

# TOUGH DECISIONS

## John 19:12-16

As we have learned, Jesus was making Pilate feel extremely uncomfortable as this trial progressed, and because of that Pilate continued to make attempts to release Jesus. But the crowd would not accept that. Let us pick up here beginning in John chapter nineteen, verse twelve.

### John 19:12-16 NAS:

<sup>12</sup> *As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."*

<sup>13</sup> *Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

<sup>14</sup> *Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"*

<sup>15</sup> *So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, **crucify Him!**" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."*

<sup>16</sup> *So he (Pilate)<sup>1</sup> then delivered Him to them to be crucified.*

The Jewish leaders finally stopped Pilate cold in his efforts to release Jesus by questioning his loyalty to Caesar. This is something that Pilate's career could not afford. If Caesar had any reason to suspect Pilate's loyalty, Pilate would be history. So what we see here is a choice Pilate must make, a choice that we are all faced with actually. Pilate must either choose the things in life that attract him or recognize Jesus as the king He is and give Him complete loyalty. You cannot have it both ways. Pilate is given a choice of kings to serve and he chooses the wrong one because he will not look beyond his worldly desires. Perhaps we all need to stop for a moment and consider where our loyalty lies.

"Several European golfers considered pulling out of the PGA Championship to attend the funeral of fellow golfer Darren Clarke's wife. Heather Clarke lost a long battle with cancer and many of the Clarke's friends wanted to attend the funeral to support their comrade. In the end, only Paul McGinley, a player on the bubble for a Ryder Cup spot, chose to skip the year's fourth major event. McGinley said, "Some things are more important than the Ryder Cup."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Parentheses added.

<sup>2</sup> *World Magazine*, August 26, 2006, Around the Horn:Golf; Pg 43. Submitted by Jim Sandell.

Here was a man who knew how to choose the right loyalty. Pilate and the Jews did not.

It seems to us that in verses 14 and 15 Pilate is mocking the Jews to get back at them for threatening him by telling the crowd that this man who has been beaten bloody, humiliated, and scorned is their king. He is saying that this poor miserable excuse for a man is what they deserve for a king. Pilate, without knowing it, is giving the Jews a last chance to recognize Jesus as their king, but they would have none of it. "*We have no king but Caesar*" is what they say in verse 15. So, like Pilate, they also have a choice to make regarding who they will accept as their king, and they too choose the wrong king. By rejecting Jesus as the King and Savior they knew would be coming, here the Jewish religious leaders are rejecting the faith that they claim they have been given the responsibility to uphold. One day they will pay the ultimate price for rejecting Jesus when they are sentenced to the Lake of Fire for eternity. It cannot be too pleasant for them right now either, because unless they changed their attitudes and later accepted Jesus, they are all now in Hell.

Pilate finally hands Jesus over to the crowd and although they do not carry out the crucifixion themselves, this certainly places as much blame on their shoulders as on the Romans. The Jewish leaders then saw to it that Jesus was led away to the place where He would be crucified.

If we think about this carefully it should really boggle our minds. Rejecting Jesus is what sin is all about. And in the midst of this expression of the essence of sin, Jesus willingly goes to the cross to die for the sin they are committing against Him at that very moment.

You might be interested in knowing that years later Pilate was removed from office by the Proconsul of Syria and banished to France where he later died. Pilate made a bad decision at a defining moment in his life for a very common reason. Pilate, like so many other people, feared what other men might do to him, rather than fearing God and what He could do for him and to him. In Pilate's case he even went so far as to sentence God's Son to death. We can only do the right thing when we choose God over men.

Matthew 10:28 NAS:

*<sup>28</sup> "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

What does it mean to fear God more than man? How can we make this feeling the dominant force in our hearts and minds? We must have this feeling imbedded securely in our minds so that whenever an issue comes up, that is the first filter that we use to begin our decision process. Is this from God? Is this within the will of God as expressed to us in the Bible? If a crisis arises, do we panic, or do we immediately ask God for His help and His counsel? Let us try to illustrate this better by reading you two stories from Daniel.

**Please keep in mind that we are trying to understand what life can be like when we believe in the sovereignty of God** and when we realize He can be totally trusted to be in

control of everything that is going on in the world. We can be sure that, no matter what the outcome, He will take care of those who are His through their faith in the work of Christ. These two stories from the book of Daniel take place during the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon, beginning in 606 B.C. and lasting until around 536 B.C.

### **Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace:**

Daniel 3:1-30 NLT:

<sup>1</sup> **King Nebuchadnezzar** made a **gold statue** ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of **Babylon**.

<sup>2</sup> Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up.

<sup>3</sup> So all these officials came and stood before the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>4</sup> Then a herald shouted out, "People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king's command!"

<sup>5</sup> When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue.

<sup>6</sup> Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

<sup>7</sup> So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>8</sup> But some of the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews.

<sup>9</sup> They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Long live the king!"

<sup>10</sup> You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments.

<sup>11</sup> That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace.

<sup>12</sup> But there are some Jews—**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up."

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in,

<sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up?"

<sup>15</sup> I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then

**what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"**

<sup>16</sup> *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you.*

<sup>17</sup> *If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty.*

<sup>18</sup> *But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."*

Do you think that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ever gave this order of the king a second thought? We do not think so. One of the Ten Commandments forbids the worship of false gods (Exodus 20:4-5). This kind of law was strictly in opposition to the Law of God and therefore no true believer would ever consider obeying it. It did not matter what type of punishment they would suffer or how severe, they were on auto-pilot to obey everything that God had instructed them to do through His Holy Word. If they were driving along in their chariot and saw a sign that said "Speed Limit, 35 MPH," would they obey it? Absolutely. If Nebuchadnezzar made a law that said they were to pay a 50% Camel Tax, would they obey it? Certainly. If the law specified they purchase a license in order to operate their airplane, would they comply? Without question. If the law required they worship the king, would they do it? No. Continuing in verse 19:

<sup>19</sup> *Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual.*

<sup>20</sup> *Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.*

Now for most of us this would be more than a little stressful. Imagine yourself seated at the entrance of the hottest fiery furnace in the world. As these thugs bind your hands and feet as tight as they can, you can feel the intense heat from the furnace and you have not even been tossed in yet. The thought flashes into your mind that you can save yourself from a very painful death by simply saying, "Excuse me, I've made a terrible mistake! Could I please worship the king now?" Would you be tempted to do that? I believe I would be tempted, but I know the Holy Spirit within me would prevent me from caving in to what would be in opposition to the will of God.

But the great thing about the kind of faith these three men had was that they trusted completely in God to care for them in such a situation and nothing would convince them otherwise.

Remember, they had no idea what God might really do. They had affirmed their belief that He had the power to save them from the fire. But they also recognized God's sovereignty. They said, "even if He doesn't save us . . . We will never serve your gods" (verse 17). How many of us affirm that we will continue to serve God even if He doesn't

answer our prayers the way we want Him to?

To be able to face every situation without fear or worry is the kind of faith many of the church martyrs have had throughout the years. Now let us resume the story in verse 21.

<sup>21</sup> *So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments.*

<sup>22</sup> *And because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in.*

<sup>23</sup> *So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames.*

<sup>24</sup> *But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, “Didn’t we tie up **three men** and throw them into the furnace?” “Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did,” they replied.*

<sup>25</sup> *“Look!” Nebuchadnezzar shouted. “**I see four men**, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!”*

<sup>26</sup> *Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire.*

<sup>27</sup> *Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn’t even smell of smoke!*

<sup>28</sup> *Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him. They defied the king’s command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.*

<sup>29</sup> *Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!”*

<sup>30</sup> *Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.*

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God in the face of death and God took care of them. Could you do the same? If the new government passes a law against worshipping God and Christ alone, would you be willing to come here and worship God in spite of the threat of imprisonment or death? Such a decision may be closer than you think.

### **Daniel in the lion’s den**

Daniel 6:1-28 NLT:

<sup>1</sup> ***Darius the Mede** decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and*

he appointed a high officer to rule over each province.

<sup>2</sup> The king also chose **Daniel** and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

<sup>4</sup> Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.

<sup>5</sup> So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."

<sup>6</sup> So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius!"

<sup>7</sup> We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions.

<sup>8</sup> And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

<sup>9</sup> So King Darius signed the law.

<sup>10</sup> But when **Daniel** learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.

<sup>11</sup> Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help.

<sup>12</sup> So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?" "Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

<sup>13</sup> Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

<sup>14</sup> Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

<sup>15</sup> In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed."

<sup>16</sup> So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

Most people placed in such a situation would begin screaming in terror the minute they were placed in that den. Panic would overtake most people as they watched these lions prepare to rip them to shreds in what might be the most horrible kind of death as your flesh is torn apart by these vicious lions. You might have to spend several minutes of sheer terror before death would mercifully put an end to your suffering. But Daniel apparently remained as cool as a cucumber, as we see starting in verse 17.

