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# GOD HATES ALL FORMS OF PRIDE

We all know that Satan is the original sinner. Satan committed the very first sins. Do you recall what those "original sins" were which Satan committed? Let's look at how God speaks about Satan.

"**Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways** from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By **the multitude of thy merchandise** they have filled the midst of thee with **violence**, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. **Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty**, thou hast **corrupted thy wisdom** by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, **by the iniquity of thy traffick** (Hebrew word = "**merchandise**"); therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." (Ezekiel 28:15-18)

Satan started out "perfect". But then something changed. So what was Satan's original problem?

**He became proud and vain!**

He became proud because of his beauty. His heart (i.e. his mind) was "lifted up". And his pride and vanity drove him to want more (i.e. in status and power and recognition) than what God had given him. His pride caused a dissatisfaction with the status quo. He began to crave recognition and adulation (i.e. flattery) from his fellow-angels. He had developed a spirit of competition towards God, wanting God's own position and God's throne (Isaiah 14:13-14). Without any outside pressure or temptation his mind had all on its own accepted a "**me first**" attitude. So Satan needed a way to outwardly express his imagined greater worth than all the other angels. Satan's solution was to channel his "me first" attitude into acquiring things for his own personal possession. **Satan invented a system of trading merchandise**.

The underlying purpose for Satan's invention of trading was to establish the concept of "**exclusive ownership**". The system of trading Satan had invented is based on the premise of exclusive ownership of things, which premise we human beings accept as normal and right and perfectly logical. We believe that it is only right that **we can own things** (houses, horses, cars, real estate, goods, etc.) without anyone else having any claims to the things we own. That's what I mean by exclusive ownership. Nobody else has any claims to the things we own.

That system is not of God; it is the system Satan had invented. This present age is Satan's world. And so this whole world functions and operates based on this system of trading that Satan had invented. Since the time that Adam sinned **we human beings have never experienced any other system** for how to deal with the human life experience. The concept that "this belongs to me and not to you", and "that belongs to you and not to me" is absolutely foundational to all of our lives. That is true for all human beings.

We need to understand that **Satan's invention** of the concept of exclusive ownership of specific material things **introduced a huge paradigm shift**, away from the philosophy of life that God had established even before creating the angels. When only God the Father and Jesus Christ existed, there was no such thing as "this is Mine and not Yours". They both owned everything jointly. And everything They created

They owned jointly. When They then created the angels, there was still no such thing as "this is mine and not yours" amongst the angels. The angels were given positions and responsibilities by God, but they were not given any personal ownership of anything.

So when Satan then invented trading, then that implied exclusive ownership of the things that were traded. You can't possibly trade away something that belongs to someone else.

Can we try to grasp what a profound change the concept of trading brought into existence? **The concept of trading was a total game-changer within God's creation!** It turned everything upside down. And the concept of trading had also created the spirit of competition.

Looking at the entirety of God's creation from our present perspective:

Nowhere else in God's entire creation is there the concept of exclusive personal ownership of anything. There is no exclusive ownership of anything in the inanimate creation, and there is no exclusive ownership in the animal world. No grazing animal owns a piece of prairie, and no bird owns any piece of fruit on any tree. And amongst spirit beings no angel owns any piece of the universe. Everything in the entire creation belongs to God, and that is it.

**It is only on the human level that we have individual personal ownership of goods and possessions. And we very carefully guard those possessions by means of locks, bookkeeping, bank accounts, safes, etc. It is only on the human level that we can transfer wealth from one part of the world to another with the stroke of a pen. Someone can write a check for one million dollars in New York, and instantly someone else in London or Paris or Singapore or Los Angeles is one million dollars richer. That kind of transfer of wealth cannot happen in any other part of God's creation, because the concept of personal individual wealth simply doesn't exist in any other part of God's creation.**

**The invention of the concept of individual ownership of goods is what makes Satan the god of this present age! This age bears Satan's hallmark, which hallmark is the concept that every individual can supposedly have exclusive ownership of specific goods.**

Note the two expressions "by the multitude of your **iniquities** (Hebrew **avon**)" and "by the **iniquity** (Hebrew **evel**) of your merchandise" in verse 18. In these two expression two different Hebrew words are both translated into English as "iniquity".

The Hebrew word "**avon**" means something like "**perversity**, depravity", while the Hebrew word "**evel**" refers to "**acts or deeds that go against what is right**", i.e. it refers to unjust conduct and behavior. Or we can simply think of the English word "**evil**".

Verse 18 could be translated in an amplified form as follows:

"You have defiled your sanctuaries by **the multitude of your perversities and depravities**, **by your system of trading that goes against what is right and which system is evil**. Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you ..."

The very concept of trading and the concept of exclusive individual ownership of things goes against what is right before God, because God never ever "trades" anything with anybody. There is nothing in existence which God somehow doesn't own. Trading is an impossibility for God.

**Trading is the expression of selfishness; it is an expression of "the get-way of life". The purpose of all trading is to get from somebody else something that we want . All trading, including what**

**we call "fair trading", epitomizes the get-way of life. The purpose of trading is always to get something that we want to get. In the presence of God there is no place for any kind of trading.**

"The get-way of life", as Mr. Armstrong used to call it, is based on trading, on getting things we want from other people, in return for giving something to those other people. **Our whole present world**, in every society on every continent, **is based on trading things**, giving some things in return for getting other things. We have difficulties trying to picture a way of life that does not include at the very least some basic rudimentary form of trading. The most commonly used medium that expresses this present trading philosophy of life we call "money", which happens to be "**the root of all evil**" (1 Timothy 6:10).

I don't think that we actually grasp the real meaning of this statement in 1 Timothy 6:10. So let's take a closer look at this verse.

**For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:10)**

The Greek word here translated as "the love of money" is "**philarguria**". This word is not used anywhere else in the New Testament; it is only used here in this verse. It is derived from the Greek adjective "philarguros", which in turn is formed from the two Greek words "philos" (a friend) and "arguros" (silver). Shortly we'll examine this word "philarguria" more closely.

But for a start we should notice that in the Greek text of 1 Timothy 6:10 **the word order is different**. Where the **English text reads** "the love of money is the root of all evil", the **Greek text reads** "the root for all evil is the love for money". The English translation has reversed the word order, and in so doing has inappropriately changed the focus of this statement.

In the Greek text **"root" is the first word of the sentence**, and in that position it suggests the article "the", because **the focus of the statement is on "root" and not on "love"**. In other words, the focus of Paul's statement is **NOT** on describing or defining what "the love of money" is.

**The real focus of Paul's statement is on describing or defining what is "the root of all evil"! And that focus implies the definite article rather than the indefinite article for "root" when this statement is expressed in the English language. In the Greek text the definite article is at times implied without being written, because the inflective Greek text is based on a different way of thinking than our syntactic English text way of thinking.**

So while technically Paul did not include the definite article for the noun "root", the fact that "root" is the very first word in this sentence places the entire focus of the subsequent statement on this word "root". **Such a focus also implies the definite article** for "root".

So here is this verse with the correct word order based on the Greek text:

"**The root for all evil is the love for money** (silver), which while **some coveted after**, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10)

As a matter of interest, here is how this first part of verse 10 has been translated in various earlier translations (the spelling in the older versions has been updated to conform to our modern spelling norms):

1382 = John Wycliffe **For the root** of all evils is covetousness ...

1526 = Tyndale For covetousness is the root of all evil ...

1535 = Coverdale For covetousness is the root of all evil ...

1545 = Martin Luther For greed is a root of all evil ... (translated)

1568 = Bishops Bible For love of money is the root of all evil ...

1575 = Geneva Trans. For covetousness of money is the root of all evil ...

1582 = Douay-Rheims **For the root** of all evils is covetousness ...

1587 = Geneva Trans. For the desire of money is the root of all evil ...

1602 = Geneva Trans. For the desire of money is the root of all evil ...

1611 = King James V. For love of money is the root of all evil ...

1876 = Julia Smith Tr. **For the root** of all evils is the love of money..

1887 = Young's Literal Tr. **For a root of all the evils is the love of money** ...

1899 = Douay-Rheims For the desire of money is the root of all evils ...

John Wycliffe had translated his version from the Latin Vulgate text. Notice that a number of these translations preserved the word order of the Greek text by placing "root" at the start of the sentence. Notice also that the 1899 Douay-Rheims translation reversed the word order from the 1582 Douay-Rheims translation. This was an attempt to conform to the more commonly accepted format for the statement in this verse. And lastly, notice that all these translations have translated "philarguria" as either "**covetousness**"or as "**greed**" or as "**the desire for money**" or as "**the love of money**".

While these words or expressions seem to be reasonable enough for translating the Greek word in question, all of these translators have in fact missed the point that Paul was making. Paul wasn't actually talking about "covetousness" or "the love of money" at all. Paul was trying to convey a different point altogether.

Consider the following facts:

The Greek New Testament has the word "**pleonektes**" that is correctly translated as "covetous" in all four places where  where Jesus Christ did not accept our expectation that more work really deserves more pay. If these two examples were not recorded in the Bible and we had no knowledge of them, but they were instead presented to us in a lecture by a professor of economics or sociology, we would spontaneously disagree with that professor, and strongly state that his reasoning is totally unfair, because we believe that more work certainly **deserves** more pay.

The only reason we don't disagree is because we know that Jesus Christ is the One who spoke these two parables. And therefore we look for spiritual applications for these statements, basically so that we can somehow get around, from our point of view, the unfair aspects of these parables. Once we have those spiritual applications, then we set these parables aside without giving them any further considerations.

When we reason like that, we actually miss the real point.

The real point is that **God's thoughts are not our thoughts**, and God's ways are not our ways, and the

way we reason is not the way God reasons. The real point is that for **many of the things that we accept as a regular part of life**, like expecting to be paid more for working longer hours, etc., those things **are in fact based on Satan's way of thinking**. In these two parables Jesus Christ was presenting God's way of thinking, which way of thinking is unnatural for us, and which sometimes may to us not even seem to be fair. Can you see that God's way of thinking is not natural for us?

God the Father and Jesus Christ work to get things done and to achieve goals and intentions. But They don't work more in order to get paid more. The focus of all Their work is **to prepare for sharing everything** with the Family of God that They are in the process of creating. God doesn't work to get things for Himself. **God works in order to give to and to make things better for all of His creatures.** The work that God does always has an outgoing focus.

Let's go back to God's statement that Satan's invention of trading and exchanging merchandise "goes against what is right" (i.e. "the iniquity of your merchandise", Ezekiel 28:18). This Scripture tells us that the premise on which trading is based goes against that which is right. It goes against God's way of living. **Trading, expressed as money, is based on a premise that goes against God's intentions.**

Trading happens to be a very powerful tool for encouraging and promoting pride and selfishness. Without the concept of money, and without any recourse to any form of trading, you are left with a way of life that is based on giving. Without money and without any form of trading it becomes much more difficult to think up **selfish schemes** and **selfish projects**, because no matter what you may do, you will never have exclusive ownership of anything. You know that everything you might produce will automatically be shared with everyone else.

By now you might be saying: what about the parables Jesus Christ told, in which Christ clearly expected His servants to engage in trading, in order to increase wealth? So let's consider those parables.

## THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

This is recorded in Luke chapter 19. Now when you and I think of trading, then we think of getting something for ourselves. But that is not what happened in this parable.

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, **Occupy** till I come. (Luke 19:13)

And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man **had gained by trading**. (Luke 19:15)

Then came the first, saying, Lord, Your pound **has gained** ten pounds. (Luke 19:16)

We know this parable well, and these three verses give us the context. Let's consider the following three Greek verbs in these verses.

v.13 = "Occupy" = the Greek verb "pragmateuomai".

v.15 = "Had gained by trading" = the Greek verb "diapragmateuomai".

v.16 = "Has gained" = the Greek verb "prosergazomai".

Here is what these three verbs mean:

1) "Pragmateuomai" means "carry on a business", without in any way hinting at what that business might be. This is not an instruction "to trade". It could be any kind of business enterprise. The instruction here is: **work with what I have given you**, without hinting at what the nature of that work might be. And **these servants were not instructed to trade**!

2) "Diapragmateuomai" has the prefix "dia", which in this verb means "by". So this verb means "by undertaking a business for the purpose of producing something worthwhile". This is also not really about trading. It is about how they had worked with what they had been given.

3) "Prosergazomai" has the prefix "pros" attached to the verb "ergazomai", which verb means "to work", i.e. to labor at something. This is also not talking about trading. It is talking about how much had been produced by working. The Greek verb "prosergazomai" literally means "to work by the side of". This servant said that the pound he had been given **had produced** ten pounds. The translation "has gained ten pounds" is an unjustified slant in favor of trading.

So with this parable:

**The translators thought of primarily two forms of occupation in New Testament times: either a man worked physically in agriculture, or he earned a living by trading. Traders made their living by buying goods from producers for one price, and then selling those same goods to someone else for a higher price, keeping the profit for themselves.**

But **traders** never actually produced anything themselves. They were just **middle men** between the producers and the consumers, and they

demanded a higher value for the goods they were selling than the price they themselves had paid for those goods in a different location. This is a major component in all of our economies worldwide today ... people selling goods for a higher price than the price for which they themselves have bought those goods.

So all our translators automatically gave this parable "a trading slant", assuming that "the Nobleman" expected His servants "to trade".

But that is not the type of activity Jesus Christ had in mind for His servants in this parable. Jesus Christ didn't actually expect His servants to do any trading at all! **He expected them to work** with what He had given them, and not "to trade". Notice that the "wicked servant" referred to sowing seeds and to reaping crops (Luke 19:21).

