

Never Give Up!

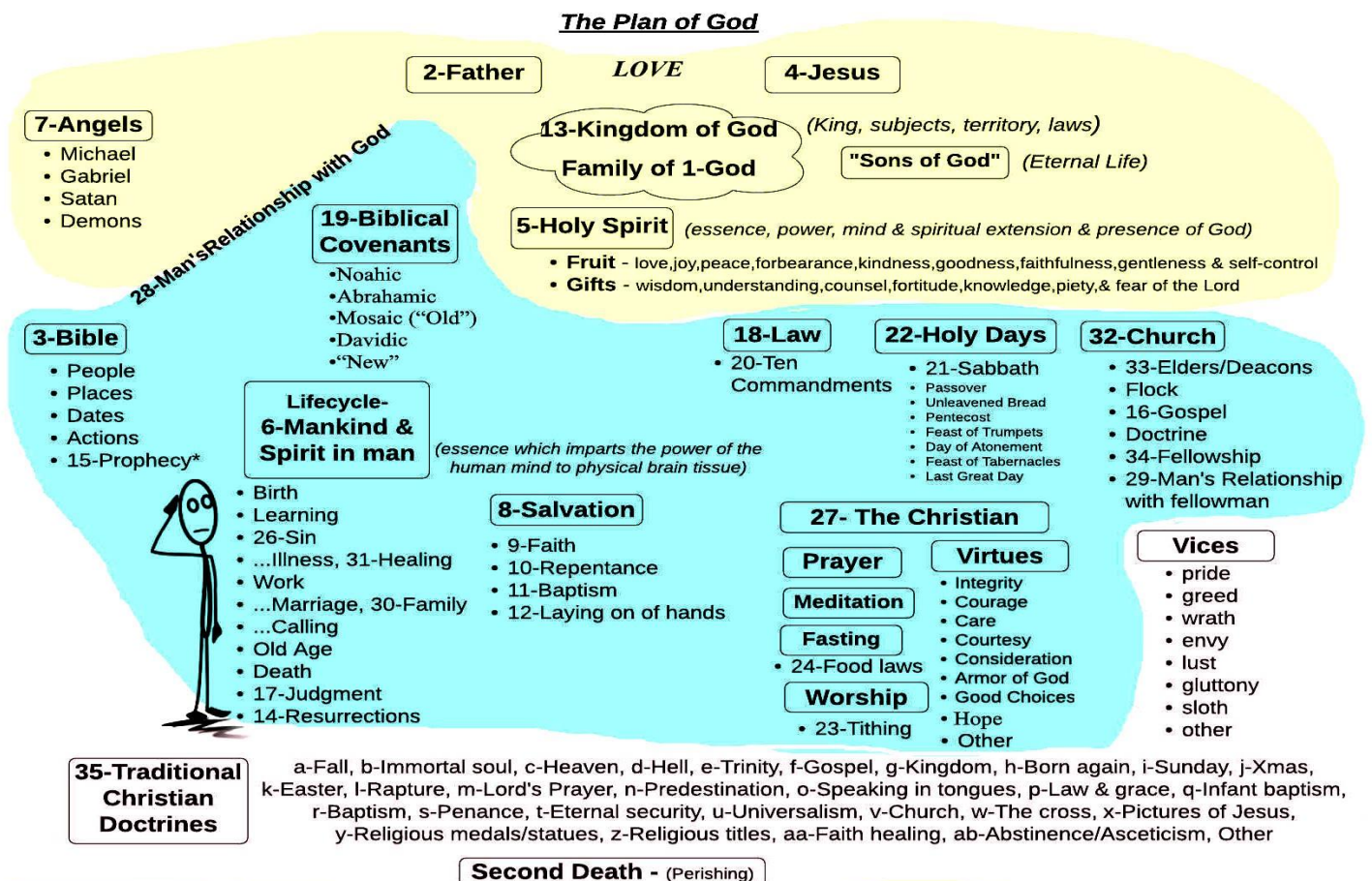
In our prayer life ... we occasionally are reminded to pray for those who (at one time) fellowshiped & attended with us ... who ... are not “with us” anymore. We love them & miss them ... but “free choice” allows them to make their decisions that will guide their actions ...

Scriptures shows the responsibility of believers to reach out, pursue & restore these loved ones

James 5:19–20 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

While we know ... scripture indicates not everyone “makes it” some WILL “fall away”!

