

**A Little Dab...**

**Will Do You UNDER**

**DIANE C. SHORE**

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DCShore Publishing  
[dcshorepublishing.com](http://dcshorepublishing.com)

ISBN-13: 978-1-7362449-2-0

1.13

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*“Lord, is there anything in me that is not according  
to Your will, that has not been ordered by You,  
or that is not entirely given up to You?”*

*Andrew Murray  
“Absolute Surrender”*



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## INTRODUCTION

This book can be read as a whole, or subject by subject. It does tend to build on itself, but it can also be separated out as to what might interest you the most on any particular day. The gift of discernment was not strong in my life. Hebrews 5:14 says: *But solid food is for the mature, whose perceptions are trained by practice to discern both good and evil.* We need to be on solid food, not milk. I needed to take off my rose-colored glasses and practice discerning the good and evil around me. The research and study I did for this book helped me be more aware. Now, I hope it helps you in whatever way you might need.

We live in a world full of deception. We can't get around it! We can't escape not being exposed to it. But we can recognize it and be wise to it when we know Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Our one true God is where we must start when surrounded with all the lies on a daily basis—lies in the news, lies in churches, lies in government, lies in our homes... I hope this book helps us all live in the Light as we are called to as the sons and daughters of God Almighty. Our Father in Heaven doesn't want us to be deceived...deception pulls us farther away from our relationship with God. Our Father wants us to see deception for what it is and know that it has already been overcome by the blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Much of what this book contains is a compilation of Scripture, sermons, videos, personal thoughts, quotations, and more, all brought together in one place to make it easier for those searching for Truth. Some of the words are mine, some are quotes and

comments from others. Some of those people have been recognized for their efforts along the way, as I identify them, others have not. I hope those who go unnamed will forgive me since footnotes are not my strong suit. But in the end, I pray the glory is all God's as we all grow together in wisdom and Truth as one body in Christ. I give thanks for all those who came before me and shared their knowledge. There is no way I can cover all the ways of deception in the world today, but I hope when you finish reading this, you will be more aware of what is out there and be able to discern and avoid the many traps the enemy has set for us.

On the Cross, Jesus said, "It is finished". We can believe that Truth and live in it every single day. How? It seems we should start at the very beginning...which is a very good place to start. At least it was....

## CHAPTER ONE

### BEGINNING

Chapter one, verse one of Genesis in the Bible says, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” That is the VERY FIRST miracle we see in God’s Word, and it’s more than amazing...it is so amazing that we wouldn’t be here without it! Let’s stop for a moment and absorb that reality, that TRUTH!! Yes, let’s start at the very beginning with Truth before we dive into the darkness that the ruthless enemy of God inflicts upon this world and us. Let’s stop...let’s pray. Let’s give thanks and praises for Christ’s redemption:

Father in Heaven, You were before the beginning, and You will be until the very end. You are the Alpha and the Omega. We are nothing without You. It is because of You that we even exist. We give You all the praise and glory for what will unravel in this book...for all the places You will take us so we will all walk in more and more of Your Light each day. Lord, we need You! So much! We can get deceived so easily. When non-truth is infused with just a little dab of Your Truth, or even when Your Truth is infused with a little dab of non-truth, we can be drawn to it, tempted into it thinking it could all be okay... “Look, there’s God right there...I see Him”—but that little dab of Truth, or that little dab of lie, can do us under if we aren’t cautious. We must be a Berean...one who studies the Scriptures to find out if what is being taught is in alignment with

Your Word. (Acts 17:11) Even with this book, please, Lord, draw the readers to Your Word first and foremost, checking on all that is written here. We need all of You, and all of Your Truth to see us through this life until we meet You face to face. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm serious, that is my heartfelt prayer as we dive into deception here. Chapter by chapter, I believe God is going to bring little dabs of darkness into the Light of Jesus that need to be talked about. I believe some of these things will shock all of us, me included. Things we thought were so needed, so right on, so holy...aren't. It reminds me of the story of the young bride who cut the ends off of her ham before placing it in the pan and putting it in the oven. Her husband asked her why she did that? He had never seen it prepared that way before. She told him she didn't know, that's just the way her mom cooked a ham. So, she asked her mom one day why she cut the ends off the ham? Her mom didn't know, she said that's the way her mom cooked it. So, she asked her grandma why she cut the ends off the ham? Her grandma's response was, "I didn't have a pan large enough to hold the ham, so I had to cut the ends off before cooking it."

We do things, lots of things, without complete understanding. It's just the way it's always been done...in our homes, in our churches, in our relationships. We believe things, lots of things, and don't even know the reason why many times.

Sometimes there is a need for going back to the basics of our Christianity. Why do we believe what we believe? And what is it, exactly, that we *do* believe? We all need to start back at the very beginning from time to time so as to not get lost in the present that we walk in...to understand the Gospel again as a child would. "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*" Matthew 19:14 (NIV) The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the adopted sons and daughters of God (believers). We must come as little children to our Father's Throne room, enter into His Word to understand what it is we believe, and then learn to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ from there without reservation. Let's do that, dispelling the darkness along the way...throwing out the papers and the trash that don't line up with God's Word...walking together into God's amazing Light of Truth! As Psalm 119:105 (NKJV) says, *Your word is a lamp to my feet and*

*a light to my path.*

Many who have come before us searched for Truth and found it because that is what they wanted. They weren't searching for their own happiness, their own satisfaction, their own contentment...they were searching for what they truly wanted...the Truth found in God's Word. Maybe that's because they tried so many other things and found there was no satisfaction in them. Oh, in the beginning other things can seem to offer what we're looking for. But in the end there will be consequences we don't want to deal with. How about that chocolate chip cookie? It sure looks good! I think I'll have another, and another...until years later, or maybe just months, we aren't who we want to be. We are in the grips of the enemy who is making us feel bad about our weight. Okay, maybe that's just my struggle. Maybe yours is video games, or shopping. Retail therapy starts off making many feel good. But when the bills come in...LOOK OUT! How about those video games played late into the night, and all day long? Not much harm there, right? Wrong! Those games can take our minds places they don't belong. If we think it doesn't change us from the inside out, let's try putting them down for a week and feel the burn...the pull back to it. Now, instead, pick up our Bible and read it...for every minute/hour we spent playing video games let's read our Bible. Tell me we don't notice a change in our attitude and our focus then. How about...alcohol? Yes, that beer after work that turned into two, then three...then became the comfort we needed when we got fired, when our friend betrayed us...that's using alcohol for comfort when God was calling us instead. We couldn't hear God because He was drowned out by the liquid comfort we chose instead. As I see a million-dollar house down the street go up for sale, with an expensive car sitting in the driveway, I know hearts are broken, a marriage has dissolved because of alcohol for one.... Consequences? YES! Sometimes too many to count.

