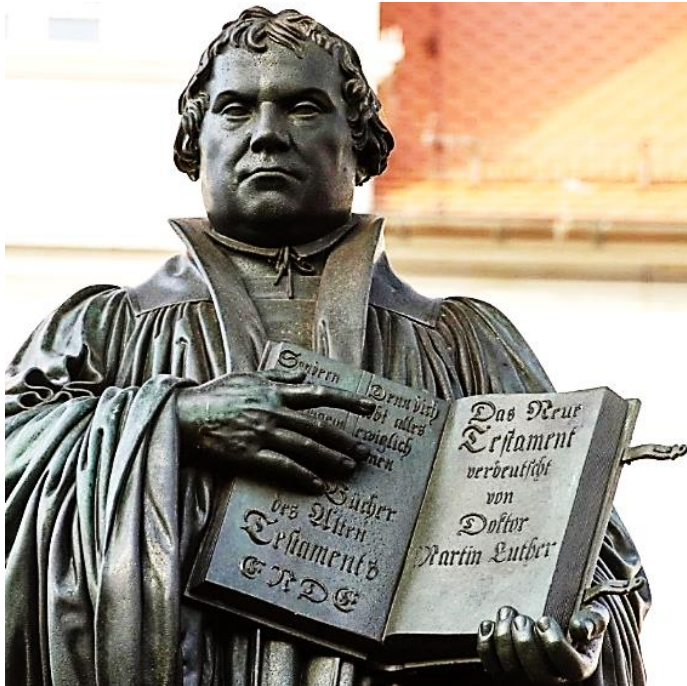


**Dr. Luther nailed it ! Posting our “back-to-the-Bible” priority :
(Reformation Day and our Providential Heritage)**



Dr. James J. S. Johnson

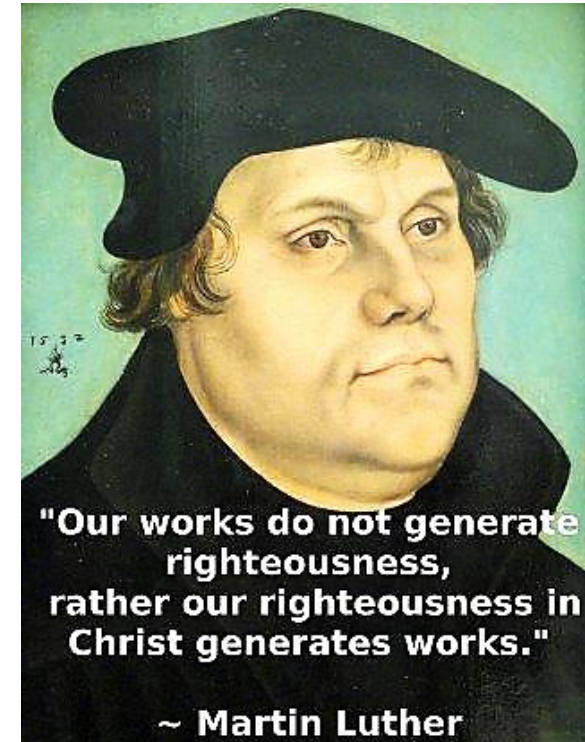
Examine Class, Faith Chapel, Prestonwood Baptist Church

Sunday, October 30th AD2020, 11 a.m.

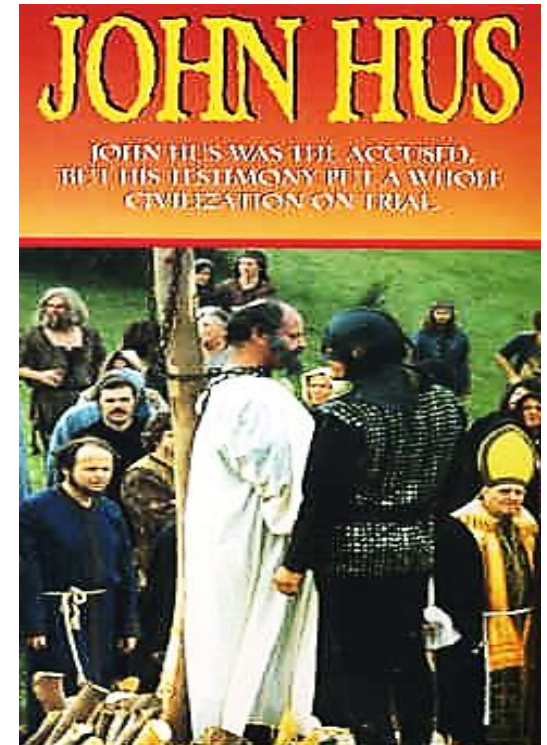
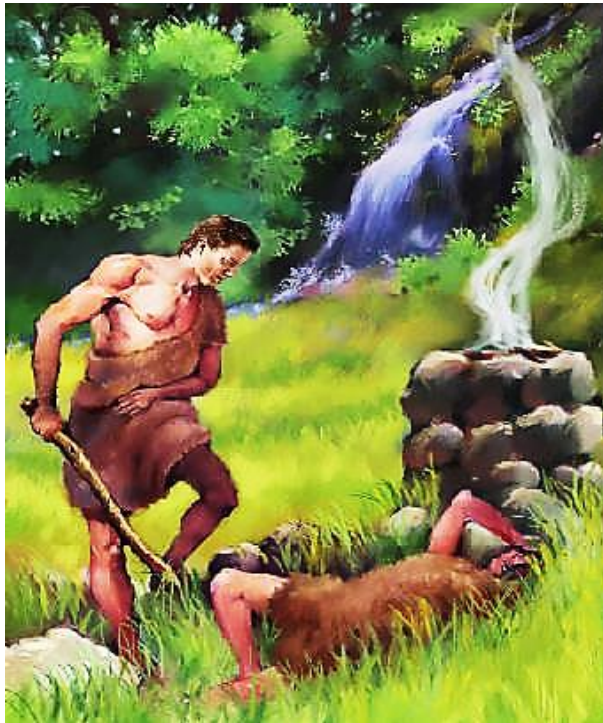
What happened 500 years ago ?



The Protestant Reformation, to a large degree, was a “**back-to-the-Bible**” (Bible literacy) movement.

