

Escaping The Descent Into Paganism

I. Paganization Of America

A. The Life Of A Christ Follower

Galatians 2:20 (NIV84®)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

B. Descent Into Paganism

Romans 1:21–32 (NIV84®)

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore **God gave them over** in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ **They exchanged the truth of God for a lie**, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, **God gave them over** to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, **he gave them over** to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

II. The Opportunity To Believe

Joel 2:32 (NIV84®)

And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved;

Acts 26:28 (NKJV®)

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "**You almost persuade me** to become a Christian."



III. Step Of Faith: *The Breakthrough Of Baptism*

Matthew 3:15–17 (NIV84®)

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; **it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then John consented. ¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Titus 3:5 (NIV®)

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

A. Noah — Dramatic Demonstration Of God's Judgment & Deliverance

1 Peter 3:18-22 (NIV®)

¹⁸ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison ²⁰ who disobeyed long ago when **God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.** In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ **and this water symbolizes baptism** that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

B. Red Sea — Impossible Barrier Becomes Pathway To Freedom & Defeat For Enemies

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (NIV®)

¹ For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

C. Phillip — Supernaturally Initiated, Directed & Concluded

Acts 8:26-29 (NIV®)

²⁶ Now **an angel of the Lord said to Philip,** "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ **The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."**



Acts 8:34-40 (NIV®)

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁷ ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ **When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.** ⁴⁰ Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

E. Prison Guard

Acts 16:31-34 (NIV®)

³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ **At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.** ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; **he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.**

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help my unbelief. I choose to put my faith in Jesus as Lord and King. My desire is to walk before You in holiness, righteousness, and faith. Guide my steps that I may not stumble, deliver me from evil and open my heart to understand Your great mercy — in Jesus' name, amen.