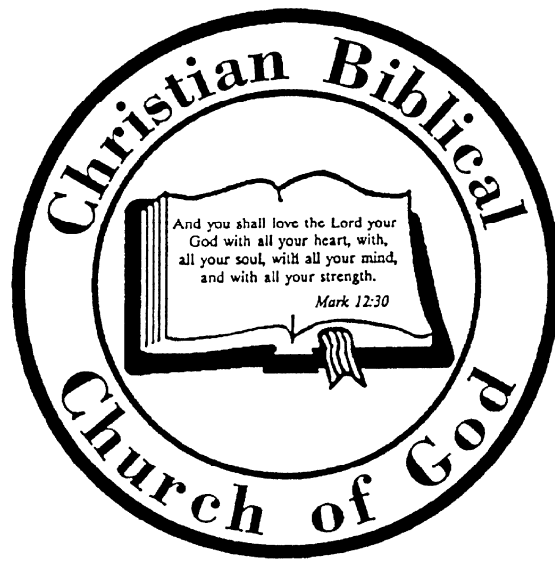


# Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians



**Transcript Book**

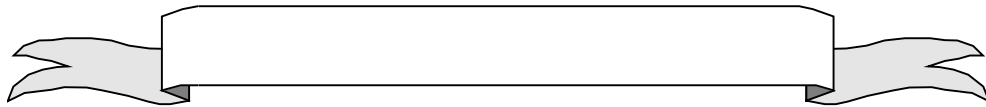
By Fred R. Coulter

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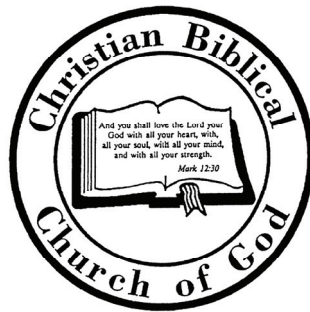
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## Colossians

Series of 11 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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# Colossians

## Foreword

This series on Colossians is a compilation of eleven sermons by Fred Coulter that will help you to gain a better understanding of this epistle written by the apostle Paul.

True Christianity is more than a religion. As the apostle Paul writes: "...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light" Col. 1:9-12.

May you find the golden nuggets, the 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' and the 'hope of glory' which are hidden in the hearts of those in whom Christ is dwelling. Put on the new man who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him Who created us. "Put on then, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...Above all...*put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" Col. 3:10-16.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.

## Epistle to the Colossians Chapters 1 & 2

Fred R. Coulter

Colossians is a very important book. There are a lot of things for us to learn here. Let's go to the very last part: Colossians 4:13: "For I bear witness to him that he has much zeal for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and *for* those in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, salutes you, and Demas *does also*. Salute the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church in his house.... [Isn't it amazing, they didn't have huge, great, marvelous, wonderful standing congregations of thousands?] ...After you have read the epistle, see that it also is read in the Church of *the* Laodiceans, and that you also read the one from Laodicea" (vs 13-16).

I would love to know what happened to that epistle. Don't ask me, I don't know what happened to it; but I'm just saying I would love to know what happened to that epistle. When you read the prophecy of the Church of the Laodiceans, 'I'm going to serve you no certain thing. 'If you say... [they talk back to God] ...you're rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing; and know not that you're miserable and poor and blind and wretched and naked.'

Let's begin in Colossian 1, because this becomes a really fantastic understanding of God's Word. I'm going to read out of the *Interlinear*—so I have the English here and the Greek—so don't mind if the English wording is not exactly the same, because the structure of the Greek word order is different, and even the translation is somewhat different. Now, let me also recommend, that if you don't have one, go ahead and get an *Interlinear* of the New Testament. You don't have to know any Greek. But just to read the English gives you great understanding. For example, everywhere it talks about *born again* in the *King James*, it's all translated *begotten*. That helps solve a lot of the problems. But it's very interesting what happened.

Colossians 1:1 (*Int*): "Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by will God's..." He didn't stand up there and say that he was an apostle by fiat. He said **by God's will**. He also said in another place that the signs of an apostle were *wrought among you*. 'I don't want to call myself anymore than the brethren. I can teach you God's Word. I can pastor a church. That's all the more that I want to say that I can do. I don't want to be presumptuous and say I'm a prophet. I don't want to say I'm an apostle.' None of that! We've seen the fruit of what happens with that. But here Paul knew: *by the will of God*. And you have to know Christ kicked him off his horse on the

way to Damascus. I mean, how about a conversion experience!

"...and Timothy the brother, to the in Colossae saints and faithful brethren in Christ. **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**" (vs 1-2). Now, we read that; how many times have you read that and say, 'Oh well, Paul's just introducing.' No he's not. He's saying something far greater.

Notice the emphasis! He's saying it's from God **to you**, and God's grace. {see sermon series on *Grace*}. The grace of God is **absolutely incredible!** God is there; He wants you in His Kingdom, and you need His grace to be there. We've been taught, how many times: God's doing everything He can to keep you out; you better get yourself straightened around or you won't be there! And *you* better do it. NO! It has to be God's grace; and *God's grace* means:

- God's love
- God's mercy
- God's kindness
- God's strength
- The working of God's Spirit

He's saying grace from Whom? *God the Father!* And the greatest, most exciting part we can preach about Christianity is that each one of us, ***we have direct access to God the Father on a personal basis***—every day! ***Think on that***—think on that more than once! Think how fantastic that is, that God says '*you have contact with Me!*' I mean, nobody else is important—right? Oh they are; but not compared to that!

That's why Paul said we have a 'new and a living way'; that we can come right into the presence of God. When you pray, you're praying to God the Father. You don't have to ask some man, 'Can I go through you to talk to God?' And it's so fantastic that God Himself gave His Spirit to be in you and ***He*** is your Father! And there's no greater relationship that you can have with any being on earth than to have Him as your Father. And in the human realm, the greatest thing you can be is to reproduce yourself, and in your children have some of you—your genes.

That's why when I went through the series on the names of God, I was showing how much we can learn from the names of God; but how much greater the name of the Father is than the other names of God. The other names of God kept you at

an arms length. For example: Your children don't come and say, 'Mr. Bradley'—do they? They say, 'father'; the little kids say, 'daddy.' The first thing they say is either 'mama' or 'dada'—right? That's our relationship with God the Father—the greatest Being in the universe—Who upholds the power of everything that is. That is marvelous. So when he says, 'Grace from God our Father, and peace'—what does that mean? It means:

- you're not hostile to God
- you have peace with God
- you have God's Spirit

That should bring you peace of mind. Does God want you walking around fearful of every little thing that you do? Is God looking over your shoulder and tracking you down like a sniffing hound dog? *NO!* You are one of the children of God and you have His Spirit, and He is there, and the angels are there, and Christ is there, and the power of the Holy Spirit is there to ensure that you get into the Kingdom of God. So, in this greeting, there's a lot more to it. You have peace with God. I suppose if you lived in Iran or Iraq and you went through the war, you would value peace. But you have peace with God—who 'was an enemy before.'

Let's go to Romans, the fifth chapter; you have to know a little bit of Greek to understand this, to show you how fantastic God is and how He deals with us. It's incredible! And I mean, it is just mind-boggling!

Romans 5:6: "For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends... [now it says in the *King James*: 'His love to us'—but it means more than that. It says God commends to us] ... **His own love**..." (vs 6-8).

In the Greek it gives you the emphasis on it. Where Christ says, 'Keep My commandments' (John 14); in the Greek, to emphasize it, they put an 'e' in front of it—which has the force of, instead of saying *this is my home*, or *this is my car*, it has the force: ***these are mine***—very emphatic! It's the same way when it's 'His own.' God doesn't want us to be fearful of Him. God loves us, brethren. I'm here to tell you God loves us! How? *With His very own!* Now the word for *own* or *self* is 'autos'—from which we get the word to in modern English, what do we have? *automobile*—spelled the same way: a-u-t-o—*self*; *auto*, *self-propelled*. This is *the* 'auto,' which means: God's very own love, from the Father. ***His very self!***

Why did God call me? Don't ask me; *when you're resurrected, ask God!* I can't tell you. I've

wondered the same thing myself. God didn't call us because we're perfect. God didn't call us because we're great. *God called us because He chose to!* And ***gave His own love***—from God the Father. I want to emphasize that! From Him! No one can cut that off. Don't let anyone ever cut that off. And because people may make you disillusioned, or angry—don't let that interfere between you and God.

I mean, after all, one of the greatest prophets of God, Elijah *spent three years with a widow, eating out of her flour-barrel and drinking out of her oil-cruise*; and when he first came there, she was mad and cursed him out because her son died. Did he sit on ice and virtually do nothing? *Yes, he did!* But He had God's very own love to sustain him. So when you're alone there's going to be a time—God is going to ensure, you can be guaranteed of this—that every one of us are going to stand alone before God ***alone!*** Because everyone's going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

That's why your comment was inspired, well taken, that it's between God and the individual. That doesn't mean we reject everybody else. But the substance of Christianity is that God Himself LOVES you. And it says, furthermore:

Verse 8: "But **God commends His [very] own love to us** because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us." When you understand what sin cost God—in other words, what price did God pay for sin. When you understand what God did because of sin.

God knew! God had a choice when He created Adam and Eve and they sinned. He said, 'All right, you're dead, that's the end of it. You people have ruined My plan. I'm going to destroy you and wipe you out.' NO! God said, 'I'm going to punish you. You're going to die. All your off-spring are going to die. But in spite of all that, My plan is going to go forward because I love you. God has called us, and He loves us. God the Father Himself, the greatest Being in the universe ***loves you!*** That is inspiring and brings hope!

Verse 9: "***While we were still sinners!*** Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

Colossians 1:3 (*Int*): "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, continually for you praying, having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus... [Paul had not seen those in Colossae. He did not start the Church there. He says in Col. 2, 'that I wish to come to you for as many of you have not seen me in the flesh as those in Laodicea.' He says he's heard of it. It becomes fantastic.] ...and the love



which *you have* towards all the saints, on account of the hope which *is* laid up for you in the heavens..." (vs 3-5).

We have to have that hope, brethren. That hope is strengthened by the love of God. If there's any one thing that will inspire you to love God, that is to *know that God loves you*. That is the hope—that faith and that hope. It's something! I tell you, it really is! That's what needs to be emphasized to people. They've even found in psychology: if you take a person and all you do is stand over them and nag and pick at every mistake that they make, you're going to destroy and ruin them. So, God doesn't do that. He says, 'Look, I have My only Son. I loved you, I have called you, I am giving you every opportunity in the world to make it into the Kingdom of God.' Boy, you talk about born to be winners! Furthermore, you have the guarantee:

- What did Jesus say? *I'll be with you to till the end; I'll never leave you or forsake you!*
- What else did He say? *The gift of God is eternal life!*
- What else did He say? *All that you have given Me, none are lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled! And those that you have given Me, no one is able to take out of My hand!*

Now, that is a guarantee! That is not to put you in fright that you're not going to make it; completely the opposite.

When we come together as God's brethren, can we not be inspired from God's Word? Should we go home and feel downcast and rotten? Or should we not go home and thank God and praise God, instead of having someone up there saying: 'Brethren, you're never going to make it into the Kingdom of God unless you pray a half hour every day, and if you can't pray a half hour every day, put the clock there and pray.' *Oh, I gotta pray, where's my clock!* NO! Should you not be inspired that you want to pray to God? Should you not be inspired because God loves you, that you pray to Him? That you love Him? *Sure, that's what God wants*. That's what we're talking about here.

"...which you heard of before in the Word of Truth of the glad tidings, which are come to you, even as also in all the world, and are bringing forth fruit, even as also among you, from the day in which you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth..." (vs 5-6)—have to know the grace of God. And we've all learned, and I'll guarantee you one thing: in growing and overcoming, every day you go to God and you praise God and love God and bless God. A man can bless God; it may seem a little

strange, but a man can bless God. And I use the word 'man' not to slight any women, but the word 'man' is in every word that refers to a woman anyway; so I use it in the overall sense of the Greek 'anthropinos' which means *a human being, a person*. I'm going to tell you, there are going to be some women in the Church of God who are going to go into the Kingdom of God and they are going to have greater rewards than some of these strutting men that think they know everything in the world—and I've met some.

"...the grace of God in Truth." (v 6). Let's hold it here and go to Acts 20 for a minute, because you're so use to hearing the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, which is true; but it's kind of like we have in the United States today: you have separation of church and state because the first amendment says *the Congress shall not legislate any laws to the establishment of 'religion.'* But the other half says: ***nor shall they prohibit the free exercise thereof.*** So if my child wanted to pray in school, no one can stop him—even a court order can't stop him. The same way with the Gospel. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is part of it—*Yes! Absolutely!*

Acts 20:24: "But I myself do not take any of *these* things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify... [I want you to pay real close attention to this]: ...the **Gospel of the grace of God....** [And in Greek it's emphatic. It is *the* grace of *the* God.] ...And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God..." (vs 24-25). Very interesting, isn't it, how they go hand-in-hand? When someone preaches only the Kingdom of God—which is the government of God, the rule of God on the earth—they're only telling half the story. That's only part of the good news. That's like being given a \$10,000 bill, but you only get half of it. You run on down to the bank and cash it and they say, 'you've only got half of it, Fred; you get the other half and we'll deposit it. That's why the grace of God is very important. It's the grace and Truth.

Let's go back to Colossians again. So he hasn't even started saying anything about doctrine, yet. This is all just leading up to it. Colossians 1:7 (*Int*): "...even as also you learned from Epaphras beloved fellow-bondman our, who is faithful for you a servant of Christ, who also signified to us your love in *the* spirit" (vs 7-8). That's what it should be, brethren. When we get together, if God loves us and we love God, shouldn't we love one another? *Sure we should!* And too many times church has been turned into the latest gossip session about someone that...*That's nonsense!* That is not what God wants. What we need to do is focus in on that love of God.

He says, v 9: “On account of this also we from the day in which we heard of it, do not cease for you praying and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will...” God wants us to be filled with the knowledge of His will. He’s going to help us to understand. All Truth doesn’t necessarily just come through ministers. Truth comes from God! Truth comes to whoever is willing to receive it. Truth comes to whoever is willing to act upon it. God is a God of Truth—it comes from God.

What did the Apostle John say in one of his parting words: ‘You have an anointing or inunction from the Holy Spirit, and you need no one to teach you’ (1-John 2:27) It doesn’t mean you don’t need teachers. But he’s saying you don’t need this false guy coming around—they’re trying to teach you. And if it works out that you’re just alone, God will teach you. But you have to respond to God and study and pray. That doesn’t mean you’re going to know everything about it, but you’re going to grow in wisdom and knowledge—and that’s quite a statement.

He’s saying, v 9: “...that you may be filled... [the Greek there is ‘pleroma’ from which we get the word today plutocrat—one filled full with everything. That’s what it means, He wants you to be]: ...**filled** with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and understanding spiritual.” *That’s what God wants for you.* It’s right here; available—it’s available. And that’s what’s so fantastic. Once you really continually keep yourself in the grace of God and ask God to keep you in His grace, these things come! And you can’t do it by beating someone up. You can’t do it by commanding it. You can’t do it by legislating it. You’ve got to do it with God’s Spirit. And that’s fantastic!

Verse 10: “To walk for you worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, in every work good bringing forth fruit...” We’re to have ‘good works.’ That’s something else! This is also mind-boggling!

One of the things that is helpful to do—and I try and do, when we go through a Bible study or sermon—brethren, is to **think with God’s Word!** *Know it enough to think with it!* And this will help you; this will expand your Bible study. This will stir up God’s Spirit in you, because you’re thinking with the Word of God. And there’s nothing better that you can think with. Don’t go out and talk to your neighbor about it, because they won’t understand it. Just be nice to them in decent terms and love them in the way that you ought to. But we’re studying God’s Word. This is something!

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto the good works... [We’re to do ‘good works.’ What are those

‘good works’? Not only *keeping the commandments*. What is the greatest work that you can do? What did the teacher say when He asked Jesus: ‘Master, what is the greatest commandment?’ And Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart; with all your mind; with all your soul; and with all your strength.’ How to love God, that’s the greatest thing you can do! *That’s the greatest ‘good work’ that God has given for you to do.*

Another thing that’s important here: We’ll go back and look at this. We are, v 10: “...His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...” Salvation is creation; a different kind of creation; **a spiritual creation**, and you can assist God in that, which is exciting! I mean, that’s fantastic! We’re to walk in these good works. Not only keep the commandments of God. Not only love our neighbor as ourselves. Do all of those things. Those are all the good works. We should walk in them. So they’re the ‘good works.’

Colossians 1:10: “...to walk for you worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, in every work good bringing forth fruit and growing into... [that’s what it means in the Greek] **...into the knowledge of God...**” That’s something! Isn’t it awfully trite then that people sit around and argue about doctrine? *Yes, it is!* What if someone says, ‘I don’t think we ought to keep the Holy Days, because they’re not listed in the Ten Commandments.’ How would you answer that to convict them, yet not be offensive? I’ll tell you how: You ask them:

- Do you believe that we should not commit adultery? That’s in the Ten Commandments—isn’t it? *Yes!*
- Do you believe that all the other illegal sex acts—because they’re not in the Ten Commandments—are allowable? *Oh, NO!*
- Should we keep the commandments there in Lev. 18 & 22? That ‘you should not do as the heathen before you, that I cast out before you’? For they did all these things: list all the adultery, incest and bestiality? *Oh, NO we shouldn’t do that!*

But that’s not in the Ten Commandments—is it? So, you answer it by saying it this way: The Sabbath is in the Ten Commandments—correct? *Oh, yes!* We should keep the Sabbath—correct? Well, obviously, God couldn’t put all the commandments there, so just as those other sex laws are a part of, but subordinate to the ‘thou shalt not commit adultery’ commandment; so the Holy Days are subordinate to, but part of, ‘you shall remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy.’ *Exact same logic!*

That’s how you answer them, and they’re really stuck, because what are they going to do? That’s a convicting witness to them. You might not

get them to keep the Holy Days, but I'll tell you one thing: they will *think on that*; they will never forget that. They might be out of their mind temporarily, but they'll never forget it. Haven't you had that in your life: someone will say something to you, you never forget it and remember it years later. It's not on your mind all the time; when certain things happen you never forget it.

"...and growing into the knowledge of God; with all power being strengthened according to the might of His glory... [Can you endure any trial? *Sure! Sure!*] ...to the might of His glory... [that's something! And the word *power* comes from the Greek word 'dunamis' which means *power*—from which we get the English word *dynamite*.] ...being strengthened according to the might of His glory to all endurance and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who made competent us..." (vs 10-12).

See sermon: *What Should I Do to Qualify for the Kingdom of God?* This is buried in the *King James*. You don't get the meaning of this.

"...giving thanks to the Father... [and the *King James* says 'Who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints.' That is a poor translation, unfortunately.] (If you have a Greek *Interlinear*, it says): ....make us competent..." (v 12). If you look up the word in the Greek, it says, *Who has qualified us. God has qualified us!*

How many times have you heard—in fear: 'Brethren, you've got to qualify to be in the Kingdom of God.' **NO! God the Father's qualified us!** That's good news! I mean, that is fantastic news! God has made it possible! That doesn't mean you don't have anything to do. We've got a lot to do. *We have to grow in grace and knowledge of God!* Also we've got to take care of commandment-keeping. That's going to help you do it better. Did Jesus break any of the commandments while He was here? *No, He didn't!* Is Christ, *in you*, going to break the commandments willfully? determinately? *No!*

But because of our human nature and temptation and weakness, *we'll sin*—that's why there's grace there. God says, 'I love you so much, that even in spite of the fact you have the 'law of sin and death' in you, I'm going to give you My grace to overcome that whole thing. And all you need to do is look to Me, keep My commandments and love Me with all your heart—and I love you!' That's a great arrangement!

Notice how this builds here. This is absolutely fantastic! Verse 12: "Giving thanks to God the Father, Who [has qualified us] made competent us for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light for the share of the inheritance..."

I could give a whole sermon just on that: I'll just briefly touch on here. I want to give it in such a way that I don't want to make it trite.

What do you buy from a company that's incorporated? *You buy shares*, commonly called *stocks*—isn't that true? What do you actually hold? *You hold some kind of ownership in that company*—isn't that correct? Especially if they're preferred, first issue stock. You actually own part of that company; and if you had enough of them, you could actually go in and take over as chairman of the board and run it—right? *Sure you could!*

What is your concept of the Kingdom of God? I hope this doesn't blow your mind, but then again, I hope it does! What is your concept of an inheritance in the Kingdom of God? While we're thinking on that, let me ask you: If you inherit something, what are you considered then? For example: If your great-grandfather died and he left you \$100,000 and you inherited it, you're not only an heir—that's true—you *are an owner*—right? You inherit a ranch, the testator has died—you own it! Isn't that right? I'm here to tell you, brethren, God is going to give us partial ownership in the Kingdom of God. ***Not only are we going to live forever, He's going to give us partial ownership!*** How do we know that? It says in Heb. 1 that His Son *is the heir of all things*—right? What does that mean? *He's going to inherit the universe*—correct?

Let's go to Romans 8 for just a minute. This will blow your mind when you really understand it; and ought to really excite you and realize the reward: *the gift of eternal life! a share of that inheritance! That is a share of the Kingdom of God!*

I do real estate loans and I deal in real estate, so I'll use some real estate terminology. When a husband and wife own property, how is it titled? *Jointly or community property*—isn't that correct? In other words, you're co-owners, legally. Before the law, either one of you can exercise the headship of that parcel of real estate you own. I realize that is by way of an analogy, but also it is by way of absolute truth.

Let's really grasp what this is saying. Brethren, if you know someone who's ready to give up on God because of a human being, sit down and have a nice long talk with them and show them what God has for them. If they had a million dollars in fine gold dust down at the bank, and all you had to do is go down on a certain day and claim it, they would be there—early! God has much greater to give to you.

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God...."

[‘huios’ in the Greek means *children; sons*] ...Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear... [God doesn’t want the Church ran on fear because that leads to bondage—right? *Sure it does!*] ...but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if we are children, we are also heirs—truly, **heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...**” (vs 14-17).

Now that makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up; because Christ has inherited the universe and *we are joint heirs*. What is the difference between the first resurrection and the others? *The others are not given ownership!* We are joint heirs. We are going to inherit. We’re just not going to inhabit under the authority of; we’re going to be the very sons of God. God, as a Father, is going to share what He has with His children.

What did Jesus say? He says, ‘In My Father’s house are many mansions. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself.’ *God is preparing a place, New Jerusalem, for us!* That’s part of the inheritance. That’s where we’re going to live. I mean, that gets really exciting when you read Rev. 21 about New Jerusalem. God isn’t down here trying to hound-dog us—and finding every mistake—so we won’t be in the Kingdom of God. He’s got a great and a fantastic plan:

- He’s going to have *us* inherit the Kingdom with Christ.
- We’re going to be the bride of Christ.
- We are going to have community property with Jesus Christ.

I mean, think on that! That’s something!

Now, let’s go back to Colossians 1:12 (FV), again: “...for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light, Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness...” (vs 12-13). That’s something! Satan has no claim over us. We’ve been delivered from that; from the authority of darkness.

Why then should we bring darkness back on the people of God by trying to place *a man* between them and God? And you can go on and on and on. Once you really understand, once you really get that connection between you and God, that’s a fantastic thing! It makes us *brethren*—doesn’t it? We are truly *brethren!* We’re not the members and the ministry. *We are brethren!* But if God gives us the things to teach, then we should teach; and you should do it with the kind of mind that God wants, always pointing the people to Christ. That’s why Paul said, ‘I didn’t take anything from you. I didn’t take gold. I didn’t take silver. I want you in the

Kingdom of God.’

(go to the next track)

Verse 13: Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love.” We’re not there yet. But God *calls the things that are not as though they are.* How sure is your salvation? *It’s as good as being there* if you remain faithful. “...transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love.” That’s a fantastic statement, because it is of *His Son*, the one of *His* love. The *King James* says, ‘His beloved Son.’ That is not as powerful as the Greek—“...the Son of His love.”

Verse 16 (*Int*): “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins; Who is *the* image of God the invisible, firstborn of all creation...” Some people look at that and say, ‘Oh, Jesus was the firstborn then.’ No, that means the firstborn of all the creation of God. How? *By the resurrection from the dead*; because it is a creation. You’re resurrected—new body, new mind—it’s creation.

To prove that, v 18: “And He is the Head of the body... [which is the Church] ...the assembly; Who is *the* beginning, firstborn from among the dead...” That’s the creation it’s talking about, not of everything that has ever been created. That *special creation*, which is going to be finished through the resurrection, because we are *His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*.

Let’s go back to v 16: “Because by Him were created all things... [How can He be the firstborn of all creation if through Him all things were created? That would be contradictory and wouldn’t make sense. He’s the firstborn of all of those *who are going to be created* through the power of the resurrection from the dead. But He is the One Who created **ALL** things.] ...the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things by him and for Him have been created. And He is before all... [that is has the preeminence] ...and **all things in Him subsist**” (vs 16-17). That’s something—isn’t it? It says that ‘by Word of His power He upholds **ALL** things’ (Heb. 1).

We had a very interesting discussion today about magnetism. I won’t go into it here, but there’s one man named Joseph Human who has a theory—if you’ve ever heard of him, he’s down in Louisiana—and he’s created what is so-called the *perpetual motion machine*. *It’s not!* It’s run by magnetism, and he says it’s what upholds the entirety of the universe, because there has to be a unity of creation. He says that unity of creation is gyroscopic particles

that are smaller than all the atoms—they compose the atoms—and that’s how God does everything. And it’s fantastic! By His Word He upholds it. **His Word**—that is something!

Some people like to hear themselves talk because they’re important. They can go out and make people come and go and all this sort of thing. But Christ ‘upholds the universe by His Word.’ That is fantastic! To really understand that that is the God Who has called you. God is the One Who has died for you. God the Father is the One Who Himself loves you. Everything has been created by *wisdom*. But also the fantastic creation that God has made is absolutely incredible—the way that things grow; the way that things are done—and yet, the greatest creation in the flesh that God has made **is us!**

We can go look at a beautiful waterfall; we can go through a beautiful scene and say, ‘Oh, God, what a fantastic thing that is.’ And we don’t stop long enough to look at ourselves and see what God has made for the habitation of His Spirit. ***Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit!*** I mean, that’s mind-boggling! We put all these things together. What God has called us for and to, it’s absolutely marvelous! And the only thing we can do is say, ‘Praise God!’

I remember a fellow I baptized and he had been attending church for 20 years. Because he couldn’t quit smoking they wouldn’t baptize him. So, I baptized him after he had a stroke and had gone through quite a few things, and he really suffered a lot. We had to scrunch him up and baptize him in the bathtub and line it with plastic so it wouldn’t overflow on the floor and all this sort of thing. He got up out of there and he said, ‘Praise God!’ And that was really moving. We were all in tears.

“...and all things in Him subsist. And He is the head of the body, the assembly [church]; Who is *the* beginning, firstborn from among the dead, that might be in all things He holding the first place; because in Him was pleased all the fullness to dwell...” (v 19). That’s something! ***All the fullness!***

My favorite Scripture—and you’ll hear a lot of sermons that I bring will end up in Eph. 3, where God says He wants you to be ‘filled with all the fullness of God.’ That’s marvelous. That’s a marvelous promise! Think of that! To be as God is God. To stand there and look at God, see Him. When you understand the resurrection’s going to take place on Pentecost; we understand we’re going to meet Christ in the air on the Sea of Glass; and when you understand that you’re going to see all the seven last plagues poured out before we come back to the earth; and we’re going to be up there with the angels singing with God. ***We’re going to see Christ!***

It’s going to be a marvelous time. That’s when the harvest is. That’s one thing that maybe Worldwide has missed. That’s also another key in figuring out when some of these prophecies come to an end.

Because God promised and said we will ‘see the vengeance on all your enemies’ (Psa. 149-150). How are all the saints going to see the vengeance of God unless they see it all at once? It says we’re going to meet Christ in the air—right? Talks about the Sea of Glass (Rev. 15). We’re going to be there. That’s exciting. And furthermore, it’s very possible that the 144,000 will be sealed on the Day of Pentecost one year before the resurrection—the very last harvest.

Pentecost has seven weeks to the harvest, plus there’s the 50<sup>th</sup> day—right? How many churches are listed in Rev. 2 & 3? ***Seven!*** Each one of those equal the work of the Church, not exactly in timeframe, but in symbolism. So, there are seven weeks to the harvest, but there’s one more harvest accomplished outside of the bounds of the Church; because the Church will either be in a place of safety or martyred. Those we call in the Church now, us!

Those who are going to be saved—the 144,000—are the children of Israel; who will be in *captivity*—and the great innumerable multitude of all nations, kindreds, families and tongues. When was the Holy Spirit given? ***When the Church began on Pentecost!*** It can be pretty well be shown that that will happen on Pentecost. What a fantastic time! God doesn’t do it by a radio program. God does it by sending His Spirit to convict them in repentance and then He says to an angel: ‘Stand, don’t do anything, until the servants of our God have been sealed in their forehead.’ So, we’re going to have all these people receive the Spirit of God just like Cornelius—be baptized after the fact. That’s something! God isn’t going to be limited. ***He’s going to save you !***

The more you study the Bible, the more you get into it and the more that you think with the Bible as you study. And that’s why it’s good to memorize the Bible. Some people say, ‘Oh, well, you don’t need rote memorization.’ Ten years down the road it does a lot of good because it’s memorized. It’s in your mind. Then you begin to put it together and ***think with*** the Word of God. Here’s another fantastic statement here in the book of Colossians.

Verse 20: “And by Him to reconcile all things to itself [Himself], having made peace by the blood of His cross, by him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens.” He’s going to reconcile everything. God is not finished the reconciliation of Satan’s rebellion, yet. Satan won’t be reconciled to God—no way! There’s some people who say, ‘Well, you know, there’s going to be

universal salvation, even Satan the devil.' *NO!* The reconciliation of that, or the justification of that is, that Satan is going to be put away. There's one Scripture which says that he's going to be destroyed.

Can Satan be destroyed? *Possible!* Could God destroy him? *Yes!* But it's like anything that God has created, it will just change form then. There will no longer be Satan. But it also says that they will be given into the 'outer blackness of the darkness,' forever and ever. So, when we see the judgment of Satan we will know what's going to happen to him. He could be destroyed. Could be he's going to go on forever in blackness of nothing.

It also says in Heb. 4 that God will destroy him that has the power of death—that is the devil. So that leaves us with that we cannot dogmatically say he's going to be destroyed—right? It does say it. We cannot dogmatically say that's he's going to go on forever—because that means age-lasting and age-lasting can be whatever the age is. The word 'forever and ever' means *into the ages of eternity*. How long is that age that he's going to be there? *Don't know!* What good is it if we did know? *No good!* It's interesting. Does our salvation depend on it? *Nope!* ***Our salvation depends of being resurrected!*** So, that's an interesting point. Should someone be put out of the Church because they believe Satan's going to eventually be destroyed? *No!* But they shouldn't say that's the only thing the Bible says, that's all.

Verse 21: "And you once being alienated and enemies... [the word here 'enemies' is the opposite of the word 'peace.' It says you have 'peace with God'; no longer enemies, you're no longer fighting God—right?] ...in mind works wicked, yet now He reconciled in body of His flesh through death, to present you... [this is fantastic when you read this.] ...Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him" (vs 21-22).

Because God has given His grace to you, how does God look at you? God gives you, imputes to you the righteousness of Christ. Do you deserve it? *No!* That's why it's grace. It's a gift. ***So, when God sees you to be in His Kingdom, He sees you as righteous as Christ.*** That's to inspire you to not want to sin. I mean, that's how you're inspired, by realizing that God counts you as righteous as Christ.

It's not going to be as one Baptist woman said to her friend, she said, 'Well, once saved always saved; and when Christ returns I'm going to be raptured—meet the Lord in the air. He'll call me even if I'm in the middle of committing adultery, because once saved, always saved.' *NO!*

Verse 21: "You once being alienated and enemies in mind works wicked, yet now He reconciled in body of His flesh through death, to present you Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him, if indeed... [conditional] ...you continue in the faith founded [grounded] and firm, and not being moved away from the hope of the glad tidings, which you heard, which were proclaimed in all the creation which *is* under heaven, of which became I, Paul, a servant" (vs 21-23). So, we have our part. He still makes it conditional, but hey, with all of this on our side, the condition is proper.

Verse 24: "Now, I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and I am filling up that which is behind of the tribulations of the Christ in my flesh, for His body, which is the assembly; of which became I servant, according to the administration of God which *is* given me towards you to complete the Word of God" (vs 24-25). That means *to finish writing—finish the Word of God*.

The Apostle John was the one who finished it with the book of Revelation, but he had his part. So he means 'finish the Word of God.' Couldn't mean anything else. What else is he going to finish? Is he going to do away with it? *No!* He's going to finish, complete the Word of God.

Verse 26: "The mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now was made manifest to His saints; to whom did will God to make known... [in other words, God made the deliberate choice to be made known] ...what the riches of the glory of this mystery *are* among the nations..." (vs 26-27). It says 'Gentiles (*KJV*), but it's 'among the nations'; the way the Jews use the word 'Gentile' has kind of a very sarcastic meaning to it; but you go back and you read in Rom. 4 where it talks about Abraham; he was made the father of many nations—the word there is 'ethnos.' Guess what? Abraham also created Gentiles. It merely means *nations* as differentiated from the nation of Jews—has no other meaning.

"...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory... [and there's another whole sermon, right there, that one phrase: *Christ in you, the hope of glory*] ...Whom we announce, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.... [Notice the work of the ministry. See what Paul said the work of the ministry was? The work of the ministry was to present everyone before God in this condition—the right conditions. To present everyone perfect in Christ.] ...When to also I labor, striving according to working His which works in me in power" (vs 27-29). That's what the ministry has to be, and that's what it should be:

- To help
- To serve
- To guard the Word
- To stand for Truth
- To do the things that are right
- To help people to have the courage to do things that are right in their life
- To help them make the choices to do what's right
- And that's what it should do.

## Colossians Two

Let's finish up as much as we can here; and this is really a tremendous chapter and also, please remember that there were no Jews in Colossae. This was a wholly Gentile church; hopefully, also Holy.

Colossians 2:1 (*Int*): "For I wish you to know how great conflict I have for you, and those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen face my in flesh; that may be encouraged their hearts, being knit together in love... [Notice what is the bonding force that comes from God? *The love of God*—correct? That's how you're 'knit together.'] ...and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding [in]to... [If the English is a little different where you're following along is because I'm reading the English in the *Interlinear* text, adding the understanding of the Greek as I go along. The 'to' comes from the Greek 'ice' which means *into*] ...the knowledge of the mystery of God and of *the* Father, and of the Christ; which are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge hid" (vs 1-3).

Notice what he's finding out and we're going to see a pattern. He's going to say: *this is of God/this is of man*—so if you want to go through and mark it: 'A' is for what is about God; 'B' for what is man. You'll see how he's bifurcated this whole chapter—by comparison all the way down, verse for verse, thought for thought all the way through. But he says—and it's very important to know and understand:

**A:** (God) "...all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid." (v 3)

Why does he say that?

**B:** (man) "And this I say, that not anyone you may beguile by persuasive speech." (v 4)

Notice we started out with God—*all wisdom, knowledge and understanding from God*. Then men with *persuasive speech*. Isn't that not for us today? *Yes, it is, persuasive speech*.

Verse 5: "For if indeed in the flesh I am absent, yet in spirit with you I am, rejoicing and seeing your order, and the firmness in Christ of your faith." Admonished now, after he says don't let

anyone deceive you; and that's strong. And I say again, brethren, ***don't let anyone deceive you! Not even yourself!*** This is where when vanity gets carried away and people want to do something. They get carried away into false doctrine; because it's their vanity, it's not the Truth. And we'll see how that is expressed here as we go along.

Verse 6: "As therefore you received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, in Him walk having been rooted and being built up in Him... ['grounded and rooted in love.' (Eph. 3). Here we're grounded and rooted and built up in Him] ...and being confirmed in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (vs 6-7).

Notice v 8—watch out, take heed, this is a warning, folks. I'm writing you a letter. This is a warning: "Take heed lest anyone you there shall be who makes a prey..." What is a prey? *A prey is something that is captured and devoured by a beast—chewed alive!*

Next time you watch all these African shows and the lions are out and they stalk the prey. What is the prey? *The weak, the unguarded, the sickly!* What is the prey, spiritually? *The weak, the unguarded, the sickly—spiritually!* You become prey! Don't be carried about by 'every wind of doctrine.' Watch out, don't let anyone make a prey of you.

"...through philosophy... ['philosophia'—that's *any form of human reasoning that tries to give an account of why we are here and what we ought to do* when you exclude God.] ...and empty deceit..." (v 8). New Age-ism, self-esteem (to put it in terminology of today)—or that we're going to crashing after the Holy Spirit and really, it's demons. Don't get involved in the voluntary worship of angels. That's demons! It's pretty strong stuff here.

"...according to the tradition of men, according to the elements... [philosophy, empty deceits] ...of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily... [why is that an important statement? *You don't need to learn about God from other spirits or other people or other philosophies!* You learn it through Christ, and in Him] ...dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily..." (vs 8-9)

That's what you need—*Christ*; not these other things, because at that time they were taking these Greek philosophies and beginning to interweave them. That's where you had Greek Gnostics, Jewish Gnostics, all coming together with a great Babylonian religion of their time. We're going to see it today. That is the 'Achilles Heel' (if I can use that, no pun intended) of a pagan god; that is

the ‘Achilles Heel’ of the ecumenical movement; that is the ‘Achilles Heel’ of everyone who wants do a unity effort because if it’s not in the fullness of Christ you’re going to be in trouble somewhere down the line. Be careful, you can’t be separated and out forever all alone. You must be careful! If Paul raised up these churches, taught his churches—and every one of them were lost because he was absent—whoa! watch out! be careful! Stay close to Christ.

Verse 10: “And you are in Him complete...”

- you don’t need to know about Buddha
- you don’t need to know about Tamuz
- you don’t need to know about the occult;
- you don’t need the ‘Maharishi Hooma Hama Hooma’ teach you
- you don’t need to go to the demon-worshippers in India or Africa or Tibet, or South America and say, ‘Oh, that’s interesting, they do have power.’

***You have your fullness in Christ!*** That’s what he says, *you are complete in HIM!*

“...who is the Head of all principality and authority...” Paul is saying all those other principalities and authorities in the world, even Christ is over them! And they, even in their evil ***must answer to Him!*** And you’re not going to go through Christ by going through them.

Verse 11: “In Whom [Christ] also you were circumcised with circumcision not made by hand, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision of the Christ... [Which then is a description of conversion—you have your mind changed, a part of you is taken away—that’s the carnal mind.] ...having been buried with Him in baptism...” (vs 11-12).

You died the same death (Rom. 6). It says there, you are ‘conjoined to His death.’ How much free will and independence do you have? *None!* It all goes to Christ. You died when you were baptized. You were conjoined in His death so that you could walk out of that watery grave and walk in newness of life. What Christ is teaching is far more powerful than we’ve ever understood. You must be far more committed than you’ve ever thought you needed to be—***through Christ***—not through an organization. Organization is fine as long as it helps facilitate the use of the Spirit; as long it’s done in decency and order; as long as we don’t create a hierarchical pecking order. But we also don’t allow sin; we don’t allow heresy. We don’t come and crash on people because they do a little something that may not necessarily please me as a person, because it goes against my personal taste or your personal taste.

Personally, I get inspired talking to people who know the Bible because I can say: you know this, and you know that and you know the other thing. It’s far different than trying to go out and say to someone ‘do you know the Lord?’ *Oh, no, who is He?* You have to start from scratch. That’s fine, I’ll be glad to do it anytime with anyone. But who needs also nurturing and caring, feeding? *Those that God has called!* We need to have our faith re-affirmed, re-confirmed, strengthened. How? *By Christ, by His Spirit, by His Word*—and it’s fantastic!

Verse 12: “Having been baptized in which also you were raised with *Him* through the faith of the working of the God who raised Him from among the dead. And you, dead being in offences... [your sins] ...and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He quickened together with Him, having forgiven us all the [trespasses] offences” (vs 12-13). So far no problem, no Protestantism, no nothing involved.

When Protestants come to read Col. 2, they come with an idea that somewhere, we must find in the Scriptures somewhere, ‘Oh please, Lord, tell us we don’t need to keep the commandments.’ So, they find a place where it looks like it says that they don’t have to keep the commandments—and that’s not what it’s saying at all. This is one of them, v 14: “Having blotted out the against us handwriting in the decrees...”

You’ve heard it before, dogmas—those decrees are by men. If you want a word study, get out your handy-dandy concordance, do a word-study on dogmas and you’ll find that every one of those are ‘decrees by men.’ There are a couple places where it refers to teachings by the apostles—one or two places, that’s all. If you are a Gentile, if you don’t have the commandments of God, if you don’t have the Word of God, and you’ve been totally pagan before—what has been against you? Your sins! What has been the handwriting? There are several different things that they have. Some say it’s a ‘bill’ of your sins listed out; it’s analogist to taking them to a pagan temple and you bought yourself from the pagan god. Some people say that. I know all the arguments there; but it’s just simply saying ‘all these things that were written, and decrees—the dogmas of men—are against you and cause you to sin.’ That’s what’s been blotted out. You have no obligation to it. If any of you have been a long-time Catholic you know what I’m talking about. Those things cause you to sin.

“...which was adverse to us... [commandments of God are not adverse to us] ...also it He has taken out of the midst... [of what? What do you mean ‘out of the midst’? *Of our heart and mind because we were baptized.*] ...having nailed it... [that sin of human nature, that conscience of being kept into these traditions; He’s freed you



from it] ...having nailed it to the cross" (vs 14-15)—**not the Ten Commandments.**

What else has He done, v 15: "Having stripped the principalities and the authorities, He made a show {of them} publicly, leading in triumph them in it." That is through the crucifixion. In other words, why bother with philosophies and traditions of men which lead you to sin and Christ is already conquered every bit of that—all the principalities of the world, all the powers of the world—He made an open show of them through the crucifixion.

Verse 16: "Not therefore... [in light of this] ...anyone you let judge... [in the seat of God to judge you concerning your conduct in relationship to Christ] ...in meat or in drink, or in respect of feast, or new moon, or Sabbaths."

These are all things Christians do—Sabbath is Holy, new moon is not necessarily, Feasts are. You have the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. How many are Holy? *Two days!* You keep the entire Feast—right? The other five days are not Holy—correct? *Yes!* But they are still the Feast of Unleavened Bread—correct? *Yes!* I'm trying to come at you at a level that I'm assuming you understand certain things when I say certain things and we don't have to necessarily get bogged down in going back to the basics to understand it.

Verse 17: "Which are a shadow of things to come..." or a foreshadow. Here is the key. Here it the marvelous, wonderful thing about this, brethren, which we've known in form and substance. The Holy Days tell us what God is going to do, when God is going to do it, and they mean more.

I never will forget, one minister got up there, opening day of the Feast of Tabernacles. He got up there and gave a great beautiful sounding, sanctimonious prayer and said, 'Thank you, God, that we're here for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.' Sometimes the Feasts have become that, so boring because it's the same thing. Now, if you want to get yourself all excited about the Feast again, take and put up ahead of the paper: The Holy Day: Old Testament Fulfillment/New Testament Fulfillment/Fulfillment for All Eternity. And when you really get done with that it's going to blow your mind! Just one thing to excite you a little bit. The real meaning of the Last Great Day is when God the Father comes down to the earth and reveals His plan for eternity. For now all of His spiritual family ought to keep the Last Great Day! *Yea!* Sure we should, absolutely!

Remember what Jesus said, about John 14, He said, 'If you love Me you will keep My words.' Who spoke the Old Testament? Who spoke the New Testament? Who inspired Paul? Who inspired Peter?

Who inspired James? Who inspired Luke? *Christ did—all are His words!*

Verse 17: "These are a foreshadowing of the coming things..." That's literally what it means; because in the Greek, if you look up there, you see that it looks like a 'w' with a 'v' at the end of it. Right above 'come'—you see those three Greek letters there gives the pronunciation 'tounge.' You see the three letters right above 'of'—that is the definite article 'tounge' which means then this is a participle of action present tense fulfilling, ongoing.

Verse 17: "These are a foreshadowing of the coming things..." Which means you can learn from that always, your entire life. Exciting, huh? You don't know how much is in God's Word—I didn't know how much is in God's Word—until you set your mind to it.

"...but the body *is* of the Christ" (v 17). In other words, the sum total of all these things, brethren, are *in Christ!* Who's going to judge you? *Christ!* We have said, 'Don't let anyone judge you but let the Body of Christ judge you—which is the Church.' Now, we've got the noose around your neck! *NO!* They tell us the time and place where to meet and do it in decency and in order and preach the Word of God. They have no right to put a noose around your neck to judge you. Christ is going to judge you. New Truth? *No! Been there all the time.*

Notice again, here's the warning, v 18: "No one you let defraud... [or cheat you out of] ...of the prize [your reward] doing *His* will... [the will of the one who says don't do it] ...in humility and worship of the angels..." Fallen! Doesn't have to say demons, because remember what happened when John fell down to worship, the angel said, 'don't worship me I'm one of your brethren.' Rev. 12 says, 'and Satan and his angels fought' against *Michael and his angels*. These are demons to take people away from God in mysticism and spiritism taught in all the occults. That's what it is, all the pagan religions.

I'll finish here and then we'll end this part. "...things which not He has seen intruding into, vainly puffed up by the mind of His flesh... [and all of that leads to vanity] ...and not holding fast the Head [Christ], from whom all the body, by the joints and bands being supplied and knit together, increases *with* the increase of God. If then you died with the Christ from the elements of the world, why as if alive in *the* world do your subject yourselves to decrees? You may not handle, You may not taste, You may not touch, (which things are all unto corruption in the using.) according to the injunctions and teachings of men, which are an appearance indeed having of wisdom in voluntary worship and humility and unsparing treatment of {the} body, not

in honor a certain for satisfaction of the flesh” (vs 18-23).