A little dab of darkness can do us under because little dabs start to add up over time. One pair of shoes becomes twenty. One cookie becomes ten. One glass of wine becomes a bottle. One painkiller becomes ineffective to dull the senses. We want/need more and more! A little dab of Light is never enough either. If we aren't searching for complete Truth in God's Word and are willing to settle for less...then the darkness of deception can move in and overtake

even the little light we have. We need to be very careful with what we listen to and believe. Salvation is a gift, faith is a gift, but if we don't strive to walk in it fully as Scripture spells it out, then we can become weak, timid, and overwhelmed and give in to the things of this world that Satan is offering to us.

I know, I know, this book is a downer right now...it's not lifting your spirits the way you hoped it would. It's just making you feel guilty, depressed, and condemned. That's because it's calling all of us to the carpet, me included. And for good reason! Because, GOD IS GOOD! And He wants to get our attention, and soon! Our Father wants to rescue us from the darkness that we are tempted to live in and show us the way to walk free. That's why Jesus came, died, and rose again!! That's why He's coming back again! Jesus is calling us into FREEDOM with His full Gospel Truth. Be warned, a partial Gospel is no Gospel at all. We will talk much more about that in upcoming chapters.

Our joy in the Lord is an eternal life filled with Truth that can start today! Not when we die. Today! Walking free here on this beautiful Earth God created, there in Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning...*" **But** "*In the beginning...*" along came... not John... that's New Testament! Along came that serpent. The snake... a snake that talks. Seems unbelievable, doesn't it? Well, how many "voices" do we hear every day that sound "snake-ish?" Like, "Eat that pan of chocolate chip cookies." "Buy that pair of shoes." "Play another hour or two of that video game." "Have a drink." "What harm will any of that do?" Yes, those are the voices of the very snake heard in the Garden after everything that God had made that was good and very good. Let's look at Genesis 3:1-5 (NKJV):

*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

*And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

*Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

How many times in life have we dealt with people who connive like this and we think to ourselves, “What a snake!” Well, we know where that comes from...the original Garden snake. That very first snake probably seemed harmless just like our garden snakes do today. If he had shown up as a rattler, Adam and Eve might have run. But he showed up as a wolf in sheep’s clothing—he was a rattler in garden snakeskin. He was one of the “wild” animals. We can see that now.

Did you see how the snake brought “God” into the discussion? Why? Because it seems when God is brought into anything it should be a very good thing. And many churches today do bring God into the discussions, the sermons, the songs...but is the true Jesus really there? Is the Good News of Jesus Christ talked about? Is Jesus our focus even in our worship songs? Or is God just an obscure entity who is out there, looking over all of us...from a distance? If we are not specific about which God it is that we are worshipping, which God is in our sermons...a little dab of God/god can do us under right quick. We need the one true God in Heaven—the Father whose Son left His Throne to come to Earth to save humanity from the destruction that the snake caused in the Garden. We need Jesus the Christ, the One who restores us into a right relationship with our Father. When someone mentions God, be sure who it is they are talking about. And then still be very cautious, because Satan even had the right God...but it still went very wrong. Let’s continue with the little “dabs” that will do us under in our own lives...

The world thinks the church lives by rules and regulations because that is what makes us holy. Then they view us as holier than thou when we resist the darker side of life, and they want nothing to do with a God like that. Again, see the little dab of lie that hurts the reality of what it is we do believe and why we believe it? We don’t stay away from sin to get into Heaven, we stay away from sin because we are going to Heaven and our heart’s desire is to please our Father in Heaven. Children should desire to please their parents. We, as adult children, should be no different.

The snake LIED, once again...just a little bit when he asked, “*You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*” He stretched what God said just enough to bring in some doubt and confusion. He knew very well what God had said, and which tree it was. Now Eve did

battle back quite convincingly, didn't she? She told that old snake that it's not that they couldn't eat any of the fruit. Yes. They may eat from the trees. That was the truth. She told him it's just the fruit from the tree in the middle of the Garden that they are not allowed to eat. More truth. Good going, Eve. But then...she added in a little dab of her own white lie for impact. She told that snake that they weren't even allowed to eat or "touch" the tree in the middle of the Garden. When did God say that? Let's look back... Genesis 2:16-17 (NET):

*Then the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat fruit from every tree of the orchard, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die."*

Did you see anything in there about not touching the tree? Why do we think we need to add to God's Word to make it more powerful? We don't! We don't need to go outside of the guidelines of the Bible to walk in the authority we have been given within those guidelines. Those dabs of Truth combined with little dabs of lies, will get us bit as when the snake then fires back, "*You won't die!*" Do you think this had Eve rethinking things? I suspect so, since she did take a bite after that. The snake did speak a little Truth again. He knew they weren't going to physically die...so why not play on that? That one drink won't kill us. That one hour on the video game won't fill our brain to overflowing with darkness. That one innocent cup of coffee with that person who is not our spouse won't lead to anything. That one pair of shoes isn't all that expensive. It won't break the bank. On and on...we listen to lies with some truth. It sounds right. It seems innocent enough. And we agree, we shouldn't be restricted like that. We're adults, after all. We can make wise decisions at the mall, at the coffee shop, at the liquor store....NO! Get out of there! Fast! How many have we known who messed with things they shouldn't have, and we watched their downfall? Too many...they are all around us. But we're different. We're stronger. We're smarter. Uh...pride? To be dealt with in another chapter...

It says the serpent "replied" to the woman. If I were writing it, I would have taken off the "rep" and simply written, "The serpent *lied* to the woman," because he did! Yes, he replied. Yes, he responded.

But listen cautiously when a “snake” responds to you...it’s probably a lie. Listen between the lines and you will hear the hiss. It’s not a pretty sound. It’s full of venom. Should we stick around long enough to then let him bite us? The enemy is only out to steal, kill, and destroy us. Just like he did that very first time in the Garden. We have to understand that’s Satan’s job, his assignment, as well as all the other angels who were kicked out of Heaven with him when Lucifer tried to exalt himself above God.

Let’s listen, cautiously, as Satan talks about God again in verse five. We might think we can relax when we are in the midst of a “God discussion”. NOT! Satan’s putting God in the sentence while he’s hissing underneath his breath, “...*God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*” Uh...Satan tried that and look what happened to him. Misery loves company. “Come join me,” he’s saying. He knows he blew it. Now he’d like Eve to join him.

A little dab of venom was injected under Eve’s skin with that. It’s just enough that she’s about to fall for it; and fall bigtime! Don’t do it, EVE!!! Oh, too late! Now we’re living in the fallen world that started there in the Garden. We know the end of that story, and we also know the end of ours as believers in Jesus Christ. Thankfully, Jesus came to rescue us from that fall.

So, please know we can truly be of good cheer as we work our way through each new deception in this book. Once again, this is not to depress us. This is to make us aware so we understand that we can, *tread on snakes and scorpions and on the full force of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you.* Jesus said this in Luke 10:19 (NET). The victory is already ours in Christ Jesus. Just because the enemy continues to lie to us, doesn’t mean we have to believe, fall for, partake in, or have anything to do with his deception. We can turn and walk away at any time...as Eve should have done. But let’s not get down on Eve, or even Adam, as they did what we do far too many times. Instead, let’s learn from past mistakes and move forward in the victory we have been given.

As we continue on, we know that when the serpent tempted Eve to want to be like God, it’s exactly what Satan did to get himself kicked out of his own gardenlike setting in Heaven. The snake, who made the gravest error of his existence, isn’t learning from his mistakes and then turning around and helping someone not do what

he did. Instead, he is tempting Eve to do what he did. And he's going to get her kicked out, too, along with Adam, into the hard work of toiling the soil and painful childbirth—something that God didn't intend for His children. You and I will one day enjoy what God did intend for us when we arrive in Heaven, free from all this malarkey the “snake” is causing all around us—all the distractions Satan brings into our lives to keep us from a close relationship with God...because that's what he's doing. It's exactly what he did in the Garden. Watch what happened in Genesis 3:6 (NET).

*When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.*

Have you ever been convinced of something, by someone, that it was going to be good, but it didn't turn out quite that good? We all have! We listen, and we think, “Yeah, I'll give that a try,” and there we go...down a road that has lots of bumps and turns we could have avoided had we been just a bit wiser. Oh, speaking of wisdom, isn't that what the snake is convincing Eve of? “You're gonna know stuff...come on, give it a try.” We fall for those insinuations that threaten our manhood, or our womanhood. We decide to take a look... Eve *saw*. She turned to look at that tree. She looked right into the face of temptation instead of looking away. Once we turn and look at something a second time, a third time, a fourth time, it can/will get to us. It will bite us because we have already taken nibbles of extra looks at it. Eve had already seen the tree. If she had decided to not even look in its direction again, maybe she could have avoided it. But she listened to the snake, and she “saw” what the snake was talking about, and it did “look” beautiful. It was so enticing standing there in the middle of the Garden.

Don't you wonder why God would put it in the middle of the Garden? The Tree of Life was also in the center of the Garden, not just the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The two trees were there together...it makes me think about God giving us a choice. Which will we choose? His Word says He sets before us life and death. As for me and my house, I want to say we will choose the Lord. Without free will, we would not be able to freely choose to

love God. And love that is not freely given and received isn't love at all, is it? Just as today we have to choose between the darkness of this world and the Light of Jesus...Adam and Eve had the same choice to make, even if it's not a lot. It says Eve ate some. There's that "little dab" that we think won't make much difference. Heresy in churches today is not being totally off the mark of Truth. It usually has lots of Truth in it or no one would fall for it.

Let's continue...after Eve ate some, she then gave some to Adam who was with her. We do that, don't we... "Hey, I'm enjoying this, want 'some'?" Lucifer tried to be like God, and now he's getting them to want to be like God. Isn't it interesting later in the Bible where we are taught to be Christlike? The snake says in the NLT Bible, "...*you will become just like God.*" When we are called to be Christlike, we won't be just like Christ. No one can be just like Christ. Jesus was perfect, is perfect, and will always be perfect. What being Christlike is, is to use Jesus as our model for what a loving, compassionate, forgiving person we are to be in this world. That's a tall order, and only made even remotely possible through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within each believer. And that is what we should want to give to others. To give them what we have received as a child of God. To receive as many of Christ's qualities into our own lives as possible, and then to share those things with others. Those are the Fruit, the very good things to have "some" of. We will only be perfected in those things when our time on Earth has come to an end and we are in Heaven.

Let's finish this first chapter with the end of this story, although it is a sad ending. Adam and Eve ate, and their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame, so they had to cover themselves with fig leaves. Consequences are not easy, and we have all dealt with them. It's a part of life. "Some" of the things we choose separate us from God, even as believers. We can have the Holy Spirit living inside of us as true believers in Jesus Christ, and still...we choose poorly at times. In life, we might think a little dab will do us, but it doesn't. Later we need more, and more...and much later we can find ourselves kicked out of the place we once were...away from our family, our friends, our job, our home...to a desolate place where we feel shame and want to cover ourselves so no one will see us. We have distanced ourselves from our Father in Heaven.

The GOOD NEWS is, that's right where God finds us! When we

have moved far from Him, He has not moved. And He is most willing to rescue us. God knew right where Adam and Eve were hiding from Him. He knows right where we are, too. So, you see, this story has a sad ending, but it is filled with great hope. The Truth of the Gospel is found in this story. They tried to cover their shame with plants. God sheds the blood of an innocent animal (the first blood sacrifice) and clothes them. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was hung on a Cross, shedding His blood for us to clothe us in His righteousness.

But God did do one last thing in this story, He kicked them out of the Garden. Was He being mean? Was He being unjust? No, He was being loving. He didn't want them eating from the Tree of Life and living forever. Not now! Not here on Earth! Think about it...living here in this fallen world forever? And not being able to die? As my dad once told me, "Death is not a problem. It's an opportunity". Our loving Father didn't want us stuck on Earth with no hope for a wonderful future away from all these lies and deceptions. God has a plan to get us out of here through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus—Jesus is coming back for us! He has gone to prepare a place for us in the new Heaven. Death isn't a problem when we know Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Death is a Heaven full of opportunities.

Let's pray:

*Thank You, Father, for making a way where there seems to be no way. Thank You for not leaving us in the fallen Garden full of deception but having a plan to bring us all the way Home to You. You will not force anyone to be with You who chooses not to be. But those who stumble and fall along the way and look up to You and ask for help and forgiveness from You will receive it freely because of what Your Son died to give us...Redemption. The greatest freedom we will ever know has come at the greatest cost of Your One and only Son, Jesus. We thank You and give You all the praise and glory You are so deserving of. We don't want just a little dab of You, we want all of You! Protect us from all the little dabs of darkness that look "beautiful" but hiss like a snake. Help us not to choose them, but to choose You, always.*

*In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*

### **Chapter One Reflections**

- 1) If we aren't searching for complete Truth in God's Word and are willing to settle for less...then the darkness of deception can move in and overtake even the little light we have. We need to be very careful with what we listen to and believe. (Page 3)
- 2) Salvation is a gift, faith is a gift, but if we don't strive to walk in it fully as Scripture spells it out, then we can become weak, timid, and overwhelmed and give in to the things of this world that Satan is offering to us. (Page 4)
- 3) It seems when God is brought into anything it should be a very good thing. And many churches today do bring God into the discussions, the sermons, the songs...but is the true Jesus really there? Is the Good News of Jesus Christ talked about? (Page 5)
- 4) Why do we think we need to add to God's Word to make it more powerful? We don't! We don't need to go outside of the guidelines of the Bible to walk in the authority we have been given within those guidelines. (Page 6)
- 5) Just because the enemy continues to lie to us, doesn't mean we have to believe, fall for, partake in, or have anything to do with his deception. We can turn and walk away at any time...as Eve should have done. (Page 7)
- 6) Heresy in churches today is not being totally off the mark of Truth. It has lots of Truth in it or no one would fall for it. (Page 9)
- 7) "Some" of the things we choose separate us from God, even as believers. We can have the Holy Spirit living inside of us as true believers in Jesus Christ, and still...we choose poorly at times. (Page 9)

- 8) Our loving Father didn't want us stuck here with no hope for a wonderful future away from all these lies and deceptions. He has a plan to get us out of here through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus—Jesus is coming back for us! (Page 10)

## **NOTES**

*(These Reflection/Note pages may be duplicated  
and used for group discussions when needed.)*



## CHAPTER TWO

### LIES

Where do we look for help when it is needed? Psalm 121 talks about looking up toward the hills. Is help found there? Maybe on a nice spring hike, we can find some peace. I once went on hike up in the foothills looking for answers. I came to a sign that said, “Keep on the path”. I laughed. It sounded like the perfect answer from God in that moment. Yes, God will meet us in the hills. But mostly, He will meet us in His Word.

As we continue on in Psalm 121, verse two says, “*My help comes from the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth.*” So, why would we look to the hills or anything that was made by God, the Creator, instead of looking to the One who created all things? That is when we have to ask ourselves the question found in Isaiah 44:20, “*Is this not a false god I hold in my right hand?*” It seems like a simple enough question, but it’s not. It’s HARD. It means taking what we hold dear, or maybe what we have worshipped, or how we have worshipped, or even what translation of the Bible we are reading, or a specific sermon, or even a pastor we have trusted, and asking, “Is this of You, Lord?” We don’t want to ask that question. We want what we’re used to, what we’ve trusted, what we’re comfortable with, to be *it*. But sometimes it’s not *it*. Sometimes *it* is a lie, as one translation puts it. And if *it* is a lie, then we are feeding on ashes and are a poor deluded fool/Christian. Yes, even believers can be

deceived. Some may quote the verse out of Mark 13:22 (NET), *“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect.”* It seems from the way this is stated that deception is not possible for true Christians. But there is a clear warning of false messiahs and false prophets deceiving people...if not for the grace and wisdom of God.

As a Christian, have you ever been deceived? I have! In a world where rose-colored glasses could come in quite handy, they aren't the best thing to be wearing when praying for discernment. Rose-colored glasses make us unaware of the dangers and deceptions around us. Life can look grand in those glasses! We don't question people's motives, or even what they're doing when we're not with them. We don't question whether someone is telling us the truth. We just go through the world trusting and loving all people. Not a bad thing, but it's the proverbial placing-our-head-in-the-sand situation. There is no discernment in that. Only ignorance. And the Bible tells us in Hosea 4:6 (KJV), *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”* It continues on with, *“they had forgotten the law of thy God...”* If we read that in the NET Bible, it's a bit different and reads a little more succinctly; *“You have destroyed my people by failing to acknowledge me.”* In the Old Testament, the priests weren't acknowledging God, and because of that, the Israelites were being destroyed. Were the people trusting the priests? I would imagine so. Were they being misled? In some ways, yes.

Let's take a few moments and think about the things we believe, and the people we believe in. This is not to make us suspicious; this is to open our eyes to what's around us. If any one of them seems out of place, so to speak, stretch out your right hand and place it/them there. Then ask yourself, “Is this a lie?” Go ahead, I'll wait....

It's uncomfortable isn't it? I know, I've done it. And there are things I want to hold onto. But trust me, it gets easier. As you take that thing, that “god,” and put it down (I usually turn my hand over and sort of smack it down), it becomes less painful. These aren't always big things...I'm talking little things. Let's find an example... How about a book that you used to like, that seemed encouraging to you? But then you found out there were half-truths within the pages. That's called a “little dab”. That's called heresy if it's a Christian book/author. It contains thoughts and choices that don't line up with

the Word of God. And that little bit of leaven will permeate all of the dough. *“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”* Matthew 13:33 (NKJV) It doesn't take much for little things to spread through everything. Think about that little drop of food coloring when stirred into white frosting...

Now Matthew 13:33 was talking about legalism...but it still can apply in other scenarios. Think of the times when a little bit of “wrong” was mixed in with a whole lot of “right”. Sort of spoils it, doesn't it? If we are holding onto something that isn't lining up with the Word of God, it can/will permeate our whole lives in time. That's why it's so important to take what we are holding in our right hand and ask ourselves that question, *“Is this not a false god I hold in my right hand?”*

“But, but...it's a very good thing,” you might be saying. Yes, and Paul also thought he was doing a very good thing when he was arresting the people of the Way. He was sure he was right. He was serving God faithfully—the very same God that we are serving as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul had all the credentials to back up what he was doing. He was circumcised on the eighth day. He was of the tribe of Benjamin. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. He was full of zeal, a Pharisee. Even as to the righteousness of the Law, he was found blameless. All this, until the day when he literally saw the Light on the road to Damascus. What else could have stopped Saul? What else could have convinced him that he was on the wrong road, headed in the wrong direction? Jesus showed up and had a question for him, *“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”* Acts 9:4 (NET) Saul/Paul had to stop. He really had no choice. He was now on the ground and blind. Maybe the three days of blindness gave him time to think it over. Maybe he decided right then and there, but Jesus gave him three days to readjust. We don't know. But we do know that when Ananias prayed for Paul and his sight was restored, Paul could clearly “see” the Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's role had changed, his whole life had changed because a question had been asked and answered. Saul, with the new name now of Paul, was pointed in a new direction...one that shocked everyone around him. They knew Saul as the man who stood with the coats as Stephen was stoned. They knew him as the man who had believers of the Way arrested and punished. They didn't know

Saul/Paul to be a man who now, suddenly, did a complete about face and took the message of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and to Kings, as well as to the people of Israel. Look out you priests who were missing the mark!—Paul immediately began preaching in the synagogues saying, *“This man is the Son of God.”* Acts 9:20 (NET)

Whatever we are doing on this day for God may seem to be a very good thing. But we have to ask ourselves a question, “Am I on the right road, with the right people, going the right direction, toward the right God?” If the answer is, “No,” then we have to stop in our tracks, fall to our knees, ask God to remove the scales from our eyes, and begin again. It’s okay, it happens to the best of us...like Paul. But when it happens, be prepared for the reaction of those around us. They said of Paul, *“Is this not the man who in Jerusalem was ravaging those who call on this name, and who had come here to bring them as prisoners to the chief priests?”* Acts 9:21 (NET)

It’s okay to ask our own questions during these times. Saul did when he said, *“Who are you Lord?”* Acts 9:5 (NET). We are told to test the spirits in 1 John 4:1 (NET): *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God...* It doesn’t matter who we have heard it from, where we have read it, or if it seems it came straight from God. Test it! All of it!

