

Borrowed Wisdom and Proud Hearts the Spirit of Superiority

Watchman Lesson (Historical + Biblical)

Eurocentric powers have taught that Greece was the cradle of civilization but the Bible says something different.

Absolutely, **not all Greeks (ancient or modern) “feel superior,”** but there *has* been a long pattern of **Greek cultural prestige** (and later **Western use of Greek prestige**) that often turned into a **superiority narrative**—even when Greek civilization clearly learned from older civilizations, including Egypt.

The issue is not just “Greek.” The deeper issue is this:

Men borrow, inherit, and learn from others—but pride makes them act like they invented everything.

That is a **biblical problem** before it is a historical one.

Lesson Goal

By the end of this lesson, the hearers should understand:

1. **Ancient Greece did not rise in isolation** (it learned through contact, trade, and cultural exchange).
 2. **Superiority narratives are often built by power, not truth.**
 3. **The Bible already exposes this pattern:** knowledge without humility becomes pride, oppression, false judgment, and eventually destruction.
 4. The watchman must warn people and systems that **boast, steal credit, oppress others, and rewrite truth.**
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Part 1 — Opening and Framing

Part 2 — Historical Grounding: Greece, Egypt, and Cultural Transmission

Part 3 — Why Superiority Narratives Form

Part 4 — Biblical Foundation and Precepts

Part 5 — Watchman Application Today

Part 6 — Discussion / Examination / Call to Repentance

Part 1 — Opening and Framing

Opening Statement (Teacher)

Today we are not here to flatter nations, and we are not here to hate nations.
We are here to **judge righteous judgment**.

The question is not:

- “Who is smartest?”
- “Who is superior?”

The question is:

- **Who is speaking truth?**
- **Who is walking in humility?**
- **Who is stealing honor, twisting history, and oppressing others?**

That is a watchman question.

Key Thesis

A civilization may receive wisdom, techniques, ideas, and language from others—and still become proud and oppressive.

That is exactly why Scripture says:

Proverbs 16:18 (KJV)

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

Part 2 — Historical Grounding

2.1 Greece did not emerge in a vacuum

A major false idea taught in many places is that Greece appeared out of nowhere and single-handedly invented civilization. That is not how history works.

Ancient Greece grew in a **Mediterranean network** of trade and exchange. Even Britannica notes the Greek alphabet was derived from earlier Semitic writing through Phoenician transmission. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

Important point

If the Greek writing system itself came through earlier peoples, then right away we see a pattern:

- **Greek greatness includes borrowing and adaptation**, not isolation.

That does not make Greece “fake.”
It makes Greece **historically normal**.

2.2 Egypt and the East were already ancient when Greece rose

Britannica’s ancient Middle East material directly states that sciences and related knowledge spread from **Egypt and Mesopotamia** through **Phoenicia**, and especially to the Greeks. It also says Greek tradition itself emphasizes what early Greek philosophers learned from Egypt. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

That matters because it kills the myth that all wisdom started in Greece.

What this means

- Greece became powerful in organizing, developing, and spreading ideas.
- But **it inherited from older civilizations**.

This is exactly how civilizations work:

- One people plants
- Another waters
- Another builds
- Another claims ownership of the whole thing

And that last part is where pride enters.

2.3 Greek sources themselves show respect for Egypt's antiquity

Herodotus (a Greek historian) records Egyptian claims and traditions in detail. In one place, he reports Egyptian priests as saying the Egyptians were first in reckoning the year and that the Greeks borrowed certain divine names from them (as Herodotus recounts it). He also describes Egyptian priests as “most learned.” ([Penelope](#))

Also, in Plato's *Timaeus*, an Egyptian priest rebukes Solon and says:

“O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children...”

That line reflects an ancient Greek tradition of Egypt being older and having deeper antiquity. ([ToposText](#))

Teaching point

Even some Greek sources do **not** present Greece as the only fountain of wisdom.

So when later people act like Greece was the absolute beginning of everything, that is often **more ideology than history**.

2.4 Greek art shows Egyptian and Near Eastern influence

The evidence is not just in texts—it is in the art.

- The University of Colorado's classics material on the **Orientalizing Period** says Greek art was heavily influenced by Near Eastern and Egyptian ideas, myths, and decorative styles. ([University of Colorado Boulder](#))
- The Met notes that early Greek **kouros** statues show **Egyptian influence** in pose and proportions. ([The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#))

Teaching point

This is what cultural transmission looks like:

- motifs
- techniques

- forms
- symbols
- stories

Again: **influence is normal.**

The sin is not influence.

The sin is **pride, denial, and false boasting.**

2.5 Be honest: influence is real, but some claims are debated

We also need balance and truth.