In other words he’s saying, all these things of will-worship and tormenting of the body—even gets down to that—these are not going to draw you closer to God, these are going to take you away into demon-worship. And unfortunately, the Church is also vulnerable to that. So, you have several sets of problems that we’re confronted with:

- The problems of *wrong* church government
- The problems of *wrong* doctrines—you say, I can’t stand that and you get out.
- You have the problems of weirdoes, spiritism, will-worship, *doctrines of men* that come along

***It’s amazing!*** Some will come along and say, ‘I don’t want this because that’s a doctrine of man. Turn around and leave that and walk over here to another doctrine of man and basically say, ‘I just found it.’ It’s crazy! I’ve see it happen! And it is true. *Stick with the Word of God! Behold Christ, He’s the Head!*

Question was asked: What’s the meaning of life? *That’s another whole topic!* But I’ll tell you something, it’s far greater and far more than we’ve ever understood or even contemplated. And God gave us minds to think. God gave us minds—wonderful, fantastic minds—not to be used in stupidity, not to make bombs (which we do), not to make instruments of killing (which we do), but so that we can have fellowship with God and that our mind can be totally expanded. It’s also found that with our physical mind, when you *use them and you think*, your mind actually grows and connects those things permanently in your brain. Now, with God’s Spirit, let’s really open our mind and see what God can do, maybe we can understand a little bit more about the purpose of life—it’s greater than we ever thought.

I mean, when I go out to do these real estate loans and all this sort of thing, hey, I’m in the mundane and it’s out here. That’s why people in the world don’t know anything about life. And if you mention just a little bit of Truth to them, they look at you almost cross-eyed, you’re strange.

Just to give you an example: I was at a seminar to get my real estate broker’s license—which is different from a real estate sales license and different from real estate loan broker’s license. I’m sitting there and here’s the lady talking to another lady and they’re talking and exchanged business cards. She pulled out her little business card and here’s a flower on it. And she’s explaining all about the Japanese mysticism of this flower. ‘Oh, that is interesting.’ *This flower means that we’re connected into the whole universe.* ‘Oh, I knew as soon as we

were talking we just locked down and it’s wonderful.’ and I sat there and I said—loud enough for them to hear: *That’s a bunch of witchcraft!*

They looked at me; I made sure I was walking—I didn’t want to create an argument. But I just wanted to make sure someone told them that it was witchcraft. Maybe you could say, ‘You weren’t nice and polite, you shouldn’t do that to good, innocent people.’ Read what Jesus said. Jesus offended the Pharisees so many times. That’s why they wanted to kill Him. But that’s the way it is in the world.

Now, when you read Revelation, read it from a different perspective. Don’t read it to say you’re going to establish new doctrine. Read it from this perspective: look at the battle between God and forces of evil; between the angels of God and Satan. When it comes down to *the beast* and the devil gives him his power and the devil gives him his authority. Hey, we’re going to be up against some battles we aren’t even prepared for, brethren.

Scriptures in the book of Colossians from *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry—except where noted All other Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 4:13-16
- 2) Colossians 1:1-2
- 3) Romans 5:6-9
- 4) Colossians 1:3-6
- 5) Acts 20:24-25
- 6) Colossians 1:7-10
- 7) Ephesians 2:10
- 8) Colossians 1:10-12
- 9) Romans 8:14-17
- 10) Colossians 1:12-18, 16-29
- 11) Colossians 2:1-23

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 14
- 1 John 2:27
- Leviticus 18 & 22
- Hebrews 1
- Revelation 21
- Ephesians 3
- Psalm 149 & 150
- Revelation 15, 2, 3
- Hebrews 4
- Romans 4; 6
- Revelation 12

#### Also referenced: Sermons & sermon series:

- *Grace*
- *Names of God*
- *What Should I Do to Qualify for the Kingdom of God?*

## More on Colossians Chapter Two

Fred R. Coulter

Today we're going to take a second look—or maybe a third or fourth or tenth or twentieth or fiftieth look—at Colossians, the second chapter. Colossians 2 becomes a very key important chapter, concerning the Truth of God and what we should do. And the world—especially Protestantism as well as Catholicism—has taken the very Scriptures which say what to do and they tell you it means not to do it.

Before we begin, let's go to Colossians, the second chapter, and let's look at one verse in particular. And let me just tell you this that's important to understand: *The New Age Bible versions help facilitate this error!*

Colossians 2:17: "Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ." Referring back to v 16: "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the Sabbaths*."

The NIV translates this: "Which are a foreshadow of things which were to come." Then they make the claim that since Christ came, they were fulfilled and there is nothing left in the way of keeping any of these things mentioned in v 16. That's how they explain it.

We will see that it is just the opposite; and we will answer the question: Who were those who were judging them? *and* Why were they judging them? We get much of the answer out of this book called *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*. So, what we will do in order to thoroughly cover this, I'm going to go ahead and read from certain select sections from this book, and what I will do then—when we're done with that—we will go ahead and quickly survey Colossians, chapter one.

Now then, let me begin reading and I'll give the page numbers since some of you have this book. It's well worth it, and there's an awful lot in here. Even though this man is not currently with a fellowship group that we know of that came out of Worldwide, he has been attending Church of God Seventh Day, because he couldn't find anything else around here. But what it does, it show that ***if you want to know the Truth you can find the Truth***—which is important, brethren. God is not just going to give it to just a few people and nobody else. God is able to give Truth to anyone that He wants to, and if you seek it you'll find it. And there's something that's very important which is this: ***If you keep His commandments you will have a good understanding***. That's very important to realize.

This book *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*

does this for us; or just kind of liken it unto if you take a pair of binoculars or a telescope and you finally focus it in. I would have to say that our understanding of it in the past has been right on, no problem with that, but what he brings us in this book helps clarify it so about the last eight or ten percent to really make it clear and understandable.

When we get done with Colossians 2, this time you will really understand it like never before. There will be no mystery to it. It will not be difficult at all. However, without some of this knowledge and understanding, when you approach something with a religious view of the past (i.e. Protestantism or Seventh Day Adventism or Catholicism) you may view some of these things from a pre-conceived notion which is not correct. But remember, Paul wrote this in about the 60s A.D. And he was dealing with a current, ongoing problem within the Church at Colossi as well as the other churches.

Now, please understand, Colossi is located in Asia Minor. They had the Greek language and the Greek philosophy—which is the Greek religion—for hundreds and hundreds of years. In this book, he shows what the Gnostics have done. Now, the Gnostics means this: *A Gnostic is someone who knows*, because the Greek word for *knowledge* is 'gnosis.' So, a Gnostic is someone who *knows*. They claim that they had special revelation from God after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now, since the New Testament was not finalized and was in the process of being written, it just made open slaughter upon the true Christians; because the Gnostics were those who professed Christ, who professed the sacrifice of Christ, and they didn't have the New Testament as we do today to combat it.

So, Paul wrote the book of Colossians to combat several particular problems noted in chapter two. The whole focal point of the book is chapter two. So let's get a little background on this and let's understand something here concerning philosophy, religion, and also magic.

Philosophy today is supposed to just be knowledge. But philosophy back then, in the Greek culture, was also 'religion.' And they also believed in magic. That is called 'theurgy'—and 'theurgy' then is the divination in calling up of spirits. And so what we have here is theurgy in part:

from: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight: ...as magic, sorcery, especially that practiced by certain

Neoplatonists who profess to work miracles by the intervention of beneficent spirits. (p 38)

When we get to chapter 2 we'll talk a little bit more about angels. But I want you also to be alert that today there's an awful lot to do with angels. You will find even whole television series devoted to angels. And all of that is just a re-dressing of the ancient old demonism that was extant in Greece and Rome and every society. They try and make you feel good. They have fuzzy warm stories. Always ends up on a good note. So that's what they try and profess with these beneficent spirits.

The underlying idea is the typical Hellenistic belief that all phenomena in the world, both spiritual and material, are linked together as a whole. In the end, everything is based on forces radiating from God into the world, giving form and life to all things. (p 38)

And this is where you get the pagan philosophy that God is in everything. And this is where you get the pagan philosophy, like the modern false prophet Deepak Chopra that God is within you, within soul with a Divine spark that you have to discover. And I'll have more to say about that later on when I get his book.

This was an especially prominent theme in the Stoic philosophy. (p 38)

Let's go to Acts 17 for just a minute, because we will see that Paul had his run in with the Stoics and the philosophers of his day in Athens. This is very important that this section was recorded for us; so that we can see that the Truth of God's Word has nothing to do with Greek philosophy—or, as we could put it, Hellenistic philosophy. Hellenism is just another word in Greek not translated.

Acts 17:18: "Then some philosophers... [who believed in magic, beneficent spirits; it was their religion] ...of the Epicureans and the Stoics..."

The Epicureans were the ones who said: 'It doesn't matter what you do because everything on the outside is physical, and as long as you have the inner part of your spirituality remaining true, whatever you do doesn't make any difference.' The Stoics said: 'No, No, No!' The way you overcome sin and lust is to beat the body. Don't touch! Don't handle! Don't do this! Don't marry! Don't have sex! This is where monasticism and nunneries came from. It didn't originate with the Catholic Church. They had the so-called *Virgins of Delphi*. And the so-called virgins in Babylon. So you see, once you get a few keys, you can tie all of these things together.

"...the Epicureans and the Stoics

encountered him. And some of *them* said, 'What will this babbler have to say?' And some *said*, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods,' because he was preaching to them the gospel of Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought *him* to [Aeropagus] Mars Hill..." (vs 18-19). That's the one whenever they show the great glory of Greece, they show this nearly tumbled down temple of Diana—that's the Aeropagus.

"...saying, 'May we know what this new teaching *is* that is spoken by you? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears....'" (vs 19-20). Why would the resurrection be strange to them? *Simply because they believed in the immortality of the soul*; and that is the key thing with all Gnostic religions—ancient and modern—believe in the immortality of the soul.

"...So then, we desire to know what these things mean.' (Now all *the* Athenians and the strangers sojourning *among them* spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.)" (vs 20-21).

This was kind of like a public square where everyone came and just spoke whatever they wanted. How many have ever been to Los Angeles? They have the city square down there. They've got all kinds of preachers and all kinds of people standing around. It's not quite like San Francisco—San Francisco doesn't have it quite as bad as Los Angeles. They also, in Piccadilly Park in London, have the same thing: little groups here, little groups there, standing here, preaching this, doing that. This is the same thing that was going on there.

Verse 22: "Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars' hill *and* said, 'Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities [superstitious]." The Greek for superstitious means *you are devoted to demons*. And that's what we just read in this book with the beneficent spirits and theurgy. You're devoted to demons, not to God. So, this is angel-worship, because demons are *fallen angels*. 'Satan was cast down and his angels with him' and 'the dragon fought and his angels fought.' So demons are angels that have fallen. There are good angels.

Verse 23: "For *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, 'To an unknown God.' So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you." This is telling us very clearly that all the philosophy of the Greek religions are ignorant of the Truth of God; and they are held in bondage to the elemental spirits of this world. And we will see that's what Paul was combating in Colossians two.

Verse 24: “He *is* the God Who made the world... [this is important to understand because we’ll talk about the God that made the world *from the viewpoint of the Gnostics* or the Hellenists.] ...and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth... [That’s a key, prime statement. Not just in heaven, but of earth!] ...He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things” (vs 24-25). He is virtually—and this is a summary—of his wiping out, completely destroying, the basis of all Greek Hellenist philosophical religion. And yet that is what is prevalent in the world today.

Verse 26: “And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him... [John 4:23-24, that God is seeking those who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. If you’re seeking God in Truth and want the Truth, you will find Him.] ...though truly, He is not far from each one of us” (vs 24-27).

Now that’s interesting, because the philosophy is that since God is everywhere—He has no being; He has no need of a head or arms or legs or a voice or a tongue—He’s just everywhere; an emanation.

Verse 28: “For **in Him we live and move and have our being**; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead... [we’ll talk about Godhead in Col. 2] ...*is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man; for *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance...” (vs 28-30). God wrote that, so what is God saying through the Apostle Paul? *All you wise men are ignorant of the Truth!* That’s why the Truth of God never comes from the wisdom of this world. That’s why all seminaries are in graveyards; they bury the Truth and substitute it with their own.

“...He now commands all men everywhere to repent” (v 30). That’s quite a sweeping statement—isn’t it? Here Paul walks into the very center of the philosophical religion of Greece and says, ‘You’re wrong! It’s ignorant! You worship demons! You worship idols and the things made by hand! We’re the offspring of God and we need to seek God! And you need to repent!’

Verse 31: “Because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all *by* raising Him from *the* dead.’.... [For a

summary, this is pretty powerful summary. Can you imagine what the whole message was? Arguing back and forth with them!] ...And after hearing *about the* resurrection of *the* dead, some mocked... [Notice, they believed in the immortality of the soul—when you die you go to heaven]: ...but some said, ‘We will hear you again concerning this *matter*.’ And so Paul went out from among them. But certain ones *who* believed joined themselves to him, among whom also *were* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” (vs 31-34). So some believed!

Can you imagine starting out with a congregation like that? Boy! That gives you a little more background concerning the ‘religion’ of the Greeks and the philosophers.

The daemons of Hellenistic belief (equivalent to angels in the Bible) were viewed as personifications of various kinds of power and energy flowing into the world from above. They’re equivalent in the New Testament “elemental spirits” mentioned in Colossians 2:8, 20 and Galatians 4:3. They are the spirits which control the “elemental forces” that sustain the world around us. (p 38)

It should be obvious from the start that Gnostic ‘Christianity’ in general is merely another manifestation of the reformation of Greek religion that began with Orphism and Pythagoreanism. There are also differences, of course. It is considered a more extreme example, in that it is developed a passionately negative condemnation of material existence. In the Hellenistic religious mainstream, especially from the earlier centuries, creation was not evil and material existence, though defective and base compared to the true life of the spirit above, generally was considered good.... For the Gnostics, the world is altogether evil. So it’s Creator, Yahweh and His religion must be absolutely evil, as well. (p 42)

And this starts planting the seeds of the hatred for the Old Testament. And you hear that even today; just listen to some of these Protestant ministers. *They hate the Law!*

Before Gnosticism, nearly all manifestations of the new religion had been pagan, separate from the religious traditions of the Bible. The Gnostics, however, were Christians.

So there was a transition.

They came into existence in the first

century of the Christian era, and almost immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ and the founding of the Church. (p 42)

So guess where they went to attend? I wonder how many of the Gnostics were in the area of Galilee and Judea? *There was the sect of the Essenes; there were other sects; there were sun-worshippers; there were philosophers.* I wonder how many of them saw all the miracles that Jesus did? And believed in Him, but clung to their Hellenistic philosophy? *Lots of them because they infiltrated the Church!*

The teachings of the Bible, about evil, the emphasis on evil as the great problem of mankind, had to be incorporated into the mix. Under the influence of the Hellenistic religion, the idea of evil became focused on materialism and, as they saw it, and the evil God Who created the material world. The new Christian teaching of the transition from the Old to the New Covenant was just the device needed to harmonize Biblical Christianity with Hellenistic religion and its rejection of creation. Though Gnosticism made liberal use of the teachings of the spirituality of the New Testament *versus* the inferiority of the Old Testament, most Gnostics did not see Christianity of a reformation of the Hebrew religion. There were more moderate Gnostic sects who took the lenient view of Yahweh and the Old Testament. However, in the Gnostic mainstream, Hebrew religion was viewed as totally evil. (pp 42-43)

Now when we grasp that and understand it then we'll realize what's happening here.

Gnostics saw themselves as a reformation, not of Judaism, but of the New Testament Church, the so-called Primitive or 'Jewish' Christianity that prevailed for a time after founding of the Church in the 30s<sub>A.D.</sub> For them, Primitive Christianity was a partial enlightenment. Nevertheless, it was decidedly inferior, precisely because it failed to completely break its ties with the deception of the Old Testament religion. Gnosticism took a unique interest in Primitive Christians, with devastating results for the history of the Christian faith. (p 43)

Then they categorized human beings. Most of those were considered animals; they did not have a soul, so this is a takeoff of Judaism. Then you have those who have a soul who were in the Christian Church and they were evangelizing to save. Then you had to

those who were the Gnostics or the ones who had the inner-gnosis or knowledge and they were the ones who had the inside track to God. They were the perfect spirituals.

Now then, it talks about the process of creation and so forth, and how that the God of the Old Testament was evil.

I want to read you a little bit of the section of Valentinian Christianity because this will tie in with Col. 2. What I want to do is cover this information first. Then you will understand the structure of why Paul wrote Colossians the way he did. And in particular, the introduction of the first chapter.

The Valentinian school of Gnosticism is important both for its wide geographical spread and influence, and the close ties it established with the early Roman Church. Valentinus began in Alexandria...

Almost all Jewish heresy comes out of Alexandria via the Hellenist Jews.

...but moved to Rome where he became one of the leading Gnostic teachers.... In Valentinian theology the highest spiritual realm is composed of 30 male-female pairs of spiritual powers, called 'aeons.' This is *pleroma* (Greek 'fullness')...

Col. 2 talks about 'pleroma'

The sense of *pleroma* is completeness and perfection, which for Valentinus is the highest heaven, the realm of the true, spiritual Father.... This perfection [of the *pleroma*] is broken by the fall of one of the youngest *aeons*, Sophia.... Redemption comes from the descent of another aeon, Christ, Who unites with the man Jesus at His baptism, or at conception. (p 57)

Of course, when He's crucified only the man Jesus is crucified and the Christ goes back to heaven.

Now, if you want to know the truth of it, Mormonism is a complete Gnostic religion. They say all human beings were spirits in heaven and they needed to have a human body to possess, so whenever a baby is born a spirit comes down and possesses that baby. Pure gnosticism. The whole thing with Mormonism is absolutely pure gnosticism.

Now, continuing on concerning Valentinian Christians—in this section here it says that later the angelic thing was changed to the trinity. Quite interesting—isn't it? And what is the key thing that all Protestants and all Catholic orthodox say you have to believe in? *The trinity!* What was the key thing they brought into the Worldwide Church of

God to take it down? *The trinity!*

The introduction of Hellenistic culture into Palestine spawns heretical Hellenistic Jewish cults before Christ appears on the earth. These mingle Hellenistic belief with Old Testament Biblical themes to create a heterodox Hellenistic Jewish theology. (p 72)

That's why the Church was so subverted. Remember there in 2-Cor. 11, talking about false apostles? Paul says, 'Are they Hebrews? *So am I*. Are they Israelites? *So am I*. Are they ministers of Christ? *I'm insane!*' No they're not! Pharisees have their own gnosticism, but it is a strict, rigid, legal gnosticism. Yes, they were, they were influenced by them, no doubt.

[it talks about] The themes of fallen angels, introduction of evil to the world by sexual misconduct of angels (a prime foundation of Gnostic asceticism)... (p 75)

Asceticism means *monasticism*—you *deprive yourself* of any pleasures of life; you live with just the meager things; you take a poverty vow; you own no property. You don't enjoy anything and you sacrifice your life in a life of doing good deeds. That's what Buddhism is all about. That's what Catholicism is all about with the monastics and so forth.

It is ironic that Paul's letter to the Colossians did not have to wait until our day to be misinterpreted and turned on its head.

We'll see the thing concerning decrees. But what they said was that the decrees that Jesus nailed to the cross were the '13 great aeons' of evil angels. We'll see that that's not true.

These are the evil angels of creation that keep man in bondage to the material world. In Gnostic theology this is equivalent of the destruction of the Hebrew religion and the law of the Old Testament. (p 86)

So that's profound how they did that. We'll also see, when we get to it that what they did, the Gnostics who professed Christ paired with angels. Now today, there's even a book out, which is entitled *Find the Angel Within*. Have you ever seen that book? *or* Seen the title of that book? So, we're coming full-circle. Remember what Solomon wrote in the book of Ecclesiastics: 'There is nothing new under the sun. That which is new shall be old, and that which is old shall be declared new.' What we are seeing is a recycle, clear back to the Hellenistic 'religion' which covered the whole world—it's coming right back again, and we will see it in everything. That's all a part of 'Mother Babylon'

and her harlot daughters. And it's going to become more and more profound.

Upon conversion, Valentinian Christians took part in sacraments culminating in a divine marriage ceremony during which they were spiritually married to angels.

Now, in the Mormon temple, when people go there, they are married to each other, but their paired with angels. And once you go through the temple you have to wear your sacred garments, which is long underwear, and they have certain markings on them. As long as you have on your sacred underwear you're under the protection of divine angels. Maroni [transcriber's correction] was an angel that brought the truth of Mormonism to Joseph Smith. And when we die we go back to heaven as angels. And that's all Mormonism.

In this way, the original sin of the breaking of submission and interdependence is reverse in the life of individual Christian converts, and the original perfection of the *pleroma*... [that is the connection with God to the Divine spark of life within you] ...is restored. (p 88)

Then they say that this gives you control over the evil passions.

The Valentinian belief in union with angels is alluded to in several texts. Here's one from the *Gospel of Philip*. Here in one passage it explains that evil spirits come in genders, and tempt human beings of opposite sex. However, if a Gnostic Christian is united with an angelic partner, they cannot [from that time forth] be sexually tempted. "So if the image... [which is the person] ...and the angel are united with one another, neither can any venture to go into the man or the woman." (p 89)

So that's how they supposedly control lust.

Is that why Mormons believe in polygamy to bring more children into the world? *Yes!* That obviously controls lust and temptation—doesn't it? Brings more children into the world, so more angels from heaven can come down and possess the children. Not too much different than Catholicism—right? They do it a little bit differently. You bring children into the world for the glory of the pope.

It talks about this concerning the things that actually exist *vs* the things that shall become. This is almost pure Deepak Chopra—which is this:

Quoting from the Gospel of Philip (pp 122-123):

It is not possible for anyone to see any of the things that actually exist unless he

becomes like them.... But you...saw something of that place, and you became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ.

*Notice the counterfeit*

So {in this place} you see everything and {do} not {see} yourself, but {in that place} you do see yourself—

that is if you have the right understanding and ‘that place’ refers to *the place of initiation*’

and what you see you shall {become}.

Here the author is arguing that in material life you see many things, but are ignorant and blind to the real self within, the soul. This is the ignorance into which man has fallen, having lost the *gnosis* of the inner-spiritual nature of the soul and its destiny to be liberated and returned to heaven.

That is almost describing to a ‘T’ what Protestantism says. Now then, so much for reading here. Let’s briefly go through chapter one. I just want to hit on key words that you can go ahead and circle as we go through—go back and restudy it for yourself.

Colossians 1:4: “Since hearing of your **faith** in Christ Jesus, and the **love**... [so we have *faith* and *love*.] (v 5): ...because of the **hope** that is laid up for you in heaven, which... [Christ is going to bring from heaven, as we know] ...you heard before in the **Word of the Truth of the Gospel**.” What is he combating? *The so-called truth of secret gnosis from Hellenism*. You don’t get it from them. It’s in “...the Gospel...” which I have preached, Paul says.

Verse 6: “...and knew [knowledge] the **grace** of God in Truth”

Verse 9: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with **the knowledge**... [gnosis—‘epignosis’ in this particular case] ...of His will in all **wisdom and spiritual understanding**”—which comes from what? *From God*—not from angels! *From God*—not the ‘pleroma’!

Verse 10: “...growing in the knowledge of God.... [You have fruitful good works which are things that you do.] ...Being strengthened with all power... [which comes from God!] (v 12): ...Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred us unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins.... [which is through Christ and not through angels. So

he’s building this whole thing.] ...Who is *the* image of the invisible God...” (vs 10-15)—showing that God has image, God has form; God has a body.

I’m just going through here very quickly so we can get a little background so when we get to Col. 2 we’ll understand what he’s doing.

Verse 18: “And He is the Head of the body, the church; Who is *the* beginning, *the* firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the **fullness** [pleroma] should dwell... [not the ‘pleroma’ or ‘fullness’ of Hellenism or Gnosticism.] ...And, having made peace through the blood of His cross... [focusing on the blood of Christ and the crucifixion.] ...by Him to reconcile all things to Himself... [v 21]: For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you*” (vs 18-21).

Verse 23—key: circle the first word: “**If** indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the **hope** of the Gospel...” He had to give that because there were those trying to take them away from the hope of the Gospel.

(go to the next track)

Now you see how much sense this makes. When you understand the underlying problem that he was combating. People coming along and saying: ‘Oh well, you mean you actually believe that Old Testament? You actually believe in the things that are there. Why, don’t you know that this was an evil God. Don’t you understand that these laws that are there are harsh and mean and evil. They were given by evil angels. Don’t you understand that?’ So he’s combating all of that now.

Verse 25: “Of which I became a servant... [for the Church] ...according to the administration of God that *was* given to me for you *in order* to complete the Word of God”—and that means to finish writing it. And Paul and Peter and John finished writing it. Now we can be even more guaranteed that the apostles wrote it and canonized the New Testament. Do you think that God would have left it to the Church infiltrated with the Gnostics? Who believed in the gospel of Philip? *and* the gospel of Barnabus? *and* the gospel of Thomas? *and* all those things which were counterfeit writings? *Of course not!*

I think we will see the fulfillment of these counterfeit epistles and things in our day. We will have a new, one-world religion Bible. They’ll take parts of the Old Testament, parts of the New Testament, parts of the Koran, parts of the traditions of Catholicism and Orthodoxies, parts of the religion



of the Hindus and the Buddhists and the Shintuists and even the Shamans and put it all into one-world Bible and say, 'Oh look what we have. We have a wonderful, wonderful thing.' I think we'll see it.

Verse 26: "*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints; to whom **God did will to make known**... [so God is the One Who's doing it.] ...what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory... [not a union with angels] ...Whom we preach [Christ], admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.... [the Gnostic Christian said: *you're not perfect unless you do it our way.*] ...For this cause I also labor, striving according to His inner working, which works in me with power" (vs 26-29).

Now we come to Colossians 2—we're going to divide this down as we have in the past, into 'A/B'—'A' are those things that have to do with Christ and God the Father and the Truth of the Gospel. 'B' has to do with men who are trying to take them away from that. So, I'll tell you how we can mark this—let's begin in verse one:

**A**—vs 1-3: "Now I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; 3. in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Saying you don't need the gnosis. You don't need this secret information. ***It's all in Christ!***

**B**—v 4, why did he say this: "Now this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech." It's a warning! Isn't that something? What were they trying to do; we'll see here.

**A**—vs 5-7: "For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him... [and we can put 'not in secret gnosis; not following angels' which we'll see a little bit later. Why?] ...being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." That is exactly how you were 'taught by us'—me, Paul, by letter; and 'Epaphras, your faithful minister, rather than being taught by other men.'

**B**—v 8, notice how he interjects these warnings: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive **through philosophy and vain deceit**...

[there it is, right there] ...according to the traditions of men... [Hellenistic religion] ...according to the elements of the world... [the fallen angels] ...and not according to Christ."

Now you know why I read all of that first. I know it was a little laborious going through it, but that was laying the foundation for understanding why he wrote this. Now you go through and read this and you say, 'Oh man, look at that! I can't believe it!' There it is.

**A**—vs 9-15—this becomes very profound: "For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily... [you can tie in there Acts 17, the Godhead is not thought to be like things made of stone, of silver and so forth—but ALL. The Gnostics said not all of it is there. They said the *pleroma*—which is fullness—belongs in the Father. No, the *pleroma* is in Christ] ...and all the fullness of the Godhead **bodily**."

Meaning that He has a body, a head, torso, arms, legs, feet, eyes, mouth, ears. What did Jesus say when Philip said, 'Show us the Father'? 'Philip, have I been with so long a time and you have not known Me? The one who sees Me has seen the Father.' So *bodily* is very important because gnosis says that God is the glob in the air. Just a big pool of 'pleroma,' and God is in everything with emanations coming down to the physical world, into the spiritual world. So this is completely knocking that.

Let's go to John, the first chapter, and we will see that *in Christ* all the fullness dwells and through the power of the Holy Spirit that God gives us, then we partake of His fullness:

- He gives us knowledge
- He gives us truth
- He gives us hope
- He gives us love
- He gives us all the things

—and we are to *grow in grace and in knowledge!* And that all comes from the 'fullness of Christ.'

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word... [Is this combating gnosticism? *Yes!*] ...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... [What do the Gnostics say? *The Yahweh Who created the earth was a lower, evil demiurge or demigod!* John says He **was** God!] ...He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him." (vs 1-3).

I don't know about you, but this just excites me. You say you get 'cranked' over something, this really 'cranks' me. What it does, brethren, it shows ***you can prove the Truth over and over and over again!*** That's what's so profound with the Word of

God. You don't have to worry about finding something that will disprove it. If something appears to disprove it, it is because there's a lack of understanding; understanding *God can give you*.

Verse 14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full [pleroma] of grace and Truth. John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, "He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me.".... [*existed before Me*; as we saw as God] ... And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace'" (vs 14-16). In other words 'the fullness of God' comes from Christ.

That's why it says back here in Colossians 2:9: "...in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.... [You could almost give a full sermon on just that one sentence.] ...very important: "And you are complete... ['complete' is another word very similar to 'pleroma'] ...in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power" (vs 9-10). Principality could also be *authority*. Showing that if you're dealing with Christ, you're dealing with the Highest Authority. You don't have to deal with angels.

Verse 11: "In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [then he explains what the circumcision of Christ is] ...having been buried with Him in baptism... [the covenant death of baptism—he's reminding them of it] ...by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead" (vs 11-12). He's reminding them once you have been buried into the death of Christ, you're to come out of that watery grave and walk in newness of life.

Verse 13: "For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses.... [This is important: **You need nothing else for the forgiveness of sin but the sacrifice of Christ**. You don't need angels. You don't need other works. You don't need special religious regulations such as touch not, taste not, handle not.] ...He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees *of our* sins, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross" (vs 13-14).

Now, let's read that in the *King James*—and let's see how this is generally explained by the Protestants, and yea, the Catholics—to justify then what they do. Here's where they get the saying that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross,

which is a wild, twisting, lying interpretation of Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances... [which they claim was the Ten Commandments] ...that was against us, which was contrary to us... [Are the commandments of God against us? *No, they are FOR us, because they tell us what sin is!* Is it contrary to us? *NO!* We have to walk in the commandments of God.] ...and took it out of the way... [that is remove the Ten Commandments] ...nailing it to His cross." That is a very unfortunate and bad translation, as well as a bad interpretation. The Greek there: 'toise dogmacin' means *the decrees*. What is a decree? Why did I put in there '(note of death)' (v 14 FV)? *Because that's exactly what it was in the pagan religions!*

Let me read to you from *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, pp. 146-147. I want you to notice the angel involvement here:

On this structure... [that is the bridge going over to heaven, or going over to hell] ... which they assert connects heaven and earth, sits the Angel of Justice...

Now, we still have that—don't we? In all of our courts—don't we? We have the Angel of Justice with a pair of balances—don't we? Are we pagan? *Yes!*

...to weigh the actions of mortals; when the good deeds prevail...

this is salvation by works; and still, many people have that concept today.

...the soul is met on the bridge by a dazzling figure...

This reminds me of Daffy Duck—with the good angel/evil angel with the pitchfork in his hand. Or Bug Bunny. Does it stick with you through life? *Yes!* Does it program you to accept things that are wrong? *Yes!*

...which says, "I am thy good angel, I was pure originally, but thy good deeds have rendered me purer..."

Notice, angels are involved in this. I want you to understand that.

...and passing his hand over the neck of the blessed soul, leads it to Paradise. If iniquities preponderate, the soul is meet by a hideous spectre, which howls out, 'I am thy evil genius; I was impure from the first, but thy misdeeds have made me fouler; through thee we shall remain miserable until the resurrection; the sinning soul is then dragged away to hell, where Ahriman sits to taunt it with its crimes.' Such is the doctrine of Parseism.

The same is the case in China, where Bishop Hurd, giving an account of the

Chinese descriptions of the infernal regions, and of the figures that refer to them, says, "One of them always represents a sinner in a pair of scales, with his iniquities in the one, and his good works in another. We meet with several such representations," he adds, "in the Grecian mythology." Thus does Sir J. F. Davis describe the operation of the principle in China: "In a work of some note on morals, called *Merits and Demerits Examined*, a man is directed to keep a debtor and creditor account with himself... [that is, write it down] ...of the acts of each day, and at the end of the year to wind it up... [that is sum them up]. If the balance is in his favor, it serves as the foundation of a stock of merits for the ensuing year: and if against him, it must be liquidated by future good deeds....

That is the *note of debt*—has nothing to do with the commandments of God. So, what Paul is explaining here: You don't need to go through all of this and write down your good deeds and your bad deeds and add them up at the end of the year. Christ nailed that to the cross. Your *note of debt* of your sins.

Various lists and comparative tables are given of both good and bad actions in the several relations of life; and benevolence is strongly inculcated in regard first to man, and, secondly, to the brute creation. To cause another's death is reckoned at one hundred on the side of demerit; while a single act of charitable relief counts as one on the other side....

So if someone is killed, you have to spend your life doing good deeds. Does that undo the debt of the individual? *No!* Is there any repentance involved? *No!* So, this is what Christ took care of for those Gentile Christians in Colossi, whom He called. Taking that *note of debt* and nailing it to the cross. Has nothing to do with the Ten Commandments of God.

But when you're dealing with people who are carnal-minded... Let's understand something: Rom. 8:7 says: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*."

So at the slightest inclination, though they never check it out for a proper translation, or try to understand the true background of it, they immediately assume that it is doing away with the commandments of God because they have an *enmity toward the Law of God*. They have a hatred toward the things that have been done. That's why it's so

profoundly important that anyone who has an inkling of that attitude, go back and study Psa. 119 all the way through—every single verse. And if you have a problem with the laws and commandments and statutes and precepts and judgments and testimonies of God, then go get on your knees and study it before God and let Him open your mind to understand.

He took away this *note of debt*. What do we have today? What do religions encourage people to do today? *The same thing, only they call it 'journaling'!* Not many people know it, who have been in the Church of God for a long time, but the religions of the so-called Christian 'religions' of this world encourage you to 'journal.' That is the same thing as a ledger of your good deeds and your bad deeds. *Well, dear diary...or dear journal...today I was a real snot; I got in an argument with my boss. Next week: finally made up with my boss; I did good works and he really likes me now.* Note of debt!

Now, let's come back and read Colossians 2:14 again. "He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees *of our sins*, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it... [the note of debt of sins] ...to the cross. After stripping the principalities... [these are the elemental spirits, which it says up there: 'the elemental spirits' (v 8)] ...and the powers, He made a public spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it" (vs 14-15). And that is the crucifixion overcame all of these demonic, Hellenistic *religious practices* that people were in bondage to. Now they are liberated from.

Verse 16 is a combination of **A** & **B**: "Therefore... [that is because of what Christ has done and what you are now doing] ...do not allow anyone to judge you... [who was judging them? *The Gnostics!*] ...in eating or in drinking..." Because you had the Gnostics who were the Stoics and said, 'Well, you can't enjoy anything. But when we have a Feast, we are to enjoy—correct? Or you have it the other way; in eating or drinking: 'Well, you mean that you follow the laws of clean and unclean meats and you don't eat all this good pork, and all the shrimp and lobster and calamari. You can suck up those little tentacles in your mouth! Just like spaghetti.'

Who was the one who was judging? Verse 8: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit."

Verse 4: "Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech." They were the ones who were judging, because they were keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days of God and were being judged as keeping those things which were antiquated and evil and were nailed to the cross.

Verse 16: "...or with regard to a festival, or new moon... [and that's calendar calculation—not 'a' or 'the'] ...or *the* Sabbaths, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming..." (vs 16-17). In keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days and living God's way, you understand the purpose of God and know that these things are a foreshadow of the things which are coming, which Christ will bring when He comes at his second coming. I hope this opens up Colossians to your understanding even more. We've understood this. We have preached it down through the years. No problem with that, but now we have the last bit of fine focus which gives us greater understanding into the reason why he wrote it.] ...which are a foreshadow of things that are coming..." (v 17). Now, if you are standing in the shadow of something and you say, 'Okay, here's a shadow and you walk toward that shadow originates, what are you going to come to? *Christ! And the plan of God*

**B**—v 18—and the very first part of v 19: "Do not allow anyone... [that is who is teaching philosophy and vain deceit] ...to defraud you of the prize... [that is of the reward that God is going to give you] ...by doing *his* will... [rather than the will of God] ...in self-abasement and *the* worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind and **not holding fast to the Head**, from Whom all the body..." All the body has to do with the Church.

Now, I'm going to read from Appendix D, p 248, *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*:

In essence, Gnostics identified Hellenistic, elemental spirits as Biblical angels. This was so prevalent and so important to religious belief at the time that it's not surprising that the New Testament writers refer to it. Remember that Gnosticism in the first century existed mostly *inside* the Church, so it was vital that the writers of the New Testament address these issues.

Gnosticism talks about evil angels and good angels. The good angels, according to Valentinian, were the Valentinian Christians—believed that angels are married

...to recreate the perfection of *pleroma* within themselves. Valentinian salvation comes from the Father via Christ, but it is affected through the agency of angels. The entire focus of Valentinian Christianity is the *pleroma* and its angels. The very substance and heavenly reality behind the spiritual shadows of our world. In the Valentinian Christianity, the way to obtain spirituality is through identification with *pleroma* and its angels.

And here's how it's done:

One receives them from the mirrored bridal chamber. The context is the divine marriage ceremony...

They had a marriage ceremony with an angel; that's worshipping the angel.

The context of this divine marriage ceremony, which scholars believe was a sacrament literally acted out. The *mirrored bridal chamber* refers to the belief that Christians became a mirror image (a shadow) of angelic beings, in the sense that they are imperfect shadow of the spiritual archetype within *pleroma*. Thus on earth they are a 'type' of the spiritual glory that will be fully realized after they die and ascend to their angelic home in the *pleroma*. (pp 252)

Valentinian theology taught that man's relationship to angels is the key to spiritual success, both by escaping evil angels associated with the religion of Yahweh, and by attracting believers to the *pleroma* by a mystical spiritual marriage that makes them a shadow of the spiritual reality of the *pleroma*. (pp 254)

That's why he says here—v 18: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize... [Why? *Because if you worship angels or you're married to angels, you then are committing idolatry!* You will lose your reward.] ...by doing *his* will in self-abasement and *the* worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind." Isn't that what happens when people have this super-secret thing that they know. *They're all vain!*

**A**—vs 19-22: "...Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ*... [through baptism; through taking up your cross and overcoming daily] ...from the elements of the world... [the good angels and bad angels] ...why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*?.... [which was the Hellenistic world, with their beliefs and practices—*the decrees of men*. These so-called Christian-professing Gnostics had their own rules and regulations] (such as, v 21): ...*They say*, 'You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!'.... [all self-discipline] ...The use of all such things leads to corruption... [because it doesn't stop sin—that's why it leads to corruption] ...**according to the commandments and doctrines of men.**"

So philosophy, vain deceit, angel-worship, voluntary humility are *all according to the doctrines and commandments of men*. And those people, according to the doctrines and commandments of men, were *judging those who were keeping the Feast, the new moons and the Sabbath*. And ‘new moon’ meaning *following the Hebrew calendar*. Of course, the Hebrew calendar would be an awful, evil thing because it was invented and designed by that terrible Yahweh! (with sarcasm)

**B—v 23:** “Which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom in voluntary worship of *angels*, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of *the body*, not in any respect to the satisfying of *the needs* of the flesh.” That means to overcoming the lust of the flesh.

You will see, when it comes up again this year, when we come to the time so-called in the world of Easter, over in the Philippines you will hear accounts there are men who are crucified. They run nails through their hands, put up on a cross and others sit there and flagellate themselves with little whips—and this all, ‘oh, look what they’re doing; oh, my!’ That does not take the place of a broken heart and repentance to God. It may look wise. ‘Oh, look what he’s doing, he’s punishing himself and disciplining himself.’ But it doesn’t stop the lust of the flesh. So that’s quite something—isn’t it?

Verse 4: “Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech. For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ” (vs 4-7).

Verse 18: “Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by doing his will* in self-abasement and *the worship of angels*, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind and not holding fast to the Head, from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with the increase of God*. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world, why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*? *They say*, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’ The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men, which indeed have an outward appearance of

wisdom in voluntary worship of *angels*, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of *the body*, not in any respect to the satisfying of *the needs* of the flesh” (vs 18-23).

So I hope that gives you greater insight into Colossians, the second chapter. Now, let’s come back and let’s just finish one section we need to finish here in Colossians 2:16-17—and this will finish it: “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking... [none of those men who practice Hellenistic gnosticism] ...or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the Sabbaths*, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ.”

We’ve always understood this and this is correct: ***Only the Body of Christ—which is the Church—should judge you in the matters concerning the Feast, the calendar and the Sabbaths.*** Not other men! That would certainly apply today with all the calendar schemes that different people have. Coming along debunking the calculated Hebrew calendar. So it is the Body of Christ.

Now there is another thing that you can also understand out of it: You gain understanding of these things, which are a foreshadow of the coming things, in the Body of Christ. *Not out in the world!*

So the whole central theme of book of Colossians is to identify everything in Colossians 2, to state the problems, to show what they are. And I am happy to have had this book which helps clarify and brings in sharper focus all of these things; and really gives us the Truth concerning Colossians, the second chapter.

All other Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 2:17, 16
- 2) Acts 17:18-34
- 3) Colossians 1:4-6, 9-15, 18-21, 23, 25-29
- 4) Colossians 2:1-15
- 5) John 1:1-3, 14-16
- 6) Romans 8:7
- 7) Colossians 2:14-16, 8, 4, 16-23, 4-7, 18-23, 16-17

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 4:23-24
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Ecclesiastics
- Acts 17
- Psalm 119

#### Also referenced: Books:

- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Finding the Angel Within* by Pamela H. Hansen
- *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop

## Gnosticism, Colossians & Christianity

Fred R. Coulter

Today we're going to cover Colossians 1 & 2 in a special and a different way. What I'd like to do is mention that there is a second edition of the book entitled *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight, explaining how the New Testament Church was overrun with Gnostic teachings. Some of you may have his first edition already; but his second edition has a third more material and is far more complete.

What is so important concerning it is: Why did Jesus say, as He was closing His ministry: 'Beware that no one will deceive you, for many will come in My name saying I am the Christ'—that is believe that He is the Christ. And how many times did the apostles say: Beware! Beware! Beware! Watch out! There're going to be those rising, even among yourselves, that are going to lead people astray. And hasn't that happened?

We know that they had the problems with the circumcision party, which insisted that all new converts be circumcised like the proselytes for Judaism. That's one problem. We also have the problem as we find in Acts, the eighth chapter, with Simon Magus—and he was called *the father of Gnostic Christianity*. Well, he was one of them. And as this book points out—*Primitive Christianity in Crisis*—Christian gnosticism came about because of a reformation of the Greek religion, beginning back in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries<sub>B.C.</sub>—where they essentially gave up on animal sacrifices and they said that as they looked in the heavens. The heavens are perfect and up there is where all the souls are; and they descend down to earth. And when they descend down to earth to come into a body of a human.

Now, all of you former Mormons, listen up, this is pure Mormon doctrine—that there have to be souls to come into the bodies of babies in order to be saved. So what you have is a Gnostic religion in Mormonism.

But the pure Gnosticism was that they would come down, and as they entered into the realms of the planets... Because the planets, they saw, had irregular orbits as compared to the heavens, which were regular. So they said the heavens was where God is, and the souls that are up there are pure souls, but as they come down through the seven planets—sound a little bit like your horoscope in your paper today? Do people still believe in Gnosticism? *Yes, indeed!* It would come down and it would enter into a person depending on how much they were polluted by the seven planets. By the way, the seven planets relate to the seven days of the week: Monday,

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and so forth.

Now, the Gnostic religion was refined, and it became a spiritual thing. Let's see how Paul encountered them. There are more than two kinds—but you have the philosophy of Plato and then you had Pythagoras and you had some others; and all of these combined to bring about the immortality of the soul; and the souls coming down from heaven.

The only thing with Gnosticism was this: You had an endless—Hinduism is a take-off of it—recycling of your soul until it is purified and returns to heaven to the ether of God. And that is almost pure Hinduism today. And they also had it that if you didn't live a reasonably decent life, well then you could come back as an animal. Then you have to make your way out of that of being an animal, and so forth.

What does all of this have to do with Christianity? Because when they refined it and refined it and it came out to be Hellenistic Gnosticism, you had something very akin to Christianity. What they said was that the God of the Old Testament, and the Hebrews was the evil God. That sound familiar? He was the harsh God. That sound a little like Protestantism? The Father in the New Testament is all pure love. And when they came into contact with Christianity, they said you've got to reform this, because Christianity was teaching keeping the commandments.

Now we're going to see about philosophy today when we get into Col. 2. Let's pick it up here beginning in Acts 17:16: "But while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he saw *that* the city *was* wholly given to idolatry, *and* his spirit was sorely moved within him. Because of this, he reasoned earnestly in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshiped *there*, and daily in the marketplace with those who met with *him*" (vs 16-17).

So, he had the same two confrontations that we're confronted with today: Judaism on the one hand, and Greek pagan philosophy and religion on the other hand. And when he went to the marketplace to dispute, here's who he disputed with:

Verse 18: "Then some philosophers... [and that's what Gnosticism is—Greek philosophy] ...of the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him...." The Epicureans were of this ilk: God gave us all these places, all these good things, we should use them, we should enjoy them and since we are spiritual and our souls are going to go back to heaven, nothing that we do in the material world

affects our salvation. Does that sound familiar? Just like Protestantism—right? I actually had a woman tell me that her friend, who is a Baptist, said that when the rapture came, if she were committing adultery, that Christ would take her to heaven; right out of that adulteress union.