<sup>17</sup> *A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel.*

<sup>18</sup> *Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.*

<sup>19</sup> *Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den.*

<sup>20</sup> *When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"*

<sup>21</sup> *Daniel answered, "Long live the king!*

<sup>22</sup> *My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And **I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.***"

Daniel had been obedient to God Almighty and at the same time did nothing to disrespect the king, because he willingly accepted the punishment the king had required for his actions. He simply could not place anyone or anything on the same level of obedience as he placed God. Picking up the account in verse 23.

<sup>23</sup> *The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.*

<sup>24</sup> *Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.*

<sup>25</sup> *Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: "Peace and prosperity to you!*

<sup>26</sup> *"I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end.*

<sup>27</sup> *He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."*

<sup>28</sup> *So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

Men with the kind of faith which Daniel and his friends had allowed them to ignore the demands of the powerful world rulers of their day because they trusted the most powerful of all the rulers. They knew that when push came to shove, God was the one who was in control and no world ruler or system could alter what He wanted to happen.

Now, you may be thinking, *“What about the early Christian martyrs whom the Romans threw to the lions? They were not miraculously delivered. They died.”* But remember what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said: *“Even if God does not rescue us, we will not worship other gods.”* The early Christian martyrs felt the same way and were ushered into the glorious presence of Christ, rather than left to dwell in a sinful, difficult world. So they also were delivered, only in a different way.

Now in order to be able to develop this kind of faith and trust, one must have a thorough knowledge of Scripture. Just because you want to be able to do what is right, does not mean that you will always know what is right. Doing what is right is based on knowing what is right, and then being able to call upon the power of the Holy Spirit to insure that you do it. Now since the time of Christ, that almost always means that such power is made available only to those who are saved by their faith in Jesus Christ. Before Christ's birth the Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell even those who trusted in God. God would occasionally provide the Holy Spirit in a person's life for a limited period of time to accomplish whatever it was that God wanted accomplished. Today such power might be made available to anyone who is truly seeking after God's truth with a sincere heart. That person might be assisted by the Holy Spirit for a while in order to find what he/she is looking for.

It is true that there are some issues that are not all that clear, such as conscientious objectors like Alvin York encounter when deciding if it was okay to fight in a war in defense of your country. Alvin York, if you do not recognize the name was the most decorated hero of World War I. But the Bible is the only source we have for such decisions and we have to study it thoroughly so that we might understand its overall intent.

Pilate failed to do the right thing, not because he did not know what was right, but because he felt his own selfish interests were more important than doing the right thing. When we fail to do what we know is right in order to get what we want, it almost always inevitably leads to misery. That reality should motivate us to understand our Bibles thoroughly because God promises that doing what is right in His eyes will bring comfort, peace, joy, and even abundance.

You see Jesus is King of Kings and has offered to be a friend to sinners. I hope that, based on his experience with Jesus, Pilate found that out and became a believer. There is a tradition that says he did, but nothing in the Bible tells us that. Yes, even Pilate, who sent Jesus to His death, could be saved by turning to Jesus and accepting Him as Savior. Imagine that kind of forgiveness and that kind of love.



James Montgomery Boice has said:

“God will demand your total allegiance and faithful service, perhaps even to death. But He does not demand of you what He was unwilling to undergo Himself. He died for you, and He promises that no matter what you may go through for His sake and the sake of righteousness, He will go through it with you, thereby proving Himself to be *‘a friend who sticks closer than a brother.’*”<sup>3</sup>

This brings us to a question we believe needs to be addressed in regard to making right decisions in our relationship to God and Jesus. It is not always easy to know when a Christian's obligation to obey God requires disobedience to the state. If God and state were always diametrically opposed, the decision would be easy. We would obey God and disobey the state in all situations. But this is not the case. The state is often if not usually right. And what is more, it has been instituted by God and is invested with God's authority. Consequently, under normal circumstances we are to obey the government. Yet what are *"normal circumstances"*? **We are not to obey without question.** How then do we decide when a particular demand by the state is wrong and requires firm Christian opposition?