For example, Britannica notes Egyptian mathematics likely impacted emerging Greek mathematics, but it also says the **manner and significance** of that influence is hard to prove fully because the documentation is limited. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

That means:

- We should not deny influence.
- We also should not exaggerate beyond the evidence.

Watchman rule here

The watchman must not lie for his side.

If we hate false history, we cannot replace it with another false history.

2.6 So why the superiority feeling/narrative?

Because superiority is often built from a mix of:

1. **Real achievement**
2. **Political power**
3. **Cultural prestige**
4. **Selective memory**
5. **Pride**

Greece had real achievements.

But later empires and scholars often **elevated Greece and Rome as universal ideals** (especially in Neoclassicism), and that prestige became a cultural weapon in the West. Britannica describes

Neoclassicism as an artistic ideal built on Greece and Rome, associated with “universality” and “idealism.” ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

Then later modern debates (like *Black Athena*) exposed how much race and ideology affected these narratives, though the topic remains controversial and heavily debated. Britannica records both the controversy and the claim that later racist discourse obscured some Greek borrowings from Semitic and African neighbors. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

A Cornell summary of Bernal’s lecture (again, reporting his argument, not final consensus) also shows how this became tied to an “Aryan model” of Greece and later racialized thinking. ([Cornell Chronicle](#))

Key takeaway

The “superiority” story is often less about pure history and more about:

- **Who has power**
- **Who controls schools**
- **Who writes the textbooks**
- **Who gets called “civilized”**
- **Who gets erased**

Part 3 — Why Superiority Narratives Form

3.1 Human pattern: receive, forget, boast

People and nations often do this:

1. **Receive** knowledge
2. **Benefit** from it
3. **Forget** the source
4. **Claim** they are superior
5. **Despise** those they learned from

That is not “Greek only.”
That is **fallen man**.

3.2 In-group language becomes moral judgment

Britannica explains the Greek term **bárbaros** originally referred to foreigners (people whose language sounded like “bar-bar”), but it took on deeply negative moral meaning. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

That is a huge point.

Watchman principle

When a people start by saying:

- “They talk different”

and end by saying:

- “They are savage”
- “They are less than us”

that is how oppression begins.

Language becomes a weapon.

3.3 Power magnifies pride

When Alexander took Egypt and founded Alexandria, Greek/Hellenistic power expanded and culture spread through institutions and cities. Britannica notes Alexander founded Alexandria and intended Hellenizing forms in the city; the Met also shows Greek and Egyptian interaction under the Ptolemies, including Greek ruling structures in Egypt. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

Teaching point

When a people gain military and institutional power, they often stop saying:

- “We learned from others”

and start saying:

- “Others are civilized because of us.”

That is how empires talk.

Part 4 — Biblical Foundation and Precepts

4.1 The Bible itself testifies that Egypt had wisdom

Before we even discuss Greek pride, the Bible already acknowledges Egyptian wisdom.

Acts 7:22 (KJV)

“And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”

1 Kings 4:30 (KJV)

“And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.”

The Bible does **not** pretend Egypt had no wisdom.

It openly says:

- Egypt had wisdom
- The east had wisdom
- Solomon's wisdom exceeded it

So Scripture itself destroys the idea that YAH only allowed one people to have knowledge.

4.2 Knowledge is not the same as righteousness

This is where nations fail.

1 Corinthians 8:1–3 (KJV)

“Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love Elohim, the same is known of him.”

- Knowledge can make a man proud.
- Knowledge alone does not prove righteousness.
- Knowledge without charity and obedience becomes vanity.

So even if a people are brilliant:

- in philosophy
- in science
- in architecture
- in war
- in law

they can still be wicked before YAH.

4.3 The Greeks and “wisdom” in the New Testament

Scripture directly names this pattern.

1 Corinthians 1:22–29 (KJV)

“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of Elohim, and the
 wisdom of Elohim.
 Because the foolishness of Elohim is wiser than men; and the weakness of Elohim is stronger
 than men.
 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty,
 not many noble, are called:
 But Elohim hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and Elohim hath
 chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath Elohim chosen, yea, and
 things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
 That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

The issue is not that seeking wisdom is evil.

The issue is when men seek wisdom **without submission to YAH.**

Then they become:

- wise in their own eyes
- blind to truth
- proud in flesh

- unable to receive correction

And YAH says He does this:

He chooses what men despise, to **humble the proud**.