Going back just little bit in history when Alexander the Great conquered all the world—the known world at that time—they also brought in the Hellenistic religion. And they reformed every religion in every country that they came to, to make it conform to one branch of the Greek philosophy. And that is all Gnosticism. Well, they did it to the Jews. And the thing that people don't understand is there were Hellenistic Jews. And Jews, as you read in Acts 6, were of the synagogue of the Alexandrians, which was the hotbed of Hellenistic Judaism.

Right in the time of Christ, one of the greatest teachers of Hellenistic Judaism was Phileo, who believed in Hellenistic Mystic Judaism. Now, that's a strange and a weird combination; because they believe in souls that come from heaven, that go back to heaven—an *immortal soul*. They believed that out of the goodness of your heart you will be good and you don't need any laws. Does that sound familiar? And that's the whole point of Alan Knight's new book: second edition of *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*—that modern day evangelical Christianity is Gnosticism reborn. Quite a good book!

As he points out in the book: Do you think that anyone who truly believed in the true Christ would be deceived today by the pope? Hardly anyone? *No, you wouldn't!* Do you think they would be deceived by Judaism? *Well, some have been*—sacred names and prayer shawls and observing the new moon and things like that, circumcision and so forth. But the one that is most dangerous is modern Gnostic Evangelical Protestantism. We'll show you why a little later.

The second group of philosophers were Stoics; they said, 'Look, one way to purify your soul is get away from all of this material world around you. These were the ones who were the founders of monasteries and nunneries and things like this where they get away from the world—supposedly. And of course, a lot of this information we now have is because of the Dead Sea scrolls. It's very interesting' we would have had all this information and knowledge sooner, if the Muslims had not burned the famous library in Alexandria. *We would have known!* And likewise, a little later, the library in Laodicea. I think it's very profound that today the biggest problem is Laodiceanism and in the Churches of God today is Protestant Evangelical

Gnosticism. So the Stoics said, 'We need to deprive the flesh, we can't touch this, we can't handle this, and we must be stoic and abstain from sex. And the thing that they all got into was angel-worship—it was all part of it. They also had a 'savior' who died and was resurrected. They also had a ritual of baptism.

So, wherever Paul went, and when Christ preached, these people heard Him. So, the Stoics, encountered him, v 18: "...And some of *them* said, 'What will this babbler have to say?' And some *said*, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods'..." They never heard of the resurrection; they never heard of the mortality of the soul—the *soul that sins it will die*.' They never heard that you have to keep the commandments that are found in the Old Testament. This now is harsh! This is what they were up against!

"...because he was preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought *him* to Mars Hill, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching *is* that is spoken by you? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears. So then, we desire to know what these things mean.' (Now all *the* Athenians and the strangers sojourning *among them* spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.)" (vs 18-21).

They didn't have TV to distract them. They were very intelligent people. After all, Pythagoras was mathematics, because they mixed science in with it, too. When you study algebra one of the first things you do is the Pythagorean Theory of the square of a triangle and the hypotenuse and the base. And you get that in what, the sixth grade, fifth grade—somewhere around there—probably not till the first year of college today—geometry.

This is the whole thing about Gnosticism and Alan Knight brings it out very well in here, called *predestination*; fate, fatalism. You have no choice over what you're going to do. If God loves you, you're going to heaven. If God hates you, you're going to hell. They also had a purgatory, too. I mean, this is some really good knowledge and information to have.

Verse 22: "Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill *and* said, 'Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very... [superstitious—and that means you are devoted to demon or deities] ...reverent to deities... [that is the angelic worship we'll get into a little bit later] ...For *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration... [because they don't want to miss any gods. You've got to honor this one and honor that one and honor the other one and so forth.] ...I also found an altar on which was inscribed, "To an

unknown God.” So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it....” (vs 22-24).

Let’s understand something: In gnosticism, the earth was created by evil beings, and the God of the Old Testament was a demiurge or a demigod who created the world. And that’s why there’s evil in the world.

So when he says: “...God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it.... [this is a profound statement to these philosophers] ...Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth... [because what the Gnostics said is this: there is the Father in heaven, but evil angels and good angels and the evil God of the Hebrews was the One Who ran this earth. So, this is boring them apart. This is absolutely just like taking a blowtorch to what they believe. This is profound because they didn’t think that the God Who ran the earth was the One Who ran heaven. This is stunning! This is turning the world upside down.] ...He does not dwell in temples made by hands” (vs 22-24).

And that’s all the Greeks did, made temples everywhere: temples to Zeus; temples to Apollo; temples to Mercury; temples to Diana; temple to Athena; etc., etc., everywhere they went temples to Isis and Osiris and Tamuz. And, of course, the thing is the Jews wanting to blend in with the Greek society. You remember that almost 300 years before Christ, you have the Septuagint Bible being translated—at least, the Law.

They spoke Greek. They loved the Greek philosophy, as witness of Phileo. And I’ve read all of Phileo’s stuff, and after a while it’s just like reading some of these other Greek philosophers. What he did, he was the first teacher of what are called *allegorical teachings of the Old Testament*—which means this: you read a law that says something definite and then he weasels around it by giving an allegorical interpretation. And one of the things that you’ll see concerning this is it’s all wrapped up in and comes out with Sunday-worship, and how they allegorically reason about the days of creation and what they mean.

But the long and the short of it is—and you can read it in the book—they took the seventh day; now the seventh day commemorates *the creation and the Sabbath and God’s rest*—in gnosticism it was for the planet Saturn, the most evil of all the gods. That being the day of the god of the Hebrews, the Hellenists always ridiculed it; always deprecated it, and the Jews that converted to Hellenism also did the same thing.

Now, to help them along their way to hate it, what do you have on the other side? *The scribes, the*

*Pharisees, the traditions, all the rules, all the laws* that governed every thought of every day from the time you wake up and also during your sleep until the time you get up—all day long. Yes, the *Code of Jewish Law* book, and today we have the same thing within Judaism—don’t we? We have the *orthodox*. They hate all the other Jews because they’re too liberal. The *reformed* Jews cannot stand the orthodox Jews because they are just mean and evil with all these laws. So, here comes ‘Christianity’ in the midst of all of this:

- Here comes the real Savior!
- Here comes the One to bring the *true laws*.
- Here comes the One Who created heaven and earth.
- Here comes One that’s contrary to the Greek gnosticism, God actually took upon Him the flesh of human beings.

So, the Gnostics were stuck with a problem. I’m getting a little ahead of the story, but I’ll finish the thought. What happened was when Christ came down from heaven *He took over the body of the man Jesus*. So, now you have what is called *Docetism*. And that’s what John refers to: ‘If anyone says that Christ came not in the flesh is not of God—he’s an antichrist.’ Because they were saying that Christ just possessed the body of the man Jesus, and before Jesus died on the cross, Christ went back to heaven. It was only the man Jesus Who died. This is what they taught, and they did it all from here. So you see, this is something that was profound and important.

Verse 25: “Nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things.” Ohhh, that just destroys so much of the philosophy of Hellenistic gnosticism it’s unreal! Because angels gave a certain kind of life to certain kind of beings, and the evil God of the Old Testament gave a certain kind of life to the Jews, and so forth. It’s really quite a thing when you read that book and then go back and read some of these things, it just kind of opens everything up to your understanding.

Verse 26: “And He made of one blood all the nations...” This is not what the Gnostics thought. You had the perfect ones, the spiritual ones—kind of like the caste of the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church today. The pope is neither a man nor a god—he’s kind of in between. And then you have all of these superior, spiritual ones and cardinals and bishops and archbishops and priests and all that sort of thing. These were the ‘elect.’

Now, Christ comes along and Paul comes along and says *brethren are the elect! That all men are sinners!* This is dynamite stuff! All have to repent! Why should they repent when they’ve got the new revelation—Hellenistic gnosticism. So these



are really profound things here.

“...all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord... [not worship angels; not seek demigods; not seek to go back to heaven as a purified spirit] ...if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being... [he puts the hook into it to get their attention] ...as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’” (vs 26-28).

Oooooo, certain people are not the offspring of God, they can’t be, they’re the offspring of demons. What’s the old story about giants. That’s a Gnostic story back there in Gen. 6—and that should be tyrants, not giants. And the story and the explanation of it comes from the Jewish kabala which is Jewish gnosticism.]

Verse 29: “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God... [that’s an amazing statement— isn’t it?] ...we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man.”. All of those things were made to honor the gods, what are we talking about here.

Just the other day Chad and I were watching some television and it showed one of these—in Moscow—churches with the dome on top of it, the gold colored dome, and so forth. Since the steeple is the male phallic symbol, and the orthodox churches are Gentile, meaning they don’t circumcise, it takes no imagination to understand what the gold top of the domes of the orthodox churches really represent. But people don’t understand that. ‘Oh, isn’t that beautiful. Oh, wow!’ Paul is knocking all of this. And the orthodox, how they have their icons and their pictures that weep, and the Catholics have all their statues. The Buddhists have all their statues. *All of this is gnosticism!*

Verse 30: “‘For *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, He now commands all men everywhere to repent... [That is startling! That is an amazing message to these people.] ...because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness... [there’s no judgment in gnosticism beyond just how you live your life and try and get your soul back to heaven.] ...by a man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all *by* raising Him from *the* dead’” (vs 30-31). No immortal soul. So, this just came like an atomic bomb right into gnosticism.

Now, let’s backup on the story a little bit here. Another part of the teachings are also very similar to the teachings of modern-day evangelical

Protestantism, which is this: The Gnostics had the new knowledge, or the new teaching. What you need is the *new knowledge*: ‘We don’t have anything to do with the God of the Hebrews, which is an inferior God anyway because He’s the One Who created this evil earth anyway. Now we have a *new teaching*.’

In order to fit this into Christianity, what they said was this: The ministry of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, was for the Jews. After His resurrection and during his 40-day ministry, He revealed many things to His chosen apostles. Now, that’s a true statement, but in meaning ‘chosen apostles’; it means the ones of gnosticism. And what was the teaching? *The teaching is that you don’t have to keep the Law*. If you believe in these teachings of gnosticism and you have God in your heart, you don’t have to keep the Law because the physical material world out there does not affect your salvation. Now, doesn’t that sound an awful lot like modern-day Protestantism? *Yes, indeed!* That’s exactly, exactly what happened.

Now then, when you come to some of the teachings of John, we’re able to understand many of these things today because there is what is called the Nag Hammadi Library that was discovered in Upper Egypt. That’s where they found the so-called gospel of Barnabus, and the so-called gospel of Thomas, and the gospel of Mary Magdalene, and the apocrypha of John and the gospel of Peter, and all of these are Gnostic writings written by someone else.

But here’s one here—(*Primitive Christianity in Crisis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p 2):

The scholar John Turner in his introductory comments to his translation of the Nag Hammadi text, the book of Thomas, the contender has the following to say about the Gnostic penchants for progressive revelation...

And that’s what they have in Protestantism today—*dispensationalism!* Well, under the dispensation of the law they were saved by the law, etc. Under the dispensation of grace we’re saved by grace and we don’t need law.

...and rejection of Jesus’ earthly ministry, here he comments on a certain class of Gnostic text. These dialogs are set at a time between the resurrection and ascension when both He [Christ] and His teachings were available to select apostles in a form unclouded by the sort of materiality which was believed to obscure the spiritual significance of His earthly pre-existence teaching.

In other words His teachings in the Gospels were contaminated with materialism, because He was not yet resurrected.

This special teaching might consist of enlightening commentary on His darker earthly teachings or even new revelation to special apostles.

Let's go to 2-Corinthians 11—this is going to make more sense than ever before when you understand that there were Gnostic Christians whose sole goal and motive in life was to reform Christianity from its Hebrew roots. They had apostles. We just read it here. What did Paul write about? *False apostles*.

2-Corinthians 11:1—this is going to open up like you will never believe: “I would *that* you might bear with me in a little nonsense; but indeed, do bear with me. For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God because I have espoused you to one husband, so that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness... [who is Satan the devil] ...so your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus...” (vs 1-4)—the Docetic Jesus—the man Jesus and the spirit soul Christ, united together in one body.

“...whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit... [which is a *satanic spirit*] ...which you did not receive, or a different gospel... [a new dispensation of enlightenment that was given to only *special* apostles, after His resurrection] ...which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something* good” (v 4). You just sit there and go along with it when you can see why the Greeks would. He had a real difficult problem here—didn't he?

Verse 5. “But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles.” That's a correct translation, especially in the light of what we just read; because there were those going around saying they were apostles. You put up with them. Then he goes on and explains certain things.

Verse 13: “For such *are* false apostles—deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.... [What was the whole goal of gnosticism? *Knowledge to enlighten!*] ...Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works. Again I say, no one should consider me a fool; but if otherwise, receive me even as a fool, that I also may boast a little. What I am *now* saying, I do not speak according to *the* Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. Since many boast according to *the* flesh, I also will boast. For since you are *so* intelligent, you gladly bear with fools” (vs 13-19). And that perfectly

describes exactly what happened to all of those who have subverted to Gnostic Protestantism—the modern version today—and that it happened in a major Church of God.

Verse 20: “For you bear *it* if anyone brings you into bondage, if anyone devours *you*, if anyone takes *from you*, if anyone exalts himself, if anyone beats you on the face. I speak as though we were under reproach for being weak; but in whatever *way* anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I also am bold” (vs 20-21).

Now notice v 22—Are they Japanese? Are they Italian? Where did they come from? Who were they? He says: “Are they Hebrews?... [These are Jewish Hellenistic Gnostics setting about to reform Christianity and give them the *new* knowledge that comes from gnosticism. What did Satan tell Eve? ‘*If you eat of this tree you will be as gods; you'll be enlightened.*’ They are Hebrews.] ...So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? So am I.... [Well now, notice how many people that excludes. This can only be Jewish Hellenistic ‘religion.’] ...Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) So am I, above *and beyond measure*—in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in imprisonments more frequent, in deaths often” (vs 22-23).

The Hellenistic Gnostic Christians did not suffer these things. Why? Why did they not suffer these things? Here's why Protestantism succeeds so well in the world, and you can add on Catholicism. Catholicism is just a more idolatrous form of gnosticism. I just want to inject one thing here—that I'm going to have to write on—what is a cult? *A cult is anything that does not follow and believe the Word of God.* That means Catholicism is a cult. Islam is a cult. Hinduism is a cult. Protestantism is a cult. Anyone who believes in the trinity is following a cult. And it all comes from paganism and Hellenistic Christianity.

1-John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the* flesh is from God. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God.... [and that was the *new* teaching—Docetism] ...And **this is the spirit of antichrist**, which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world” (vs 1-4).

If you go after this Gnostic Christianity, even in today's form in Protestantism, you are going

to an inferior belief that promises freedom but brings you into bondage; because if you have the Spirit of God in you, 'the One Who is *in* you is greater than the one who is in the world; and the one who is in the world is antichrist and Satan.']

Verse 5: "They are **of the world**... [profound statement—*not of God*] ...because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them."

I don't know if you were watching the news, but I was watching Scarborough Country and they were talking about Christmas and they had Jerry Falwell on there and they had an atheist on there: 'Is it right to have nativity scenes on state property?' and all this sort of thing. This is just a satanic subterfuge to keep you away from the true God. It's amazing!

(go to the next track)

Verse 5: "They are of the world... [not from God] ...because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (vs 5-6). That's what's so important.

Now let's look at some other profound Scriptures that we have here. 1-John 1:1: "That which was from *the beginning*..." What was the Gnostic Christian gospel? '*Jesus' earthly ministry was polluted because it was the man Jesus and the spirit Christ*. So therefore, you don't need to listen to the Gospels. You need to listen to the things of Paul.' Isn't it profound that how in the original order of the New Testament what do we have? *We have the General Epistles first before we get to Paul!* There's a reason for all of this.

"...that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life" (v 1). We're reporting this to you.

Verse 5: "And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is light... [that is the One Who created the earth, not the demigod of the gnosticism] ...and there is no darkness at all in Him." The various souls had various aspects of light and darkness in them, depending on when they were born, according to the astrological charts. Does that sound familiar today? *Yes, indeed!* Same way with God.

We're setting the record straight against the lawlessness of those people who say you don't have to keep the commandments of God, you just have it all in your heart. If you're a good person you automatically do everything that you need to do.

And if you don't do it, well then, don't worry about it because it has nothing to do with your salvation. John <sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> sets the record straight:

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments.... [That's what he's harping on all the way through here.] ...The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (vs 3-4). Who were the ones that said they know Him and were keeping the commandments but the Gnostic Hellenistic Christians, and who were former Jews, Hebrews and Israelites.

Verse 5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word..." That's contrary to gnosticism; and isn't this what Protestantism hits us with today? *Oh you keep the commandments. Oh you're seeking salvation and justification by works.* No!

"...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (vs 5-6). What is that? *Christ in His physical, earthly ministry as He walked*—the 'inferior ministry' they were rejecting! 'Another Jesus' that they were preaching!

Verse 7: "Brethren, I am not writing a new commandment to you... [because that's what they were doing, coming in with a new commandment. 'Oh, we've got a new way of looking at this.'] ...but an old commandment, **which you had from the beginning**."

You get out your handy-dandy concordance and look up the word *beginning* in 1-John and you will see that he constantly—1-John, 2-John & 3-John. These Gnostics were saying 'No, we don't have to go back to the beginning of the ministry of Christ, because after His resurrection He had a *new* enlightenment for the *special* apostles. "...the old commandment is the message that you have heard from *the beginning*." (v 7).

Let's come Colossians, the first chapter. It's very interesting that at the end of the book of Colossians Paul says to *read this epistle in the Church of Laodicea*. And who dares? We don't have the Epistle of the Laodiceans—this is quite good enough. Let's see here just in the first chapter some very profound and important things that combat gnosticism, then in the second chapter we get into the very heart and core of gnosticism.

Colossians 1:8—it talks about how they received and so forth: "Who has also informed us... [Epaphras] ...of your love in *the Spirit*. For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be

filled with the **knowledge** of His will..." (vs 8-9)—

- *knowledge* is 'gnosis' and 'epignosis'
- gnostics means *knowledge*.

This is directly against it. This is the knowledge of *His* will.

"...in all wisdom..." (v 9)—'sophia'—which is part of the word 'philosophias'—*philosophers*

"...and spiritual understanding..." (v 9)—these false Gnostic apostles were saying you don't have the spiritual understanding.

Verse 10: "That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work... [Gnostics, just like the Protestants today don't believe in good works. Oh, they believe in some, but not the way that Paul is writing about here.] (quite contrary to the Gnostics): ...and growing in the knowledge of God."

Only the Gnostics could grow in the knowledge of God as they would profess. These people who kept the commandments, they couldn't grow in knowledge; they're limiting themselves, they're hindering grace, they're cutting off the spirit. Same thing today.

Verse 11: "Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (vs 11-12). ***It's God the Father Who makes you qualified***, not some angel. Today in Catholicism they have angel-worship. We'll see a little later those are called 'saints,' so they build a little statue. This pope has made more cardinals and more saints than any other pope in history.

Verse 13: "**Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness**..." [That is another profound statement, because it's not God and gnosticism who is to rescue you from the power of darkness; it is the enlightenment of the their gnosis or knowledge that is to rescue you.] ...and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood... [that's a terrible thing. That's why the Eucharist is an unbloody sacrifice and comes out of Egypt.] ...*even* the remission of sins; Who is *the* image of the invisible God..." (vs 13-15).

So, the Gnostics believe that the heavens were God. Anybody remember the name Stavrinides? *God is everywhere!* What did he bring into the Church? *Hellenistic gnosticism!* What did they all say? *Oh, it's so wonderful when you understand it!* It really means if you allow your brain to get so messed up that you think you

comprehend it, and you get this warm, fuzzy feeling—then you've made it, which is just the opposite—you have just lost it.

Isn't Satan sneaky? *Yes!* He wants to deceive the elect. And we're looking at some of his devices on how he has done this. We will never, never read the New Testament the same again once you understand about Hellenistic gnosticism—the reformer of primitive Christianity, out of which came the Roman Catholic Church. And then the reformation, when they got done with it they never really got back to *sola scriptura*, as they said they were—the Scriptures only! They got back to another form of gnosticism. Amazing! What did Solomon say? 'There's nothing new under the sun.' So, what he's saying here, ***if you have seen Christ***—just like Christ said—***you've seen the Father***.

"...*the* firstborn of all creation..." (v 15). This means *the firstborn from among the dead*. Again, this gets back to Jesus' birth. You can say this: In His physical birth, through the virgin Mary, He was the firstborn of all the creation of mankind by the preeminence of the fact that He was the Creator. He explains about Christ and how profound He was and what He did

Verse 16: "Because by Him were all things created... [He's greater than anything that has been created; any philosopher who comes along and says the Hebrew God of the Old Testament was an inferior God. *NO!*] ...created all things, the things in heaven... [when you say that the pure souls of evil lived] ...and the things on earth... [that you say were made by demons] ...the visible and the invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers... [and part of gnosticism was to do what? *Get in touch with the powers, the angelic powers.*] ...all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things subsist" (vs 15-17). As Hebrews 1 shows, ***He upholds the universe by the word of His power!***

Verse 18: "And He is the Head of the body, the Church... [What came out of gnosticism? *The pope*, who's the head of the church. I mean, all of this stuff is so relevant today; but it is profound to understand where it came from so that you realize what's going on.] ...Who is *the* beginning, *the* firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him... [not some other Christ] ...all the fullness should dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth... [meaning not to any of the Gnostic knowledge and the rituals that they go through] ...or the things in heaven" (vs 18-20). Because he has to straighten out the things in heaven

because of the rebellion of Satan the devil and the angels—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 21: “For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him” (vs 21-22). That’s quite a thing! That’s how you stand before God. He wants you to know that through Christ this is accomplished and not through the false knowledge as gnosis.

Verse 27: “...Christ in you, the hope of glory”

Colossians 2:1: “Now I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh... [and it might well that he have concern with the things going on] ...That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all **riches** of the full assurance... [*the riches*—‘ploutos’—is one of the things that the Gnostics wanted you to do is be fulfilled—‘pleroma.’ You’re fulfilled in Christ.] ...and understanding... [that comes from God] ...unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God... [the true mystery *vs* the gnosis mystery] and of *the* Father, and of Christ; **in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**” (vs 1-3). Not in demigods, not in angels, not in gnosis of teaching—**but in God!**

Verse 4—he’s starting to get into it: “Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech. For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord... [‘the way I preached it to you’—not the false apostles, not the Gnostic.] ...be walking in Him... [as we saw in 1-John, ‘walking in His commandments’] ...being rooted and built up **in Him**... [notice the emphasis here] ...and being confirmed in the faith, exactly **as you were taught**... [no new knowledge coming in] ...abounding in it with thanksgiving. **Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy...**” (vs 4-8).

And that’s where we started in Acts 17—right? *Yes!* And gnosticism is philosophy. Greek religion is philosophy.

When I was going to attend the University of San Francisco—which is a Jesuit university in San Francisco, back in 1963—what was one of the first required courses that they would have you take? I finished two years at the College of San Mateo, and I was going to take, at that time, a business course because they had a renowned business school up there. I was just getting the *Plain Truth* and just

getting some of these things so I had some knowledge, but I had no designs of going to Ambassador College at that point. I figured, well, I’ll get my business degree and so forth.

In the *Plain Truth* we were getting the Ten Commandment series and Satan’s Great Deception—which was perfect for me to have going to a Jesuit university, to see all that nonsense going on up there. So, one of the first classes—and it’s mandatory that you take it—Philosophy 101. The Roman Catholic faith is not based upon the Bible, it’s based upon human philosophy and the traditions of the fathers. I was listening to this, having ringing and clanging around in my mind about Satan’s Great Deception and the Ten Commandments; and here I’m getting all this philosophy and I’m sitting there saying to myself: What am I doing here?

I know God was dealing with me, and so just before I withdrew—you have to withdraw in six weeks so you don’t get any bad grades on the transcript or anything—so one of the things that did it: they had all of the busts of all of these ‘important people’ and in the front of every classroom they had a crucifix, and I was standing up in between classes and I was looking down and they had a nice little square down there where you could walk from one building to another building, and I was up there just before class and I was looking down there and here comes a Jesuit in his long cloth-sack robe with his prayer missal walking along and I just got done reading about the Pharisees and scribes that go around in long robes and like the salutations of everyone. So, here he’s walking, doing his prayer-walk with his Catholic missal. And a missal is not a weapon, it is a prayer-book.

So the students come along and say, ‘Hi, father’ and he bows his head and I thought: *I’ve got to get out of here!* That’s when I made up my mind, I’m going to withdraw. So I did. I went down to the main office and said I have to withdraw, and as I walked into the main office, guess what greeted me? This great, huge picture—it must have been five feet high and at least three feet wide—of a bust figure of ‘Christ’ with long hair and a beard and this little crown of thorns on his head with one little drop of blood coming down with this very feminized real meek look on him. And I said, *I’ve got to get out of here!* Anyway, that’s how God got me out of that mess. ***You have to have knowledge and understanding of God’s Word to understand what’s going on.*** And just look what a little bit did for me.

Verse 8: “...through philosophy and vain deceit... [It’s all a lie! It’s all a fable! Every bit of it’s a fable!] ...according to the traditions of men...” What do they say when they’re confronted with Scriptural Truth? *Well, we have our traditions!* The

traditions of the 'fathers.' Where do they come from?

"...according to the elements of the world... [this could have reference to the elemental spirits or the demons of this world] ...and not according to Christ. **For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily...** [that is directly against gnosticism] **...and you are complete in Him...** [You don't need these Gnostics. You don't need philosophy. You don't need vain deception.] ...Who is the Head of all principalities and power" (vs 8-10).

The thing is this: If you get involved in gnosticism, you're getting involved in angel-worship, who the greatest of those could be *principalities and powers*. God doesn't want you worshipping those. He wants you worshipping Him! So you're complete in Him!

Verse 11: "In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [that's a permanent change of the heart and mind that is accomplished by the Spirit of Christ.] ...Having been buried with Him in baptism... [because they also had their own baptisms] ...by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses" (vs 11-13).

Now notice the translation of v 14, which does away with the modern gnostic teaching of doing away with the commandments of God; and this is as accurate a translation as you can get: "He has blotted out the note of debt..."

Hislop and *The Two Babylons* show that people were to keep a list of their sins and so forth. What do some of these 'religions' require you to do today? *Have a journal!* What do you do with this journal? *You list all your sins and all your good points*—right? That's what this is talking about—a listing of them.

"...against us *with* the decrees of our sins, which was contrary to us... [the Laws of God have never been contrary to us, they are good. They define sin so we can stop sin.] ...and He has taken it... [the note of debt] ...away, having nailed it... [the note of debt] ...to the cross" (v 14). Having nothing to do with nailing the Ten Commandments to the cross. This translation clarifies it—doesn't it? *Yes!*

Verse 15: "After stripping the principalities and the powers... [it's important to understand that all the demonic powers] ...He made a public

spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it"—'in it' means *through His crucifixion, death and resurrection* to triumph over all the powers of evil, Satan the devil and the demonic fallen angels. This is important to understand, because we need to go through the rest of this chapter to really grasp it.

Verse 16—the Gnostic Christianity of the world reads this verse this way: 'Since you don't keep the Holy Days, and since you don't keep the Sabbath, and since you can eat any meat you want, don't let anyone judge you in doing those things.' Now, who ever judged them—from the world—from doing those things? *Nobody!* Nobody judges them for going to church on Sunday. Only those who are Sabbath-keepers, but we don't stand up and say, 'Ohhhh, I saw you go to church on Sunday!' *No!* But they do that to us—*are you a Jew?*

A point was made that the Colossians were a Gentile community; this is a Gentile church. So, for them to convert from philosophic gnosticism and come out of that and begin keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days, what would all of their friends do? *They would judge them!* How?

- You meet on Saturn's day, the most evil day of the week!
- You don't eat any more pork!
- You don't follow the Roman calendar anymore!
- You keep Passover!
- Unleavened Bread!

Are you Jews? That's what it means *judge you*. You cannot judge someone concerning these things unless you are doing them.

Now, let's just read it through without any comment this time and you'll see how clear it becomes, v 16: "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking..."

- the Stoics said *no wine*
- the Epicureans said *get drunk*
- the Jews said *no unclean foods*
- The pagans say *eat anything you want*

Like in New Guinea, one of the things they delight in are roasted huge, giant termites about the size of a golf ball—luscious and slimy and delicious. Now what did I just do, I just judged them for eating it—didn't I? So, if they began following God's way they were being judged for following God's way, by other people.

"...or with regard to a festival, or new moon or *the* Sabbaths" (v 16). There's no article there; this has to do with calendar calculation—not observing of the new moon on a monthly basis, otherwise it would say: new moons (plural) as it does with Sabbaths or *the* Sabbaths; because in saying when

you are keeping these things what is this doing? *It is teaching you!*

- Has that not happened to us when we keep the Holy Days?
- Do we not learn?
- Does it not teach us?
- Do we not dwell in grace and knowledge through God's Spirit?
- *Yes!*

Verse 17: "Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming..." The new modern translations translate that: a foreshadow of things *that were* to come; saying that in Christ they have been completed and you don't need to keep the Sabbath; you don't need to keep the dietary laws; you don't need to keep the Holy Days—because those things were completed. That's exactly the gnostic teaching today that they were teaching then.

So, does this not open up Col. 2? I know I've given quite a few sermons on Col. 2, and this is covering the same ground with a little bit different knowledge bringing into it and from a little bit different angle.

"...but the Body of Christ" (v 17). The completion of the thought means: In any of these foregoing things, let the Body of Christ judge you in it—which is *the Church!*

Now that Paul all done with this, he gets into the nitty-gritty of it, v 18: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by doing his will* in self-abasement and *the worship of angels...*"—principalities and powers.

That ties right back in with v 8: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men... [Don't let any man get you involved in it] ...according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ." And v 15: the principalities, too.

See how it all ties together. That's what they were doing: self-abasement, worship of angels.

"...intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind..." (v 18). As it appeals to the carnal mind. It gives you power without having to submit to God. That's what the thing is.

Now, when they got into angel-worship, here's what happen, v 19: "And not holding fast to the Head [Christ], from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world... [Hellenistic gnosticism] ...why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the world*? *They say,*

'You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!' The use of all such things leads to corruption... [and ever gnostic-type community has been known to be led into all kinds of corruption] ...according to the commandments and doctrines of men, which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom in voluntary worship *of angels*, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment *of the body*, not in any respect to the satisfying *of the needs* of the flesh" (vs 19-23).

You're not going to stop lust by beating your back. The Catholics have it today where that you flagellate yourself with a little whip, and they like to do this during Lent and during the crucifixion week. And there are even some in the Philippines that, *have themselves crucified!* They run the nails right through their hands and they put them up on a cross and this is some big thing to do.

One of the greatest rip-off artists in the world was just made a saint—Mother Teresa. The Catholics got millions and millions and millions soliciting for her. And she was *under a poverty vow*. She never had a hospital. That's why she was made a saint, so they can continue under the name of Saint Mother Teresa. Now 'we can get more millions.'

This gives you just a little inkling of some of the things that are in the Bible which shows us and exposes today, not only the 'old time religion' of gnosticism, but the *new* 'old time religion' of evangelical Protestantism and their grace and lawlessness. What was made that we heard about the duality of prophecies and things in the Old Testament that the New Testament has a lot of duality to it—yes, indeed, it does, without a doubt.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 17:16-31
- 2) 2-Corinthians 11:1-5, 13-23
- 3) 1 John 4:1-6
- 4) 1 John 1:1
- 5) 1 John 2:3-7
- 6) Colossians 1:8-22, 27
- 7) Colossians 2:1-18, 8-23

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 8
- Genesis 6

#### Also referenced, Books:

- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried & Hyman Goldin
- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians I

Fred Coulter—October 16, 1993

This is the third in a series of the inspirational Epistles of the Apostle Paul. The first two as you know were Ephesians and Philippians. Now we come to the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians. I want to go ahead and reiterate again, a little bit more concerning the translation, which you will find in the section: *All About This...Translation*, but I need to also clarify as to why I have done it. I have done it so that it will be for inspirational study to try and bring out the fullest possible meaning of the Greek.

from: *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians, An Inspirational Study*, p 4  
All About This...Translation.

The original Greek is so rich in meaning and understanding that the study of the Greek... [by myself] ...for over 19 years has left me in a state of awe and reverence at the fantastic meaning God has inspired in each and every word of the New Testament, in the Greek language. It is absolutely true and inspiring, as Paul wrote for us about the word of God in 2-Timothy 3:16, which in the Greek the phrase “*pasa graphe theopneustos*”—which means **ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED** or **GOD-INSPIRED**. [And you can have] an exact literal translation of this [which would] be rendered as: “*All Scripture is God-spirited*,” or inspired by the [Spirit] power of God’s Holy Spirit.

And then the Apostle Peter gave us some understanding concerning the Scriptures and we need to realize this, as he wrote, in 2-Peter 1:20: “Knowing this...” In other words, the whole basic approach we have to all of the study of the Bible, to all of the study of the New Testament is this: “Knowing this first, that any prophecy of the Scripture is not of any private interpretation...” The reason being is that God gives the interpretation right in His Word:

...because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Therefore it’s absolutely true, the Word of God is God-Spirited! [And just like] Jesus said, “It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing: *the words that I am speaking to you, THEY ARE SPIRIT AND THEY ARE LIFE*” (John 6:63).

Now let’s cover something very important

concerning the *Expanded Amplified Translation*. I want to reiterate again **that this translation is not meant to be a final, doctrinal translation**. Even though the translation is accurate as to the meaning of the Greek in its verb and word usage, and is technically accurate, it is presented in free flowing and a verbose manner to capture, as much as possible, every degree of meaning from the original Greek into the English.

However, **please understand** that this translation has been produced for the special, inspirational rendition of these three epistles of the Apostle Paul and is **not**, I reiterate, **NOT** intended to replace the Word of God as inspired in the Greek text, or the New Testament. So, what I have done—so that you will understand this—I have provided an additional study aid for each one of the readers, which includes the *Greek Interlinear* of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians by George Ricker Barry, which contains the same Greek text as used by me for this translation.

Now, let’s cover a little about the background to the book of Colossians. It was written to the Christians who were in the city of Colossae.

*Introduction to the New Testament*, p 216-20:

Colossae was located approximately 100 miles east of Ephesus, in the upper Lycos Valley, in the district of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia, called Asia Minor, today. It was strategically located on the important highway to the east as the Lycos Valley narrowed down to a pass—ten miles long, two miles wide—through the Cadmus Range to the east. The valley was very fertile and still is to this day. The numerous mineral hot springs and streams were laden with calcareous matter and laid down immense glacier-like streams and cataracts of limestone. Specially noteworthy are the formations at Hierapolis and Colossae.

The neighboring cities mentioned in the epistle are: Laodicea, which is twelve miles west and Hierapolis, six miles north. Laodicea was the thriving, banking center of great wealth for the entire region. It was also the administrative center for taxing purposes for the Roman province of Asia. And there are extensive ruins of Laodicea, which testify to its once great affluence and luxury. Hierapolis, on the other hand, was noted for its mineral hot springs and was thronged with visitors searching for health and



pleasure. The three cities were in constant communication and could have been easily visited in one day. The entire area was an active center of the textile industry during Roman times. Phrygia is mentioned as one of the regions represented on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2:10).

The bulk of the population apparently consisted of native Phrygians, people marked by the tendency to mystical illusion and orgiastic excitement, which made Phrygia the home of the frantic worship... [which we would say fanatical worship] ...of Dionysius and Cibebe.... [And Sibley is just another name for Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians.] ...But this Phrygian substratum had long ago received an admixture of Greek. And the Greek language and the Greek manners prevailed and leavened the life and culture.

Now, as we find evidence in the book of Colossians 2:1, Paul writes that he had never seen those in Colossae or Laodicea or Hierapolis, face-to-face. But they were the direct result of Paul's ministry, which was centered at Ephesus for over two years, as we find in Acts 19.

Paul clearly shows that they learned the Gospel and were instructed in Christ by Epaphras, who was "a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf," (Col. 1:7). And it seems that he was known for his ministry in all three cities, (Col. 4:12-13). From the internal evidence of the Epistle to the Colossians, it does not appear that there was any Jewish converts in the congregation. Nor is there any reference....at all to....the circumcision of the flesh,

as there are in the Epistle to the Ephesians or what Paul mentioned there concerning the true circumcision in Philippians, the third chapter, as well.]

Paul clearly states that he was making known the glory of the "mystery of God, among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

In Colossians 2, there are direct references to the convert's previous state as being the uncircumcision in the flesh, (Col. 2:13) vs their current converted state with their circumcision in Christ, which is, when we cover Col. 2, we will see was made without hands—in other words, the spiritual conversion, the spiritual circumcision in Christ.

The major thrust of this epistle is the great conflict, which was being waged against the

Church [as a result of the] pagan religious philosophies. Paul makes it clear that the doctrines and teachings of philosophy constituted a tremendous threat to their faith in Christ Jesus. If they followed these teachings of men, with their doctrines and commandments, it would drag them away from Christ, into the worship of fallen angels. [These philosophies taught] that a person could not be complete in their knowledge and understanding of God, through Jesus Christ and God, the Father, alone....a person [would be] required to go through various stages of philosophical enlightenment and the worship of angels before one could understand [God or the Godhead. According to the teachings of the religious philosophies, Jesus Christ was] not sufficient.

And that is why we have in Colossians 2 that you are complete in Christ. I have a whole section in the book showing how we are complete in Christ, as related there in chapter two.

[They claim that a seeker of God] must also accept these cleverly devised teachings and obey the Stoic's traditions. Just as the religious philosophies of today claim, it was taught that a person cannot come to the complete knowledge of the Divine, without the knowledge and practice of the religious illumination...of philosophy.... [which every religion of this world is based upon those philosophies.] ...This is the central message of the Epistle to the Colossians. Most theologians, who are wrapped in their own religious philosophies, think that, the epistle to the Colossians does not appear to be of much importance since it was written to a small, insignificant congregation. [So here is what they say]: "With the epistle to the Colossians, the Church practically disappears from Christian history, while the two neighboring churches played quite a prominent role in the early church history. The church at Colossae was of little importance in the greater sphere of the Christian church."

We're going to see that that is absolutely not true, because these words, this epistle, was preserved for us, today, as we will see when we start going through it.

But, its teachings are profound and desperately needed today! This small epistle is perhaps the most powerful tool to combat the onslaught of apostasy, which is flooding the world and the churches today, with its

New Age philosophies.

And you see it everywhere. All the New Age so called philosophies are based upon the old philosophical religions of Satan the devil. And today, in the world, we are facing the amalgamation of all religions into a new, Satan inspired, united, global religion. And I talked to a friend of mine who said that he talked to a Methodist friend of his and they are waiting for a brand new revelation to supersede even the New Testament. So hang on tight, folks, because we don't know exactly what is going to happen to fulfill the prophecy where it says in Rev. 13, that the whole world is going to worship Satan the devil. But, it is going to be based on philosophy. And they are actually, the same, ancient, demonically inspired philosophies, which assaulted the little congregation of God at Colossae, over 1,900 years ago.

Now, another thing to consider is this, few people realize that the Apostle Paul's teachings against the pagan, religious philosophies of men, and by the way, this under-girds almost all professing Christian churches today, especially those who are Sunday-keepers. What he wrote there is actually; powerful teachings against what is commonly known are the so-called trinity.

Few people realize... [or] ...even understand that the doctrine of the trinity, in its various forms, is founded almost exclusively in pagan philosophy!....

You could say not only almost exclusively but, **exclusively** in pagan philosophies. You can't find it in the Bible.

Paul's complete denunciation of the religious philosophies of men, which is nothing more than the worship of fallen angels, is also a complete, unilateral rejection of the doctrine of the trinity. The Great trinitarian philosophy, as taught by Plato, is in reality...a refinement of the ancient Babylonian philosophy of the "three in one" and the "one in many" and the "many in one." God inspired the Apostle Paul to write this epistle [against philosophy and religious practices.] As such then...it is also a complete rejection of the pagan religious holidays of Sunday worship, Christmas and Easter. As we will see, contrary to the beliefs of most Christian professing churches, Paul most emphatically upholds the observance of God's weekly Sabbath, annual Holy Days, New Moons, clean and unclean meats, etc.

And you will see this when we especially get into the second chapter of the book of Colossians.

Now, I want to cover, just a couple of other things as to why this is very important that we thoroughly go through this epistle word-by-word. And I also want to clarify, as I do this, one of the reasons why I did the translation. So this ties, hand-in-hand, with some of the things that we are going to cover.

Now first of all, we need to understand that in the first century, when the New Testament Church was being raised up, and was growing quite fantastically; one of the centers of religion was Alexandria. Out of Alexandria—we won't have time here, but we will cover that on a separate series: *Scripturalism vs. Judaism*—that what is commonly called the Catholic religion, which then includes Orthodox and all the various kinds. We also have to understand that Protestantism is nothing more than purified Catholicism. And they still keep the same days that the Catholics have dictated.

The Catholics taunt the Protestants all the time when the Protestants say, 'Well, we go by the Bible,' Then they taunt them and say, 'Why then do you observe Sunday and Christmas and Easter, because we know, as Catholics, that that was a proclamation given by the pope and has nothing to do with the Scriptures.' The Catholics know that. Most people don't understand that the Catholics know that. But, they feel that it's the right of the pope to change it.

However, the point is this: the Catholic Church actually came out of Alexandrian Judaism via Philo and Simon Magus, and then it was married together with Mithraism and the other religions of the East.

We're going to see why this is so important for us. This is talking about the two witnesses, and the two witnesses is not the point I want to cover here. Revelation 11:8 "And their bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." This is talking about Jerusalem.

I recently talked to a man who said that he took a trip to the Holy Land, so called—if there is any land that is unholy today, it is Jerusalem, because God says it is like Sodom and Egypt, *spiritually*. Now, you can think on that and when you understand about the trinity, that one of the explanations of the trinity is that the Father eternally begets the Son, and the Son eternally begets the Father—**that is spiritual sodomy**. It says *Sodom and Egypt*, so we are shown the religious significance of Jerusalem today.

Now, let's understand something very clearly, the philosophy that Paul was writing about, in Colossians, the second chapter, is the

Christianized, Egyptian, Babylonian philosophy—which is the basis and the fundamental foundation for the ‘religions’ of this world. When God brought the children of Israel out of their slavery, where were they living? *They were living in Egypt*—is that not correct?

Now let’s go to Deuteronomy 17 and we will tie this in with one of the reasons why we need to get in and really study the Word of God and why every minister should do what it says here, pertaining to when the Israelites would set up a king over them. He was to sit down and *write* a copy of the Law for himself. I feel that that’s one of the reasons God wants us to get in and really study the Word of God. This why I have done these translations and so forth, so that I can have the understanding of it in a greater degree and also be able to convey this to other people.

Now, let’s pick it up here in Deuteronomy 17:14: “When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, and shall possess it and shall live in it and shall say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that *are* around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you, whom the LORD your God shall choose. You shall set a king over you from among your brethren. You may not set a stranger over you who is not your brother. Only he shall not multiply horses to himself...” (vs 14-16).

That is interesting if you go ahead and transfer that over to the New Testament ministry. Not that they were to be kings, that is obviously not correct, but *they were not to multiply wealth to themselves* in the New Testament, nor was the king to multiply horses to himself that he would trust in his own armament, that he would trust in his own army, that he would trust in himself and the people *rather than God*.

“...nor cause the people to return to Egypt...” (v 16). This ties right in with Rev. 11, because we are seeing in the Churches of God today a movement to cause people to return to Egypt by the acceptance of the Egyptianized, pagan philosophy of the trinity. That is why God says in Rev. 11 that Jerusalem is called, spiritually, *Sodom and Egypt*. So, *every minister better really take heed!* Is he causing the people to go back into Egypt or, as we would say in the New Testament, *back into the world?*

“...so as to multiply horses because the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’” (v 16). What I want you to do is compare that to the things in the New Testament, which talks about the way we are to live, the way of Christ is called *that way*.

Egypt and the way of the Egyptian

‘religion,’ the Egyptian philosophy’ was also called *that way*. And the very meaning and the very substance of the first Passover was God’s judgment against all the gods of Egypt. The book of Colossians, we’re going to see, is very strong; that we are not to go back into the philosophies of men, from which these so called Christian philosophies originated out of Egypt. We are not to go back that way.

Verse 17: “Nor shall he multiply wives to himself, so that his heart does not turn away. Nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold to himself. And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book from that which is in the custody of the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life...” (vs 17-19)

Now this kind of reading is not just to read, but this kind of reading is to read and study in depth—and he is to do it all the days of his life. This is important for any minister, too, because too many ministers think that they reach a certain level of understanding of God’s Word and they know it all. *That is not correct!* You cannot know it all because the Bible was inspired of God’s Spirit and of His Word and from His mind; and if you claim that you know it all then you are claiming you have the mind of God.

Here’s the reason why, “...so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them... [and more importantly]: ...so that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren.... [And that is why the book of Colossians is so important because it teaches the minister *not to lift himself up above the brethren*.] ...and that he does not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel” (vs 19-20).

Let’s just apply this spiritually to the New Testament, that you may attain to the Kingdom of God and as the Apostle Paul said to Timothy, that if you give yourself wholly to these things then you will save those that hear you.

Let’s go to 2-Timothy, the third chapter, and let’s again read in summary the verse that we quoted in the beginning of this sermon. Let’s carry it on a little bit further, into the areas, which affect us today. 2-Timothy 3:15: “And that from a child you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; So that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good

work” (vs 15-17). These are the good works of the ministry to teach, to inspire, to help and all that sort of thing.

2-Timothy 4:1: “I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God... [We have a charge, as ministers, given to us, which then is above and beyond anything else in our life, or any other person in our lives.]: ...I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom. Preach the Word!....” (vs 1-2). That means *the whole Message of God!*

{John 1:1-3: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....”}

So you are preaching the whole message of Jesus Christ. That is what it means: ‘Be urgent in season’ which shows that they were keeping the Holy Days.

“...Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience (longsuffering)... [and that means to encourage and edify.] ...and doctrine” (v 2). And believe me, ***doctrine is important***. The term ‘doctrine’ merely means *teaching*. He is talking about the correct teachings in the Bible. We are in this today, and this has happened time and time again, down through the history of the Church.

It was happening in the days of the Apostle Paul when he wrote 2-Timothy 4:3: “For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine... [Why? *Because they get caught up in the world and they do as Deut. 17 said do not do*, they go back to Egypt and accept the pagan philosophies.] ...they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers, having ears itching to hear what satisfies their cravings....* [To hear what is so-called ‘new truth,’ but most of the things that are brought as new truth are old fables and tales, just recycled back into their own modern day version.] ...**And they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths**” (vs 3-4). Now, isn’t that amazing what happens because people do that? ***They go back into Egypt.***

Now, let’s go to the ***Expanded Amplified Translation*** of the Epistle to the Colossians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle, one who has been dispatched and sent, as commissioned, who bears authority of Jesus Christ, by God’s very own will and purposeful desire, and Timothy, the brother, to the saints, who are the Holy, consecrated ones, even the faithful brethren in Christ, who are at Colossi. Grace, Divine favor (God’s generous gift) and blessing to you,

even the peace, harmony and tranquility from God the Father and the Lord and Master Jesus Christ. We are giving thanks and expressing our gratitude to the God and Father of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, continually praying and making intercession for you.” (vs 1-3).

“After having heard the report of your faith (that steadfast belief and trust) in Christ Jesus, and the report of your love (that Godly, Divine love) which you express toward all the saints; on account of the hope the (promise of the resurrection and eternal glory) which is laid up and reserved for you in heaven, which hope you have previously heard and understood in the word, the announcement and message of the divinely revealed Truth of the glad tidings of the Gospel; which is coming to you, even as it is also being preached in all the world; and as a result, is bringing forth and producing the spiritual fruit (of hope and love), exactly as it is also doing in you and in your lives, from the day you heard and obeyed, even knew and comprehended the grace of God (God’s gracious blessing, Divine favor and generous gift) which was given in divinely revealed truth” (vs 4-6).

Now, let’s go back and let’s study each verse and we will go into detail and bring a lot of Scriptures to bear on each verse as we are going along.

Colossians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle, one who has been dispatched and sent, as commissioned, who bears authority of Jesus Christ...” The apostles, who were truly apostles—those chosen and taught by Jesus Christ and appointed by Jesus Christ—have the authority of Jesus Christ. That is an awful lot of authority when you really understand it.

Let’s go back to Matthew 28 and let’s see what Jesus said of His authority. This is very important, lest any of us get lifted up in our own importance and think we are apostles and that we bear the authority of Jesus Christ as the apostles did. I don’t think that after the original apostles died, that there were, we could really say that there were truly apostles as the original apostles of the beginning New Testament Church were apostles.

#### **God’s Will:**

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority [power]... [the word in the Greek here is ‘exousia.’ So, when Paul was sent with the *authority of Jesus Christ*, notice the authority that was backing him up]: ...All authority in heaven and on earth...” When Paul writes the introduction here—that he was sent and dispatched and commissioned as one who bears the authority of Jesus Christ—he is really giving us a tremendous introduction as to the very reason and purpose for

his ministry *by God's very own will* (Eph. 1:5).

God is revealing *His will* to those whom He is calling. This is really profound for us to understand, because God's whole plan and God's whole will that we be in the Kingdom and Family of God is so all encompassing and fantastic that it is almost beyond our minds to wholly and totally grasp it, but it is contained in the Word of God so that at least in this life that we can understand as much as we can. Even though it is like as the Apostle Paul said, 'Looking through a glass darkly.'

(go to the next track)

Ephesians 1:5: "Having predestinated us for sonship... [and it shouldn't read *adoption* (KJV), but sonship of children] ...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will." This is something that God has willed!

- His own *will*
- His own *desire*
- His own *love*
- His own *plan*
- His own *motivation*

and this is what God the Father is doing.

Now, it is kind of like a man said one time: 'Well, when you really understand about the New Testament, then you find out who is in the Truth and who is into playing religion.' I think that's very apropos today because of God the Father's will and His own good pleasure. That is what God wants for us.

"...according to the good pleasure of **His own will** [and desire], to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the Beloved Son" (vs 5-6). That is quite a profound statement, because that means that we are accepted in the Beloved One, Who is Jesus Christ, and we are accepted as Jesus Christ Himself. That is why it is only by grace that you can be saved. That is why it is only by grace and God's Spirit that you can understand the Truth and understand His will and understand His purpose, because God is the One Who can do it.

"...wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the Beloved Son; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (vs 6-7).

I want you to think about *the riches of the grace of God*.

- not only is it a calling
- not only is it having our sins forgiven
- not only is it being called into the Church of God

but we are called to the glorious inheritance to share with Jesus Christ. When it talks about the 'riches of His glory,' what we need to do, brethren, is *think*—as much as possible as our little, finite, little brains can think—of the vastness and glory of the universe, because we will be the crowning glory of the riches of His grace.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence [prudence]; Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (vs 8-9).

I want you to *think* on that for just a minute. Lest you get complacent in your Christian life, in Christian growth, in overcoming and burdened down with problems—which you may have and everyone has a certain amount of those—that the greatest Being in the universe, God the Father, *has made known to you the secret of His own personal will for you*. You *think* on that because that is absolutely mind-boggling when you understand it. For those who play church, you can just excuse yourself because you will never grasp it. But for those who are truly called of God, let us understand that God the Father Himself:

- has called us
- has opened our minds
- has given us the knowledge of His Truth
- the knowledge of His Family
- the knowledge of the fact that we can be born into the Kingdom of God
  - ✓ through the power of the resurrection
  - ✓ by the power of God's Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ, to be the children of God the Father

That is what all of this means.

Verse 9: "Having made known to us the mystery [secret] of **His own will**, according to His good pleasure... [it is going to be for joy and happiness and abundant living through all eternity] ...which **He has proposed in Himself**."

- God the Father is actively involved in our lives.
- God the Father is the One Who calls us.
- God the Father is the One Who applies the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to us, etc., etc.

So, when Paul talks about God's very own will and purposeful desire, it has great and profound meaning, and this ought to have great and profound meaning to every minister.

As he says here, Colossians 1:1 "...Timothy **the** brother." It is very interesting the way it is written there in the Greek; it is not *a* brother but *the*

brother; in other words, that close, personal relationship that he and Timothy had.

Verse 2: “To the saints... [*saints* comes from the Greek word which means *Holy ones*] ...Who are the Holy, consecrated ones... [because we have been sanctified by God’s Holy Spirit, we have been sanctified by God] ...even the faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossi. Grace...” We need to understand about the *grace of God*, which is so profound and which is so important and which is so meaningful for us. God’s grace, which is God’s Divine favor, we already spoke of that, by revealing His will, God’s generous gift. What is the generous gift that God is giving to us?

### **Grace of God:**

Again, let’s go back to the book of the Ephesians and let’s understand about this grace, which is the *expression of God’s love*. After he shows how we were sinners in past time and being led about by every wind of Satan the devil; and we’re following our own lusts.

Ephesians 2:4: “But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love... [the Greek there is ‘*megalos*’—which means *great, marvelous, almost incomprehensible* love that God has for us] ...with which He loved us, even when we were **dead in our trespasses**... [that is an interesting expression in the New Testament, because every person who has not been called of God is literally a walking dead person, because they have been concluded and shut up unto sin. We were dead in sins] ...has made *us* alive [spiritually] together with Christ...” (vs 4-5).

This is why all the commandment-keeping in the world, though it is required, can not replace the grace and sacrifice of God the Father, through Jesus Christ, *can not do it! Nothing can replace the sacrifice of Jesus Christ*, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins is poured out upon us *by the grace of God* through His calling.

“...(***For you have been saved by grace.***)” (v 5). The Greek means *by grace you have been saved*—and that is referring back to Satan the devil in Eph. 2: 2-3. We currently ***have been saved*** from Satan the devil. We find in 1-Cor. 15:2 that as long as we are standing in the Gospel we are ***currently being saved***. If we endure to the end—that is of our life or until the time of the resurrection—we ***shall be saved*** (Matt. 24). But, at this point, you have been saved by God’s grace. Let’s understand that it’s

- by God’s Divine *intervention*
- His personal *calling*
- the personal *gift* of His Holy Spirit
- the *gift* of Jesus Christ
- the *gift* of the salvation of God

which ***saves us by grace!***

Verse 6: “And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages that *are* coming... [that is when we will be literally sitting there] ...in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith**, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, Not of works, so that no one may boast.... [Why?] ...For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works...” [which then are motivated spiritually by God’s Holy Spirit] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 6-10). And we can add to that: ***as a living way of life!*** God’s grace is absolutely marvelous and absolutely fantastic, it is something that is just really marvelous and wonderful for us to understand and to realize and to contemplate.

There’s much more that we could say on grace, we have a whole series on it which goes through it. Let’s go to Romans, because there is something very important we need to understand concerning *what this grace does in the way of the gift*, the giving gift of righteousness which comes from God toward us, which is very important concerning the grace that God has given us.

What I want you to do as we are going through these studies, I want you to see how absolutely thoroughly all of the epistles and all of the things in the New Testament agree with each other because it is inspired by the very mind of God.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace... [we will talk about peace as we find it there in Col. 1, and that means ***we have ceased hostilities with God***] ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace...” (vs 1-2). Grace is the *umbrella covering* that God puts over us. Grace then is the means by which He expresses to us *His love*:

- by which He gives us faith
- by which He gives us His Spirit
- by which He gives us access to Him where we can cry, ‘Abba, Father’
- by which we then are able to be saved

But “...into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope... [in Col. 1, he talks about *the hope of God*] ...in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the *hope of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has

been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (vs 2-5). This is just a real quick summary the Apostle Paul writes of the whole Christian experience.

Verse 17: “For if by the offense of the one man... [Adam’s sin] ...death reigned by the one, how much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace...” Meaning that we are going to be able to overcome sin, that God’s goodness is going to be so great toward us.

I want you to just look around the world and see all of the death, all of the dieing, all of the destruction, all of the wars, all of the famines, all of the sickness, all of the disease, all of the wretchedness of humanity and if you feel overwhelmed in it then you need to understand *that the abundance of grace that God gives is greater than all of that*. That’s why the grace of God is so profound.

“...the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness...” (v 17). That’s very profound, because *the gift of righteousness* is also another gift of God, which is He gives us and imputes to us and makes it possible for us to stand before Him:

- blameless
- without blemish
- without spot
- without wrinkle

“...by the One Jesus Christ)” (v 17). That is the gift of righteousness by grace. That’s why

- we need to have *hope*
- we need to have *faith*
- we need to have *inspiration*

God Himself has given that to us. That’s the whole *operation of grace!* That’s the whole *meaning of grace!* Therefore, it is most profound that we understand about this grace of God and why it is so important, why it is so good, why it is so righteous and why it is such a tremendous blessing.

Now, let’s come back to Colossians 1:2: “...Grace, Divine favor... [God’s generous gift] ...in blessing to you even the peace, harmony and tranquility from God the Father, and the Lord and Master Jesus Christ.”

### Peace of God:

Let’s talk a little bit concerning the *peace of God*. This is the kind of peace that we are to have, and this peace can only come with the love of God; because this kind of peace that Jesus is talking about is a *spiritual peace of mind*. Too many people do not have this peace because they don’t understand the *grace of God*. And they don’t understand the *love of God*.

John 14:27: “‘Peace I leave with you; **My peace** I give to you... [says Jesus. That is very profound, and we are going to see what kind of peace that this is. It fits in with the *gift of righteousness* and *right standing with God*.] ...not as the world gives...”

No! The world gives and takes back. There is no peace in the world. How many prophecies are there in the Old Testament when they say ‘peace, peace and there is no peace’? **Only God is the Author of peace!** Human beings with the *law of sin and death* in them cannot possibly create peace between themselves and God, if it is not through Jesus Christ. This is what He is saying:

“...Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear” (v 27). Why?

Let’s go back to the Epistle of 1-John, chapter four. Let’s understand something very important and also very profound—and I have been trying to get away from using the word *profound* because I use it almost all the time. But I really can’t find another word to describe what God is doing and what God has done and how He is doing it.

1-John 4:8: “The one who does not love... [the one who does not have the Spirit and attitude of love] ...does not know God because God is love.... [That’s what God is. And that is magnificent when we understand it.] ...In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love...” (vs 8-10). And this is something we need to understand in relationship to peace and that is you cannot have the peace of God unless you have the love of God as we find here in 1-John 4.

Verse 9: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God... [Which then would be a work on our part—right? *Yes, it would!* But we cannot boast in any works—can we? *No!*] ...not that we loved God; **rather, that He loved us** and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us. By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us” (vs 9-13). Which then, is the spirit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, temperance, goodness, kindness and meekness; and as the Apostle Paul said, ‘Against such there is no law.’

Verse 14: “And we [the apostles] have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (vs 14-16). We are talking about the profound Godly love, which God gives to us through His Holy Spirit.

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us... [this is what we are talking about with the kind of peace we need to have] ...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. **There is no fear in the love of God...** [Didn't Jesus say: 'Don't let your heart be troubled; don't be afraid.'] ...rather, **perfect love casts out fear** because fear has torment.... [And when you have torment you don't have peace. When you have torment of mind, you don't have faith. When you have torment of mind, you don't have love.] ...because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God” (vs 17-18). Why? *Because, he has this fear as a roadblock sitting right there between him and God*—that's why. With the *peace of God* we need to have that taken down.

- we need to get rid of the hostility of the carnal mind
- we need to get rid of the fear of our own deceiving

and really come to that perfect love of God and have the peace, which Christ wants us to have. “...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. **We love Him because He loved us first**” (vs 18-19).

The rest of this chapter because it all ties in together with our whole approach and our whole attitude toward God and God's calling and God's love and the peace we need to have. I'll tell you one thing, if you really, truly understand that, then you really, truly understand that God has given these things to you and God has called you to be in this standing with Him which is special and particular and great and marvelous beyond anything we could think of or ask. Then we can have *the peace of mind*. Then we won't have to worry about anything that is going to take us from Christ, because it won't.

May this be in the Church of God; may we correct this problem that is so prevalent in the Church of God, v 20: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.... [And we have had far too much of that, brother against brother, minister against minister within the Church of God. This was a problem back then that John was writing

about.] ...If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, **how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?**”

Through the *grace of God* and the *peace of God* and the faith and the love that comes we can come to this understanding and we can put away our hatred toward other brethren in the Church and the problems and difficulties that are there. That's why Jesus said in Matt. 18 if anyone has a problem with anyone, you go to him and work it out, get it taken care of. That is all part of the love of God.

Verse 21: “And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother.”

Now, let's go to Romans, the eighth chapter, because we are going to find out some more about this *peace of God* as compared to the carnality of our human mind; compared to the difficulties and problems we have in overcoming sin. Let's understand that this is very important for us to realize; because this is all part of the grace of God that bring us peace with God.

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit.” Too many times we go around and spiritually flagellate ourselves in sort of a guilt trip beating of mental whips upon ourselves because we're not perfect. Well, God knows we are not perfect. That is why He's given grace—not that we should sin, as the Apostle Paul said. No, we are not going to go out and sin that grace may abound but so that we realize we have this tremendous standing before God because of God the Father's own purposeful design for us.

Verse 2: “Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death.... [the clutches of human nature in death] ...For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**” (vs 1-3). So therefore, brethren, we need not fear. God knows that even though you are trying to the very utmost of your being that you are going to sin. Therefore, you go to God, *through His grace*, and He will continually blot out those sins because Christ is the propitiation or the continual atoning of our sins.

Verse 4: “In order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us... [Why? *Because it is in our hearts and it is in our minds*. ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,’ says the Lord, ‘I will write My laws into their hearts and into their minds, I will inscribe them.’]



...who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit: For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit” (vs 4-5). That is what we are doing brethren, we are minding the things of the Spirit of God, because:

- God’s Spirit is *in* us
- He is *leading* us in it
- we *desire His Truth*
- we *desire His love*
- we *desire His faith*
- we *desire the hope*

that He has held out for us of the resurrection and to be a very son or daughter of God.

Verse 6: “For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace... [Why? *Because we are no longer an enemy of God!*] ...Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God...” (vs 6-7)—an *enemy* of God! Remember Christ died for us while we were still the enemies of God and in our cases before we were ever born.

“...Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God.... [this applies to us]: ...However, you are not in *the* flesh... [because God is looking at you through Christ, God is looking at you because you have His Spirit] ...but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you” (vs 7-11).

This is the whole reason, the whole purpose for the *grace of God, the peace of God!* When the Apostle Paul says, ‘Peace from God, the Father.’ This is what he is talking about; this is what he means. You are no longer at war with God. Jesus says, ‘My peace I give unto you, not as the world gives it unto you, I give unto you, and let not your hearts be afraid, neither be troubled.’ Then, brethren, let the Spirit of God and let the love of God fill your heart and mind and as he says here:

Verse 14: “For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God.” That’s what it all means when we have the *peace of God*.

Now let’s come back to Colossians again, v 2: “...even the peace, harmony and tranquility... [That means that you have a tranquil mind, you are

no longer at war with God, and this is what?] ...from God the Father, and Lord and Master Jesus Christ.” That is very profound and very important for us to understand and realize—isn’t it?

Verse 3: “We are giving thanks and expressing our gratitude to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, continually praying and making intercession for you.” This is one of the things that any minister needs to do for those people that he is in contact with, praying for them, not only for their healing but *for*

- God’s *Spirit*
- God’s *love*
- God’s *faith*
- God’s *intervention*

to help them in everything that they are doing. We also need to know that we are to be *praying for each other* and in this way, too, all the brethren for the ministers and the ministers for the brethren.

Verse 4: “After having heard the report of your faith (that steadfast belief and trust) in Christ Jesus, and the report of your love (that Godly, Divine love) which you express toward all the saints.” Again, we come right back full circle to *the faith*.

#### **Faith of God:**

Let’s see why this is so important for us today, because Jesus made a very profound statement here in Luke 18:8: “I tell you that He will execute vengeance for them speedily. Nevertheless, **when the Son of man comes, shall He find the true faith on the earth?**” Or, as it is in the Greek: *the faith, on the earth?* In other words, not only just the whole set of beliefs, which are in the Bible, but *the faith* and *the trust* in God. *Yes, He will find it in those that are really those of God.*

What kind of faith are we talking about? Let’s go to Galatians, the second chapter. Let’s find out the kind of faith that God is talking about here; that Christ is talking about. The kind of faith that we need to really exercise and it’s not something that you whip up by the carnal psychology of mentally making yourself believe something. *No!* this is *faith that comes from God!*

Galatians 2:20—and this is a very important verse for us to understand because this all ties in with the love, the faith and the peace and the hope of God. “I have been crucified with Christ... [and that means through baptism (Rom. 6)] ...yet I live... [Paul says, he is still living in the flesh.] ...*Indeed*, it is no longer I... [In other words, he is not living to himself, for himself and that is important for us to realize.] ...but Christ lives in me.... [if you have an old King James, you see the ‘eth’—that means *is*

living in me.] ...**For the life that I am now living in the flesh, I live by faith**—that *very faith* of the Son of God... [that really means in the Greek: *the Son of God's own faith in him supplies the belief and the energy and the hope by Christ.*] ...Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Now, that is the kind of faith that it is talking about.

Let's see also concerning *the faith*, which comes from Jesus Christ. Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the patience of the saints*... [or the endurance of the saints] ...here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and **the faith of Jesus**." Which means **Jesus' very own faith**. So, when Paul is talking about, there in Col. 1, that he heard the report of their faith, he was not commending them because of their carnal belief in God, he was commending them because of the Spirit of God that was in them, which then gave this report of faith.

Let's come back to Colossians 1:4: "After having heard the report of your faith (that steadfast belief and trust) in Christ Jesus..." Let's understand just one other thing concerning that kind of steadfast faith and belief and trust. ***It is a spiritual gift, which comes from God!*** In Heb. 11, it says that 'faith is the substance'—which comes from the Greek 'hypostasis': *a spiritual substance that comes from God*, through the power of His Holy Spirit, right into your very heart and mind and being.

Verse 4: "After having heard the report of your faith, (that steadfast belief and trust) in Christ Jesus, and the report of your love... [we covered quite a bit of that in 1-John 4] ...(that Godly, Divine love) which you express towards all the saints."

### **Love of God:**

Now we need to put in here several Scriptures: Mark 12:29 [transcriber's correction]: "Then Jesus answered him, '*The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear, O Israel. Our one God is the Lord, the Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*' This is the first commandment. And the second is like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (vs 29-31). And the third one is an extension of these two together

John 13:35: "By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you have **love one another**." That is all tied in there with the term of love, which is Godly love that comes from God. This is something that only God can give you. And then if you do, you express it toward all the saints.

I'll tell you one thing that we have seen and we have experienced in our little group, our little church, which is this: When we are doing precisely what I just said with these three commandments of

*loving God and loving our neighbor and loving each other*, we have a wonderful fellowship with each other. We have a minimum of problems because we are not going around seeking to solve things in a carnal way. But we are seeking to—through the love of God, through the faith that God has given us—to really love each other.

### **Hope of God:**

Now, let's come to Colossians 1:5: "On account of **the hope**... [Now there are three things that are important: *faith, hope and love* and love is the greatest of these.

Let's go to 1-John, the third chapter, because this is the kind of hope that it is talking about of the resurrection and the whole plan of God. You see how all of these things tie together?

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.... [here is our **hope**]: ...And everyone who has **this hope** in him purifies himself, even as He is pure" (vs 1-3). In other words, this hope is to motivate you:

- to draw closer to God
- to be filled with God's Spirit
- to be filled with God's love
- to have every one of your sins removed, forgiven, blotted out, through the love and forgiveness of God

And it is ***the hope of the resurrection*** unto which we are called.

Now, let's come back to Colossians 1:5: "On account of **the hope** (the promise of the resurrection and eternal glory) which is laid up and reserved for you in heaven..." You don't have it now, but Christ is going to bring it with Him ***when He returns***.

Now, let's go to 1-Peter, the first chapter, because this is very important for us to understand, concerning ***the hope***; because as a matter of fact, the whole Epistle of 1-Peter is dedicated to *hope*!

1-Peter 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us... [When Christ comes, He is going to bring His reward with Him.] ...reserved in heaven for us, Who *are* being safeguarded by *the* power of God through

faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in *the* last time” (vs 3-5). That’s important for us to know and understand and realize.

Let’s come to the book of Philippians, the third chapter. Here is what *this hope* is to do for us, to inspire us and lead us in Philippians 3:11—the Apostle Paul writes: “If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving...” (vs 11-12).

That is what we need to do, brethren, follow after, never give up, never let down and if you do let down, let Christ pick you up, through the strength and power of God’s Holy Spirit, let Him pick you up and lead you on.

“...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*...” (vs 12-13).

- this is how you can do it with *hope*
- this is how you can do it with *love*
- this is how you can do it *with the Truth of God*

“...—forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead, I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (vs 13-14)—which then is *the resurrection*, to rule and reign with Christ.

Verse 20: “But for us, the commonwealth of *God* exists in *the* heavens... [coming from God, where *the hope* comes from] ...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ... [This is *the hope*—isn’t it?] ...Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (vs 20-21). And so when Paul is bringing these introductory remarks in each epistle, there is a great, great, great amount of spiritual meaning and understanding that He is conveying to us.

Now let’s come back to Colossians 1:5 where we saw that *this hope* was laid up in heaven for us. “...which hope you have previously heard and understood in the word, the announcement and message of the divinely revealed Truth of the glad tidings of the Gospel... [So, you see how we have *faith*, we have *peace*, we have *hope*, we have *Truth*, and we have *love*.] ...Which is coming to you... [that is by the power of God’s Holy Spirit] ...even as it is also being preached in all the world” (vs 5-6).

Now, we have a very interesting statement there in Matthew 24:14 [transcriber’s correction]: “And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the

world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come.” I don’t think we have arrived yet, to that point, brethren. We have to trust in God, how He is going to do this; not by

- our devices
- our means
- our predilections
- our thoughts

on what *we think* may have been done in preaching the Gospel to the world. The events in the world are constantly changing, so that we don’t know the hour, we don’t know the day. We can understand the times and seasons in which we are living, but nevertheless, we don’t know what it means to have the Gospel preached in the whole world as a witness to all nations and then the end shall come. Many people have tried to have the end come according to *their* own time schedule.

Now, let’s come back to Colossians 1:6: “...and as a result, it’s bringing forth and producing the spiritual fruit [of hope and love], exactly as it is also doing in you and your lives, from the day you heard and obeyed, even knew and comprehended the grace of God [God’s gracious blessing, divine favor and generous gift], which is given in Divinely, revealed Truth.” That tells us an awful lot

- concerning *God’s way*
- concerning *God’s Truth*
- concerning *God’s love*

and when we come to it next time, we’ll go back and review just a few of these verses and see then how all of this ties in together. This whole book of Colossians is really a fantastic and tremendous book for us. It really is one of the most important books that we can possibly study in this modern end-time just before the return of Jesus Christ.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible, in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (exception: Book of Colossians from *Amplified Translation* booklet)

Scripture references:

- 1) 2 Peter 1:20
- 2) John 6:63
- 3) Revelation 11:8
- 4) Deuteronomy 17:14-20
- 5) 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- 6) 2 Timothy 4:1
- 7) John 1:1
- 8) 2 Timothy 4:2-4
- 9) Colossians 1:1-6
- 10) Matthew 28:18
- 11) Ephesians 1:5-9
- 12) Colossians 1:1-2
- 13) Ephesians 2:4-10
- 14) Romans 5:1-5, 17
- 15) Colossians 1:2

- 16) John 14:27
- 17) 1 John 4:8-21
- 18) Romans 8:1-11, 14
- 19) Colossians 1:2-4
- 20) Luke 18:8
- 21) Galatians 2:20
- 22) Revelation 14:12
- 23) Colossians 1:4
- 24) Mark 12:29-31
- 25) John 13:35
- 26) Colossians 1:5
- 27) 1 John 3:1-3
- 28) Colossians 1:5
- 29) 1 Peter 1:3-5
- 30) Philippians 3:11-14, 20-21
- 31) Colossians 1:5-6
- 32) Matthew 24:14
- 33) Colossians 1:6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Colossians 2:1
- Acts 19
- Revelation 13
- John 1:2-3
- Ephesians 2:2-3
- 1 Corinthians 15:2
- Matthew 18
- Romans 6
- Hebrews 11

Also referenced:

- *Introduction to the New Testament*
- *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians—An Inspirational Study* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series:

- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- *Grace*

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians II

Fred R Coulter

This is the study in the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians, and it is in the *Expanded Amplified Translation*, which I have done for the purpose of this study. Let's continue on where we left off last time, but let's just review a couple of things—down through Colossians 1:6 is where we got last time. I want you to understand how these epistles are put together, how God inspired them to be put together. Not only these, but almost every other writing in the New Testament. When you study in the New Testament, you can also see this pattern that is there.

First of all, in the first chapter as we noted last time, I'll just rehearse some of the key words, we have *grace, blessing, peace, faith, love, hope, truth, love, hope, grace*. So every one of these epistles starts out with an encouraging and uplifting and a very important understanding we have to have toward God; that God is the One Who is doing these things for us. Then as we go along, especially in this first chapter, as we will see, it comes down to the 'hope of glory, which is Christ in us' (Col. 1:27).

Then in Col. 2 he begins to address some of the problems and difficulties that they have, especially with philosophies and false religious practices get into quite detail. Then in Col. 3 he shows them how to overcome these things; how to live our lives in a daily detailed way.

You will find the same thing in Ephesians and Philippians, here in Colossians, you can see it in the book of Romans, you can see it in everything that the Apostle Paul has written. And then when you come to the end, he tries to encourage us by again getting our minds back on God and seeing the things that we need to. This is a real tremendous and inspiring thing that God has given and I think that all of us as ministers need to pattern our speaking after the way that the Apostle Paul wrote; and if we do then we are going to find that we are going to have far more success and be able to help more people. After all, God doesn't want us *beaten* into the Kingdom of God, He wants us to want to be there and He wants us to understand

- His love
- His hope
- His peace
- His grace

because that is what is going to get us there, as we will see today.

We left off last time and went through and showed about the spiritual fruit of hope and love (Col. 1:1-6).

Colossians 1:7: "Precisely as you have been taught in your discipleship by Epaphras, our beloved and dear fellow servant, who is a faithful and dedicated servant and minister of Christ; Who also related and declared to us your Divinely inspired love... [Wherever the word 'agape' is, I have translated it with the expanded translation, Divinely, inspired love or Divine love.] ...Your Divinely inspired love and concern in the Spirit. Because of this wonderful report, from the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying and interceding for you, beseeching God on your behalf, requesting and petitioning that you may be filled and be abundantly supplied with the knowledge and full spiritual perception of God's very own plan, of His will and personal desire, revealed in every aspect of spiritual wisdom and sagacity and right-mindedness" (vs 7-9).

Let's follow along here with each one of these verses, let's take v 9 and look at some other Scriptures which help amplify this for us and we'll see the pattern that he wrote concerning how we are to have this understanding. It is a *spiritual wisdom*, and the spiritual wisdom also brings to us and tells us the intelligent, right-mindedness. I think that's something that we need to focus on as far as the Holy Spirit of God is concerned, because that's the way we need to think. We need to think with the Spirit of God and the way that God wants us to is to have ***His Word in our heart and our mind and our being***. That way then, we can do as Jesus said, 'To bring every thought into captivity, to the obedience of Jesus Christ.'

Let's see how Paul continually prayed for all of those in the Church that they would grow to this knowledge and wisdom and understanding. The thing that we need to understand—especially in the light of the fact that too many of the Churches of God, because going through and accepting this doctrine of trinity, now are saying that God is a mystery, we can't understand. *That is a direct contradiction of what Paul said!* Paul wants us to understand. We're going to see that these things can only be understood by the Spirit of God. They're not going to be understood because we, as human beings, *have great intellect*.

Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.... [maybe you could make that as a long, individual study there yourself, *the Father of glory*. What is the glory of God? What is it going to be like when we have a glorious body and that we are the glorious expression of God's own purpose and will and

desire?] ...may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation... [these things have to be revealed] ...in *the* knowledge of Him.”

Now you might tie in your notes and put there 2-Peter 3:16-18: that we are to ‘be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’ As we have seen there in Ephesians, the fourth chapter, how that we are to grow up unto the full measure of the stature and the fullness of Christ. I tell you, this indicates to me, that we have a long way to go, and what God has for us is really fantastic.

Verse 18: *And may the eyes of your* [understanding] **mind be enlightened...** [That is quite a phrase. I am struck by that phrase so many times, every time I read it.] ...in order **that you may** [know] **comprehend...**” Everywhere you go God wants us to *know*, He doesn’t want us to be in doubt. He doesn’t want it to be a mystery that we can not understand, because the mystery of Godliness is **Christ in us** and the life that Christ lived, and how He came to the earth and then was crucified and resurrected and sits at the right hand of God. And the mystery of Godliness is **that we are going to also have our part in it**, because Christ is the firstborn among many brethren.]

“...that you may comprehend what is the **hope of His calling...** [this kind of hope is to inspire us, to uplift us, to really bring us to the knowledge and understanding of God] ...and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (v 18).

Now we are going to expand somewhat on some of this, as we go through some other Scriptures today. So right now, we’ll go through the inheritance, so we need to think a little bit more about the inheritance. God is not going to give us something, which is just kind of ethereal. God is not going to give us a bag of wind. **God is going to give us substance!** After all, God is the One Who created the universe—isn’t He? And God is going to let us share in that inheritance with Jesus Christ.

Verse 19: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe... [That is the key. **You must believe!** The one who comes to God

- *must believe* that He is
- and you *must believe* Christ
- and you *must believe* in His plan,
- and you *must believe* in His hope
- and you *must believe* in His faith
- and you *must believe* in His love

Then God is going to be able to open your mind, to give you strength, to give you wisdom, to

give you understanding and so forth; “...according to the inner working of His mighty power” (v 19).

1-Corinthians 1:26: “For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh...” That doesn’t mean that if we have someone who is wise, he is to say, ‘Well, there are at least a few—aren’t there?’

There was one man who wanted to have a ministry toward the intelligent of the world. He used to be in the Church of God. So, when he left, he set up a work where he was going to reach out to the intelligent of the world. Well, God hasn’t called the intelligent of the world. Once in a while He calls someone who’s intelligent so at least we can have some wisdom, but I tell you what, among us, there isn’t anyone who is wise. **Our only wisdom is going to come from God!**

“...not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, **God has chosen...**” (vs 26-27).

When you see the words *chosen* and *calling*, you can put in there John 6:44: ‘None come to Me except the Father draw him, and none come to the Father except through Me.’ God is the One Who has chosen. So any time you get down or you get discouraged, or you think that things are really so bad and rotten and miserable that you don’t know which end is up, remember:

1. God has called you, *personally*
2. God loves you

It’s no great thing that we’re the foolish of the world. He has done this to confound the wise. At the Feast I went through and showed how that God is going to make the synagogue of Satan come and worship at the feet of those who truly love God.

“...and God has chosen the weak things of the world... [When you go along and you find you’re weak and you find you are having a difficult time overcoming, God knows that, He didn’t call the strong and mighty.] ...so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the [base] lowborn of the world... [I’m sure the Apostle Paul included himself in that because he said that he was the least of the saints.] ...and the despised **has God chosen...**” (vs 27-28). This is really telling us that in the world, we may not have the greatest public relations with people, but we need to have that right relationship with God.

“...—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—... [The things which are not even counted to be important or worthwhile or anything.] ...in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; So that no flesh might glory in His presence” (vs 28-29). No one is going to walk up to God and

say, 'God, I knew it! You just had to call me' because of this or that—yickity, yack!' No such thing is going to happen.

Verse 30: "But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Again, notice the pattern, how the Apostle Paul brings out the very encouraging things before he gets into any of the difficulties. And believe me, as you know, the book of 1-Cor. is filled with problems.

Verse 31: "So that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in *the* Lord.'" And that is where everything that we have stands, that is where everything we have begins and ends, right there! Just like we need to picture with the Word of God, it is not a line, it is not a circle, but it is a sphere. And if we look at it from the point of view of being a sphere, then the Word of God can have an infinite number of lines passing through that sphere, and they all connect with an infinite number of connections to make a beautiful whole and fantastic picture that we find in the Word of God. But, we've got to dig in and get it out.

It is just like this: When we come to God and glorify Him, when we come to God and realize, as Paul said there in 1 Cor. 4:7, that ***there is nothing that we haven't received, that it all comes from God!*** Then we are made of the wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

1-Corinthians 2:1: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom, in proclaiming the testimony of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (vs 1-2).

That is not an expression that we are to look to the cross as some people believe. That is not an expression that we can now wear crosses or commit idolatry by having these trinkets and things hanging around our neck. This is the crucifixion of Christ and everything that that stands for, everything that that means. So, when you look at that, you can put in there, 'save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' you can put the entirety of the four Gospels. That is a summary of it.]

Verse 3: "And I was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling *when* I was with you; And my message and my preaching *was* not in persuasive words of human wisdom; rather, *it was* in demonstration of *the* Spirit and of power; So that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God" (vs 3-5).

Brethren, I just pray that we can come more closely to the kind of faith that is listed here in 1-

Cor. 2:5. That it's going to be in the power of God. Now, we have a lot we need to do. We have a lot of things that need to be accomplished, but we can only do it if we have this kind of faith. And God has to provide.

Verse 6: "Now we speak wisdom among the *spiritually* mature that is those who are spiritually mature; however, *it is not the* wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nothing. Rather, we speak *the* wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*... [it is hidden from the world, but not us] ...that God foreordained before the ages... [we know God's plan was conceived before He even created the world] ...unto our glory" (vs 6-7).

Think on that for a minute! Here we are—whatever we are, whatever our physical condition is, whatever our stature in life is, whatever our life has been—***think of it, that God has called you to share in the glory which He proposed before the world was!*** That is really something! Let's really focus on that. I know some people have said we are going through the dark time between the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover, and that's Satan's greatest hour, with Christmas and all that sort of thing. If we get down and discouraged, really focus on that!

Verse 8: "Which not one of the rulers of this world has known... [God has given us something which not even the leaders of this world know.] ...[for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory]; but according as it is written, '*The* eye has not seen, nor *the* ear heard, neither have entered into *the* heart of man, *the* things which God has prepared for those who love Him'" (vs 8-9).

I think it is very important that we understand and realize that this same pattern, before anything is brought out on how we need to change and overcome, Paul inspires the people to look to God, inspires them with the love of God, in hopes that when he brings out the things that need to be taken care of, they will do it themselves, without having to have some taskmaster with a whip, to whip them along.

Verse 10—this is a profound verse—and we have read this, and I have given sermons on it and so forth, down through the time in my ministry—but, just think on this: "***But God has revealed them to us...*** [***God has made it known!*** If you tell anyone you are a begotten son of God, and you are going to become a true spirit, glorified son of God and have the same existence as God, they won't understand it. ***God has revealed that to us!***] ...***by His Spirit***, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God." Brethren, pray that we can come to a greater

understanding of those *deep things of God*; and of the wisdom and knowledge as the Apostle Paul said.

Verse 11: “For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him?....” God has given every human being that *spirit of man*, so they can have intelligence, so that they can use their brain, so that they can exercise choice, etc.

“...In the same way also, the things of God no one understands... [That is by himself, because, the ‘eye hasn’t seen, nor the ear heard, neither has it entered into his heart.’] ...except *by* the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God” (vs 11-12). That’s tremendous, brethren! Every time I read these things, I just get so inspired, it just leaves me, in most cases, without the words to express it. But I hope that with the Spirit of God *in you and in me*, that God will convey to us what He is relating to us through the inspired words of the Apostle Paul.

Verse 13: “Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom...” If you want to know about man’s wisdom, just get out that whole 120-page thing that Carl Franklin did on the trinity. The ‘trinity’ is man’s wisdom in trying to grope around in the dark and understand God without going to God and saying, ‘God, teach us of Your way.’ You aren’t going to find God through that kind of nonsense.

“...but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand *them* because they are spiritually discerned” (vs 13-14). That is a tremendous blessing, brethren, and that expands out what the Apostle Paul said here when he wants us to come to the full spiritual knowledge and understanding and righteousness of God in the things that God wants us to do.

Let’s come back to our expanded *Amplified Translation* of Colossians—so we can go ahead with this and understand even more Colossians 1:10 “That you may walk worthily, conducting your lives in a manner which promotes growth of Christian character in the Lord, and which expands into a way of life that is pleasing and acceptable to everyone... [Which means that, as you grow in the love of God, obviously] ...that you may abound in every good work and endeavor, thereby growing and increasing in the knowledge and spiritual perception of God.”

Now, let’s just take one section back here in Ephesians 2, and let’s see how the Apostle Paul was preaching nearly the same thing that we understand concerning the works that we need to walk in;

concerning our lives and how we need to conduct them.

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works...” Those are the good works of love, truth, knowledge and understanding.

What does the world do to get rid of lawbreaking? Let’s think on this for just a minute. This just dawned on me just this passed week. In the world, to get rid of crime, they get rid of the law. When there is too much marijuana smoking, for example, they want to do away with the law, which says it is illegal to legalize it. When there is too much adultery they want to legalize prostitution. So, the carnal mind, to get rid of the problem, tries to eliminate the laws and commandments of God. Now then, let’s apply this same reasoning to how the Protestants look at grace.

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith... [then they proceed to take that statement and say that since it’s]: ...Not of works, so that no one may boast” (vs 8-9). Then they say there is no law, there are no commandments that we need to follow. So, they take the same carnal-minded approach to God’s way that with grace, they themselves eliminate the laws and commandments of God, in the same carnal-minded way that the world does. Now, just think on that and you will see that is exactly how they do it. And whenever they go to Eph. 2 and read those verses, they very seldom read:

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus... [so what God is doing in us, is creating that Holy, righteous, perfect character. Creating in us, through the hope of glory which is Christ in us.] ...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.”

Now wherever there is the word *walk* used, that means *the way of life* that we are living, the path of life that we are walking. And the path of life that we are walking is:

- God’s way!
- God’s Truth!
  - ✓ with His love
  - ✓ with His Spirit
  - ✓ with His hope
  - ✓ with His commandments

and as Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” So, that was really something, I was walking down the hall coming down to my office here, and it just struck me, just this week. What a thing! That is amazing! That is how they do the grace. That is what is so confusing with it. So,



we do have good works to walk in. We do have things that we need to do.

Now, let's come back to Colossians 1:11—and hopefully, we will make a little progress here today. If not, we will just take it as we need to take it, and go right on through and finish as much as we can each Sabbath.

Colossians 1:11: “(And that through God you may be strengthened, **energized with all the necessary power**... [now the word *power* in the Greek is ‘*dunamis*’—which means *energy, strength*, it's *the living, vital power* by which God does everything.]: ...strength and spiritual courage in every situation according to the might and the forceful power of His Divine majesty and glory; granting you **endurance and patience** in all things...” The word *patience*, where it says in the book of James *patience*, this is the same Greek word. You have heard of the ‘patience of Job.’ That has more to do with *enduring patience* than just being *patient of mind* in the way that you don't get riled or upset easily

This is: “...endurance and patience in all things, that you may have joy and happiness,’ (even in mentally torturous situations)” (v 11). This, brethren—when we are going through trials and difficulties—is the only thing that is going to keep us in the joy and happiness of God.

Let's go to 2-Timothy, the first chapter, and see what the Holy Spirit is to do; see how we are to have the use of God's Holy Spirit. And this is something we have to do. 2-Timothy 1:6: “For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God... [the gift of God for any ministry is also *by the grace of God*, that's why Paul said he received the apostleship *by grace*] ...that is in you by the laying on of my hands.”

We need to understand, it happens to every one of us. Every one of us, as it says there concerning the ten virgins, slumber and sleep—don't we? We let things kind of slack off. What Paul is saying here to Timothy who is a minister now. Any minister who is a minister knows that this also happens to him as well as to anybody else that God calls because we are struggling against the pulls of the flesh and the pulls of the world and so forth. So we are “...to stir up the gift of God...” that is in us...” We do that:

- by prayer
- by study
- by really meditating on God's Word

And if we can put together the keys of David a little bit more that would be one fantastic way of stirring up the gift of God which is in you.

Verse 7: “For **God has not given us a spirit of fear...**” This is what is so absolutely hellacious and damnable for the brethren of God, when they are put in fear, when they are preached *fear* and we are going to see that that is the total opposite of what God wants. God does not want us to be in fear. God does want us to go around in just terror as it were in some cases. He hasn't given us that spirit.

“...**but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness**.... [That is why I translated *intelligent* ‘right-mindedness,’ back in the first chapter of Colossians, because it gives us the power of a sound mind.] ...Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of the gospel*, according to *the power of God*” (vs 7-8).

I think we all really need to grasp that and understand that that is what is happening to the whole Church right now. God is putting the Church through all these various trials and difficulties so we that won't be ashamed of the Gospel. That if we do have afflictions that we are going to be able to overcome them and endure them through the power of God.

Verse 9: “Who has saved us and called *us* with a Holy calling...” Boy! I tell you the Apostle Paul really, really brings out how fantastic and inspiring that calling is—doesn't he? Almost every epistle we see the same identical pattern that God inspired the Apostle Paul to write the epistles. We see it again, repeated here in 2-Tim. 1.

“—not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which *was* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time; but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death, and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the* Gentiles; for which cause I am also suffering these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He has the power to keep what I have committed *to Him* for that day. Hold *as the standard for doctrine* the sound words that you heard from me, in *the* faith and love that *are* in Christ Jesus. Guard the good thing that was committed *to you* by *the* Holy Spirit that is dwelling in us” (vs 9-14).

Brethren, that is a tremendous thing! Just put that together and really be inspired, and, of course, the Apostle Paul had to be really inspired with it, and he was confronting some of the difficulties that we are confronting, even today.

Verse 15: “You know this, that all those who *are* in Asia have rejected me...” And I still don't understand that verse completely but I think

through this series of *Scripturalism vs Judaism*, and the other things that we will put together, we may be able to comprehend what was going on here. But isn't that something?

- after all that the Apostle Paul did
- after all that he wrote
- after all that he taught
- after all the love and the joy, the hope, the goodness, the correction and everything that God had given

he writes to Timothy and in a very desperate way and says that 'you know all which are in Asia turned away from me.' That is something! I tell you, if you think we are living in difficult times, there you've got it right there. If it is going to be repeated again, in the end-time, which it very well may be, we are not too surprised with the apostasy then that is taking hold in the various Churches of God.

Now let's go back to our translation, Colossians 1:12: 'We are giving thanks and offering up praises of gratitude to the Father Who has made us competent....'

Now, just turn to your *King James* for a minute and let's read that verse in the *King James* and we miss one of the most profound and important things in the New Testament.

Colossians 1:11 (KJV): "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, and with all patience and with longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, Who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (vs 11-12). Now, think of it for a minute, what is the word m-e-e-t? Well, it doesn't mean anything in English to us, but the Greek means: *made us competent or has qualified us*.

Let's think about how many sermons that we have heard in the past, brethren: 'you have to do this to qualify for the Kingdom of God.' Yes, it is true there are things that we need to do, but let's also understand that *it is 'God who has made us competent and has qualified us* for the inheritance of the saints in light.' That is really something! *God is the One Who qualifies us*, because He has:

- called us
- given us His Spirit
- forgiven our sins
- sent His son Jesus Christ for the propitiation of our sins
- sent Jesus Christ so that we can live our lives through God's Spirit, exactly as Christ wants us to, and Christ in us

***God is the One Who is qualifying us!*** That is so very important. And this has the thing that is so important if you know that God is qualifying us.

Some people think well then you know if you say that God is doing it for us then everyone is going to slack off and not do the things that they ought to do. No, that is the reverse. With God's Holy Spirit, if we know that God is doing this for us, this inspires us to do more what God wants us to do. Not just the reverse of it.

Now back to the *Amplified Translation* of it here, 12: "...and has qualified us, and has qualified us for a share and portion of the inheritance and eternal destiny of the saints (the Holy, consecrated, called-out ones in Christ), in the light of Divine Truth and spiritual illumination: Who has delivered and rescued us from the power and authority of the spiritual darkness and moral depravity (of this world)..." (vs 12-13).

I tell you we sure see it coming now, in power and darkness, in evilness, just as we saw here recently with the situation with the Rodney King case. Well they finally convicted the officers of depriving Rodney King of his civil rights who, by the way, is a drunkard and a dope addict and has a long record. He is out free, making money, giving speeches and all this sort of good thing, while the officers are in prison; and then those who rioted because of the first sentence of acquittal against the officers, those who rioted and burned Los Angeles and went against Reginald Denney and beat him nearly to death so much so that he is personally injured permanently for the rest of his life. They got off scot-free.

You see this is going to turn this society more into wickedness, more into lawlessness, it is going to put the dividing line and the people against people and hatred against hatred, and I can just visualize in Los Angeles that there are going to be more guns and more shootings and more racism and more hatred than ever before because of this thing. It is unreal! And that is because, the spiritual darkness and moral depravity of this world is coming in full force.

Now contrasted with that, let's continue and finish off v 13: "...and has caused us to transfer our allegiance and obedience unto the Kingdom and the governance of his very own Son Jesus Christ." It does not mean, as it is implied in the *King James*, that we are in the Kingdom of God now. Let's read that in the *King James*, v 13: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated *us [transferred us]* unto the kingdom of His dear Son." You can put in a lot of Scriptures there. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; we will be in the Kingdom at the resurrection, etc., etc., etc. We are not in the Kingdom now; cannot be because the Kingdom of God is not here. But, we are under

the jurisdiction and governance of the Kingdom of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Now let's look at some other Scriptures and expand this out just a little bit here. Who is the *true* Light? Let's go to Acts 26:18 and see that the whole Message of the Gospel is to transfer us away from the power of this world.

(go to the next track)

The Apostle Paul showed that was the whole entire purpose of his ministry. When he came to Rome and was preaching to them there, this is what he taught. He was giving his defense before he got to Rome showing what his mission was and was talking to Agrippa.

Paul said, Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, that *they* may turn from darkness to light, and *from* the authority of Satan to God... [unto the power of God] ...so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified through faith in Me." Now you see how the Apostle Paul continually preached the inheritance, the tremendous power of God and how that we are to have our eyes open. Here is a tremendous summary of the whole Gospel.

Let's go and see some other verses concerning this. Let's go to Isaiah 60 and let's see the prophecy of Christ coming. If you have the recording of *The Messiah* this is one that is really very inspiring. There is also another hymn, a solo, which has been written off:

Isaiah 60:1: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you... [And that's sure true for us, those who have God's Spirit, it is risen upon us.] ...for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness *the* people; but the LORD shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you.... [this is a prophecy of Christ and His first coming, when He came to a world filled with darkness.] ...And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising" (vs 1-3).

As we know, many times the prophecies in the Old Testament go from His first coming to His second coming, in many cases intertwine the both of those together. And so sometimes it's difficult to really separate it out, but it applies in both cases.

Verse 4: "Lift up your eyes all around, and see. All of them gather themselves together; they come to you. Your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side." It blends into the return of Israel, when they come back out of captivity when Jesus returns, but also it is a prophecy of us when we are resurrected to meet Christ in the air.

Now, let's go to Isaiah, the fifth chapter, and let's see compared with that how in living in this world—that is wicked and dark and under the power of Satan the devil—what is actually happening in this world. We are seeing this today. As a matter of fact, you could read the whole chapter of Isa. 5. We will see this is really something, the way it is coming.

Isaiah 5:20: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (vs 20-21).

Now, brethren what I have read to you is a summary of what is happening, not only in the United States, but in the world. And just think of all the policies and things that are coming down through the government now. All of the things that are being declared and we will see why this is happening.

Verse 22: "Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame burns up the chaff; their root shall be like rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up like dust **because...**" (vs 22-24).

Here, brethren, is the cause of the darkness of this world and what Satan the devil wants everyone to do. You can think about this concerning your federal government, beginning with the President all the way down through all the congressmen and senators and judges and bureaucrats. You can think of this with your state government and all the governors and their legislatures. You can think of this with everything that is done in the society.

And there is this active force to do what the rest of v 24 says: **...because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel**"

That is why the darkness is coming on this world. And brethren, it's a shame! Why should we have to see Churches of God doing this? Go back to the world to try and understand their perverted philosophy and understanding of God and go back and reject the Laws of God, go back into the darkness that is there; go back and reject the words of the Holy One of Israel, which is Jesus Christ.

Jesus spoke of this...let's go to Matthew, the sixth chapter, for just a minute here. It shows how that this darkness can affect so many human beings.

When you have people, when the wicked are put in power, the vilest of men come to the fore.

Matthew 6:22: “The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye be sound, your whole body shall be *full of light*.” That’s what it needs to be, brethren.

- Our eye needs to be *single in purpose* toward God the Father and Jesus Christ.
- Our eye needs to be *single in the understanding* and use of the power of God in our lives.
- Our eye needs to be *single in loving God* with all of our heart, mind, soul and being.

And he says: “...your whole body shall be *full of light*.... [that’s why Christ has transferred us from the darkness and the wickedness of this world] ...But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be *full of darkness*. Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” (vs 22-23).

And it is just tragic to see people leaving God, throwing away the Word of God, giving up on the Spirit of God, going sound asleep at the switch, running off and letting their lives be filled with darkness and they just don’t understand. What follows on the heel of this is:

Verse 24: “No one is able to serve two masters... [***You can’t serve light and darkness. You can’t serve good and evil.***] ...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Now all of those of you who, if you have ever had two bosses, got caught in the power struggle between the two bosses, you know exactly what these verses are talking about. It is the same thing. If you go back and eat at the table of demons, as Paul says, then you’re serving two masters. You cannot serve Satan and his darkness and serve God and His light. We have been called out of that into His light.

We are going to see that ***Christ is that Light***. It talks about it with the coming of Christ. John 1:4: ‘In Him... [that was the Word Who became flesh] ...was life, and the life was the light of men.’”

Let’s just look at Colossians 1:27, because that is the whole summary of everything that he is doing in chapter one. “To whom God did will to make known and to reveal what is the riches and the abundant blessings of the magnificent glory, even the surpassing magnitude of this mystery among the nations; which is Christ in you, the hope of the magnificent splendor and glory (which shall be revealed in us).”

He is the *light of men*! John 1:5—when Christ came: “And the light shines in the darkness.... [Didn’t we read the prophecy that darkness covers the earth? *Yes!*] ...but the darkness does not comprehend it.... [it also means that *the darkness did not overcome it*] ...There was a man sent by God, whose name was John. He came for a witness that he might testify concerning the Light.... [capital L] ...so that through Him all might believe. He was not the light, but *came* that he might testify concerning the Light. The true Light was that which enlightens everyone who comes into the world” (vs 5-9). It is even talking about here in the sense of the *spirit of man*, that He gives intelligence to every man—isn’t that something?]

Verse 10: “He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, but the world did not know Him.” That is a profound statement! Isn’t that something? The world rejected Christ. The world didn’t know Him.

Verse 11: “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him; But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become *the* children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name; Who were not begotten by bloodlines, nor by *the* will of *the* flesh, nor by *the* will of man, but *by the will of God*. **And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us** (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth” (vs 11-14).

So, brethren, it really, really becomes something when we understand the words of Christ, we understand the plan of God.

John 8:12: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘**I am the Light of the world**; the one who follows Me shall never walk in darkness, but **shall have the light of life**.’” So if you are following Christ you will have that light of life.

John 9:4: “I must work the works of Him Who sent Me while it is still day. When *the* night comes, no one is able to work.” Brethren, that is going to apply in a prophetic sense to our very end-time. There have been times when the curtain of darkness has followed on this earth. Remember, there is even a period in European history which is called *The Dark Ages* when *satanism and Catholicism and all of that stuff reigned supreme and brought darkness!* So, we are going to go through the same thing again. “...When *the* night comes, no one is able to work. As long as I am in the world, I am *the* Light of the world” (vs 4-5).

It’s absolutely magnificent how God has inspired His Word and put it together. It is something else, brethren! It is just so great! And I

hope that we can really study these things together and grow in grace and knowledge together.

Romans 13:11: “Now *consider* this, knowing the time, that *it is* already *the hour that* we should be roused out of sleep; because our salvation *is* nearer now than when we first believed.” And it is getting nearer, whether it is going to be the return of Christ or we die in the faith. Remember, Jesus said, through the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 57), that God takes the righteous away from the evil, which is coming. And that means that when one of the saints dies, so that is a reality for every one of us. We don’t know whether we are going to live tomorrow or die tomorrow. We don’t know what the whole situation is going to be.

“...because our salvation *is* nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost over, and the day is drawing near... [Now this is a prophecy for us, brethren, even though the Apostle Paul felt that in his very own life at the time that he wrote the book of Romans.] ...Let us walk decently, as in *the* day: not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and emulation. But *let us* put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make any allowance for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (vs 11-14). Wonderful, inspiring and powerful words!

Now let’s come back to the first chapter of the book of Colossians and let’s go ahead with it a little bit further. Christ has called us out of the darkness of this world. Colossians 1:14: “It is through the Son that we are having the redemption (procured for us by the payment of His very own life at the crucifixion) through His blood, even the remission, pardon, cancellation and forgiveness of sins.”

As we see now, in Psalms 86, where it says that ‘God is ready to forgive.’ God is not there to hold things over our head. God is ready to forgive, instant to forgive. But then, brethren, we need to respond in love, obedience, truth, faithfulness and so forth. So, this is a tremendous thing that God has done this for us, that ***He has made it possible that we can have our sins forgiven.***

Now, let’s go to the Epistle of 1-John, the first chapter, and let’s see how this works. And sometimes when we are going along and we sin, we just get so discouraged and we get so down, that we just don’t go to God with the understanding and knowledge and attitude that God is there—God will help, God will forgive—which He is. It is not a matter of taking advantage of grace. And I know that when you sin and you have a guilty conscience and you feel down, you feel, oh man, I just can’t go to God. Well, *God knows!* The One to Whom we have to deal with everything, *we stand naked before*

*God—so God knows!* We need to really realize what God has done for us.

We will notice the same, inspiring way that God inspired even John to write. The same system that we find there in the book of Colossians, the book of Romans, the book of 2-Timothy and, in fact, all the epistles.

1-John 1:5: “And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth” (vs 5-6).

Now we are seeing that happen before our very eyes, those people *who are rejecting and throwing away the Word of God!* Those who are saying, ‘Well, we don’t know what God is, we think God is *hypostasis*.’ They’re beginning to walk in darkness and the darkness is coming because Satan has blinding their eyes.

Which means then: “...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth. However, ***if***... [notice the condition there, that wonderful little English word which is in all languages, too] ...***if*** we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin” (vs 6-7). The Greek here means that *the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing*, present tense, *us from every sin*.

When we sin, God wants to clean us up and we need to understand something, spiritually speaking: ***All sin is uncleanness!*** So therefore, when it says the blood of Jesus Christ is ***cleansing us from every sin***, that’s a tremendous promise. What we need to do is go to God and repent and say, ‘Oh God, oh man, I sinned! It is terrible, it is miserable, it is awful, I feel guilty, I am condemned! But I know Your mercy and kindness and greatness and goodness; that You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, what a wonderful and fantastic blessing, give me Your strength and Spirit and understanding that I can go forward and not sin.’ That is how we need to approach God!

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [Notice He is going to judge us, He is going to condemn us, He is going to throw us out. He’s going to stomp us down, He is going to kill us. NO! It doesn’t say that] ...***If we confess our own sins***, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned,

we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 8-10).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [God doesn’t want us to sin] ...And yet, if anyone does sin, **we have an Advocate** with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; And He is *the* propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world” (vs 1-2).

So, brethren, God can forgive your sins, and sometimes you just need to go to the Psalms and see how David approached God when he sinned. Come here to 1-John, the first chapter, and apply this in your life. Go to God, on your knees and just say, ‘Oh, God, You alone can do this.’ So He is the One Who’s forgiven our sins and caused us, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ...There are many other Scriptures we can put together but I will give you just a couple here that you could add to it.

1-Peter 1:18: “Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from *your* forefathers; But by *the* precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before *the* foundation of *the* world, but was manifested in *these* last times for your sakes; *Even for you* who through Him do believe in God, Who raised Him from *the* dead and gave Him glory, **so that your faith and hope might be in God.** Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit, love one another fervently with a pure heart” (vs 18-22).

And boy I tell you what, if that does not describe what we experienced at the Feast of Tabernacles, I don’t know anything that does. That was a tremendous and wonderful Feast that we had and I’m, just in my own mind, trying to capture that feeling of love and spirit that God gave us there and just retain it as long as I can.

Now let’s come back to Colossians 1:15: “Who is the exact image and similitude of the great invisible God, the firstborn...” This creates some difficulties for people because then they feel that Jesus Christ was a created being. So I am going to read all the way down through v 18 so we get the full feeling and thrust of what this is talking about. When we come to the word *firstborn*, we are talking about the Greek word ‘prototokos.’ When we are talking about *the only begotten* we are talking in the Greek about ‘monogenes’—which means *only begotten*.

Jesus Christ was *firstborn* twice, He was the firstborn ‘prototokos’—and that had to be after His birth was completed—with Mary; and we find that in Matt. 1. We are talking about the firstborn,

‘prototokos’ from among the dead. This is also very powerful for us to understand that when the resurrection occurs we will **then** be born again.

Verse 15: “Who is the exact image and similitude of the great invisible God, the firstborn (by the resurrection), the prototype of all that God is creating by this means.” It says in the *King James, the firstborn of all creation*. That is not a correct translation, because the creation that it is referring there to is all who are created by the resurrection, as the sons of God

Verse 16): “Because by and through Him (the Son) were all things created and brought into existence, all things on the earth and in the vast reaches of the heavens and universe, all visible things and all invisible things regardless of whether they be thrones or lordships, or principalities or authorities and powers; all things (everything that exists) were created by and through Him, and for Him. And He (the Son) existed before every one of these things, and in Him all things continue to exist and subsist. And He is the head of the body, the church (the assembly of the called-out ones); He is the beginning, the originator of all things, the firstborn (by the resurrection) from among the dead; that He might hold the first rank, and have the highest dignity and pre-eminence in all things. Because in His Son, God the Father was pleased to have the fullness and abundance of all things dwell and reside” (vs 16-19).

Now, in order then to understand this about the firstborn of every creature, we have to understand that he is talking about *the resurrection*. He is not talking about Jesus Christ being created and then born as it were. He is talking about Jesus Christ who was resurrected as the firstborn from among the dead.

Let’s see this in Romans, the eighth chapter—and we will see that He is called the firstborn among many brethren; Romans 8:26: “Now, in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses... [‘The flesh is willing but the spirit is weak.’] ...because we do not fully understand what we should pray for, according as it is necessary...” You can be greatly relieved in your prayers, if you go pray and just ask God to help you with it, God’s Spirit is going to intervene and God’s Spirit is going to convey to God what is truly in your heart.

“...but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed *by us....*” (v 26). This is not speaking in tongues because speaking in tongues is something which is uttered. This cannot be uttered because it goes from you spiritually to God directly, *spiritually*.

Verse 27: “And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit *are* because it makes intercession for *the* saints according to *the will of* God. **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose Because those whom He did foreknow, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His own Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren**” (vs 27-29).

So, Jesus Christ was the firstborn from among the dead. These verses are the two greatest witnesses that we have that you, that me, that Christ was not born again until the resurrection. **Christ was born again!** He was ‘prototokos’ twice: once when He was born in the flesh, the second time when He was born from the resurrection as the eternal, spiritual, living Son of God.

Now, let’s go to Revelation, the first chapter, because there is a mistranslation in the *King James* concerning ‘prototokos’ that we need to cover. Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness...” It says in the *King James*: ‘the first begotten from the dead.’ Well the Greek here is not ‘monogenes.’ The Greek here is ‘prototokos’ and should be translated **firstborn from among the dead**, which shows then the resurrection is the rebirth experience and truly born again.

Let’s just finish this off by going to 1-Corinthians 15, because it talks about this very thing of Christ being, in this case, *the firstfruits*, which then is the very first one, we have the type of the firstfruits, we have a type of firstborn.

1-Corinthians 15:20: “But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead... [Who then is the *firstborn* from among the dead] ...He has become the firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep.... [He is the first one harvested by the resurrection to eternal life.] ...For since by man *came* death, by man also *came the* resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order: Christ *the* firstfruit; then, those who are Christ’s at His coming” (vs 20-23).

***That is a tremendous thing, brethren!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible, in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted) Exception: Book of Colossians from *Amplified Translation* booklet

#### Scripture References:

- 1) Colossians 1:7-9
- 2) Ephesians 1:17-19
- 3) 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
- 4) 1 Corinthians 2:1-14
- 5) Colossians 1:10
- 6) Ephesians 2:10,8-10

- 7) Colossians 1:1, 11-13
- 8) 2 Timothy 1:6-15
- 9) Colossians 1:11-13
- 10) Acts 26:18
- 11) Isaiah 60:1-4
- 12) Isaiah 5:20-24
- 13) Matthew 6:22-24
- 14) John 1:4
- 15) Colossians 1:27
- 16) John 1:5-14
- 17) John 8:12
- 18) John 9:4-5
- 19) Romans 13:11-14
- 20) Colossians 1:14
- 21) 1 John 1:5-10
- 22) 1 John 2:1-2
- 23) 1 Peter 1:18-22
- 24) Colossians 1:15-19
- 25) Romans 8:26-29
- 26) Revelation 1:5
- 27) 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Colossians 1:1-6, 27
- 2 Peter 3:16-18
- Ephesians 4
- John 6:44
- 1 Corinthians 4:7
- Isaiah 57
- Psalm 86
- Matthew 1

#### Also referenced: Sermon series:

*Scripturalism vs Judaism*

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians III

Fred R. Coulter

In our series and study that we are doing through the book of Colossians and we are following through on the *Expanded Amplified Translation* for the purpose of studying; because Paul's epistles are so absolutely inspiring, that we need to have as full an understanding in its amplified meaning of these epistles as we can. And last time we came down through Colossians 1:18, *who is the firstborn*. So let's just review a couple of Scriptures concerning that, so that we really fully understand and comprehend that Jesus was literally the firstborn *twice*.

Matthew 1:25—this talks about Jesus' first birth, His human birth: "But he [Joseph] did not have sexual relations *with* her until *after* she had given birth to her son, the firstborn; and he called His name Jesus." The Greek for *firstborn* there is 'prototokos.' When we come back here to Colossians 1, where it says that 'He is the firstborn of every creature,' that is kind of a misleading translation, simply because it doesn't mean the firstborn of every *creature*.

Here is the way I translated it beginning in Colossians 1:15 of the *Amplified Translation*: "Who is the exact image and similitude of the great invisible God, the firstborn [*prototokos*] (by the resurrection)...—[*of the creation*; has reference to what God is doing/creating in us. That is the creation He is talking about, not everything that has been made. And this is where people really get off the beam where they say that Jesus was the first created of God, the firstborn of God, and so forth. That is not correct.] (It means that He is): ...the firstborn (by the resurrection), the prototype of all that God is creating by this means."

Now, another Scripture I want to review in Revelation, the first chapter, so that we can be sure and understand that there is a difference between *first begotten* or *only begotten* and ***firstborn***. The Greek word, which is translated *begotten* is 'gennao.' Jesus Christ being the *only begotten*, in the Greek is 'monogenes.' Mono: we have that even today, we have a monorail that means a *single* rail—or *one*. So, 'monogenes' means *the only begotten*.

Here in Revelation 1:5 it says: "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead..." The Greek there is 'prototokos'—so Jesus was *born again*.

Now, one other Scripture we need to cover: Romans 8:29. I wanted to be sure and review this because this always becomes a central part of our understanding as we are going forward in

understanding the Word of God. Romans 8:29: "Because those whom He did foreknow... [He called us before the resurrection] ...He also predestinated... [the predestination of God's plan] ...to be conformed... [to be made like] ...to the image of His own Son..."

Then, if you have the image, the image is made after the reality; you cannot have an image unless there is a reality. That's why when God said: 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.' That shows that we are made in the image of God. That means that God—being the reality—has a body, a face, hands, legs, feet, etc. So, when we see 'image of His Son' here, *Christ is the reality*. And we are going to be made in that spiritual image of His Son.

"...that He might be *the* firstborn [*prototokos*] among many brethren." And so that is what it means of Jesus Christ being the firstborn of every creature. That does not mean of the creation but of those that God is creating now. We are created in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The process of conversion is a *spiritual* creation.

Now let's come back to Colossians, our *Amplified Translation* of it, and let's continue on. Let me just review; Colossians 1:15: "Who is the exact image and similitude of the great invisible God..." If we are going to be in the image of Jesus Christ—Who is the firstborn among many brethren—then it is going to be that resemblance of family. That's why when Philip said, 'Show us the Father.' Jesus answered and said, 'Have I not been with you so long a time that you have known Me, Philip, if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.'

"...the similitude of the great invisible God, the firstborn (by the resurrection), the prototype of all that God is creating by this means; Because by and through Him (the Son) were all things created and brought into existence, all things on the earth and in the vast reaches of the heavens and universe, all visible things and all invisible things regardless of whether they be thrones or lordships, or principalities or authorities and powers; all things (everything that exists) were created by and through Him, and for Him. And He (the Son) existed before every one of these things, and in Him all things continue to exist and subsist" (vs 15-17).

Verse: "And He is the head of the body, the church (the assembly of the called-out ones); He is the beginning, the originator of all things, the firstborn [by the resurrection] from among the



dead... [firstborn again is 'prototokos'] ...that He might hold the first rank, and have the highest dignity and pre-eminence in all things.... [And, of course, that means *through all eternity*.] ...Because in His Son, God the Father was pleased to have the fullness and abundance of all things dwell and reside" (vs 18-19). Paul is leading up to show us the greatness of the calling of God, to show us the greatness of Jesus Christ as our Savior and to show the tremendous and fantastic plan that God has for us.

When we come to Colossians 2—we will see how penurious, how vain and empty is the philosophy that was trying to deceive the brethren there in Colossi to following into the worship of fallen angels.

Verse 20: "And by and through Him (the Son) to reconcile and restore to favor and blessing all things unto Himself, having made peace, harmony and tranquility through the blood of His cross; so that through Him all things might be reconciled, whether it be the things on earth, or the things in the heavens and universe." That is quite a statement—isn't it?

Let's look at this and study these verses a little bit more in detail. First of all, we know that Christ was made the Head of the Church, and Jesus Christ is the only One Who can be the Head of the Church. Too many times people have placed men between them and God, and literally made the man the head of the Church and were more willing to follow the commands of a man than the clear commands of Jesus Christ. This is why the Apostle Paul is making it absolutely clear that ***Christ is the Head of the Church***, He is sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven above and that is what we need to constantly look to.

We see that Paul continues in the same theme in Ephesians as he did in Colossians; Ephesians 1:20 talks about the mighty power of God: "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above every principality and authority and power and lordship... [that means anything that is on the earth or that Satan has] ...and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come" (vs 20-21). Which is the Kingdom of God. This is almost exactly the same as he is expressing to those in the book of Colossians there, the same thing concerning Christ.

Verse 22: "For He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the Church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all" (vs 22-23). So, in other words:

- there is absolutely nothing in this world
- there is nothing that has been created
- there is nothing that Satan can offer
- there is nothing that the demons can offer
- there is nothing that any human being can offer that can fill what God is going to do with us, through us and to us

So we need to really just grasp that and keep it in mind constantly.

Now let's come to Ephesians 5:23, it is talking about Christ as the Head of the Church also the husband of the Church that He is going to marry. "For the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church; and He is *the* Savior of the body." We might interject in there, this just came to mind, so let's put it in there, this does not mean that the husband wields the rod of iron over his wife. Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees: '*I desire mercy and not sacrifice.*' Go learn what that means. In this sense we need to, as husbands, understand what it means that *Christ is the Head of the Church* and He is *the Savior of the body*.

Verse 25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it... ['gave' means to *give up*] ...so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word; That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself" (vs 25-28).

- that is not done with beatings
- that is not done with commanding
- that is not done with a rod of iron
- that is not done with a heavy hand

***that is done in love***

That doesn't mean that you become weak or mousy or anything like that, it just means that if Christ is in you, since He's the Head of the Church, we as husbands need to conduct our lives toward our wives in that particular way. But, also that the wife needs to submit to her husband as the Church submits to the Lord. So it works all ways.

Coupled with that, let's understand that there is, because Christ is the Head of the Church, there is always a limiting factor on every minister, and we need to understand that. I am sure we do, but let's just rehearse it and emphasize it here.

1-Corinthians 11:1: "Be imitators of me, exactly as I also *am* of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, because you have remembered me in all

things, and you are keeping the ordinances in the way that I delivered *them* to you. But I want you to understand that the Head of every man is Christ, and *the* head of *the* woman *is* the man, and *the* Head of Christ *is* God” (vs 1-3). Jesus said, ‘My Father is greater than I am.’

Now, let’s go to the book of Revelation where it says that Christ is *the Beginning*. I just talked to someone on the phone the other day who said that he needed to understand what this verse meant. Let’s see what Jesus said concerning Himself. Stop and think about this for a minute. Jesus created everything that there is. God the Father had Him—Jesus Christ—create everything; that’s why He is called the Word in John, the first chapter. Jesus was God before He became flesh, and it’s not true that while He was in the flesh He was 100-percent God—He wasn’t! He **emptied** Himself and took upon Him the same form and image as man. (Philip. 2).

So, He was not wholly God. He was God in the flesh, but God in the flesh is not the same as God in the Spirit. That’s why when Jesus was on the earth, He had to pray with strong cryings and tears ‘to Him who is able to save Him from death.’ And if He were wholly God in the flesh, then He couldn’t have died. Since He was God, that means that He continued to exist from all eternity just as God the Father. He is the One Who is the Creator, because God the Father delegated that to Him.

When we come to Revelation 1:8, Jesus said: “‘I am Alpha and Omega, *the Beginning* and *the Ending*... [That means He is the agent of the beginning, that does not mean that He was the beginning of the creation of God or the first thing that God created, doesn’t mean that at all. He is the agent of the beginning; He is the agent of the ending.] ...I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning* and *the Ending*,’ says the Lord, ‘Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come—the Almighty.’”

Revelation 3:14 is where many go to say that Christ was the beginning of the creation of God, because that is what it is in the English. But it doesn’t mean that He was that *thing* which was created first. It means that He was the *agent* of the beginning of the creation of God.

Revelation 3:14: “And to the angel of the church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God.” That doesn’t mean He, Himself, was the first thing created, that means He was the One Who *began* the creation, and He is continuing to do it with God the Father in us, because what God is doing in us now is the greatest creation that God is accomplishing. This is why that

it is through Jesus Christ that all these things have been done.

Now let’s come back to Colossians 1:20 again, and let’s look at just a couple of things here that are very important. “And by and through Him (the Son) to reconcile and restore to favor and blessing all things unto Himself...”

We can go to Acts 3 because this becomes very important in understanding how God is going to reconcile everything, and there is a statement that is made there which is quite profound which most people miss. It talks about Jesus Christ—here is the sermon that was given:

Acts 3:19: “Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out, so that *the* times of refreshing may come from *the* presence of the Lord; And *that* He may send Him Who was before proclaimed to you, Jesus Christ, Whom *the* heaven must indeed receive until *the* times of restoration of all things...” (vs 19-21). And that restitution then is the reconciliation of everything. We are the first part of that reconciliation right now. That is what is so important and that is done through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now back to Colossians 1:20: “...having made peace, harmony and tranquility through the blood of His cross...” There is so much we could say about the blood of Jesus Christ. I could actually take another sermon for it, but let me just mention to go back and reread the section in *The Christian Passover* book concerning the blood of Jesus Christ and what it does for us, we will cover just a few of those verses.

Let’s see *how* God did this and in what *way* He did this, and because of His love that He did this *for us*. Romans 5:6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died *for the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood...” (vs 6-9).

It is through His blood that we are put in right standing with God the Father in heaven above. That is what is so fantastic, and that is what is so important for us to comprehend. The blood of Christ and His sacrifice only can accomplish that. Just remember this: ***Nothing can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!***

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the

death of His own Son...” (vs 9-10). Isn’t that something? That is really a verse to think about, to pray about, to understand that *God reconciled us*, set the things in motion so that we could be reconciled while we were still enemies of God, and for us who live in this age, before we were ever born.

“...much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation” (vs 10-11). That is through Jesus Christ by God the Father in heaven above in the Holy of Holies with Jesus Christ sitting at His right hand.

Now let’s come back to Colossians 1:20 again; here is the part of the verse I want to cover: “...so that through Him all things might be reconciled, whether it be things on the earth or the things in the heavens and universe.”

- What is there to reconcile in the heavens and the universe?

That means to *make everything right, to bring it back together*.

- What is going to be the final act of reconciliation that is going to take care of things that occurred in heaven?
- Why are there things in heaven that need to be reconciled?

The reason is this:

- Satan the devil rebelled—did he not? *Yes, he did* (Isa. 14; Ezek. 28).
- He took one third of the angels with him—did he not? *Yes!* (Rev. 12:4).

God still has not reconciled the problems that that has caused. Now, since the demons and Satan have rejected God, He cannot make it right by their repentance because *they have refused to repent*. God has to make it right. What is the vehicle that God is going to do to make it right? *God is going to bind Satan and the demons!*

There is one verse in the book of Hebrews that says He is going to destroy the devil, there is another one, which says that he is going to be in the ‘blackness of darkness forever and ever.’ So, it is not clear exactly from the Bible exactly what is going to happen to Satan the devil and the demons, but we know that there can be no total peace, there can be no total reconciliation of all of God’s creation and His plan until Satan the devil has been taken care of, along with his demons. That is why, when we read in the book of Revelation that after Satan is used for the last time, he is cast back into the Lake of Fire and then Satan is no more heard of and only after that is done and then the Great White Throne Judgment—where salvation will be offered to

everyone who never had an opportunity and those human beings who reject the plan of God and will have committed the unpardonable sin—will die the second death.

In order to make things right when you have something that is irreconcilable then you must eliminate it, and that is what God is going to do so that all that will be reconciled with Him will be together in the Kingdom of God. Then, and only then, can New Jerusalem come down out of heaven from God the Father and be on the earth. So, that is quite a statement where it says that He might reconcile all things, “...whether it be the things on earth, or the things in the heavens and universe” (v 20).

We covered part of this in Rom. 5, that He reconciled us while we were still enemies of God, v 21: “And all of you were once alienated and antagonistically estranged... [hostile to God] ...even in a state of animosity and enmity, actually enemies (of God) in your minds by your own wicked, malevolent and evil works, your own daily actions and deeds; yet now has He reconciled and ransomed you.”

Let’s look a little bit about the nature that we have as human beings with the *law of sin and death* in us. This is why there is nothing, brethren—no force from the outside that is going to correct the problems of the inside—because we are enemies of God in our minds:

- by our thoughts
- by our works
- by the law of sin and death within us

This last week I had the local church do a project—you might want to do this, and I would appreciate your input on it: Think of every reason why the *mark of the beast*—when it comes—will be hailed as the best thing that has ever happened, which the Bible says is the worst. Why businesses will like it, banks will like it, individuals will like it, governments will like it, etc. And it just dawned on me another reason why the *mark of the beast* is so insidious: because that is the ultimate outside force, which is used to coerce people into doing what is right, *as the society considers the things that are right*.

Whereas God, on the other hand, wants us to have the character by choice to do the things that are right, rather than being forced to do the things that are right from the outside. That is why the *mark of the beast* is so absolutely awful, *it takes away your choice and your character and you give it up to the force of Satan the devil* through the *mark of the beast* to coerce people to do what they should do by choice. *The mark of the beast won’t change the*

**heart!** The reason is that *only God can change the heart*. That is why Christ has to come *into* us. That is why we must be reconciled to God.

Mark 7:20: “And He said, ‘That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man’” (vs 20-23).

Hence then we are enemies of God. And you cannot correct that with the *mark of the beast*. You may be able to force people for a while to do something. You may be able to coerce them into not stealing. You may be able to coerce them into not cheating on their business dealings, or whatever it may be. You can coerce them to bring the underground economy up aboveboard because now there is no cash. But you have not changed the heart and that is what is so important. God wants the heart changed

- by conversion
- by His Spirit
- by His righteousness
- by His love
- and by His goodness

Let’s go to Romans, the eighth chapter, because the word *enemy* in the Greek is the same word as we find in Rom. 8 concerning the carnal mind being enmity, and we are enemies of God. Where? *In our minds!* That’s what must be changed. That’s why Jesus Christ told the Pharisees to ‘clean first the inside of the cup and then the outside will be clean’—because the Pharisees were those who liked to take and make everything clean and look right on the *outside*, but *within they were full of excess and extortion*, just like whited sepulchers full of excesses and rottenness.

Let’s look at what God did in this reconciliation. Let’s pick it up here in Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...” Even though we still have the *law of sin and death* in us, even though we have not overcome, *we are saved by grace*. God does not condemn us, because we are fighting to overcome sin, because we are to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. The sins that we have are the inner battles, because as Paul said every time he wanted to do good *evil was present*. *Only the Spirit of God can expose that evilness and that wickedness of your mind!* That is why the struggle is so intense. And because that struggle is intense and because you don’t want to do the works of the flesh, you don’t want to sin—but

you want to follow Christ—therefore, there is no condemnation to you who are in Christ Jesus.

“...who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit... [And that is what you are following: the things of the Spirit of God.] ...Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from ‘the law of sin and death.’ For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (vs 1-3).

Please understand that that means in exactly the same flesh that we have with the *law of sin and death* in us. That is why it says in 1-Peter 2:24, that Jesus Christ Himself bore in His body our sins to the cross.

(go to the next track)

Christ had to overcome the *law of sin and death*. When you really understand it, the judgment that God put on all human beings, to give them, within their members and in their minds *the law of sin and death*, **God took the same judgment upon Himself to redeem us**. That is so profound, brethren, that it is still hard for us to really grasp that kind of love. When you think and you ask yourself, ‘What is the greatest thing that I would do for someone else?’ We can’t even come close to the greatness of what Christ has done. We can’t even come near to the love of what God has done for us. That God would do this in the person of Jesus Christ, give up being God who is Holy and perfect and righteous and sinless. To take upon Him the likeness, the same flesh as we have, with the *law of sin and death* in Him so that He could die and in His living in the flesh He would never sin; that He could be that perfect sacrifice. That is really fantastic when we really grasp it. And when we do then:

- Do you want to sin? *No!*
- Do you want to do those things that are carnal? *No!*
- Do you want to have just the physical things in this life? *No!*

—because since you have the Spirit of God and are walking after the Spirit, you are minding the things of the Spirit and not the things of the flesh. The very fact that you keep God’s commandments, the very fact that you want to do those things which please God, show that you are not doing those things of the flesh to follow the flesh.

Verse 4: “In order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us... [s the true righteousness] ...who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit: For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit

mind the things of the Spirit.... [That is what we are doing, brethren, right now at this minute studying the Word of God.] ...For to be carnally minded... [or that is to follow the mind of the flesh] ...*is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace... [that is what Christ has brought] ...Because the carnal mind *is* **enmity**... [same root word as *enemy*] ...enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*" (vs 4-7).

The very fact that you want to keep the commandments of God, the very fact that you are desiring to do those things which are pleasing to God, show that you have the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God is leading you and you are not carnal minded in as much as you are not trying to live your life by the schemes and the sins of the flesh, but you are trying to live your life by the commands of God through His Holy Spirit, which He has given through His Son Jesus Christ.

"...for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God.... [because they do not have the Spirit of God] ...However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (vs 7-9).

This is really quite a profound statement when it says in Colossians 1:21: "And all of you were once alienated and antagonistically estranged, even in a state of mental animosity and enmity, actually enemies (of God) in your minds by your own wicked, malevolent and evil works, your own daily actions and deeds; yet now at this time has He reconciled and ransomed you in the body of His own flesh through His sacrifice, even the death (the very death of the Son of God) to present you before God the Father, (yes, in His very presence)..." (vs 21-22).

We need to understand that, brethren. When we pray to God, and our prayers go up to Him, they come right before the very throne of God. Just like it says there in Rev. 8 when John saw the altar and the incense coming up from the altar was the prayers of all the saints coming right up before God the Father. When we pray and we say, 'Our Father' we have direct access to the greatest Being in the universe. That is what the reconciliation is all about.

Here is how we stand before God: ...as Holy and consecrated, even unblamable, unimpeachable and unblemished before Him" (v 22). That is an awesome thing to understand. That is tremendous to understand.

Romans 3:22: "Even *the* righteousness of God... [Which means that we have been given the gift of the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to

us.] ...Even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *But* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past, Through the forbearance of God..." (vs 22-26).

This righteousness and the gift of righteousness, which is imputed to us, is given so that we may stand before Him Holy and blameless and spotless and without blemish. That is a wonderful and awesome thing!

Romans 5:17: "For if by the offense of the one man death reigned by the one, how much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and the **gift of righteousness**." God gives that to us, a fantastic and tremendous gift. ***No one can earn the righteousness of Jesus Christ***, because only Christ was wholly righteous. God gives this righteousness to us, imputes this righteousness to us, ***through His love!***

- How we are to operate within this?
- How we are to do this?
- How we are to live our lives?

It is not going to be that God is there dogging our every step of the way to make us do His will. That is what the *mark of the beast* is going to be so people are going to be *made* to keep the laws of the land, *made* to submit to authority. ***God does not want that***; He wants us

- to voluntarily love Him:
- to choose His way
- to submit to His way
- to keep His commandments

Now, let's come here to Philippians 2:12: "So then, my beloved even as you have always obeyed..." Very important thing; that means that we have no pretense in what we are doing, we are striving to obey at all times.

"...not as in my presence only..." (v 12). Too many people do that. That is called *politics*, to do things to be seen, and we have to realize the One we have to deal with, we stand before Him naked, so ***God knows!***

"...but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you... [that righteousness is created by Christ in us, with God's Spirit and God is working in us, within us] ...***both to will and to do according to His good pleasure***. Do all things

without complaints and disputes; So that you may be blameless... [that connects right with Col. 1.] ...and without offense, innocent children of God in *the* midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in *the* world” (vs 12-15).

Brethren, I tell you the darkness is coming on this world so fast, it is breathtaking! These Scriptures really have a lot of meaning for us. Now here is how we do it, v 16: “Holding forth the Word of Life” (vs 12-16). That’s what we have to hold onto because the words of Jesus Christ has given us, inspired for us, ***they are Life and they are Truth!***

Now let’s come back to Colossians 1:21—let me suggest that you put in your notes: 1-Cor. 6:9-11, which shows the past conduct of many of those that God called, including us.

Now let’s continue on with Colossians 1:22: Be “...Holy and consecrated, even unblamable, unimpeachable and unblemished before Him, if you truly continue to embrace and adhere to the faith which has been established...” (vs 22-23)—which is *Christ in us*, and that is the whole purpose. Paul is bringing this whole first chapter up to a crescendo in v 27.

Verse 23: “If you truly continue to embrace and adhere to the faith which has been established, and continue firm and steadfast on that foundation; not being moved away, or swerving from the hope of the glad tidings of the Gospel, which was proclaimed and heralded to all the creation which is under heaven...”

Which means that we really don’t understand how far the Gospel was preached with the twelve apostles and the Church that God raised up in the first century. We have a small, little pittance of what the Church was with what is contained in the New Testament. But Paul says that it was preached under heaven to all the creation. So how far that was, we do not know. It is continuing to be preached—isn’t it?

“...of which I, Paul, became a minister and servant. Now at this time I am rejoicing in my sufferings and afflictions for you, in your service and on your behalf. And I am filling up and completing, in a sense, that which has been left behind and unfinished of the tribulations and afflictions of Christ in my own flesh, for and on behalf of His body, which is the Church, the assembly of the called-out ones” (vs 23-24).

Now, let’s look at a couple of references we can tie in this with the Apostle Paul. Let’s go to Acts 9; let’s see the very calling of the Apostle Paul. It was prophesied in the very beginning of his ministry that when he was Saul. It is interesting, Carl [Franklin] pointed this out to me some time ago:

‘It’s interesting that Saul, who is of the tribe of Benjamin—first king of Israel—failed and was a sinner. Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, who is a Pharisee, who is a killer and destroying the Church God called, succeeded.’ That is just a little interesting sidelight as you go through the Bible.

Here is the calling of Saul who became Paul, Acts 9:1: “Now Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, Asking him *for* letters... [those were arrest warrants, because the high priest was sitting in the seat of Moses and gave that judgment] ...*to take* to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who were of that way, he might bring *them* bound [*in chains*] to Jerusalem” (vs 1-2).

So then, God called him, knocked him off his donkey and he became blind and they led him into Damascus and he was three days without sight (vs 3-9).

Verse 10: “Now, there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, I *am here*, Lord.’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise *and* go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying, And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the* children of Israel; For I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name” (vs 10-16).

So, right with the beginning of the calling of the Apostle Paul, it was a *calling to a ministry*, which had tremendous suffering to it. That is why I did the two sermons, *So You Think You Have Suffered*. Paul understood this, that’s why he said even in his body he was filling up the afflictions of Christ.

Now, let’s go to Philippians, the third chapter, and see another view of how Paul viewed his status with God. Isn’t that something? Most ministers today, or most people who desire to be ministers are looking for all the power, and all the glory, and all the things that they can get out of it, rather than as the Apostle Paul was when Christ told him ‘you’re going to suffer.’ Well, a little later down the line they learn that. Hopefully they repent and change; let’s hope so. Now let’s see what the Apostle Paul counted everything that there was and

how he looked at the suffering that he was going through.

Philippians 3:8: “But then truly, **I count all things to be loss** for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung [the dregs of the refuse]; that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness*... [the right standing with God, which is the gift of God through His grace] ...which *is by the faith of Christ—the righteousness of God that is based on faith*; That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death... [And how did he endure all of this suffering?] ...**If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead...**” (vs 8-11).

He always had that as a goal and he counted all of that as nothing, as it were. You can read there in Acts 4 that when the apostles were beaten and let go and came back and prayed with the brethren, they were praying that they were counted worthy to share in the sufferings that Christ suffered. On the other hand, we are not to go out and provoke suffering. Listen, it'll find us, because we are human beings and we're living in this evil world.

Colossians 1:25: “For which cause I became a minister and servant according to the administration and stewardship of God...” Now this is interesting because the ministration or administration and stewardship of God. A steward is something which most people today have very little concept of, or stewardship. A *steward* is one who is given responsibility and complete control over someone else's goods or property to run as a trustee honestly and forthrightly—realizing constantly that nothing belongs to him—and so that is how Paul viewed his ministry and that is how every minister needs to view the Church of God. That they are the husbandry of God, they are the sheep of God, they are the inheritance of God and do not belong to the minister.

Paul understood this, that is why it's “...the stewardship of God, which was given to me for you, in order to complete and fulfill the word and the message of God” (v 25). Paul here, at this point, knew that he was going to finish and help complete writing the New Testament. And the message of God is:

Verse 26: “The mystery of God's own will and desire... [Isn't that something? God has given us the understanding, at least as much as we are able to grasp, of His own secret plan and of His own will and desire.] ...which has been hidden, and not revealed in the past ages, generations or

civilizations...” That's why salvation was not given until Christ came to bring it, except with the few exceptions of those kings and prophets in the Old Testament, and such as those that are called the patriarchs. Those were the only ones who received salvation until Christ.

“...but now has been made manifest and revealed to the saints... [Brethren, what we have and understand is so profound, and it was revealed]: ...through Jesus Christ and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God” (vs 25-26).

Now here is what he is coming to. This is the fulcrum, the central theme of the first chapter and all of the rest of the book of Colossians hangs on v 27. You have the first chapter leading up to this, which then gets our mind on Christ, then you have the second chapter which shows how philosophy leads away from this and then you have the third chapter the which shows us how to grow and overcome and develop the character of God which v 27 is talking about.

Verse 27: “To whom God did will... [that means He purposed] ...to make known and to reveal what is the riches and the abundant blessings of the magnificent glory, even the surpassing magnitude of this mystery among the nations... [The *King James* says the ‘Gentiles’ and that means those of other nations other than the Jews and the Israelites, that is all it means.] ...which is Christ in you, the hope of the magnificent splendor and glory (which shall be revealed in us).”

That is the whole key to understanding the book of Colossians. ***It is Christ in us, the hope of glory!*** That is of the splendorous magnitude of the great plan of God.

Verse 28: “And it is He, Jesus Christ, who we are announcing and preaching, even admonishing and teaching every person in all wisdom and understanding; in order that we may present every person perfect, fully accomplished in Christian character, and free of short-comings in Christ Jesus. And it is to this end and purpose that I am laboring, earnestly striving according to His inner working, which is working and functioning within me with dynamic strength and energizing power.” (vs 28-29).

