

Doctrine of the Five Cycles of Discipline

1. The term "fifth cycle" was coined by Col. R.B. Thieme to describe the last in a sequence of divine disciplines imposed on a nation.

1.1 Extensive and continued negative volition toward God causes a national discipline.

2. As to whether there are exactly five cycles of discipline is certainly problematic; however, we do know there are definitely several warning steps culminating in a final stage, characterized by military defeat, dispersion and demise of a national entity.

3. Nations like individuals are disciplined in time when they reject God.

Hos 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land.

Hos 4:2 There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Hos 4:3 Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.

Hos 4:4 "But let no man bring a charge, let no man accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.

Hos 4:5 You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother--

Hos 4:6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priest nation; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

4. For individuals, our doctrine of discipline tells of a warning and an intensive phase, and even a sin which would seem to lead to death.

4.1 Believers are disciplined for either carnality or reversionism, or some combination of both.

Heb 12:5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

Heb 12:6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

4.2 If discipline comes for carnality, the discipline is canceled by the use of rebound, at least to the extent that discipline for punishment is turned into discipline for "blessing."

1Co 11:31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

4.3 Discipline for reversionism or evil requires a change in thinking and the associated halt in the aberrant behavior.

Rom 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

5. There are for the individual believer stages of discipline just as there would also seem to be stages of discipline for a national entity.

5.1 There is a warning stage where God presents a gentle reminder, and if there is no response then the severity is increased.

Rev 3:19 "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent."
Rev 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."

5.2 That there is an ultimate dying stage would seem to be taught by what many call, for lack of a better term, "the sin unto death."

1Jo 5:16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

1Jo 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

6. Israel, as the only Priest Nation, received the ultimate national discipline, first in 586 B.C. and later in A.D. 70. Client nations are subject to the curse of the five cycles when they digress into national reversionism.

7. Client nations today would seem to be culpable; they are expected to have

7.1 a large pivot of positive believers,

7.2 a significant evangelical effort both at home and abroad, and

7.3 pro-Semitic policies for ethnic Jews living within their borders, and

7.4 establishment principles which protect and support the four divine institutions.

8. When nations fail such principles, divine discipline in stages falls upon them.

9. The root cause of divine discipline for a nation is "a lack of knowledge" of the Word of God and the implementation of its principles.

Hos 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

10. As we look at God's dealing with Israel and His warnings, there are cycles that result finally in a stage called by Col. Thieme the "fifth cycle."

11. There are many passages outlining the process, but the most extensive can be found in Deu 28:58-67 and Lev 26:14-39.

12. As in most prophetic Scriptures, the isagogics must be interpreted in the light of modernity.

13. Some of the caveats of Scripture translate readily, like famine, lack of rain, etc., but descriptions of being eaten by beast might better be interpreted in the light of internecine carnage or the ravages of war.

14. Let's first look at Deu 28:58-67 to get the concept of God's promise to deal with a disobedient Israel.

Deu 28:58 If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, do not revere this glorious and awesome name--the LORD your God--
Deu 28:59 the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses.

Deu 28:60 He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you.

Deu 28:61 The LORD will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed.

Deu 28:62 You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God.

Deu 28:63 Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.

Deu 28:64 Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods--gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

Deu 28:65 Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart.

Deu 28:66 You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life.

Deu 28:67 In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!"--because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see.

15. Col. R. B. Thieme [as earlier mentioned] has chosen to organize the Scriptures found in Lev 26:14-39 into five cycles of discipline as follows:

15.1 Cycle One Lev 26:14-17

Lev 26:14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;
Lev 26:15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:
Lev 26:16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning fever, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.
Lev 26:17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

15.2 Cycle Two Lev 26:18-20

Lev 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.
Lev 26:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:
Lev 26:20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

15.3 Cycle Three Lev 26:21-22

Lev 26:21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.
Lev 26:22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.

15.4 Cycle Four Lev 26:23-26

Lev 26:23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;
Lev 26:24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.
Lev 26:25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.
Lev 26:26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

15.5 Cycle Five Lev 26:27-39

Lev 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;
Lev 26:28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.
Lev 26:29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

Lev 26:30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

Lev 26:31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odors.

Lev 26:32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

Lev 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Lev 26:34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

Lev 26:35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

Lev 26:36 And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

Lev 26:37 And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

Lev 26:38 And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

Lev 26:39 And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

16. Israel today finds itself under the fifth cycle, and it will remain until our Lord returns. It all began in A.D. 70 when Rome destroyed Jerusalem; its discipline will continue in spades during the seven years of the Tribulation, when Israel will receive far greater discipline than anything as yet experienced.

17. Twice in the past Israel has suffered. In the past:

17.1 great famine in the land,

17.2 people ate their sons and their daughters,

17.3 Israel's places of worship were destroyed,

17.4 her people were dispersed to foreign lands and

17.5 the land received a long denied sabbath year.

18. In the future:

18.1 the Jews will become timorous, a fallen leaf will cause them to run in fear,

18.2 the people will flee the sword even though no one is pursuing and,

18.3 they will be devoured by the Gentiles in various foreign lands.

19. C. I. Scofield was the first to classify and organize Lev 26:14-39 into degrees of discipline for Israel.

20. Scofield elected six degrees or cycles of discipline as opposed to five.

1st - Distress Lev 26:14-17

2nd - Drought Lev 26:18-20

3rd - Beasts Lev 26:21-22

4th - Disease Lev 26:23-26

5th - Famine Lev 26:27-31

6th - Dispersion Lev 26:32-39

21. Whichever of these great expositors and organizers of the Word you choose there is no doubt a warning exists to all national entities today.