4.4 Pride always rewrites reality

Romans 1:21–22 (KJV)

“Because that, when they knew Elohim, they glorified him not as Elohim, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,”

This is the exact pattern of proud civilizations:

- They know enough truth to humble themselves
- But they refuse to glorify YAH
- They become vain
- Then they call themselves wise
- Then they become fools

So yes—men can inherit wisdom from others and still become fools, because **pride corrupts knowledge**.

4.5 The Bible condemns boasting in wisdom

Jeremiah 9:23–24 (KJV)

“Thus saith YAH, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am YAH which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith YAH.”

YAH directly forbids glorying in:

- wisdom
- power
- wealth

That applies to:

- individuals
- kingdoms
- races
- empires
- institutions
- scholars
- governments

Any nation that glories in “our civilization,” “our genius,” “our superiority,” while doing injustice is under this rebuke.

4.6 Pride leads to judgment

Proverbs 11:2 (KJV)

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.”

Proverbs 27:2 (KJV)

“Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.”

Obadiah 1:3–4 (KJV)

“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith YAH.”

Pride deceives.

A proud people believe:

- “We are untouchable”
- “We are the standard”
- “We define civilization”
- “No one can judge us”

YAH says: **I will bring thee down.**

4.7 False superiority creates false judgment against others

Romans 2:11 (KJV)

“For there is no respect of persons with Elohim.”

Acts 17:26 (KJV)

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;”

YAH made all nations of one blood.

That means no nation has a right to say:

- “We are human, they are lesser”
- “We are civilized, they are beasts”
- “We own truth, they are naturally inferior”

That is anti-Scripture.

YAH judges by righteousness, not by fleshly boasting.

4.8 The Bible warns about “wisdom” divorced from YAH

Colossians 2:8 (KJV)

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

James 4:6 (KJV)

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, Elohim resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

Not all “philosophy” is evil in the sense of thinking deeply—but when man’s systems are built:

- apart from YAH
- against truth
- for self-glory
- to justify oppression

then that “wisdom” becomes a snare.

4.9 The watchman must expose false narratives and false penmanship

Jeremiah 8:8 (KJV)

“How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of YAH is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.”

Isaiah 5:20 (KJV)

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

This is where history, scholarship, and systems come under judgment.

If scribes, schools, or rulers:

- hide sources
- erase peoples
- glorify oppressors
- call theft “civilization”
- call domination “order”
- call lies “history”

YAH says **woe**.

This is watchman territory.

4.10 When superiority becomes oppression, judgment is sure

Isaiah 10:1–2 (KJV)

“Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;

To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!”

Habakkuk 2:12 (KJV)

“Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!”

Psalms 82:2–4 (KJV)

“How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.”

This is the fruit of superiority ideology:

- unjust laws
- selective justice
- stolen rights
- institutional cruelty
- flattering the wicked
- crushing the poor

At that point the issue is no longer “history class.”

It is **judgment**.

4.11 Watchman mandate: warn them plainly

Ezekiel 33:7–9 (KJV)

“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

The watchman cannot be silent because the topic is “academic.”

If the issue becomes:

- pride
- falsehood
- oppression
- deception
- lawlessness

then the watchman must speak.

Part 5 — Watchman Application Today

5.1 Modern application of the principle

The principle is bigger than Greece:

Any people, nation, church, race, institution, or empire can do this:

- take from others
- profit from others
- rewrite the record
- call themselves superior
- punish the people they stole from
- then teach the children a cleaned-up version

That is not wisdom.

That is sin.

5.2 What should the righteous response be?

A) Tell the truth

- Acknowledge real achievements
- Acknowledge real borrowings
- Do not exaggerate
- Do not erase

B) Reject pride

Proverbs 18:13 (KJV)

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Do not jump to conclusions because of emotion or loyalty.

C) Judge by righteousness, not prestige

A nation can have:

- monuments
- books
- philosophy
- universities
- armies

and still be wicked.

D) Call for repentance

The issue is not “Who gets bragging rights?”

The issue is: **Who will repent and do justice?**

5.3 A final wealth/wisdom warning to nations

Deuteronomy 8:17–18 (KJV)

“And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember YAH thy Elohim: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.”

This applies to civilizations too.

When a nation says:

- “Our wisdom built this”
- “Our culture built this”
- “Our power built this”

and forgets YAH, that nation is already on the road to judgment.

Closing Charge (Teacher)

This is the charge:

- Do not worship civilizations.
- Do not worship race.
- Do not worship “Western wisdom.”
- Do not worship “ancient wisdom.”
- Do not worship scholarship.

Fear YAH.

If a people have wisdom, let them be humble.

If a people have power, let them do justice.

If a people have influence, let them tell the truth.

If they refuse, the watchman must warn them.

Jeremiah 9:24 (KJV)

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am YAH which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith YAH.”