

- m) This indictment begins with the compound adverb **μηκέτι (*mēkēti*)**: “so that you no longer.” What they are to no longer do is to “walk,” the present active infinitive of the verb **περιπατέω (*peripatéō*)**: “to walk.”
- n) If I were a masochist, I would stop here, go back to the 1990s, and review the Doctrine of Walking. Its emphasis was on the word *peripatéō*.
- o) By now you all know by heart the biblical synonyms, both in the Tanakh and New Testament that define this idea. We initially seized on a word in Hebrews 12:13 to develop the study of “wheel-tracks”:

Hebrews 12:13 Make straight paths
[plural of the noun τροχιά (*trochiá*): “wheel-tracks”] for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

- p) Walking illustrates the choices each individual makes with his free will. Whenever anyone goes from point A to point B, it is their free will that takes them there. The path taken is the volitional progression from thought to decision to action.
- q) We are who we are by means of what we think. The decisions we make are based on our inventory of ideas in conjunction with divine viewpoint from the Word of God or cosmic viewpoint from *cosmos diabolicus*.
- r) We generalized this process with two phrases: (1) wheel-tracks of righteousness and (2) wheel-tracks of wickedness. Examples of these polar opposites are found in Proverbs 1–15.
- s) Here are some English representations of these two concepts found in the KJV translations of: walk (8), path (18), run (5), way (35), and go (17), including plurals. The most predominant among these is the noun דֶּרֶךְ (*derek*):

דֶּרֶךְ A masculine noun meaning path, journey, way. This common word is derived from the Hebrew verb דָּרַךְ (*darak*), meaning to walk or to tread, from which the basic idea of this word comes: the path that is traveled.



This word is most often used metaphorically to refer to the pathways of one's life, suggesting the pattern of life (Proverbs 3:6); the obedient life (Deuteronomy 8:6); the righteous life (2 Samuel 22:22; Jeremiah 5:4); the wicked life (1 Kings 22:52). The ways are described as ways of darkness (Proverbs 2:13); pleasant ways (Proverbs 3:17); and wise ways (Proverbs 6:6).⁶

- t) In Ephesians 4:17, the verb, *peripatéō*, is a cognate of the Hebrew verb, *derek*: “to walk.” Each emphasizes a behavior pattern that is a facilitated wheel-track, in this passage, a path of least resistance in the category of wickedness.
- u) Paul is encouraging these believers stop their reversionistic walk and return to the study of the Word of God.
- v) The apostle compares the reversionistic lifestyle with that of “the Gentiles”: **τὰ ἔθνη (*tá éthnē*)**. This term is used in a number of applications in the New Testament but here it makes reference to Gentiles classified as heathens:

With the definite article, *tá éthnē*, the word has special meaning “of the Gentiles” or “the non-Jewish people,” which gradually took on a bad moral meaning to the extent that *ethnikoí* is translated “heathen” in Galatians 1:16; 2:9.

Paul employs *éthnē*, the plural of *éthnos*, nation, in a twofold sense, either as pagan Gentiles as contrasted to Jews (Romans 2:14; 3:29; Galatians 2:8) or as Gentiles in contrast to Jewish Christians (Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:12, 14). This double usage is well illustrated by comparing Ephesians 3:1 [For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles] with 4:17 [... just as the Gentiles also walk]. In both passages *éthnē* is used, but in the first it is simply a mark of nationality while in the second it has a moral touch.⁷

- w) When Jews, who consider themselves among the “Chosen People,” speak despairingly of Gentiles they often use the plural noun **גוֹיִם (*goyim*)**, often translated into English as “heathen.”

⁶ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 248–49.

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 503–504.



- x) This is followed with the second use of the verb *peripatéō*, this time in the present active indicative. This use of the present is retroactive progressive. This indicates the reversionistic lifestyle of the Romans living in the province of Asia Minor and who produce the action of having blackout of the soul.
- y) This first-century lifestyle defines the Zeitgeist of the area where believers among the seven churches of Asia adopted this decadent way of life.

PRICIPLE: Believers without a high inventory of biblical principles are unable to defend their souls from outside temptations and adopt the character traits of *tá éthnē*, the heathen Gentiles of SPQR. This same circumstance is in evidence in twenty-first-century America.

- z) The status of these unbelievers' souls is described next by the locative of sphere of the noun **ματαιότης** (*mataiotēs*), translated "futility" by the NASB, NET, and NIV, and "vanity" in the KJV. We will examine two sources to narrow this down:

ματαιότης (*mataiotēs*): vanity, nothingness, transitoriness. The noun refers in Ephesians 4:17 to the *nothingness* of the purpose of the lives of the Gentiles and in 2 Peter 2:18 to the presumptuousness of false teachers "who speak pretentious words *without sense*."⁸

ματαιότης: state of being without use or value, emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness.⁹

- aa) When the reversionistic process reaches critical point, the doctrine once relied upon is so inhibited that doctrines of demons have become the facilitated path of least resistance.
- bb) The key word among the above definitions that best defines *mataiotēs* is vanity: (1) "Something that is empty or valueless" (M-WCD, 11th ed.), (2) "Origin: Middle English: from Latin *vanus* 'empty, void,'" (NOAD), and (3) "The state of being void or empty" (OED).

⁸ Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 396.

⁹ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (2000), 621.



- cc) From these definitions of “vanity” the key ones are “empty” and “void.”
- dd) The definition of “**Empty** is a complete absence of contents. **Void** suggests absolute emptiness. **Vacuous** suggests the emptiness of a vacuum and especially the lack of intelligence.¹⁰
- ee) Based on Paul’s context in Ephesians 4, the loss of thought through the stages of reversionism, and its end result, blackout of the soul, we translate *mataiôtēs* with the word “vacuum.” Here’s the definition:

Empty of ideas; unintelligent; indicative of mental vacancy. Devoid of content or substance. An empty space. Unoccupied with the usual or natural contents.¹¹

- ff) From this analysis we conclude that the word that best described the “loss of doctrinal thought” in the souls of reversionistic believers is “vacuum.”
- gg) When doctrine becomes so inhibited that all recall is canceled then blackout of the soul occurs creating a vacuum where divine viewpoint is no longer accessible.
- hh) The explanation for this is found in the field of neurology. Let’s consult an excerpt from a neurologist and then observe a visual for both facilitation and inhibition:

Synaptic Inhibition. A neuron can do only two basic things to influence other cells: it can increase or decrease their activity. Synaptic excitation increases the excitability and activity of a neuron. Inhibition does the opposite: it decreases the excitability and activity of a neuron. Fast synaptic inhibition occurs when inhibitory synapses on a neuron are activated.

Inhibition works just like excitation. An action potential arrives at the presynaptic terminal, Ca^{2+} rushes in, and neurotransmitter is released and diffuses across the synaptic space to attach to chemical receptor molecules. (Inhibition) differs from excitation in that only certain channels are opened, in particular Cl^- . (83)

(End JAS2-02. See JAS2-03 for continuation of study at p. 21.)

¹⁰ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.vv. “emptiness, synonyms.”

¹¹ The Oxford English Dictionary, s.vv. “vacuous, vacuum.”

