


Are the Wicked winning?

Psalm 10:11: (NASB) *He says to himself, God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.*



We often look around at the world and think how horrible things are. Yet, more people have more advantages now than at any time in history. The average life expectancy throughout the world has dramatically increased, and in most countries technology is in the hands of the average person. All of this as the desire to live in a God-honoring, Christian way has severely decreased, especially in developed countries. If so many good potentials for the human race exist and Christianity is on a downward spiral, is it logical to conclude that life without God and Jesus is *better* for humanity?

Let's begin by looking at different perspectives on whether the world is better or worse.

 **Measuring violence, Steven Pinker Says the World Is Becoming Less Violent, National Public Radio, July 16, 2016** (Steven Pinker is a Harvard University psychology professor, author of the book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.*)

- *The only way you could really answer the question - has violence gone up or down? - is to count how many violent incidents have there been as a proportion of the number of opportunities, and has that gone up or down over the course of history? And that's what I tried to do in the book. I looked at homicide, looked at war, looked at genocide, looked at terrorism. And in all cases, the long-term historical trend, though there are ups and downs and wiggles and spikes, is absolutely downward. The rate of violent crime in United States has fallen by more than half in just a decade. The rate of death in war fell by a factor of 100 over a span of 25 years.*

Our question was a little broader than just violence, but violence is a part of it.

The world is BETTER:



(Source: Ourworldindata.com) Life expectancy has increased rapidly since the Enlightenment. Estimates suggest that in a pre-modern, poor world, life expectancy was around 30 years in all regions of the world. In the early 19th century, life expectancy started to increase in the early industrialized countries while it stayed low in the rest of the world. This led to a very high inequality in how health was distributed across the world. Good health in the rich countries and persistently bad health in those countries that remained poor. Over the last decades, this global inequality decreased. Countries that not long ago were suffering from bad health are catching up rapidly. Since 1900, the global average life expectancy has more than doubled and is now approaching 70 years. No country in the world has a lower life expectancy than the countries with the highest life expectancy in 1800.

"No country in the world has a lower life expectancy than the countries with the highest life expectancy in 1800." Our worst-case country is better than the best-case country in the year 1800. The world is looking pretty good! People



are living longer. Also, good health in rich and poor countries has begun to even out.

Are the wicked winning? Maybe not...!



The world is WORSE (summarized by one of our CQ researchers - tables referenced are not included):

(Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/comparison-2008-2009-and-2016-2017-nsduh-state-prevalence-estimates>)

- Table 10 shows an increase in mental illness in every single age group when comparing the years 2008-2009 and 2016-2017.
- Table 12 also shows that every single age group saw an increase in suicidal thoughts during the same time periods.
- Table 13 is quite shocking. 2008-2009 major depressive episodes from the 12-17 age group was 8.22% in the total U.S. in 2016-2017 it was 13.01%.

The world is BETTER:

(Source: Wikipedia)

As of June 2018, 55.1% of the world's population has internet access.

(Source: International Telecommunications Union)



| | 2005 | 2010 | 2017 (Estimate) |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| World population | 6.5 billion | 6.9 billion | 7.4 billion |
| Users worldwide | 16% | 30% | 48% |
| Users in the developing world | 8% | 21% | 41.3% |
| Users in the developed world | 51% | 67% | 81% |

The world is WORSE:

(Source: www.fightthenewdrug.org) There were more than 28,500,000,000 site visits to (porn site name withheld) last year, which equates to about 3.75 visits per person on earth. And this is a huge uptick from the year before, considering that (name withheld) only received about 23,000,000,000 visits in 2016 - an increase of more than 5.5 billion visits last year. That's a difference of 64 million average visits to the site per day in 2016, versus 2017's 81 million average visits a day in 2017. Long story short: that is a lot of visits, and that's a big increase from the last report.

How long would it take to view just the annual content uploads to this massive porn site? If someone looked for 24 hours a day non-stop, it would take approximately 68 years!