The authority of the state is limited in at least two important areas. **First**, it has **no right to forbid the teaching of the complete Word of God.** If the government attempts to do this, we must resist, knowing that we have been given a commission to preach the Word from Jesus Himself. **Second**, the state has no right to command an **immoral act** that is in opposition to God's Word.<sup>4</sup>

It is at this point, however, that we as followers of Christ must be extremely cautious. We know that it is easy to develop an attitude that the government is hopelessly immoral. Governments quite often do things that people do not like, many of which are not in competition with God's will. High taxes and laws that require one to be fair to others are not reasons for disobedience, because they do not violate either of the two things we have already mentioned. We may not want to obey the government simply because we have a resentment against authority. We saw that Jesus alerted us to precisely this danger in John 19:11 by indicating that, although the sin of Pilate was great, the sin of the religious leaders was greater in that they sinned out of pride and against a greater knowledge. We need to make certain that we do not act from impure motives. One good way to insure that is to have input from other Christians about our thoughts, feelings, and actions so that we are accountable to one another for our actions.

In our country today the government has instituted a number of practices that apply to the second point and are getting very close to creating laws to restrict the first point. We as

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<sup>3</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *An Expository Commentary – John, Volume 5: Triumph through Tragedy (John 18-21)*, Paperback ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1483-1488.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Christians must prepare ourselves to disobey such laws even if it means imprisonment or death. Such acts include:

- ✓ abortion
- ✓ recognition of homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle
- ✓ embryonic stem-cell research
- ✓ eliminating the use of “Jesus” in our prayers
- ✓ stealing from the poor to give to the rich  
(You may need to think about this last one for a while, and be certain, it is worded correctly).

Let us just look at abortion as one example. There can be no doubt that life begins at conception. Anyone with two brain cells can come to that realization with all the scientific proof and technology that is available today; and Scripture tells us this as well (Psalm 139:13-18; Jeremiah 1:4-5). In this country we have laws that prohibit people from putting an end to those lives. If someone murders a pregnant woman and her unborn child that individual is tried for two murders. If a baby is born in a hospital and immediately after that birth someone enters the birthing room and shoots the baby, they would be arrested and tried for murder. If ten minutes before that baby is born, however, the doctor plunges a sharp scissors through the baby’s skull, sucks out his/her brains, and crushes the skull to complete the procedure before removing it from the mother, that is called an “*abortion*,” and it is supposedly justified by a mother’s “*right to choose*” whether the baby lives or dies. Does the mother, according to our laws, have the right to choose *after* the baby is born? If she plunges that scissors into the baby’s head right after birth, it would be considered murder. This is simply “*bad law*” and any knowledgeable attorney will tell you *Roe v. Wade* was a very bad decision.

Let us give you some plain and simple facts. As soon as that baby begins growing in his/her mother, it is a living human being given life by its creator, God. If a doctor comes along and snuffs out that baby’s life in any way, that doctor is guilty of murdering a human being, and the mother who allows it is guilty of being an accessory to that murder. A pregnant mother has no more right to end the life of her child than she has of ending the life of her husband, or brother, or mother, or next door neighbor. The president of the United States and all the members of Congress, governors and all the members of state legislatures are guilty of being accomplices to murder, and they are walking the streets free. We who believe the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to be the guiding principles for our republic, should throw every single one of them out of office, and that includes judges who have come to believe they have power to make laws instead of enforcing them, and who refuse to accept and defend that document as originally written and lawfully amended. We need to begin again, a fresh start, with the constitutional law our founding fathers gave us.

Fifty million murders that have gone unpunished since 1973. And what has the Church done about it? For the most part nothing. Few pastors have the kind of faith that Daniel and his friends had. It makes me wonder why they became pastors in the first place. They

stand silent in the pulpit afraid to talk about the worst holocaust in all of history. Christians go to bed every night and do not give a thought to the 2,000 or so babies that have been murdered that day. People march up and down in front of and all around abortion clinics so that they do not interfere with these murderers, when they should be standing in the doorways with thousands of other pro-life people **forbidding those murders to take place.**

But where are the people of courage today? Are they all sitting in comfort before their electronic games, computers, or giant screen TVs? Are they all playing with their cell phones, blackberries, or Ipods? Is this what the United States has come to? We hope not, but we certainly do not see any behavior to make us believe otherwise.

We as Christians should do everything within our power to put an end to these practices wherever possible. Nonviolence is the preferred method and should be used until all such efforts prove futile. But when a government persists in promoting what decent people know to be evil, the people must do whatever necessary to correct the wrong, or they will be promoting disobedience to God's will, and for that the entire nation will eventually suffer.

**Our first line of attack must be prayer.** Then we should take action by writing and phoning our representatives in government as well as voting only for people who hold to biblical and constitutional values. But remember, we must always take a stand against wrong and we must refuse to worship any god but the Lord God Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ.