

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. When God first started speaking about the Daniel Training Network earlier this year, He highlighted several aspects of Daniel's life and ministry that He wanted to find expression through the Daniel Training Network. Daniel *prayed*. Daniel *proclaimed*. Daniel *prophesied*. Daniel *prepared*.

*Daniel 6:10-11 (NIV)*

***Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.***

*Daniel 12:2 (NIV)*

***Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.***

*Daniel 2:44 (NIV)*

***"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people.***

*Daniel 1:17 (NIV)*

***To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.***

*Daniel 6:3-5 (NIV)*

***<sup>3</sup> Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators (practical skills) and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. <sup>4</sup> At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs (governing righteously in light of his future assignment as a ruler in Jesus' kingdom, cf. Dan. 7:27), **but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.** <sup>5</sup> Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."***

B. Prayer, prophecy, proclamation, and preparation marked the life of this man whose life was a sweet aroma to God.

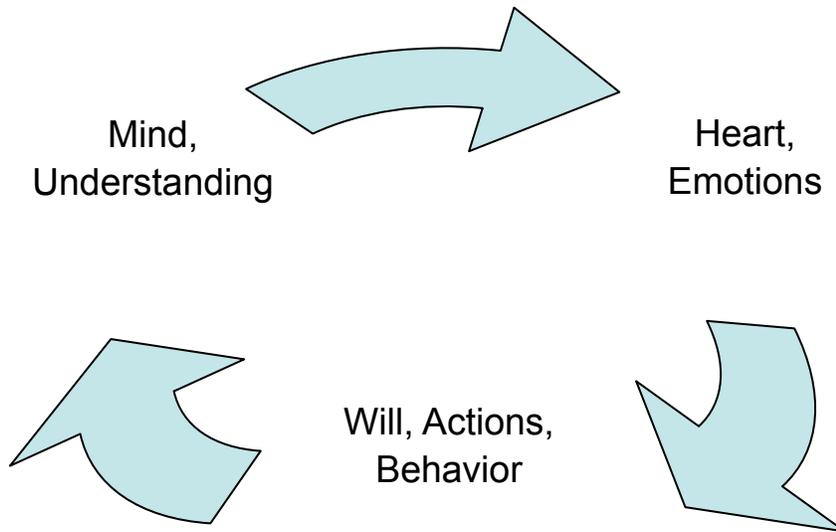
*Daniel 9:21-23 (NIV)*

***<sup>21</sup> while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup> He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup> As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed (ESV- "for you are greatly loved").***

- C. Prayer was the foundation of Daniel's life. A life of abiding in Jesus, the Vine, through prayer and intercession must also be the foundation of everything we do. Daniel also had clear understanding of the biblical gospel. He proclaimed the Messiah's coming earthly kingdom, and his hope was in the bodily resurrection of the saints that will occur at the end of the age. Daniel was also sensitive to the voice of the Lord. He had skill in hearing the Spirit clearly. The Holy Spirit gave him strategic prophetic insight into God's purposes at the end of the age. Despite great opposition, Daniel faithfully and righteously administered his God-given assignment with integrity. He administered his responsibilities in righteousness because He knew that one day he would inherit a kingdom of righteousness. Daniel also had practical skills in leadership and administration.
- D. Last month, the Holy Spirit began to stir my heart again concerning these four dimensions of Daniel's life, as well as His desire for them find regular expression in our midst. In August we are going to begin diversifying our activities on Friday nights. On the first Friday night of every month, we are going to have a corporate solemn prayer assembly. This will be open to all whom the Lord will bring. On the second Friday of every month, we will have an Emmaus Road Gathering. These will be devoted solely to teaching. During these, we will continue to mine the riches of God's Word together. On the third Friday night of every month, we will have a prophetic forum. During these we will take time to discuss what the Holy Spirit has been speaking to us. We will talk more about those next week. On the fourth Friday night of every month, we will conduct "preparation seminars." These will focus on the impartation of practical skills that will benefit the saints as the earth passes deeper into the shakings prophesied in Matthew 24.
- E. Tonight we are going to zone in on the topic of preparation. Why should we prepare? Does God even want us to prepare? What does preparation look like? What different types of preparation are there? What is our role in preparation? How do we prepare?

## II. PREPARATION – AN EXPRESSION OF GODLY WISDOM

- A. Question: When we hear the word "wisdom" today, what kinds of things usually come to our minds?
- B. So what is God's definition of wisdom? In Scripture, wisdom is a rich, multi-dimensional concept that involves mind, heart, will, and action. Our understanding, our emotions, our choices, and our behavior are all integrated realities. What we think and understand about something powerfully influences our feelings and choices. What we feel and choose, in turn, profoundly influences what we think.



C. God desires for us to grow in a right understanding of His personality, His ways, His character, His promises, and the way He is carrying out His plans for the earth. Right understanding of the gospel is designed to stir in us holy emotions and motivate us to righteous choices and holy living. The degree to which our understanding, emotions, choices, and actions are not in agreement with God and the truth of the gospel, is the degree to which we are still in deception.

Understanding and Faith	Holy Emotions	Choices and Behavior
Jesus as God's appointed sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins	thankfulness, joy, love, gratitude	Follow Jesus' example; dying to self; putting off the old, putting on the new; communion in prayer
Jesus as God's appointed judge, who will punish the rebellious and reward the righteous at the Second Coming	holy fear and trembling	Putting to death the things of the flesh, and walking in the fruits of the Spirit in light of the coming judgment; accessing grace in prayer
God's long-suffering with and mercy towards sinners in this age	gratitude, thankfulness, wonder and amazement	mercy and patience towards others, pray for enemies, etc.

D. We often tend to think of wisdom primarily in terms of creative solutions and applications. It is more accurate to describe wisdom as biblically defined in terms of creative solutions and applications that are righteous in God's sight and which spring from our faith and conviction in a coming kingdom that will only be full of righteousness.

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- F. Biblical wisdom means a righteous understanding of God as revealed by God; unto righteous heart responses toward God and through God (grace); unto righteous choices and actions in obedience to God; unto receiving the inheritance promised by God – the resurrection of the righteous. As we, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, respond to God in humility, love, faith, and obedience, He in turn increases our understanding and the cycle continues. We don't want to be too linear in the way we think about this. Each dimension is complex and dynamically impacts the other.

*Job 28:20-28 (NIV)*

<sup>20</sup> ***"Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell (wisdom tied to right understanding)? <sup>21</sup>It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air. <sup>22</sup>Destruction and Death say, 'Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.'***  
<sup>23</sup> ***God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells (God alone gives wisdom and right understanding), <sup>24</sup>for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. <sup>25</sup>When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, <sup>26</sup> when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, <sup>27</sup> then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. <sup>28</sup> And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord (Heb. "adoni" – emphasizing majesty and authority, often refers to the Messiah, cf. Ps. 110:1)—that is wisdom (righteous understanding, righteous heart response), and to shun evil (righteous choices and behavior) is understanding.'***"

*Proverbs 2:1-5 (NIV)*

<sup>1</sup>***My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you (understanding of God's ways revealed by God), <sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, <sup>3</sup>and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, <sup>4</sup>and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure (affections, emotions, and desire set on it), <sup>5</sup>then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. <sup>7</sup>He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless (right choices and behavior from a right heart), <sup>8</sup>for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. <sup>9</sup>Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. <sup>10</sup>For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. <sup>11</sup>Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. <sup>12</sup> Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, <sup>13</sup>who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, <sup>14</sup> who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, <sup>15</sup> whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.***

*James 1:2-8 (NIV)*

<sup>2</sup> ***Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom (concerning how to persevere patiently in loyalty to God through sufferings, like Job and***

prophets cf. Jam. 5:7-12), **he should ask God** cf. Prov. 2), **who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.** <sup>6</sup> **But when he asks** (for wisdom concerning perseverance), **he must believe and not doubt** (that in the Day of the Lord God will in fact vindicate the righteous who choose wisdom and righteousness in this age, cf. vv. 9-12), **because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.** <sup>7</sup> **That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;** <sup>8</sup> **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.**

G. In Daniel 12, God tells Daniel that at the end of the age, the earth is going to enter into a time of unparalleled difficulty and distress. God also tells Daniel about an amazing promise He is extending to the saints, especially to those who will live through this time in history. Those who commit themselves to God's path and definition of wisdom; and those who train others in wisdom and righteousness, will shine with great power and glorious brightness in the resurrection of the righteous at the end of the age.

Daniel 12:1-3 (NIV)

**1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise (NIV alternative – "those who impart wisdom") will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.**

Matthew 24:21 (NIV)

**For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.**

H. God spoke this promise to Daniel in context to a prophetic warning about the difficulties that would come upon the earth at the end of the age. From Daniel 12 we learn that at the end of the age, it is imperative that shepherds, teachers, churches, and ministries commit themselves to clinging to the truth of God's Word irrespective of what the world calls wisdom, and to train the saints to walk according to God's righteousness and wisdom in the face of severe opposition – even if it isn't upon us yet.

I. Throughout the Scriptures, we constantly see a conflict between God's definition of wisdom and what this rebellious planet calls wisdom. The world persecutes God's heralds of wisdom.

Luke 11:49 (NIV)

**Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,'**

J. The most inspiring stories of the Bible are about normal men and women who clung fervently to God's path of faith and wisdom in the face the world's so-called wisdom. Would Abraham and Sarah believe God for the birth of Isaac despite what the world said about their old age? Would Noah risk looking like a fool and start building the ark 120 years before God's word came to pass concerning the Flood? What would have happened had Joseph not stored up

grain in response to God's word? What if Job, the prophets, and Jesus himself had given up through their sufferings?

- K. This battle continues to rage today. Worldly wisdom says "let us eat and drink (wicked behavior), for tomorrow we die (wicked understanding and unbelief)" (1 Cor. 15:32). Godly wisdom says, "let us prepare our minds, hearts, and hands in righteousness, love, humility, obedience and the fear of the Lord, for tomorrow Jesus will return in power and glory to punish the wicked and establish the kingdom of God on the earth."
- L. God is patient with human beings who in their arrogance tout their own version of wisdom. However, God is going to win this battle in the end. Wisdom will be vindicated by her children on the Day of the Lord when Jesus comes for His people. The so-called "wisdom" of this evil age will come to nothing when Jesus returns.

*Luke 7:33-35 (ESV)*

***<sup>33</sup> For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine (because he followed wisdom in fearing the Day of the Lord), and you say, 'He has a demon.'*** <sup>34</sup> ***The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'*** (because he followed wisdom in demonstrating God's longsuffering towards sinners) ***<sup>35</sup> Yet wisdom is justified*** (vindication in the Day of the Lord) ***by all her children*** (those who heeds wisdom's voice, cf. Prov. 2)"

*1 Corinthians 2:6 (NIV)*

***We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing***

- M. The issue of preparation, therefore, is primarily an issue of God's wisdom verses man's wisdom. God has said that these difficulties are coming. Will we believe His Word even when everything around us seems to be going on business as usual? Will we, like Noah, walk in the fear of the Lord and scorn what this world calls wisdom? Will we prepare our hearts, our minds, our friends, our families, our children? Will we believe God's word to Daniel and ask God to help us build an ark that will float through the difficulties of Matthew 24?

*Hebrews 11:7 (NIV)*

***By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.***

### III. PREPARATION OF HEAD, HEART, AND HAND

- A. In light of our discussion of the different dimensions of wisdom, what does preparation look like? In what follows, we are going to look at preparation from three different perspectives: Head, Heart, and Hand. As we look at these, again we must not forget that all three of these are dynamically interrelated to one another. Lets start with preparation of the mind.
- B. Story – Corrie Ten Boom in China. Recently I heard a Bible teacher named David Pawson recount a story about a visit that Corrie Ten Boom once made to China. He says, "When that dear woman Corrie Ten Boom went to China, she was shocked to find Christians saying to her,

'Corrie, American missionaries told us that before the big trouble came we would be up in heaven. And the big trouble came, and we didn't know how to handle it. Why didn't they tell us we would suffer for Jesus?

And Corrie wrote this in one of her books: "I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution. In China the Christians were told, 'don't worry, before the tribulation comes, you will be raptured.' Then came a terrible persecution, millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I (Corrie) heard a bishop from China say sadly, 'We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution, rather than telling them that Jesus would come first.' And turning to me, he said, 'Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes, to stand and not faint.'"

- C. Paul tells us that we need to have our minds renewed by the Holy Spirit. All of us have ideas, assumptions, paradigms, and perceptions that are out of sync with God and His ways. The extent to which this is true, is the extent to which we are still in deception.

*Romans 12:2a (NIV)*

**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

- D. We must ask the Holy Spirit purge our understanding over time of unbiblical ideas, paradigms, and assumptions. For example, many believers today believe that *God wouldn't let His people go through hard times or persecution*. There is a teaching popular among many American evangelicals today called the "pre-tribulation rapture." This teaching says that God will rapture His saints into heaven before the events prophesied in Daniel 12:1 – commonly known as the "Great Tribulation" – begins. We don't have time to go into an in-depth study of the history or the arguments employed on behalf of this teaching. Here I will simply say that this teaching is not biblical and seems to have its historical roots in a false prophecy. It certainly does not match the experience of most Christians outside of America today. Daniel would call this teaching sheer foolishness. You don't prepare for a disaster by pretending that it won't ever hit your shores. Ask Winston Churchill. "Churchill was a fierce critic of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Adolf Hitler and in a speech to the House of Commons, he bluntly and prophetically stated, "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour, and you will have war" (Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston\\_Churchill#cite\\_ref-130](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston_Churchill#cite_ref-130)).
- E. The doctrine of the cross must regain its place in the forefront of the church's thinking again. Satan has done everything he can to get our eyes off of the cross. The cross is the ultimate expression of God's love, humility, long-suffering, and covenant faithfulness.

*Luke 9:23-26 (NIV)*

**23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**

John 12:25-28 (NIV)

***25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. 27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!"***

F. Jesus says that the good news of the kingdom of God will be preached throughout the earth just before He returns. Another way we need to prepare our minds is by growing in our understanding of the message Jesus has called us to boldly proclaim at the end of the age.

Matthew 24:14 (NIV)

***And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.***

- G. What is the gospel? When we say "the gospel of the kingdom," and when Jesus says "the gospel of the kingdom," do we mean the same thing that Jesus means? What is the message that he has commissioned the Body of Christ to communicate to nations? Unfortunately, these fundamental questions often goes unasked in the Body of Christ today because of presumed familiarity. Those who have grown up in churches influenced by Western culture are especially prone to overlook this basic question. With so many sermons, worship CDs, and Bibles floating around, *surely* we know what the gospel is—don't we? The truth is that much of what we call "the gospel" today would be hardly recognizable to the prophets and the apostles.
- H. As we proclaim the gospel at the end of the age, we want to proactively take steps to grow in our understanding of the "gospel of the kingdom." We want our understanding of the gospel to approximate that of Jesus and the apostles as much as possible. We want to be faithful ambassadors. Like Daniel, we must be committed to declaring the biblical gospel boldly in word and deed. This is the purpose of ERGs, DI classes, and other training events oriented toward growth in our understanding of the biblical message and hope.
- I. When we take seriously what God says is coming to the earth soon, then this will drive us to our knees in prayer. We must ask God to give us grace to prepare our hearts for what is coming. Constant prayer is the means by which we access God's power and grace over time to become like Jesus. Prayer is the primary means of heart preparation. We must constantly ask God in the place of prayer to strengthen our hearts to die daily now, so that we remain loyal to him when the greater time of testing comes.

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)

***Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.***

- J. Jesus tells that a life of fervent prayer will not be optional for his people at the end of the age. We must pray that we will persevere through what is coming and stand before the Son of Man as those who loved Him not only through the good times, but also through the hard times.

Luke 21:34-36 (ESV)

***<sup>34</sup> "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."***

K. In two weeks I am going to focus more on the necessity of prayer at the end of the age.

#### IV. HAND – PRACTICAL PREPARATION

A. In addition to head and heart preparation, God also calls us to prepare with our hands. All of the saints are called to walk in a unified understanding of our hope, and all of us are called to a life of abiding with Jesus in prayer. Hand preparation is more diverse in its expression, according to the God's calling on different parts of His Body.

Ephesians 4:4-7 (NIV)

***<sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.***

B. Practical preparation is not simply about making sure we have enough beef jerky stored up to keep ourselves and few others alive as anarchy breaks loose. It is about creating and preparing a context for practical expressions of love to be expressed in a time of great need. It means using the gifts and skills that God has entrusted to us to strengthen and love others.

C. What does love look like practically? Many of us are familiar with Gary Chapman's five "love languages" – words of affirmation, gifts, quality-time, acts of service, physical touch. What does gift-giving look like in context to major economic shakings? What do acts of service look like when Matthew 24 is happening? What do words of affirmation look like when a brother or sister in Christ fleeing persecution knocks on our front door?

D. All parts of the Body of Christ have an important role to play in strengthening the saints for the end of the age. Moms, plumbers, farmers, coaches, truck drivers, business-people, economists all have a key place in the end-time drama that is about to unfold. God wants to use the things He has deposited in all of us, to strengthen others through the most difficult time the world will ever see. This should stir and excite our hearts. How do you think you would feel if when Jesus returns you find out that three children didn't go to a lake of fire because of a simple children's book that you wrote?

E. I really want to encourage all of you to take advantage of our training proposal form. We have set it up to empower the Body.

F. Technically, all of our Friday nights will be a form of preparation. However, we are devoting the fourth Friday of every month more specifically to hand-types of preparation. What are the practicals involved in leading an effective small group? What are some of the practical dynamics involved in fasting? What foods can we eat and not eat? How do we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit? What do we need to know about cars? What kinds of food have a long life span, and which ones don't? How do you pasteurize your own milk? Etc.

- G. The following dream was sent to me by a friend. In the dream, God was showing the need for practical preparation alongside head and heart preparation.

"I looked up and saw that I was sitting around a camp fire with Noah and his sons. I knew I was dreaming and when I realized who these guys were I said "very cool"! We talked lightly for a few minutes then Noah called the few of us to have a prayer meeting. As we prayed I would watch ever-so-often, and I could tell time was moving by quickly. As I gazed at these men their beards were steadily getting longer. Their faces were getting more wrinkled. After quiet some time I could hear thunder in the distance, as we kept on praying. Suddenly I felt rain drops on my arms. I looked up and the others felt the rain also. They looked to the sky in horror, then start wailing and weeping as they realize they have been praying and praying and done Nothing. And now the rain was here!"

## V. CONCLUSION

- A. I want to close with a story sent to me by John Kaiser:

"During the early 1970's there was a revolution in Mali, north-central Africa. An animist came into power and during his tenure put into effect a law that every person (except Muslims) were required to go through cultural animistic initiation ceremonies. In these ceremonies, there was much immorality and teaching about the spirits. By the end of the initiation, each person was required to receive his/her own personal spirit. Anyone who refused to go through these ceremonies was to be buried alive with only one leg sticking out of the ground as warning to others. Many Christians died during that short time that this man was president.

Abe Taves, a retired missionary who had spent his career in Mali with the Gospel Missionary Union, made a visit at the end of this time of persecution. He found that a number of people had fallen away from the church and had gone through the ceremonies. As he researched the reason for the differences between those who put their lives on the line (many of them dying) and those who fell, he came to the conclusion that those who stood firm had been prepared. They were ready for the persecution and stood firm. Those who fell had not been prepared and were swept away when the persecution broke."

- B. The reality is that biblical Christianity is preparatory by nature, at its very core. There is no such thing as non-preparatory Christianity!

*1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NIV)*

***2 We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. 3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.***

*2 Thessalonians 1:8-11 (NIV)*

***8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.***

***11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.***

*1 Peter 1:13 (ESV)*

***Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***