

Are We Rejecting Reason or Responding and Reacting to Reality?

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool"

Isaiah 1:18

Dr Chuck McGowen

We humans were created with a sense of reason by an infinitely rational God; an attribute which provides us with the means to communicate One with the other; we being the other and God being One in essence yet three in Person. Unlike the rest of God's creatures_vegetation, animals and rocks_the Lord has endowed each of us with a soul; the seat of intellect, emotion, personality and will plus a sense of, and the capacity to, reason, the essence of God's being or image. To reason is to think, understand and form judgments logically. Reason allows us to find a solution to a problem by considering various possible options. Finally, it provides us with the ability to persuade with a rational argument. That is why God invites us to reason with Him through the study of His Word. In doing so He makes His position patently obvious and we have little, if any, room in which to wiggle.

REJECTING REASON

We are now living in a time when society in general has tossed reason to the wind. It is known as an age of post-modernism. Since many of the readers may not be familiar with that word post-modernism a brief explanation of the term is in order. Countless tomes have been written on the subject and what is shortly to be said about it would be comparable to examining a single grain of sand in order to understand an entire beach. Never the less I will attempt to put the subject into some sort of perspective relative to the purpose of this essay. For a more profound explanation of these issues I would refer the reader to the late Christian philosopher and apologist Francis Schaefer's work entitled *Escape From Reason*.

While the notion of post-modernity has been around since the 1940s and postmodern philosophy originated primarily in France during the mid-20th century as a rejection of the concepts of rationality and absolute truth, prior to the 20th century there were several influencing philosophical preludes that sparked many of postmodern philosophy's interests, including an abrogation of the notion of moral absolutes. It was also greatly impacted by the writings of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century and other philosophers early on in the 20th century. It was Nietzsche and his ideas regarding "the will to power" which greatly influenced Adolph Hitler in his determination to rule the world through the rise of his macabre brainchild the "Third Reich." Furthermore Hitler gained an alleged justification of the

"Final Solution" to his Jewish problem that eventuated in the Holocaust. Postmodern philosophy is an ideological objective which is critical of the foundational assumptions and concepts of modern philosophy and particularly Biblical Judeo-Christian ethos and mores. It was heavily influenced by three concepts known as phenomenology, structuralism and existentialism.

PHENOMENOLGY

In its most fundamental category phenomenology aspires to study topics usually regarded as subjective: I.e. consciousness and the content of conscious experiences such as judgments, perceptions and emotions. Beginning with the proposition of denying the existence of the soul those studies are doomed to failure. It is axiomatic that erroneous conclusions always derive from faulty propositions and assumptions. Although phenomenology seeks to be scientific, it does not attempt to study consciousness from the perspective of clinical psychology or neurology. Instead, it's proponents seek through systematic reflection to determine the essential properties and structures of consciousness and conscious experience. Without a soul, the "systematic reflection" supposedly utilized by the advocates of phenomenology would be impossible. They are in essence using the soul to disprove its existence. That is just one of hundreds of inconsistencies in the subtypes of post-modern philosophies. Structuralism, explained further below, rejected the concept of human volitional freedom and choice and focused instead on the way that human behavior is determined by various structures. By rejecting freedom of the will, a major Christian concept that requires the existence of a soul, they hope to move even closer to their purpose of eliminating God from all philosophical equations, debates and discussions. A central proposition of existentialism (also dealt with below) is that existence precedes essence, which means that the actual physical life of the individual is what constitutes what could be called his "essence" instead of there being a predetermined essence that defines what it is to be a human being.

Post-modern philosophy is skeptical or nihilistic toward many of the values and assumptions of earlier philosophical positions that derive from modernity, such as humanity having an essence (Schaeffer refers to it as "souliness") which distinguishes humans from animals, or the assumption that one form of government is demonstrably better than another. Of course the real essence that distinguishes humans from all other creatures is the soul and the capacity to reason, to cogitate, to think, to emote, to calculate, to plan and to act rationally. As for one system of government being better than another, no one has yet come up with a more preferable or efficacious arrangement of government than ours, which is based upon a perfect balance between form and freedom (another of Schaeffer's fundamentals). Our constitutional republic was founded upon representative federalism and is restrained by a balance of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of our republic. Too much form and one

has Fascism, totalitarianism or a police state ruled by a dictator. Too much freedom and one has anarchy; the one being as undesirable as the other. The experience of a society having too much freedom once happened in Israel, the account of which we read in Judges 21:25: *In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*

In drawing up the Constitution our forefathers, relied much on prayer and the advice of Providence. The balance of powers (Judiciary, Legislative and Executive branches) was even derived from a biblical precedent. *For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.* (Isaiah 33:22) God the Father, who is the ultimate Judge, represented in our judicial branch of government, for as we read in Revelation 20:11-12; *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were **judged** according to what they had done as recorded in the books.* The Holy Spirit is the Lawgiver (giving rise to the legislative branch) for we see that the Spirit told the prophet to write in Jeremiah 31:33; *I will put my **law in their minds** and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.* Finally, God the Son, Jesus the Christ, is King of Kings (the executive branch in our system of government) for in Revelation 17:14 we are told ; *They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is **Lord of lords** and **King of kings**—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.*

Postmodern philosophy is often particularly skeptical about simple binary oppositions (I.e. right versus wrong) and that is so characteristic of structuralism, which emphasizes the problem the philosopher has in patently distinguishing knowledge from ignorance, social progress from reversion, dominance from submission, and presence from absence; all binary opposites. Ergo, with that type of skepticism the post moderns came up with the notion of relativism. That is the inane doctrine which alleges that knowledge, truth, and morality exist only in relation to a particular cultural, societal, or historical context and are thus not absolute. Truth for example is dependant, not a stand alone, absolute possessing independence. For instance one might ask a post-modern the question, "Is that true?" To which the relativist would say, "It all depends." You may recall a former President of the United States who said under oath when asked, "**I**s it true that you and a certain Whitehouse female intern had an affair?" To which that post-modern thinker had no difficulty in averring, "It all depends on what is is."

If anything flies in the face of reason it is the post-modernist's notion of relativism. Suppose I were to say that 2 plus 2 equals 5, or 5 times 5 is 23 or 8 divided by 2 is 5. Who in their right mind could not distinguish simple mathematical facts from those answers that are patently uttered in ignorance? If our society ever succumbs to total anarchy who would call that chaotic consequence a progression? If I were to rule over my family with an iron fist, what rationally

thinking individual would say that I was in submission to my wife or my children? As far as whether or not a person is present or absent I would merely point out what my friend and 21st century apologist Ravi Zacharias once said to a rather smug and skeptical college student following one of Ravi's lectures in a major university. The student asked him, "Sir, can you prove that I actually exist?" To which Ravi promptly asked, "And whom should I say has asked this question?" While relativists cling to their irrational philosophy in theory, they consistently deny the impractical idea in practice. For example, they might question the truth of gravity, but they would surely die trying to prove that it doesn't exist by jumping head long out of a plane without a parachute. When a person of that persuasion avers with all confidence and conviction that "There is no such thing as absolute truth," all you or I need say in rebuttal is, "That being the case, is what you just said absolutely true? If not then we can both dismiss it as pure nonsense."

The growing attempts to redefine marriage to include the union of two people of the same gender who reportedly love each other as opposed to exclusively being defined as the union of a male and female who are madly in love, is one more example of eclipsing absolutes. One knows that only by uniting a man and a woman or a male and female of the animal kingdom can there be an obedience to God's command to "multiple and fill the earth." Without opposite sexes there can be no procreation; and that's an absolute scientific truth. Recall what He said to Noah in regard to animals: *Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can **multiply** on the earth and be **fruitful** and increase in number upon it.* (Genesis 8:17)

Earlier God had told this to Noah; *You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, **male and female**, to keep them alive with you.* (Genesis 6:19) As for His command pertaining to humankind God instructed Noah: *As for you, be **fruitful** and increase in number; **multiply** on the earth and increase upon it.* (Genesis 9:7) God had previously arranged for Noah to bring his three sons and their wives aboard the Ark to begin the process that would eventually repopulate planet Earth. *But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.* (Genesis 6:18) Apart from absolute gender distinctions, none of that would have been possible.

There is also the notion in post-modern thinking that moral absolutes are inane utterances of babbling idiots who hold to a strict, outdated Judeo-Christian code of ethics. Situational ethics teaches that the distinction of wrong versus right is impossible to know unless one knows the situation in which one is performing a given act. To that type of thinking, which blurs the lines of absolute distinctions, God responds as follows: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.* (Isaiah 5:20) Those were three more examples of the binary oppositions that were explained and alluded to above.

STRUCTURALISM

As noted above, structuralism has rejected the concept of human freedom and choice and focused instead on the way that human behavior is determined by various cultural structures. From the very beginning God presented Adam with a choice and although our freedom of will was greatly affected by the Fall, freedom of the will has remained to some extent. That freedom is defined as doing exactly what you wanted to do and were capable of doing at a particular moment in time, even if one moment later, having thought more about it, you would have done something all together different. Freedom and ability are not the same. I might have the freedom to fly, but lacking wings I am unable to do so. I have the freedom to do what is right, but possessing innate original sin I might not have the ability to do the right thing. The apostle Paul put it this way as he struggled with sin inborn sinful nature: *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.* (Romans 7:15-23) Left to ourselves we don't even have the freedom to come to Christ unless God gives us the ability. Jesus made that point patently clear; *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him... This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.* (John 6:44, 65)

For further discussion of the limitations of that volitional "freedom" I would suggest that you read *The Bondage of the Will* by Martin Luther, putative father of the Reformation. To some extent we are all slaves and held in bondage. Peter pointed this out when he warned us of the immoral nature of false teachers: *They promise them freedom, while they themselves are **slaves** of depravity—for a **man is a slave** to whatever has mastered him.* (2 Peter 2:19) Our only hope to escape the bondage of our wills, especially in regard to our inability to please God is found in the words of Christ Himself: *If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and **the truth will set you free.*** (John 8:31-32)

God presented Adam with this choice of obedience versus autonomy from the very outset of their relationship. *And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you*

eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17) The choice was demonstrably obvious; eat the fruit and die or abstain and live. That seminal couple decided to be autonomous rather than obedient to God's only law. The word autonomy derives from two Greek words auto meaning self and nomos meaning law. To be autonomous is to be a law unto one's self. That was the choice that Adam and Eve made and it proved to be an egregious, fatal error that affected us all.

In Deuteronomy 30:15-20 we read of God presenting mankind with another set of free will choices. *See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.*

EXISTENTIALISM

A central proposition of existentialism is that **existence precedes essence**, which means that the actual, material life of the individual is what constitutes what could be called his or her "essence" instead of there being a predetermined essence that defines what it is to be a human. Thus, according to the post-modern view of life, we had no essence until we existed. Essence may be defined as the intrinsic nature of something or the quality which determines something's character. While Adam was created with a flawless, intrinsic nature, a high degree of moral integrity, consummate intelligence and an eternal existence for his future, when he sinned and brought about the fall from grace of all future mankind, it was inevitable and predictable that the human race would descend into an abyss of moral depravity. Prior to the Flood that would wipe away all persons then residing on Earth, save eight, God viewed the pitiful state of mankind and this was how Moses recorded God's thoughts: *The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.* (Genesis 6:5) When the Flood was over and only eight people remained on Earth, God uttered these words: *Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.* (Genesis 8:21) Everything had changed on Planet Earth as a result of the Flood, except the human essence, the sinful soul of mankind.

A person with a Christian worldview has no problem defining one's basic, intrinsic nature even before we were known to exist in the eyes of the world. From the moment of our conception, at a time when we were one stem cell large, possessing a cell nucleus consisting of

46 chromosomes that contained 40,000 genes and a main cell structure capable of advancing us to a fully developed infant human, we had a soul, the real essence of life. Of that soul David wrote this in Psalm 51:5 *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* Thus, at the moment of conception our intrinsic nature, our real essence, the soul was sinful. Before the existentialists of the world could know of our existence we possessed essence. They have it backwards; essence precedes existence, not the other way around. They are correct when they say that "the actual life of the individual is what constitutes his essence" for that is the only part of one's being that lives on eternally. Paul explains it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4: *Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.* The temporary dwelling, here referred to metaphorically as a tent, is not our permanent home, our glorified, heavenly body is.

Both our essence and existence were formulated in the mind of God long before the beginning of our life, and for some even before the universe was created. David also wrote of this divine knowledge concerning all human beings in Psalm 139:13-16: *For you created my **inmost being**; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.* Our "inmost being" is the soul, the real essence of our being and the only part that will never die.

Writing off believers such as us, the apostle Paul penned these words in a letter to the church at Ephesus regarding God's eternal knowledge of our ultimate essence and existence: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he **chose us** in him **before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in his sight.* Ephesians 1: 3-4.

RESPONDING AND REACTING TO REALITY

Reality is the sum total of that which is seen and that which is unseen. Writing in his great apologetic work on the existence of God entitled, *The God Who is There*, Francis Schaeffer freely acknowledged the fact that the amount of reality comprising the unseen portion far out weights that which is visible. The apostle Paul put the concept of such reality this way: *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though **outwardly** we are wasting away, yet **inwardly** we are being renewed*

day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) The "outward" is the body that is our temporary dwelling and the "inward" is our soul which lasts forever.

The aggregate of the seen plus the unseen makes up that which is real. Prior to the discovery of "radio waves" _electromagnetic waves that have the capacity to transmit music, speech, pictures and other data invisibly through the air_ that unseen reality was not part of what mankind considered real. Brilliant people such as the Italian inventor by the name of Guglielmo Marconi made us aware of the reality of such unseen things. Today many devices work by using invisible electromagnetic waves including: radio, microwaves, cordless phones, remote controlled toys, television broadcasts, and more. That invisible part of reality is no longer impossible to comprehend. So it is for Christians who believe and conceive of other realities in the invisible realm of the real universe and beyond.

We are equally convinced of the reality of the invisible soul, angels, our triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and of the demonic world of Satan and his fallen angels (demons) as we are certain that invisible, life giving gases called oxygen and the deadly carbon monoxide are real as well. For us seeing is believing when it comes to the physical world, but where our faith is concerned visual proof is not always necessary, especially when we are speaking of the spiritual and metaphysical realm. *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* (Hebrews 1:11) The ability to comprehend, to conceptualize the metaphysical, the spiritual realm of reality comes to us by means of a spiritual rebirth. Jesus spoke of this when He explained to a Pharisee named Nicodemus that he was incapable of comprehending things regarding God's kingdom on earth because he had not yet undergone a rebirth. The Pharisee had just made some rather naive statements about Jesus being a man of God, not knowing that He was in fact a God-man. *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.* (John 3:3) The word "see" there doesn't refer to visual sight but rather comprehension. He could just as well have said; "Nicodemus unless you are born again you cannot comprehend things relating to the kingdom of God." Jesus went on to say, *I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.* (John 3:5-7) The entering God's kingdom has to do with becoming part of the invisible church, the body of Christ. It also relates to the ability to enter heaven when our physical life ends.

The apostle Paul also stressed this point when he instructed the church at Corinth about the necessity of possessing the indwelling Spirit who enables us to interpret Scripture and

understand other things about God's kingdom. *We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, **that we may understand** what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.* (I Corinthians 2:12-14)

The reality of the demonic spirit world is just as pertinent as that of the actuality of God's kingdom. Though many would chose to ignore this caveat offered by Paul in his letter to the Ephesian believers, such a warning is just as applicable to our lives as it was to those in the 1st century church. *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.* (Ephesians 6:10-18) Each of those portions that I have underlined represent metaphysical realities to which we are called to respond and react according to the reality of our experience with Satanic attacks.

The difference between a response and a reaction can be best illustrated as follows. When you or I enter a room where our pet dog is sleeping, the dog responds by looking up and raising his ears. He then reacts by arising from his relaxed position, walking over to the place where we are standing, wagging his tail and licking our outstretched hand. We can only respond to God's word by putting what we learn into action. James, the brother of Christ put it this way: *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.** Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.* (James 1:22-25)

Though we cannot see God, we can see the results of His ubiquitous presence as he works in the lives of believers. This too is a reality to which we need to respond and react. We cannot see

air currents, but we can see the effects that air has on leaves, grass and a flag on a pole. Jesus used such an example in His discussion with Nicodemus. *The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.* (John 3:8) Like the effect of wind on leaves, the Holy Spirit turns our lives over and around when He regenerates our soul from its spiritually dead existence. Likewise, when we note that God is working in a given person's life for whom we have been praying we need to do everything in our power to respond and react to that spiritual reality. The clue may come in the form of a question that relates to our faith.

In view of that the apostle Peter has advised: *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* (1 Peter 3:15) Of first importance is setting Christ's will and purpose for the moment above our own. We should have already been prepared to answer the person's query as a result of our intense and frequent study of the Bible. Last but not least, having responded to the question and thinking about our next move, we should give the answer, by reacting gently and respectful of the questioner's spiritual state; believer, new believer, non-believer or skeptic. Another reality may be an awareness that someone in the body of Christian believers has slipped away and fallen into a lifestyle of sin. James, the foster brother of Jesus, gives us this advice to which we should react: *My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.* (James 5:19-20).

One of the best biblical examples of are countless times we are called upon to respond and react to the reality of our spiritual position in Christ that supervenes our physical state is found in Matthew's gospel as Jesus explains the events surrounding His 2nd Coming: *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."* (Matthew

25:31-40)

We cannot expect the post-modernist who is unregenerate to understand the invisible realities that we know to exist, for they are the genuine **existentials**, they are real, actual, not imagined or invented. They are currently existing and in operation throughout the world in and out of the hearts of believers and unbelievers alike. Paul such activity as this to the Philippian church: *for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

(Philippians 2:13) The miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles after Him were **phenomena** that gave credibility to those who heard the Word of Truth from the speakers. The most credible **phenomenon** of all however, the consummate apologetic, was Christ's resurrection from the dead. Peter put it this way on the day of Pentecost, as recorded by Dr Luke: *Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man **accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs**, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.* (Acts 2:22-24) In another place Luke recorded Paul's apologetic discourse at the Areopagus in Athens which ended with these words: *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.* (Acts 17:31)

As for **structure**, our faith in God and God's kingdom, unseen to the skeptic, yet very real, is built upon two rock solid and unshakable foundations, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ (John 1:14) and the written Word of God. Of the first steadfast and resolute foundation Paul aptly wrote: *For no one can lay any **foundation** other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.* (1 Corinthians 3:11) The second and equally unyielding foundation is described by Jesus in His parable of two builders: *Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its **foundation on the rock.** But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.* (Matthew 7:24-27) The reader will note that each of those two men had heard God's Word preached to them, thus both attended worship services. The major difference was in the application of that which they heard. They both responded, having heard (as did the dog when we entered the room) but only one reacted and put the Word of God into practice.

As our pastor Dr. Allen says at the close of each message "Here's the deal." Pope Benedict rightly said as he took his place in the Papal See, that society in general and the church in

particular is in danger of drowning in a sea of relativism. To be effective people of God in and keep our heads above water in this sea we must **structure** our lives and build them up on the truth's of God's word and according to the unique pattern God has laid down for each of us. *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* (Ephesians 2:10) Next we need to be true examples of the **phenomenal** work that God did in making us alive in Christ, by the unseen reality of grace, through progressive growth in His kingdom that causes others to see Him in us. *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit* (2 Corinthians 3:18) Finally, instead of just **existing** in the body of Christ, we must be all that He planned for us to be when He saved us. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been **called according to his purpose.*** (Romans 8:28) We must be obedient to His commands, we must be vocal on issues that fly in the face of our Christian worldview, we must be His servants seeking to help others know and grow and we must always be on guard against the wiles of Satan, the enemy of our souls.

A fitting closure to this brief discussion on post-modernism and its relationship to the unbelieving world that we face on a daily basis, was penned by the author of the book of Hebrews, for in it we seeing the inexorable fusion of the visible and the invisible, the physical and the spiritual, the material and the immaterial; a true and unalterable testimony to the totality of the realities that we hold so dear: *May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Soli Deo Gloria