The implication in this parable is that those servants would have produced an increase by using the money they were given for seed, then planting those seeds in their master's fields and working in the fields to produce crops. Those crops they would then have sold (i.e. "traded") for money, keeping enough seed for sowing the fields again the following year.

The point is: The servants "traded" the money they were given for seed. In this "trade" they didn't make a profit or a loss. They only got a fair amount of seed for their money. **Then they planted the seed and worked in the fields and produced a big crop.** They got more money because they had more crop to sell, not because they had jacked up the price of their goods.

The profit they made was **the result of the work they had done** between originally buying the seed, and then later selling the crop they had produced. The increase they made came from the work they had

put into producing the crop; it didn't come from the buying or the selling. What they sold later was a greater quantity of grain than what they had bought. They were selling a much larger quantity, which gave them a larger amount of money, **without any price inflation** per pound or per bushel being involved in this whole process.

**Traders, on the other hand, always inflate the prices of the things they sell. Trading is based totally on inflating the price between producer and consumer in order to pay the trader in the middle.**

We need to understand that Jesus Christ was not telling His servants to buy goods for one pound, and then later sell those identical goods for two pounds or even three pounds, in that way making a profit. That would have been Satan's system, and nothing more than inflation, where they now got more money for the same weight or volume of goods. The only "hard work" that traders perform is **finding buyers** who are prepared to pay more for those goods than the traders themselves had paid. Finding buyers for goods someone else has produced is in actual fact **an unproductive activity**.

Christ was telling His servants to use the pound He had given them and then to work diligently at producing more, producing an increase in crops or goods because of their diligent work. And the pound Christ had given them was the means that made it possible for them to produce more. And more produce had a greater value, without causing any inflation in price per weight or volume.

Consider also that **none of these servants gained anything for themselves**. The pound belonged to "the nobleman" and everything they had gained also belonged to "the nobleman". Nothing they had produced belonged to them. Everything they produced belonged to "the nobleman". The servants did not have a motivation to produce more for themselves, because it wasn't theirs. **They did not have a selfish motivation** to produce anything for themselves.

Let's look at the unproductive servant in this parable.

And another came, saying, Lord, behold, [here is] Your pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared You, because You are an austere man: **You take up that You laid not down**, and **reap that You did not sow**. (Luke 19:20-21)

This servant was thinking totally selfishly. He was saying: You expect us to work and to produce an increase for You. But **there is nothing in it for us**. Everything we will produce is just going to be for You. We have to do the sowing and the reaping and **You get it all**. And this "wicked servant" expected to get something for himself out of any work he might do. His only motivation was self-interest. His motivation was: what's in it for me?

Anyway, to get back to the way this passage was translated:

"Trading" was an unfortunate way for the translators to translate the Greek verb involved in this text. It is really a reference to "working" and not to "trading". The parable is not about "trading" at all!

The good servants in this parable were each given a reward, yes. But those rewards still didn't increase their own personal wealth. They didn't become richer as a result of their work. They were given rulership but not any kind of pay. The reward they were given was the opportunity to work with a greater responsibility. But nothing in this parable involved the servants working to get anything for themselves.

So:

Trading is wrong and evil because everything, including our lives, belongs to God, and everything will

always belong to God! God clearly says that "all souls are Mine" (Ezekiel 18:4). Trading assumes that we have ownership of the things we trade. **Trading treats God's possessions as if they were our possessions.** This point was far more obvious when Satan introduced trading amongst the angels under his authority than it is today.

Satan **knew** full well that he was introducing a system that **challenged God's ownership of everything**. Can you see why God calls the trading system Satan invented "iniquity"? Satan's trading was a blatant affront to God.

[Comment: As an aside, I would speculate that all the angels under Satan's leadership (i.e. 100%) rose up in rebellion with Satan against God **because** they had all accepted Satan's selfish way of thinking, once they had been exposed to this concept of trading and personal ownership of things. For minds that had accepted a selfish point of view the prospect of individual personal ownership of things (i.e. of the universe) became the incentive or motivation for supporting Satan's rebellion.]

Let's now also very briefly consider the parable in Matthew 25.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

This parable is recorded in Matthew 25:14-30. It also contains a mistranslation that favors trading. We need only consider verse 16.

Then he that had received the five talents went and **traded** (Greek = ergazomai) with the same, and made [them] other five talents. (Matthew 25:16)

The Greek verb "**ergazomai**", here translated as "traded", is the root verb for the verb "prosergazomai", which we saw in the previous parable. It means "**to work**" and not "to trade". So Matthew 25:16 should read:

"Then he that had received the five talents went and **worked** with the same, and produced five more talents."

As a matter of interest, the New Testament Greek words that refer to trading and to traders are the following words:

- "**Emporeuomai**", a verb, means "**to trade**". This word is translated as "buy and sell" in James 4:13, and as "make merchandise (of you)" in 2 Peter 2:3.

- "**Emporos**", a noun, means "**a trader**" or "a merchant". The word is used four times in Revelation 18 to refer to "the merchants" who became rich (see verses 3,11,15,23). See also the comment below.

- "**Emporia**", a noun, means "**merchandise**". This word is used in Matthew 22:5.

- "**Emporion**", a noun, refers to **the place** where trading takes place, a market place. This Greek word was adopted into Latin as "emporium" which means "a market". And from Latin this word came into the English language as our word "emporium".

[COMMENT: Generally it is not the workers, those whose labors actually produce something, who become rich. In most cases it is "the traders", who buy and then sell goods produced by someone else, who "wax rich" (see Revelation 18:3 referred to above). That is in essence the same thing as

industrialists who "wax rich" from the goods or services produced by thousands of their employees; industrialists don't "wax rich" from the goods they themselves produce. That is the system that Satan had invented as described in Ezekiel 28. Our entire industrial system today is based on the system Satan had established in Ezekiel 28, and which system is destroyed by God in Revelation 18.]

It should be clear that New Testament Greek had words that specifically refer to trading. But **none of these words are used in either parable**, because Jesus Christ did not intend the servants in those parables to engage in any trading. They were to work with the pounds or talents that had been delivered to them, not to trade with them.

Let's now continue with the subject of pride.

## WHAT IS PRIDE?

The words "pride" and "proud" are used very frequently in the Bible. The actual meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words thus translated into English are our main concern here. We will examine a large number of Scriptures with these words "pride" and "proud". And the message from all of these verses is simple:

**In the eyes of God the word "pride" never has a positive good meaning!**

I mention this because there is a tendency in secular circles to seek to find a good meaning for "pride" and for "proud". Thus people frequently want to talk about "the right kind of pride", and about "being proud in a positive way", like being "proud" of one's achievements. **There is no such thing as "the right kind of pride".** All forms of pride are an abomination before God.

When in English these words "pride" and "proud" are used in what are considered acceptable positive contexts (e.g. you need to take some pride in your work, you should be proud of what you have achieved, etc.), then that simply means that we are misusing the word "pride", to give the emotion of pride some unjustified credibility. In those cases we are using the words "pride" and "proud" inappropriately.

The basic premise we should never forget is that **God hates pride**! God hates pride because **pride is the dominant manifestation of Satan's attitude**. Secular, non-biblical examples of using these words to mean great happiness and great delight are **attempts to disguise Satan's attitude** as supposedly being perfectly acceptable and perfectly normal.

But pride is not the same as happiness, and neither is pride the same as great delight, and neither is pride the same as pleasure. Pride is a completely different emotion from feelings of happiness and delight and pleasure.

The truth is this:

**Pride is Satan's version of happiness and delight and pleasure! Pride is Satan's counterfeit for these things!**

So don't allow yourself to be deceived into believing that there are some good forms of pride. That would be like saying that Satan actually has some good attributes, which is a completely false assertion. There is nothing good about Satan, and there is nothing good about pride.

But pride happens to be a very common part of our present world. It is one of the hallmarks of our world today. That is also what Paul predicted.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, **boasters**, **proud**, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (2 Timothy 3:1-2)

So let's look at some of the things God tells us about pride. We'll start in the Old Testament.

## PRIDE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are a large number of different Hebrew words (i.e. over 20 different words) that are at various times translated into English as "pride" or as "proud/ly". These Hebrew words can be grouped together under a number of different root words, with the words within each group having similar or related meanings. Amongst these different groups of Hebrew root words themselves the meanings tend to overlap. And English words and expressions like "proud, pride, self-exaltation, haughty, arrogant, lofty, bluster, swaggering speech", etc. cover the intended meanings of all of these groups of Hebrew words fairly accurately.

Because there are so many different words, I am not going to present any of these Hebrew words themselves. Doing so could be a distraction in our context here. For our purposes here it is sufficient that we understand the actual literal meanings for these different groups of words, which collectively give us the meanings for the words "pride" and "proud".

Some of these Hebrew words refer to "**rising up**"; some refer to "**being high**"; some refer to "**being magnified**, **being great**"; some refer to "**boiling**"; some refer to "**boastful empty speech**"; and some refer to "**being haughty or lofty**". The meanings of "proud" and "pride" are identified when the people involved seek to "rise up above other people", when they seek to be "high above other people", when they seek to "magnify themselves against other people", when their selfish conduct "boils up against other people", etc. Pride covers all of these things, and we don't really need to distinguish between them.

Recall that Satan was the first one who wanted to "rise up" and who wanted to "magnify himself" and who spoke in "haughty, empty boasts". In fact, all of these words, when used in a negative sense, have some kind of link with Satan. Whenever we talk about any aspect of pride, Satan is never very far away from the center of the picture.

Let's look at some clear statements about pride in the Old Testament.

## PRIDE IN OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and **behold every one [that is] proud, and abase him. Look on every one [that is] proud, [and] bring him low**; and tread down the wicked in their place. (Job 40:11-12)

In these verses God is speaking to Job, and telling Job: okay, Job, now see if **you** can abase the proud and bring them low, which activity is one of God's responsibilities. The expression "everyone that is proud" here refers to "**everyone that has exalted himself**". The obvious implication in this verse is that

**God abases all those who exalt themselves**, and God brings low those who try to rise up with pride and vanity. So Job, if you think you are so great, let's see you bring down those who are proud. Obviously Job couldn't do that any more than you and I can do that.

The way God presents this challenge to Job tells me that **God sees this as part of His own "job description"**, if you will. God feels responsible for putting down every one that is proud. **It is God's will** that every one that is proud is put down. And God has surely done that throughout human history, and God still does that today, in our age. God will surely abase those who are proud and who exalt themselves.

Let's now look at Psalm 10.

The wicked **in [his] pride** does **persecute the poor**: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. (Psalm 10:2)

This is a very common expression of pride, that proud people persecute those who they feel cannot harm them (symbolically represented by "the poor"). **Bullying is an expression of pride.** Proud people seek to exalt themselves by taking their anger out on those who are weak and helpless, those who cannot defend themselves.

For the wicked **boasts of his heart's desire**, and blesses the covetous, [whom] the LORD abhors. (Psalm 10:3)

Proud people cannot stop bragging. Notice that proud people also tend to praise those who are covetous, those who have dedicated their lives to making more and more money. The proud look upon making lots of money as a virtue. Another way of saying "they bless the covetous" is to say "**greed is good**", a slogan that has found considerable acceptance over the past two or three decades.

The wicked, through **the pride of his countenance**, will not seek [after God]: God [is] not in all his thoughts. (Psalm 10:4)

The pride is obvious in their faces. And their pride amounts to defying God in heaven. God is assuredly not a consideration in any of the plans made by proud people; God is not in their thoughts. And God will surely punish their pride with severity!

**His ways are always grievous; Your judgments [are] far above out of his sight: [as for] all his enemies, he puffs at them. (Psalm 10:5)**

The ways proud people operate and conduct themselves are always perverse and twisted, **like a writhing snake**, always twisting and turning and looking for an opportunity to inject poison into its victim. The proud couldn't care less as to what the laws of God mean and how they are to be applied.

He has said in his heart, **I shall not be moved**: for [I shall] never [be] in adversity. (Psalm 10:6)

In extreme cases the proud actually believe that they are **invincible**! That's what Satan believed when he rose up against God, that he, Satan, was invincible. When the proud get to this irrational feeling of invincibility, at that point they are also **demon-possessed**. That feeling of invincibility is Satan's counterfeit for faith in God and in God's power to intervene.

Understand that the attitude of "I shall not be moved" is an expression of defiance against God. In their own eyes the proud are always victorious, and if they are not victorious then they have a valid excuse, or perhaps they weren't treated fairly. But in their own minds victory is always a foregone conclusion,

because they are the greatest bar none.

The expression "I shall never be in adversity" is a continuation of that defiant attitude of someone who is demon-possessed. It is the demon that seeks to defy God.

His mouth is full of **cursing** and **deceit** and **fraud**: under his tongue [is] mischief and vanity. (Psalm 10:7)

There is cursing and then there is cursing. This verse is not talking about "the cursing" that Elisha engaged in when he "cursed them (i.e. children) in the name of the LORD" (2 Kings 2:24), with the result that 42 children were killed by two bears. Psalm 10:7 is talking about the type of cursing that is anti-God, that is an expression of contempt for God.

Further, the proud person's speech is largely based on **deceit and fraud**. His speech is "**mischief**", meaning trouble and perverseness, and "**vanity**", meaning empty, hollow and useless.

Coming back to the proud persecuting the poor:

One of the clearest biblical examples of this is found in the Book of Esther, where a man named **Haman** was promoted by the Persian king. In the story of Esther Haman does in fact represent Satan, as does also the very beautiful Queen Vashti in the first part of the book. For more details on this subject see my 1995 article "The Book of Esther", which article is available on my website.

Notice the circumstances for Haman.