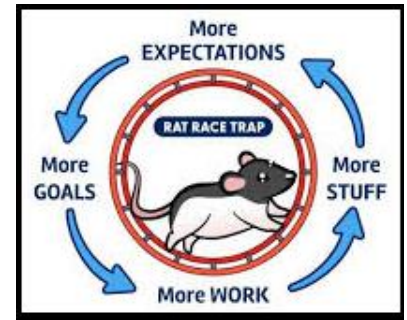
2Th 2:1-4 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.



Time: (Past - History - Creation, 25-Hebrew Calendar ... Present -(World events) ... (Future - 15-Prophecy*) ... Eternity ...)

Life is **hard** ... full of things that can cause stress & discouragement in the “rat race” we live in!

“**Human nature**” (Vanity, Jealousy, Lust & Greed) certainly causes problems ... but scripture indicates **Satan is also active** (behind the scenes) **in MANY realms of society** -- influencing culture, power, and human hearts.



1. False Religion & Idolatry - Satan promotes worship of false gods, idols, and even counterfeit versions of Christianity.

- **1Cor. 10:20**...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons & not to God
- **1 Tim. 4:1** ...in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

2. Political & Worldly Powers - He influences rulers and nations to oppose God’s Work

- **Rev. 13:2**...the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.
- **1Jn 5:19** We know that we are of God, & the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.
- **Eph. 6:12**...our wrestling... is against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age...

3. Corruption of Justice & Violence - reflects Satan’s destructive spirit

- **Gen. 6:11** The earth also was corrupt before God, & the earth was filled with violence
- **John 10:10** The thief does not come except to steal & to kill & to destroy.

4. Immorality & Corruption of Human Behaviour - Sexual immorality, greed, addictions, and perversions are marks of his influence.

- **Rom. 1:27**...men committed shameless acts with men... receiving in themselves the penalty...
- **Matt. 24:12**...because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold
- **2 Tim. 3:4**...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God

5. Deception in Media, Knowledge, and Communication - Lies, propaganda, twisted philosophies, & corrupt entertainment spread his ideas

- **2 Cor. 4:4**...whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe...
- **Rom. 1:22**...professing to be wise, they became fools.
- **1 Tim. 4:2**...speaking lies in hypocrisy...

6. Occult, Witchcraft, and Demonic Practices - Witchcraft, sorcery, and occult rituals open doors to demonic power.

- **Deut 18:10**...there shall not be found among you..one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer
- **Rev. 9:21**...they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts

7. Breakdown of Family & Marriage - Attacking God’s design for family weakens society & faith

- **Matt. 19:6**...what God has joined together, let not man separate
- **2 Tim. 3:1–2**...in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves... disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy



- 8. Division, Hatred, and War** - Satan fosters enmity between people, races, and nations
- **John 8:44**...the devil... was a murderer from the beginning...
 - **James 3:16** For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion & every evil thing are there
- 9. Persecution of God's People** - Satan stirs hostility against those who follow Christ
- **Rev. 2:10**...the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested
 - **2 Tim. 3:12**...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution
- 10. Spiritual Apathy & Lukewarmness** - Indifference to God, comfort in sin, and lukewarm faith are signs of his subtle work
- **Rev. 3:16**...because you are lukewarm, & neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth
 - **1 Thess. 5:6** "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober



Techniques used by Satan to influence people to leave the Church ... &/or ... give up on their salvation... (& God's Response!)

1. Deception through lies and false teaching

- **John 8:44** You are of your father the devil... when he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.
- **2 Corinthians 11:3** But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.
- **2 Corinthians 11:14** For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light

➤ **2Th 3:3** But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you & guard you from the evil one

2. Planting doubt about God's Word and promises

- **Genesis 3:1** Has God indeed said...?
- **Matthew 4:6** If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written ...

➤ **Deuteronomy 7:9** – "Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

3. Accusations to produce guilt and hopelessness

- **Revelation 12:10** For the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day & night, has been cast down.

➤ **Romans 8:33** Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies

4. Persecution and fear of suffering

- **Revelation 2:10** The devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

➤ **1Cor 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

5. Temptation through desires of the flesh and world

- **James 1:14**...each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires & enticed
- **1 John 2:16** ...the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world

➤ **2Pe 2:9** ... the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations...