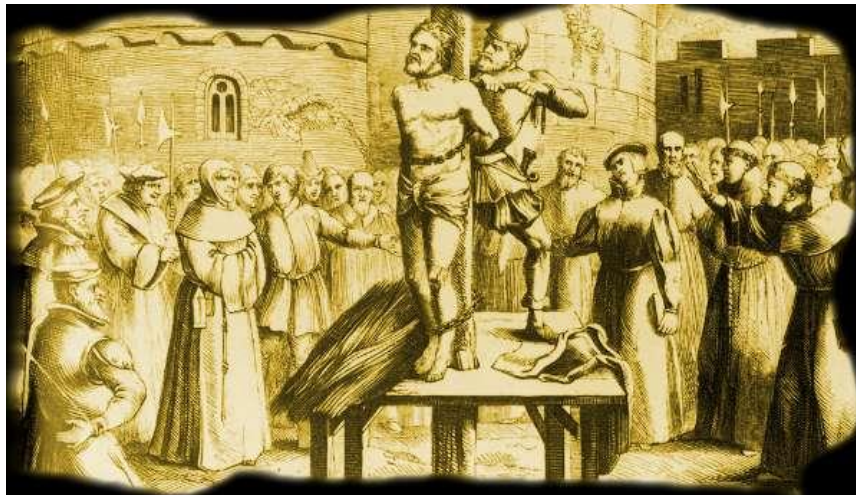


Early on, the Protestant Reformation was a religious liberty (i.e., anti-persecution) **movement**, too.



“... for they have gone in the way of Cain ...” **(Jude 1:11)**

William Tyndale: Every plow-boy needs a Bible !



**Protestant
Reformation**
impacts: sacred
music, visual arts,
family history, etc.



260

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

EIN' FESTE BURG (isometric) 8.7.8.7.6.6.6.7

Martin Luther, 1529

Trans. Frederick Henry Hedge, 1852

Martin Luther, 1529

1. A might - y for - tress is our God, A bul - wark nev - er fail - ing;
2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, Our striv - ing would be los - ing;
3. And though this world, with dev - ils filled, Should threat - en to un - do us,
4. That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, No thanks to them, a - bid - eth;

Our help - er He a - mid the flood Of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.
Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choos - ing.
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to tri - umph through us.
The Spir - it and the gifts are ours Through Him who with us sid - eth;

For still our an - cient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is He, Lord Sab - a -
The prince of dark - ness grim, We trem - ble not for him; His rage we
Let goods and kin - dred go, This mor - tal life al - so; The bod - y

power are great, And, armed with cru - el hate, On earth is not his e - qual.
oth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the bat - tle.
can en - dure, For lo! his doom is sure, One lit - tle word shall fell him.
they may kill, God's truth a - bid - eth still, His king - dom is for - ev - er.

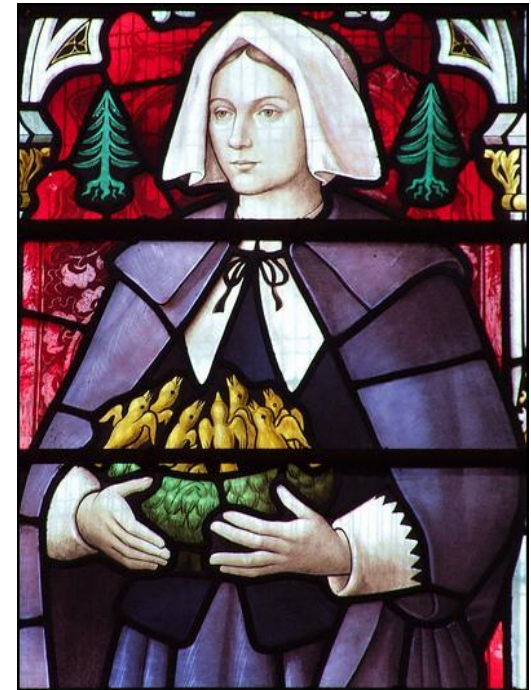
Dr. Martin Luther and his beloved wife (Katie) enjoyed family life (AD1525—AD1546), with their **6** children, plus **4** adopted orphans !



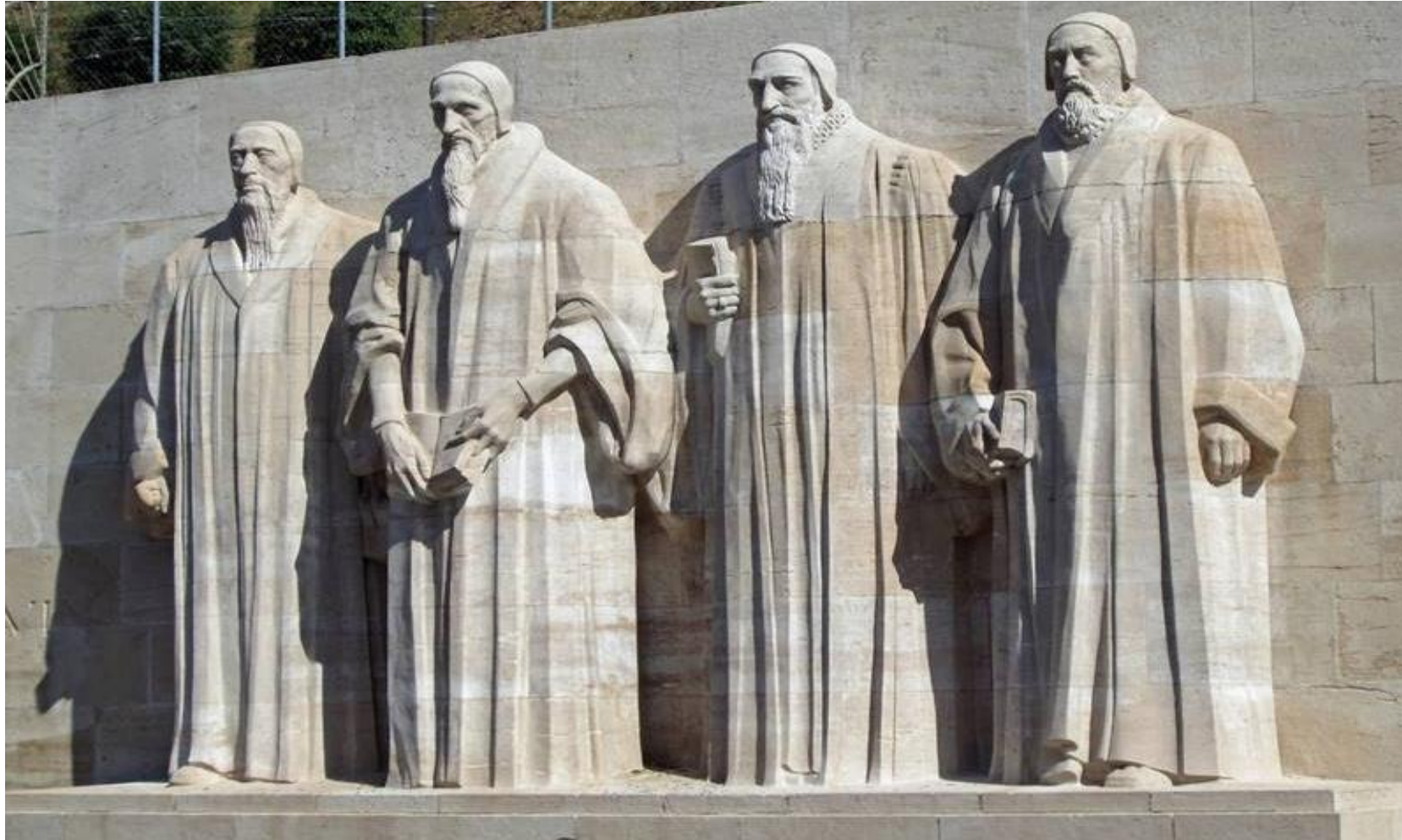
“Of whom the world was not worthy . . .” (Hebrews 11:38)