And **all the king's servants, that [were] in the king's gate, bowed, and reverenced Haman**: for the king had so commanded concerning him. **But Mordecai bowed not**, nor did [him] reverence. (Esther 3:2)

Haman was in fact incredibly proud and arrogant and conceited. He loved to have people kowtow before him. In time Haman noticed that Mordecai did not bow and scrape before him. This made Haman furious; his pride was very offended.

And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, **then was Haman full of wrath**. (Esther 3:5)

So here was an extremely proud man whose pride and vanity was offended. Great wrath is a very common response when you hurt the pride of an extremely proud person. So notice Haman's response:

And **he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone**; for they had showed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore **Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that [were] throughout the whole kingdom** of Ahasuerus, [even] the people of Mordecai. (Esther 3:6)

This is the ultimate expression of the wicked in his pride persecuting the poor. **Pride never cares who gets hurt.** That point all by itself tells us that Satan is in control of the proud person's mind. **With Satan in control pride knows no restraints.** When pride is hurt it seeks vengeance with a fury, the type of fury that would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons. Rational thinking is thrown out of the window when pride is hurt.

In this verse Haman was in fact acting out the attitude of Satan himself. In this state pride seeks to assert itself **by inflicting pain** on those who are innocent but helpless. Seeing others suffer actually gives pride **a very perverted and satanic sense of satisfaction**.

We know the story here. So Haman gets a royal decree to destroy all the Jews on one particular day. Then after the king hadn't been able to sleep one particular night, Haman came in very early to ask the king for permission to hang Mordecai. The king, however, preempted Haman by asking him: "what shall be done unto the man whom the king delights to honor?", without telling Haman who the person was that the king intended to honor.

Now we come to the apex of Haman's pride and arrogance.

So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delights to honor? Now Haman thought in his heart, **To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?** (Esther 6:6)

This is typical of pride. Proud people always think that everything is about them. They see themselves as the center of the universe. So Haman thought, who else on this planet could the king possibly want to honor but me? There simply isn't anyone else who deserves the great honor that I deserve.

Now Haman reveals that he himself wanted to be seen by the people as being **equal to the king**. He didn't seem to realize how brazenly he was exposing his deepest innermost ambitions. And so Haman advised the king as follows:

And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delights to honor, Let **the royal apparel** be brought which the king [uses] to wear, and **the horse** that the king rides upon, and **the crown royal** which is set upon his head: And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of **one of the king's most noble princes**, that they may array the man [withal] whom the king delights to honor, and **bring him on horseback through the street of the city**, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor. (Esther 6:7-9)

Not only did Haman's pride lead him to covet the king's throne and position, but he also expected to be served by "one of the king's most noble princes", to create the impression amongst the people that he would be the first in line to the throne after the king himself.

We all know that this backfired in a monumental way for Haman when the king revealed that Mordecai should be so honored. But this also reveals that **very proud people are often blind to their own arrogance**, which arrogance they freely expose in their own speech and actions for all the world to see.

The king here didn't seem to pick up on Haman's secret plans to at some point depose the king and take over himself, because the king in his own mind was applying everything Haman said to Mordecai the Jew. And Mordecai had already proved his loyalty to the king by exposing an assassination attempt (see Esther 2:21-23), and so the king had no qualms about giving this type of honor to Mordecai. And it didn't seem to occur to the king that Haman was in fact seeking all this honor for himself.

Anyway, the end result was that Haman was hanged on the very gallows that he had built for Mordecai. This was a fulfillment of Proverbs 28:10.

Whoso causes the righteous to go astray in an evil way, **he shall fall himself into his own pit**: but the upright shall have good [things] in possession. (Proverbs 28:10)

We need to understand that it is inevitable that proud people will fall. God will always make sure of that. **The proud never get away for very long.** And then they have to pay the price for their pride and vanity. The reason God doesn't let the proud get away with their pride is because pride is in fact a challenge to God's powers and status and position. There is no way that God will let such challenges go unanswered. Proud people will always pay the price, even as Haman had to pay the price for his pride.

So much for Haman. Now let's look at some more Scriptures.

Let the **lying lips** be put to silence; which **speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous**. (Psalm 31:18)

The proud always reveal their pride and arrogance by the way they speak. They show contempt for those who seek to live righteously. Note also that **proud people are invariably liars**! It is their lying lips that God will "put to silence". Pride is built on a foundation of a lack of honesty.

O love the LORD, all you his saints: [for] the LORD preserves the faithful, and **plentifully rewards the proud doer**." (Psalm 31:23)

"Rewards" in this verse means "recompense, requite"; i.e. it refers to "**payback time**". God will "plentifully" pay back all the proud, because pride is always directed against God.

Lift up Yourself, You judge of the earth: **render** a reward (i.e. **a penalty**) **to the proud**. (Psalm 94:2)

Here David actually **asked God to punish the proud**. We should be doing the same; **we also should earnestly ask God to punish the proud**. The reason why we should ask God to punish those who exude pride and vanity is because they are in fact exalting themselves against God. In this verse David was applying the principle Paul expressed in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

**Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Corinthians 10:5)**

Paul is speaking about us using "the weapons of our warfare" (2 Corinthians 10:4), and **our main weapon** is that we **ask God to intervene** in human affairs to bring about God's purposes and intentions. So **asking God to cast down those who exalt themselves** is in full agreement with God's desires. And so we see David asking God very directly to punish the proud.

Our soul is exceedingly filled with **the scorning** of those that are at ease, [and] **with the contempt of the proud**. (Psalm 123:4)

The attitude of contempt for others by the proud is a frequent theme throughout the Bible. The proud can't help themselves and they have almost **a compulsion to heap scorn and contempt on other people**. They can't help themselves in this regard because Satan is like that, and their minds are being controlled by Satan. So **the next time you witness a tirade** of a proud person heaping scorn and contempt on others, understand that **you are observing Satan's mind in action** from a ringside seat.

**The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. (Psalm 140:5)**

This is another principle we need to understand. If you are ever in any kind of contest with proud people, then you can know in advance that the proud will not "fight fairly". **The proud will not abide by the rules.** No, the proud win by setting traps for their opponents, they win by trickery and by cheating. The proud seek to win at any and all costs. If acknowledged at all, losses are always justified by claims that others didn't play by the rules. The proud will resort to whatever devious, deceitful, diabolical actions and behavior it may take to make sure that they will win. That is what David was referring to in this psalm.

The fear of the LORD [is] to hate evil: **pride, and arrogance**, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, **do I hate**. (Proverbs 8:13)

Do you do this? Do you actually **hate** pride and arrogance? Or do you just accept it because, well, that's just the way people in the world are, right? God hates pride and arrogance! **And if we don't hate it, then we lack the fear of God!**

So once again: do you actually hate pride and arrogance? What if your favorite radio or TV talk show host or your favorite politician or your favorite sports personality or your favorite entertainer has **a pride and an arrogance that stinks to high heaven** ... do you hate it or do you excuse it for your favorite people? What if their pride and arrogance happens to agree with your own personal positions on specific issues ... do you then overlook their God-defying pride and arrogance, or do you hate it regardless of whether or not it happens to agree with your own personal positions? Do you hate it because you hate all forms of pride **as a matter of principle**?

Be very careful!

Satan is extremely subtle. Most human beings will readily accept pride and arrogance that expresses **agreement with their own personal positions**. When someone's proud and haughty statements agree with our own views, then their pride isn't all that bad, is it? When it is someone we don't like, then their pride is utterly detestable; but if it is someone we like and largely agree with, well, that is different. That's how most people reason. And when we also reason like that, then we have been sucked in by Satan to willingly co-exist with mind-boggling God-defying pride and arrogance.

**In the mouth of the foolish [is] a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. (Proverbs 14:3)**

Proud people simply **cannot keep their mouths shut**! They must have the last word. They must pronounce their own greatness. They must justify themselves. And their pride just gushes out like a well-shaken foaming bottle of warm beer.

**The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow. (Proverbs 15:25)**

Pride is a terrible act of defiance against God because it is an attitude that elevates the self against God. It is a manifestation of Satan's rebellious attitude towards God. **There is no mercy for the proud**, unless they really repent. God will not co-exist with the proud. No, God will destroy them.

Think about the countless really wealthy families of the past, going back all the way to Julius Caesar or even earlier, that have simply died out. Think of how many extremely wealthy people never even lived to the biblical age of threescore and ten. They in many cases don't even have any descendants to continue their formerly wealthy lines. And their wealth has all but disappeared. **That's the fulfillment of this proverb.** Not all wealthy people are proud, but very many are. And those that are proud will eventually face Proverbs 15:25.

**A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit. (Proverbs 29:23)**

It is not a case of pride sometimes bringing a man low. This will happen every time. **All proud people will be brought low by God!** That's what God had already revealed to Job. Being brought low is a guaranteed outcome for pride. Pride is Satan's original sin, and **we are expected by God to hate that original sin** in any and every form that it happens to manifest in our world. If we are not repelled by pride, then we are not aligning ourselves with God, and we are not thinking like God. And obviously, we need to guard that we ourselves don't become proud and haughty.

For the day of the LORD of hosts [shall be] upon **every [one that is] proud and lofty**, and upon every

[one that is] lifted up; and he **shall be brought low**: (Isaiah 2:12)

This is a warning from God through the prophet Isaiah. It should be quite clear that pride and arrogance provoke God to anger.

And I will punish the world for [their] evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause **the arrogance of the proud** to cease, and will lay low **the haughtiness** of the terrible. (Isaiah 13:11)

The context here is the end-time. Verse 9 refers to "the day of the LORD". Verse 10 refers to the heavenly signs of the 6th Seal of Revelation (Revelation 6:12-13). So in verse 11 God is speaking about humanity at the time of Christ's second coming. It is speaking about **our time today**.

Clearly the level of pride and arrogance and haughtiness in our world today is something that makes God angry. God makes a point of specifically focusing on this prevalent attitude of pride and arrogance that permeates much of our society today, precisely because it is so **disgustingly wicked** in the eyes of God. It is God who hates pride, and it behooves us to likewise hate pride.

Woe to **the crown of pride**, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty [is] a fading flower ... **The crown of pride**, the drunkards of Ephraim, **shall be trodden under feet**: (Isaiah 28:1-3)

Time and again God makes clear that pride is something that God will punish very severely. We may not know when and we may not know how, but the point that God will surely punish all the proud is certain. That includes all our favorite entertainers and sports personalities and politicians and radio and TV hosts, etc. who openly display their pride and vanity. **None of the proud will escape.**

In that day shall you not be ashamed for all your doings, wherein you have transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of you **them that rejoice in your pride**, and you shall **no more be haughty** because of my holy mountain. (Zephaniah 3:11)

There are people who are proud of their pride, if you can have such a thing? Pride is a challenge to God's status and position, and God will always respond with anger towards pride. God will never co-exist with any of Satan's attitudes. God will destroy all pride in the lake of fire just before creating the new heaven and the new earth.

For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and **all the proud**, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall **burn them up**, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (Malachi 4:1)

The proud who do not repent at some point will be burned up in the lake of fire, never to exist again. They'll be as though they had never existed. And all their selfish attitudes, of which pride is the dominant one, will die out with them. Malachi 4:1 is an unequivocal expression of what God thinks of pride and arrogance. God hates pride.

But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit [done] unto him; for **his heart was lifted up**: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding **Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart**, [both] he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah. (2 Chronicles 32:25-26)

This is an important statement because it reveals a very important principle. And that is this: **when the leader of a nation is proud, then God punishes the whole nation**. This application goes back all the way to the time when Satan rose up in pride, then all of the angels under Satan's leadership were punished along with Satan, because they had followed Satan and accepted his selfish attitude.

Here we have the case of Hezekiah, who in other ways was basically a good king, being lifted up with pride, and "Judah and Jerusalem" were going to be punished as a result of Hezekiah's pride. But here we also have **an example of someone repenting**, and "humbling himself for the pride of his heart", with the result that the God-pronounced penalty was postponed to a later time. But that penalty was still imposed at a later date.

However, the lesson here is that people who succumb to pride and vanity can repent and humble themselves. And if they really do repent, then God will forgive their pride, even as God has forgiven all of us our pride.

**This principle also applies today. We have a proud leader ruling over us in this nation, and the whole nation has suffered as a result of his pride. That is a penalty from God just as surely as it was a penalty from God in the days of King Hezekiah. Many other nations today, including those who are our enemies, have similar problems with proud leaders ruling over them. It follows that in due time they will also be punished by God for the pride of their leaders, amongst other things.**

In biblical times the leaders were kings, and they were leaders for life. In our world **today we select new leaders** every few years **by voting** certain people into office. Now if we elect new leaders who are just as proud as, let alone more proud than, our present leaders, **then our problems can only get worse**!

**Under no circumstances will God ever bless the tenure of leaders who are proud and haughty against God!**

We should never forget that **the more pride a person has, the closer that person is to Satan**! We don't have to vote in elections if we don't want to vote. But if we do choose to vote, then God will later hold us to account for how we voted. So let's be sure, if we are going to vote, that we never vote for the candidates that are closest to Satan, something that spirit-led Christians should be able to discern.

## SOME COMMENTS REGARDING VOTING

What do the following five things have in common: driving a car, eating garlic, voting, playing tennis, having a sauna? The thing they have in common is that none of these five things in any way affect our relationship with God. None of these five things have any spiritual consequences.

Thus:

God is not concerned whether or not we drive a car, or whether or not we eat garlic. And God is not concerned with whether or not we vote in elections. And God is not concerned with whether or not we play tennis or whether or not we have a sauna. With all five of these things God has given us the freedom to make our own decisions without any of those decisions having any spiritual consequences. **None of these five things are an issue in the Christian life.** Before God none of these five things are somehow more significant than any of the other four.

The point is that before God **voting or not voting is no more significant than whether or not you drive a car**. Voting has always been a non-issue before God. All that people do in voting is express their personal opinions. And God has given us the freedom to express our opinions.

To be clear:

God doesn't work through voting! **Voting is not the way God ever appoints anyone to a position**,

whether such voting is for positions in the Church of God or whether such voting is for positions in a local or national government. This is not to say that God is somehow opposed to voting any more than God is opposed to us driving a car or having a sauna or playing tennis.

God does not appoint anyone to any position through the process of voting, but God recognizes the decisions that are made through the voting process. That's the same as God not determining that we should or should not drive a car; but when we ourselves make that decision to drive a car, then God recognizes that decision. Understand that God recognizing a decision we have made is independent of whether that decision is good or bad. God recognizes our decisions either way because God has given us human beings a free will. And God recognizes that we use our free will to make decisions.

Sometimes (i.e. seldom) voting results in the best of the candidates being elected, and sometimes (i.e. very frequently) voting results in the worst of the candidates being elected. Sometimes (i.e. most of the time) us driving a car has good results (i.e. we get to another place fairly quickly), and sometimes (i.e. occasionally) us driving a car has bad results (i.e. we are bad drivers and have accidents and are injured or killed). But God is not involved in either the voting or in driving a car.

Thus: many of us in God's Church don't want to vote in national elections in our countries. And that is fine, and God recognizes that decision. And some of us in God's Church do want to vote in elections, and God also recognizes that decision. Neither of those two decisions is somehow better than the other decision. God gives us the freedom to make either decision.

So what about the statement that I made just now, when I said: "if we do choose to vote, then **God will later hold us to account** for how we voted", in reference to perhaps voting for the most arrogant and proud candidates up for election? If both voting and not voting are acceptable to God, then **why** will God later hold us accountable?

We should realize that **God will hold us accountable for everything we do**! That includes everything we say and everything we do. When Jesus Christ said "every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36), then that principle also applies to everything we do.

It is not a matter of singling out who we voted for in some election. It is really a case of us having voted in elections being a part of **our overall record before God**. We'll also have to give account to God if we drove a car carelessly or recklessly, and then caused some injury or death to anyone. We'll also have to give account for the things we have eaten, if we ate a junk food diet that caused us to get sick. We will also have to give account to God if we engaged in activities that involved "tempting God" because of the high risk of injury or death associated with that activity.

The principle of "every idle word that men shall speak" is focused on the word "idle". That word "idle" really refers to **something that is worthy of blame**. So this principle in Matthew 12:36 applies to any conduct or words or deeds that are worthy of blame, something that makes us responsible for **bad consequences**. That is the principle here!

So it is not a matter of us giving account for every word we have ever spoken. It is a matter of us giving account for those words we spoke which had bad consequences. Likewise, it is not a matter of us giving account for every single thing we have ever done in our lives. It is a matter of us giving account for everything we have done that had bad consequences. We can think of "bad consequences" as "**bad fruits**" which result from the things we have said or done.

Thus, as far as voting is concerned, people would not be required to give account for why they voted for Winston Churchill. But people would be required to give account for why they voted for Adolf Hitler,

because that vote had monumentally bad consequences. And those who voted for that man also carry some responsibility before God for which they will have to give account.

Can you see the principle of "every idle word ..." in action?

In principle God is not concerned with whether or not we choose to drive a car. However, if we are incompetent to drive and if we represent a major danger to other road users, **then** how we drive a car does become an issue before God.

Likewise, in principle God is not concerned with whether or not we vote in elections. However, if one candidate is far more anti-God in his actions and in his attitude (rather than just some selected positive statements he may have made about religion, because it was expedient to say those things) than any of the other candidates, then voting for such an anti-God candidate becomes an issue before God.

There are many things that we may not be able to know about the people who want our vote. But **pride is something we should always be able to identify quite easily** because, as we saw earlier, proud people simply cannot keep their mouths shut. They feel compelled to spout out to us their pride and their vanity. So there is no excuse for ever voting for people whose obnoxious pride is abundantly obvious. Neither is there any excuse for believing the bold claims such proud people may make, because **proud people are also liars**, something the Bible repeatedly makes clear.

Yes, all or almost all the people who want to be elected in any election in this world have considerable pride. But some people simply have far, far more pride than others. Those are the people to beware of.

**Voting in national elections is never a case of seeking to get humble, God-fearing leaders into office. Such people are simply not available today, and that's not what elections are about. For God's people voting in elections is about seeking to keep the worst possible people out of office. That's attempted, though not necessarily achieved by voting for the candidates who we believe will cause the least amount of damage to our nations. And proud people tend to cause phenomenal damage to their nations because they provoke God to anger.**

Furthermore:

Theoretically, sometimes the only choice we may have is between two individuals who are both despicable in their views and their attitudes from God's perspective, and in such a situation even those people who may in other circumstances be desirous of voting, might conclude that their only option is to not vote at all for that particular election cycle. Voting cannot attempt to "keep the worst possible people out of office" if all of those available for election are in fact "the worst possible people". Those who decide on principle not to vote obviously don't face this type of dilemma.

But let's keep in mind that in principle voting or not voting is no more significant before God than playing or not playing tennis.

## CONTINUING WITH PRIDE IN O.T. SCRIPTURES

Let's move on to another Scripture.

Whoso privily (i.e. secretly) slanders his neighbor, him will I cut off: **him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer**. (Psalm 101:5)

The "**high look**" refers to outwardly discernible signs of pride, and "**a proud heart**" refers to the inwardly hidden true motivations of the proud person. What this is telling us is that David simply did not put up with proud people. And neither does God put up with proud people. And neither should we. **Always try to get out of the presence of a proud man or woman** as fast as you can. Proud people are also very inclined to slander other people. A person who loves to spread gossip, for example, is typically a very proud person.

Every one [that is] **proud in heart** [is] **an abomination to the LORD**: [though] hand [join] in hand, **he shall not be unpunished**. (Proverbs 16:5)

That's pretty blunt. This applies just as much to **our favorite proud people** as it does to all the other proud people in the world. Pride is disgusting in the eyes of God. And God will always punish the proud and the arrogant.

**Pride [goes] before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)**

For proud people destruction is inevitable. A haughty spirit is a proud spirit. Proud individuals are living their lives by Satan's personal attitude. To be precise, **Satan channels** his attitude of **pride** into the minds of those human beings who are receptive to his attitudes.

When proud people are destroyed by God, then **the focus of their pride will be taken from them by God**, i.e. it will be destroyed. So, for example:

If people are proud of their **wealth**, then God will take their wealth from them.

If people are proud of their **good looks**, then God will see to it that they lose those good looks.

If people are proud of their **achievements**, then their subsequent achievements will not be good, and will erase their good reputations.

If people are proud of their supposed **great intellect**, then God will see to it that they will end up looking foolish. etc.

In all these things pride goes before destruction. Let's look at the next Scripture.

He loves transgression that loves strife: [and] **he that exalts his gate seeks destruction**. (Proverbs 17:19)

"He that exalts his gate" refers to a proud person trying to impress other people with his or her supposed higher status. It is a reference to boasting about one's status. It is always the same outcome for pride: destruction!

**Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor [is] humility. (Proverbs 18:12)**

The only way to deal with people who are proud, arrogant and haughty is to **destroy the foundation of their pride**. And that is what God always does. Destruction was the only way for God to deal with Satan's pride, and destruction is also the only way to break the pride of a human heart. So we should expect to see God destroy whatever it is that people base their pride on. And when those proud people are the leaders of nations, then those nations also suffer some of the penalties those proud leaders have incurred.

Let's look at the next Scripture.

Moreover the LORD saith, **Because the daughters of Zion are haughty**, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing [as] they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: **Therefore the Lord will smite** with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. (Isaiah 3:16-17)

These verses always make me think of models walking down a catwalk at a fashion show, with pride and arrogance exuding from their faces. But in reality this description fits our whole society, which is permeated by a spirit of pride. Once again we see God expressing great anger at this display of pride. Here we also see a direct link between the problem and the penalty imposed. Pride in one's physical appearance draws the penalty of destroying that physical beauty. It is a case of cause and effect. We should also understand that **God destroyed Satan's beauty** long before God created Adam and Eve. Today Satan is a pathetic, miserable-looking spirit being without any kind of beauty.

God also deals with pride in the non-Israelite nations of the world.

We have heard **the pride of Moab**, (**he is exceeding proud**) his **loftiness**, and his **arrogance**, and his **pride**, and the **haughtiness** of his heart. (Jeremiah 48:29)

These verses are in a section of the Book of Jeremiah where **God pronounces penalties on nations** in the greater Middle East area, including **Egypt** (Jeremiah 46:2), and the **Philistines** (Palestinians? Jeremiah 47:1), and **Moab and Ammon** (Jordan? Jeremiah 48:1, Jeremiah 49:1), and **Edom** (Turkey? Jeremiah 49:7), and **Damascus** (Syria? Jeremiah 49:23), and **Kedar** and the kingdoms of Hazor (Iraq? Jeremiah 49:28), and **Elam** (Iran? Jeremiah 49:34).

While the exact modern identities of some of these nations are a matter of some speculation, what is clear is that **these prophecies in the closing chapters of the Book of Jeremiah are intended to cover all of the nations in that part of the world**. And all of them are going to be punished by God. And pride and arrogance are a major problem for all of these nations, not just for Moab.

Consider another reference to Moab's pride.

Therefore [as] I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, **Surely Moab shall be as Sodom**, and the children of **Ammon as Gomorrah**, [even] the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and **a perpetual desolation**: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. **This shall they have for their pride**, because they have reproached and magnified [themselves] against the people of the LORD of hosts. (Zephaniah 2:9-10)

Pride is one of the major reasons for God imposing specific penalties on specific people, because pride is such a direct and open manifestation of Satan's character and Satan's mindset. God will never overlook pride. All forms of pride will be exterminated by God. There is nothing good about pride.

The LORD shall cut off all **flattering lips**, [and] **the tongue that speaks proud things**: (Psalm 12:3)

God hates pride, and that message is repeated time and time again throughout the Bible. And God hates flattery because **flattery makes a direct appeal to pride**. Flattery is a way of tempting someone to become proud.

But you should not have looked on the day of your brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; **neither should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress**. (Obadiah 1:12)

This addresses a dangerous situation. We can ask God to help us with our enemies. And we can even

ask God to punish those who are proud. But when those we don't like fall or are destroyed, then we need to **be very careful that we ourselves don't become proud and haughty**. We are never "to speak proudly" in the day of other people's distress.

This reminds me somewhat of Shimei who came out and cursed David when David was fleeing from his own son Absalom (see 2 Samuel 16:5-8). We need to **beware that we don't "speak proudly" in the day of distress for other people**.

That also applies to the times of trouble that still lie ahead for the whole world. We know that there will be a time of great tribulation, and we know that there will be three "woes". And we have God's promise of protection for those times. But we need to be careful that we don't develop an attitude of pride towards the world when we look forward to being protected by God. We have the warning "woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD ..." (Amos 5:18). We need to have the attitude which King David expressed, when he said "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty ..." (Psalm 131:1).

Now let's take a look at one particular example of great pride.

## KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

This is about a dream and its consequences that king Nebuchadnezzar had in Daniel chapter 4. This account has some very valuable lessons regarding pride.

Nebuchadnezzar the king, **unto all people**, nations, and languages, that dwell **in all the earth**; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. (Daniel 4:1-2)

This was a letter that the king wrote to all the people throughout his empire. What the king then proceeds to do is present a faithful witness of how God had dealt with him, and specifically **how God had punished his great pride** and vanity.

It was a very humbling and humiliating experience for Nebuchadnezzar. He could have been embarrassed and then tried to keep it secret and discreet. But instead the king actually felt that it would be good for everyone "in all the earth" to be aware of the facts here. And so he wrote this up in a letter to all his subjects. And Daniel, who was intimately involved in this story, then chose to include the king's letter in his own book, the Book of Daniel, for all of God's people to learn from.

The king's willingness to share this embarrassing story with all his people shows that **he had learned a lesson**, and that he did indeed try to "praise and extol and honor the King of heaven" (Daniel 4:37).

The king starts his letter with praise and respect for God.

How great [are] his signs! and how mighty [are] his wonders! his kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion [is] from generation to generation. (Daniel 4:3)

This was the conclusion that the king had been left with after this experience that played out over an 8-year period.

The whole thing starts off with God giving Nebuchadnezzar a warning in a dream. The king already had a major problem with pride and vanity, but he had not yet reached the tipping point where God would intervene.

I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw **a dream which made me afraid**, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. (Daniel 4:4-5)

From the king's point of view things were going well in his kingdom; he was doing very well, thank you. That was when God sent him a warning in the form of a dream, which dream really scared the king. And that is also a lesson for us.

God usually sends warnings **while things are still going well**. That is a test. Do we heed a warning when everything still looks good, or do we only heed warnings when we are in serious trouble? The tendency for all of us is to ignore warnings when it looks like we are doing well. Nebuchadnezzar, as we'll see, did the same. He ignored this warning for about a year because everything looked so good.

Anyway, after this troubling dream the king assembles all the wise men to help him understand the significance of his troubling dream.

Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise [men] of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the **magicians**, the **astrologers**, the **Chaldeans**, and the **soothsayers**: and **I told the dream before them**; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. (Daniel 4:6-7)

The wisest people in the land didn't understand the significance of the king's dream. That's 1 Corinthians 2:11 in action once again. A message from God isn't understood by the world's spirit. It takes God's spirit to understand God's thinking.

But at the last **Daniel** came in before me, whose name [was] Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and **in whom [is] the spirit of the holy gods**: and before him I told the dream, [saying], (Daniel 4:8)

The king's lack of understanding is seen in his use of the expression "the spirit of the holy gods". Nebuchadnezzar's mind wasn't open to the truth, and so he thought there were dozens or hundreds of "gods" out there. All he understood was that Daniel's God was the greatest of the "gods" out there.

O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods [is] in you, and **no secret troubles you**, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. (Daniel 4:9)

The question is: if this is what Nebuchadnezzar knew about Daniel, why didn't he call Daniel first? Why did he first call all these other supposedly "wise guys"? This shows up **a tendency many of us have** when we need help or advice.

Many times we may know that there is someone who could actually help us to understand our problems (e.g. a parent, a teacher, a minister, a coworker, etc.). But we don't seek out that particular person. No, instead **we seek out others** whom we find more attractive, and who we know think the same way we do, in the hope that they'll have the answers we are looking for. It is only when it seems that no one else is able to help us that then, under a certain amount of duress, we seek out the person who we knew all along was the most likely one to have the correct answers for us. But that person was never going to be our first choice in our search for help. It is only because **now we are desperate** that we approach the person we could and should have approached right at the start.

That's basically what **king Ahab** said and did in the account in 1 Kings 22:5-8. As Ahab said at that time: "**there is yet one man** ... by whom we may enquire of the LORD, **but I hate him**, for he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil". While Nebuchadnezzar didn't hate Daniel, there was

nevertheless a reluctance on Nebuchadnezzar's part to call Daniel as his first option. After the episode in Daniel 2 you would have thought that Daniel would always be Nebuchadnezzar's #1 choice "go-to person" for understanding the significance of any dream. But that wasn't the case. Daniel was still only the king's last resort.

So the king proceeds to tell Daniel his dream. That is like us finally presenting our problems to the person we should have approached in the first place.

Thus [were] the visions of my head in my bed; I saw, and behold **a tree** in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof [was] **great**. The tree grew, and was **strong**, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof [were] fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it [was] meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. (Daniel 4:10-12)

You already know the interpretation of this symbolism, because Daniel proceeds to explain what this means. Try to picture this as a movie with animals and birds coming and going. Then something interrupts this peaceful scene.

I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, **a watcher** and an holy one **came down from heaven**; (Daniel 4:13)

This picture represents divine intervention in what's going on down here on Earth. God has sent an angel to deliver a warning message.

He cried aloud, and said thus, **Hew down the tree**, and cut off his **branches**, shake off his **leaves**, and scatter his **fruit**: let the beasts **get away from under it**, and the fowls from his branches: (Daniel 4:14)

The message is that the whole tree will be methodically destroyed: the trunk is sawed off, then the branches are cut off the trunk, the leaves are shaken off those branches, and the fruit that was on the tree is scattered. The tree no longer provides either food or protection to any animals or birds. But then there is seemingly one small concession made.

Nevertheless **leave the stump of his roots in the earth**, even with **a band of iron and brass**, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and [let] his portion [be] with the beasts in the grass of the earth: (Daniel 4:15)

The concession is that the actual **roots are to survive**. They are secured in place by "a band of iron and brass". "The roots" represent the system that the tree represented, and "iron" represents The Roman Empire and Roman culture, and "brass" represents the Greek Empire and Greek culture. That is the symbolism from the king's dream in chapter 2. "The tree" represents the kingdom of Babylon and the whole Babylonian system, as well as Nebuchadnezzar personally, as we'll see.

This verse tells us that when the Babylonian kingdom was destroyed, then the actual system of that Babylonian Empire would be preserved to the end-time by way of Greek and Roman culture.

What is significant to note here is that the Babylonian system would bypass the Medo-Persian system, since "the band" of preservation does not include "silver" (i.e. from the image in Daniel chapter 2). So our end-time system of civilization comes to us from Babylon via first Greece and then Rome, but without any influence from Medo-Persia being preserved in our system.

Now most historians and educators understand the powerful ways in which the Greek and Roman cultures have influenced our Western culture of today. What they usually don't understand is that it

doesn’t stop with Greece. Greece is not the true origin of our Western culture. Greece really got much of its system from Babylon.

This fact is somewhat obscured because the kingdom between Greece and Babylon (i.e. the Medo-Persian Empire) didn’t make any significant impact on the Babylonian system; that kingdom was bypassed in the transmission. That omission obscures the tracks which lead from the present back to Babylon. It was up to the Greek and Roman cultures (i.e. brass and iron) to preserve and to transmit the Babylonian system up to the end-time. That is what God tells us in Daniel 4:15.

Let his heart be changed from man’s, and **let a beast’s heart be given unto him**; and let **seven times** pass over him. (Daniel 4:16)

Now we are back to king Nebuchadnezzar himself. The expression "let a beast’s heart be given unto him" means: **take the spirit in man away from him for seven years**! Without the spirit in man Nebuchadnezzar still looked like a human being, but he was in fact nothing more than an animal for those seven years. For those years he simply did not possess a human mind.

Now here is the point for us:

**Short of death, this is in fact the ultimate penalty for pride!**

Without the spirit in man no human being can function on the human level. And this account with king Nebuchadnezzar gives us a very vivid example of what a human being is like when God takes away the spirit in man. Taking away the spirit in man from anyone is the most powerful way to demolish all feelings of pride and vanity. We are nothing without the spirit in man which God has given to us. And evolution cannot explain the effect of the spirit in man on the human mind.

Notice what Solomon explained:

[There is] **no man that has power over the spirit to retain the spirit**; neither [has he] power in the day of death: and [there is] no discharge in [that] war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. (Ecclesiastes 8:8)

Nebuchadnezzar certainly didn’t have any power when God decided to take the spirit in man from him for seven years. Normally God only takes that spirit away at the time of death.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and **the spirit shall return unto God who gave it**. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

Let’s be sure that we don’t take for granted the spirit in man which God has given to us, because God can take that away from anyone at any time. That is a part of the message for us in this passage. Just because there is no record of God ever doing that to any human being other than to Nebuchadnezzar, **that doesn’t mean that God couldn’t do it again to any other arrogant person in the future**.

Here is God’s reason for this whole message to Nebuchadnezzar.

This matter [is] by the decree of **the watchers**, and the demand by the word of **the holy ones**: to the intent **that the living may know** that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it **the basest of men**. (Daniel 4:17)

Notice the expressions "the watchers" and "the holy ones". It seems that both expressions refer to groups of God’s holy angels. But do some angels "make decrees"? "The word" in this verse is the

translation of an Aramaic word that also basically means "decree" or "commandment" or "appointment". This verse seems to imply that both groups of angels (if these two terms do indeed refer to different groups of individuals) have authority to make decrees along the lines of commandments. How does that work? Does this mean that this specific decision to take away the spirit in man from Nebuchadnezzar was made by angels and not by God?

Do you understand what Daniel 4:17 is telling us?

Consider what the prophet Micaiah, the man Ahab hated, said:

And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: **I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left**. (1 Kings 22:19)

God gave Micaiah a vision of something that very likely happens fairly frequently in heaven. And that is that Jesus Christ has the angels gather before Him to discuss proposed actions. Notice the purpose for this gathering.

And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And **one said on this manner**, and **another said on that manner**. (1 Kings 22:20)

Jesus Christ presented to the angels a desired outcome: Jesus Christ wanted Ahab to actually go to war with Syria so that he could then die in battle at Ramoth Gilead. Then Jesus Christ asked: how can we achieve this? We see in this verse that **different angels actually presented different proposals to Jesus Christ**, none of which were accepted by Jesus Christ.

Now in this specific case in 1 Kings chapter 22 Satan was allowed to be present at that particular meeting, and Satan then put forward a proposal for achieving God's intentions, and Jesus Christ then accepted Satan's proposal. At the same time Christ gave the prophet Micaiah a vision so that Ahab could actually be warned about what would happen to him in battle.

Normally Satan would not be present at such meetings in heaven. Satan's presence is only commanded when Jesus Christ wants to discuss something that will involve Satan carrying out specific intentions from Jesus Christ, as was the case in Job chapters 1-2 and again here in 1 Kings 22.

The point is that very likely Jesus Christ frequently invites input and suggestions from **the angels who will be involved in implementing specific instructions**. For example, there appear to be 24 angels who have seats "round about" God's throne (see Revelation 4:4), and those 24 angels are identified as "elders". The term "elders" is used in the NT to also refer to the ministry. But historically in Israel the term "elders" referred to individuals who had attained a certain wisdom and maturity that qualified them to function as counselors and advisers. So it seems to me that the "24 elders" in Revelation 4:4 are created spirit beings who have been given by God the responsibility to act as advisers to God, to put forward opinions and suggestions for God to consider.

I suspect that before God gave Nebuchadnezzar this dream, God had called the angels together and asked them: what shall we do with Nebuchadnezzar to achieve God's purposes? And I suspect that the angels identified as "watchers" and as "holy ones" had suggested to Jesus Christ: why don't You, Lord, take the spirit in man away from Nebuchadnezzar for 7 years? That should be an effective way to teach all the various lessons that You want to be taught. And Jesus Christ had perhaps replied: that's a good idea; as you have said so go and do; and you "watchers" watch over Nebuchadnezzar for those 7 years, so that he survives that period of time. But first let's give him a warning through a dream so that he has the chance to repent without having to go though that 7-year period.

I suspect that this plan is in Daniel 4:17 called "the decree of the watchers" and also "the commandment (or "word") of the holy ones" because it had been their idea to take the spirit in man away from Nebuchadnezzar for a specific limited period of time. Obviously I cannot prove this. This is only my speculation.

Let's continue with Daniel 4:17.

The purpose for taking the spirit in man away from Nebuchadnezzar was so that all human beings would have a witness that God rules. In our world today evolutionists would have no explanation if God would just take the spirit in man from an adult human being. Taking away the spirit in man is a very powerful way of demonstrating that God is in full control of every human life.

Notice also that God often sets up "**the basest of men**" in positions of rulership. That's because Satan is the basest of spirit beings, and he rules over this present world (2 Corinthians 4:4). In a sense, many individuals who have been in positions of rulership throughout human history have been **of Satan's ilk**. And that has happened with God's permission, because that condition suitably reflects mankind's rejection of God's leadership and acceptance of Satan's ways in general.

While this obviously does not apply to all people who have occupied leadership positions, it does apply in far more cases than we tend to realize. Here in the Book of Daniel this statement was being applied to king Nebuchadnezzar, who outwardly seemed like a reasonable guy, at least to Daniel. It is clear that Daniel actually liked Nebuchadnezzar, as we'll see. Yet here the king is referred to as an example of "the basest of men".

Let's continue with the account in Daniel 4. Having told Daniel his dream, the king then expected Daniel, who was his last resort, to have a correct explanation for the dream.

This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now you, O Belteshazzar, **declare the interpretation thereof**, forasmuch as all the wise [men] of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but **you** [**are**] **able**; for the spirit of the holy gods [is] in you. (Daniel 4:18)

Daniel immediately understood the correct meaning of the king's dream.

Then Daniel, whose name [was] Belteshazzar, **was astonied** for one hour, and **his thoughts troubled him**. The king spoke, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble you. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream [be] **to them that hate you**, and the interpretation thereof **to your enemies**. (Daniel 4:19)

Daniel was **appalled** and **dismayed** and **dazed**, the meanings of the archaic King James English word "astonied". Replacing "astonied" with "astonished" to some degree misses the depth of feeling conveyed by "astonied". The Aramaic word in Daniel 4:19 that is translated as "astonied" really means "appalled"; so "astonied" was an appropriate translation 400 years ago.

This reaction by Daniel showed that Daniel liked Nebuchadnezzar and thought well of him. Daniel was genuinely concerned for the king's well-being, even though Daniel understood that this was a message from God. Daniel actually respected Nebuchadnezzar, as seen by Daniel voluntarily referring to Nebuchadnezzar as "my lord" and wishing the meaning of the dream on Nebuchadnezzar's enemies.

Yet God referred to Nebuchadnezzar as a part of "the basest of men", and in a moment we'll see why. That was a part of the purpose for imposing this particular punishment on Nebuchadnezzar, to expose that Nebuchadnezzar was a part of that group referred to as "the basest of men".

Then Daniel proceeded to present the meaning of the dream.

**The tree that you saw, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves [were] fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it [was] meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: (Daniel 4:20-21)**

Daniel emphasizes the impressive appearance and great value of the tree. Daniel's repetition of this description again put this image vividly into the forefront of the king's mind. The tree is the first symbol in the dream. And so Daniel now explains that first symbol.

**It [is] you, O king, that are grown and become strong: for your greatness is grown, and reaches unto heaven, and your dominion to the end of the earth. (Daniel 4:22)**

You, Nebuchadnezzar, are the tree; and therefore this dream explains what is going to happen to you. These things will happen to you **because of the way you conduct yourself right now**.

Daniel then repeats the content of the dream before presenting the interpretation.

And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and [let] his portion [be] with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; (Daniel 4:23)

Before presenting the interpretation for these things, Daniel first explains that this is a judgment on the king from God in heaven.

This [is] the interpretation, O king, and this [is] **the decree of the Most High**, which is come upon my lord the king: (Daniel 4:24)

Having made clear that this is a judgment from God in heaven, Daniel now presents the interpretation in a blunt and very direct way.

That **they shall drive you from men**, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and **seven times** shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will. (Daniel 4:25)

They will drive you from men because for seven years **you are going to be nothing more than an animal**, a horrific penalty, one that had appalled even Daniel himself. Then God will give you back the spirit in man and you will have learned the lesson God wants you to learn. In the next verse Daniel presented the second part of the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; **your kingdom shall be sure unto you**, after that you shall have known that the heavens do rule. (Daniel 4:26)

Notice that Daniel said "that **the heavens do rule**", rather than saying "that God rules" or saying "that the Most High rules". This is in line with this penalty being a decree of "the watchers". So here again there is the hint that God accepts and acts on advice and suggestions from others, in that way **including them in the decisions that are then implemented**. That is somewhat like the spontaneous decision the angel made to spare the "little city" of Zoar when the angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis 19:18-21). That spontaneous decision also had God's approval.

Notice also that while Daniel readily acknowledged "a band of iron and brass", **he did not offer any explanation for these two specific metals**. That was because those two metals had nothing directly to do with Nebuchadnezzar. Those two metals were included in the dream to give us at this end-time some additional information, which information would not have meant anything to Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Having interpreted the dream, Daniel then proceeds to give the king some advice. The purpose of Daniel's advice is to prevent the events predicted in the dream from having to come to pass. Daniel was genuinely concerned for Nebuchadnezzar.

The lesson here for us is as follows:

Whenever God predicts certain penalties for sins, then it is always God's desire that the people concerned will repent and change, so that God does not have to implement those penalties. The purpose of pronouncing penalties in advance is never to say: this is what is going to happen! The real purpose for such penalties announced in advance is always: this is what is going to happen **IF YOU DON'T CHANGE RIGHT NOW**!

God's intentions are revealed in the Book of Ezekiel.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord GOD: [and] not that **he should return from his ways, and live**? (Ezekiel 18:23)

Say unto them, [As] I live, says the Lord GOD, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked**; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 33:11)

God's intention is always to motivate people to repent and to change. And if they do change, then the penalties that have been pronounced will not come to pass.

But **if the wicked will turn** from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, **he shall not die**. (Ezekiel 18:21)

Again, **when the wicked [man] turns away from his wickedness** that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right, **he shall save his soul alive**. Because he considers, and turns away from all his transgressions that he has committed, he shall surely live, **he shall not die**. (Ezekiel 18:27-28)

This principle also applied to king Nebuchadnezzar. And so Daniel then proceeded to warn the king.

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, and **break off your sins** by righteousness, **and your iniquities** by **showing mercy to the poor**; if it may be a lengthening of your tranquillity. (Daniel 4:27)

Daniel was aware of the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was involved in sins and in iniquities. Daniel also knew that the poor were taken advantage of by the king's administration, by the laws and rules that Nebuchadnezzar had instituted.

**But Daniel didn't actually address king Nebuchadnezzar's biggest sins of all. Those biggest sins of all Daniel may not have been able to address without putting his own life in danger. Who knows? King Nebuchadnezzar's pride and arrogance and vanity were by far his greatest sins before God, because in that regard Nebuchadnezzar was reflecting the attitude of Satan himself.**

Anyway, Nebuchadnezzar faithfully records in his letter to all his subjects the advice Daniel had given

him. He makes no comments of any kind as to how he accepted either the interpretation of the dream or the advice that Daniel gave him. **Nebuchadnezzar does not record his own response to what Daniel had told him.** But implied is that Daniel's advice had not made any lasting impressions on his mind.

The king simply skips forward by one year and says that everything that Daniel had predicted came to pass.

**All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 4:28)**

And then Nebuchadnezzar proceeds to explain what had happened to him. Now we'll see the most important reason for this penalty.

At the end of **twelve months** he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. (Daniel 4:29)

For another 12 months after the dream nothing happened. Everything looked good. So the king then walked through his palace and his gardens and admired his own great achievements. **He was filled with pride** over his own great accomplishments.

The king spoke, and said, Is not **this great Babylon**, that **I have built** for the house of the kingdom by **the might of my power**, and for **the honor of my majesty**? (Daniel 4:30)

Nebuchadnezzar was singing the old song "**HOW GREAT I AM**"! He was filled with pride and arrogance, something he freely admits in this letter to all his subjects.

The reason why God took the spirit in man away from Nebuchadnezzar was to punish his enormous pride and vanity.

While the word [was] in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, [saying], O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from you. And **they shall drive you from men**, and your dwelling [shall be] with the beasts of the field: **they shall make you to eat grass** as oxen, and **seven times** shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. (Daniel 4:31-32)

The palace area had some very large gardens in which certain wildlife and domestic animals were roaming freely, and which animals would have been regularly fed with grass and hay when this was needed. In all likelihood Nebuchadnezzar was driven out into those royal gardens, where the palace personnel could still keep an eye on him.

It is not as if the common citizens of Babylon would somehow have bumped into Nebuchadnezzar in some wild area during those seven years. His servants might even have been told by Daniel that the king's condition would last for seven years, after which he would again be normal. So they were in all likelihood keeping an eye on him.

Anyway, this all happened very suddenly. That's how God's penalties usually come: suddenly when we are not expecting them.

**The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' [feathers], and his nails like birds' [claws]. (Daniel 4:33)**

This tells us that Nebuchadnezzar could no longer function as a human being. He couldn't take care of even basic tasks. That is why they had to feed him with grass, because he couldn't cope with anything

else. This went on for seven years.

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and **my understanding returned unto me**, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that lives for ever, whose dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom [is] from generation to generation: (Daniel 4:34)

After seven years God gave the spirit in man back to Nebuchadnezzar. Once again he could think like a human being. He could look at himself and see his long hair and his filthy beard and his long fingernails and toenails. He could see that he was covered in dirt and totally without any clothing. And he could recall his proud, boastful thoughts from seven years earlier as vividly as if he had been thinking those thoughts a mere five minutes earlier.

In the distance he could see some of his servants, smartly dressed and clean. And for the first time in seven years he uttered human speech: "come over here and help me" ... or words to that effect. He was in shock. And **he had learned his lesson**!

A spirit of pride is a terrible thing because it is **the worst form of idolatry**, exalting the self above God. Pride is the most pernicious manifestation of Satan's original sin. It is difficult to overcome this satanic attitude without the person being very forcefully put down. Unless a proud person voluntarily humbles himself before God, **God will firmly humiliate that person in order to break the pride**. Whether or not God will ever again resort to temporarily taking the spirit in man away from people with extreme forms of pride remains to be seen. But God has done it once already, and **it was extremely effective**.

Let's continue with Nebuchadnezzar's letter.

And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing: and **He does according to His will** in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are You doing? (Daniel 4:35)

Nebuchadnezzar had learned his lesson. And so God had him restored into his former position, just as Daniel had predicted eight years earlier in verse 26. In the concluding statement of his letter to all his subjects the king stated the primary lesson he had learned.

Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works [are] truth, and his ways judgment: and **those that walk in pride he is able to abase**. (Daniel 4:37)

This whole episode had been about how God deals with pride.

As far as Nebuchadnezzar being restored to his former position, let's note the following things:

1) While he was removed from his position of prestige and power, it had been stated in advance that **this removal was only a temporary thing**. Nebuchadnezzar was told in advance that this would last for 7 years.

2) Nobody else was king over Babylon during those 7 years. So he had not been replaced by anyone else. His position had been protected during those 7 years. His was only a temporary suspension rather than a permanent removal from office. The length of suspension was specified in advance.

3) Nebuchadnezzar had not held a position in either Israel or in the Church. He was not somebody with whom God was working and who had been called by God to have a part in the first resurrection. He was not in any way a teacher for God's people. Nebuchadnezzar was nothing more than a part of this world

over which Satan is "a god".

4) Nebuchadnezzar by way of this letter also provided **a very open confession of his own sins** of pride and vanity that led to God temporarily removing him from his position for 7 years. In no way did Nebuchadnezzar attempt to cover up his own guilt and responsibility for his 7-year suspension.

5) God temporarily removing Nebuchadnezzar from his position as king of Babylon is not at all a parallel to God removing a man from the ministry of God's Church. God never removes a man temporarily from the ministry; a removal from the ministry is always permanent and irreversible.

Let's now move on to some more Scriptures about pride.

## PRESUMPTUOUSNESS IS A FORM OF PRIDE

Another group of Hebrew words that is at times translated as "pride" refers to boiling, in the sense of boiling over in proud and rash actions, in presumptuous actions. These Hebrew words are mostly translated as "presumptuous" and they represent a particular form of pride.

And **the man that will do presumptuously**, and **will not hearken** unto the priest that stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or unto the judge, **even that man shall die**: and you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and **do no more presumptuously**. (Deuteronomy 17:12-13)

Presumptuousness is in many cases a specific manifestation of pride. (Sometimes it may be a result of ignorance, without necessarily involving pride, and those situations are not what I mean here.) As we can see from this Scripture, serious cases of presumptuousness against either a religious leader or a civil leader were to receive the death penalty. Clearly presumptuousness is a serious evil in the eyes of God. **Pride very easily manifests as presumptuousness.**

There is also a very serious warning for any man who presumes to speak in God's name, when God has not commanded him to speak. This also carries the death penalty.

But the prophet, **which shall presume to speak a word in my name**, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even **that prophet shall die**. (Deuteronomy 18:20)

The Hebrew verb here translated as "shall presume" is the same word that is translated as "do presumptuously" in our previous Scripture. This Scripture here applies to two groups of people: firstly it applies to men erroneously coming into the ministry of God's Church, and then claiming to speak for God, **when in fact God has not called them into His ministry**. Secondly it also applies to the **religious leaders of all of the false churches and false religions**, who in actual fact speak in the name of "other gods".

This Scripture affects a large number of men in the churches of God, who were never called into the ministry by God. Many are self-appointed "authorities" on biblical and doctrinal matters. There are **many men** amongst God's people today who vigorously expound heresies and oppose the truth.

To such religious leaders God says "**I have not sent them**", even as God said this to false prophets in the days of Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 27:15 and 29:9). And **it is always a matter of pride** when men set themselves up as Bible teachers without having been called to that responsibility by God. This pride

readily manifests as presumptuousness in these specific circumstances. Matthew 7:22-23 implies that many of these men will be in for a big shock when Jesus Christ finally deals with them and says: "**I never knew you**, depart from Me, you that work iniquity".

I mentioned that sometimes presumptuous acts are based more on ignorance and a lack of understanding than they are on pride. That is why David prayed as follows:

**Who can understand [his] errors? cleanse You me from secret [faults]. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous [sins]; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. (Psalm 19:12-13)**

The Hebrew word here translated as "presumptuous" is a noun that means "**pride**". There is no word in the text for "sins". The translators provided the word "sins" because the Hebrew noun in this verse is in the plural form, and in English "presumptuous sins" sounds far better than "presumtuousnesses". Understanding that this Hebrew word also refers to a form of pride, means that in our English translation we could use the singular form "pride".

In this statement here David was asking God: "**keep Your servant also from pride**, let it not rule over me". Notice that David here referred to pride as "the great transgression". The Hebrew word "pesha" here translated as "transgression" also means "**rebellion**".

So here is what David is telling us in these two verses:

**Pride is the underlying motivation for rebellion. People who rebel are motivated by pride. Pride was Satan's real motivation when he started "the great rebellion" against God. By prefacing these statements with the question "who can understand his own errors?", David was acknowledging that we frequently have a hard time understanding that our real problem is pride. Sometimes we are ignorant when it comes to identifying the real causes of our own problems.**

[COMMENT: In this context I am not speaking about "rebelling" against oppression, where the oppressors are the real problem, and not those who oppose the oppressors. Here we are talking about the type of rebelling that cannot possibly be justified.]

Moving on, there are a number of statements about the proud in Psalm 119. Let's look at some of them.

You have rebuked **the proud** [that are] cursed, which do **err from Your commandments**. (Psalm 119:21)

Those who are proud will invariably err from God's commandments, meaning that **they will misapply or totally disregard God's laws**. Pride in itself is proof positive that those people are transgressing the laws of God, and there is no way that proud people will have a correct understanding of the Bible.

**The proud have had me greatly in derision: [yet] have I not declined from Your law. (Psalm 119:51)**

A common identifying sign for a proud person is an attitude of contempt and derision for **those who don't agree with them**. Those who seek to obey God are often despised by the proud.

**The proud have forged a lie against me: [but] I will keep Your precepts with [my] whole heart. (Psalm 119:69)**

This highlights another common characteristic of proud people. They will spread lies about their enemies

or opponents. They seek to destroy others with lies by **smear campaigns**, which is one of Satan's most-used weapons. Spread enough lies about those who oppose you, and sooner or later some of those lies will be accepted as truth, and in that way they will damage your opponents. Your opponents will be forced to defend themselves against totally untrue accusations.

**Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: [but] I will meditate in Your precepts. (Psalm 119:78)**

The ways the proud deal with people are perverse! Being perverse applies to all aspects of their lives: in work and in business, in leisure activities, in personal relationships, in their personal conduct, etc. **All their ways are perverse**, distorted by their pride and by their own arrogant perceptions of themselves. **The proud cannot be trusted** with anything.

Here the psalmist was asking God to bring the proud to shame. We really should be doing the same! **We should be in prayer asking God to shame those who are proud.** Pride is one of the major highways that leads to the lake of fire. Asking God to shame the proud is one way to stop their progression down that fatal highway. This approach of shaming the proud was extremely effective with Nebuchadnezzar.

**The proud have dug pits for me, which [are] not after Your law. (Psalm 119:85)**

If you ever have to deal with proud people, always examine everything they say for a trap! Trickery and deception are a major manifestation of pride on the part of those who are trying to trick us. The Pharisees repeatedly tried to set traps for Jesus Christ, and **the Pharisees were an extremely proud group of people** ... just think of the way the Pharisee prayed in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (see Luke 18:10-11).

Be surety for Your servant for good: **let not the proud oppress me**. (Psalm 119:122)

Oppressors are always proud people. Satan is the original oppressor, and **oppressing others is always an expression of pride**.