6. Stealing the Word of God from hearts

- **Matt 13:19** Then the wicked one comes & snatches away what was sown in his heart

➤ **Rev 20:10** The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.



7. Blinding minds from truth

- **2 Cor 4:4**...whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel... should shine on them.

➤ **Eze 37:13** Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.

8. Causing divisions, anger, & unforgiveness

- **2 Cor 2:11**...(forgive) lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices
- **Eph 4:26–27** Be angry, and do not sin... nor give place to the devil

➤ **Jas 4:7-8** Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9. Oppression & discouragement

- **2 Cor 12:7** "...a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me
- **1 Peter 5:9**...resist him, steadfast in the faith...

➤ **2Co 12:9-10** & He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong

10. Promoting love of the world and falling away

- **2 Timothy 4:10** “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world
- **2 Thes 2:12** “...that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness

➤ **Luk 8:15** But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble & good heart, keep it & bear fruit with patience.

11. Choking faith with cares, riches, and pleasures of life

- **Luke 8:14** Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity
- **Mark 4:19**...the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, & the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful



➤ **Luk 18:29-30** So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

12. Encouraging spiritual laziness and sleep

- **1 Thes 5:6** Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober
- **Matt 24:12**...because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold

➤ **Eph 6:11** Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

13. Sowing tares (false believers) among the wheat

- **Matt 13:39** The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age

➤ **Matthew 7:15–16** Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.

14. Using false signs, wonders, and miracles

- **2 Thes 2:9** The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders
- **Matt 24:24** For false christs & false prophets will rise & show great signs & wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect

➤ **Deuteronomy 13:1–3** If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

15. Corrupting worship and drawing people into idolatry

- **1 Cor 10:20** Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons
- **1 John 5:21** Little children, keep yourselves from idols

➤ **Daniel 3:28–29** (After God delivers Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from the fiery furnace) Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him... there is no other God who can deliver like this.’

16. Promoting hypocrisy & counterfeit religion

- **Acts 5:3** (Ananias & Sapphira) Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?
- **2 Timothy 3:5**...having a form of godliness but denying its power & from such people turn away!

➤ **Matthew 15:7–9** Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’



17. Snaring people with pride

- **1 Tim 3:6**...not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil

➤ **Micah 6:8** – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; & what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, & to walk humbly with your God?”

18. Keeping people enslaved to fear - fear keeps people from trusting Christ fully

- **Hebrews 2:15** ...who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage

➤ **1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love

19. Distorting God’s character to produce bitterness

- **Genesis 3:4–5** For the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die... For God knows (–*painting God as withholding good*)

➤ **John 8:31–32** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’

20. Causing people to love pleasure more than God

- **2 Timothy 3:4–5**...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power
- **Philippians 3:19** “...whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things

➤ **Ecc 2:10–11** “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure... Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done & on the labour in which I had toiled; & indeed all was vanity & grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun

21. Promoting doubt about Christ’s return

- **2 Peter 3:3–4**...scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’

➤ **Matthew 24:48–51** But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘**My master is delaying his coming,**’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.”



22. Wearying believers through delays & trials

- **Proverbs 13:12**...hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life
- **Hebrews 12:3** For consider **Him** who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, **lest you become weary and discouraged** in your souls.

- **Philippians 4:13** – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- **2 Corinthians 1:3–4** – “Blessed be the God &



Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

We understand the ***ideal*** (that Christ setup) was ... that brethren would **worship & fellowship together** to **help, lookout for, & encourage** each other ...

Ecc 4:9-10 Two are better than one... For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.

Heb 10:25 ... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Scriptural reasons why it may be right (!?!) to stop attending a particular church



1. If False Doctrine Is Taught

- **Galatians 1:8** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed

2. If Sin Is Practiced or Tolerated Without Repentance

- **2 Corinthians 6:17** Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you’
- **Ephesians 5:11** And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them

3. If Leadership Abuses Authority or Exploits People

- **2 Peter 2:3** Who exploit you with deceptive words...
- **1 Peter 5:3**...not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock
- **3Jn 1:9-10** I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. & not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, & forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church

4. If There Is Division Contrary to the Doctrine of Christ

- **Romans 16:17** Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them

5. If Worship Is Corrupted by Hypocrisy or Man’s Traditions

- **Matt 15:9** In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men

6. If Remaining Would Endanger Faith

- **1 Cor 15:33** Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’

Watching Over One Another

Hebrews 3:13 - Exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil & the good

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap