**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***God’s Word in You***

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***Written Upon Your Heart***

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

April 2nd In the Year of Our Lord - (Anno Domini A.D.) 2022

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

Read and/or print sermon notes from our website – roundtopchurch.org

**Proverbs 1:7-9**

**7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

 **8** Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

 **9** Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck.

**Proverbs. 3:3** Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

**Proverbs 6:21** Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.

**Proverbs 7:3** Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.

**Jeremiah 31:33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

 **Sin written on hearts too. Jeremiah 17:1** The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; With a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart And on the horns of their altars,

**Hebrews 10:16** "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," He then says,

**2 Corinthians 3:3** being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

 Proverbs was written during the reign of King Solomon . . .over nine hundred years before the New Testament era…and 28 of the 39 books of the Old Testament had not yet been written.

 Jeremiah was written about six hundred years before the New Testament era and before the completion of the Old Testament.

 Hebrews and 2 Corinthians were written before 68 A.D.

2 Corinthians was written by Paul. Hebrews was written by an unknown writer, but the author is God. No doubt, Paul, being a Pharisee, knew the Proverbs and Jeremiah passages. Due to the extensive cultural and Old Testament content of the book of Hebrews, there is not any doubt that the writer was well-aware of the same passages of Scripture as Paul.

 **Why is this a worthy observation?**

 Because, from Adam to Abraham to Moses. . . a few thousand years passed before God first asked anyone to put His Word in writing. This does not mean they did not have a knowledge of how to be a person that God intended. I recently asked the question. . . what version of the Bible did Adam or Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac. . . down to Moses have? The answer is that they did not have a written form of God’s Word on some kind of physical material. **Romans 1:19-20** tells us. . .

**19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. **20** For 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.

This verse and history records that God communicated to people before the written Word. I see that there is an internal spiritual component to humanity to have a two-way communication with God our Creator. I have noted before that The National Geographic Society conducted a world-wide study which highlighted the fact that people all over the globe are “hardwired” in the brain for spiritual encounters.

With this *innate built-in capability* people know they need to seek peace in all things in order to have the best chance for survival. This starts with responding to the questions of how we got here and who put us here? Therefore, I see that people, deep down inside, know they need to make peace with their Creator and the people around them. The alternative to the “peace pursuit” in human lives is death. . . not a very good survival of the fittest proposition.

**Why does the writer of Proverbs (most likely Solomon) make these statements that became part of the Jewish cannon of sacred Scripture?**

Answer: Solomon had access to God’s Word in oral or written preservation. It is imperative for human survival that we accept and realize that the basic foundations for life that God has for humanity is transferred and contained primarily in the hearts and minds of people.

So, let us go back to the Torah. . . the Pentateuch. . . the first five books of the Old Testament that God gave to Moses and his descendants. God spoke to Moses directing him to write His words about four hundred years before Solomon ruled (Exod. 17:14, 24:4, 34:1,27; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9).

Yes, God instructed Moses to write down His covenant instructions. However, God knows that people will not always have His written Word physically written down on parchment or stone tablets. Therefore, God impressed upon the Hebrew leadership to do certain acts in order to keep His plan in front of them and to not be forgotten. God wanted them to constantly remember His Word, because the fallen world was/is constantly in front of them. . . testing them, enticing them to think evil thoughts and commit evil acts. God desires for us to take His path for our lives. We do this by keeping a constant awareness of His covenant and testimony (Word).

**Psalm 25:10** All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

Let us read. . .

**Deuteronomy 6:8** "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

**Deuteronomy 11:18** "You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.



**Exodus 13:9**

 "And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.

 So, (depicted in above picture) the Hebrews leadership physically made little boxes called “Phylacteries” to show that the Word of God was bound in/on their hearts and minds constantly.

 Here is an online article that summarizes about that little box the Jews wear on their forehead and forearm.

**Phylactery,** Hebrew tefillin, also spelled tephillin or tfillin, in Jewish religious practice, one of two small black leather cube-shaped cases containing Torah texts written on parchment, which, in accordance with Deuteronomy 6:8 (and similar statements in Deuteronomy 11:18 and Exodus 13:9, 16), are to be worn by male Jews 13 years of age and older as reminders of God and of the obligation to keep the Law during daily life. The name phylactery is derived from the Greek phylakterion, meaning amulet.

According to rabbinic regulations, one of the phylacteries is worn on the arm (the left arm if one is right-handed, the right arm if one is left-handed) facing the heart and the other on the forehead at the morning service (except on the Sabbath and festivals) and at the afternoon service on the Ninth of Av.

The phylacteries are worn in a prescribed manner so as to represent the letters shin, daleth, and yod, which taken together form the divine name Shaddai. The hand phylactery (tefillin shel yad) has one compartment with the texts written on a single parchment; the head phylactery (tefillin shel rosh) has four compartments, each with one text. The extracts are Exodus 13:1–10, 11–16; and Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21. Reform Jews interpret the biblical commandment in a figurative sense and, hence, do not wear phylacteries. Because of rabbinic indecision about the exact sequence of the four scriptural passages, very pious Jews may have two pairs of phylacteries.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "phylactery". Encyclopedia Britannica, Invalid Date, [https://www.britannica.com/topic/phylactery. Accessed 1 April 2023](https://www.britannica.com/topic/phylactery.%20Accessed%201%20April%202023).

**What does all this tell us?**

It tells us that God wanted/wants His Word written and held in our hearts and minds. We know that the Hebrews copied God’s Word given to Moses. They took meticulous effort to accurately copy these words (Sacred Scripture) onto vellum, parchment, papyri and parts of the text onto stone, metal objects and cloth. However, there were times when God’s Word was not physically present in front of them. This is why God offered to change their hearts so He could direct their lives (Ezekiel 36, John 3). However, God waits for people to ask Him to change their hearts.

We, too, as Believers, do not have God’s Word in a physical form with us all the time. However, we know God’s foundational message and way for our lives. We have not memorized the literal word-for-word text. I mean how many ways can you say. . . “God is love, and we are created in His image to love Him with all our heart and mind and love our neighbor.” And with our humility to God, we are given access to His Holy Spirit power to follow His teachings.

However, we need to know that there are those who claim they love God but live contrary to His plan for their lives and His Truth for all people. These “false claimers” are liars, and they have not humbled themselves to God. These people are destructive to human lives who commit atrocities upon others. They are self-consumed with abusive pride, whose heart makes evil plans as they seek to hurt the innocent. . .for they find joy in doing evil, they lie about God and eagerly seek to create disunity and hardship for others.

God does provide guidance and warnings not to do destructive things to ourselves and others.

 Do not steal, do not murder, do not hate, do not lie, honor your parents, to not be jealous of your neighbor’s stuff. Do not desire for your neighbor’s spouse, set a day aside to worship God and rest. Do not worship false gods.

Do not run with people who are gossips, liars, frauds, and who live licentious lives, who are immoral, impure, and pursue sensual desires like. . .idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, who are envying, drunkards, carousing.

Conversely, we are called by God to humble ourselves to His Holy Spirit enabling/empowering us to live in and with His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control of which there is no greater power. All these empower us to be forgiving, merciful, gentle, giving and respectful of others.

We can see that there is nothing complicated about God’s intent for humanity. Regardless of what language you convey God’s foundational intent for our lives, it is simple. The challenge is that people tend to over-think God and make His plan for their lives more complicated than it is.

**Rejecting God and His Truth that is Evident in the Creation**

A case can be made that the failings of the State Dark Age Church led to the era of Enlightenment and Reason. The false representation of God and His Word gave the perception that people could do better on their own without God managing their lives. I see the highpoint of the State Church hypocrisy and lunacy was when there were three claimants to the head of the State Church, and they all excommunicated each other (1377 A.D.). See sermon from Round Top Church Christian Fellowship, “Christ – Head of the Heaven and Earth Church”, Colossians 1: 15-18, Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl, July 31th, In the Year of Our Lord - (Anno Domini A.D.) 2022

So, in time, people surmised they could do better. Hence, the Age of Enlightenment and Reason came.

Since the Age of Enlightenment and Reason (late 1700’s – early 1800’s), there has been a challenge against God’s Word based upon the reasoning of men. Defining the age of Enlightenment in a general way. . .

From online: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age\_of\_Enlightenment

The Age of Enlightenment or the Enlightenment an intellectual and philosophical movement that dominated Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Enlightenment included a range of ideas centered on the value of human happiness, the pursuit of knowledge obtained by means of reason and the evidence of the senses, and ideals such as natural law, liberty, progress, toleration, fraternity, constitutional government, and separation of church and state.

The Enlightenment was preceded by the Scientific Revolution and the work of Francis Bacon, John Locke, among others. Some date the beginning of the Enlightenment to the publication of René Descartes' Discourse on the Method in 1637, featuring his famous dictum, Cogito, ergo sum ("I think, therefore I am"). Others cite the publication of Isaac Newton's Principia Mathematica (1687) as the culmination of the Scientific Revolution and the beginning of the Enlightenment. European historians traditionally date its beginning with the death of Louis XIV of France in 1715 and its end with the 1789 outbreak of the French Revolution. Many historians now date the end of the Enlightenment as the start of the 19th century, with the latest proposed year being the death of Immanuel Kant in 1804.

**The Great Challenge – “*Straw Man*”**

We have all heard throughout our lives the basic challenge to the validity, accuracy and over-all truthfulness of the Bible. It is my opinion that the doubters and nay-sayers have framed their claim using a *straw man* debate tactic. Regardless of an intent to do this. . . it has still taken place. In a debate when one side has little to stand or with little to no evidence, they create a *straw man* to assign to their opponent. The *straw man* is not real, but the debater attempts to persuade the audience that their opponent is the *straw man* and therefore has an indefensible position. The debater seeks to assign bad qualities and attributes to their opposition for the audience to believe. These attributes and bad qualities have nothing to do with the real issues but seek to weaken the opposing debater and persuade the audience that his opponent is in fact the *straw man* that should not be believed and found not to be creditable.

This *straw man* tactic. . . fallaciously distorts and exaggerates, in an extreme way, their opponent’s position and then uses the fallacious distortion against them. The audience is drawn to then focus upon the distortions and not the real issues of the original position.

Within the discussion about the validity of the Bible, atheists create a *straw man* using the reasoning of the Enlightenment. By this, I mean, they assigned a level of proof that they call “reason” for God’s Word that was never intended by God to be used as the main provability factor. The provability factor for God’s Word is in living the life that He has called us. . . that produces peace with Him and our neighbor.

Fallen humanity cannot save himself, and, without God. . . death and destruction rule. This is evident in what has happened.

Last year, I quoted the German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) who was a promoter of the Age of Enlightenment (1685 A.D. – 1815 A.D.). Nietzsche is the man that said and published, “God is dead”. With this statement, atheistic governments did not have moral responsibility or duty to anyone. Here is an excerpt from Nietzsche.

“**God is dead.** God remains dead. **And we have killed him**. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”

The following century proved Nietzsche to be correct in that over 230 million people were killed in wars.

Again, this statement was declared as a product of and in context of the Age of Enlightenment when European philosophers found that there was not any need of God to explain the creation and the origins or management of life. Eventually, in 1859, these Enlighteners and political leaders came to feast upon Darwin’s publications that gave an alternative scientific explanation for the origins and management of life. Darwin in his 1859 publication “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life” provided to atheistic academia and political leaders their sought-after science to proclaim that there was not any need for the God of creation (God of the Bible) since life and the world in which we lived was not created but evolved from random undirected meaningless purposeless processes. Their worldview believed that they did not have a duty or responsibility to any higher authority because they believed that science and philosophy had proved God does not exist.

With this acceptance, Nietzsche made the observation that mankind has philosophized God out of their way. . . that modern Western humanity can live without the need, use or want of God. Why seek or turn to a God that does not exist? Many see that Nietzsche prophesied what would come in the 20th century. In fact, he was correct. We stated earlier that the 20th century produced more wars on a global scale and produced more deaths by human decision than in all of previous human history. There was no longer any responsibility, duty or need to love God (who did not exist) or your neighbor because morality was only subjective to the individual to fulfill their own selfish ambitions and way of life managed by biological mechanisms in pursuit of *survival of the* *fittest.* . . “might makes right”? No. With this belief right or wrong does not exists! Their “might” pursues making their lives survive at the expense of their neighbors. There is not any “love your neighbor” or “pray for your enemies”. (Mark 12:31; Matthew 5:43-44). In this fallen world, God waits for anyone/everyone to call upon Him (Romans 10:13).

**What is the *straw man* that atheists and agnostics use to discount God’s Word?**

Atheists and Agnostics and other non-believers demand a mathematical model for the copying of God’s Word consisting of a letter-by-letter verbatim duplication of the text. If this man-made standard is not met then God’s Word is false and cannot be trusted. In addition, most Christian Scholars and church members have bought into this *straw man* proof of which is impossible to attain.

The other *straw man* applied to the validity of God’s Word is atheists and agnostics assign the atrocities and lies of the Dark Age State Church and all its branches to God and His Word.

With these two *straw man* objections. . . who wants to be a person who believes in God who gave us His Word we call the Bible?

 **The Answer**

The answer is spiritual, not physical. As from Adam. . .we are all called to a spiritual relationship with God our creator. It is within this spiritual relationship that we find the proof of God and His Truth. We are called to make peace with God. Because peace with God brings us a full life now but also an eternal life with God. It is within human nature to seek peace with their Creator and their neighbor. People who reject this innate calling are willfully choosing to rebel against the very power and authority who created them. This is why they came up with a man-made *straw man* standard to prove the validity of God’s Word. Again, God’s Word is first designed to be spiritual not physical. How can you write God’s Word on a human heart?

**Hebrews 10:14-22**

**14** For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. **15** And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

**16** "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD**: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,"**

He then says,

 **17** "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

 **18** Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

 **19** Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.