

## STUDY UNIT 1

Rom. 1:18-25 / Mt. 10:16-42 / Mt. 5:10-16

### THINGS TO COME: LIVING IN A POST CHRISTIAN AMERICA

America is a miracle as a nation, unique among all the nations since the church age began 2000 years ago. But things have changed in the last 75 years and are beginning to get worse. Our decline is clearly predicted and described in Romans 1:18-25, and which the attached diagram attempts to summarize visually. Studying it will help you follow the thoughts presented in this Study Unit which concludes by addressing what we most probably will be facing as disciples of Christ in America in the coming days. The subsequent studies of this volume will concern what God has said we are to be and do as we face them. So...let us consider:

1. The Miracle of America as a Christian Nation in the **Past**
2. Our **Present** Day Humanist American Culture
3. The Opposition And Persecution **to Come** to Committed Christians,

#### 1. The Miracle of America as a Christian Nation

No other people since the church age began 2000 years ago have enjoyed a culture, a government, and churches that have exalted the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible as has America. Perfect we have not been, but openly trying and helped by the Holy Spirit, with “In God We Trust” as our boast and intent, and, to a wonderful extent, the result has been the blessing of those who have lived their life here.

America has sent out more missionaries to the rest of the peoples of the world in obedience to Mt. 28:19-20 than all the other nations combined. Our government officials and judiciary during our formative and ensuing years has declared that “we do not make laws, we find laws” meaning that we search God’s Word to understand His will, His principles, and His commands, and doing so, we follow them.

Moreover, America has done more to pursue God’s “Dominion Mandate” (see Gen. 1:27-28) than any other nation (and most of all the rest combined) and have supported God’s people Israel more than all the other nations since Israel’s founding. As a result, God has richly blessed us – until we began to embrace **humanism** as shown in the diagram, the lie that “there is no God, that man is the measure of all things, and that there is no true truth, truth being relative to what is good for each person, as they decide for themselves.”

## 2. Present Day Humanist American Culture

Beginning, as the diagram shows, about 75 years ago, the philosophical view of the world that is called **humanism** began to be embraced and taught in our educational schools and even our mainline churches. As our culture embraced this world view, rejecting the inspiration and authority of the Bible as from God, Who they said did not exist, Americans began to face choices that were new in America. Do we stand against the current of the culture as it proceeds down the “**Romans 1 Road**” or do we drift along with it? Notice the clearly spelled out, 5 stage decline, of any person or people or culture or nation that “puts God out”.

*“For 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. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and 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.*

*Therefore 1) **God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to immorality**, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie (i.e. that man is the measure of all things) and worshiped and served the creature (man) rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*For this reason 2) **God gave them over to perversion** (i.e. sodomy and LGBTQ); for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and 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.*

*And because they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, 3) **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, (i.e. a mind that doesn’t work) and 4) **to do those things which are not proper**, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, 5) **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**”*

*Rom 1:18-42*

There began to be a cost to stand for Christ, relationally at all levels, and in all environments in America. The increasing exposure to humanistic values, immorality, and evil, encouraged Christians to respond in two ways over the last 75 years with much biblical direction:

- **Avoid the influence of a godless culture**, and
- **Address weaknesses and compromises in the church** that have come by “drifting with the current” of our increasingly godless culture.

Good examples of this are:

- The Home School movement that began in America in the early 1980's with a few Christians removing their children from the best schools in the world, and that now involves more than 6 million children.
- Conflicts in the churches over doctrine, associations with other "Christians" and organizations, and conduct.

But now, what we are beginning to face is an open and increasingly aggressive OPPOSITION and PERSECUTION of both biblical values and God's people. It was not long ago that sodomy was a crime. Now it is a crime to oppose it. It was not long ago that men were men. Now it is not allowed to prevent men from using women's locker rooms and showers.

The list grows longer by the week and the opposition to biblical values and the freedom to hold them grows stronger. Children, without caution or permission from parents are being taught to choose their sex themselves, etc. You can imagine where this leads, along with much more, in our nation's growing opposition and persecution of biblical truth, values, and practices.

*"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.*

*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And **he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.**"* *Matt. 10:34-38*

### **3. The Opposition And Persecution To Come To Committed Christians In America**

Rather than just seeking to avoid a godless culture and a compromised church, committed American Christians are faced with the prospect of a humanistic culture that will **come after them** to OPPOSE and PERSECUTE them, as Christians have been opposed and persecuted throughout the centuries and are being so treated in most places on earth today. We have not faced this like we will, if the Lord does not return soon.

How we are to respond and what we are to do is the focus of the remaining studies of this volume. These issues and questions are not hard to find in God's Word. They are a found everywhere we look! The Christians of the first century faced OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION, didn't they? The nation of Israel has faced OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION, hasn't it? So, both the N.T. and the O.T. tell us how to respond and what to do.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.**"* *John 16:33*

*“But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he arose and entered the city. And the next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.*

*And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”*

*Acts 14:19-23*

*“I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*

*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; **but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.”***

*2 Tim. 1:6-8*

***“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you...***

***Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”***

*Matt. 5:10-16*

## **UNIT 1 STUDY SESSION #1:**

In preparation for the group study of this principle of living for Christ, read and study the above scriptures and summary and then complete the following self – evaluation.

### **Evaluating My Understanding of America’s Christian Foundation and Decline**

1. I am familiar with a) the biblical foundation of the original 13 colonies, the “miracle at Philadelphia” and c) the resulting constitutional structure and resulting national laws of America. \_\_\_\_yes\_\_\_\_some\_\_\_\_no
2. I can explain the basis of the following statement by a “founding father” of our nation, and how it explains our current cultural state:

**“Democracy, as a form of government, cannot succeed unless the people govern themselves. If not, they cannot be governed”**

\_\_\_\_yes\_\_\_\_no

3. I am familiar with the writings of Francis Schaeffer and others in the 1970s regarding what will happen to America and why. \_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_\_\_No
4. I think I know what to do if things get worse. \_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_\_I am confused
5. I have confidence in my family and church leaders that they know what to do  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_\_\_Not Sure\_\_\_\_\_No

### **Discussion Questions for Study Session #1**

1. Do you think there is a political solution to our present problems in America?
2. What did the Covid related issues and divisions in the churches across America reveal about our unity, love for one another, and readiness for the things to come?
3. Do you agree with the assessment of the study regarding our past, present, and future as a nation and what Christians will probably face in the days ahead?
4. Do you see the Romans 1:18-25 path in our country today? Where are we on this path?

### **Prayer Together**

## **UNIT 1 STUDY SESSION #2:**

In preparation for the second study session please consider choosing one of the following projects and be prepared to share about it.

### **Preparation for Session #2: Application Project**

1. Many Christians have fled their countries and come to America over the last 50 years because of chaos, opposition, and persecution. They have experienced what we have not and could perhaps help us. Contact 1 or 2 that you may know or know of and ask them about their experience and thoughts about what we are facing.
2. Study Matthew 5:10-16 and 10:16-39 looking for principles that may help us.
3. Study the letter Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy) when he was concerned that Timothy was NOT handling the pressures he faced from growing opposition and persecution. Identify and summarize Paul's exhortations. Evaluate your maturity and the maturity of your church, based upon them, to respond to what we are now facing and what will come.
4. The Voice of the Martyrs is an organization that has addressed and made known what is happening in the area of our study (opposition and persecution) around the world for many years. Find their site and/or read some of their material this week.

### **Discussion Questions**

If you were able to pursue one of the Application Projects, can you share with us about it?

### **Prayer Together**