To put this in perspective, we have been broadcasting Christian Questions for nearly 21 years producing 1,056 episodes. If someone listened for 24 hours a day, it would take approximately 77 days to listen to everything we have ever said.

We could continue to go back and forth on this for hours, and the conclusion would be the same. The world is better than ever, and the world is worse than ever. Whichever way you may want to lean in this discussion, we should all be able to agree that *Christian values have lessened on the world stage*.



This noticeable absence of God and the seeming victory of evil is not new:

Psalms 10:1-3: (NASB) ¹Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble? ²In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; let them be caught in the plots which they have devised. ³For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and the greedy man curses and spurns the LORD.

If God is there, should He show us where He is? This question was asked in the days of the Psalms.



These ways are INSTANT and VIRAL. We see it faster, larger and more dramatically than ever before.

**We always talk about the dire conditions of the final trouble.
How can it be dire if there is good?**

Part of understanding the plan of God is realizing how broad and far-reaching it is. There is no human development that is beyond the sight and planning of God. He created humanity in His image to be creative, thoughtful and able to choose. He allows all of these things to have a wide breadth of experience, because His ultimate plan is for our learning and growing.

The plan of God is bigger than what is happening today in front of us. This plan takes time to unfold.

Are the wicked winning? They seem to be. Evil is *temporarily* ruling in this world, but it will not ultimately win because God has everything in control.

Romans 8:28: (KJV) *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

Psalms 10:4: (NASB) *The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, There is no God...*

There is no God - a powerful statement we often hear around us.

The wicked - beginning with Satan. While he was still called Lucifer, he wanted to abolish God's sovereignty over humanity.

His was a growing, festering and deadly thought process:

Isaiah 14:12-14: (NASB) ¹²How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! ¹³But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I



will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

God knew Satan's desire and allowed it to take temporary hold. But God's "temporary" seems like forever! Along the timeline of the destiny of humankind, it may appear righteousness is unrecoverable. But there is a pre-determined outcome and evil will be eradicated.

This Psalm is a good description of the wicked's attitude of arrogance:

Psalms 10:5-7: (NASB) ⁵*His (Satan and the wicked) ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all his adversaries, he snorts at them. ⁶He says to himself, I will not be moved; throughout all generations I will not be in adversity. ⁷His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.*

Satan and his followers have incredible arrogance, mocking God. This mocking has become part of our public discourse. For some reason, mocking God is not considered "politically incorrect."

Daniel shows the results of this growth of wickedness in prophetic end times verses by starting with the end:

Daniel 12:1,4: (KJV) ¹*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

Daniel here has revealed a unique (and final) time of trouble and the resulting deliverance of God's people.

Michael shall stand up - a picture of Jesus standing up for God's people.

A time of trouble such as never was - an unmistakable time, Armageddon, different from any other trouble seen in history.

Thy people shall be delivered - in conjunction with the trouble is a deliverance of God's holy and chosen people.

⁴*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end...*

The time of the end - not the end of time; the end of this particular age in which wickedness is allowed to reign and the gospel has been introduced.

We can trace a big change since the coming of Jesus and the establishment of Christianity to today. The *time of the end* (not the *time of trouble*) begins with the year 1799. (How we determine that year is beyond the scope of this podcast.)

Daniel's prophecy was not meant to be understood until the appropriate time, at which point he adds another powerful detail that begins when this special end time begins.

...Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.