[**When**] **pride comes**, **then comes shame**: but with the lowly [is] wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2)

That's the way it always works. It is only a question of time before the proud are brought to shame. It is God who sees to that. This principle also represents an opportunity for us to be instructed. If we have been shamed in some or other way, **had we perhaps been acting in pride?** That isn't always the case, because some people will try to shame us without any cause. But in many other situations we ourselves may have brought the shame upon ourselves by behaving proudly.

A basic point we should keep in mind is that **pride expressed by one person will always anger some other individuals**, because pride is a way of elevating oneself above others.

That was Satan's original sin, elevating himself. Let's continue.

**Only by pride comes contention: but with the well advised [is] wisdom. (Proverbs 13:10)**

This is an important principle for us to understand. When we have contention between two people, then there is always a component of pride somewhere in the picture. It may not be immediately apparent, and it may manifest as presumptuousness or as indignation. But the basic problem is really pride. That's what Solomon is telling us in this verse.

**Proud [and] haughty scorner [is] his name, who deals in proud wrath. (Proverbs 21:24)**

These are identifying signs for pride. Whenever we have scorn and disdain for other people, then we are always responding to a feeling of pride. Scorn says: I am better than you, which is another way of describing pride. And very often **we become angry because our feelings of pride have been offended** in some way.

God punished ancient Babylon, and God will again punish Babylon at the end-time (see Revelation 18:2, etc.). One of God's main indictments against Babylon is their attitude of pride.

Behold, I [am] against you, [**O you**] **most proud**, says the Lord GOD of hosts: for your day is come, the time [that] I will visit you (i.e. punish you). And **the most proud** shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him. (Jeremiah 50:31-32)

**God will always punish pride! That is the message throughout the Bible. Pride is not restricted to specific nations. Pride is a universal problem, because Satan is able to influence all people in every society. We need to expect that proud people will be punished by God in some way.**

Expect it like you expect the sun to rise tomorrow morning!

We also need to recognize that pride will deceive us. **Pride will cause us to misinterpret the facts.** This also applies to any proud people we must deal with. **We should expect a proud person to reach false conclusions** in any matters that are affected by their pride.

**The pride of your heart has deceived you, you that dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation [is] high; that says in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (Obadiah 1:3)**

So often proud people believe that they are invincible, because that is what Satan, the father of all pride, thought about himself. We need to realize that when people refuse to accept logic that is in fact irrefutable, then **their real problem is pride**! Their pride does not allow them to acknowledge facts that they cannot really refute.

**We have a lot of proud people in the churches of God! And we have a lot of proud people in the ministry of the various churches. Today God's people have access to far more understanding than when Mr. Armstrong died 30 years ago. That is no different than saying that in 1986 God's people also had access to far more understanding than 30 years earlier in 1956.**

There is **a constant pattern of growth in understanding**, very much in line with the Apostle Peter's very last admonition, that we must "**grow** in grace and knowledge ..." (2 Peter 3:18). So it is to be expected that today, 30 years after Mr. Armstrong's time, we have more knowledge and understanding than when Mr. Armstrong was alive. But many people stick with an understanding that is **frozen in time**. Spiritually they have never progressed beyond the 60's or 70's.

We have a large number of members and ministers who simply cannot understand **where our past understanding was incomplete and inaccurate**. You can present them with fact after fact after fact that disproves their present understanding, but they will not get it. **They simply cannot understand because "the pride of their heart has deceived them".** That is why no amount of factual evidence against their position will convince them. I have witnessed this process time after time.

It is pride that prevents them from accepting facts that expose the flaws in their positions. And they are not even able to recognize that it is pride that causes them to argue against facts that contradict their views.

**I don’t think that we really understand the profound negative effect that pride has on life!**

Pride was Satan’s original sin. And Satan knows that if he can instill any form of pride in a person’s mind and personality, then that will guarantee that the person will not accept facts that don’t agree with what the person believes. The person will **argue against the facts**, even as Satan himself argues against facts that he doesn’t like.

Here is what most of us may not have understood in the past:

In many cases before Satan tempts us to break any of God’s laws, before he tempts us to actually do something that is wrong, **he seeks first of all to instill in our minds a sense of pride**.

The actual focus for the pride is totally immaterial. It makes no difference whether the pride centers on our supposed good looks, or our skills and abilities, or our intellect, or our popular personality, or our supposed great understanding, etc. Once our minds harbor feelings of pride, **then Satan knows that we have accepted a mindset** that is willing to argue against facts that we don’t like.

That is the mindset that Satan seeks to instill in every human being, in order to keep us deceived. We all know that Satan has deceived the whole world. What we haven’t always understood is that **pride is an essential, vital requirement for Satan to keep us all deceived**.

It is only if we truly humble ourselves before God, that then our own hearts will no longer be able to deceive us. It is **only humility** that makes it possible for us to accept unpleasant facts about ourselves and about our beliefs.

So **here is the real issue with pride and humility**:

If Satan can manage to instill an attitude of pride in our minds, then our minds have been set up to deceive us about the truth of God. **A proud mind** not only will not, but in fact **cannot accept facts that contradict its own position**. Therefore God resists the proud.

The only way the human mind can become receptive to unpleasant truths is for that mind to cast out all pride and to actively develop an attitude of humility. That attitude of humility will open the door for the mind to accept unpleasant facts, facts that contradict past conduct and past points of view. That attitude will in fact enable that human mind to understand the truth of God

Before God **humility is not an end in itself**. Before God humility is a means towards an end. **Humility prepares a human mind so that God can then work with that mind.** God cannot in a positive way work with a mind that is devoid of humility. That is the real issue.

That is why, as I already said earlier, the proud who do not repent at some point, will be burned up in the lake of fire, never to exist again. God simply cannot work with such individuals.

This is the crux of the matter when God could initially work with certain men, but later in their lives God could no longer work with them. These men had started out humble, but then when they were successful they developed pride. That includes men like King Saul, King Solomon, King Jeroboam, etc. With all these men it was **the acquired attribute of pride** that changed their relationship with God. Pride is always a game-changer!

Let’s look at the next verse on our topic.

And now **we call the proud happy**; yes, they that work wickedness are set up; yes, [**they that**] **tempt**

**God** are even delivered. (Malachi 3:15)

That describes a society in which pride is a prominent characteristic. People who call the proud happy see pride as a positive emotion. **They believe that pride is good**, when in fact pride is a disgusting, diabolical, depraved and perverse attitude and emotion ... from God's point of view. There is no such thing as "a right kind of pride"! Before God all forms of pride are evil.

Pride always amounts to tempting God. It is a very dangerous way for the human mind to reason and to operate. Pride always leads to destruction.

Let's consider another Scripture.

And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: **the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient**, and the base against the honorable. (Isaiah 3:5)

This is a particularly egregious form of pride, when children lack respect for adults. This is an example of Satan working in and through "**the children of obstinate opposition**", the meaning of the Greek expression in Ephesians 2:2. If pride is unchecked in a young child, then in most cases Satan has hooked that child for life. Our society is so perverse that it actually encourages pride to develop in children; pride is actively promoted in children.

Satan must get us to inculcate pride into our character, in order to deceive us and to keep us deceived for our whole lives. **Pride prevents God's calling from getting through to the minds of people.**

Recall that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). The only ones that are "chosen" are those that manage to put out pride and then put on humility. **Pride makes a person uncallable**! If pride in a young child is not dealt with, then it will make it far more difficult for God to later work with that person. God hates pride, and all the proud will eventually be burned up in the lake of fire (Malachi 4:1).

Let's continue.

**An high look, and a proud heart, [and] the plowing of the wicked, [is] sin. (Proverbs 21:4)**

Pride is a very evil form of sin, even when it doesn't involve the direct breaking of any of the ten commandments. That's what we must come to see.

**He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife: but he that puts his trust in the LORD shall be made fat. (Proverbs 28:25)**

Proud people always cause trouble. Pride is like a magnet for trouble. Therefore we should try, as much as we are able to do so, to avoid dealing with proud people.

**The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. (Isaiah 2:11, also Isaiah 2:17)**

This illustrates the problem with pride: pride is a challenge to God. Pride, arrogance and haughtiness will always be brought down by God.

And that about covers the subject of pride in the Old Testament. Now let's have a look at what the New Testament has to tell us about pride.

## PRIDE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are several different Greek words in the New Testament which apply to pride. Some apply to proud arrogant speech, some apply to boasting and being an empty pretender. One word applies to the insolent and despiteful acts of proud people. There is no need for us to distinguish between these different Greek words in our context because they all apply to some or other manifestation of the character trait of pride. All describe bad attributes.

Let's start with something that Jesus Christ said.

And He said, That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, **out of the heart of men**, **proceed** evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, **murders**, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, **pride**, foolishness: **All these evil things** come from within, and **defile the man**. (Mark 7:20-23)

These are all things that come out of the human mind. We should understand that **all of these things are "evil thoughts"**, they are all "wickedness". None of these attributes exists in isolation. These attributes are all linked to one another **like a chain**, where some links are adjacent to each other, while other links are slightly further apart. But they all belong together. And **pride is closely linked to several other attributes in this group**. God hates pride just as much as God hates every other attribute in this list. All of these things defile a person in the eyes of God.

Now consider the following statement very carefully:

**Before God pride is just as great a sin as murder!**

No human laws would agree with this statement. But we need to understand that in God's sight pride is no less serious a sin than murder or adultery or idolatry or stealing, etc.! Pride is "an evil thing" like all the other things in this list in Mark 7. It is an extremely serious matter.

So when any of these other attributes apply to a person, then the chances are great that the person also has a problem with pride. Pride is usually somewhere in the mix with all these ungodly attributes.

Let's look at how Paul described the reprobate mind, i.e. the same mind that Jesus Christ spoke about in Mark 7. This section is found in Romans 1:28-32.

And even as **they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge**, God gave them over to **a reprobate mind**, to do those things which are not convenient; (Romans 1:28)

This is the most important key for identifying a carnal mind and a carnal attitude. **This is the premise on which all ungodly attributes are based.** This key is that the carnal mind rejects God's point of view! It rejects God's perspective of what is right. It simply does not want to know God's view and what God expects from us human beings. In Paul's words, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge".

That attitude is **extremely prevalent** in our world today! We see it when children reject the knowledge and instructions of their parents. We see it when young adults reject sound advice from their elders with statements like "**don't tell me** what is right and what I must do; I want to find that out for myself".

That attitude is also extremely common amongst religious people in this world. That is what Jesus Christ pointed out about the Pharisees of His day.

And He said unto them, Full well **you reject the commandment of God**, that you may keep your own

tradition. (Mark 7:9)

That is precisely what Paul meant with his expression "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge".

**And we also see that same attitude fairly commonly amongst those who attend God's Church!**

Many people in the Church don't really make much of an effort to seek out God's thoughts and God's wishes. Many people don't make much of an effort to find out what God would **like** them to do. They may accept what other people (i.e. ministers) tell them is expected of them; but they don't search out God's mind **for themselves**. They may **read** the Bible, but they don't actually "**study** (the Bible) to show themselves approved unto God" (see 2 Timothy 2:15), preferring to let other people do the studying for them.

**For example: Have you ever tried to tell church people that the Jewish calendar is not right for determining God's Feasts and Holy Days? Most of the people who attend the various Church of God groups are not really prepared to look into this matter for themselves, right? And there are many people who make any number of excuses for not examining the evidence that proves the Jewish calendar to be unacceptable before God.**

That attitude is an expression of **people not really wanting God in their knowledge**; they just want to stick with the customs and traditions they have always accepted in the past. And **they are afraid** of finding out that there might be some problems with some of those customs. The "**that's good enough for me**" attitude when faced with challenging questions is the attitude of not wanting God in their knowledge.

I mention this because, while the next few verses clearly describe the common attitudes of carnal people in the world, we in God's Church can in fact have the same mindset as the people in the world, just to a lesser degree.

There really is no difference in attitude between someone in the world **simply not wanting to know the truth** about the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days, etc., and someone in the Church **either** not wanting to know the facts why the Jewish calendar is wrong for us to use for the annual observances, **or else** not wanting to know why their particular solution to the calendar problem is **still wrong**, even though they have rejected the Jewish calendar. **Most of the solutions that various people have implemented to get away from the Jewish calendar are still wrong!**

Either way such people are right in their own eyes. The subject matter is different between people in the world and people who are in the Church, but the underlying attitude in all these situations is the same, which underlying attitude is expressed in the statement: "I am not interested, and I just don't want to know that, because I know that what I am doing is right". Their minds are closed to evidence that contradicts their own personal positions. And **pride** is assuredly in the picture in all these cases.

So yes, we do indeed have people in the Church who have a problem with pride!

Let's look at Paul's description of the mind that is not acceptable to God, i.e. the reprobate mind, the mind Jesus Christ spoke about.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, **debate** (Greek = contention, strife, arguing), deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, **proud**, **boasters**, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: (Romans 1:29-31)

Paul has here listed over 20 different things, all of which are based on **the foundation** of not wanting God in their knowledge, not wanting God in the picture. They all have the same foundation. All of them are likewise linked together like a chain. And **pride is a part of every one of those attitudes or actions**.

Notice Paul's conclusion for this particular thought:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are **worthy of death**, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:32)

With God **pride, boasting and contentious arguing all carry the death penalty**! That's what Paul is pointing out.

The attitude of having pleasure in them that do these things means that those who themselves are proud will also praise the pride of others (i.e. as long as they are not direct competitors). Pride is presented as something good. **Society in general admires proud people.** Proud people are commonly held in high esteem.

Let's look at another statement from Paul.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and [to] Apollos for your sakes; that you might learn in us not to think [of men] above that which is written, **that no one of you be puffed up for one against another**. (1 Corinthians 4:6)

Here Paul is speaking about our precise situation today. We today have the "I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Cephas (i.e. Peter), and I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:12) attitude amongst us in a very emphatic way. We are **divided in our loyalties** to various different church groups (United, Living, COGWA, Philadelphia, etc.), precisely because we look to this evangelist or to that evangelist or to this minister or to that minister for leadership. Or we want to appoint our own leaders because we the congregation believe that we should decide who should be our spiritual leaders. We are indeed divided amongst Paul and Apollos and Peter.

And the result is that all too often those in one group are "puffed up" against all the people who are in the other Church of God groups. There are **some groups** today who want to prevent their members from having **any contact at all** with any people who are in any other Church of God group. They try to prevent their people from listening to messages from other groups or from reading the material from other groups.

In effect such groups expect their members to treat every person in every other Church of God group just as if all those people were **disfellowshipped**! And **the real cause for this situation is pride**! In Paul's terms, they (i.e. the leaders in such groups) are "puffed up one against another".

This is the exact same situation that the Apostle John faced in his later life. As John wrote:

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, **receives us not**. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, **neither does he himself receive the brethren**, and **forbids them that would**, **and casts [them] out of the church**. (3 John 1:9-10)

Diotrephes was like the leader in some or other CoG splinter group. He instructed his people not to have any contact with anyone in any of the other congregations. Diotrephes controlled the people in his group very closely, and he disfellowshipped those who continued to have contact with people in other CoG

groups.

Today we have the same situation that the Apostle John faced. And **the real problem is caused by pride**. Pride divides God's people. Pride always causes divisions. Pride causes people to be "puffed up" against those in other groups.

Let's continue.

**Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (Colossians 2:18)**

Pride makes a person much more susceptible to being deceived. Pride may deceive us into believing and accepting a completely false way for approaching God and for developing a relationship with God.

Earlier I briefly referred to the Pharisee in the parable in Luke 18. That Pharisee in the parable in fact demonstrates precisely what Paul was speaking about here in Colossians 2:18. Paul clearly understood the mind of a Pharisee, having been a Pharisee himself. Let's briefly look at the key verses in that parable.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You, that **I am not as other men** [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. **I fast** twice in the week, **I give** tithes of all that I possess. (Luke 18:11-12)

The Pharisee really had been deceived into believing that his "voluntary humility" (fasting, etc.) would get him into a better relationship with God, when in fact he was extremely "puffed up by his fleshly mind". His fasting and tithing were not the problem; his self-righteous attitude, an expression of **his pride**, **was the problem**. And his pride in his "voluntary humility" prevented him from seeing the real self; it blinded his mind to his own failings and weaknesses and shortcomings.

The lesson for us in Colossians 2:18 is that we always need to guard against an attitude of pride, an attitude of becoming puffed up. It is easy for people to believe that they (we) are better than others.

Notice Paul's instruction to Timothy regarding ordaining a man into the ministry.

Not a novice, **lest being lifted up with pride** he fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6)

When a man is still relatively new in the Church of God, he may quite possibly demonstrate some good, sound understanding. Perhaps his background before coming into the Church provided him with certain training or experience. At any rate, he demonstrates a certain soundness or a certain maturity, and therefore the pastor starts to think about ordaining this man into the ministry.

This admonition from Paul here points out that such "novices" become more susceptible to Satan's temptation to develop pride. Being rapidly promoted up the chain of authority provides fertile soil for Satan to sow the seeds of pride and conceit. Fifty and sixty years ago a number of men were ordained into the ministry within two or three years of when they were baptized; i.e. they were ordained when they were in fact still novices. And that was not good.

The expression "he fall into the condemnation of the devil" literally means that **pride causes a person to receive the same judgment that Satan receives** for his pride, which judgment amounts to condemnation.

Notice another instruction that Paul gave to Timothy.

**If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, [even] the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, (1 Timothy 6:3-4)**

With the expression "wholesome words" Paul means: teaching that is sound and logical. So here Paul was telling Timothy that whenever people disagree with sound teachings and explanations that are biblically logical, then those people have a problem with pride. With the expression "knowing nothing" Paul means that such people lack real understanding. They don't really understand the truth, at least not on that particular subject.

So when people disagree with factual evidence that contradicts their own personal opinions, but which evidence they are not able to disprove, then their greatest problem is pride. **It is their pride** that does not allow them to acknowledge facts that they cannot disprove or refute.

Let's move on to something the Apostle James said.

Even so **the tongue** is a little member, and **boasts great things**. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles!" (James 3:5)

It is so easy to boast and to brag. Speaking is the most common way we express pride. (We can also express pride through our looks and our demeanor.) But boastful speech can so easily lead to huge problems between people. James 3:5 is the New Testament equivalent of Proverbs 13:10, that only by pride comes contention.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resists the proud**, but gives grace unto the humble. (James 4:6)

The proud will always, sooner or later, have a hard time. When God is the One who opposes the proud, then the proud are always going to have troubles. And the proud do not receive grace from God.

The Apostle Peter made this same point.

Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yes, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for **God resists the proud**, and gives grace to the humble. (1 Peter 5:5)

Notice what Peter said in his second letter.

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and **to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment** to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. **Presumptuous** [**are they**], **self-willed**, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. (2 Peter 2:9-10)

Presumptuousness and being self-willed are very common manifestations of pride. Peter's point is that the proud are going to be punished by God on the day of judgment. And the punishment Peter is speaking about is destruction in the lake of fire.

Let's look at one more statement from the Apostle John.

For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and **the pride of life**, is not of

the Father, but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)

Pride in all its forms is a huge problem for us human beings. Pride is Satan's original sin. And when Satan can tempt us to embrace feelings of pride in any area of life, then we have developed a huge problem in our relationship with God. It is the attribute of pride that makes the vast majority of all people uncallable for God.

## THE ANTIDOTE TO PRIDE

We have already repeatedly seen that the antidote to pride is **humility**. **Being humble** is the opposite of being proud and haughty and arrogant and vain.

While there are a number of different Hebrew words in the Old Testament that are translated into English as "humble" and as "humility", they all cover the meaning of "humble" quite well. So there is also no need for us to try to distinguish between these different Hebrew words.

Here is the most basic point regarding what God expects from us.

He hath showed you, O man, what [is] good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and **to walk humbly** with your God? (Micah 6:8)

"To walk humbly" here means "to walk in a lowly manner", i.e. the opposite of being high-minded. It is the opposite of living with a proud attitude. It is a reference to the frame of mind of the person involved.

Let's look at an example of how God responds to us when we truly humble ourselves.

After king Ahab, one of the most evil kings in the Bible, had taken possession of the vineyard of Naboth, God sent Elijah to Ahab with one of the most scorching messages ever from God, including the prediction that dogs would eat the king's wife Jezebel (1 Kings 21:23). This message finally got through to Ahab and scared the living daylights out of him. And so Ahab actually went so far as to humble himself before God.

And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he **rent his clothes**, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and **fasted**, and **lay in sackcloth**, and **went softly**. (1 Kings 21:27)

Now this was not any real repentance after a godly manner, because Ahab continued to be an evil king until the day of his death in battle. But Ahab did actually humble himself for a brief period of time, even if the humbling didn't include any real repentance.

Notice how God responded to Ahab's actions.

And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Do you see how Ahab **humbles himself** before me? because he humbles himself before me, **I will not bring the evil in his days**: [but] in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house. (1 Kings 21:28-29)

When Ahab set aside his pride and humbled himself before God, then **God actually changed the course of human history**, by postponing a specific penalty. Ahab's dynasty was allowed to continue beyond Ahab's death. That is a powerful example of what God is willing to do when we set aside our pride and voluntarily humble ourselves before God.

When we can see that God responded this way to Ahab humbling himself, can we grasp how powerfully God will intervene in our lives when we, who are a part of God's called-out ones in this age, turn away from pride and arrogance and truly humble ourselves before God? When God sees that we resolutely reject Satan's original sin, pride, then God will accept us and help us with life's daily struggles.

**It is extremely important to God that we reject all forms of pride!**

Here is what God told king Solomon in a dream, after Solomon had built the Temple:

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; **If my people**, which are called by my name, **shall humble themselves**, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; **then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin**, and will heal their land. Now my eyes shall be open, and my ears shall attend unto the prayer [that is made] in this place. (2 Chronicles 7:13-15)

True humility is the only foundation on which a relationship with God can be established. Even repentance must be established on the foundation of humility. A changed way of thinking, which is what the word repentance conveys, is only **real godly repentance** if it is based on an attitude of humility. These verses show how much importance God places on humility.

So now let's conclude by summarizing the points we have covered about pride.

## THE MAIN POINTS ABOUT PRIDE

We have looked at a lot of Scriptures throughout the whole Bible. Here are some of the main points from those Scriptures:

1) Pride is Satan's original sin.

2) Pride resists God.

3) Pride is a mindset that elevates the self ahead of God.

4) Satan invented trading (i.e. buying and selling) in order to accumulate wealth for himself, and in that way provide an outlet for himself to express his personal pride.

5) The underlying principle of trading is that the more you have, the better you supposedly are.

6) Satan is the real inventor of money. Money, representing wealth, is the most abundant and universal medium for expressing pride and arrogance.

7) God hates all forms of pride.

8) Pride boasts of great achievements and claims superiority to others.

9) God is committed to bringing down and abasing all the proud.

10) Pride is the motivation for bullying and for persecuting the poor.

11) The proud turn making money into a virtue, and they praise the covetous.

12) The proud will not seek God. **They don’t like to pray.**

13) In most cases pride can be readily seen in the faces of proud people.

14) Pride is Satan’s counterfeit for joy and happiness and pleasure.

15) The way proud people conduct themselves is perverse, grievous and depraved before God.

16) The proud believe that they are invincible and always right, just like Satan.

17) The mouths of the proud are filled with lies, deceit and fraud. Proud people are always liars.

18) Pride leads to totally irrational anger, as in Haman’s case, and seeks revenge with a demonic fury.

19) Pride is the greatest motivation for inflicting pain on other people.

20) Pride is totally blind to its own arrogance.

21) Proud people always fall. God guarantees that.

22) We need to ask God in prayer to cast down and to punish the proud, and to bring them to shame, even as David asked this of God.

23) The proud have contempt for others, and they readily spout out tirades of insults against other people.

24) The proud will lay traps for other people. So always be on your guard when dealing with proud people.

25) The proud don’t play by the rules. They play to win in any way they can, with a disregard for rules.

26) God requires us to hate all pride and arrogance, without exceptions, as a matter of principle.

27) The proud cannot keep their mouths shut because speaking is one of the main outlets for expressing their pride.

28) God will surely destroy the house of the proud. Their dynasties always fizzle out. The destruction of the proud is inevitable.

29) Without repentance there is no mercy for the proud.

30) The proud are headed for the lake of fire.

31) King Hezekiah is an example of someone repenting of his pride, and that repentance was accepted by God.

32) In most cases it takes a drastic humbling to even bring proud people to that point of perhaps repenting of their pride.

33) The greater the pride that a person has, the closer that person is to Satan.

34) Proud leaders cause tremendous damage to the people they lead, be it a country or a city or a

corporation, etc.

35) Gossip is a very nasty expression of pride. It is of Satan.

36) Destruction is in fact the only effective way to deal with proud people. God will always destroy the focal point of their pride.

37) Flattery appeals to pride and vanity.

38) The greatest penalty for pride in this life is when God temporarily takes the spirit in man away from a proud person. This exposes that without the spirit in man we are nothing and utterly incapable of accomplishing anything.

39) Pride is the worst form of idolatry because it is worship of self.

40) Pride is presumptuous.

41) Pride motivates people to set themselves up as teachers of the Bible.

42) Pride is the primary motivation for rebellion.

43) The proud have a poor understanding of the Bible and they easily misapply the laws of God.

44) The proud seek to destroy others with lies.

45) Before God all the ways of the proud are perverse.

46) Those who oppress other people are motivated by pride. Satan is the original oppressor, and pride was his motivation.

47) It is inevitable that proud people will reap shame. When we reap shame, then we should at least examine ourselves for pride.

48) Only by pride come contention and quarrels. In every quarrel at least one party is motivated by pride.

49) Pride causes people to misinterpret and to misapply facts. We should expect proud people to reach wrong conclusions.

50) Pride will even cause people to deny factual truth that the proud don’t like and don’t agree with.

51) To get us to sin, Satan must instill pride in our minds. As long as we harbor any form of pride, so long it is guaranteed that we will sin, because pride is not submissive to God.

52) Pride is also an essential requirement for Satan to keep us deceived. The more we are able to cast pride out of our lives, the less we are going to be deceived.

53) It is only true humility that makes it possible for us to accept unpleasant facts about ourselves and about our beliefs (i.e. where our beliefs are in error). Without real humility we will never understand the error of our ways.

54) That is because a proud mind simply cannot accept facts that contradict its own position.

55) Humility prepares the human mind so that God can then work with that mind.

56) **The greatest way we can express true humility towards God is by praying regularly, on a daily basis.** Pride is the primary reason why many people in the various churches of God do not pray regularly.

57) Pride tempts God and provokes God.

58) Unchecked pride in young children is extremely bad, and it has very serious consequences.

59) Pride blocks God's calling from reaching a human mind. Proud people are simply not callable.

60) That is because a proud mind rejects out of hand God's point of view.

61) Pride is like a magnet for trouble. Proud people are invariably trouble-makers.

62) Pride is the primary cause of divisions amongst the people of God.

63) And pride carries the death penalty.

And that's about all we need to cover about pride at this stage.

Frank W Nelte