions come from that book so I don't have to cite it each time. Let's start first of all with the Hebrew word that is translated as *madness* in English. It's transliterated as *siggaon*, Strong's #7697 and Baker and Carpenter define it as:

“A masculine noun meaning insanity; madness. It is always used in a negative, accusatory way of persons who behave abnormally to a threatening and excessive extent.”

This is what I was getting at—it’s more militant and aggressive. This is not what I called “the hippy approach” of *I want to do drugs and do my own thing and act crazy but I do my thing and you do yours and we’ll all be accepted and get along with each other*. That’s not the *madness* we are talking about. This is an excessive and threatening one that takes the approach of, “*You will comply and you will go along and participate or we will punish you. We will sensor you and might even try to kill you if you don’t go along with the narrative.*” That’s what we’re dealing with, that’s where we are seeing society going.

It talks about *madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. The definition for blindness — I won’t go into because it’s very obvious. We’re talking about *blindness* but it’s not a visual disability—physically that we’re talking about—it’s more a *spiritual blindness* of not being able to see or accurately assess things. When it refers to *confusion of heart*, let me share with you the Hebrew word used as *confusion of heart*. It’s transliterated as *timmahon* Strong’s #8541. Baker and Carpenter define it as:

“A masculine noun indicating bewilderment; confusion. It refers to a curse that God will bring up on a disobedient people of confusion, disorientation at what is happening.”

In other words, disorientation to even cope with their world. We are going to see as we look at some examples, it is losing the ability to assess commonsense things. For example, just the basic difference between boys and girls. That’s one of the things we are going to talk about that our society has been infested with. This is something in nature that is basic commonsense but people are losing the ability to assess these basic commonsense things and are taking that aggressive approach of—*you’ll go along with the narrative or we’ll punish you if you don’t*.

Also notice—let me cover these two verses again to see, where does this madness lead?

28) *The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.*

29) *And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. (NKJV)*

Notice the way it ends, “*you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually*”. Let me share with you the definition of the Hebrew word for *plundered*. That is transliterated into English as *gagal*, Strong’s #1497. Baker and Carpenter define it as”

A verb meaning “to rob, to take away by force”. It is often used figuratively, as evil leaders of Israel pulling off or tearing off the skins of God’s people. In another figurative usage, it means to “take away or deprive persons of their rights”. In a literal sense it describes the seizing the houses of the oppressed, it means to rob persons of their personal property or even children.

Think of this in the context of the audience to whom this is being communicated. This is God talking to Israel—a nation He makes a covenant with and tells them that if you faithfully obey Me, you’re going to have all these blessings and life is going to go well for you. If you consistently disobey Me, here’s all the curses that are going to happen to you. If you heard my last sermon addressing the fifth commandment, one of the comments I talked about in that sermon was, the promise in that commandment was not one of, promising everyone that you will individually have a long life if you honor your parents. I phrased it as a matter of “*national security*”. In other words, if a nation in general doesn’t teach children to honor their parents and have that as a value, over time it just destroys the structure of a nation and it falls. This is exactly what this is talking about. *Being oppressed and plundered continually*, which is what happened to Israel and Judah. They were both eventually conquered, put under totalitarian rule where they lost their freedoms, they lost their rights, they lost their property, maybe their children were killed. This is what happened; that’s what He is describing here, that’s the end result of this madness.

Notice what this verse started off saying, “God will strike you with this.” How does that work? We often think that God wouldn’t do something bad to people like that. He only does feelgood, positive things for people. He wouldn’t do something evil. That’s a misunderstanding of how reality in the world works. To understand how He does this—I’ll just summarize this because I’ve covered this many times in previous sermons—if you look at the book of Job in Job 41, it describes God as saying “*I have taken Leviathan, [who we know is Satan], as My servant*”. It describes Leviathan as essentially like a dog on a leash. Where God is in control of the leash and it depends on how much leeway He gives him as to how much Satan can act. Growing up in the church of God all of my life, I’ve often heard the well-intentioned but misguided notion that it’s getting around the Holy Day times and Satan is really stirred up and causing people more trials. They paint the picture like the angrier Satan gets—like if he gets really mad—he gets to influence mankind more. If he is calmer and more settled then he influences less. That is never the case. Satan is always a homicidal maniac who would love to kill everybody any chance he gets. The question is always, how much leeway on the leash that God allows him because He is always in control. This is the key to understanding, how does God strike a people with *madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. It’s how much leeway He gives to Satan.

Let’s look at some examples of this. 2 Thessalonians 2 is a section of scripture we often think of because the way it’s worded in the New King James. God striking people with *strong delusion*. In other words, with *madness—madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. This verse is out of the New Living Translation because I think it words the whole thing a little more clearly to see what is happening.

2 Thessalonians 2:5 *Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you?*

6) *And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.*

7) *For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.*

8) *Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.*

9) *This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles.*

10) *He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.*

11) *So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies.*

12) *Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.*
(NLT)

He is saying that God will strike people with *strong delusion*. The NLT doesn't word it like that, it says *deception*. But if you read it in the King James it mentions *strong delusion*. How does that happen? God loosens his leash on Satan and allows him more leeway to go in and deceive people. We see a more graphic example of exactly how this plays out in 2 Chronicles 18, a story about an interaction between Jehoshaphat, who is the king of Judah versus Ahab, who is the king of Israel. The issue at stake here is about potentially going into battle against Syria. You're going to see what is involved in deceiving them into taking this action. It ultimately results in Ahab getting killed and a demon being allowed to be a lying spirit to then deceive everyone into believing a lie and pursuing actions as a result of it.

2 Chronicles 18:1 *Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab.*

2) *After some years he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth Gilead.*

3) *So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?"*

And he answered him, "I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war."

4) *Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."*

5) *Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"*

So they said, "Go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand."

6) *But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?" (NKJV)*

Obviously, for Jehoshaphat to say that, he perceived that the prophets that Ahab seeks counsel with are not prophets of the real God. He immediately says, don't we have prophets of the real God that we can actually inquire of? This tells you where Ahab is at. This account doesn't say that they are prophets of Baal but one of the things that Ahab is known for is, he married Jezebel who was known for worshipping Baal. There is a good possibility that is involved, although it doesn't directly say that. I say that based upon the history of what the Bible records about him.

7) So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah the son of Imla." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!" (NKJV)

You can see both of their bias's here. Notice that Ahab doesn't like listening to Micaiah because he never tells him what he wants to hear. I only want to listen to people who tell me things that feel good and tell me what I want to hear. This guy tells me stuff that makes me feels bad and I don't like that.

8) Then the king of Israel called one of his officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!"

9) The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in their robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.

10) Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" (NKJV)

If you read how the story ends, obviously the true God didn't tell him this because that's not how the story goes.

11) And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the king's hand."

12) Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement." (NKJV)

In other words, here's the accepted narrative and we want you to play along. You need to cooperate and go along and say the narrative of everybody else. We're going to see that he doesn't and gets thrown in prison for it. He gets punished because he won't go along with the lie.

13) And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak." (NKJV)

He has promised that he's only going to speak the truth. As you're going to see in a moment, that's important to understand a statement he's about to make.

14) Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!" (NKJV)

I'm going to speculate a little here as to what is being said. If you consider the full context, this makes some sense, but qualify this as my opinion. I think Micaiah's statement here in that last sentence which I just read, was most likely stated in a sarcastic, mocking tone of voice. The reason I say that is, first of all Ahab doesn't like Micaiah because he always tells him things he doesn't want to hear. So, he's probably aware that Ahab has it in for him and doesn't like him because of what he says. Before he even comes to give this counsel, he has already been told that this is the consensus and we want you to play along and say the same thing that everybody else wants to hear. So, he has already been given the hint that they don't really want the truth, they just want him to play along with this. He has also promised that he's not going to play along, he's going to tell them the truth of what God says. We'll see in the rest of the chapter he tells them in graphic detail what God actually says and that they are all being deceived by lies. In the next verse Ahab, after hearing this one sentence immediately knows that he is not telling what he really thinks. I think most logically he probably said this like, "Sure go up and take them, you'll be successful." He probably said it in a mocking, sarcastic tone of voice knowing the context of what was taking place. Notice verse 15.

15) So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" (NKJV)

Immediately, hearing that one sentence he knew, he was not telling him what he really thought; he had to have a reason to think that.

16) Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'"

17) And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

18) Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left.

19) And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead? So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner.

20) Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him. The LORD said to him, 'In what way?'

21) *So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'*
And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him and also prevail; go out and do so.'
(NKJV)

If you think this through, I don't in any way think that a righteous angel jumped up and volunteered and said, "I'll go lie and deceive everybody". Obviously, this was a demon coming before Him saying, "Let me have a go at him, I would love to deceive everybody". And God says, "OK, I'll allow you to do it". He shortens or slackens the leash and allows him to go and do this.

22) *Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."*

23) *Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"*

24) *And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"*

25) *Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son;*

26) *and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace." ' ' "*

27) *But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"* (NKJV)

If you read the following chapters, Ahab winds up getting killed. So obviously what Micaiah was saying was true. What I want you to notice about the whole picture is they are being deceived by a lying spirit. A demon has gone out and basically deceived with a mass delusion here. This isn't a madness of, "We'll do our thing and you do yours and we'll all get along and be openminded and accepting". No, it's, "You need to play along and say the same thing and if you don't, we're going to punish you and throw you in prison." That's the approach, the kind of *madness* we are dealing with.

How does this happen? How does society get this far off base? It's kind of a spectrum. Coming from a church of God perspective, I've always looked at the world as a world under the influence of Satan and deceived and going the wrong way. But oftentimes you're not seeing this militant, attacking, denying of basic common sense, you just see people deceived and going in a wrong direction. That starts with just the basic denial of God's Word as the foundation of knowledge and that gets people on the wrong track. What really results in *derangement* is *complete, open rebellion*. To see the whole perspective let's start with a familiar scripture in Psalm 111, a memory scripture we're probably all familiar with, in verse 10.

Psalm 111:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.* (NKJV)

As we all know this is a basic, foundational concept that the secret to wisdom, the foundation of wisdom is following God's instructions. It's not leaning to our own understanding but following His instructions and respecting the Bible and the principles it teaches us. Following them is the secret to sanity and good wisdom. To see how powerful this basic concept is, I would like to share an article with you that I've covered in previous sermons, but I'm really a fan of how he lays this out. It's written by an individual named Dennis Prager. You're probably familiar on You tube, you'll see short videos labeled Prager U—Prager University—Dennis Prager is the individual behind this. He has his own radio program and is a very conservative commentator. He is Jewish, not church of God but very strong on following biblical values and honoring the Bible as the source we should follow. He has an article on his website—from DennisPrager.com—posted on December 2, 2003 entitled How I Found God at Columbia. It's addressing the concept of the verse I just read. I'm going to read the entire article; it's not very long but I think it's very profound.

Very few people can say that they found God or religion at college or graduate school. The university, after all, is a radically secular institution that either ignores or disparages religious belief in God. Yet, one day, when I was a graduate student in International Affairs at Columbia University, I had what can honestly be called an epiphany.

I remember it very clearly. Since entering graduate school, I was preoccupied with this question: Why did so many learned and intelligent professors believe so many foolish things?

Why did so many people at my university believe nonsense such as Marxism? I was a fellow at the Russian Institute where I specialized in Soviet affairs and Marxism, and so I encountered professor after professor and student after student who truly believed in some variation on Marxism.

Why did so many professors believe and teach the even more foolish notion that men and women are basically the same? At college, it was a given that the differing conduct of boys and girls and of men and women is a result of different, i.e., sexist, upbringings. The feminist absurdity that girls do girl things because they are given dolls and tea sets, and boys do boy things because they are given trucks and toy guns, was actually believed in the mind-numbing world of academic intellectuals.

And why were so many professors morally confused? How could people so learned in contemporary history morally equate the Soviet Union and the United States, regard America as responsible for the Cold War, or regard Israel as the Middle East's villain?

One day, I received an answer to these questions. Seemingly out of nowhere, a biblical verse — one that I had recited every day in kindergarten at the Jewish

religious school I attended as a child — entered my mind. It was a verse from Psalm 111: “Wisdom begins with fear of God.”

The verse meant almost nothing to me as a child — both because I recited it in the original Hebrew, which at the time I barely understood, and because the concept was way beyond a child’s mind to comprehend. But 15 years later, a verse I had rarely thought about answered my puzzle about my university and put me on a philosophical course from which I have never wavered.

It could not be a coincidence that the most morally confused of society’s mainstream institutions and the one possessing the least wisdom — the university — was also society’s most secular institution. The Psalmist was right — no God, no wisdom.

Most people come to believe in God through what I call the front door of faith. Something leads them to believe in God. Since that day at Columbia, however, I regularly renew my faith through the back door — I see the confusion and nihilism that godless ideas produce and my faith is restored. The consequences of secularism have been at least as powerful a force for faith in my life as religion.

If our universities produced wise men and women, curricula of moral clarity, and professors who loved liberty and truth, not to mention loved America — there is no question that my religious faith would be challenged. I would look at the temple of secularism, the university, and see so much goodness and wisdom that I would have to wonder just how important God and religion were.

But I look at the university and see truth deconstructed, beauty reviled, America loathed, good and evil inverted, elementary truths about life denied, and I realize that one very powerful argument for God is that society cannot function successfully without reverence to Him. So as much as I shudder almost every time I read of another academic taking an absurd position, I also feel my faith renewed.

Ironically, the worse the universities get, the greater their tribute to God.

Just the very concept of denying the fundamental truth, that we should look to God’s Word and follow Judeo-Christian values in terms of how life should be structured, alone puts us beginning down the road of insanity. That doesn’t typically, all by itself result in this militant approach of just denying the most basic concepts in life and not only just denying them, but being excessive and threatening. *“That you better go along or we’re going to punish you. We are going to censor you, we are going to try and shut you out of the economy, we might even try to kill you if you won’t go along with the madness.”* This results in not just a rejection of the foundation of truth of the Bible but a militant, hostile reaction and focus towards God’s Word.

I won't take the time to turn to this particular scripture, but you're probably familiar with Paul's Epistles where he gives a description of the end time. The famous scripture, "*in the last days perilous times will occur*" and you see this list he lays out. One of things he includes in that list is that mankind will be *despisers of good*. It's not just a, "I want to do my thing and you do yours, I kind of like my sin and my drugs and sex, drugs and rock and roll—you do your thing and I'll do mine." No, it's "We absolutely despise and hate good and we're going to try and force you to go along." This results in absolute *derangement*. In Jeremiah 51 there is a verse where the context is referring to the Day of the Lord. That's why I referenced Paul's description because he also is talking about in the last days and what mankind is going to be like. Paul's description also applies to these verses.

Jeremiah 51:6 *Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this is the time of the LORD's vengeance [in other words it's the Day of the Lord]; He shall recompense her.*

7) Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged. (NKJV)

In other words, they aren't just misguided and going in the wrong direction and making wrong choices, they are aggressively *deranged*. They lose basic common sense and are not just wanting to do their things and you do yours, they want to force you to comply and to go along with the *madness*. That's the kind of crazy we are dealing with. To look at some specific examples of how our current culture has been sucked into this we are going to look at a couple areas where God's Word provides basic, commonsense definitions. The rejecting of that has not just gone from the "you do your thing, we'll do ours" it has literally gone to an aggressive, "you will comply and you will go along with the narrative or we will shut you down; we will punish you, we will censor you" and eventually society is going to get to the point of, "we'll shut you out of the economy and might even kill you".

Because of the fact that there is already aggressive censorship with regard to some of these issues, there are going to be times where I'm giving examples and where I am going to be purposefully a little vague in describing some things. But I think if you follow me, you'll know exactly where I'm going. I'm doing that because some of our big tech platforms today are pretty aggressive at trying to censor anyone who speaks against accepted narratives. Some of these narratives are blatantly rebelling against the basic commonsense of God's Word.

One of the obvious pieces of evidence of just how deranged our society has become is people literally getting to the point, that not only are they questioning gender roles, they have confused the basic definition of boys and girls. First of all, start looking at this from a perspective of how God designed society with some pretty basic, commonsense things. Turn to Genesis 1:26.

Genesis 1:26 *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air,*

and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27) So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (NKJV)

Notice, there is only two options. There's male, there's female, there's no such thing as non-binary, there's no in between categories, there's no transitioning from one to the other— there's male, there's female. This was done for a purpose. It wasn't just anatomical differences, there are different roles and God intended for these to stay separate on purpose, because there's a synergy intended for this. We see His obvious instruction for this to remain distinctly different, in Deuteronomy 22:5.

Deuteronomy 22:5 *“A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God. (NKJV)*

Not only did He design male and female—just two options—He purposefully designed this for different roles, for different purposes so that together, it's a symmetry that works well. There's a role that men play and a role that women play with the different strengths and weaknesses each has. It's a complimentary system to go together for the good of all mankind. We see a society today that doesn't just challenge or want to reject some of this and say, “We just want to do our own thing and not accept these roles, but you do your thing and we'll do ours.” No! it's, “you will absolutely reject this, be completely confused on it and if you don't, we'll punish you if you don't go along”.

Let me give you some examples of this. Recently I watched a documentary entitled “What Is A Woman”, done by a guy named Matt Walsh. You can find it on the Daily Wire website. The Daily Wire is a conservative, news, commentary related type of organization. They have a number of speakers and if you subscribe to their website you can see that they have regular video programs that they produce and a lot of articles. They approach things from a Judeo-Christian point of view typically. Not that I am endorsing everything they come up with, but they have a lot more sanity compared to a lot of things in our society today. This is because they come from the basic foundation of Judeo-Christian values.

Matt was taking on this whole gender confusion subject and throughout the documentary interviewing various people on the street. He talks to college professors, he talks to therapists and doctors, just talking about this issue. What's funny is, as he goes through all of this what stumps so many individuals is he just keeps sticking to the question, “What is a woman?” He's asking for a solid definition. One of the common things that he comes up against is people go, “A woman is anyone that identifies as a woman”. Okay, but tell me what are they identifying as; give me a solid definition for what that is. You just hear this insanity of people talking in circles. In one of the main conversations that was filmed, he spoke to a PhD professor who is head of a Gender Studies department at a university. They had an extensive conversation and he keeps trying to nail the guy down about “What is a woman?” “Well, a woman is anyone who

identifies as a woman.” “But tell me what they are identifying as; give me a solid definition.” and the guy just keeps talking in circles. Matt finally looks at him and asks, “Are you familiar with what a circular argument is?” But the guy just keeps talking in circles. Not only in this conversation but in numerous conversations; politicians he interviews, doctors and others and eventually he just keeps trying to push for basic commonsense. There is always some point in the conversation where they get up and say, “I’m offended, this is going in the wrong direction” and they storm out of the interview because they are stumped by the basic commonsense question of, “What is a woman?”

What’s even more interesting, later in the documentary he travels to Africa and he talks to a remote tribe. If you look at what’s portrayed in the film of how they dress and their way of life, by Western standards this would seem pretty primitive and backward. But he’s talking about this subject with them and he starts asking them about gender—what is a woman and what is a man? There was one member of the tribe who is bilingual because English is not even their language. So one individual there was able to translate back and forth for them. He asked them “What is a woman?” and they were puzzled by the question. Women have babies and men don’t. Women have these anatomical parts and men have these anatomical parts—why is this confusing? Even in their definition they not only included the obvious anatomical, physical differences. You could tell in their answers that they even got to the concept of different roles in society and in the family and it’s intended to be that way. They were just touching on basic common sense. Matt mentions to them that in his country, we have people who think if a man identifies as a woman, he can transition to a woman and vice versa and starts explaining all this. The guy who is bilingual translates and explains this to the leading members of the tribe and you hear them all burst out laughing. You can tell the guy is trying to be polite and says that they have never heard anything like this. You can see by the look on his face he wants to say, they have never heard of something so ridiculously stupid as all this. They thought this was ridiculous. Matt even asked at the end of this, based upon what I’ve told you, would you have any desire to come to America and live there and they said, “No—we think these people are nuts.”

What is also interesting throughout the documentary is that he talks about a number of things you have heard in the news over the last few years, items about particular individuals—celebrities, sports figures, even some political figures—identifying themselves as having been a man and now, they are transitioning into a woman. If you’ve noticed in a number of these cases, you then see organizations that say, they are nominating this person for “Woman of the Year”. Think about how insane that is. They are literally saying that men make better women than women do. That’s how crazy this is. But it’s gone beyond just saying; they believe in this kind of thing. In a number of cases he talks to school teachers, college professors and others who have lost their jobs simply because they won’t play along with students who now claim they are the opposite gender. They are supposed to play along with the delusion or they are shut down.

I could name a number of conservative individuals who have had their Twitter accounts shut down or suspended simply because they have commented on one of these specific

examples. They have simply pointed out the obvious truth that a man who claims to be a woman is not a woman, he's just a confused man. Or a woman who claims to be a man—is not a man just a confused woman.

Let me give you the severest example. This is a true story. I'm not embellishing it or making any of this up. It's a situation that happened in Canada. A divorced couple—a husband and wife who were no longer living together but there were minor children involved. One of the minor children decided they were the opposite gender. So, they got the medical profession involved and to try to transition this person through drugs and surgery and things of that nature. The father completely disagreed with this and was trying to protect his child. He stepped in and voiced strong objection to all of this. The end result was, not only did they not allow him to do this, he was literally, legally charged with the crime of misgendering. He was given a significant fine and is currently awaiting trial in Canada for the crime of misgendering. In other words, "You will play along or we will punish you." That's what is happening. I could give you more examples but I'm going to move onto another subject.

Another common area where you might say this has affected our culture is in the area of race relations and what is taking place in this regard. It's not secret if you look back in the history of the United States, there were times when we seriously mistreated certain races, abusing them and practicing some racist policies and such that should not have been done. These violated basic biblical principles. What's happened now is the concept of what I like to call, "seeing the middle of the road as you jump from one ditch to the other". Just to see the biblical principle here, turn to Numbers 15 and we'll see first what God's Word has to say about this.

Numbers 15:15 *One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you [in other words the non-Israelite], an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.*

16) One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you." '(NKJV)

You don't oppress people based upon race, you don't exclude people or show favoritism based on that. You have one set of rules and everyone has to play by them and you institute them fairly. This is even true for some, who are perceived as disadvantaged. You don't pervert justice as a result of that. This is clearly stated in God's Word as well in Leviticus 19:15.

Leviticus 19:15 *You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. (NKJV)*

In other words, you don't take the perspective of, this is the disadvantaged so we'll make up a new set of rules and pervert judgment in their favor. Nor do you go, this is the powerful and if I'm alongside the powerful and wealthy that will benefit me so let's do

things in their favor. You don't do either one because both of them are perverting justice.

If you look back historically in the U.S., particularly as rules were around the black race in the U.S. for many years, there was blatant racism. There is no question there. There were shameful things that took place and it's a good thing we changed those as a society to try and right those wrongs. But this has also been used to completely jump in the opposite ditch and now you often see those who claim to be against racism yet are practicing blatant racism. If you call it out and object to it, then you're a bad person because you're the racist because you're not wanting to go along. Let me give you an example that happened to me in grad school about thirty years ago. I've shared this in a number of sermons over the years.

This is back when they used to try to conceal a little bit of where this was going. Today they are just much more blatant about it. I had a class in grad school about thirty years ago that was addressing some of this. One day the professor lecturing, put on the chalk board what she called the "Emotional Level of Prejudice". She defined it as the feelings that a minority group causes in a majority group. From a U.S. context, it's very obvious where this was going. You are basically saying only white people can be racist because by definition, just using her definition, it couldn't go the other way around. So, I immediately shot my hand up and I called her out on it. Zealot that I am, I didn't go along and I pointed out the obvious problem in what she was saying. Human nature is human nature and we can all do evil things; it doesn't discriminate by skin color. She kind of talked in circles and acknowledged that what I was saying was accurate and then turned around and pointed at the board and said, "but we're going to go with this definition". In other words, we're going to ignore obvious, blatant reality and we're going to follow a completely flawed, political agenda definition.

When you do this, what happens is you start down the road of "crazy". What you have to then do is mental gymnastics and pervert basic reality to go along with this. Let me give you an extremely obvious example that has happened fairly recently. I'm going to purposely be very vague but I think the way I'll state this, most of you will figure out exactly where I'm going. But again, I'm avoiding censorship.

In the last few months there was a pretty prominent individual who got on national television. We'll just refer to this individual as the primary leader of the nation I happen to live in. He got up and announced that he has this important position to fill in his administration but is specifically going to screen candidates on the basis of race and gender. This is dressed up as diversity, inclusion and that this was a wonderful thing. No, it's racism and sexism because you're screening candidates on the basis of race and gender. I have been an employment recruiter for the last twenty-two years and I am familiar with employment recruitment as it applies to these things. It has been the instructions of my job the entire time. As a recruiter, if a hiring manager comes to me and says we have this important position to fill but we want you to screen candidates on the basis of race and gender. We only want this one gender to be considered and automatically exclude anyone that doesn't have that. We want to include these races

and exclude those. My instructions have always been to immediately have a coaching conversation with them and tell them “No, I refuse to go along with this; this is a blatant violation of the law and totally unacceptable” and explain to them why this is completely unacceptable. Instead, what has happened now is we dress it up in different languages and you are blatantly going to racism and sexism.

This “crazy” is formulated in a way that if you speak out and object to it, we will censor you, we will punish you and you are the bad person if you don’t go along with it. How does this transition take place with people? It’s typically in small steps. Oftentimes emotion is a major thing played upon to create this transition from one to the other. In other words, that is how a person goes and slowly walks their way over time to this kind of thinking. To give a quick biblical principle, go to a common memory scripture Proverbs 14.

Proverbs 14:12 *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.* (NKJV)

An example of this is the issue of abortion. It plays out as a very good example of not only how our perceptions of things can be perverted and our morals changed, but it can pervert our thinking about life. In my lifetime, over the last fifty years, the whole Roe vs. Wade situation played out from the time it was implemented to the most recent turning over of that decision. When I was young, I would hear this subject addressed with a very emotional appeal. The picture would always be painted of some young girl who was forcefully raped against her will, wound up pregnant with very much this, “you need to be compassionate and caring about her, because this is through no fault of her own, she wound up in this situation”. What happens then is you propose this solution based upon this emotional appeal of, “Let’s solve this problem for her.” But the solution is murdering a child. Then you talk people into making an exception in that regard. Over time it’s a little more and little more and then you walk from where we were fifty years ago of, it needs to be safe, legal and rare and just being accommodating for this heart wrenching situation and this poor innocent victim. But then it turns into what it is today of, “How dare you infringe upon a woman’s right to murder children at will.” That’s literally what it’s become. It was this slow progression, one little movement at a time, over a long period of time. Also just think about how it perverts thinking in general. It’s not just the moral issue, it’s how it perverts our whole mentality.

Think about what happens and how it’s addressed in today’s culture. If a woman is pregnant and is happy and excited about it and wants to be a mom and have a new addition to the family, not only her but all of her friends and family—no one is confused about the objective facts. Everyone knows it’s a baby—she is going to have a baby and there’s going to be a new addition to the family and everyone is excited about that. But suddenly, if she sees it as a bad thing, as something that would be an infringement upon her life, well then, it’s not a baby, it’s a clump of cells. It is equivalent to a tumor that can just be cut out. Then we get into the argument of—her body, her choice. No, a simple DNA test will prove that baby’s body is a separate body because it has separate DNA, it has its own heartbeat—these are all objective medical facts. But these get

switched on and off like a light switch depending on how it feels. So, you have this whole perversion of reality that takes place just based upon this.

Another common factor which plays a part in all of this is the issue of peer pressure and fear.

Exodus 23:2 *You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. (NKJV)*

In acknowledging the whole concept of what peer pressure can do, we oftentimes refer to a “mob mentality” to describe how people get sucked up into peer pressure. They go along and do things that they probably wouldn’t have done if it was just them on their own. It also creates an environment where people can feel like they can get away with things. Things that they have really wanted to do, so if everyone else is doing it, now they can do it too. That combination of peer pressure and even fear, can cause people to totally violate their fundamental values and not face any negative things that might be hurtful for them. In John 12 we see a quick biblical example of this. This is one where people can compromise and lose their salvation simply out of not wanting to face social pressure or face negative consequences in their lives as a result of their beliefs.

John 12:42 *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;
43) for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (NKJV)*

Notice “Him” is capitalized, we’re obviously referring to Jesus Christ. These were a number of individuals who recognized that Christ was the Messiah. He was who He said He was but

“We don’t want to acknowledge that and live accordingly because that could cause us some social consequences. We might lose friends, we might lose a job, we might have to face some individual pain as a result, we might get kicked out of the synagogue if we stand up for what we believe in. This might get personally painful”.

What they wound up doing was cashing in their salvation because Christ openly said that if you deny Me before men, I’ll deny you before the Father. This is a big issue. What they wound up doing was compromising this because of individual pain, because they might face some social consequences.

Let me give you an example of this that I personally witnessed last year. A substantially large number of individuals compromising the most fundamental values of their profession through a combination of fear and peer pressure. I’m going to be vague but I think you’ll figure out where I’m going. Fifteen years ago, I worked for a major hospital system. I was a recruiter who handled a number of positions, but the core of what I handled through that time frame was clinical research related positions. In other words,

people who worked on medical research with clinical trials, often testing experimental medications and things of that nature. As a result of that I became quite familiar with the ethical rules, laws and policies as they pertain to that subject. There are a couple of fundamental concepts that every clinical research professional needs to know in their job. They are as common as the ten commandments are to Christians to make it analogous to all of this audience. The people who profess to be Christian may have a variety of opinions and views on a whole number of subjects but there are some basic fundamental concepts that everyone is aware of, is clear on and agrees on. Simple stuff like, you don't steal other people's possessions, you don't lie to other people, you don't cheat on your spouse and you certainly don't kill other people. Everybody seems to know about that and if they are serious about being a Christian, they try to follow that.

There are some concepts in the medical research world called informed consent and non-coercion of test subjects. It's the idea that you do not in any way, whatsoever, and you must, as the regulatory documents refer to, avoid any form of coercion or undue influence. In other words, in working with what's called a test subject, that is by definition, anyone who receives an experimental medication is considered a test subject participating in research. That's the very definition. If someone is going to do that you can't in any way push or coerce them or manipulate them in any way to take this—it must be totally voluntary. You must also provide them with informed consent so they fully understand not just what you think are the benefits but what are the potential risks; this must all be laid out to them very clearly.

What I experienced last year was a situation where the entire profession participated in, basically openly coercing people, through the threat of termination and sometimes denial of medical treatment of medical issues if people didn't go along with this. This is an absolute fundamental violation of the most basic ethics of their profession. In addition to that, much of the HR professors across the country did a similar thing. There was a government organization—I'm going to avoid stating their name—but let's just say they are very involved in work place safety and in tracking work related injuries or deaths. This organization got very involved in the concept of trying to make a policy to make everyone across the nation—at least the majority—take an experimental medication. Interestingly enough, even though their job is tracking the statistics on work place injury and deaths—to ensure safety—they openly stated on their website, we're not going to make any effort to track this and stated the reason being, that information might cause people to be hesitant to receive this. In other words, we might be giving them informed consent. They might be able to see both sides of the story and that might scare them away. This is a fundamental violation of basic ethics. Professionals all across the country, whose job it is to know better, wound up going along with this and participating in it. Just simply giving a message of "safe and effective" to everybody. That in itself is an ethics violation that was directly stated in the documents of internal policies of the organization I used to work for. I attached it to my resignation letter—that you do not market a study drug as safe and effective for the purposes of which it's under investigation.

There were massive violations of their most fundamental ethics and how did that happen? Peer pressure and fear because I'm talking about an audience of people whose job it is to know better. We have to see the extent to what pressure upon people can do and create. How people, in their own minds, went along with this admitting, this is a violation of everything I'm supposed to believe in in my profession but I just didn't have the guts to stand up and stand against it. What happened was human nature kicks in and instead we start rationalizing and justifying and turning reality upside down. We decide that what we've done is this noble good thing instead of, no I just betrayed all the ethics I'm supposed to believe in and stand for. That's how we start walking our way down the road of slowly compromising our values and go down the road of *madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. This is ultimately how things go; and it slowly results in the perverting of our thinking.

This can happen on a large scale. Notice I mentioned literally millions of people violating their most fundamental values. I'm about to give you an example; this is a strategy that even throughout history nations have used to overthrow other nations. This whole process that we see in Deuteronomy 28:28-29 where it says you will have *madness, blindness and confusion of heart* and where does it end? You will *be oppressed and plundered continually*. In other words, you will be overthrown and put into totalitarian rule. This was a strategy that the KGB used to use. I'm going to quote from a book in a minute that was written by a former KGB agent who defected from the Soviet Union and came to the west in the 1970's and in 1984 he wrote a book. The book is titled The Love Letter to America. This individual's real name is Yuri Bezmenov, but he wrote the book under the name Thomas Shuman and he says in the book his real name is Yuri Bezmenov. He refers to this process as ideological subversion. It's very much the process of undermining Judeo-Christian values to then create chaos in a society so you can later overthrow them. A quote from his book.

The real driving force of this war of aggression is IDEOLOGY – something you cannot eat, wear or store for a “rainy day”. An integral part of this war of ideology is IDEOLOGICAL SUBVERSION – the process of changing the perception of reality in the minds of millions of peoples all over the world. The late comrade Andropov, the former head of the KGB called this war of Communist aggression, “the final struggle for the MINDS and hearts of the people.”

A little later in the book he expounds on this more.

The purpose of this process is to change your perception of reality to such an extent that even despite an abundance of information and evidence about the danger of Communism, you are unable to come to sensible conclusions in your own interests and in the interests of your nation.

In other words, you pervert your thinking so much that you can't make sensible conclusions. It's the combination of undermining basic Judeo-Christian values and assaulting people with propaganda and false narratives.

To summarize the process, he describes it as a four-step process.

1. Demoralization
2. De-stabilization
3. Crisis
4. Normalization

What it comes down to:- demoralization is trying to undermine the basic values and thinking of a society, so that you can de-stabilize or create conflict and division so the people are fighting with each other. You then try to escalate this into a crisis where you have societal break down and what they refer to as normalization where you establish totalitarian control to solve the crisis. That basically results in a communist takeover that results in, as the Bible would put it, being *oppressed and plundered* continually.

Similar to what I've described in the sermon, this is a very slow process that they would do over multiple decades. To give you another quote that Yuri says in the book:

The process of subversion is such a long-term process that an average individual, due to the short time span of his historical memory, is unable to perceive the process of subversion as a CONSISTENT and willful effort. That is exactly how it is intended to be: like the small hand of your watch. You know it moves, but you CAN NOT SEE it moving.

You try to get people to move just a little and compromise a little step at a time over multiple decades and you walk them into what the Bible would call *madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. Where it ends is *being oppressed and plundered continually*. Later in the book he quotes from an article he got out of a Canadian newspaper. He was astounded at how accurate the description was of the KGB's activity.

Years ago, when I was scanning through a pile of Western newspapers in Novosti's Moscow headquarters, I came across a column written by a Canadian writer, Gregory Clark in the Toronto Star. Here it is in full. I have saved it for my files: "If I were a Communist agent in America with millions of dollars to spend annually, I would not waste it in bribing public servants to give away state secrets. But I would lavish and encourage the sleazy tunesmiths of that region to turn out more and more garbage 'culture'.... Gaggled-headed and obscure musicians would be helped to prominence. I would seek out the questionable publishers of the dirtier paperbacks and slip them a few hundred thousand so they could set up more respectable head offices. Whenever trend shows towards the beat generation, I would offer it a helping hand. Anything that promoted the insubordination of teenagers, anything that contributes to the confusion and exasperation of parents would be most deliberately endowed. The basic intention of my spending would be to break down the discipline, encourage relaxation of authority of every kind to build up, in as short time a time as possible, an adult generation that could easily go out of control.

America would look desperately around for any kind of discipline to rescue them and THERE – would be Communism, the most iron-fisted discipline since Sparta. The victory would be bloodless.... Except, of course, in concentration camps, torture, prisons, and a few things like that....But nobody would know about that because of censorship of the press.

That's the end of a quote and then Yuri goes on to state:

This was written in 1959; the accuracy of this description of our activity stunned me.

In other words, of how this played out. For time's sake I'm going to have to only refer to this, but there are actually examples of ideological subversion taking place in the Bible. You'll find the story in Numbers 25. There was a situation if you read the chapters prior to that, where there was an individual named Balak who is the king of Moab and he's concerned about the Israelites coming into his area. He's afraid of going up against them, because he thinks they are going to beat him. So, he talks to a sorcerer named Balaam and tries to get him to put a curse on the Israelites so he can defeat them. Long story short, this plays out with multiple interactions and God always keeps preventing Balaam from putting a curse on them. But then Balaam comes up with another suggestion. He suggests using the women of Moab to seduce the men of Israel; basically, playing upon the weakness of their sex drive, getting them involved in relationships and then luring them into false worship, pulling them away from their God. It was an obvious attempt at ideological subversion for the purpose of overthrowing the nation and undermining them. Fortunately, it didn't work and they defeated them. But if you read through the chapters, it shows how the whole process could play out and their values undermined. They are slowly sucked into moving away from Judeo-Christian values, but what also happens is it creates division—destabilization—within the nation. Fortunately, it gets cut off before it can undertake this whole process. But that's how it plays out.

If we look at this not only from a national perspective, but more importantly from the perspective of our eternal lives, the society that we are living in is getting crazier and crazier by the day. It's not a live and let live "crazy", it's a forced participation. We know if we read Revelation 13, (for time's sake I won't turn there), we know how it ultimately ends. It ultimately ends with,

"You will go along with the narrative and you will participate or we will shut you out of the economy, we will stop you from buying and selling and we might even kill you if you don't go along. So, you had better comply and you had better go along with it."

What's the answer for this? How do we see this? We have to understand that it's deceptive, it goes for a long period of time and slowly tries to get you in small increments.

Let me give you a quick example of how I think we should respond as Christians with this. This actually comes from a popular sitcom that I like, called "Last Man Standing". It's not on the air anymore but it's in reruns and stars Tim Allen as a guy named Mike Baxter. He's the only guy in the family and that's why it's referred to as that. It's him and his wife and they have several daughters. There's a situation in one of the episodes where one of his daughter's is in college and Mike is asked to give a speech to the university. While he is working on it, his daughter is telling him that the college has rules about micro-aggressions and you have to be careful about what you say. Typical of a sitcom they have fun with it. The characterization is not inaccurate. He is practicing his speech and starts with "Welcome ladies and gentlemen". His daughter tells him you can't say *ladies and gentlemen* and he asks "why not?" *It offends those who don't identify as either.* Well, there's only two options; that's kind of crazy. It goes on like this over multiple issues where she says you can't say this or that and Mike eventually says, "I'm just not going to do this. I'm not going to play along; this is crazy" and he backs out. This upsets his daughter and his daughter uses the approach that our culture uses with all of us today. Just go along; it's just a small thing, it's not that big of a deal. Just make a little compromise. Then a little more and a little more and walk your way into insanity. Mike sees it for what it is. But his daughter just says to comply. He tells her something that I think we should all think of as we approach this in our culture. He looks at her and when she is exasperated with him and he's trying to get her to understand the insidiousness of this, he says,

"Mandy, they are not asking you to get along, they're telling you to go along and I don't go along".

That's what we have to do as Christians when we see society trying to force us to make a little compromise and then a little more and a little more and walk your way to insanity. Walk your way over time into *madness, blindness and confusion of heart*. Realize that at the end of that road you will *be oppressed and plundered continually*. More importantly for us is the loss of our eternal lives. So, as you see this in this culture today, constantly pushing you to compromise and to fit in. When you want to push back it's "just be reasonable and compromise a little, it's not that big of a deal, just do this". Think of it and take the advice of Mike Baxter;

They are not asking you to get along, they are telling you to go along and
I don't go along!