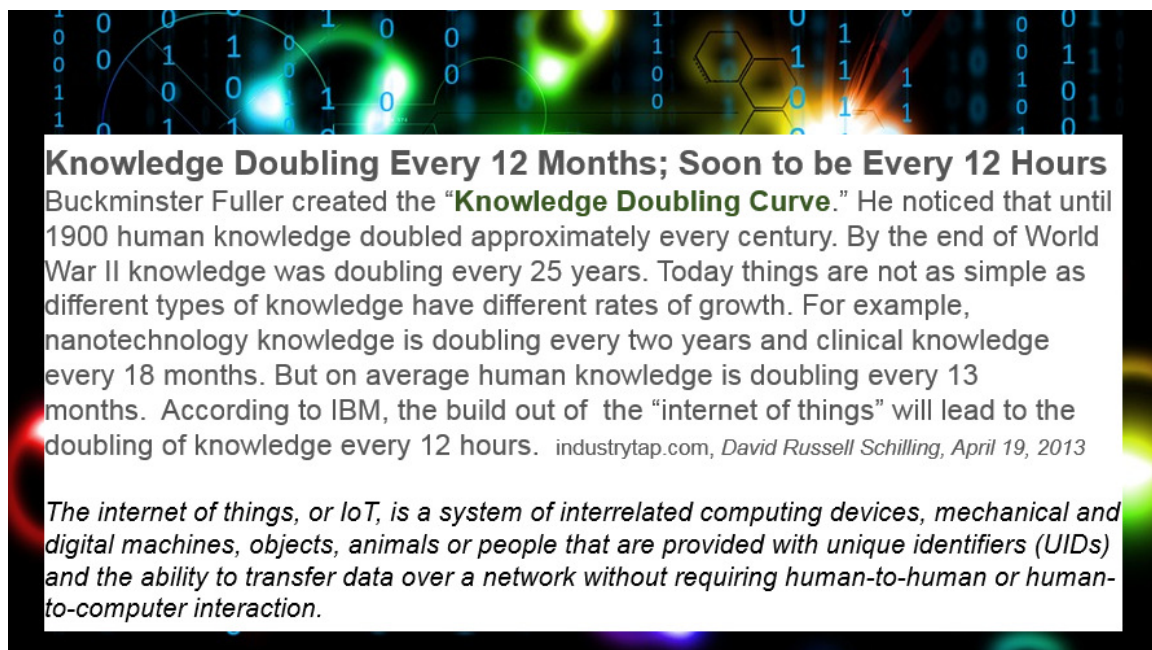
Daniel started this prophecy talking about the *time of trouble*. He said the book would be closed until the *time of the end* and its understanding would be opened at that time, which we believe to be our day.

Many shall run to and fro - transportation - the ability to go places. Man went from riding on horses for most of his existence to just recently having the capability of sending missions to Mars.

Knowledge shall be increased - God's prophecy shows the allowance of mixing of great knowledge and great evil.



Starting with the Industrial Revolution in the 1800's, knowledge has been increasing at an astounding rate.



Knowledge Doubling Every 12 Months; Soon to be Every 12 Hours

Buckminster Fuller created the "**Knowledge Doubling Curve**." He noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology knowledge is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every 18 months. But on average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the "internet of things" will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours. industrytap.com, David Russell Schilling, April 19, 2013

The internet of things, or IoT, is a system of interrelated computing devices, mechanical and digital machines, objects, animals or people that are provided with unique identifiers (UIDs) and the ability to transfer data over a network without requiring human-to-human or human-to-computer interaction.

Everything that can be invented has been invented. — **Charles H. Duell, Commissioner of United States Patent Office in 1899** (Note, the audio podcast misattributed the quote to another.)



God's preparations were in place when Satan's rebellion was only in his thoughts:

Revelation 13:8: (KJV) *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the **foundation** <2602> of the **world** <2889>.*

Foundation: Strong's #2602 *katabole*; a deposition, i.e. founding; figuratively, conception

World: Strong's #2889 *kosmos*; orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively [morally])

The orderly arrangement is the way the world works. That was in the planning stages (the ransom was essentially already paid) because the evil thought was already beginning to percolate.

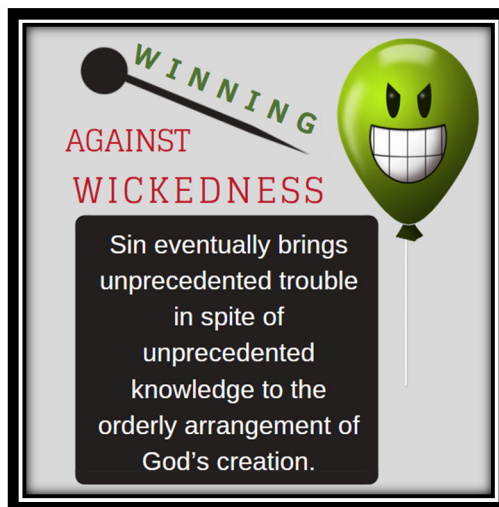
Jesus was a willing sacrificial lamb from the moment there was a shadow of doubt cast upon the harmony of God's creation. God pre-planned the way out when the way into the trouble was just beginning.

Jesus also refers back to the Daniel 12 prophecy:

Matthew 24:21: (NASB) *For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the **world** <2889> until now, nor ever will.*

In summary, Daniel tells us that in the end times, knowledge will be increased and a great time of trouble will happen.

There is a correlation between these two - knowledge increases but so does trouble.



Have you had your credit card hacked? I (Rick) have a couple of times. It is scary and aggravating and makes you wonder how people could do such a thing. People who do that are smart. Imagine if they could use their intelligence for something good! Technology allows us to use all our intelligence and creativity for something dark OR light. Whenever there is a positive breakthrough, there is the negative recourse that follows. The world looks like the wicked are pulling ahead because of knowledge. But God said it would increase and the result would be this time of trouble.

**How is wickedness described in the Bible?
Isn't it painfully obvious that we should avoid it?**

We do generally think that pinpointing wickedness is a simple and obvious exercise. As we now look at some of Jesus' own warnings against it, we will see a subtle expansion of what evil is and does, which sheds a whole new level of light on just how insidious Satan's approach has become.





The wicked are dark and devious:

Psalms 10:8-10: (NASB) ⁸He sits in the lurking places of the villages; in the hiding places he kills the innocent; his eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate. ⁹He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; he lurks to catch the afflicted; he catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net. ¹⁰He crouches, he bows down, and the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.

These days, the wicked lurk in the dark corners of the world of technology. They bait you into clicking where you should not and hold your computer hostage. This is a modern day picture of what this Psalm is talking about. It may not be out in the street, but a lot of wickedness takes place in peoples' minds and can reach us without leaving our desk.



Results uneven but good, Steven Pinker Says the World Is Becoming Less Violent, National Public Radio, July 16, 2016

- *Martin: And you say this is a worldwide phenomenon.*
- *Pinker: Well, it's highly uneven. If you certainly choose the most violent parts of the world at any given time, they're going to be pretty violent. But if you count the number of parts of the world that are violent versus those that aren't, then you see that the world is becoming more peaceful. The impression that some kinds of violence have gone up over the last five years has some truth to it. Because of the Syrian civil war, the rate of death in warfare has drifted upward a little bit in the last five years. There has been a small increase in homicide in the United States in the last three years. But both of those figures are at a fraction of what they were in the '60s, '70s and '80s.*

Violence is one aspect of wickedness, but it is much broader than that.

Jesus' prophecy of his return compares our day to Noah's day. Here is the account of Noah's day:

Genesis 6:5,7-8: (NASB) ⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... ⁷The LORD said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them. ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

This is a graphic description of a constant evil getting even worse.

When Jesus used Noah's day to compare to the time of his return, he focused on something entirely different...

Life went on, until sudden destruction:

Luke 17:26: (NASB) ²⁶And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man...

You would be expecting Jesus to reference the evil in Noah's day, but instead he talks about the everyday activities.

Matthew 24:38-39: (NASB) ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming (presence) of the Son of Man be.



He does not mention evil. Was this an oversight? Evil was the primary reason for the destruction of that world. Jesus' point was that life was normal, and then destruction came. "Normal life" before the Flood was *evil continually*.

As it was in those *days of Noah*, so shall it be when Jesus returns.

For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episodes #797 and #799 "Is Jesus Really Returning?" (Parts 1 and 2).

When this *time of trouble* we have talked about is present, so is Jesus. Jesus is saying, "Here is what it will be like when I come back - it will be like the days of Noah."

He does the same thing in his prophecy with the example of Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah:

Luke 17:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸*It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; ²⁹but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

They were living life. Jesus does not talk about the evil of that day, but this is why the city was destroyed.

The actual account is clear about their evil:

Genesis 18:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰*And the LORD said, The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. ²¹I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.*

In Genesis 18:24-33 there was a discussion between Abraham and God. Abraham pleads with God to spare the city if there could be found just 50 righteous people. God agrees. Abraham then asks about 40 and God agrees. He drops down to 30 then 20, and God agrees. The request goes down to 10, but in the end not even 10 righteous people were in the city, and it was destroyed.

The evil here was deep and dark, yet Jesus does not mention it as an indicator of our own end times when he compares us to Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? The wicked (Satan and those who follow his objectives) have been systematically working towards an environment that shows us a "new normal" without God and godly principles. In both cases of Noah and Sodom, Jesus explained that life went on normally until destruction came. We need to challenge what our "normal" is.



Observations of Jesus' warning for our time based on the days of Noah and Lot:

- Life looks as it should, yet it contains an inherent darkness if it is godless. We have come to a place where "normal" is a godless approach because "I" have become the god of my life.



- Society has purposefully walked away from God, and now this is what is considered "normal."



When I was a kid, I saw more of an innocence. Now I see a more blatant, in-your-face evil being presented as if it is good.

- Those who seek to remain godly must NOT be a part of this "new normal." This is hard! We need to train our children in a God-fearing way of reverence and respect for the older generation.

We have to look at the world around us and understand we are seeing "dark" that appears normal. This is what Jesus was warning us against - the normal we see is darkness - do not be fooled by it.



Godliness is a standard that is higher than humanity. We have to re-measure ourselves by the higher standard and not the ever-moving standard of "how I feel today."

Wickedness looks like it is winning because evil has become the "normal" way of life.

**How do we in all practicality avoid participating in this "new normal"?
If we run, where do we hide?**

It is here that we begin to realize that we are in a tight spot. According to Scripture we are NOT instructed to sequester ourselves and be completely withdrawn from the world. As a matter of fact, Jesus told his followers to preach the gospel to the world. What we need to do is be able to hide in plain sight!

Our "normal" is inherently dark, and dark to a point it has never been before. When you look at the statistics that show the darkness that comes as a result of technology - the ease with which it is able to be reached - the depressiveness people experience, we have to really be on our guard.

Psalm 10:11: (NASB) *He says to himself, God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.*

The thought is, there is freedom because God hides Himself so He will never see what we do. Those who do evil say, "What do we have to worry about? You think God is going to do something to me?" It is that sense of complete and utter freedom to do whatever we want because, "There is no evidence of God anywhere, so why would I begin to worry?"



This sounds so much like the famous quote:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. — Charles Dickens, "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859)

SPECIAL NOTE: Part of the Dickens' quote is referring to going to either heaven or hell. There is no hellfire or torment in God's plan. We have done many programs on this topic, and the correct way to use these terms is to substitute "grave" or "tomb," where those who have passed away are waiting for the resurrection, to be brought back to life in the Day of Judgment.

For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episodes #1021, 1024 and 1027: "Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible?" (Parts 1, 2 and 3.)

This was written in 1859, and he is describing the French Revolution from the late 1790's. However, we read it and say, "That sounds like today!" The point is that there has always been trouble in the world.

History is cyclical, but what we see today is evil in a very different form. Our "normal" is far more godless.

Back in the times of the Crusades, many "God-fearing" individuals acted under false pretenses, because the doctrines of the Catholic Church were hideous, forceful and untrue. These false doctrines were put in place to scare people into giving money to the organization - fear-based Christianity.

Today the recognition of God has almost disappeared. Evil has found a way to not just mock the name of God, but completely remove it from the equation so there is no thought for something higher.

Back to Psalm 10 and the pleading with God for His help:

Psalm 10:12-14: (NASB) ¹²Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the afflicted. ¹³Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, You will not require it. ¹⁴You have seen it, for You have beheld mischief and vexation to take it into Your hand. The unfortunate commits himself to You; You have been the helper of the orphan.

Do not forget the afflicted - In other words, do not forget those who are suffering. People have a sense of God and do not understand why, if God is light, there is so much darkness?



Violence is irrational, Steven Pinker Says the World Is Becoming Less Violent, National Public Radio, July 16, 2016

- *Martin: Why is the rate of violence going down around the world?*
- *Pinker: If there's a common denominator - in the long run, violence really is irrational. I might get an advantage if I harm someone else for my benefit, but on the other hand, he feels the same way. And if we both are*



constantly trying to kill each other, we're both worse off. And certainly the police and government have had a huge role in reducing violence. In the international arena, of course, we don't have a global police force. And there it is partly dependent on institutions of cooperation that make it more profitable to trade with other countries than to invade them. You don't kill your customers. The rise of democracy has probably made a difference. Democracies are less likely to wage war against each other. And there's also been a change in norms, just what decent countries do or don't do.

Murder is a measurement, but what about the kind of violence done to others in order to get ahead? What if I can do something to you that is not nice, because I am more important than you? We do not think about this as being violent, but stepping on the rights of another human being is not godly.

Thousands of years ago in the Old Testament there was the same pleading for God to show Himself. Even then they saw wickedness and had a longing for deliverance.

This pleading was and is as common as those who see the works of wickedness long for deliverance:

Habakkuk 1:2-4: (NASB) ²How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, Violence! Yet You do not save. ³Why do You make me see iniquity, and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; strife exists and contention arises. ⁴Therefore the law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore justice comes out perverted.

What a great description! Habakkuk could have written this today. Think of all the false lawsuits and court systems where no justice is being done. Often, justice IS perverted, because our sense of what justice should bring us is perverted. The increase of knowledge has not been kept in check by the morality set by God. Knowledge without the checkpoints of godly morality will go awry.



(Corrected from audio.) I had a friend whose mother was put in jail for adultery in the 1950's, because then there was a sense of morality. Today it does not matter.

What happened to us? Where did we go wrong? Daniel told us about the increase of knowledge. But without the checkpoints of God's morality continually keeping that knowledge on the straight and narrow path, it will automatically become darkness.

What was Habakkuk supposed to do with all the destruction and violence around him? He was supposed to hide.

Where did Habakkuk "hide" from the wickedness and perverted justice? He hid in plain sight:

Habakkuk 2:1,3: (NASB) ¹I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved... ³For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.



Habakkuk witnesses the violence in front of him and says, "I know God is with me. I am going to watch. I know He will show me what to do." The verse we did not read talks about writing the vision down and making it plain so those who run can read it. God is telling Habakkuk to give **instruction** and **encouragement** along the lines of truth, so we can interpret what is happening in a godly fashion.

Having learned that kind of truth, we are trying to restate it to anyone who will listen. We want to warn that darkness is around, evil is there, knowledge has increased and it is wonderful, but without God, "wonderful" turns sour, bitter, dark and damaging. But do not worry - God's got this.

Habakkuk's eyes were opened wide in his evil time, just like ours should be. We will see God's deliverance - we just have to keep watching. We are to be "in" the world but not "of" the world.

Where are we to hide? In plain sight! Jesus is clear and tells us to be a shining light. We are protected by providence:

John 17:14-19: (NASB) ¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

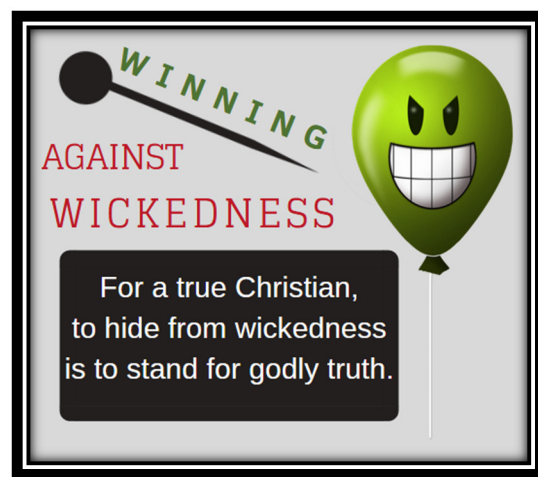
Jesus is praying to God the night before his crucifixion to protect his followers. He is saying, "Set them apart, sanctify them with the truth of the gospel. Do not take them out of the world. You put ME into the world to be a light. I am sending them into the world like you sent me." Why? To be a light.

How do we hide in plain sight? In the protective providence of God. We might think that is a dangerous place to hide - and it is - because the world does not like it. But does that mean we do not do it? What did Jesus do? How did Jesus stand?

To hide means to say, "I will take the providence of God and wear it as I walk in Jesus' footsteps, come what may." The great promise is that it does not matter what happens to us now, because this is about eternity. This is about standing in truth and being faithful unto death.

It might sound odd, but that is how we hide. We hide in the light of God's word and of Jesus' example.

When we stand for truth, wickedness has no part in our heart or mind.





What do we watch out for while both avoiding the wicked world and seeing God's will unfold?

Essentially, we want to define those things we are to be running from as well as those things we are to be running to. We will find it is always easier to escape darkness and evil when we have an appropriate destination. Clear guidelines help make our decisions more factual and less emotional.

Too often as Christians we "feel" something. We think, because we are Christians, this feeling must be from God. But if it is not holding up to the highest standards of godliness, truth and righteousness, then it is not a feeling that comes from God. It is *not* "the Spirit moving in me." If it is not in line with godliness, honor, truth and sanctified thinking and action, it is a lie. We want to know what we are running from and what we are running to.

Back to Psalm 10 - here is where we see that God IS there and WILL answer clearly:

Psalms 10:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer, seek out his wickedness until You find none. ¹⁶The LORD is King forever and ever; nations have perished from His land. ¹⁷O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear ¹⁸To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror.

Break the arm of the wicked - take the "wicked's" ability to influence away. This will happen but not as soon or as easily as we would like.

What do we run from and what do we run to?

Isaiah 5:20: (NASB) *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil...*

Morality needs to have a clear basis to guide behavior.

What is your conscience tuned to?

1 Timothy 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron...

If we put a hot iron on our skin, it kills the nerves - they are deadened. Even Christians can get into this state. The context is about Christian leaders falling down this path. We must be on our guard, especially if we are involved in traditions that may lead us off the path.



Isaiah 5:20: (NASB) *Woe to those who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness...*

Woe to those - any "truth" that does not harmonize with the light of God is tainted and should be treated as such:

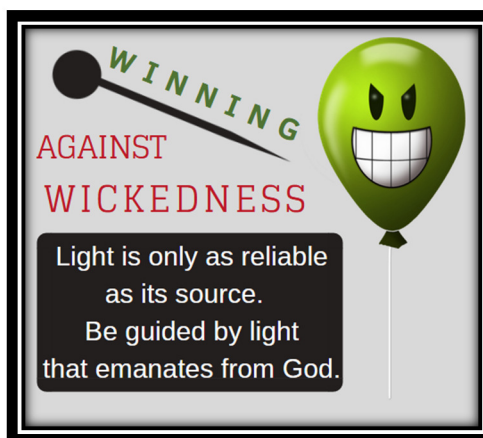
2 Corinthians 11:14: (NASB) *No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*

We can be deceived if we do not recognize the source of "light." Satan knows he can take darkness and turn it subtly, slowly, into what we may see as light, so we fall into something without realizing it.

James 1:17: (NASB) *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

Goodness with godliness equals peace and contentment for life.

Goodness without godliness eventually disrupts our lives. It has to be godly for its good to last.



We are in an age where wickedness does look like it is winning, so be alert!

Isaiah 5:20: (NASB) *Woe to those...who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

Our sensory stimulation needs monitoring now more than ever. The statistics we read in segment one is - *bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*

Philippians 4:8: (NASB) *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

The battle is in the mind. We must fight our thoughts to get them in line with God's righteousness. Do our thoughts honor God? *Dwell* on the good listed in Philippians 4:8.

We may not be able to keep the thoughts from coming into our minds, but we can keep them from staying. If we allow thoughts to stay in our heads, they will eventually trickle down into our hearts, producing damaging actions.



Most of us know our heart can bring us down the wrong road. Most of us do not have the courage to stand up against it. This is letting wickedness win.

Isaiah 5:21: (NASB) *Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!*

Pride must be kept down. This is not something that comes easily.

Ego must be kept in check - let our wisdom be from above:

1 Peter 5:6-7: (NASB) *⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*

Most of humanity wants to be exalted and in the limelight. We want that sense of accomplishment. *Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God - and the exaltation comes when He says it is appropriate.*



Isaiah 5:22: (NASB) *Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink...*

Our actions and participation need to be based on moral and godly intentions:

Colossians 3:23-25: (NASB) *²³Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. ²⁵For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.*

Do your work heartily - if we are in a job we do not like or we are doing chores we do not like, do it to honor God.



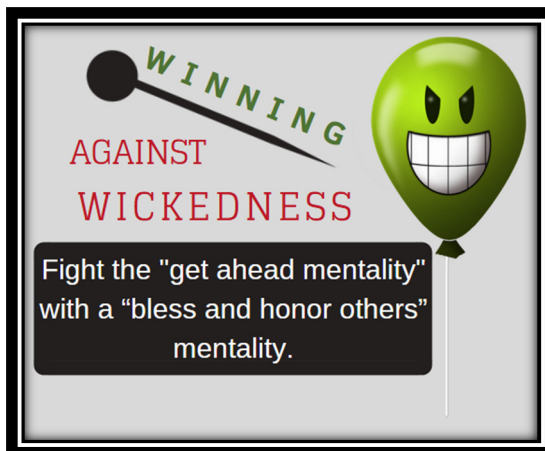


Isaiah 5:23: (NASB) *Who justify the wicked for a bribe and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!*

Do things the right way.

Our ability to rationalize must never be confused with our appropriate opportunities to compromise:

Matthew 6:33: (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*



Are the wicked winning? It sure looks like it, because "normal" has become evil and evil has become "normal."

The good news is we can hide in plain sight by standing firm in Christ's righteousness, putting on the full armor of God and having the light of Jesus shine in us and through us so we can be an example to those around us. God's kingdom is coming. Wickedness will be put away forever; it WILL NOT win.

In our lives, wickedness should have no place.

*So, are the wicked winning?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on January 14, 2019:
Ep. #1056: "What Makes a Christian a Hypocrite?"





Bonus Material

He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster.
— Friedrich Nietzsche



Deb says: To answer your question, no, the wicked are not winning. They are a learning model for the world of mankind.

Another reminder of some of the effects of wickedness in the world:

This example is the priesthood of Israel as they failed to honor God the way they were supposed to:

Malachi 3:13-15: (NASB) ¹³Your words have been arrogant against Me, says the LORD. Yet you say, What have we spoken against You? ¹⁴You have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵So now we call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also test God and escape.

Next a hard look at the results of idolatry which is putting ANYTHING above God:

Romans 1:18-32: (NASB) ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Finally, the assurance that God through Jesus will put all of this in order:

Isaiah 42:1-4: (NASB) ¹Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry out or raise his voice, nor make his voice heard in the street. ³A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not extinguish; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not be disheartened or crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for his law.

Isaiah 55:11 (NASB): So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

God has said it; He WILL do it.