Deception is coming! We can believe the Lord Jesus Christ who told us it is. When asked in Matthew 24:3 (NET), *“...what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?”* Jesus answered them in verse 4, *“Watch out that no one misleads you. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will mislead many.”* Jesus went on to tell them a few more times, watch out! Don’t be deceived! There will be false messiahs, and false prophets performing great signs and wonders. They’re going to look like the real deal! But they won’t be. They will be the ways that the enemy will distract us from our Lord and Savior and from doing the Kingdom work of our Father.

How do we recognize these false things that will look so real? Most say, keep looking at, reading, and feeling the real, and you will recognize the counterfeit when it comes along. I agree, but not completely. If we are not trained in something, it is not in our vision, so to speak. Think of it this way; if you’re a trained gardener, what are you going to notice when you walk into church on Sunday morning? The landscape. If you are a “professional” shoe shopper,

you will notice every pair of shoes that everyone is wearing. If, like me, you have done thousands of men's haircuts, you will sit in church and notice everyone who needs a haircut, if they just had a haircut, or if it's a good fade or a bad one. I can't help it. It's in my DNA! But, if we don't have an eye for deception, for New Age, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, Mysticism, or Witchcraft, etc...we may not notice it. The wolf is not going to appear in wolf's clothing. He is going to come dressed as a sheep, and we better have the nose of a sheep dog to smell the wolves. A little dab could do us under if we don't recognize it. I know when a man has product in his hair, if it's there to give it shine, firm hold, a natural look, or whatever. Now if some guy with a terrible haircut, say in the style of Hitler (I only use him because we can all picture that in our mind.) was sitting in front of us, we'd be staring at his haircut wondering why he left the house with it looking like that. My hope in writing this book is that we will be able to pick out heresy in so-called Christianity as quickly as we could pick out Hitler's bad haircut. I hope to do this by not only encouraging you to know the Truth, the Word, and to be extremely prayerful...but to also know enough about the wolf that you will pick up on its scent immediately so as not to be deceived.

For starters, let's go to Galatians and take a look at a few things there. In Galatians 1:4, it says that Jesus Christ was given to us because of our sins, and to rescue us from this present evil age. What does that mean? It means not only were they living in an evil age back 2,000 years ago, but we're still living in it now, if not more so. And Paul was astonished how quickly they were deserting the grace of Christ. They had already started following a different Gospel, although he clarifies that by saying that there really isn't another Gospel. I mean, how could there be? Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14:6) So what other Gospel could there be like that? Everything else falls short. And yet, so many still seem to go after other ways...and even those going the right way can get detoured from time to time. Why? Well, Paul spells it out in Galatians 1:7 when he explains there are people disturbing us and wanting to distort the Gospel of Christ. This is tough. Are those deceiving others doing it on purpose? Or are they deceived themselves? Probably a bit of both. If they weren't deceived, they wouldn't be deceiving others...even if they think/know in their head what they

are doing seems right. To do it, to deceive others on purpose, calls for deception having overtaken them already. Anybody who truly knows and understands and has accepted the true Gospel, follows it to the best of their ability. And if deception ever does come from them, and they are made aware of it, they will quickly call the thing they have been holding in their right hand a lie and repent of it. That is what a true follower of Christ would and must do! When it is brought to their attention, a change/repentance will quickly be in the works. If their hearts are callous, we have to pray harder—their deception runs very deep!

In whom do we put our stock? No one! I don't say that to be mean, I say it because that is what the Word of God says. You're reading my book, and I thank you. But please, be a Berean. Check everything I write with what Scripture says. It's imperative! Paul said in Galatians 1:8-9, *"But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be condemned to hell! As we have said before, and now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be condemned to hell!"* That's very clear! If anything that is being preached/written is contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Word of God, discard it. It doesn't matter how good, smart, or wonderful it sounds! Throw it out with the morning trash! Paul was trying to warn people by writing this, and we should take note of it and follow his urgings. As Paul said, if we are trying to please people, we are not a slave of Christ.

Once the true Jesus was revealed to Paul, he was going to do what God told him to do, no matter how hard it was for him. And it was hard! Paul went from savagely persecuting the church and trying to destroy it, to being one of the largest contributors in the writing of the New Testament. Paul was zealous for the traditions of his ancestors. But when God called Saul and revealed Jesus to him, everything changed in Saul's/Paul's life, including his name. Even though others were suspicious of Paul, he didn't quit. Paul was now on a mission for God in the *right* direction. And when the others caught on that Paul was the real deal, that he had changed into a follower of the Way instead of opposing it, they glorified God because of him. Paul was willing to call the thing he held onto before a lie. He laid it down after God shone His light on him and literally laid him down on the road to Damascus.

How hard would this be for us? Let's take a look at how hard this was for Paul. In Acts 22:22b-24 (NET), it says, "*Away with this man from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live!*" While they were screaming and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust in the air, the commanding officer ordered Paul to be brought back into the barracks. He told them to interrogate Paul by beating him with a lash so that he could find out the reason the crowd was shouting at Paul in this way. And we think we have it hard when we try to defend our faith? Paul was about to lose his life, as so many have around the world. In the U.S., so far, we don't have it that bad.

I hope this is making us all think...what lies are we believing? What half-truths are we willing to hold onto for comfort's sake? Jesus warned of deception...do we see it? If not, we are most assuredly missing some of the "bad haircuts" in the pews around us, in the world around us. Deception is not just found outside of the church. In these latter days, especially, it is in our churches. What better place for the enemy to hide out in sheep's clothing? So, what do we do? Do we leave our church? Do we start a home church? Even in a new church, or a home church, deception can enter in. What we do is pray and seek God's direction and help as to what we are to do, and when. This is not to make us all run for the hills. It is to make us all aware that the hills are not where our help comes from, and to recognize the difference between deception and Truth! The elect need to have discernment. We need to not only be studying the Truth but learning about deception enough that we are able to spot it quickly, pray immediately, and stand strong in the full Armor of God!

Let's pray:

*Father, thank You that Your Word warns us of these things. You haven't left us in the dark. You are shining Your bright light on it all. Help us open our eyes and see clearly. We want to follow You on the right road into Your heavenly Kingdom. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

## Chapter Two Reflections

- 1) Psalm 121, verse two says, *“My help comes from the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth.”* So, why would we look to the hills or anything that was made by God, the Creator, instead of looking to the One who created all things? (Page 15)
- 2) We have to ask ourselves the question found in Isaiah 44:20, *“Is this not a false god I hold in my right hand?”* It seems like a simple enough question, but it’s not. It’s HARD. (Page 15)
- 3) The Bible tells us in Hosea 4:6 (KJV), *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”* It continues on with, *“they had forgotten the law of thy God...”* (Page 16)
- 4) Let’s take a few moments and think about the things we believe, and the people we believe in. This is not to make us suspicious; this is to open our eyes to what’s around us. If anyone of them seems out of place, so to speak, stretch out your right hand and place it/them there. Then ask yourself, *“Is this a lie?”* (Page 16)
- 5) *“But, but...it’s a very good thing,”* you might be saying. Yes, and Paul also thought he was doing a very good thing when he was arresting the people of the Way. (Page 17)
- 6) We are told to test the spirits in 1 John 4:1 (NET): *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God...* It doesn’t matter who we have heard it from, where we have read it, or if it seems it came straight from God. Test it! All of it! (Page 18)
- 7) Deception is coming! We can believe the Lord Jesus Christ who told us it is. When asked in Matthew 24:3 (NET), *“...what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?”* Jesus answered them in verse 4, *“Watch out that no*

*one misleads you. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will mislead many." (Page 18)*

- 8) This is not to make us all run for the hills. It is to make us all aware that the hills are not where our help comes from, and to recognize the difference between deception and Truth! The elect need to have discernment. (Page 21)

## **NOTES**

*(These Reflection/Note pages may be duplicated  
and used for group discussions when needed.)*

## CHAPTER THREE

### WATCHMAN

When we aren't even sure which Bible translation we are to be reading, how are we to know about being a "Watchman" as it talks about in Ezekiel 33:1-9? For starters, let's take a look at that passage of Scripture. It says, "*Son of man, speak to your people, and say to them...*"

Let's stop there, even though it seems a bit too soon. When it says, "*speak to your people,*" I take notice because I speak to a lot of people...mostly one-on-one. But sometimes I speak to a small group, and sometimes larger. How would God have me/us use those moments to best glorify Him? When we are standing in line at the grocery store and striking up a conversation with someone nearby, what do we say? When we are at the doctor's office talking to the receptionist, can we be used there by God? When we are with a friend at church and someone walks up with a prayer request, will we be ready? The scenarios could go on and on. These are precious moments that we may never get again in quite the same way. How do we use them wisely? Biblically? Let's look on further in that passage:

*"Son of man, speak to your people, and say to them, 'Suppose I bring a sword against the land, and the people of the land take one*

*man from their borders and make him their watchman...”*

Now what if we suddenly see there *is* a problem, a need, a hunger...in the person we are talking with? Perhaps a “sword” of some sort has come against them in their life. Sometimes we’re put in charge of “watching” for the coming trouble. Let’s look at what happens next in this part of Scripture:

*“He sees the sword coming against the land, blows the trumpet, and warns the people, but there is one who hears the sound of the trumpet yet does not heed the warning.”*

The watchman sees a problem and knows it needs to be announced. Some will heed the warning...some won’t...but that’s not the watchman’s responsibility. He let them know. That is his job. Theirs is to take notice. In Revelation many times it says, *“The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* Some have a responsibility to give a warning. But everyone has a responsibility when given a warning to pay attention and pray about its validity. If it is from God’s Word, or even a trusted “Watchman” that God has put on duty in our lives, we should give heed to it. What will be the results many times if we don’t?

*“Then the sword comes and sweeps him away. He will be responsible for his own death. He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, so he is responsible for himself. If he had heeded the warning, he would have saved his life.”*

I hate to say, “I told you so...” But there it is, so I don’t really have to. God’s Word points it out. There are times in life when we get caught off guard, when we are deceived, and we don’t realize it right away...sometimes for a long time. But there are times when we have been warned of the dangers and we should pay special attention. Every day brings us closer to Jesus’ imminent return, so watchmen are important. Some, like those with the gift of discernment, are placed in a “position” to see what’s going on and warn others. Others, like myself, do research and share what we have learned so you can be on the lookout, too. Both can come in handy when the “sword” is headed for us and we need to be warned.

Here's another scenario in that same part of Scripture:

*“But suppose the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people. Then the sword comes and takes one of their lives. He is swept away for his iniquity, but I will hold the watchman accountable for that person's death.”*

This is a very bad situation because there could have been a warning given. There was a watchman in place, but he didn't do his job. He didn't blow the trumpet, and the sword came, and it did damage, even sometimes causing death. The person in trouble loses his life, his job, his reputation, perhaps...but the watchman is in bigger trouble. He is responsible for what has happened...the blood is now on his hands. It could possibly have been prevented. Honestly, I don't want to be either one of the people in this scene, the one swept away or the one not giving the warning.

As Christians today, there are a lot of things we need to be warned about. But we can't have our eyes looking in every direction at all times. We need each other. *Although an assailant may overpower one person, two can withstand him. Moreover, a three-stranded cord is not quickly broken.* Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NET) As a team, we can accomplish more. We need each other, to look out for one another, to help...especially when there is a “sword” coming at us.

Now, why all of this in a book on deception? Because we even need to be careful about our watchman. Perhaps we need to go back to the “drawing board” and look first at which Bible we are using? Where are we getting our information? Every “reliable” Bible comes from the Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew writings of the Scribes. We have no original Bible, only copies, which is a very good thing. Why? Because then the original cannot be altered, and the thousands and thousands of copies we do have would be much too hard to change. Slight errors found in the copies can be checked against other copies, and the errors remedied...a very wise plan of God. But back to the reliable Bible. Not every book being called a Bible today may be just that. There is a Mormon Bible, a Jehovah's Witness Bible, and many other religions that have their own Bibles. And, in the Christian circle, we have so many English Bibles to choose from it can be completely overwhelming. Many of them are

very good, but some of them are unacceptable for reasons I will go into. Let's look at a brief history of the English translation of the Bible here:

The first Bible written in English was written by Alfred the Great, who died in 901 A.D. He didn't actually get the whole Bible finished, just the Ten Commandments, parts of Exodus, Acts 15, and the Psalms. Quite an accomplishment, though. Then there was a man name Abbot Aelfic in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century who translated a large part of the Old Testament and the Gospels, including some of the other books of the New Testament. Moving forward a couple hundred years, the Psalms and New Testament were translated into middle English. They were the precursors of a version that John Wycliffe (who died in 1384) was affiliated with. Wycliffe didn't do it alone. His Bible translation was the standard Bible of the Western Church throughout the middle ages. Then the Renaissance brought about a new interest in Hebrew and Greek.

There was a huge increase in Bible production when the printing press began to be used in 1476. Martin Luther, in the early 1500's, was responsible for the Protestant Reformation. That helped advance the translation of the Bible into an everyday language. Luther's translation was from Greek into German. And then in 1525 William Tyndale translated the Bible from Greek into English. But he was executed for doing so. Quite a price to pay for putting the Bible into people's hands, as others through the ages experienced also.

For the next 100 years, Tyndale's Bible was used, and helped to bring about the King James Version of 1611. Before the King James translation, there were other lesser known versions such as the Coverdales of 1535 and the Matthews Bible of 1537. Then in 1539 the so-called "Great Bible" was used in every church in England. King Henry the VIII was responsible for that Bible.

When Elizabeth I took her reign, two more English Bibles came onto the scene. One was the Geneva Bible, which would have been used by Shakespeare. The Geneva Bible became even more popular than the Great Bible, but with its Calvinistic leaning, they needed something else to satisfy the Anglican authorities. So, the Bishop's Bible came onto the scene. With two contesting Bibles now, the Hampton Court of 1604, along with the King James' authorization, there began a new translation that became the English Bible of the

day. Until 1885, when the Revised Version came out, the King James Bible was the most used Bible of the day.

In 1901, the American Standard Version of the Revised Version was published. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw the coming of the Revised Standard Version in 1946/1952. This was a revision of the King James Bible and the American Standard Version—this Bible was the first of the modern translations. Then came a stream of translations and paraphrases including many we know of today...the Amplified Bible, Jerusalem Bible, Living Bible, and the New International Bible to name just a few. The NIV Bible was the first to not be a revision or update of an already existing translation. Now we also have the New English Translation (NET) which is the first Bible with full computer networking support.

There are two Bibles that I haven't included in this list for good reason. One is The Message, and the other is The Passion Translation (TPT). The Message is not considered to be an actual Bible, but more like a novel written by one man. The TPT was also mainly written by one man, Brian Simmons, and is said to be a re-written and re-worded Bible. Bibles should be translated by committees. Any translation by a single person can cause us to question its accountability. Simmons did have his Bible evaluated by a small group of scholars and editors, and BroadStreet Publishing also formed a team to review it. If you have more questions about these, or any other particular translation, there are pros and cons for all of them available on the internet.

Now that we have a brief history of our English Bible, I would like to tell you a little bit about the differences we will find within them. Some Bibles are more of a word-for-word translation, while others are thought-for-thought. No Bible can be completely word-for-word since one language translated into another language would be unreadable. Not only this, taking idioms into account, it would not make much sense. What's most important in any translation is the faithfulness of the Bible we are reading. It is important when considering what Bible to use, that it isn't so literal that the English is difficult to read, and that the translation not be so general that it becomes an interpretation instead of a translation of what was originally intended. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are as many as 5,000 hand copied documents that exist, containing 98 percent of the text. So we CAN have a well-

documented, fully understandable Bible to read still today. That's exciting!

When reading our Bibles, it is always best to hold any Scripture up to the test like the Bereans would do. Today, we can easily look up two or three other translations on the Internet to check for accuracy of the thoughts and the words used. Revelation 22:18-19 (NET): *I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy contained in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.*

This comes as a warning, from the most important Watchman on the wall, our Lord. God knew that many would try to tamper with His Word through the years. He has given this warning to all of us. Some have heeded it, and some have not. Let's choose a Bible that stays within the guidelines our Father has set for us. Jesus said in Revelation 22:20 (NET): *The one who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Jesus "testifies" to these things. We can believe Him. Always! And Forever!*

This book is not intended to be a witch-hunt on Bibles or anything else concerning Christianity today. But instead, it is a Truth-hunt. We will always look long and hard at Truth. But in so doing, we will be turning up many witches along the way. There is so much deception mixed in with the Truth of Christianity these days...maybe since the beginning of time...that it's not surprising our "Watchman" has warned us of all this in His Word. We will listen to our Watchman, as we proceed with caution, trusting the Holy Spirit to lead the way.

In Ezekiel 36:25-26 (NET), it says, *"I will sprinkle you with pure water, and you will be clean from all your impurities. I will purify you from all your idols. I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh."* We don't have to worry if we notice some dirt along this Truth Journey. It is to be expected. There will be times when we realize we have been deceived. There will be times when we will see where we have been tripped up. But our loving God is always there to help us, to lift us up out of the muck and mire, to set our feet on solid ground, wash us in the blood of

Christ, and to help us learn His true way through this life. No one is going to get this journey perfect because the only perfect One is Jesus Christ. In 1 Timothy 4:1 (NET) it says, *Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings...*

Some do willingly choose the deceptive path while others will be led astray onto it. Some well-meaning Christians may find themselves off God's narrow road without realizing what has even happened. There is then a choice to make when the realization comes that we've been led astray...whether it be self-study that pointed out the error of our ways, or a watchman who warned us something might be off. We have to repent and quickly turn back to the Word of God, Truth, and follow the one true Jesus when it's discovered...otherwise we will end up hanging out in the land of deception for way too long.

Sadly, some may flatly refuse to accept the Truth of God's Holy Word...occupying themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings. They will hold onto the "idol" in their right hand...refusing to call it the lie that it is.

Romans 1:28-31 (NET) reads: *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what should not be done. They are filled with every kind of unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice. They are rife with envy, murder, strife, deceit, hostility. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, contrivers of all sorts of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, covenant-breakers, heartless, ruthless. Although they fully know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.*

We must do as we are told in Hosea 6:1-3, *return to the Lord.* When God has torn us to pieces, He will then heal us. He will bandage our wounds. God will restore us so that we can live in peace with Him. Let's search for God and for His Truth as we travel along. Let's get to know the Lord and depend on Him. He will come and rescue us.

A Truth Journey like this will have many ups and downs. It will be painful at times. You may already be finding that to be true just by examining what Bible you are reading. I did. I made a change. I laid something down that I considered a "friend." It's not easy to let

go of certain things and take hold of the Truth of God's Word in a more precise translation. Do we want Truth above comfort? It's imperative that we do! In 2 Timothy 3:4-5 we are warned about loving pleasure rather than being lovers of God. If we only maintain an outward appearance of religion, we will have rejected the power of God in our lives.

Daniel, chapter nine, tells us about how compassionate and forgiving our God is, even when we have rebelled against Him. God warned many through His prophets. But just as Israel did, many turn away from God and don't obey Him much of the time. God *will* get His way. His Word is Truth, and it is to be obeyed. We can ignore it for as long as we choose. But we should not then be complaining about the consequence/discipline that comes our way.

Sadly, sometimes the consequences are not even any fault of our own but have come because of the disobedience of others. Either way, we wonder why God allows these things to happen? God doesn't want any of "it" to happen. Why do bad things happen to good people? Why does anything good happen to us at all? There was only One who was ever really good/perfect, and that is Jesus.

We deserve God's wrath. Instead, the Father sent us His one and only Son, Jesus, to save us from this fallen world. All our Father asks is that we turn to Jesus, repent, and be saved. But many times, all we want is what we want, and then we want God to bless us in the process of living our own lives, doing our own thing exactly the way we choose to do it. Psalm 1 tells us our real blessings are found in obeying the Lord's commands, meditating on them day and night in the Bible. Maybe it's time to examine what translation you are reading. Do some investigation as to its origin and style. There are many search engines available for this task. Make sure your Bible is as it should be. If it is not, prayerfully lay it down.

To briefly sum up some translations:

King James Version - Finished in 1611. Written by 47 scholars. Revered for 400 years.

New International Version – Conceived in 1965. Written by 15 scholars. Known for readability.

New American Standard Bible – Evolved from ASV of 1901. Word for word translation.

New King James Version – Commissioned in 1975. Written by 130 scholars. Updates the KJV.

English Standard Version – Published in 2001. Some say it's too liberal, or too dynamic.

New Living Translation – Completed in 1996. Combined word-for-word/thought-for-thought.

21<sup>st</sup> Century King James Version – Published 1994. Easier to read than KJV.

The Message – One author. Published in segments 1993 – 2002. Contains translation errors.

The Passion Translation – 2017-2018. Re-worded and re-written Bible. Author: B. Simmons.

Modern English Version – Completed in 2013. Word-for-word. Stays close to KJV.

New English Translation – Twenty Scholars. First available online 2005. Read, studied, and checked by more people than any other Bible translation in history.

(Information gathered from [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org))

Isaiah prophesied that people will honor God with their lips, but their heart will be far from Him. It goes on to say that many will worship God in vain following the commandments of men. Sadly, in the expression of Christianity across America, and around the world, we are not hearing the Truth as it needs to be taught—not in some pulpits, not in a lot of the worship music, not even in all our Bibles, or studies, or Christian books we read...deception is everywhere and on the rise. We have been warned in Matthew 24!

Let's pay attention and keep seeking the pure Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

All scripture is inspired by God. It says so in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Bible has a great purpose. It is there to teach us, rebuke us, correct us, and train us in righteousness. We are to be dedicated to God and to His Word. In doing so, we will be capable and ready for everything God is calling us to do for His Kingdom until Jesus returns!

Some useful facts about the Holy Bible:

The Bible is 66 books, written in three different languages; Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic.

It was written on three different continents; Asia, Africa, and Europe.

It was penned by 40 different authors from all different walks of life from kings, to prophets, to peasants.

The Bible was written over a span of 1,500 years.

There are four different authors of the gospels from their four different perspectives. They are written for four different audiences for different purposes.

John – So that you might believe.

Matthew – Written to a Jewish audience.

Mark – Written to a Gentile audience.

Luke – Writes an orderly account as a historian.

The Bible was written by eyewitness...those who heard, saw, and touched the things written about. It was written during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses. This is important because those other eyewitnesses could hold the Biblical writers accountable. Christ appeared to over 500 people at one time after His resurrection. Over

300 eyewitnesses were still alive when 1 Corinthians was written.

Many claim the Bible has been changed many times...things were added on later. This is a multi-layered problem. There are over 6,000 Greek manuscripts alone. To change them, they would have to change all 6,000. Also, the early church fathers had a habit of writing extensive commentary of the New Testament. If all we had were their writings, we could reproduce all of the New Testament except for eleven verses...so the commentaries would also have to be changed.

Others say it's been translated so many times...it's unreliable. But the Bible was not translated from other translations. Each reliable translation goes back to Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew manuscripts. Each translation comes from the same source.

Some complain that we don't have any of the originals. We don't. But this is a very good thing. If the original could be tampered with, instead of having to change 6,000 copies, it would be a problem.

"But men wrote the Bible." If you can't trust it or believe it because men wrote it...you would have to burn every book you own.

(These facts were gathered from Voddie Baucham's sermon on this subject.)

Let's pray:

*Father in Heaven, Your Word is a gift and we treasure it. Help us to use it as You have intended, to read it regularly, to believe it, to follow it, and to share it with others. Your Truth is what we long for. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

### Chapter Three Reflections

- 1) The watchman sees a problem and knows it needs to be announced. Some will heed the warning...some won't...but that's not the watchman's responsibility. He let them know. That is his job. Theirs is to take notice. (Page 26)
- 2) As Christians today, there are a lot of things we need to be warned about. But we can't have our eyes looking in every direction at all times. We need each other. *Although an assailant may overpower one person, two can withstand him. Moreover, a three-stranded cord is not quickly broken.* Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NET) (Page 27)
- 3) Perhaps we need to go back to the "drawing board" and look first at which Bible we are using? Where are we getting our information? Yes, every "reliable" Bible comes from the Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew writings of the Scribes. (Page 27)
- 4) Bibles should be translated by committees. Any translation by a single person can cause us to question its accountability. (Page 29)
- 5) What's most important in any translation is the faithfulness of the Bible we are reading. (Page 29)
- 6) When reading our Bibles, it is always best to hold any Scripture up to the test like the Bereans would do. Today, we can easily look up two or three other translations on the Internet to check for accuracy of the thoughts and the words used. (Page 30)
- 7) There is so much deception mixed in with the Truth of Christianity these days...maybe since the beginning of time...that it's not surprising our "Watchman" has warned us of all this in His Word. (Page 30)

- 8) Do we want Truth above comfort? It's imperative that we do! In 2 Timothy 3:4-5 we are warned about loving pleasure rather than being lovers of God. If we only maintain an outward appearance of religion, we will have rejected the power of God in our lives. (Page 32)

## **NOTES**

*(These Reflection/Note pages may be duplicated  
and used for group discussions when needed.)*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### REPENTANCE

There is a story told of a famous coach whose team had lost the playoffs the previous season. They were gathering for the first practice of the new season. Thinking they were going to be told about how to better strategize, play smarter, play better, they were surprised when their coach simply held up a football and announced to all of them, “This is a football.”

I took that very simple yet astute idea and used it for my Bible study group one Wednesday morning as we entered into the subject of the week on Repentance. Since I didn’t have an official football in the house, I used the official baseball that I did have which belongs to my grandson. It is a signed, official, major league ball that a friend had gifted to him.

Starting the morning with praying Psalm 25, we were all reminded that we should be asking God’s Holy Spirit to help us understand His ways. We should be asking God to teach us His paths and guide us into His Truth. God is both kind and fair, and He alone teaches sinners the right way to live. When we humble ourselves, our Father will show us what is right. God will teach the humble His ways. We are to seek our Father’s forgiveness for our sins, and He will show us the way to live.

2 Peter 3:9 (NET) says, *The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you,*