Anne Bradstreet, Before the Birth of One of Her Children

All things within this fading world hath end, Adversity doth still our joys attend;
No ties so strong, no friends so dear and sweet, But with death's parting blow is sure to meet.
The sentence past is most irrevocable, A common thing, yet oh, inevitable.
How soon, my Dear, death may my steps attend. How soon't may be thy lot to lose thy friend,
We both are ignorant, yet love bids me These farewell lines to recommend to thee,
That when that knot's untied that made us one, I may seem thine, who in effect am none.
And if I see not half my days that's due, What nature would, God grant to yours and you;
The many faults that well you know I have Let be interred in my oblivious grave;
If any worth or virtue were in me, Let that live freshly in thy memory
And when thou feel'st no grief, as I no harms, Yet love thy dead, who long lay in thine arms.
And when thy loss shall be repaid with gains Look to my little babes, my dear remains.
And if thou love thyself, or loved'st me, These O protect from step-dame's injury.
And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse, With some sad sighs honour my absent hearse;
And kiss this paper for thy love's dear sake, Who with salt tears this last farewell did take.



So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. **(Nehemiah 8:8)**



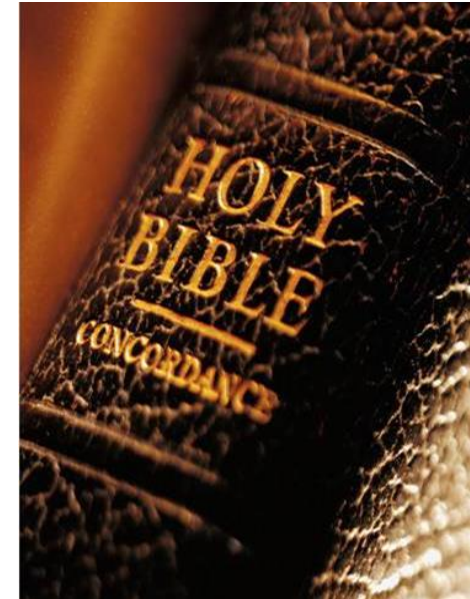
“For wherever the Gospel is purely preached, there men have a sure rule for their faith, and by that they are able to guard against idolatry. But there Satan plies temptations of every kind, and [Satan] tries by what means he can the most effectually to draw men away from the Word, or how he can most completely corrupt the Word itself. ... But this temptation, when Satan attacks the Word and the works of God, is by far the heaviest and most dangerous; and that temptation the most intimately concerns the Church and the saints. It was in this manner therefore that Satan attacked Adam and Eve . . . to tear away from them the Word, in order that giving up the Word and their confidence in God, they might believe a lie. When this takes place what wonder is it if a man afterwards becomes proud, a despiser of God, an adulterer or anything else? This temptation therefore is the head and chief of all temptations. ... For unbelief is the foundation of all sins. When Satan has brought a man under this temptation [of unbelief] and has wrestled from him ... the Word, [Satan] may do anything to him.”

Dr. Martin Luther (Genesis Commentary)

Satan's tactic of displacement.

- “**subtracting from the Word**”: Sadducees used doubt/denial of parts of God's Word to dodge the authority of (and their obligation to obey undervalued parts of the O.T. Scriptures.
- “**adding to the Word**”: Pharisees used their religious tradition to usurp the Bible's proper place of authority.
- Just as any substitute for Scripture is a **counterfeit Bible**; likewise, any substitute for Christ is an idol — thus “**Churchianity**” is the tragic result of “Church” **replacing** Christ, in theology and/or in experience.

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me [*i.e., Jesus*], for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words? (John 5:46-47)



The written Word of God *perfectly presents* to us the living Word of God, *the Lord Jesus Christ*. There is *never* any substitute for the Holy Bible.

REFLECTING UPON OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORD OF GOD

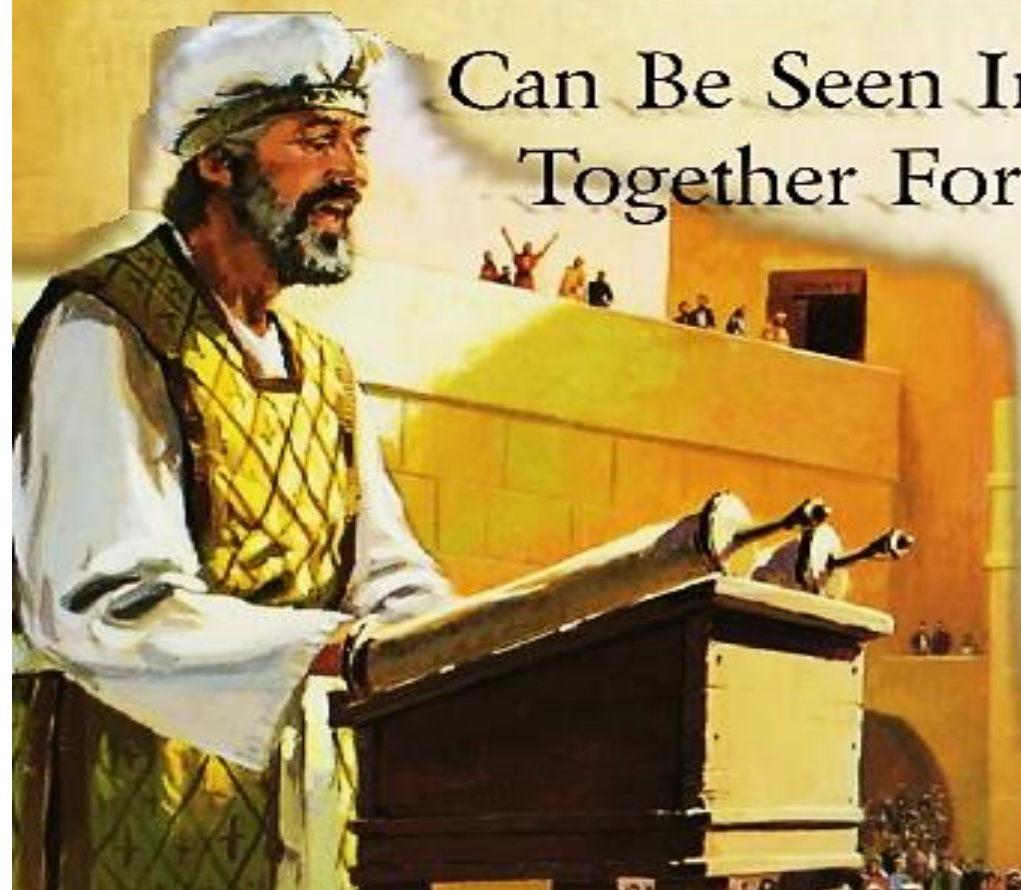
They Wanted To Learn

[1] . . . all the people gathered together as one man

Can Be Seen In Their Desire To Assemble
Together For Acceptable Worship – 8:1

Nehemiah 8:1 (NKJV)

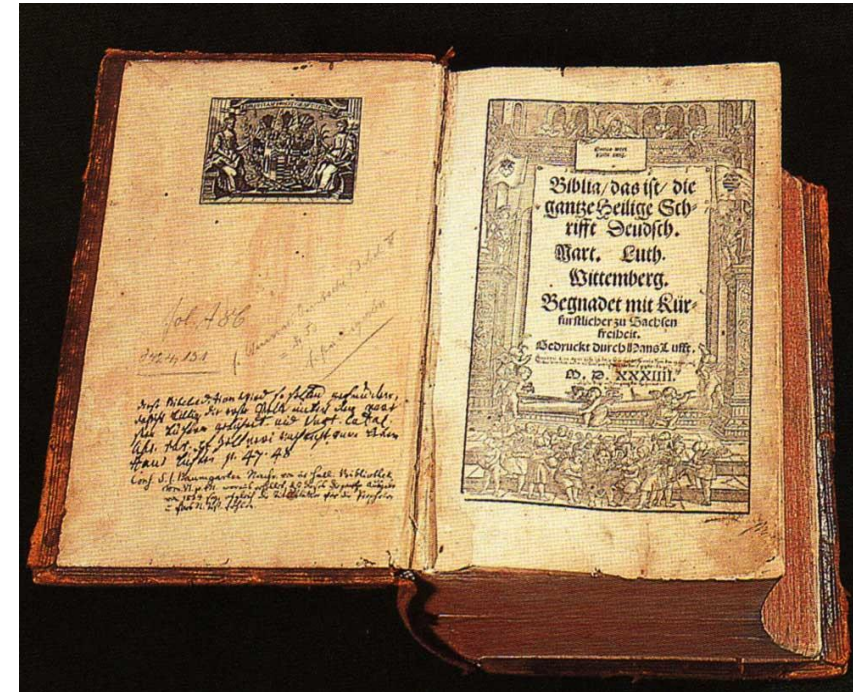
. . . and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel.



What priorities did the Jews recover ?

They prioritized God – and they proved it, by prioritizing God's Word.

If you really appreciate God, you prize *belonging* to Him, and you will value your opportunities to know Him *through His Word*.

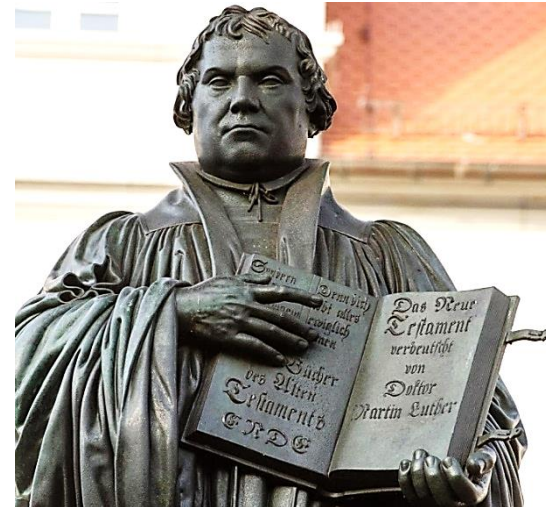


And Ezra the priest brought the law [Torah] before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the 1st day of the 7th month. **(Nehemiah 8:2)**



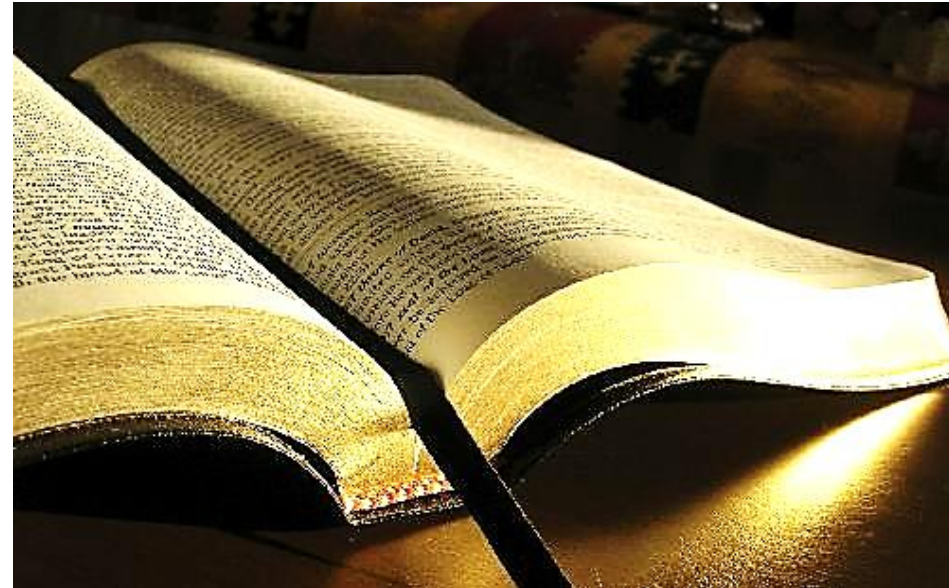
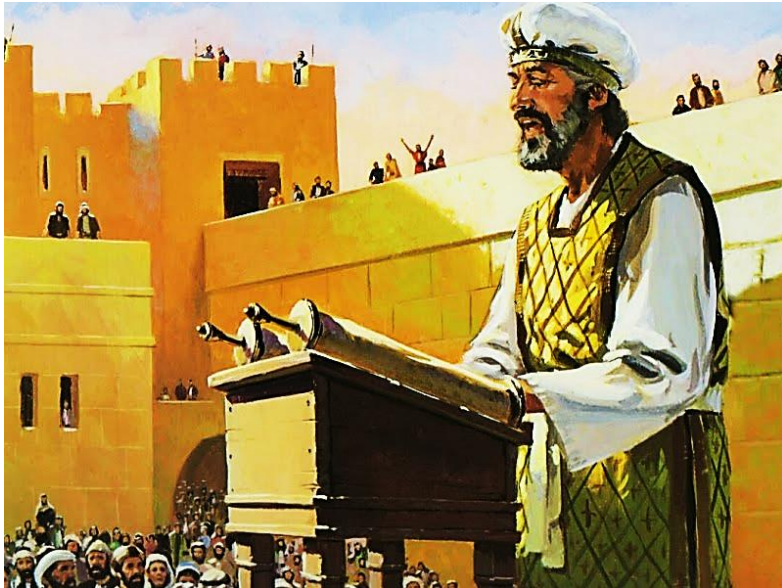
Observation: when people sincerely sought to be taught from God's Word, God sent Bible teachers – **ready, willing, and able to teach.**

And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. **(Nehemiah 8:3)**



Observation: when God's Word was read publicly, to God's people, the people (who were old enough) were attentive to it – all morning long.

And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; **(Nehemiah 8:4)**



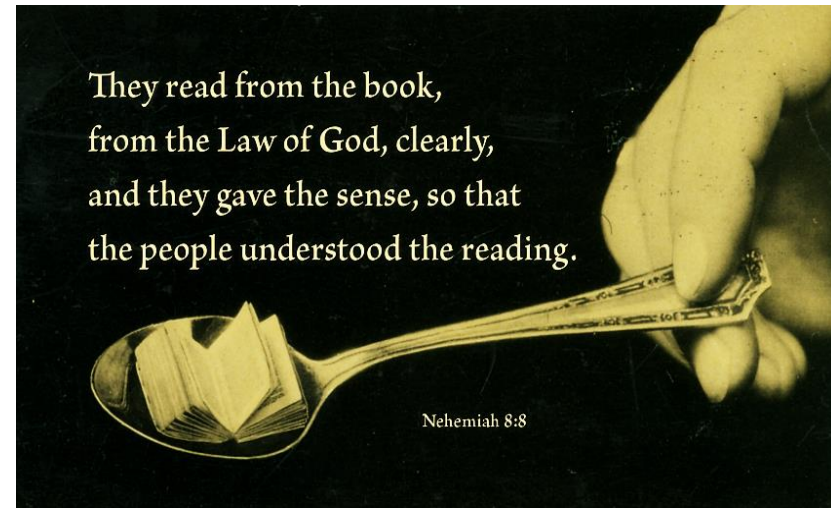
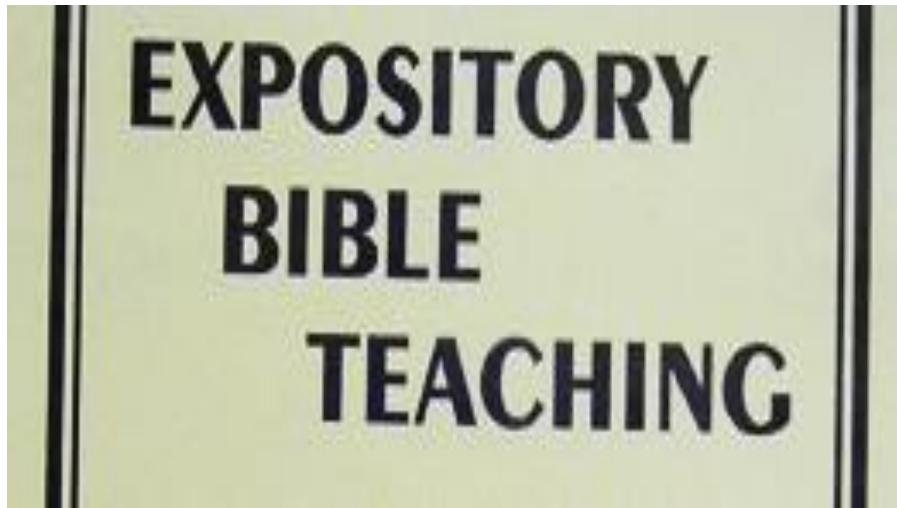
Observation: When the Bible was to be taught, publicly, actions were taken to utilize practical technology to maximize the event's success.

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people). And when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen,
(Nehemiah 8:5-6)



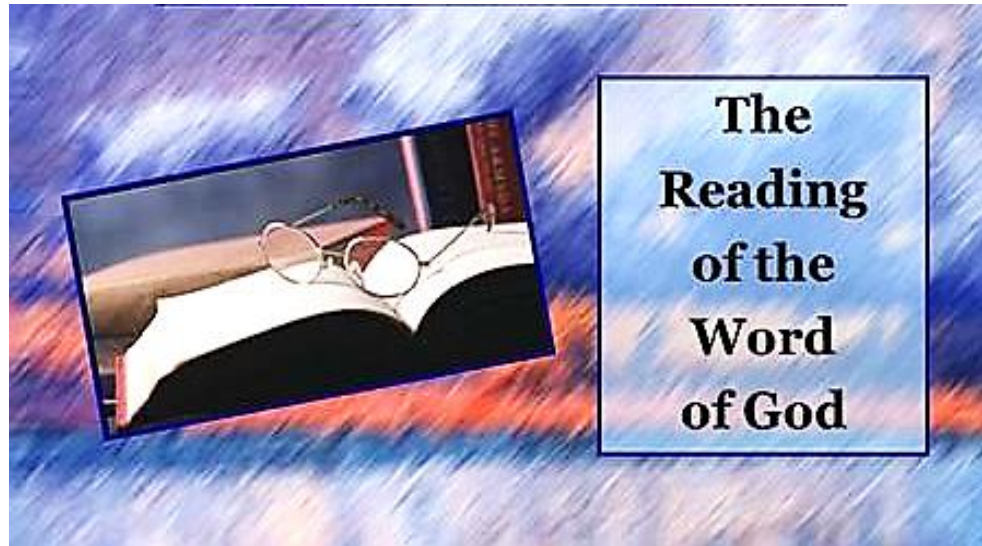
Observation: When publicly reading the Scriptures, the Bible should be conspicuous, to emphasize that God's Word is being read and taught. Also, reading God's Word should include an **attitude of worship**.

