

6. The Lord warned the Sadducees about their lack of attention to what the Bible teaches:

**Matthew 22:29** Jesus answered them [ **Sadducees**<sup>1</sup> ], “You are deceived, because you don’t know the scriptures or the power of God. (NET)

7. The power of the Word resident in the soul defends the believer from problems indicated in the previous verses. One’s mental attitude is the function of thought. The content of that thought is reflected in decision-making and application.
8. Consequently, what a person thinks determines how he behaves: “What he thinks within himself, so he is” (Proverbs 23:7). Since thinking is the crucial issue, there are imperatives throughout the Bible regarding it:

**Romans 12:2** Stop being conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renovation of your thought, that you may prove what the will of God is, namely, the good [ **spiritual self-esteem** ], the well-pleasing [ **spiritual autonomy** ], the complete [ **spiritual maturity** ]. (EXT)

9. The development of an idea begins with vocabulary and progresses as it becomes associated with thought, notions, concepts, and conceptions:
- These nouns refer to what is formed or represented in the mind as the product of mental activity. *Idea* has the widest range. *Thought* is distinctively intellectual and stresses contemplation and reasoning. *Notion* suggests an often-intuitive idea or image conceived by the mind. *Concept* and *conception* are applied to mental formulations on a broad scale.<sup>2</sup>**
10. This process includes the ingredients of one’s renovation of thought that occurs when he engages in serious study of the Word of God.
11. This advance of thought develops humility in the soul as notions build concepts. Paul continues with this thought in:

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<sup>1</sup> “The Sadducees controlled the official political structures of Judaism at this time, being the majority members of the Sanhedrin. They were known as extremely strict on law and order issues” (The NET Bible [Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2005], Matthew 3:7sn10, 1811). They did not believe in the resurrection (Matthew 22:23). In this same passage (vv. 24–28) they tried to trap Jesus by contriving a question on levirate marriage described in Deuteronomy 25:5–10 and presenting it in the context of the resurrection. (Ibid., Matthew 22:24sn5, 1852.)

<sup>2</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2016), s.v. “idea: synonyms.”

**Romans 12:3** For I say through the grace which has been given to me to everyone who is among you, stop thinking of self in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine. (EXT)

12. Thought testing is also addressed in the Tanakh by Isaiah in:

**Isaiah 55:6** “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.”

- (1) This verse addresses believers who have abandoned divine guidance and reject the prophet’s message.
- (2) Punishment comes to a client nation when the population drifts away from studying the Word while the Pivot shrinks as mature believers die off.
- (3) Prayer is the most powerful asset possessed by believers, but failure to pray or ignorance on how to pray diminishes its power.

**Isaiah 55:7** “Let the wicked [ רָשָׁע (*rasha*‘): guilt, wrong, dishonest, godless<sup>3</sup> ] forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord [ 'Athonay ], and He will have compassion on him, and to our God [ 'Elohim ], for He will abundantly pardon.”

- (4) Recovery from reversionism is only possible when the believer returns to serious and consistent study of the Word of God.
- (5) Isaiah’s reference to the wicked believer refers to those in both moral and immoral degeneracy. To forsake either form of wickedness means he must acquire divine viewpoint from doctrinal thinking.
- (6) The verse continues with the phrase, “forsake his way,” which requires developing wheel-tracks of righteousness.

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<sup>3</sup> “Of the 78 occurrences of *rasha*‘ in the book of Proverbs, almost all use antithetical parallelism in portraying the contrast between the “righteous” (צַדִּיק [ *saddiq* ]) and the “wicked: (רָשָׁע [ *rasha*‘ ]). The sayings are concerned with demonstrating the act-consequence nexus” (Helmer Ringgren, “רָשָׁע,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. Douglas W. Stott [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004], 14:6).

**Isaiah 55:8** “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.

**v. 9** “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. (NASB)

13. If God is perfect righteousness, enforced by means of His justice under His policy of grace, then every expression of His standards may be described as *the* truth.
14. The world offers its versions of truth expressed in societal beliefs, standards, principles, ordinances, and laws. The United States has its set, but they have suffered constant redefinitions over time by competing belief systems.
15. This dichotomy is displayed by citizens of other nations whose belief systems are dramatically different from ours and to which they subscribe.
16. The Roman society had its standards which were strong enough to maintain civic order for almost a millennium, from its founding as a Republic in 509 B.C. until “The Western Roman Empire officially ended 4 September A.D. 476, when Emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the Germanic King Odoacer \ō-do-ā'-ser\.”<sup>4</sup>
17. The Roman Empire accumulated numerous nations and tolerated their various cultures, religions, and languages as long as their citizens did not violate Roman laws.
18. Rome had standards it considered “truth” as the peoples within the Empire practiced what they considered to be “truth.”
19. This principle is illustrated by this exchange between Jesus and Pontus Pilate in:

**John 18:33** Pilate entered the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

**v. 34** Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”

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<sup>4</sup> Joshua J. Mark, “Roman Empire: The Fall of the Roman Empire,” in *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, [http://www.ancient.eu/Roman\\_Empire/](http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Empire/), accessed March 17, 2017.

**John 18:35** Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?”

**v. 36** Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”

**v. 37** Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a King?” Jesus answered. “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

**v. 38** Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, “I find no guilt in Him.” (NASB)

20. Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” was rhetorical, asked merely for effect with no answer expected. It was used to slough off Jesus’ statement in verse 37 which clearly expressed His messiahship and the gospel: (1) “I have come into the world to testify to the truth,” and (2) “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”
21. This was the moment Pilate went officially negative. From that point on, his rejection of truth compounded his association with the lie eventuating in cruelty, violation of Roman laws, and commission of suicide:

Pilate, Roman prefect (governor or procurator) of Judaea (AD 26–36) under emperor Tiberius; he presided at the trial of Jesus and gave the order for his crucifixion. He was appointed prefect of Judaea through the intervention of Sejanus, a favorite of the Roman emperor Tiberius. Protected by Sejanus, he incurred the enmity of the Jews by insulting their religious sensibilities, as when he hung worship images of the Emperor throughout Jerusalem and had coins bearing pagan religious symbols minted. After Sejanus’ fall (AD 31), Pilate was exposed to sharper criticism from the Jews. The Samaritans reported him to Vitellius,<sup>5</sup> legate of Syria, after he had attacked them on Mt. Gerizim (AD 36).

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<sup>5</sup> Following the death of Nero, Vitellius was the third of the four Flavian emperors of Rome who reigned in whole or in part of the year AD 69. He reigned from April 17, 69 to December 20, 69. He was murdered by Vespasian’s troops.

Pilate was then ordered back to Rome to stand trial for cruelty and oppression, particularly on the charge that he executed men without proper trial. According to 4th-century tradition, Pilate killed himself on orders from Emperor Caligula in AD 39.<sup>6</sup>

22. Thus, there is a wide variety of truths, but *The Truth* is only found in the Word of God and those who ignore it are responsible for their own demise.
23. The major fault experienced by those who fail thought testing is the absence of *the* truth in their souls. Those who have it advance and are tested to discover if they will be able to access it for application.
24. Paul again confronts the problem of Dark-Side assaults:

**2 Corinthians 10:4** For the equipment and the weapons of our spiritual warfare are not human attributes, but attributes of power by means of God the Father, against the destruction of fortifications of cosmic propaganda.

**v. 5** We are assaulting and demolishing with doctrine speculations based on human viewpoint and every obstacle of arrogance against the knowledge of God, even making a prisoner of every thought contrary to the knowledge of God to the obedience of Christ;

**v. 6** holding in readiness the Word of God as an instant reaction force to punish all deviation when your obedience has been fulfilled. (EXT)

25. Believers can only capture erroneous thinking by the artillery of truth resident in his soul. This means that it is in the various learning curves engaged in the sophisticated spiritual life that the lie can be identified, isolated, and defeated.
26. The Lord on numerous occasions in the four Gospels began His remarks with this phrase, ἁμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν (*amēn légō humín*): “Verily I say unto you” (KJV), but far better translated, “I tell you the truth,” which is the interpretation found in the NIV, NASB, and NET Bibles.

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<sup>6</sup> “Pilate, Pontus,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010), 9:440.

27. In the scrum of the Angelic Conflict, the key piece of artillery is revealed by our Lord in:

**John 8:31** “If you continue in My Word [ follow My teaching (NET) ], then you are truly disciples of Mine;

**v. 32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (NASB)

### Momentum Testing: Disaster

1. As a believer moves through momentum tests and is on the verge of spiritual maturity, he will encounter major mental-attitude crises in the category of disaster testing either personal or historical.
2. The first category is personal during which he faces types of suffering that result in blessings that shifts his momentum into high gear.
3. On the other hand, this kind of suffering also provides warnings of cosmic involvement. David went through this category, as did Elijah, and others. Solomon wrote an apologetic about it.
4. Historical, including collective or national disaster, is a form of testing that causes the believer to suffer by association because of bad decisions by others.
5. Personal disaster testing has a number of characteristics that includes (1) physical pain or mental anguish, (2) victim of crime, (3) persecution, (4) privation of necessities, (5) loss of loved ones, property, finances, employment, etc. and (6) disease, illness, accident, injury, or handicap.
6. National disaster testing includes a number of internal and external challenges to freedom and stability of a client nation: (1) violence: under the cover of a non-existent “freedom to demonstrate;” crime: including rioting, arson, assault, and intimidation or attacks on police and civil servants; terrorism: including that perpetrated by resident citizens or aliens under the cover of “workplace violence;” drugs: disseminated by peddlers or used by junkies; injury: on person or property; or murder: including victims during a “demonstration”; (2) warfare, (3) weather factors on person or property, and (4) the five cycles of discipline on the client nation.