Also Joshua [and others] caused the people to understand the law. ... So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. **(Nehemiah 8:7-8)**



Observation: we need to have God's Word read *and* explained. This involves literally **reading** Bible's text, *then* **explaining** what it *means*.

And Nehemiah [*and Ezra, and the other Bible scribe-teachers*] said unto all the people, This day is **holy** unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. **(Nehemiah 8:9)**



Observation: when God's people really listen to the reading of **God's Word**, and have it explained, this produces an immediate recognition of personal and corporate sins, resulting in grief and sorrow.

Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry, because the joy of the LORD is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10)



Observation: *Feeling sorry* for our sins and failures is worthwhile, but it doesn't fuel us! It's the joy of the LORD that's our strength!

So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. **(Nehemiah 8:11-12)**

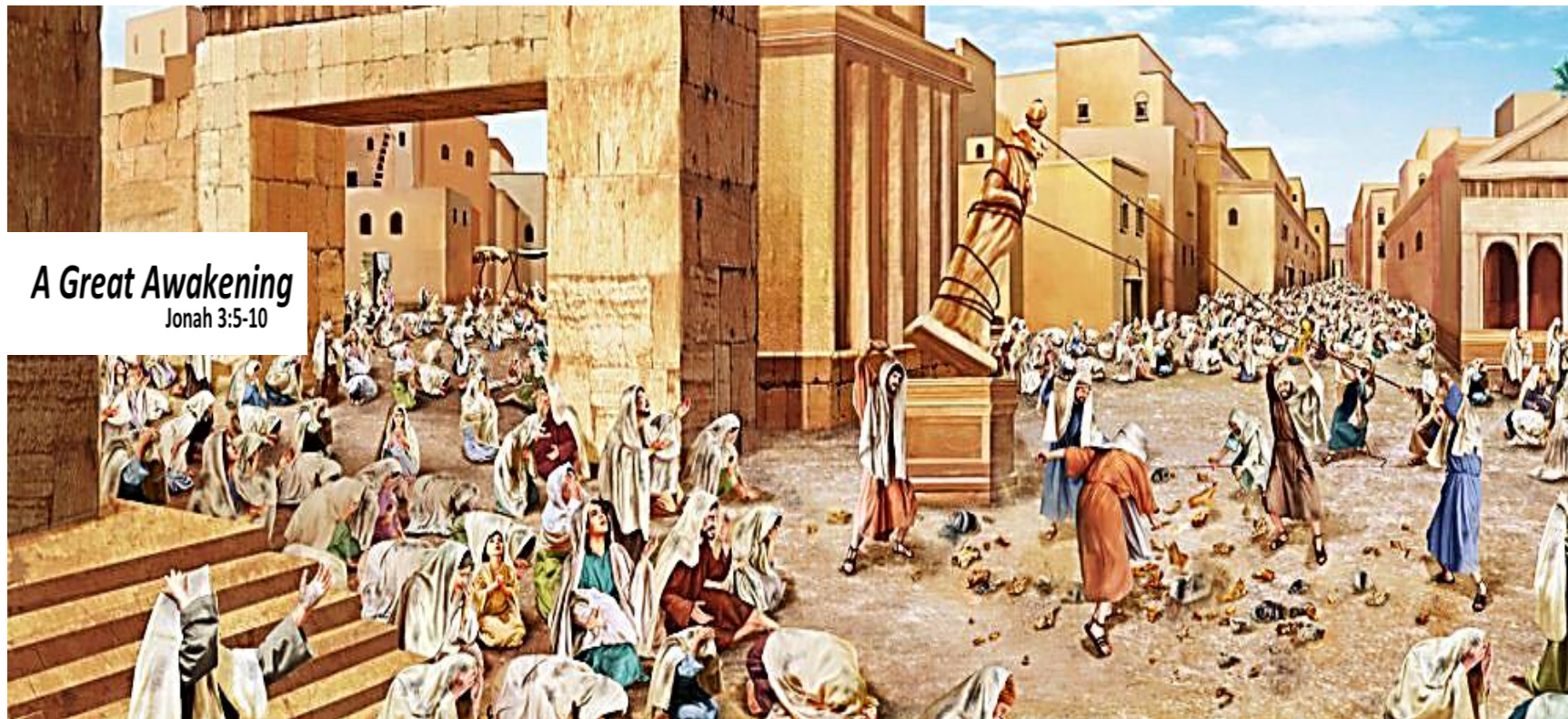
Observation / Application: Although attentively hearing (or reading) and understanding God's Word is humbling, it is moreso a joyful and fortifying blessing, worth a hearty and festive celebration (*and maybe even some rejoicing that includes feasting!*), joy to be somehow shared with others! 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊



Remember Jonah? *Our repentance is God's relief!*

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of [*God was relieved** regarding] the calamity that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.

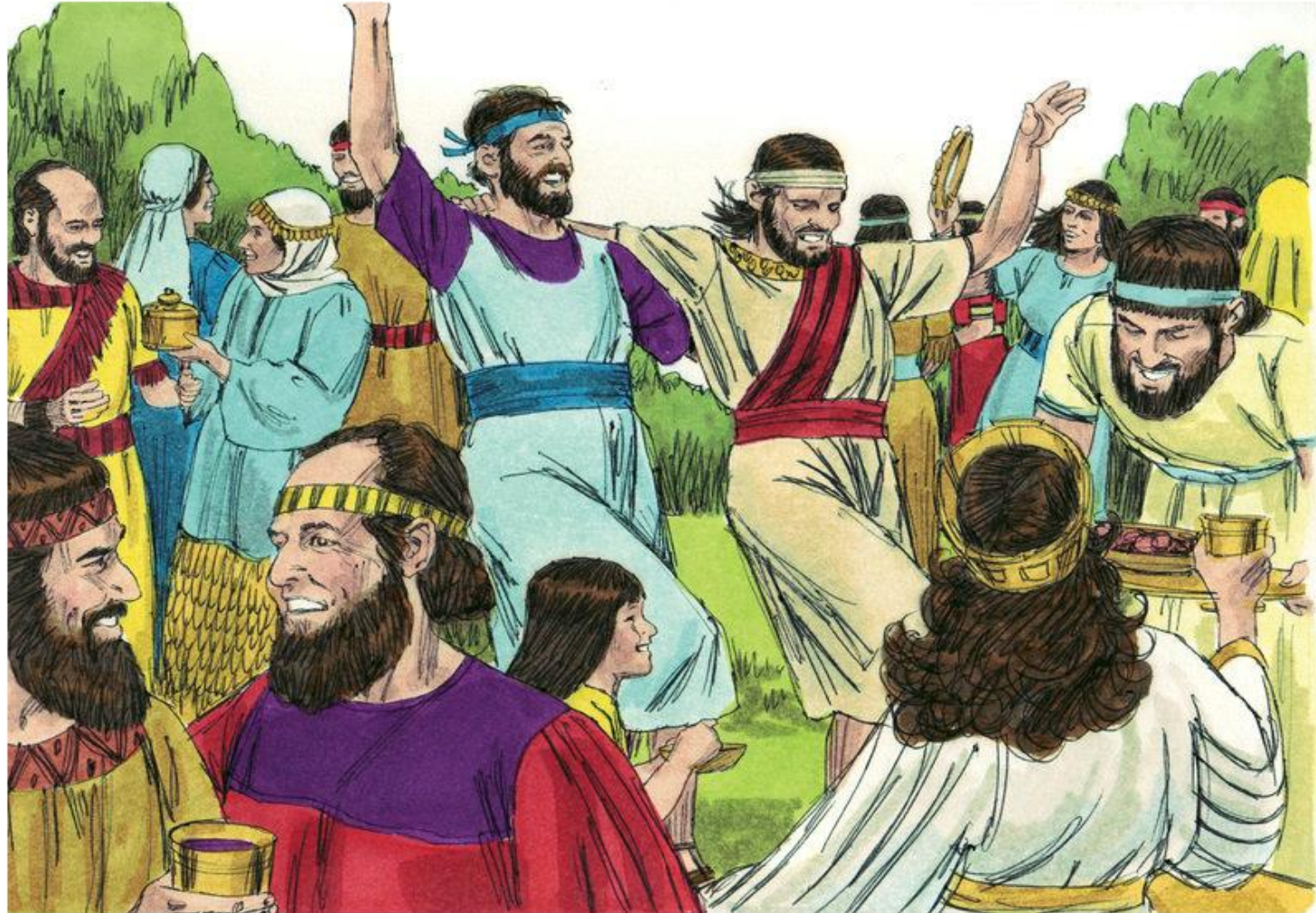
(Jonah 3:10) **nâham* *niphâl* [to console, relieve, comfort, sympathize, pity]



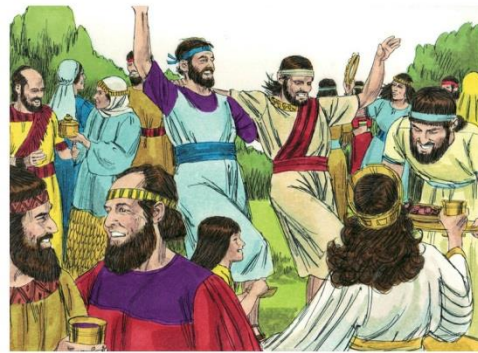
When we've **humbled** our hearts to God, as forgiven sinners (**1st John 1:9**), due to our **hearing** and **revering** His written Word, we appreciate His **mercy** and **grace** in our Lord Jesus Christ (*Who solved our sin problem, securing us as clean before God*). **So, being forgiven, we now focus on the joy of belonging to Him! (Luke 10:20)**



I rejoice at Thy Word, as one who
finds great treasure. **(Psalm 139:162)**



And they written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths, in the feast of the 7th month ... fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written *[for properly observing the Feast of Tabernacles]* ... And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths. **For since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so.** And there was very great gladness. **(Nehemiah 8:14-15 & 8:17)**



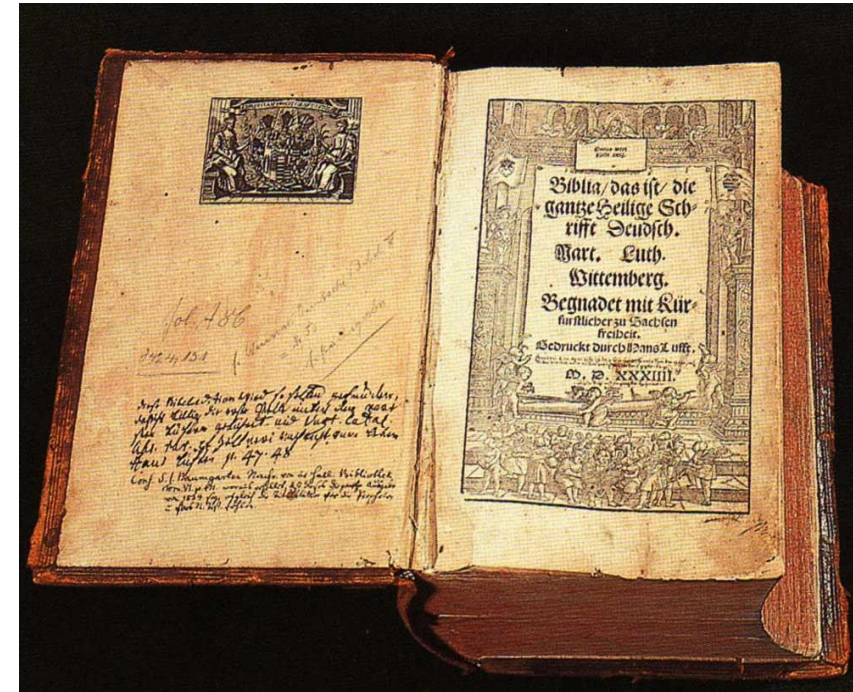
Observation: **obeying God's Word**, and taking action to honor and celebrate His glory (“as it is written”), is **the right thing to do**, plus “**very great gladness**” results!

Also day by day, from the 1st day unto the last day, he read in the Book of the law of God. And they kept the feast [of Booths] 7 days. And on the 8th day was a solemn assembly, **(Nehemiah 8:18)**



Observation: **Reading and learning God's Word is not a 1-day experience.** And, as **Matthew 4:4**, Psalm 1, and Joshua 1:8 teach us, *we always need to take in God's Word, daily.*

What priorities did the Jews recover ?
They prioritized God – and they *proved* it, by prioritizing God's Word. If you really appreciate God, you prize *belonging* to Him, and you will value your opportunities to know Him *through His Word*.



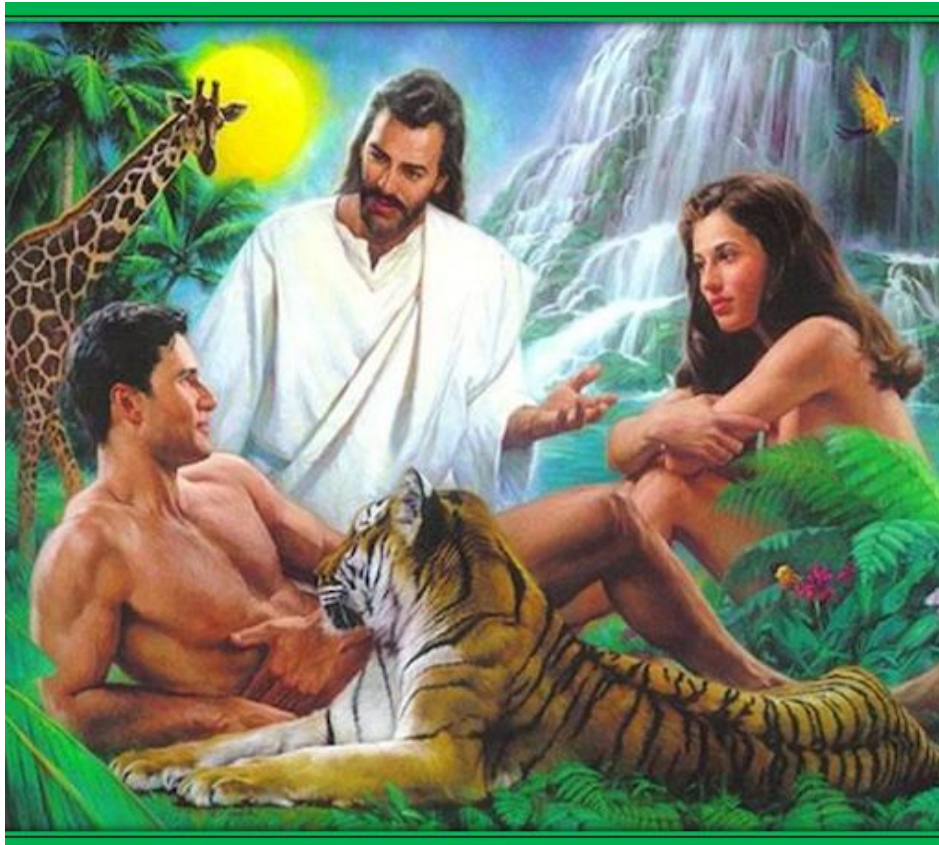
What was lost during the Dark Ages?
Why is religious freedom shrinking ?
Why is Biblical illiteracy so common today?

The Five Solas

1. Sola Scriptura (by scripture alone)
2. Sola Fide (by faith alone)
3. Sola Gratia (by grace alone)
4. Solus Christus (Christ alone)
5. Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone)



First, we need **God** to be created!
Also, we need **God** to save us from sin.
Always, we need **God** to give us truth.



Prioritize & rejoice!

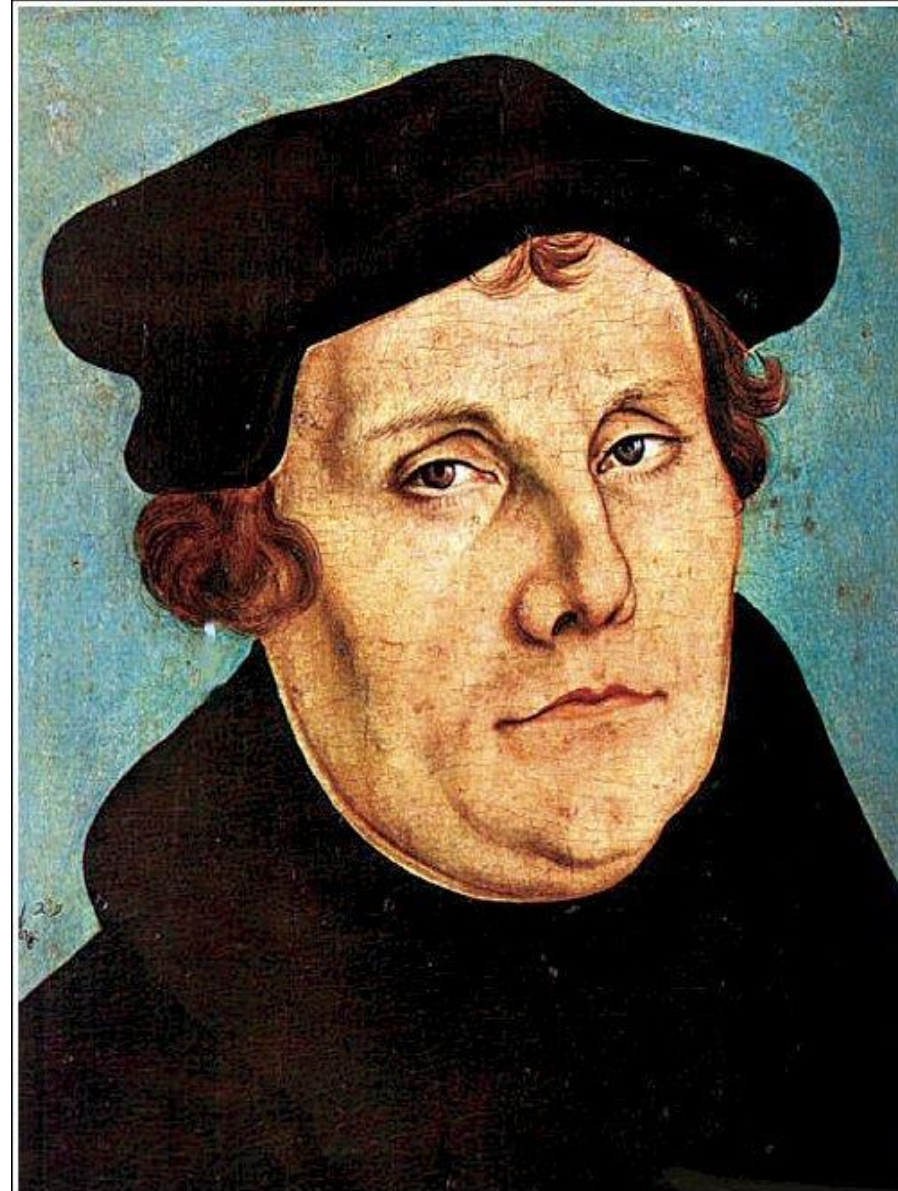
Scripture alone!

Christ alone!

Grace alone!

Belief (faith) alone!

God's glory alone!



Thank God for Dr. Martin Luther's godly hammer, **500 years ago**, and for the "**back-to-the Bible**" revival (that we call the **Protestant Reformation**)! Rejoice in His Word! 😊