That is the whole purpose and goal of the ministry. If any minister wants to know what his goal is in teaching the brethren, there it is right there in vs 28 and 29. Now let's look at some verses which will help expand and amplify v 27.

Ephesians 1:4: “According as He has personally chosen us...” That is God the Father, the One who calls us. Think of that for a minute! If you think about the Psalm that David had when he said,

‘Oh, Lord, when I consider the heavens and the earth and the things that you have made, what is man that You think on him? Behold, You have made him a little lower than God, a little lower than Elohim.’

Brethren that is fantastic when you realize that God the Father Himself is the One Who draws us to Christ.

“...He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world...” (v 4). That was His plan, not that God followed every genetic trace of our ancestors down to us and said, ‘Okay because of the genes, I am choosing them.’ *No!* This is *by grace*, this is not by inheritance of a physical, genetic line.

This was His plan “...before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; Having predestinated us for sonship... [not adoption, *sonship*, we are going to be the children of God, not the children of someone else adopted by God. This means sonship of children] ...to Himself through Jesus Christ...” (vs 4-5). It is to God the Father, *Himself*. We receive the begetting, what? *From God the Father*—don’t we? *Yes!*

So it is, “...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will... [And that still blows my mind, brethren. That means *of His very own will and desire*.] ...to the praise of the glory of His grace...” (vs 5-6)—which means that the angels and those who come into the Kingdom of God after the first resurrection *will praise God for the glory that He has done in us*. That is why the Apostle Paul said, ‘that Christ in us is the hope of this glory.’

“...wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; Having made known to us the mystery of **His own will**...” (vs 6-9).

That is *His own will*! Isn’t that something? God has revealed and made known to us, by His calling, by His Spirit, by the New Testament, *His own will*. Brethren, that just thrills me every time I think of it, and that humbles me every time I think of it. It is so awesome that it just leaves me in a kind of blubbery mass of unworthiness, and I am sure that it affects you the same way. That God would do that, v 9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself.” That is awesome! That is something! That is absolutely something!

Let’s go to 1-John, the third chapter, and let’s really grasp and understand this to the very best that God’s Spirit will lead us to understand it. Brethren,

- we grow in *knowledge*
- we grow in *understanding*
- we grow in *God’s Spirit*
- and we grow in the *spiritual feeling and emotion* of these things

When we first heard we are going to be the sons of God, ‘oh yeah, that is interesting.’ But now when we hear that we are the children of God, doesn’t it have a whole lot more meaning than it did when you first heard it? Doesn’t it sink deeper into your consciousness and into your mind and into your soul and heart and being, that God has loved us this much?

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us... [Remember what David said, ‘What is man, that You are mindful of him?’ You might put your own name there. What am I? What are you? That God is mindful of us!] ...that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us...” It doesn’t comprehend us. It doesn’t understand our belief and faith and love.

“...because it did not know Him. Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2).

What is this to do for us? Brethren, God wants us to be inspired. God is not going to *beat us* into the Kingdom of God. God wants us to love Him and be inspired. That is what v 3 says, that

- *if* we understand this
- *if* we understand the calling of God
- *if* we understand the love of God
- *if* we comprehend it to the degree and the point that we do now

—which we hope to grow in more in the future—here is what we are going to do, v 3: “And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” That means cleanses himself. How do you cleanse yourself?

Let’s go to 1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin” That is how we are purifying ourselves—through Jesus Christ.



Now back to 1-John 3:3: “And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He [Christ] is pure.”

To see the tremendous calling that God has given and what God is holding out to us freely is the tremendous and wonderful and fantastic gift that God has that ***we are going to be His sons***. Of course, the Apostle Paul said that this was made known by revelation. You can’t find this in the Old Testament, brethren. That is why the New Testament must interpret the Old. That is why the New Covenant is superior to the Old. That is why the Word of God in the New Testament gives us

- the very words of God
- the life of God
- the mind of God
- the purpose of God

which was not understood in past ages.

Ephesians 3:11: “According to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, In Whom we have boldness and *direct* access **with confidence through His very own faith**” (vs 11-12). We never fail on that faith, brethren. We may get weak, we may have our difficulties, we may struggle in overcoming sin, that is true, absolutely, without a doubt. But we can have “...confidence through His *very* own faith.”. [That is by Christ’s faith in us.

Verse 13: “So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working* for your glory.... [Paul was writing this from prison. Paul understood the afflictions and tribulations he went through.] ...For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (vs 13-15). And yes,

- God is a *family*
- God is creating *His family*
- we are going to be the firstborn in the Kingdom of God, the firstfruits after Christ, at the first resurrection
- we are going to be named after the Father,

That is why He has called us, that is why He has given us His Spirit.

Verse 16: “That He may grant you according to the riches of His glory... [Right from the very Being of God Himself through His Holy Spirit *to you* of the riches of His glory.] (Here is what God wants to be for you.): ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man.... [the inner man because that is where it is at brethren] ...That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the

saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height” (vs 16-18). God wants us to understand His plan. God wants us to know His love. God wants us to understand about Jesus Christ.

Verse 19: “And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses human knowledge... [That means it surpasses any human knowledge or any human wisdom or any human philosophy. It’s got to come from God.] ...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” That is what God wants for you. And, of course, that will be completed *at the resurrection*.

Now notice this promise, v 20: “Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...” When you get discouraged, brethren, think on these things and turn to this verse and just tell God that you know that He is able to do abundantly above everything we might even think of, or even ask Him. So, the awesome destiny that God has for us is overwhelming, brethren. How’s He going to do it?

“...according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 20-21).

Now what I want you to do is to capture whatever inspiration that God gave us today. Sort of encapsulate that in your mind:

- think on the *plan* of God
- think the *purpose* of God
- the *Family* of God
- the *calling* of God
- the *magnificence* of Christ
- the *greatness* of His sacrifice
- the *overwhelming abundance* of His love that He has given to us

Then I want you to get that paper that Carl Franklin gave us at the Feast concerning the trinity, and I want you to labor through that it is going to be difficult, I know. Some of you may have already read part of it or perhaps a few of you may have read all of it. I will have to admit I have not quite completed it all myself, so I am going to try and do it by next week. I want you to compare this greatest thing of philosophy that is contained in this paper showing the trinity and hypostasis and the pagan thoughts about God, and understand that it is the rudiments of the demonic spirits of this world.

Then, what I want you to also, when you are done with that, if you can and if you have time, please reread and study the article that I did just before the Feast that you are complete in Christ which goes through chapter 2 verse-by-verse,

because next week we are going to go through chapter 2 verse-by-verse.

I want you to compare the greatness of God's plan as compared to the penurious stupidity of the philosophy of men. And then we will understand Colossians, the second chapter

I am going to read here in the *King James*, Colossians 2 and we will end here. When you consider all that has been said here and the inspiration that God has given us to understand His way, now when you read Colossians 2:8: "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."

Doesn't that make that verse leap right off the page? So, we can understand *there is nothing to compare with what God has given us*. And the wisdom of this world through its philosophy or 'sophia'—as it is in the Greek, or 'philosophia': *lover of wisdom*—nothing can compare of that.

That is why Paul said, *'The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor is it entered into the heart of men the things which God has prepared for those that love Him.'* And brethren, philosophy and theology and the things of the world *can never replace or compare to the greatness of God's plan*.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible. in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted) Exception: Book of Colossians from *Amplified Translation* booklet

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 1:25
- 2) Colossians 1:15
- 3) Revelation 1:5
- 4) Romans 8:29
- 5) Colossians 1:15-20
- 6) Ephesians 1:20-23
- 7) Ephesians 5:23, 25-28
- 8) 1 Corinthians 11:1-3
- 9) Revelation 1:8
- 10) Revelation 3:14
- 11) Colossians 1:20
- 12) Acts 3:19-21
- 13) Romans 5:6-11
- 14) Colossians 1:20-21
- 15) Mark 7:20-23
- 16) Romans 8:1-9
- 17) Colossians 1:21-22
- 18) Romans 3:22-26
- 19) Romans 5:17
- 20) Philippians 2:12-16
- 21) Colossians 1:22-24
- 22) Acts 9:1-2, 10-16
- 23) Philippians 3:8-11
- 24) Colossians 1:25-29

- 25) Ephesians 1:4-9
- 26) 1 John 3:1-3
- 27) 1 John 1:7
- 28) 1 John 3:3
- 29) Ephesians 3: 11-21
- 30) Colossians 2:8

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Philippians 2
- Isaiah 14
- Ezekiel 28
- Revelation 12:4
- 1 Peter 2:24
- Revelation 8
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- Acts 4

#### Also referenced:

- Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- Sermons: *So You Think You Have Suffered!*
- Study Paper on the *Trinity* by Carl Franklin

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians IV

Fred R. Coulter

This is number four in the series of the book of Colossians. Today is going to be a day that we are going to have to really put on our thinking caps. Some of these things that I cover today we'll have to go back and review it in the written material. Nevertheless, I think this is critically important. We have come to the most important chapter in understanding the problems that were confronting in the New Testament Church. Colossians, the second chapter, is really a very difficult Scripture to understand, especially for those who have never really understood the New Testament. But, when we go through and understand it the way that God wants us to, we will see that it indeed is not that difficult to understand.

So before we begin, what I want to do is rehearse, just for the record, the *14 Rules of Bible Study*, because what you are going to see is that as we go through Colossians 2 and handle perhaps the most difficult Scriptures in the New Testament—the hard to understand Scriptures—you will see that we are going to literally follow all of the *14 Rules of Bible Study*. I have that in a separate printout plus I also have it in *The Christian Passover* book. So let me just review very quickly, you don't have to write these down now—just review very quickly.

### The Fourteen rules of Bible Study:

1. Begin with Scriptures that are easy to understand

That is why we are at this point now in Colossians, the second chapter, because we began with the easy to understand Scriptures, just like the Apostle Paul did in bringing out the importance of Christ. We are going to see the importance of Christ in relationship to what is contained in the second chapter of Colossians.

2. Let the Bible interpret and prove the Bible. Don't look for what you want to prove, look for what the Bible actually proves.
3. Understand the context, the verses before and after, the chapters before and after.

Does your understanding of a particular verse harmonize with the rest of the Bible? This is what we are going to do. In the second chapter, what we are going to see is that we have to understand the chapter before and then we will understand the chapter after. So chapter two is contingent upon chapter one and chapter three is contingent upon chapters one and two.

4. Understand the original language—Hebrew or Greek. Never try to establish dogmatic doctrines or teachings by using *Strong's Concordance*. It can be helpful at times but it is extremely limited.
5. Ask: What does the Scripture clearly say?
6. Ask: What does the Scripture not say?
7. Ask: Who was the book written to?
8. Ask: Who wrote it?
9. Ask: Who said it?
10. Understand the timeframe in history when the book was written.
11. Don't bring your personal assumptions or preconceived notions into your understanding or conclusions.
12. Base your study on Scriptural knowledge that you already understand. What do you understand up to this point?
13. Do not make conclusions based on partial facts or insufficient information or the opinions and speculations of others.
14. Opinions, regardless of how strongly you feel about them, don't necessarily count. Scripture must be your guide and standard.

Now, what I am going to do so that we can get a complete overview of Colossians 2, I am going to read all the way through it, in the *King James*. And then we will come back and we will look at two sections of difficult Scripture to understand it. And then we will come back and we will see how the overall chapter two was structured and what we can understand out of it.

Let's go to Colossians 2, *King James Version*. I hope that some of you were able to study the article that I wrote: *The Completeness in Christ*. I will review just a few things out of that as we study completely through Colossians 2.

Colossians 2:1: "For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (vs 1-5).

“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk you in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 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. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (vs 6-12).

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; *and* having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (vs 13-19).

“Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh” (vs 20-23).

The reason that I read it all the way through was so that we could get the flow of what Paul wrote about here in Colossians, the second chapter. What we are going to do is look at the two sections of difficult Scriptures first. Let's come to Colossians 2:13, because 13 and 14 are very, very difficult, because v 14 is commonly taught by the Protestants that this is the section of Scripture which says that God nailed the Ten Commandments to the cross; because it does say “the ordinances which was contrary to us and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross.”

We are going to study this verse first and then we are going to see what it really is telling us and we are going to see very clearly that ***the laws and commandments of God were never nailed to the cross*** whatsoever, under any circumstances. Let's understand some things here, that we need to, concerning the Laws of God, the grace of God and understand who establishes righteousness and so forth. First of all, let's go to Romans 6, and here is a tremendous verse, which defends the laws and commandments of God, and also defends grace.

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say?... [That is, to the grace of God.] ...Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?” What is sin? A very basic Scripture, and this is then how we understand, how we are able to come to a proper knowledge and understanding of Scripture. What is sin? *Sin is the transgression of the law (KJV)*—

1-John 3:4: “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.”

What does it say the wages of sin is? Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin *is* death...”

So, Paul then answers the question in v 2: “[God forbid!] **MAY IT NEVER BE!**” It is interesting in the Greek, it doesn't mean *God forbid*, it is even stronger than that. He says; “**MAY IT NEVER BE!**” That is from the point of view and understanding that this is not even a consideration whatsoever, it's not a matter of God preventing it by forbidding it, it is completely unthinkable! “**MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?” So if you are living in sin, you are *transgressing the Law*.

What does the Bible teach us concerning the laws and commandments of God? Right here he tells us very clearly how we are to keep them, Romans 7:6: “But now we have been released from the Law... [That doesn't mean from keeping it, but that means of the consequences of sin.] ...because we have died *to that* in which we were held... [because ‘the wages of sin is death’] ...so that we might serve in newness of *the* spirit, and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter.... [Then Paul asks]: ...What then shall we say? *Is the Law sin?*” (vs 6-7). If the Law were sin, then that is what would have to be nailed to the cross.

But Paul again says: “...[God forbid!] **MAY IT NEVER BE!....** [Then he goes on to explain something very, very important here]: ...But I had not known sin, except through the law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the Law said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, having grasped an opportunity by the commandment... [because we know that by the Law is the knowledge of sin] ...worked out within me every *kind* of lust

[concupiscence]....” (vs 7-8).

In other words, he understood, he understood the gravity of sin, the origin of sin; that it *begins in the mind*. And later he shows that he understood the *law of sin and death*, which was in his members.

...because apart from law, sin *was* dead” (vs 7-8). In other words, there can be no sin without law.

Romans 4:15: “For the Law works out wrath; **because where no law is, there is no transgression.**” We will come to that in the conclusion, but just think on this for a minute: If there is no Law, there is no sin, if there is no sin, then Christ died in vain because there are no sinners, so therefore, if He died for sin, then He died in vain. That’s taking their conclusion to the ultimate extreme. Paul, in no way, is saying that there is no Law, what he is saying, is *how the Law works*.

Romans 7:9: “For I was once alive without law; but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.... [How did Paul die? Did he die physically? No! If he did, he wouldn’t be able to write this—correct? *No! He died spiritually!*] ...And the commandment, which *was meant to result in* life, was found *to be* unto death for me; because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. Therefore, the Law *is* indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good” (vs 9-12).

Now let’s look at a couple of other Scriptures here, showing how Paul died. This is how we all die. We die the death of Christ, co-joined together with Him, in baptism. This tells us very clearly, why it is not possible to have a proper baptism with sprinkling. Did you ever try to bury a corpse by taking a little dust and sprinkling over the top of it? That is why we are put into the water, full immersion baptism. Another reason is that it is literally the closest thing we can come to—that is death—and still live. If we were literally held under the water we would die, we would drown. The use of water is also very important because it is symbolic of God’s Holy Spirit, as we find there in John 7.

- it also purifies
- it also cleanses
- it also then gives us the cleansing, symbolic cleansing of our sins

and when we raise out of that watery grave, we are to walk in newness of life. So let’s find that right here in Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were

baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His* resurrection” (vs 1-5).

That is when we will be *truly born again*. I want you to remember v 6 in relationship to Col. 2:13-14.] “Knowing this, that **our old man was co-crucified with Him** in order that the body of sin might be destroyed... [What is to be destroyed? *Sin*, not righteousness. *Sin is the opposite of righteousness.*] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin... [Which then is very clear that you should not be transgressing the commandments of God.] ...Because the one who has died *to sin*... [that is through this *operation of baptism*, and that is how Paul died] ...has been justified from sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live** with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 6-11).

If something is nailed to a cross and dies, what is it that was nailed to the cross? Well, we’ll find out here as we go along.

Verse 12: “Therefore, do not let sin [reign] rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof.” That means, don’t let sin have dominion over you as it had dominion over you before you were converted. Don’t let sin rule and reign in your life. What are we to let rule and reign in our lives? **Christ!** Not sin! **Christ!** Let’s see how he amplifies that :

Verse 13: “Likewise, do not yield your members... [the members of your body] ...as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not **under law**, but under grace? [God forbid!] **MAY IT NEVER BE!**” (vs 13-15). That in itself is a difficult verse, but it really means this: *Because you are not under law for justification, but under grace for justification, therefore you are not to let sin reign in your mortal body.* Therefore, you are not to continue in sin that grace may abound.

Verse 15 makes it very clear: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under

grace? MAY IT NEVER BE! Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (vs 15-16). There is the whole overall picture concerning the commandments of God, concerning the laws of God, concerning sin and grace and righteousness.

Now let's go ahead and look at some other Scriptures concerning *righteousness*; and we'll find all of this in Psalm 119—which you might make note of is the Psalm which shows the complete, converted attitude toward the laws and commandments of God. The whole Psalm is just an absolutely, wonderful Psalm. This Psalm, for your information, you come back to the first part of Psalm 119 and you will see at the top of each section that it lists every one of the letters of the Hebrew language. And there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is *alpha* and then *beth*, *gimel*, *daleth*, all the way down through the rest of them there. Let's just look at the first section here of Psalm 119 and then we will look at several other verses.

Psalm 119:1: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep His testimonies and who seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways. You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!" (vs 1-5).

You will notice here, that nearly the same conflict existed in David with this Psalm that existed in Paul, when he said, 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who is going to deliver me from the body of this death?'

Verse 6: "Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Your commandments. I will praise You with uprightness of heart when I have learned Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes; O forsake me not utterly" (vs 6-8).

We will see how this ties in with some of the words of Jesus, v 142: "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your Law is the Truth."

Verse 126: "It is time for the LORD to work, for they have made void Your law. Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold. Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (vs 126-128). That shows the whole overall attitude. We need to ask ourselves; do we also consider every precept of God? Regardless of whether it is a law or commandment, regardless of what it is:

- concerning His grace
- concerning His love
- concerning faith
- concerning what He has given us in the way of His Word and Truth
- what He has given us in the way concerning His Spirit
- what He has given us in the way concerning understanding

—that we consider all of these things right.

Verse 151: "You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are Truth." We will put this together with a couple of other Scriptures here, all right.

Verse 160: "Your Word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever."

Verse 172: "My tongue shall speak of Your Word, for all Your commandments are righteousness. Let Your hand help me, for I have chosen Your precepts. I have longed for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight" (vs 172-174).

Since the commandments are Truth, since the law is Truth, since all of His precepts are true from the beginning, this is how we are sanctified; we are not sanctified in law-breaking. So therefore, we can conclude that, since we are sanctified in righteousness and we cannot be living in sin, we are sanctified in Truth, and all of God's ways are Truth and Truth endures forever. Therefore, ***the commandments of God could never have been nailed to the cross.*** We will reinforce this just a little bit more as we are going along.

John 17:17: "Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth." What did Jesus say of Himself?

John 14—there are several things here that really contains a lot for us in our whole, overall approach. John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life'... [Jesus is *the Truth*. ***If*** the Laws of God are true, the commandments of God are true, His Word is true, all His precepts are true, and Jesus Christ Who is the Word of God personifies every bit of that, and He is the Truth, then *we certainly cannot do away with the commandments of God*. God certainly is not going to nail them to a cross. No one went out there and took the two tablets of the Ten Commandments out of the Ark of the Covenant as it were and ran over to the crucifixion stake or cross of Jesus and nailed it up there along with Him and said, 'Hooray, we have nailed the Ten Commandments to the cross.' That is a *carnal minded approach* to the Laws of God.

Again, we are going to review some very basic things which we already know. But we need to really reinforce it and understand it deeply. Verse 15 “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” In the Greek this is most emphatic. ‘Your Word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever.’

Then He gives, v 17: “...the Spirit of Truth... [v 21]: “The one who has My commandments...” These are the words of Christ. These were His words the night before He was crucified. If He were going to nail—or have God the Father nail alongside with Him—the commandments of God, He would have told His disciples *that very night*, that when He died in the crucifixion, the commandments of God would also be nailed to that cross. But He didn’t!

Verse 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me... [An ongoing thing. Your love to God is reinforced and expressed by keeping the commandments of God.] ...shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.”

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word.... [we are not to just keep the commandments, we are to keep all the words that Jesus brought] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words...” (vs 23-24). Think of that for a minute! We have the commandments; we have the words; and now we have the sayings, whatever Jesus said. That makes it far more profound!

Now notice the next sentence, this is very important to understand because, if you ever are talking to someone who believes that the Ten Commandments have been nailed to the cross, go ahead and go through the things like I have here and then ask him the question: Do you follow God the Father? He will probably say: ‘Oh yes, indeed, I follow God the Father, that’s the One I want to follow.’ Do you follow Jesus Christ? ‘Oh yes that’s the One I want to follow.’ Then you go through John 14

Verse 24: ...and the Word... [the whole Message of Christ] ...that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.” That is something to think on—isn’t it? Every word that Christ spoke, every commandment that He gave was Truth, was righteousness from God the Father. So, if you believe those things, that they came from God the Father. Therefore, it gets back to the whole principle then of your relationship with God that if you love

Him, you will keep His commandments.

Let’s see some other verses which also reinforce this; and we will see what the Apostle John wrote concerning these things. This is why you need to understand the difficult Scriptures with those that are easy to understand.

1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him... [so there are certain things that we are supposed to know and understand] ...if we keep His commandments.” There it is. Our status with knowing God is contingent upon keeping His commandments. So, any Protestant needs to be asked, ‘Do you know the Lord?’ And that is one of their favorite sayings—right? They come up to you and say, ‘Brother, do you know the Lord?’ This is how we know the Lord because, if anyone says he knows Him, it is only going to be contingent upon keeping His commandments.

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth...” which is

- the Word of God
- Christ in him
- the commandments of God
- the statutes of God
- the judgments of God
- the grace of God

...is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him [Christ] is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked” (vs 4-6).

Did Jesus ever transgress one of the commandments of God? *NO!* In fact, one of the first teachings of Jesus Christ, as we know—Matt. 5:17-18, He clearly said, ‘Don’t even think about it, don’t even let it enter into your mind that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets’—He didn’t! He came to fulfill!

1-John 5:17: “All unrighteousness is sin...”—very clear, without a doubt.

Let’s consider the following, and then we will go back and understand Col. 2:13-14:

1. If the laws and commandments of God were only until Christ and they were nailed to the cross at the crucifixion, then there would not have been any sin, because *the laws and commandments of God define what sin is*. If they were abolished, there is no sin. Where there is no law, there is no sin. If the laws and commandments of God were truly nailed

to the cross at the crucifixion of Christ there would be no sin.

2. Consequently, if there has been no sin since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ then there are no sinners; hence sinners are not sinners and there is no need for repentance nor forgiveness of sin.

So, what the Protestants have done in this, they have actually boxed themselves into a corner where they have no solution. Because they have just trotted through the Bible and picked out a very difficult Scripture and have made outrageous, lying claims about it, which are not true.

3. Furthermore, if there have been no sinners since the death of Jesus Christ—because the laws and commandments of God, which defines sin have been abolished—then no one has need of a Savior. You don't need a Savior. And because no Savior is needed, Jesus Christ's perfect life and death were in vain.

So, that is how you take the *illogic* of human reasoning and bring it to its ultimate conclusion and show that that is folly.

(go to the next track)

There are a couple of other Scriptures, which are important for us to know, which are these:

Not everyone that says to Me, Lord, Lord is going to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but the one who is doing the will of My Father.

Then we know the verses after that says that when they make various claims about using the name of Jesus, about casting out demons, about doing many wonderful works, He is going to tell them:

I never knew you, depart from Me, you that work iniquity or lawlessness.

Then He also said in Matthew 25:41: "Then shall He also say to those on *the* left, 'Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

All right, now let's go back and understand what is the true meaning of Colossians 2:13-14. Let's go back to Colossians 2:11, because if you have a difficult Scripture you look at the verses before and after. "In Whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision, (the spiritual circumcision of the heart and mind), not made or performed by human hands, in the stripping off and renouncing the body of the sins and offenses of the flesh..." You are putting off sin. You are not getting rid of the commandments of God, you are getting rid of the sin, because you have transgressed the

commandments of God and now you need 'the circumcision of Christ,' which is of the heart. How is that done?

Verse 12: "...buried with Him into baptism... [we already saw what it meant to be baptized in Christ] ...(in the watery grave), out from which you were also conjointly raised with Him (as though resurrected from the dead) through the faith and belief in the workings and powerful operation of God... [you now believe, you now have] ...Who resurrected Him (Jesus Christ) from among the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, transgressions and iniquities (for the wages of sin is death), and in the uncircumcision of your flesh..." (vs 11-13).

Ephesians, the second chapter, ties right in with it, when it talks about you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he is talking about their spiritual condition before God, prior to baptism.

Ephesians 2:1 (KJV): "And you *has* He quickened..."—to be made alive spiritually.

(FV): "Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past... [Before their calling and conversion.] ...you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)" (vs 1-5).

Let's go back to Colossians 2:13—and I am using the *King James*, so we can understand it in the *King James* and I am doing this, lest someone says, 'Well the only way you understand it, is by reading your *Amplified Translation*.' The *Amplified Translation* is an amplification that has been made *after* the understanding.

Colossians 2:13 (KJV): "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.... [v 14 keys on vs 12 & 13]: ...Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us" (vs 13-14). Here is where they say that He 'blotted out' those ordinances of God—but this is not so.

The handwriting of ordinances were not written by the hand of God, they were written by the *hand of men*. And these handwritings of ordinances



were in a sense what could be called the *note of debt, which a sinner has before God*. The *note of debt* or *the record of our debt* of our sins has been **blotted out**. Those ordinances and the sins were caused by *the commandments of men*!

Let's come over here to v 20, because he gives us the answer right in the chapter. We are talking about being dead in Christ, dead from the rudiments of the world—correct? *Yes!* So vs 12 & 13 connect directly with v 20: "Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, (Touch not, taste not, handle not; Which are all to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (vs 20-22).

So the handwriting of ordinances, which is symbolic of our sins that we committed, were actually caused by following the pagan religion which they were adhering to through philosophy. So, their very way of life **caused** the handwriting of ordinances or the *note of our debt*, which was caused by obeying the doctrines and the commandments and ordinances of men.

Verse 14 again: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us... [Sin is against us! The commandments of God are **never** against us. The commandments of God are there to define what sin is so we may repent of it, that we may change, that we may turn, that we may go the other way.] ...[And sin then] which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." What was Christ on that cross? *He represented sin, the sin offering of God!*

We will see that clearly defined for us, 2-Corinthians 5:21: "For He made Him [Christ] Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us..." That's a tremendous thing to contemplate, brethren. That the righteous God, Holy and perfectly righteous, took upon Himself the human sinful nature and yet lived perfectly in the flesh, overcoming human nature, so that when He was nailed to the cross, **He represented us**. He represented sin because He took upon Him all the sins of the whole world.

"...Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him" (v 21).

Now let's go to 1-Peter, the second chapter, a very important and profound verse. When we understand what was nailed to the cross, literally there were two things nailed to the cross:

1. Jesus Christ
2. A sign, which was written, which said that He was the King of the Jews

Nothing else was nailed to the cross. The Ten Commandments weren't nailed to the cross. The statutes and judgments of God were not nailed to the cross. **All sin was nailed to the cross**. It includes all the sins that men do, which are caused by their own self-righteousness and their own religions, pagan or otherwise. It includes the sins of every thought of every human individual, which causes them to sin, because Jesus Christ had in His body the *law of sin and death* so that He could carry our sins to that cross.

1-Peter 2:21: "For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us... [He was sin for us; He suffered for us.] ...leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; *when* suffering, He threatened not, but committed *Himself* to Him Who judges righteously; **Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree...**" (vs 21-23).

Now **that** also constituted the handwriting of ordinances, which was contrary to us because it was the *note of the debt* of our sins. Didn't Jesus Christ say that everyone is going to give an account of even every idle word that he speaks? Everyone is going to give an account of himself before God? *Yes!* We need to have our old self, our old sins, our entire life, as it were—which constitutes sins—nailed to the cross with Christ; and that's why we have baptism.

"...Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree so that we, being dead to sins... [The same thing that Paul wrote, same thing that John wrote.] ...that we, being dead to sins, may live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed" (vs 23-24).

So Col. 2:13-14 does not, in any way, mean that the commandments of God were nailed to the cross. The only two things nailed to the cross were:

1. Jesus Christ, Who represented the sins of all mankind, collectively and individually, as applied upon repentance and baptism.
2. The sign which said; 'This is the King of the Jews.'

Let's go back to Colossians 2:15 (KJV): "*And* having spoiled principalities and powers... [that is of Satan, of the kings of the earth and of the demons] ...He made a show of them openly... [in other words, this was done publicly; and you might even say notoriously; and as the Apostle Paul said, it was not done in a corner] ...triumphing over them.... [that is the principalities, Satan, the powers, the kings of the earth] ...in it"—which then is the crucifixion.

Now we are ready to understand Colossians 2:16-17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body *is* of Christ." Let's begin with the very basic understanding here, and let's first of all ask what it **does not say**. Let's look at that first sentence again.

1. The first sentence does not say that a believer does not have to obey these things—does it? *No!* It doesn't say that we don't have to observe these things; *not in any way*.
2. It doesn't say that these were abolished and no longer are required to be observed.

What does it say? The first sentence says; 'Let no man judge you.' What does it mean to let no man judge you? *Simple, just what it says!* When someone judges you, they are judging your behavior—correct? *Yes!* If they are judging your behavior, you are doing it—correct? *Yes!* What is most important here in understanding this is, is that we have a whole congregation, which was not Jewish. Colossi and the Colossians were all Gentiles. That Paul was '...making known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. 1:27)

Colossians 2:13, he says: "...you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh..." If these people, being former pagan converts, and as we are going to see, bothered by their former philosophical, religious teachers, they were the ones who were judging them because they were keeping the things that Paul listed here.

Now, v 16, you kind of lose an emphasis here in the *King James*: "Let no man therefore judge you..." But the *therefore* in the Greek is most emphatic and really should be (*FV*): "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths, 17. which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ" (vs 16-17).

One way of understanding that is this: That you are to not let any man—those not within the Church—judge you concerning your observing of these things, but the Body of Christ, which is the Church. That is a correct understanding, but it is amplified even more than that when we understand the whole thing.

What we have is this: We have, clearly told us that in eating, which is in meat or in drinking, which is in drink or in respect of a Holy Day or of the new moon or of the Sabbath 'which are a shadow of things to come.' These foreshadow what God is

doing as compared to the philosophical traditions of men and the commandments of men; and those were the ones who were judging what they were doing.

Now let's go to the *Amplified Translation* of it and I will read the *Amplified Translation* here and then we will come back and we will see the whole structure of Colossians the second chapter and how importantly this fits in. Colossians 2:16: "Consequently, in the light of (all that has been written up to this point), do not let anyone judge you... [So then I gave in brackets the meaning of the word *judgment*] ...(that is, calling you into account, or assuming censorial power over you) in your eating or in your drinking, or in regard to, or on account of your observance of a festival... [And there, 'in respect of' means]: ...[in] observance of a festival, or a new moon, or the Sabbaths.... [It is plural, Sabbaths, not Sabbath days. That is all right for a translation, that is correct, but Sabbaths showing that it is in the plural on an on-going basis.] ...Which things are a foreshadowing... [they foretell] ...a foreshadowing and an advance sign of the things which are coming, (actually a foretaste of the coming events in God's plan); but (the meaning and reality of observing these things is found) in the body of Christ, which is the Church" (vs 16-17).

- Do you not, in your experience, understand more what God is doing by keeping these things, which foreshadow and portray what God is working out in His plan? *Yes!*
- Did we not, at the Feast of Tabernacles, feel that so tremendously and understand it even more? *Yes!*
- Do we not even understand the sacrifice of Jesus Christ even more every year when we keep the Passover? *Yes!*
- Do we not respect and love God, when we follow His laws concerning health, clean and unclean meats; and of course, in drinking that either we drink in moderation *vs* those who drink not at all or we don't drink to excess *vs* those who are drunkard? And some people call us into account of that.

In other words, since no man is to judge us, **who is to judge us?** *Jesus Christ, the Word of God*. Even the Apostle Paul says, 'I judge no man.' Why, because we are all going to come before the judgment seat of God.

Now let's go back and let's look at how the whole chapter of Col. 2 is put together and it's really something! When you get into these things and understand them, it is really quite fantastic! Now we're going to see that there is a pattern in which these things have been written. So you might put this

A & B: 'A' has to do with the things of God. 'B' has to do with the things of men. We will continue in the *King James* here,

**A: Having to do with God.** Colossians 2:2: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vs 2-3).

Notice what that is telling us: 'the mystery of God the Father and of Christ'—then which is the full comprehension and understanding of God's plan. Everything that there is to know about God and about eternal life is found in *the Father and Christ*. Notice what is absolutely, explicitly missing here. Can you guess what it is? ***There is no reference to the Holy Spirit as a person!*** Now, *if* the Holy Spirit were part of the mystery of God, and *if* the Apostle Paul truly taught the trinity, and the Holy Spirit as being a person, then he should have put it here—correct? *Yes!* Its absence is profoundly strong in showing that the pagan doctrine of the trinity ***is not true***, because we are going to be talking about philosophy, as we will see in v 8.

**B: Referring to men:** what men do or what men say or what they want to do or what they want to say or how they are coming to you in a religious sense. Verse 4: "And this I say, lest any man should **beguile** you with enticing words." *Beguile means to deceive and with enticing words or persuasive; and as we could say blessedly true sounding lies.* Because there are blessedly true sounding lies but they are lies. So, he's warning against men again. Now when you tie that in with v 16: "Let no man..." Then men were trying to ***deceive*** them out of keeping the things in v 16. 'Let no man deceive you with enticing words' (v 4).

Let's read those in the *Amplified Version*, Colossians 2:1: "Because I want you to know and understand what a great burden I have for you, and for those in Laodicea also, even as many as have not had the opportunity to see me face-to-face, and have not personally known me; that their hearts and minds may be encouraged, being united, knit together and interwoven in godly, divine love; and that this may expand into all spiritual riches and abundant blessings of the full assurance of understanding, which is the foundation and which also expands into the knowledge and comprehension of the revelation of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, the Savior; in Whom are embodied all (yes, He truly is the personification of all) the treasures, the riches and the wealth of spiritual wisdom and comprehension, and the knowledge and understanding [of God]. And these

things I am saying, in order that no one may ever entice you with beguiling and deceitful words by persuasive and superficially logical speeches" (vs 1-4). Okay, so I amplified it to also make it relevant as to what is happening when people are confronted with the problems and difficulties of men.

Now let's continue on and let's come back to the *King James*, Colossians 2:5: "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, joying and beholding your order in the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." That is just a spiritual way of saying that with the Spirit of God, with your joy and steadfastness, with the report that he heard back there in v 1 that he was with them spiritually.

Now vs 6-7; we can put down here as **A: Pertaining to God, to Christ and His way.** Verse 6: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk you in Him.... [we are going to see that vs v 8.] (v 7): ...Rooted and built up in Him, and established in **the** faith, as you **have been taught**, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Now this becomes very important. Notice what he stresses here. Let's put that together with vs 2-3 about all the treasures being hid in Christ and God the Father.

So therefore, v 6: "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk you... [Now how are we to walk? *To walk as we saw there in 1-John 2:4-6: 'even as He walked.'* When it talks about *walk*, it means *be conducting your life*, as you are *living*, as you are *walking the path of life*.] ...in Him [Christ]."

Now who are we to be rooted and grounded in? "Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith..." [not by some half-cocked ideas, not by theories, not by deceit of men, but] ...in Him established in the faith, as you have been taught abounding therein with thanksgiving" (v 7).

Now v 8 is '**B**'—vs 4 & 8 tie together: "Beware... [in the Greek that means *watch out, be on guard against*] ...lest any man spoil you... [From *all the riches of Christ, from walking in Christ, from being rooted and established and built up in Christ.* And 'to spoil' means *to hunt you down as a man hunts down an animal to kill.*] ...Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy...." There we have philosophy, we have had some great encounters with philosophy—haven't we? And few people realize that philosophy really is the pagan religion of this world; the whole structure and order of how men think. The whole basis of our civilization, is based upon the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, which he calls: ...vain deceit... [that means *empty, futile*, that this kind of enticing through philosophy and lying with persuasive words is] ...vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the

world... [which then are according to the demonic spirits of this world] ...**and not after Christ.**”

So this is really a very powerful warning— isn’t it? “Beware lest any man.”

Now let’s come to the *Amplified Version* and see how I have brought out the meaning of it here. Let’s pick it up here in vs 6: “In the light of this, as you have received and acknowledged Jesus Christ, the Lord and Master, be walking, conducting and regulating your life in and through Him; Having been rooted, grounded and founded in Him, and are now being spiritually built up and edified (for the development of Christian character; in and through Him)... [because the rest of the Bible teaches that.] ...and for you to be strengthened, established and confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding and progressing more and more in this faith with thanksgiving and joyful gratitude. Be alert and be on guard, lest there be anyone seeking to make a prey of you (hunting you down, so as to carry you away from the truth, to destroy you spiritually) by the means of philosophy and false teachings, which are empty deceits and tricky deceptions, according to the elemental (demonic) spirits of the world and society, and not according to Christ”(vs 6-8).

What I want you to do when reading and studying this, there is this comparison continually going on through Colossians, the second chapter. He just gave a tremendous and great warning. Let’s analyze this again before we come to v 9. Verses 2-3 reaffirm our fullness in Christ; then he gives a warning, v 4: “...lest any man beguile you with enticing words.” Then we come to vs 6-7, showing our fullness and completeness in Christ, to follow what we have been taught; and then he says again in v 8: “...beware lest any man spoil you.”

Now when we come to vs 9-10, this is really tremendously important because we come all the way from v 9 all the way again down to v 16 where it again talks about men. So v 9 he says: “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily....” Why is that an important statement? *Because philosophy and the religions of this world say that you must progress through various stages of enlightenment*; and, of course, then based on this philosophy we have everything that we have such as in Masonry, in religious orders and so forth, that you progress by rank and enlightenment. Part of the philosophy of this also, which we find today very evident, that Jesus Christ was just a prophet, He was not Divine, He was not of God and He was like Mohammed or He was like Buddha or He was like the one we have today Lord Matria. He was like the Dalai Lama of the Buddhist religion today, because all of these men through philosophy have progressed

to what they consider the eighth level of divinity. And the only way you can come to complete divinity through their philosophical structure is to reach the ninth level.

So, Paul was saying here, **no!** Christ is the fullness of the Godhead, which means Divinity, bodily, the full, Divine, bodily manifestation of God. Now v 10 becomes important: “And you are complete in Him... [which means that you do not need philosophy because your completeness is in Christ] ...which is the Head of all principality and power.... [you do not have to worry about these demonic spirits and rudiments of the world because Christ is over all of them] ...In Whom [Christ] you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.”

Now let’s go to Romans, the second chapter, because this is the circumcision which is, I want to also point out that we have no conflict between the circumcision/uncircumcision here, in the book of Colossians as we do in Ephesians, as we do in Romans. So here in the second chapter of the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul brings out some really important things here.

Romans 2:25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* law; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the* law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.” To the Jews, who were punctilious in their circumcision, this was just really a fist in the face. This was absolutely unthinkable, for anyone who was a Jew to call another Jew *uncircumcised*. This is horrendous! This is anti-Semitic! This is really a powerful statement.

Then he does this, v 26: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the law, judge you, who, with *the* letter and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of *the* law?” (vs 26-27). Those are pretty powerful words! Now you know why the Jews were after Paul, why they wanted to kill him, why they wanted to destroy him, why they wanted to stop the Gospel.

Then he makes this profound statement, v 28: “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; Rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit *and* not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 28-29).

When he is talking to the Gentiles back here in Colossians, the second chapter, when he says that they were dead, that they had the circumcision made without hands in the putting off of the body of the

sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. That is, brethren, ***the circumcision of the heart***. This was even known in the Old Testament, this was also a prophecy, a command of God. We realize that what Paul was teaching was founded in the Scriptures before he began teaching it and it was amplified and expanded by Jesus Christ. And we find this tied right together with how our lives need to be with Christ.

Let's pick it up here, Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways..." What I want you to understand, as we are reading this, brethren, is how this is almost identical to what we find in the New Testament, because the Word of God is consistent throughout, from one end of the Bible to the other.

"...and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" (vs 12-13). All the laws and commandments of God were for our good and ***are for our good***. It is the breaking of them, the transgressing of them, which is not for our good.

Verse 14: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is today*" (vs 14-15). It is the same with us in being called into the Church today:

- God *called* us!
- God *loved* us!
- God *delighted* in us!
- God brought us *to repentance*!
- God brought us *to baptism*!
- God *gave us His Holy Spirit*!

Here is the spiritual circumcision, which is done through Christ, v 16: "Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked." So, this is the circumcision 'made without hands' which is the circumcision of Christ, which is the putting away of the body of the sins of the flesh, ***because that takes away the power and control of sin to rule in our lives***. We still have to fight *the law of sin and death*, that is true, without a doubt; no question of that. But ***it is God's Spirit, which convicts us of the sin and of the difficulties and to lead us to repentance***!

#### Scripture References:

- 1) Colossians 2:1-23
- 2) Romans 6:1
- 3) 1 John 3:4
- 4) Romans 6:23, 2
- 5) Romans 7:6-8
- 6) Romans 4:15
- 7) Romans 7:9-12
- 8) Romans 6:1-16
- 9) Psalm 119:1-8, 142, 126-128, 151, 160, 172-174
- 10) John 17:17
- 11) John 14:6, 15, 17, 21, 23-24
- 12) 1 John 2:3-6
- 13) 1 John 5:17
- 14) Matthew 25:41
- 15) Colossians 2:11-13
- 16) Ephesians 2:1-5
- 17) Colossians 2:13-14, 20, 14
- 18) 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 19) Colossians 2:15-17
- 20) Colossians 1:27
- 21) Colossians 2:13, 16-17, 2-10
- 22) Romans 2:25-29
- 23) Deuteronomy 10:12-16

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 7
- Matthew 5:17-18
- Colossians 1:27

#### Also referenced:

Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter  
Article: *Completeness of Christ* by Fred R. Coulter

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians V

Fred R. Coulter

Colossians 2 was the most difficult chapter in the book and perhaps one of the most difficult chapters of the writings of the Apostle Paul outside of the book of Romans. Let's review just a little bit. Let's understand that everything that is said in Colossians 2 is built upon everything that is said in the first chapter. And the entire problem that they had at the Church at Colossae was that they were being inundated with false teachers who were coming in bringing philosophy. We saw that how the second chapter was built upon an **A/B** kind of construction whereas: '**A**' is for God and '**B**' is for man. Now let's review the verses again which are for man/which are for God.

Let's come to Colossians 2:2; this is '**A**'—for God:

- "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together..." and so forth.
- "...in Whom are hid..." (v 3)
- "...the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ..." (v 2)
- "...in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (v 3)

And as we mentioned last time, this would be the most appropriate place *if* the doctrine of the trinity were ever taught in the Bible, it would almost be demanded to be added here; because if the 'mystery of God' contains the Holy Spirit as a person or a form of a third being in a triune Godhead, then it would have to be mentioned in v 2.

It should read: "...unto the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ"—**and it doesn't** say: and of the Holy Spirit. So this is a good proof by negation or the lack of having it there that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not true as taught in most nearly every other church.

Verse 3 says: "In Whom... [God the Father and Jesus Christ] ...are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Now v 4 is '**B**': "Now, this I say so that no one may deceive [beguile] you by persuasive speech." Now why would they be beguiled or deceived? And of course, the word 'beguile' means *to deceive with enticing words*—and they sound good. Then he again reaffirms that they are in Christ.

Verse 6: "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him... [not in the beguiling words of men] ...being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.... [Now notice the '**B**'—*contrasting what men would do.*] ...Be on guard so that no one

takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ" (vs 4-8).

What is the trinity called? *It is called a tradition*, is it not? *Yes, it is*. There are many traditions in philosophy that people follow, as we will see. But notice again it is comparing their status in Christ, as they have been built up in Him and established in Him as compared to men who are coming around and trying to spoil them. Spoil means *to hunt down as a prey or an animal seeking to kill someone*, through philosophy, 'philosophia': *the love of wisdom and vain deceit*, which then are the fables and the tales and "...the traditions of men..." after the rudiments of the world—and those rudiments of the world are guided by demons and not after Christ.

Back to '**A**' again, v 9: "For in Him... [It goes back to God and Christ] ...then all the way down through v 15, has to do with what God has done.] ...dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.... [And that could be all the fullness of Deity, the fullness of what it is to be Divine is found wholly in Christ bodily.] ...And you are complete in Him... [Which then also refers to Christ, which then goes back to the mystery of God the Father and Christ.] ...You are complete in Him... [That is a profound statement! We will come back and review that again here before we are done.] ...In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (vs 9-11). Which is then accomplished by baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

That is why, then in v 12 he goes right on: "Having been buried with Him in baptism..." That is the circumcision of Christ, to take away the hardness of the heart, to take away the things that human nature is and to be converted and transformed by the renewing of your mind with the power of the Holy Spirit.

"...by which you have also been raised with Him through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh..." (vs 12-13). Everyone is dead in sin, until they accept Christ. Everyone is dead in sin. Why? *Because the 'wages of sin is death.'* **The only way you can get rid of sin is by repentance and baptism.**

- You can't get rid of past sins by being better today.

- You can't get rid of sins that you do today *by doing good works tomorrow.*
- You cannot be made right before God *by what you do or by the prescriptions of what other people tell you to do*, which follow philosophy and do not follow Christ.

Verse 13: "For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh..." (v 13). Which then again is another proof that the congregation at Colossae was Gentile and was not Jewish. There is no circumcision/uncircumcision controversy in the book of Colossians; and this becomes very important when we come to v 16, because it is claimed by those who come to the book of Colossians with preconceived notions about what they believe and what it is saying, make the claim that they were told in v 16, not to keep the commandments of God, having to do with eating and drinking and the Sabbath and the festival, etc. They were told that was a command to not do it, but we will see that that is a complete, absolute, incorrect interpretation of that verse.

Verse 13: "For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive [quickened (KJV)] with Him... [Now how is that done?] ...having forgiven all your trespasses.... [All trespasses means all the sins, everything that has caused sin, now being Gentiles in the past, and following philosophy in the past, their past religion caused them to be 'dead in their sins.' So he makes it very emphatic here.] ...having forgiven all your trespasses. He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees of *our* sins, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross" (vs 13-14).

The only thing that was nailed to the cross was Jesus Christ, Who represented sin and the little sign over His head, which said King of the Jews. Nothing else was nailed to the cross. Most of the Protestants believe that this—because it says blotting out the handwriting of ordinances—means that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ blotted out, did away and nailed to the cross the commandments and laws of God, so therefore, they do not have to keep them. That is a complete, erroneous interpretation of this. The blotting out of handwritings or the *note of debt*, have to do with the sins that were caused by the commandments and doctrines of men!

So it comes all the way down through v 15, now let's finish it off and this is the one then which is referring to God and what God is doing or the 'A' part of the structure of Colossians the second chapter. "After stripping the principalities and the powers.... [Who were they? *They are the evil powers of this world!*] ...He made a public spectacle

of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it..." (v 15)—and the 'in it' refers to the crucifixion and the resurrection and the whole life of Christ.

After he goes through from vs 9-15, showing how they got to their condition as Christians

- that it was through Christ
- that it was through baptism
- that it was through the forgiveness of sin, which Christ can give
- that they have the circumcision made without hands
- that they were raised from the watery grave to walk in newness of life

Verse 16: "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you..." What does that statement mean? It means just what it says, *do not let any man*, who is:

- v 4: trying to beguile you with enticing words
- v 8: trying to deceive you with philosophy and the traditions of men

These were the men were coming in and judging. What were they judging? Well, they were obviously *judging their behavior!* As Gentiles, uncircumcised in the flesh, in keeping the things which are mentioned here (which come in the rest of the verse) were astonished that these disciples now following Christ had given up their philosophy, had given up their way of pagan religion and were now following the laws and the commandments of God. They were astonished that they were following the commands of eating and the commands of drinking, that they were keeping Holy Days, that they were calculating things by the new moon rather than by the sun, and that they were regularly keeping the Sabbath.

What does v 16 *not* say?

- It does **not** say, *do not keep!*
- It does **not** say, *therefore let no man keep eating and drinking, or a Holy Day or new moon or Sabbath day!*

It says: "Therefore, **do not allow anyone to judge you...**" How are people judged? *People are judged by comparison!* What were these evil men comparing their new behavior to now that they were Christians and had forsaken the pagan way? What were they comparing their behavior to? *Philosophy! The commandments of men!*

Now, let's go to another part of 'A'—which shows why we are to let no man do this. Let's come to v 18: "Do not allow anyone..." We have vs 4, 8, 16, and now we have v 18: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you [deceive you out] of the prize by doing

*his* will in self-abasement...” A *voluntary humility* then is taking the vows of asceticism; taking the philosophical—and we could almost say severe Buddhist way would be more like anything that we would understand today—in the pagan religion.

“...by doing *his* will in self-abasement and *the* worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind” (v 18). So, you notice the comparison all the way through.

Now let’s just finish these next verses and then we will go back and we will understand from v 15 on and complete the second chapter. It says that if you are worshipping angels, which we will go into in a little detail here—v 19: “And not holding fast to the Head...” Who is the Head? *Christ!* So, in other words, these were all the things:

- which were taking them away from the calling of God
- away from the Truth of God
- away from the commandments of God
- away from the laws of God

so that they would get involved in this philosophical, voluntary humility and the worshipping of angels. That is called the New Age movement today, where they have channelers, where they worship demon spirits. When you do that, you get your mind off of Christ.

Verse 19: “And not holding fast to the Head, from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ*... [How are you dead with Christ? *You are dead through baptism, you are buried with Him!*] ...if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world... [which comes right back to v 8, ‘the traditions [rudiments] of the world’ are *philosophy and vain tradition of men!*] ...Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world, why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men?*” (vs 19-20).

Back to v 14: “He has blotted out... [the whole *operation of Christ* through baptism and your calling] ...the note of debt against us *with* the decrees of *our sins*, which was contrary to us... [What were those ordinances?

Verse 20: “...why are you subjecting yourselves to *the decrees of men* as if you were living in *the* world?... [Here are the ordinances which cause sin, because they were contrary to the laws and commandments of God.] ...*They say*, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’.... [and then up here worshipping of angels] ...The use of all such things leads to corruption...

[which means *they have no lasting, eternal value or function*. Why?] ...according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (vs 20-22).

So, the *handwriting of ordinances* were those things which were the commandments and doctrines and teachings of men, which established the pagan religion of philosophy—and from that they had been called. From that operation of what is called in philosophy *enlightenment*—which we have in various religions: Masonry, Buddhism, Islamism, Catholicism; all of those are based on the philosophies of this world. What happens is that it is useless after you have done those things and they are useless before you even do them, because they have no lasting, eternal value, they have no standing before God, in Christ.

Verse 23: “Which indeed have an **outward appearance** of wisdom... [Again: ‘sophia’—from which we get *philosophy*. They appear to be intelligent] ...in voluntary worship... [will-worship] ...of angels...” Now, *will-worship* are those mental things which make you smarter, which make you greater, which gives you the will to walk on coals, to spike yourself with nails and all of this sort of thing. The punishment of the flesh, the voluntary humility in will-worship—where they take a vow of celibacy, where they go on pilgrimages or whatever it may be.

“...and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of *the* body, not in any respect to the satisfying of *the needs* of the flesh” (v 23)—which means *it does not stop*; it does not control the carnal flesh and the drive of sin.

Now let’s come back to v 16 and let’s analyze this one considerably more so we can understand what is going on here. “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you...”—which means that because you are doing what is listed *you are not to let any man judge you*.

What is the very first thing that happens, when you start following the Word of God and you change your eating habits so you don’t eat the foods that people normally in this world accept as good? What happens when you begin to refuse eating pork and seafood? Especially down there on the Gulf Coast, the shrimp haven of the world; the oysters, the clams, the lobsters and all that sort of thing—and you begin not eating those things? Why? *Because God is the One Who says not to eat them!*

Let’s see what the Word of God says about these kinds of foods. Deuteronomy 14 was given just before they went into the ‘promised land’ and Lev. 11 covers many of the wild animals which they would encounter in their journey before they got to the ‘promised land’ so it lists many of the wild animals there that are not necessarily listed in:



Deuteronomy 14:1: “You *are* the children of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves nor make *any* baldness between your eyes for the dead... [What is that? That, brethren, is *one of those religious, philosophical practices that the pagans did!* That’s exactly what Paul is referring to back here in Col. 2.] ...for you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God... [We are also called Holy people aren’t we? *You’re a Holy nation, you’re a Holy people* (1-Pet. 2:9)] ...and the LORD has chosen you to be a specially treasured people to Himself, above all the nations that are on the earth” (vs 1-2). Is that not true of us today? *Yes, it is!*

Why are we not to eat any of these unclean animals? *Because we are called; because we are Holy people!* If you eat things that are unclean, you are defiling the body.

- Does God want you to be ill? *No!*
- Does God want you to be sick? *No!*
- Does God want you to suffer ill health because of eating these things? *No!*

God did not create certain things to be eaten.

Verse 3: “You shall not eat any abominable thing. These *are* the animals which **you shall eat...**” This takes care of vegetarianism as a religious, ascetic way of living. Some people have to be vegetarians because of their health, *or* because they have cancer, *or* because they can’t tolerate meat, *or* whatever the condition may be. However, this is a command to eat meat.] ...the ox, the sheep, and the goat, the deer, and the gazelle, and the roe deer, and the wild goat, and the mountain goat, and the wild ox, and the mountain-sheep. And every animal that divides the hoof, and divides it into two hooves, *and* chews the cud among the animals, that you shall eat” (vs 3-6).

Verse 7: “But **these you shall not eat**, of those which chew the cud, or of those that divide the cloven hoof: the camel, and the hare, and the rock badger, for they chew the cud, but do not divide the hoof. They *are* unclean to you. And the swine because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud; it *is* unclean to you. You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their dead body” (vs 7-8). Then it shows what we are to eat of the waters everything that has fins and scales, what we are to eat of the birds, etc.

When the brethren at Colossae turned from eating these wrong things and went to eating the things that are correct, they then *were being judged*. This is a good substantiation that they were following the commandments of God concerning the eating of things, which were clean or not clean.

Now let’s come to 1-Timothy, the fourth chapter, and here is one of the places in the New Testament that people turn to, to try and show that it is okay to eat unclean things. But just like everything else that many ‘religious’ people do, they have an idea in mind and they pick a verse right out of the middle of the context.

1-Timothy 4:4: “For every creature of God *designated for human consumption* is good, and nothing to be refused, *if* it is received with thanksgiving, because it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer” (vs 4-5). So therefore, all you have to do is to make sure that your pork is refrigerated and that you cook it well—so it kills all the parasites, etc.—and then you can go ahead and eat it if you ask the blessing on it.

Again let’s go back and look at this verse and we will see that one of the major difficulties we have with people concerning these verses is that they don’t really read the verses before or after and they don’t dig into it to find out what it really says.

1-Timothy 4:1: “Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith...” When you depart from the faith, what are you leaving?

- You are leaving the Word of God!
- You are leaving Christ!
- You are leaving God the Father!

Correct? *Yes, indeed!*

“...some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits... [Isn’t that the same topic that we are talking about in Col. 2, in a voluntary worship of angels? *Yes, it is!*] ...deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... [Which are the *traditions and philosophies of men after the rudiments of the world!*] ...speaking lies in hypocrisy...” Are we not seeing that on a vast scale even within the Church of God?

And, of course, we are seeing it on a mammoth scale in the government: speaking lies in hypocrisy, the deliberateness of their deceit and the underlying subversive, socialist plan that they are bringing upon us as a nation is almost just unreal. Here are those things that come from demons because they speak lies and hypocrisy.

Then you come to a certain point when you speak lies so much—and I think we all know one very famous man who seems to have this kind of conscience—“...their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*” (v 2). They no longer have any shame in telling *lies and teaching the doctrine of demons!* Why, it is just a wonderful, natural thing to do.

Now v 3 shows some of the problems they had at that time: “Forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving...” We have the same thing today. What is one of the biggest problems that they have in the Catholic Church right now? *An unmarried priesthood!* What is one of the problems that they have with the Buddhist religion? *An unmarried priesthood!* Which is based on philosophy and ‘will-worship’ to the depriving of the flesh.

“...to abstain... [stop eating] ...from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by those who know the Truth*” (v 3). Let’s analyze this statement here in v 3 just a little bit: “...which God created to be received... [there were certain things which were] ...created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by those who know the Truth.*”

What is Truth? *God’s Word is Truth!* If you believe the Truth—which is God’s Word; know the Truth—which is God’s Word; then you go back and you find out which animals God created to be *received with thanksgiving*—right? *Yes!* Were there certain animals that God created not to be received with thanksgiving and not to be eaten? *Yes, indeed!* And He tells us which ones *they are* and which ones *they aren’t*.

Now, v 4: “For every creature of God *designated for human consumption* is good... [That would be a contradiction in fact it meant every creature which God ever created is good for food and nothing to be refused if it was received with thanksgiving.] (v 5 is another qualifier for v 4): ...because it is sanctified by the Word of God... [Which then is *Truth!*. Which then is saying that every creature which God *created to be eaten* is good and nothing to be refused if it]: ...is received with thanksgiving, because it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer” (vs 4-5).

So, the very verse that is used to show that it is all right to eat unclean meats—and by the way, I think that needs to hang on—that in other Churches of God we know of, that they are going to go to the allowance of eating unclean meats. I have already heard it, and one of the reasons is that we have refrigerators, so therefore, that makes the meat clean, it is all right to eat it. Well a refrigerator does not change *a condition of creation!* Just remember that.

Colossians 2:16: “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking...” We could go through the Scriptures and see that the Bible allows the drinking of wine and occasionally strong drink, but ***it does not tolerate nor endorse drunkenness.***

Much of the philosophical teachings that are in the various religions have that they are not to drink at all, which is one of those things that people will do in the form of *will-worship*. So, here they were drinking, obviously, wine with the feast that they were having and so forth.

“...or with regard to a [Holy Day] festival...” (v 16). If they weren’t keeping these Holy Days, how could someone judge or criticize them? *It would not be possible!* Remember, they had no exposure to the Holy Days. Paul never went into any synagogue in Colossae to preach. As a matter of fact, it is not even recorded that he ever even went there. Since Paul went to the Jews first and went to the synagogues first, he probably did not go to those cities where there was not a synagogue. Therefore, this is another proof that this was a wholly Gentile congregation having never known the Laws of God nor followed the *ways of God*. The Holy Days are all listed in Lev. 23, and the Holy Days teach us the things that we need to know of God.

“...or new moon...” (v 16). Rather than using a solar calendar, they were now using the new moon as the beginning of the month, and in particular, we have today the Feast of Trumpets, which is the first day of the seventh month.

“...or *the Sabbaths*...” In the Greek this is the Sabbaths, which is plural, which means a weekly, on-going keeping of the Sabbath.

Verse 17: “Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming...”

Now let’s review for just a minute and understand why the Holy Days and the Sabbaths and these other things are a *shadow of the coming things*.

- What is one of the most important things, which is coming, in the whole history of the world?

*It is going to be the Kingdom of God!*

- What are they going to be eating and drinking in the Kingdom of God?
- Do you think that God is going to allow the eating of unclean foods in the Kingdom of God?
- Do you think that God is going to institute Sunday-worship, which is breaking and violating the Sabbath?
- Do you think that God is going to carry forward with Christmas and Easter and New Year’s, which are all based on lies?

***NO!***

Let’s go back to Isaiah 66; let’s look at a prophecy here—the very last part of the last chapter of the book of Isaiah—which brings us into what the

Millennium is going to be. And also, it has to do with the Church, as we will see.

Isaiah 66:15: “For, behold, the Lord will come with fire... [His second return] ...and with His chariots like a tempest, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire, for by fire and by His sword the LORD will execute judgment with all flesh... [You tie that in with all of the prophecies in the book of Revelation and the other prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and so forth.] ...the slain of the LORD will be many. ‘Those who sanctify themselves...’” (vs 15-17). Which is by what? *By worldly, earthly philosophies and religions!*

Let’s go to the book of Ezekiel for just a minute and we will see some of the things that were done, the practices that the children of Israel did concerning all of their abominations, which they were doing, which they were committing against God, which were all based in pagan religions—pagan philosophy, because pagan religion is pagan philosophy.

Ezekiel 8:5: “And He said to me, ‘Son of man, lift up your eyes now to the way of the north.’ So I lifted up my eyes toward the way of the north, and behold, northward at the gate of the altar the image of jealousy *was* at the entrance.... [This was a pagan image, which was placed right in front of the temple of God and this is called the image of jealousy.] ...And He said to me, ‘Son of man, do you see what they do; even the great abominations which the house of Israel is doing here, that I should go far off from My sanctuary? But turn again, *and* you shall see greater abominations’” (vs 5-6).

Where do these abominations come from? Who is the mother of all of these abominations? In Rev. 17 it is ‘Babylon the Great, Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth’; and this is the practicing of the Babylonian religion right in the temple of God. Are we seeing that happening again in one of the Churches of God? *Absolutely!*

Verse 14: “...And behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.” Which was *one of the gods of the Babylonians*—because every abomination in religion and all the religions of the world—which are not of God—come from there, come from Babylon. We are going to see with the amalgamation of all these religions of the world—Babylon the Great—come back home together again.

Verse 6: “And He said to me, ‘Son of man, do you see what they do; even the great abominations which the house of Israel is doing here, that I should go far off from My sanctuary?

But turn again, *and* you shall see greater abominations.’ And He brought me to the opening of the court; and I looked, and behold, a hole in the wall. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, dig in the wall now.’ And I dug in the wall, and, behold, an opening.... [a secret entrance] ...And He said to me. ‘Go in and see the evil abominations that they do here.’ And I went in and saw. And behold, every kind of creeping thing, and hateful beast, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were carved on the wall all around. And seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, standing in front them, these were before them, and each man with his censor in his hand. And the sweet smelling cloud of incense was rising” (vs 6-11).

- Who were the 70 of the ancients of Israel? *That was likened unto what we would call the Congress today!*
- Do those in the Congress have their secret organizations to which they belong? *Yes, indeed!*
- Do they have their secret little religious practices that they practice? *Yes, they do!*

This is exactly what it is talking about. This is all based on the philosophy, which takes men and people away from God to worship Satan.

Verse 12: “And He said to me, ‘Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, each man in his room of idols?....’” Well, let’s see: we have Masonic temples, we have Knights of Columbus temples, and we have Odd Fellow temples, and we have Elks, and we have the Moose and whatever we have, those are all included in what is discussed here in Ezek. 8.

Verse 13: He also said to me, ‘You shall see greater abominations that they are committing.’ And He brought me to the opening of the gate of the LORD’S house, toward the north. And behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz” (vs 13-14). Right there, weeping for the Babylonian goddess Tammuz, right in the house of God! What do they always say; ‘Oh, we are delivered to do this.’

Verse 15: “And He said to me, ‘Have you seen this, O son of man? You shall see greater abominations than these.’ And He brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house, and behold, at the opening of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east.” (vs 15-16).

There you have it, loud and clear—right? Are there men in high places that are causing people to turn back from God to worshipping those pagan

deities, which come down to sun-worship? What do they do on Easter sunrise services on top of a high hill or in front of their churches? Do they not bow down and worship the sun toward the east?

(go to the next track)

Verse 17: “And He said to me, ‘Have you seen, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they do the hateful things which they do here? For they have filled the land with violence and have turned to provoke Me to anger still more.... [Do we not have our land filled with violence, today? Is not God provoked to anger?] ... And lo, they put the branch to their nose.... [That is sniffing at their own pagan religion and the branch, we just need to be very frank about it, is a phallic symbol. And that is what they are doing with their religion.] ... Therefore I will also deal with fury; My eye shall not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in My ears *with* a loud voice, I will not hear them” (vs 17-18).

Now, let’s come back to Isaiah 66 and let’s see some of the other practices that they were doing. This is why Christ is going to come in fury, this is why Christ is going to come *in power*; because

- Satan is going to have *deceived* the whole world!
- Satan is going to *control* the whole world!
- Satan is going to lead the whole world—except those that have the Spirit of God—
- in rebellion against God and to fight God to destroy as many human beings as he can and hopefully to destroy God!

God says He is going to come with fire and his sword and so forth, Isaiah 66:17: “Those who sanctify themselves, and purify themselves *to go* into the gardens, after the rites of Achad....” This is, brethren, no less than the *eco-freak movement* of today, where trees are counted as having spirits and they go to the grove. That’s where the Academy of Plato originated, in the groves, where he talked to the demons. **Philosophy!** What do they do?

“...eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, will be cut off together,’ says the LORD.... [they’re eating all these unclean things. In many places, mice are considered a delicacy. As a matter of fact, in Thailand, after they have the harvest of the rice then they drain the fields and they gather all the rats, heap them into a big pile and they have a deep fried rat fest. **They do!**] ... ‘For I *know* their works and their thoughts; it shall come to pass, that I will gather all the nations and tongues; and they will come and see My glory” (vs 17-18). Then it shows that He is going to bring all of them.

When God reforms the world, what is He going to do? Verse 23: “And it shall come to pass... [Here’s the reformation of the thing that is coming in the Kingdom of God.] ...that from one month to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me,’ says the LORD.” There you go! Now, the reason we keep these things is because they are a *foreshadowing* of the events, which are coming.

Now let’s review just a little bit concerning the Sabbath and the Holy Days, etc.

- we will have ***past***, which is Israel
- we will have ***present***, which is the Church
- we will have ***future***, which is the Kingdom of God when Christ returns

#### **Passover**

- **Past:** *for Israel:* It pictured the passing over of the houses of the children of Israel when they were in Egypt, when God killed the firstborn of the land of Egypt.
- **Present:** *the Passover Lamb of God,* the crucifixion of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and the passing over of our sins.
- **Future:** *for the Kingdom of God,* when salvation, through the sacrifice of Christ will be granted to all nations and the sacrifice of Christ will be applied to all nations at that time.

#### **Feast of Unleavened Bread:**

- **Past:** *house of Israel,* in the coming out of Egypt and leaving the bondage of slavery in Egypt.
- **Present:** *for the Church,* coming out of sin, coming out of the ways of sin, because a little leaven, leavens the whole lump.
- **Future:** *when the world system will be changed* so that there will no longer be a sinful civilization.

**Wave Sheaf Offering Day:** *which is on the day after the regular Sabbath, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread:*

- **Past:** *for Israel,* it pictured the beginning of the harvest of the firstfruits.
- **Present:** it pictures *the resurrection and acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior* to appear before God the Father in heaven above for us.
- **Future:** it pictures the opening of *salvation to all people* in the world.

#### **Pentecost:**

- **Past:** *to Israel,* pictured the receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai.

For the New Testament:

- Present: *Church*—pictured and still pictures the giving of the Holy Spirit for salvation to all people in general through repentance and baptism (Acts 2).
- Future: It pictures *when God is going to save the whole world* by giving His Holy Spirit available to everyone in the world.

#### **Feast of Trumpets:**

- Past: When *the children of Israel* completely conquered the land through their warfare, overcame and inherited the 'promised land.'
- Present: pictures *the birth of Christ*.
- Future: pictures the *return of Jesus Christ* in the power and the authority of God Almighty and in the future it also pictures *when the government of God is going to rule over all the earth*.

#### **Day of Atonement:**

- Past: *for Israel*, the Day of Atonement pictured when all of their sins were forgiven, officially at the sanctuary and God would then deal with them again through the next year in spite of the carnality of their flesh.
- Present: the Day of Atonement pictures that *Jesus Christ has conquered and overcome Satan the devil*, that He has carried our sins and that Satan the devil has been conquered through Christ.
- Future: pictures when *the world will be at one with God and Satan the devil will be removed and will be bound*. Now, let's come back to the Feast of Tabernacles.

#### **The Feast of Tabernacles:**

- Past: When the *children of Israel* went into the 'promised land,' when they had all of plenty, when the golden age of Solomon was in effect.
- Present: pictures that *we are strangers and sojourners* just as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and that we are looking for the Kingdom which comes from God and that we are following God right now. It also pictures for Christ, when He lived or tabernacled among men on the earth.
- Future: pictures the *Millennial reign of Christ* when the universal salvation will be granted to all of those who choose and accept it.

#### **Last Great Day:**

- Past: for the *children of Israel* pictured, when they had a great feast toward God because it ended living in booths.

- Present: pictures *the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit* and really there is not too much of a present time fulfillment for the Last Great Day today that is more totally into the future.
- Future: pictures *the second resurrection*, and the opportunity of salvation for all those who never had an opportunity for salvation, while they lived a first, physical life.

Now that is a very, quick summary of the *foreshadowing* and the *meaning* of the Holy Days and the Sabbath. We can go back and let's picture the Sabbath. The Sabbath was created by God as a day of fellowship, week in and week out, with His people. All the way through the Old Testament, the Sabbath was *a sign of His people*. Then, of course, that also means the Holy Days (Exo. 31:13).

#### **The Sabbath:**

- Today pictures that:
  - ✓ we are entering into the spiritual rest of Christ every week
  - ✓ that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath
  - ✓ that we are to be keeping the Sabbath, week-by-week
- Future: the Sabbath also pictures the Millennial reign of Christ

So all of these things are a shadow or a *foreshadow* of the coming events in the plan of God. That is why Satan wants to deceive us with philosophy and keep us from understanding those things by substituting his deceitful way for the Truth of God.

Colossians 2:16 will make far more sense when we read it again: "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the Sabbaths*, Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body [is (KJV)] of Christ" (vs 16-17).

Now that is a little difficult verse there, because the translators of the *King James* inserted in italics the little verb 'is' which is meant to help clarify the topic, but in helping clarify the topic they actually confuse it and it actually has this meaning: *Which are a shadow of things to come but the body of Christ, let that body judge you in observing these things instead of a man.*

That is one meaning of it. Another meaning is that: *The reality of keeping these things which are foreshadows are found in the body of Christ, which is the Church.*

The second one is probably the more proper understanding of v 17. These things are a foreshadowing, an advance sign, of the things which are coming.

Let me read this in the *Amplified Version*. Let's pick it up here in v 16 and then we'll go on and we'll analyze the rest of the verses and hopefully we will be done with the second chapter of Colossians today. Here is what I have written in the *Amplified Version* bringing to bear all of the Scriptures of the Bible and the Bible understanding to the verses to help give us a broader understanding.

Colossians 2:16: "Consequently, in the light of (all that has been written up to this point)... [and that is what the word 'therefore' means, and in *King James* it says: 'let no man therefore'—but it should really be 'therefore, let no man'] ...Consequently, in the light of (all that has been written up to this point), do not let anyone judge you... ['judge' has this meaning; *calling you into account*, or *assuming censorial power over you*] ...in your eating or your drinking, or in regard to, or on account of your observance of a festival...[which is what it means in the Greek] ...or a new moon, or the Sabbaths." It is plural in the Greek, and when it is done that way in the plural it means *an ongoing practice*—the Sabbaths, on a regular basis.

Verse 17: "Which are a foreshadowing and an advance sign of the things which are coming, (actually a foretaste of the coming events in God's plan); but (the meaning and reality of observing these things is found) in the body of Christ, which is the Church."

Now, I hope that through all of this that you really understand these verses because vs 16 & 17 coupled with vs 13 & 14 are perhaps the most difficult verses of all that Paul has written. And you can't understand those unless you fully realize, as Paul was writing, that you are complete in Christ. ***Christ in you is the hope of glory***, that you're to be rooted and built up and established in Him, as you have been taught, and you are to avoid and beware of the deceptions of men, which bring you into the bondage of their demonic religions.

Now we are ready for v 18—again we have the same situation: "Let no man... [that is: *do not allow anyone*] ...to beguile you or deceive you of your reward." That's a very interesting statement— isn't it?

Let's go to 1-Corinthians, the third chapter, and let's see what he is talking about here. This talks about how we live our Christian lives, that we build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and so forth. This is the thing that is important, this is what Paul is talking about with Christ and salvation and everything that we are concerning here in Col. 2.

1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been

laid, which is Jesus Christ." Since Christ died for our sins, rose and is at the right hand of God; since our salvation is in Him and through Him; and since Christ is in us, the hope of glory, *there is no other foundation that can be laid*. You cannot go back and substitute it for your own will, which is *will-worship*. You cannot go back and substitute it with philosophy. You cannot go back and substitute the revelation of God the Father and Jesus Christ for the doctrine of the trinity.

Verse 11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds upon this foundation..." (vs 11-12). If you are going to build upon the foundation of Christ, how are you going to do it? *You are going to do it by the will and by the Word of God, with His Holy Spirit!* He likens what you could say six classifications of Christians and their works.

Verse 12: "Now if anyone builds upon this foundation **gold**... [which is the finest character as typified by fine gold] ...**silver**... [which then is the next most precious metal] ...**precious stones**..." [and notice these three, gold, silver and precious stones all survive trial by fire. And as a matter of fact, gold, silver and precious stones are made better because of trial by fire.

But notice the next three: "...wood, hay or stubble.... [What happens to wood, hay and stubble when the fire comes? *It burns up!*] ...The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day of trial will declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is. If the work that anyone has built endures, **he shall receive a reward**" (vs 12-14). Our works do not save us, but our works in Christ—gold, silver or precious stone—bring us a reward. Tie that in with Matt. 25 where it talks about what is given to those who develop with the talents that God gave them, and that is their reward.

Verse 15: "If the work of anyone is burned up... [burned up in the way of wood, hay and stubble, the ***three inferior kinds of Christian character***.] ...he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire."

This doesn't guarantee salvation because you have to tie that in with Matt. 25, if you go so far that you even burn up the foundation that you have because you leave it for philosophy or the worshiping of angels, then you yourself will not be saved. But he is saying that if you build on this foundation even though it is kind of crumbly and it is filled with wood, hay or stubble, if your heart is right you're still going to make it, but you aren't going to have much of a reward.

Colossians 2:18: “Do not allow anyone to [beguile] defraud you of the prize... [let’s see how they do it]: ...*by doing his will in self-abasement [voluntary humility]...* [Which includes all the do’s and don’ts of men. It has to do with all of the rigorous, disciplinary things that men would enforce in a physical way upon people. All you have to do is look at some of the Eastern, philosophical ‘religions’ and you have the whole understanding of that.] ...and *the worship of angels...*”—now these angels are not the angels of God, these are the demonic angels.

If a spirit comes and says ‘worship me,’ you know it is not a Spirit from God. You know if a spirit comes and says; ‘I am an angel from God, worship me’—you know it is not from God. That’s how we know that the whole Mormon religion is not correct, because it is based upon the angel, Maroni; and the angel, Maroni, was the one who was Jesus Christ and became an angel. If you want a real twisted conglomeration and amalgamation and combination of philosophy with so called biblical sounding things, try Mormonism.

Revelation 19:10—and this was after the angel gave him the vision here: “Then I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, ‘*See that you do not do this!*... [This was the angel that brought the message.] ...*See that you do not do this! I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God...* [not angels] ...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

Let’s see the same thing again; and after John saw all these this vision, boy what a tremendous thing it was, Revelation 22:8: “Now I, John, *was* the one who saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who *was* showing me these things. But he said to me, ‘*See that you do not do this!* For I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. **Worship God**’” (vs 8-9). So any angel that comes along and says ‘worship me,’ is not of God, *it is of Satan the devil*.

Now let’s go to Revelation 12:9 and we will Satan does have his angels which, because of their fall, are now called *unclean* or demon spirit. “And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world... [that means actively doing it now] ...he was cast down to the earth, **and his angels were cast down with him.**”

Those are the angels that want to be worshiped. Any true angel of God would direct you exactly as the angel from God directed the Apostle John there as we saw back in the book of Revelation.

Matthew 25:41: “Then shall He also say to those on *the left*, ‘Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’”

Now let’s go to Matthew 4:8, and let’s see that Satan wants to be worshipped as God and even wanted Jesus Christ to worship him. “After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, And said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me’” (vs 8-9).

Satan and his demonic angels want to be worshiped and one of the surest ways of losing your salvation and losing your reward is to worship angels. Angel worship is always connected with philosophy. They even have it in the mail order books today. It is called the *Rosicrucian’s*, where you get their little prayer book and go into your bedroom and make it dark and you set up these candles and you go through the stages of *Rosicrucian enlightenment*, which brethren is no more than the old ancient Egyptian ‘religion.’

Now let’s come back to Colossians 2:18: “Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by doing his will in self-abasement and the worship of angels*, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind.”

I will tell you one thing that is for sure, every time someone is involved in this kind of overt, active, spirit worship of angels and following of Satan, they get all lifted up in their vanity and they think they are greater than anyone, they have greater intelligence than any one. We are not to do that!

Verse 19: “And not holding fast to the Head, from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God.”

Now again we come back to ‘A’, v 20: “Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world... [referring to God. How are you dead with Christ? *By baptism*, you die to the world.] ...if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world...” Going back and living and becoming part and parcel of the world.

Is that not what one of the larger denominations of the Church of God wants to do? Is that not where it is heading? *Yes, it is!* And they are going to head right back into accepting all of the basic demonic philosophies of ‘religion’ and that church will not be a Church of God, except in name only.

“... why are you subjecting yourselves to the decrees of men as if you were living in the world?” (v 20). Which then are the ordinances of the pagan, philosophical, demonic, angel worshipping, asceticism, which was the former ‘religion’ of those in Colossae.

Verse 22: “The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men.” Not after the commandments and doctrines of God.

Where, in the Bible, at any time, does it ever show that the commandments and doctrines of God are not to be followed? *It does not!* So therefore, these verses cannot, nor will they ever mean that the commandments and statutes and laws of God have been done away. As a matter of fact, I need to do a sermon on this, I will show that the laws and commandments of God transcend and follow through every covenant of the Bible. So, if you want something to study on, go ahead and study on that and think on that.

Now what I want to do is just go ahead and read this in the Amplified and then I will go back and I will summarize the things which make us complete in Christ and the things we are to beware of and then we will have finished Colossians the second chapter.

Colossians 2:18: “Do not permit or allow anyone to rob, defraud or cheat you out of the prize or the reward (of the calling of God), by doing his will, the one who is wishing and desiring to get you involved in self-imposed humiliation and self-mortification, even wanting to get you involved in that religious system of philosophy, which is worshipping angels (those wicked, rebellious, hostile angels who fell with Satan, and who are now demons), intruding into and getting involved in things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up in his mind and rashly strutting in the vanity of self—in the fantasy of his own fleshly mind.”

“And in following these practices they are holding fast or keeping their eyes on the Head (Who is Christ Jesus), from Whom the entire body [the Church], through the spiritual joints and ligaments which binds all together, are being nourished and spiritually supplied and knit together, even interwoven in Christ, and is increasing and growing with the increase and growth that comes from God (and not from the philosophies of men). Now then, consider this: If you died together with Christ (through the operation of baptism, and the spiritual circumcision of your hearts and minds) from the elements and rudiments of the world (those evil, demonic, supernatural, spiritual forces, which are driving, motivation and controlling this society), why then, as if living in the world (as if you are part

and parcel of the society) are you voluntarily submitting to and subjecting yourselves to the decrees and dogmas, even the ordinances and statutes (of the philosophy of demon worship)?” (vs 19-20).

“Such as: you may not handle. Abstain—you are not allowed to have sexual intercourse (as God intended); You may not taste—you are not allowed to partake [as God intended]; You may not touch—the superstitions of forbidden objects. All these things (these absurd, inane and foolishly imposed restrictions of men) fall into spiritual corruption and destruction by their very use according to the commandments and injunctions which are the doctrines and teachings of men, which things indeed have a superficial appearance and a skin-deep veneer of wisdom in the ritual of voluntary worship (of fallen angels) and the will-worship of self-imposed humiliation and self-mortification, even the unsparing, rigorous treatment and non-indulgence of the body—(are against what God intended); and in no way will this kind of strict, torturous regimen provide an honorable satisfaction of, or the control of the (lusts of the) flesh” (vs 21-23).

I am going to take this from the article that I wrote, *You are Complete in Christ* and toward the back of it we have a summary of all the things, which make us complete in Christ. We have also, all the things, which take us away from the completeness of Christ. I am going to have this in my final print out that I have for the book. What I am going to do is just draw your attention to, and please go back and review, starting with the things, which take us away from the completeness in Christ. All of these are out of Colossians, chapter two.

#### **Things which take you away from Christ:**

1. Persuasive, deceitful words.
2. Philosophy and empty deceit.
3. Traditions of men.
4. Elements of the world.
5. Allowing anyone to judge you in your Christian behavior and obedience to Christ.
6. Doing the will of men.
7. Humility, self-imposed pseudo humility.
8. Voluntary worship of angels or demons.
9. Intruding into those things, which he has not seen.
10. Puffed up, vainly puffed up by the mind of flesh.
11. Not holding fast the Head, which is Christ.
12. Living to the world.
13. Subjecting yourself to the decrees, doctrines and commandments of men.



There are thirteen things, which take you away from Christ, and if you are superstitious, in numbers 13 is bad.

**The things which make us complete in Christ:**

1. The full assurance in understanding. Full assurance means the completeness, *the fullness*.
2. The knowledge of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ.
3. In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. Sophia, knowledge and gnosis and they are hidden in Christ and God the Father.
4. The steadfastness of your faith in Christ.
5. As you have received Christ, walk in Him.
6. Having been rooted and are being built up in Him.
7. Being confirmed in the faith as taught, which then means the full teachings of the New Testament as taught by the apostles and preserved for us.
8. Circumcised with the circumcision of Christ.
9. Putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.
10. Buried with Him in baptism, the death of baptism.
11. Raised with Him through the workings of God.
12. Dead to your sins.
13. Made alive with Christ.
14. Forgiven all your trespasses.
15. Blotting out the handwriting of the note of our sins.
16. Nailed all of our sins to the cross.
17. Stripped away the power from the principalities and authorities of the demonic spirits over Christians.
18. Publicly triumphed over them in it, that is the crucifixion.
19. Eating and drinking in accordance with the commands of God rather than the traditions and commands of men.
20. The observance of the festivals, which are the annual Holy Days of God.
21. The observance of the new moons in particular, the meaning of the use of the Hebrew calendar as the standard of time, rather than the pagan calendar of Rome.
22. The observance of the Sabbaths, which means the weekly keeping of the Sabbaths on an on-going basis.

We have finished Colossians, the second chapter, which leads us up to what we are going to learn in chapter three but the thing that is so important and vital in this, brethren: whenever you come to difficult Scriptures—such as we have here

in Col. 2—this is how we are to study them and take them apart bit-by-bit, ***but keep the whole vision of what God is giving us to do.***

So, I hope not only, has this been helpful and beneficial for you but that it has been helpful and beneficial in showing you how to properly study the Bible and tackle some of these most difficult Scriptures.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible, in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

**Scriptural References:**

- 1) Colossians 2:2-16, 18-20, 14, 20-23, 16
- 2) Deuteronomy 14:1-8
- 3) 1 Timothy 4:4-5, 1-5
- 4) Colossians 2:16-17
- 5) Isaiah 66:15-17
- 6) Ezekiel 8:5-6, 14, 6-18
- 7) Isaiah 66:17-18, 23
- 8) Colossians 2:16-17, 16-18
- 9) 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
- 10) Colossians 2:18
- 11) Revelation 19:10
- 12) Revelation 22:8-9
- 13) Revelation 12:9
- 14) Matthew 25:41
- 15) Matthew 4:8-9
- 16) Colossians 2:18-22, 18-23

**Scriptures referenced, not quoted:**

- Colossians 2: 4, 8
- Leviticus 11
- 1 Peter 2:9
- Leviticus 23
- Revelation 17
- Acts 2
- Exodus 31:13
- Matthew 25

**Also referenced:**

- Article: *You Are Complete in Christ* (p 19 *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians* by Fred R. Coulter)

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians VI

Fred R. Coulter

Now we have come to Colossians 3:1 and as we have done before, I am going to go ahead and read down certain sections of Scripture and then we will go back and we will coordinate those with other Scriptural references and bring it all into focus.

Let's begin right here in Colossians 3:1: "Reflecting on everything that has been written, now then, if you were raised (out of that watery grave) with Christ, be diligently and zealously seeking the things which are above, the things of God, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Be minding the things, which are above, setting your heart and your affections on them—not on the things on the earth (and all that it stands for). Because you have died (to yourself and this world), and your life (your spiritual life and eternal destiny) has been hid and laid up in store with Christ, reserved for you in God." (vs 1-3).

"When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, and shall be revealed for all to see, then you shall appear and be openly manifested with Him in magnificent splendor and glory. Therefore, (through the power of the Spirit of Christ in you—rather than subjecting yourselves to the regimen of the philosophies of men and the worship of fallen angels), you are to put to death, mortify, what is earthly in you, those degrading pulls of human nature; sexual depravity and promiscuity; uncleanness and lewdness; lustful and disgraceful passions of sexual desires—the unbridled mental sexual obsessions of your imagination—those evil and wicked lusts and yearnings; also, the inordinate desires for riches—those avaricious, covetous cravings which are, in fact, idolatry" (vs 4-5). Of course, that is what we are seeing now at Christmas time.

"On account of these very things the fierce wrath and anger of God is coming on the children of disobedience—those who obstinately refuse to believe and obey God; among whom you also at one time conducted your lives and walked in those evil ways. When you were living that way, your whole way of life—yes, your entire lifestyle—was actually built around those things" (vs 6-7).

Now, let's go back and let's take it verse-by-verse and go through it. Remember that chapter three is written after everything that we went through in chapter two. I know that chapter two is perhaps, one of the most difficult chapters in the entire New Testament. If you can understand that, then I don't think you are going to be hung up on any difficult Scriptures in the New Testament

whatsoever, except that it just may be a matter of technical understanding of what the Greek may be.

Let's come back to Colossians 3:1: "Reflecting on everything that has been written, now then, if you were raised (out of that watery grave) with Christ, be diligently and zealously seeking the things which are above, the things of God, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God."

Let's go back to Romans 6, because this tells us all about baptism and what it means. This is very fundamental. It also shows us the whole meaning; the symbolism of it and it also shows that there must be baptism. There are people today, who believe that you can receive the Spirit of God without baptism, but that is not true; that is not so.

When God gives the Holy Spirit, without baptism or prior to baptism—like He did with Cornelius—then the person is to be baptized. And always remember this, that, *you never take an exception*, as you find in the case of the exception of Cornelius and his household *and make that the rule or the standard—modus operandi*. And we know that through baptism you are to be baptized completely immersed in water. You are to be raised out of the watery grave, have hands laid on you for the receipt of the Holy Spirit.

I want you to notice the parallel in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Colossians—the way it is written is considerably more advanced than we have here in Romans. Romans then gives the fundamental details of it, whereas in Colossians, he said, 'wherefore if you are buried with Christ.' In other words, he is assuming they know everything that is contained here in Romans, the sixth chapter.

The Apostle Paul, says concerning baptism, Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?" For all the Protestants who believe in grace, that is one thing that too many of them practice. Some of them are trying as hard as they can to not sin, but the problem is you cannot overcome sin by just beating the flesh as we learned in Colossians, the second chapter. It must be Christ *in* you that is doing the overcoming.

Verse 2: "MAY IT NEVER BE!...." Now, let's understand that 'God forbid' (*KJV*), in the Greek means, *may it never be*. In other words, it is not something that God is going to stop or 'God forbid,' but he is saying, *may this never even be*—which means, *don't let it come into mind, don't let it exist*, because that is not the way of God. God wants His laws and His commandments and *His way*, and

*His love and His faith written in our hearts and our minds.* And that is the whole purpose of the New Covenant.

“...We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?” Then he explains what it means to be dead to sin. He explains in Rom. 7 that we still have *the law of sin and death* in us and we have to overcome and grow in grace and knowledge and that is true. We will see how that parallels in Col. 2 as we go through verse-by-verse.

Verse 3: “Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized **into** Christ Jesus, were baptized **into** His death?”... [That is a tremendous thing, and the Greek means that we were co-joined **into His death**.] ...Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism **into** the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life” (vs 3-4). Which is what we are going to see that Col. 3 is all about and it expounds it even more about this newness of life.

Verse 5: “For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin” (vs 5-6). That shows the whole meaning of what it means to be, that if you have died in Christ and were raised out of the watery grave, your life is then hidden in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:1: “...be diligently and zealously seeking the things which are above, the things of God, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.” How are we going to be able to do this? We are going to be able to do it, *because of the Spirit of God in us!* I’ll tell you what, one of the things that is so very, very important is that, when you have the Spirit of God and these things are in your mind and in your heart and in your being, then *you are going to be seeking the things of God*, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

We find this in Ephesians, the third chapter, where it tells us, in one of the most, inspiring sections of the whole Bible, and, of course—in hearing me preach any length of time as many of you have—you know that I go there many, many times and cover this. This is what we are to set our minds on, **on the things which are above!** And I tell you, if there is any one thing that I am beginning to see and to know and to learn and to understand more is the way you overcome sin to the greater degree is that you really **focus in on loving God**. You put that as the primary thing. That is the greatest thing to set your mind on.

Now here in Ephesians 3:16—Paul writes: “That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love... [that is the whole way you are going to set your heart and your mind on the things that are above] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [Brethren, this is one of the goals that we all have to have. This is the whole meat and purpose of what God wants us to comprehend and understand and grow to.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (vs 16-19).

Now, God is able to do that and God will do that. You just wait and see. You go ahead and realize that if you focus in on the love of God that that is going to help you to be able to grow in that particular way.

Now let’s go to Hebrews 10<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>, let’s see concerning the new covenant, concerning what is the basic, fundamental thing that we get into our system—in our heart and mind—as the Holy Spirit will lead us. We have to *put in*, we have to *drink in* of:

- God’s *way*
- God’s *Spirit*
- God’s *laws*
- God’s *commandments*

Hebrews 10:16: “‘This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord: ‘I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.’” Which is really a tremendous thing and the Greek means *to inscribe as in a stone*.

I don’t know if any of you have been following the series that they have been doing on the mental abilities or the way that the mind works, but they now understand that if you use your mind constantly that you are going to be alert mentally all of your life. Of course, there comes a time when we reach toward the end of our lives that we aren’t going to be as mentally sharp as we were when we were younger. But they found that even in cases where there is advanced age, that people who use their minds, because of the way that the brain was made and built to function, that their minds actually become greater and better and sharper.

And I’ll tell what, from what I know of some of the ministers I know of I will take any of the people that I know of who are advanced in age and who have used their minds and have really

studied their Bibles and I'll stack them up against some ministers I know and they'll put those ministers to shame. That is the whole part of the covenant that God is giving us that He is doing so we can focus in on the things that are at the right hand of God.

Now, let's come back to the book of Psalms 46:7, and we will see how this all ties in with it: "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." This is what God is going to do. He is *with* us in everything that we do, because

- He's given us His Spirit!
- He's given us His commandments!
- He's given us His love!

*That is what we need to focus in on.*

What we are going to do is go back to Psalm 37. And we are going to see what appears to be the guide, which Paul followed to write Col. 3 Now, it mixes in with some other things, but it has almost the same thing. Put on/put off—which we find in Col. 3. We are going to go through quite a bit of

Psalm 37:1: "Do not fret yourself because of evildoers, and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb" (vs 1-2). Part of our problems that we have in relationship to that is that we are not patient enough. As I mentioned in the sermon that I did on *How to Use the Holy Spirit* when we see all the world prospering, we get frustrated. Well, he says don't get frustrated.

Verse 3: "Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness.... [Tremendous promise from God. We'll see how that follows right closely along with Col 3.] ...Delight yourself in the Lord..." (vs 3-4). Rather than saying; 'Oh well, you know, I just wish God hadn't given this commandment. Oh my, this is so tough and I'm looking out here and seeing all these other people who aren't keeping the commandments and man, they don't seem to be having the difficulties.' But turn it around the other way

Verse 4: "Delight yourself also in the Lord... [Notice what He's going to do then]: ...and He shall give you the desires of your heart." As we just read in Eph. 3, above and beyond all that we could think or ask. So He will do that.

Verse 5: "Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass." That is why this whole theme is:

- *rest* in the Lord
- *trust* in the Lord
- *look* to Him
- *set your affection* on the things above

Verse 6: "And He shall bring forth your

righteousness like the light, and your judgment like the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way; because of him who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret yourself, it leads only to evil.... [We'll see how this really follows along very nicely.] ... For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth" (vs 6-9). And not only, are we going to inherit the earth, but we are going to have the inheritance of New Jerusalem.

I will let you read all the rest of the way through because that's helpful, too, in understanding Col. 3. Verse 27—exact same thing that we find in Col. 3: "Depart from evil and do good; and live forevermore. For the LORD loves justice and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the earth and dwell in it forever. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (vs 27-31).

There is a tremendous promise from God. Notice how that ties right in so nicely with what we read there in Heb. 10. "The law of his God is in his heart..." (v 31), therefore, that will give you the guide and the understanding as led by the Holy Spirit.

Let's come down to v 34: "Wait on the LORD, and **keep His way**, and He shall exalt you to inherit the earth; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it." When are the wicked going to be totally cut off? *At the return of Jesus Christ*. So this flows right into everything that we have in the New Testament.

Let's see some things here which are very important for us, Colossians 3:2: "Be minding the things which are above, setting your heart and your affections on them—not on the things on the earth (and all that it stands for). Because you have died (to yourself and this world), and your life (your spiritual life and eternal destiny) has been hid and laid up in store with Christ, reserved for you in God.... [And so that is a tremendous and absolute blessing.] ...When Christ, Who is our life..." (vs 2-4).

That is really something to contemplate and understand— isn't it? If Christ *be in you* and the Father *be in you*, **He is your life**, because as Jesus said, the words that He spoke, they are Spirit and they are life. We have something, brethren, that God has given us with the promises, that is so sure that we need not be discouraged one minute concerning anything. We might get down and depressed a little bit, but when you do as Paul said here, 'be minding the things that are above' and realize that when

Christ is going to appear—“...then you shall appear and be openly manifested with Him in magnificent splendor and glory” (v 4).

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!... and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.” (vs 1-2). In other words, ***the whole plan and purpose of God, for us, is that He is going to share His magnificent, splendor and glory with us!***

With that in mind, let me read you the section that I have here, concerning mankind.

The One of the God Family Who later became Jesus Christ, personally created Adam and Eve with His own hands, in their image and after their likeness, a little lower than God (Elohim)—the Hebrew word ‘Elohim’ is a plural noun for *God*. Human beings are flesh and blood and do not have inherit immortality within themselves. However, God has added to the human brain a spirit essence called the spirit of man. This spiritual dimension of human brain imparts mind, power and intellect. Therefore, human beings have the capacity to think, to think beyond their minds and bodies, to speak, to learn, to write, to plan, to devise, to create, to build, to control, to teach, to choose, to worship, to build character, combined with all the emotional feelings and expressions. God made them male and female for the expression of intimate, personal love with each other as husband and wife. And through this physical union, they would create children after their own kind; produce families, clans, tribes and nations.

Adam and Eve were not created with a sinful nature, but after sinning, by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God, in His judgment, sentenced them for their sins to the penalty of death and a sinful nature. This sinful nature was passed to all mankind by physical inheritance. As a result, human nature is naturally hostile to God and not subject to His laws or commandments. From conception, human nature is a mixture of good and evil and all die in Adam. When a person dies, his or her conscience thoughts cease. The body returns to the dust and the spirit in man goes back to God. Only through God the Father’s gracious and merciful plan of salvation, through Jesus Christ and the Father’s personal, individual calling, is it possible for a person to be

redeemed and saved from this sinful nature of death. God’s overall plan and purpose of salvation for each human being is complete reconciliation with God the Father through Jesus Christ. And that he or she may ultimately enter into the family of God, as a literal son or daughter of God, sharing the same eternal existence as God. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*).

That is a tremendous thing, brethren! In the *Beliefs* I start out with the God Family. That is interesting in the light of the things that we have heard recently. Then God the Father and then God the Son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth; and then mankind, and then God’s love to us and our love to God. It is so tremendous, it is absolutely just overwhelming and magnificent when we think that what Paul is talking to us about here and writing about is the very greatest Being in the universe, Sovereign Ruler of the universe, has *called* us and has *given* us

- access to Him through prayer
- access to His Word through study
- access to growing and overcoming

that we may be in the Kingdom of God forever and ever and ever. When He appears, we are going to be meeting Him in the air on the Sea of Glass and He is going to share His magnificent splendor and glory with us.

Let’s come back to Colossians, the third chapter, again. We have a couple of other verses we need to finish here, let’s put in your notes where it is that we look to Christ, when He returns, ‘Who will transform our vile bodies’ of sin like unto the glorious body that He has, at His appearance and at His coming (Philip. 3:21).

Colossians 3:5—notice what we have here: the command to put away all of these things. I made a rather long interjection here in parentheses. The reason I did that is, because, I tried to bring a quick summary of everything in chapter two, talking about philosophy and fallen angels and put that in perspective with what Paul is talking about here.

Colossians 3:5: “Therefore, (through the power of the Spirit of Christ in you—rather than subjecting yourselves to the regimen of the philosophies of men and the worship of fallen angels), you are to put to death, mortify, what is earthy in you...” In other words, this is a basic beginning on how to overcome and put down sin.

Let’s see something that goes right along with this, how we are to do it, 2-Corinthians 10:4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds, Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the

knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ” (vs 4-5).

That says an awful lot. This tells us, how we are to overcome sin, overcome lust. What is it doing? *We are focusing our minds in on Christ; we are bringing it into the obedience of Christ!* We are to overcome it through the faith that we have, the love that we have and focusing in on the things which are above. This is the way to overcome the degrading pulls of human nature.

Colossians 3:5 “...sexual depravity and promiscuity...” The greatest problem that human beings have, complete misdirection of what God created in us to have intimate personal love with husbands and wives, and we see how it ruins societies; it ruins lives.

You personally may know—I personally know—those people who have gotten so caught up in this that their lives are ruined and destroyed, and unless they turn to Christ, it is just a complete shambles the rest of their lives. They may be able to kind of block it out of their mind and kind of live with it, but nevertheless, that is always there to haunt them.

“...uncleanness and lewdness...” (v 5). Let’s understand something about the term *uncleanness*: any sin that you commit puts you into a state of, either physical uncleanness or spiritual uncleanness. This has to do with more of the *uncleanness of mind*. You have heard of what is said, ‘a dirty mind’? This is what that is referring to in lewdness.

“...lustful and disgraceful passions of sexual desires...” (v 5). This is what the whole society is trying to get everyone to focus in on, because of the world we live in; you could call in *condom mania*.

“...—(the unbridled mental sexual obsessions of your imagination)—those evil and wicked lusts [thoughts] and yearnings...” (v 5). That is going to be one of the major, driving forces of any human being, which if it is not contained, with the Spirit and the power of God, it is not going to be overcome.

1-Corinthians 9 is what the Apostle Paul did in his overcoming, in his putting the flesh down, in his changing so that he could qualify for the Kingdom of God. Every one of us has our part. Ultimately Christ has to do all of it, but we have our part and we must work with and cooperate with the Spirit of God as it leads us. We have to put forth the maximum effort that we can.

1-Corinthians 9:24: “Don’t you know that those who run a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? That is the way you *are to* run in order

that you may obtain *the prize*.” What he is saying, we are to live our Christian lives with the whole thought in mind that the goal of eternal life is like receiving the first prize, or the first place, as you would compare that to some of the sports and things that you would see or watch.

Verse 25: “For everyone who is striving *for mastery* controls himself in all things.... [He *disciplines* himself. He doesn’t have the excesses and so forth, and he says that those who do this, they *discipline* themselves.] ...Of course, they *do this* so that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we *are striving for* an incorruptible crown.” What God has held out for us is even so much greater, so much better, so fantastic!

Verse 26: “I, therefore, so run, not as one who is uncertain...” You can’t be uncertain, you have to ask God for the

- full faith
- full love
- full understanding
- the blessing of His grace
- the blessing of His mercy

and everything that God does in dealing with you and also in dealing with others.

“...so *also* I fight, not as beating *the* air.... [just not out there wailing his arms around] ...But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection... [the Apostle Paul was showing the extent of the effort that he put into overcoming. When we come back to Col. 3 and see what we are to put off and to put on, then this makes a whole lot of sense.] ...lest, after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected” (vs 26-27).

So, the Apostle Paul really understood the whole thing concerning the pulls of the flesh and all the difficulties of growing and overcoming, putting down sin and bringing every thought into captivity.

Here is a whole tremendous and wonderful verse, Galatians 5:16: “Now *this* I say, walk by *the* Spirit... [In other words, let the Spirit of God *lead* you. Let the laws of God be *written in your heart and mind*. Let them be *the guide* for what you do. Add to that, the *faith of God, the hope of God, the love of God*.] ...walk by *the* Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

That is, what you might say, the counterpoint of philosophy: the only way you overcome the lust of the flesh is to deprive it, because they don’t have the Spirit of God to overcome, so they are trying to figure out how they can do it. That’s what ends up being so futile. But, with the Spirit of God we ‘will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.’ I’ll tell you one thing, if you really focus

in on the love of God, you are not going to be fulfilling the lust of the flesh.

This shows the fruit of the Spirit; v 22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.... [Gal. 2:20 [transcriber’s correction]: ‘I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me.’] ...If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit. We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another” (vs 22-26). So there are some tremendous lessons for us here on how to grow, how to change, how to overcome, how to yield ourselves to God.

(go to the next track)

Let’s come back to Colossians 3:5 and let’s finish the last sentence there: “...also, the inordinate desires for riches—those avaricious, covetous cravings which are, in fact, idolatry.”

We had the occasion to go up to San Francisco, and right across the parking lot was Macy’s Department Store. We had a little time to kill before our appointment, so Dolores and Rachelle went in there to shop and I hate shopping so I found myself a little chair to sit down in while they wandered through the store for twenty or thirty minutes. They didn’t end up getting anything. But I just sat there, and of course, it was right during the Christmas shopping season and you could almost smell the covetous cravings for physical things as people are walking in and walking out.

I’ll tell you, in San Francisco you have to be prepared to see all kinds of odd and weird looking people. It is unreal! But anyway, people going around, they are all hyped up on the music for Christmas shopping, they are all kind of in a trance, walking around, seeing what they can buy. Walking out the doors with shopping bags full of things and just caught up in this whole thing of Christmas. That’s exactly what Christmas is all about. To appeal to the covetous and the avaricious and the idolatry of doing good, under the guise of evil, of which then is idolatry.

I was thinking, as I was sitting there, watching all of this and wondering why people go through this, and it really dawned on me. The reason people get caught up in Christmas so much is that, it appeals to *their lying and deceitful nature*. What is one of the things that a lying and deceitful nature would have you do? *Do good with a lie!* You think on that! Everything that Christmas is based upon is a lie! But then they try and do good.

The whole Santa Claus thing, the whole bit on that and everything, that just keeps them all wrapped up in the things of the world, the things of the flesh, the covetousness and the greed, which are in fact, idolatry. If a Christmas tree in a house is not idolatry, I don’t know what it is. I personally think that, it symbolizes the tree of *the knowledge of good and evil* and symbolizes those of the world who are celebrating their own fall, through deceit, which they don’t even understand, that that is what they are celebrating.

I asked a man the other day, we were talking about a Christmas tree—I didn’t give him the answer, I just wanted to see what his response would be—why do we have all of these orbs and all of these Christmas lights and balls and things like this on Christmas trees and why do people bring a tree into their house? Well, he told me: ‘It’s fun, it’s beautiful, it’s entertaining, and it’s wonderful.’ It was really something!

Colossians 3:6: “On account of these very things the fierce wrath and anger of God is coming on the children of disobedience—those who obstinately refuse to believe and obey God.” If I would have given that person just the whole naked truth about Christmas, he would have really been thrown for a loop and look at me as if I am crazy. Their time is coming!

Verse 7: “...Among whom you also at one time conducted your lives and walked in those evil ways. When you were living that way, your whole way of life—yes, your entire life style—was actually built around those things.” All of the physical things are going to come tumbling down. Now we are getting into some of the things we need to overcome, which I have found, with my own experience, are those things that you can overcome far better by really focusing on the love of God, the laws of God and so forth.

Verse 8: “But even now, you should also put off.... [There is a whole process, we are to *put in* Christ. We are to put off and put out all of these other things that he lists here in v 8]: ...(Strip away, cast aside, and renounce) every one of these things: indignation, anger and wrath...”

Of course, these are the things that get us more than any thing else. Remember, he is talking to converted Christians. He is saying to put these things away. So, it is no surprise, we have these things to work on—right? *Yes!* I’ll just have to say that is what I need to work on an awful lot.

“...indignation, wrath and anger; emotional outbursts of temper, and hateful rages—malignant, bitter thoughts of spitefulness...” (v 8). I’ll tell you what, if there is any one thing that can spoil an attitude it is bitterness. Especially if it is bitterness

against God, because things didn't go the way that you wanted. *Now, think on that statement!* Maybe what you wanted is not God's way. So, rather than be bitter, as some people are, go to God and say, 'God, help me to understand.'

"...bitter thoughts of spitefulness; blasphemy and cursing; obscene, vile or foul language from out of your mouth. [Eliminate these degrading character traits and habits]" (v 8).

Even the Proverbs say, 'Don't be around an angry man, lest you be like him.' Don't be around someone who has a foul mouth, lest you begin picking up what he is saying. I know, I have experienced it and you have experienced it: if you are around people who are using bad language, swearing or cursing, you will inadvertently pick it up in your mind, though you don't want to have it there, but just being around and hearing those kind of things, it puts it into your mind.

These are the things that you need to put down and put away and stop and really yield yourselves to God in a way that is going to be right and good and true and loving. You'll feel better when you get these things out of your mind. The next time you really smash your thumb with a hammer or whatever it may be, then you will find out what sort of progress you are making.

Verse 9: "Do not lie or speak deceitfully to one another.... [Here, he is talking to Christians. Have Christians lied to each other? *Yes!* Have they spoken deceitfully to each other? *Yes!* Is it something that they should do? *No!* That is why Paul says *put it away.*] ...considering that you yourselves have put off and fully renounced the old person (your old self which was buried in the watery grave of baptism) together with his deeds..." There is the whole operation of putting off/putting out, getting rid of.

Let's come back to Romans 6 again and see that Paul was teaching the same thing in a little bit different way than he is here in Col. 3—notice how closely this parallels what Paul wrote, Romans 6:8: "Now, if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.... [Notice, he gives an overall statement here]: ...Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof" (vs 8-12).

He didn't say you are not to have sin and you are to be completely perfect, because we know that is an impossibility. What he is saying is, *don't*

*let it rule in your lives*; don't let it reign in your lives. If you walk in the Spirit, you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Verse 13: "Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God." There is the whole, profound and important lesson of changing, of growing, of overcoming, of putting out, and that is how we put out.

Let's come to Romans 8:9—this is also very important for us to understand in our relationship with God, our relationship with each other, in changing and growing and overcoming. "However, you are not in *the* flesh... [you are not living as a carnal human being, without the Spirit of God] ...but in *the* Spirit, **if the Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you....**" That is the most profound and important thing, brethren. That the Spirit of God dwell in you.

There are times because of difficulties, because of sin; *or* there are times because of sorrow; *or* there are times because of frustration and not knowing exactly how God is going to work things out, that you may feel like there is not as much of God's Spirit in you as you would like. But don't worry, it is still there. God doesn't take away His Holy Spirit unless you commit absolutely, the unpardonable sin, and if you do, you will never be the same person again. But, nevertheless, if we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, then we are His.

"...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness" (vs 9-10). So again, we have the same thing that Paul is writing about, the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit, to put out one thing and to put on another thing.

Verse 11: "Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies... [that means to make alive your mortal bodies, obviously at the resurrection] ...because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.... [How is this done?] ...For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God" (vs 11-14). That is pretty powerful, what Paul is writing, how we need to grow and change and overcome.



Let's come back to Colossians 3:10—now here comes what we need to do.

- If you put something out, *you need to put something in.*
- If you take something off, *you need to put something on.*
- If you get rid of sin, then *you need to put in righteousness,*

That is the whole thing that Paul is talking about.

Colossians 3:10: “And that you put on and exemplify the new person (Christ in you—your new self), which is being continuously renewed and regenerated in godly spiritual knowledge according to the likeness and exact image of Him (Jesus Christ) Who created and is creating (in you that new person from within).” There is the whole process of overcoming. You can see by this, this is a very high level of Christian growth and

- may we attain unto that
- may we really understand and realize that in a way that we ought to

Verse 11: “Where (there are no physical barriers or qualifications)... [That's important to understand, especially when you reflect on what the Jews said to Jesus, they said ‘we be Abraham's seed.’ Well, it's not because of *what* you are; *it's because of Who God is.*] ...or qualifications... [there is no physical qualification that God is laying down for a person to be a Christian, as we saw with the circumcision of the heart and so forth.] ...where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor freeman; rather Christ is all things (of Christian character and enlightenment) in everyone.”

Let's see where the Apostle Paul again wrote of this and shows who are the true seed of Abraham. It ties in exactly with what we are talking about here. Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus”

Let's understand something, very important: ***If you are the children of God, it doesn't matter what your physical status is!*** It is true there are prophecies for different nations. It is true there are prophecies concerning the ten tribes of Israel; of which we are in the midst of, I am convinced of, here in the United States, even though we are going down the tubes just like Babylon the Great. However, please understand that every time Israel and Judah sinned they became Babylonianized. You cannot count on the fact that you are who you are physically to come to God and say because who I am you must do something for me. ***That is not faith in Christ!***

Galatians 3:27: “For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ.... [baptized into His death, His burial and resurrection and so forth] ...did put on Christ.... [Christ in you is the *hope of glory*, which was the whole focus of the first chapter of the book of Colossians.] ...There is neither Jew... [a Jew has no standing before God because he is a Jew] ...nor Greek... [a Greek has no standing before God because he is a Greek, or you can put in any other nationality or bloodline that you want there] ...there is neither bond nor free.... [If you are free and a slave of sin *you are still in bondage!* If you are a slave and you are free of sin because of Christ *you are free!*] ...there is neither male nor female...” (vs 27-28)—as far as Christian growth and overcoming is concerned. There is male and female as far as our physical lives are concerned, but a man isn't going to come to God and say ‘Well God, you made me the head of my wife, so therefore, I deserve better.’ It won't happen.

“...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.... [***That is your spiritual standing before God!*** Your spiritual standing before God does not eliminate the fact of your physical status, but just as ***your physical status has no standing with God*** on account of salvation.] ...And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the* promise” (vs 28-29). That is what is so very important for us to know, to realize, to understand, to live by, to really concentrate on.

In the process of putting out all of these sins, in the process of beating the flesh as it were as the Apostle Paul said, that he fights, and he fights putting down these physical things and lust and greed and works of the flesh by walking in the Spirit. Here's what we need to do, Colossians 3:12: “Consequently, be putting on and clothing yourselves with Godly, Christian character, (the fullness of God's way, even His love and attitude, in your mind).”

Let's understand something here that is very interesting. Here is part of the message to the Laodiceans. I don't want to focus in on the whole message, but I want to focus in on just one part. He says, Revelation 3:18 “I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments... [You buy from Christ, the white raiment/garment. Tie that in with Matt. 25:9, about the ten virgins: five were wise, five were foolish and the wise told the foolish: ‘Well, you have to go to them that sell and you buy.’ That is the same message that is here, we are to come to Christ and through the righteousness that He gives us, we are to purchase without physical money—but with the Spirit of God—the white raiment. And the white raiment is the *righteousness of Christ*. Why?] ...and the shame of your nakedness may not be

revealed...” So that is really very important, we are to be clothed, we are to put on, we are to have all of these things put into our hearts and minds and being.

Let’s come back to Colossians 3:12—here is how we are to do it; we are to: “...be putting on and clothing yourselves with Godly, Christian character, (the fullness of God’s way, even His love and attitude, in your mind), as the elect and selected ones of God... [Remember the calling that God has given you it is from God the Father, Himself.] ...Holy and consecrated...”

That’s what you are to God. When we look at ourselves in the mirror and see this aging flesh as it’s coming along or whatever it may be, it is hard for us to realize that we are Holy and consecrated. But with the Spirit of God, we are, in fact, Holy and consecrated.

“...even the beloved and cherished ones in Christ...” (v 12). Of all that God is doing in the universe, what is He focusing in on more than anything else if it is not the children that He has called and given His Spirit to? That’s what He is focusing in on. And that’s what Christ wants. He wants us to grow in grace, to grow in knowledge.

“...develop these attributes of God)... Here is what we need to develop brethren]: ...compassion and tender mercy... [How? That you just put it on? *No!* ...**flowing from the depths of your innermost being**.... [it is to be without any pretense] ...kindness and sympathy; humility and lowliness of mind and heart... [Not the self-exaltation and the vanity and all the stupidity and things that we as human beings do.] ...meekness and controlled calmness; longsuffering and fortitude” (v 12). Here are all the things that we are to be putting on.

Verse 13 shows what this is going to do. “Forbearing one another... [Don’t be getting mad and angry at each other because of a little problem that may come along.] ...having an attitude of tolerance and understanding; forgiving each other, if anyone has a dispute with anyone else, or a complaint or criticism against any; exactly as Christ forgave you (blotting out, forgiving and forgetting all your sins, transgressions and offences against Him), in the same way, you also should be doing (the same thing).”

Let’s see something that is really important, in our relationship with God and our relationship with each other. How many times have we seen this take hold the wrong way? How many times have we seen someone that God has called, whom God has forgiven their sins, whom God has given His Spirit and then they come along and they forget that they have had their sins forgiven?

Matthew 18:23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who

would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24).

You can liken that to; we’ll just round that off to \$10-million and be generous. If you were in debt, \$10-million, think of that. I know it is difficult when you have debt and you don’t have money coming in to try and figure where you are going to pay these bills, and especially, if the creditors come around and they are banging on the doors and beating in the walls and clanging on the phones. Just liken that to your own sins.

Verse 25: “But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt” (vs 25-27).

Now then, when we are in that status before God, too many times we do the following. Because we forget what it was that God has done for us, and we become focused in on the physical things; we become focused in on a character trait or character flaw and we forget our own weaknesses and our own stupidities and our own sins. *We do!*

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins; and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me’” (vs 28-32). It shows the tremendous, immediate forgiveness that God shows toward our sins.

- Can we not give the same allowance, toward others that God will forgive them of their sins?
- Can we not be patient and forbearing and understanding in that way?
- Can we not grow in compassion with God’s Spirit to do so?

That’s hard to do, brethren, I know. If you have really been offended or someone has offended you, it is hard; it is not easy. It may take an awful lot of prayer on your part.

Remember this, v 33: "...‘Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. Likewise... [here is the whole lesson] ...shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother’s offenses from the heart” (vs 33-35). That is very clear.

Paul is teaching exactly the same thing here in Colossians 3:13: “Forbearing one another, having an attitude of tolerance and understanding; forgiving each other, if anyone has a dispute with anyone else, or a complaint or criticism against any; exactly as Christ forgave you (blotting out, forgiving and forgetting all your sins, transgressions [trespasses] and offences against Him), in the same way, you also should be doing [the same thing].... [here is the pinnacle that we are to come to] ...In addition to all these things (above and beyond the basic qualities of Christian character) be putting on and clothing yourselves with **THE LOVE**... [that’s what it is in the Greek, the ‘agape,’ *the love*] ...(that Godly, divine love), which is the bond of cohesiveness that unites us all together in spiritual maturity and Christian perfection” (vs 13-14).

It is so very important that we do that, brethren. That very love that comes from God. {see *Love series* on the love of God} Remember this, it is so absolutely important: ***we love God because He loved us first*** and *that is how we ought to be loving each other*. I’ll tell you what, if we are in the process of growing and overcoming and putting out sin and putting off the things that Paul said, put off, put out, get rid of and *put on Christ*, and *put on the Spirit of God*, then you know that the problems are going to be minimized. As long as we are in the flesh and have human nature, there are still going to be some problems and difficulties, but let’s keep them all down to a dull roar, by using the Spirit of God. Only the Spirit of God can give us that. Only the Spirit of God can help us.

Here’s what we are to do: v 14: “...be putting on and clothing yourselves with **THE LOVE** (that Godly, Divine love), which is the bond of cohesiveness that unites us all together in spiritual maturity and Christian perfection.’ The only thing I can say is, recall this past Feast of Tabernacles, because, I tell you, that certainly, I think, epitomized almost everything that the Apostle Paul is writing of here.

When this happens, v 15: “And let the peace, harmony and tranquility of God rule and predominate (be the governing force in) your hearts and minds, by which (peace and rulership) you all were called into one body, the Church... [which then

is the spiritual body of Christ] ...and always be thankful and filled with gratitude (reflecting the preciousness of your calling).... [Then he shows exactly how all of this is done]: ...Let the Word and Message of Christ be dwelling, living and residing in you, richly and abundantly, in all wisdom and understanding...” (vs 15-16). That is what we are to let abide in us,

- the Word of God
- the Truth of God
- the love of God

Let’s go back to Ephesians, the fourth chapter. Eph. 4 is really a parallel of Col. 3. As a matter of fact, you could put them, side-by-side, and study it.

Ephesians 4:21: “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the* truth in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts.... [notice how that parallels Col. 3] ...And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth” (vs 21-24). And that is the whole goal, brethren.

God is not going to *beat* us in the Kingdom of God. ***He is going to lead us into it!*** What is the most important thing of that? That by the Spirit of God we are

- going to be ***inspired***
- we are going to be ***uplifted***
- we are going to be ***desiring and wanting***
  - ✓ God’s love
  - ✓ His way
  - ✓ His Truth
  - ✓ His Kingdom
  - ✓ His salvation.

Then you can read all the rest of Eph. 4, where he goes through the same thing:

- put away lying
- don’t be angry
- don’t give place to the devil
- don’t steal
- don’t have any corrupt communication out of your mouth
- Grieve not the Holy Spirit.
- Put away bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking

Verse, 32: “And be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you.” That is tremendous, brethren, the way that these books come together.

Let's come to Philippians, the second chapter, and see again we have the same thing. I tell you, when Paul was writing these prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, God gave him an extra measure of inspiration. I think that He gave the extra measure of inspiration to Paul because he was so alone and so deprived and he didn't know whether he was going to live or die and he wrote these epistles from the very, innermost part of his being, if we could put it that way.

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let nothing be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself" (vs 1-3). That is something, brethren, which is really a very important attitude for us to have. What does that reflect?

We will see what this attitude reflects, v 4: "Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 4-5). There is the whole goal, brethren, of what we are to do, in character and growth and overcoming.

- Was not Jesus perfect in love? *Yes!*
- Was not Jesus perfect in obedience? *Yes!*
- Was He not perfect in faith? *Yes!*
- Does He not give these things to us? *Yes!*

He gives us

- His own *faith*
- His own *love*
- His own *hope*
- His own *strength*
- everything to be right in the very midst of our being

Here is how we are to really grow in grace and in knowledge with the Spirit of God, Colossians 3:16 "Let the word and message of Christ be dwelling, living and residing in you, richly and abundantly, in all wisdom and understanding..." That is so important brethren, I know there are people who, and I have heard it from people in other Churches of God, that what they do is they read the Bible. That's okay, that's better than not reading it, but we need to *study* it. Not only do we need to study it, we need to *ask God's Spirit to lead us and teach us what it means* because, to be just like this here, so that it will be:

"...richly and abundantly [in us], in all wisdom and understanding; teaching and instructing, admonishing and reminding each other in psalms

and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts and minds to the Lord" (v 16). That's really something that we can focus in on and I hope that we can have more occasions where we can do more singing and things like that. Again, I call your attention to what we had at the Feast of Tabernacles, this past year.

Verse 17: "And in everything, whatever you may be doing, in word (whether in speech or written communication) or in work (any deed or endeavor), **do all things in and through the name of the Lord Jesus, our Master and Ruler, giving thanks and praises of gratitude to God, even the Father, by and through Him.**"

I tell you what, if we can all strive for this kind of overcoming, if we can put out the deeds of the flesh, overcome the works of the flesh and the pulls and the lust of the mind through the Spirit of God, and really apply Colossians, the third chapter, in our lives, we are going to find that even in spite of all the difficulties and turmoil and wretchedness in the world:

- We are going *to know* that we are right with God.
- We are going *to know* that God loves us.
- We are going *to know* that we love Him.
- We are going *to know* that we love the brethren.

That is real tremendous.

We will go ahead and end it here because it gets into other topics and so we will finish this off the next time.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible, in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (Exception: Colossians: *Expanded Amplified* booklet)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 3:1-7, 1
- 2) Romans 6:1-6
- 3) Colossians 3:1
- 4) Ephesians 3:16-19
- 5) Hebrews 10:16
- 6) Psalm 46:7
- 7) Psalm 37:1-9, 27-31, 34
- 8) Colossians 3:2-4
- 9) 1 John 3:1-3
- 10) Colossians 3:5
- 11) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- 12) Colossians 3:5
- 13) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- 14) Galatians 5:16, 22-26
- 15) Colossians 3:5-9
- 16) Romans 6:8-13
- 17) Romans 8:9-14

- 18) Colossians 3:10-11
- 19) Galatians 3:26-29
- 20) Colossians 3:12
- 21) Revelation 3:18
- 22) Colossians 3:12-13
- 23) Matthew 18:23-35
- 24) Colossians 3:13-16
- 25) Ephesians 4:21-24, 32
- 26) Philippians 2:1-5
- 27) Colossians 3:16-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 7
- Hebrews 10
- Philippians 3:21
- Galatians 2:20
- Matthew 25:9

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *How to Use the Holy Spirit*
- Sermon Series: *Love*
- *Beliefs of The Christian Biblical Church of God*

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians VII

Fred R. Coulter

Let's continue with our study of the epistle to the Colossians. Let's go ahead and just review Colossians 3 down through v 11, because that is where we finished last time.

Colossians 3:1: "Reflecting on everything that has been written, now then if you were raised (out of that watery grave) with Christ, be diligently and zealously seeking the things which are above, the things of God, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Be minding the things, which are above, setting your heart and your affections on them—not on the things on the earth (and all that it stands for). Because you have died (to yourself and this world), and your life (your spiritual life and eternal destiny) has been hid and laid up in store with Christ, reserved for you in God" (vs 1-3).

"When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, and shall be revealed for all to see, then you shall appear and be openly manifested with Him in magnificent splendor and glory. Therefore, (through the power of the Spirit of Christ in you—rather than subjecting yourselves to the regimen of the philosophies of men and the worship of fallen angels).... [Which all refers back then to Col. 2.] ...You are to put to death, mortify, what is earthy in you, those degrading pulls of human nature; sexual depravity and promiscuity; uncleanness and lewdness; lustful and disgraceful passions of sexual desires—the unbridled mental sexual obsessions of your imagination—those evil and wicked lusts and yearnings; also, the inordinate desires for riches—those avaricious, covetous cravings which are, in fact, idolatry" (vs 4-5).

"On account of these very things the fierce wrath and anger of God is coming on the children of disobedience—those who obstinately refuse to believe and obey God; among whom you also at one time conducted your lives and walked in those evil ways. When you were living that way, your whole way of life—yes, your entire life style—was actually built around those things. But even now, you should also put off (strip away, cast aside and renounce) every one of these things: indignation, anger and wrath; emotional outbursts of temper, and hateful rages—malignant, bitter thoughts of spitefulness; blasphemy and cursing; obscene, vile or foul language from out of your mouth. (Eliminate these degrading character traits and habits)" (vs 6-8).

All of this shows that the inner battle of growing and overcoming Christians is not perfect. And as a matter of fact the real truth is with God's Spirit in you, the longer God's Spirit is in you, you

understand how evil that human nature really is. And you come to the same point that the Apostle Paul did in:

Romans 7:19 when he said: For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing. But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me. Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members. O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death? I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ..." (vs 19-25)—that he will be saved out of this. So all of these things show the character traits and things, as a result of human nature and the pull of the flesh and what we need to overcome.

Colossians 3:9: "Do not lie or speak deceitfully to one another, considering that you yourselves have put off and fully renounced the person, (your old self which was buried in the watery grave of baptism) together with his deeds, behavior and way of living; and that you put on and exemplify the new person (Christ in you—your new self), which is being continuously renewed and regenerated in godly, spiritual knowledge according to the likeness and exact image of Him (Jesus Christ) Who created and is creating (in you that new person from within)" (vs 9-10). And that is very important for us to understand.

Let's go to 2-Corinthians, the fourth chapter, and we will see what the Apostle Paul was saying about being renewed within. And it is continuously being renewed, continuously growing and changing and overcoming. 2-Corinthians 4:14: "Knowing that He Who raised the Lord Jesus *from the dead* shall also raise us through Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the abounding grace may cause the thanksgiving of many to overflow unto the glory of God. For this reason, we do not lose heart..." (vs 14-16).

Paul is talking about the ministers; Paul is talking about the brethren; and Paul then talks about his own difficulties and we'll see how he puts that in proper perspective.

"...but if our outward man is being brought to decay, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day" (v 16). And you can tie that back in with

Matt. 6: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' And that means 'help us today, God, with everything that we do, keep us from the evil one today, Oh, Lord.'

"...yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our tribulation..." (vs 16-17). Paul is talking about the trials that he went through, the trials you are going through, the trials I am going through, whatever they may be, whatever your circumstances are. Paul says that compared to eternal life, it is:

"...For the momentary lightness of our tribulation is working out for us an immeasurably greater *and* everlasting fullness of glory; while we consider not the things *that are* seen, but the things *that are* not seen. For the things *that are* seen *are* temporary; but the things *that are* not seen *are* eternal" (vs 17-18).

That is what we must keep our hearts and minds focused on continually. That's why Paul emphasizes here in Col. 3, it is going to make overcoming easier, because you are focusing on the eternal, spiritual things of God while you are overcoming and putting out the physical things and the character problems that you have. You can overcome them with a far more effective way and means *if* you're focusing in on what God can do for you.

Let's come back to Colossians 3:11: "Where (there are no physical barriers or qualifications)"—which is very important. Remember what Jesus told the Jews when they said 'Why, we are in bondage to no one, we are Abraham's seed'; and Jesus said, 'Well, if you were Abraham's children, then you would do the works of Abraham, you seek to kill Me and that Abraham did not do.'

Remember what John the Baptist said to the Pharisees when they came out wanting to be baptized, he said, 'Don't come and tell me that you are Abraham's seed because God, from these stones, can raise up children to Abraham.' So, there is no physical barrier even though we are still physical in the flesh. The way God is dealing with us and qualifying us for the Kingdom of God is not going to be Jews first, Greeks second, it's not going to be circumcision first and uncircumcision second.

That is what he writes here: "...where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor freeman; rather Christ is all things (of Christian character and enlightenment) in everyone" (v 11). In other words, *if Christ is in you* that is the important thing. I know with all of us, we look around at us and we are a weak and motley crew. But that is okay, God can use us, we will keep our heart and mind on Christ.

Verse 12: "Consequently, be putting on and clothing yourselves with Godly, Christian character, (the fullness of God's way, even His love and attitude, in your mind), as the elect and selected ones of God, holy and consecrated, even the beloved and cherished ones in Christ.... [And I might just add there, so when all else fails and everyone else fails, **remember God loves you.**] ...(develop these attributes of God); compassion and tender mercy flowing from the depths of your innermost being; kindness and sympathy; humility and lowliness of mind and heart; meekness and controlled calmness; longsuffering and fortitude."

Let's go back and let's look at some Scriptures on how we can do all of these things. Let's come to 2-Corinthians 10 and let's see how we are to put out these things and put on Christ. Christ is in us and it is the earnest of God's Holy Spirit, which is the promise of eternal life. And remember that God Who promises will fully deliver, because *God cannot lie!* That is what Paul wrote of Abraham: he said that Abraham was fully persuaded that *what God had said He would do!* So now, with Christ *in* us we can overcome.

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh." That is the key thing brethren, you cannot overcome carnal mindedness with carnal mindedness, it won't work. It's just like you can't bail the ship out if you're pouring water in it. You can't put the fire out if you're throwing gasoline on it.

Verse 4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal... [we know they are spiritual] ...but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds... [The strongest hold that there is in the world for you is your mind.] ...casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ" (vs 4-5). And if Christ is *in* you, you can do it. That is the tremendous thing.

Let's just remember the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee came and he was doing all these things by carnal means—wasn't he? He said, 'God, I thank you, I am not like others' (Luke 18). He was looking out and judging around and comparing himself with others. It says here in Col. 3 that those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise.

Verse 12: "But we dare not join ranks with or compare ourselves with those who are commending themselves; for those who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, have no understanding." Why? *Because, in comparing yourself among yourselves, then you are not comparing yourself to God!* And

that is what happened with Job. Job was comparing himself with himself and what he was doing and others were doing—and yes, in the flesh he was perfect—but compared to God, what was he? Well you read about his repentance ( Job 42).

Verse 5: “...bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.” The Apostle Paul gives a little more detailed information on how to do that in Col. 3; how that *we are to put out* these things but *put on Christ, put Christ in!* Remember the whole theme of the book is: *Christ in you, the hope of glory!*

Let’s come to Philippians 2 and see how this parallels right along with what Paul was writing there. Notice one of the things that is so vitally important, if you are concentrating on these things. As Paul wrote in the book of Philippians you are not going to be just overloaded and burdened down with all the carnality.

- God will give you His Spirit
- God will give you His love
- God will give you His contentment

Philippians 2:1: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the Spirit*...” Showing that it all has to come with the Holy Spirit in us, and by this Holy Spirit, the power of God, we fellowship with God. This is really the most important thing.

You can have social clubs, you can have people gathering together, yes, you can have churches gather together. When I was up in the Northwest just recently, I learned, to my dismay that many of the brethren of God are just coming together to fellowship because it is a social club. Well, people can get together and have ‘do-goodism’ and ‘feel good,’ and pat each other on the back and all this sort of thing, but *that is not the fellowship with the Spirit of God*, with Jesus Christ and God the Father.

1-John 1:3: “That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ.... [That’s where it has to be: in prayer, in study, in yielding to God, in letting God’s Spirit work with you. Then you have that fellowship of the Spirit.] ...These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full” (vs 3-4).

That is what God wants us to have. I’ll tell you one thing, with all the disasters going on, with all the troubles going on, all the hand wringing in the world is not going to help, because we are in such a situation that now God’s hand is going to be against those who are evil and we are not to participate in

the world nor the things that they do. We just need to ask God to help us and guide us and protect us and spare us.

Let’s come back to Philippians 2:1: “...if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the Spirit*, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions... [that your feelings are true and come from within, from the very depths of your innermost being]. ...fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind... [We are again going to see how that Paul is very inspiring in these Epistles of Eph., Phil. and Col. and focuses in on Christ in you.] ...be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory*...” (vs 1-3). How does strife and vainglory come? *It comes by comparing yourself among yourselves* and those that do so are not wise.

“...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus” (vs 3-5). I tell you, that is so profound. I was studying the other day the first chapter of the Gospel of John again and there is so much there, that even after having done the study through the whole Gospel of John, I feel like now, we are just ready to start studying it again what is there, every word is loaded.

Verse 6—here is the mind that Christ had, He didn’t have vainglory, He didn’t have self-righteousness, He was righteous because of love, He was righteous because He was God. “Who, although He existed in *the* form of God... [and that means actually existing in the form of God] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, But emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross” (vs 6-8) When Paul says, ‘let this mind be in you,’ that is what he is talking about.

Now, let’s come back to Colossians 3:13: “Forbearing one another, having an attitude of tolerance and understanding; forgiving each other, if anyone has a dispute with anyone else, or a complaint or criticism against any; exactly as Christ forgave you (blotting out, forgiving and forgetting all your sins, transgressions and offences against Him), in the same way, you also should be doing (the same thing).”

Now, if you’re looking around and judging, comparing, then you are not going to be forgiving, you are not going to be understanding. We are to be ‘wise as serpents and harmless as doves,’ that is correct. We don’t have to be dupes and stupid, but we are to be *forbearing* one another.



Let's see what happens when judgment reigns supreme. And unfortunately, brethren, that is how too many Churches of God are run. They are run on *judgment*. It is amazing! I heard a sermon by a so-called leading Evangelist and all he did was just *up himself*: how many rich people he knew, all the physical things and comparing himself among himself and others. It was unreal, I couldn't believe it. And coming through and judging and everything, all that does is just create an atmosphere of self-righteousness and picky-ness that *destroys true love and real Christian attitude* led by God's Spirit.

Matthew 6:33 shows that the message of Christ was the same as the message of Paul, was the same as the message of John, and was the same as the message of Peter and so forth. Matthew 6:33: "But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness... [Jesus' message was exactly the same. That is the first thing we are to do.] ...and all these things shall be added to you.... [the physical things that you have need of] ...Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself.... [That doesn't mean don't plan, but it means don't go ahead and rely on your plans that they are absolutely going to be done the way you thought.] ...Sufficient for the day is the evil of that *day*" (vs 33-34).

There are going to be enough difficulties and problems come along on a daily basis that you just cannot rely on all of the physical plans and things that you are going to do. I call your attention to the earthquake in Southern California. Everybody's plans were suddenly changed, and the evil of the thing at hand was overwhelming. But out of all that suffering, what did it do?

- crime went down 80%
- people helped one another
- people went out and did the things that they needed to do
- everybody, in amazement, said, 'well, I wonder why we can't do this all the time.'

When the disasters come, when the evil comes, then people realize their inadequacies. And out of all of this evil we can look around and boo-hoo and complain and all this sort of thing, but how many people are going to begin to wonder *if* God exists, 'I don't feel adequate to myself any longer.' Out of that then, *if* there is repentance, God can make good happen.

Matthew 7:1: "Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned." I tell you one thing, isn't it true: when you hear someone judging someone else and running them into the ground, do you think that that person would stand for anyone talking about them in that way? Here

'judge' means *judge not to condemnation*. There is a kind of judgment that we are to do. And it is far different, far, far different than people generally suppose.

John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." If there is any kind of judgment we need it is *righteous judgment*. In the world and with business affairs, from day to day we need *judgment*, we need *wisdom*, we need *understanding*, otherwise you are going to get clobbered.

Matthew 7—what He is talking about is the interpersonal relationship between people and brethren so that you are not going around judging each other and you end up like the Pharisee who, through all the physical means—fasting and tithing and not committing adultery and not exhorting, which all things are required—he wasn't repentant. He said, 'and that Publican over there.' The Publican repented and said, 'Oh, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' And Jesus said, 'I tell you that man went down to his house justified rather than the other.' So there is a perfect example of the kind of judgment that Jesus is telling us to not do, that is *judge unto criticism and condemnation*.

Matthew 7:2: "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged... [living law] ...and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you. Now, why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye'; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye? *You* hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your *own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye" (vs 2-5)

Let's go to Galatians 6; it shows us how we are to do this. It doesn't mean that we don't make judgments; it means that *when we do, we consider ourselves*. We will see what the Apostle Paul wrote and said to amplify what Jesus gave there in Matt. 7.

Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in some offense, **you who are spiritual**... [That is the opposite of self-righteous. That means those who have the mind that we have just been talking about here.] ...restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." Not only tempted because of sin but tempted because of judgment and condemnation.

Now let's look at the opposite teaching of this, let's go to Matthew 18, and here is something that is really profound and very important and what we need with each other—toward each other—and part of our Christian living that needs to be

emphasized, in many cases it has not been emphasized in the way that it needs to.

Matthew 18:21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?’” That seems like quite a lot, in going through this. Have you ever had anyone sin directly against you seven times in a day? *Well, probably not!* Peter thought, ‘Well hey, I am going above and beyond by saying seven times.’

Verse 22: “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.’”—which is 490; 70x7. This is showing the difference between the perspective of forgiveness from a human point of view and the perspective of forgiveness from a Godly point of view.

Go back and look at all of the different ones in the Old Testament, and as I mentioned before, Ahab is one of my favorite characters in the Bible, not for the evil he did, but *to show the quickness of the forgiveness of God* when he did sin. God sent Elijah there to judge him, condemn him and throw his flesh outside the wall and the dogs were going to eat it and lick the blood of Jezebel—and Ahab repented and walked tenderly. Then Elijah was on his way back home and God said, ‘Now behold my servant Ahab, see how he walks tenderly.’

So, that is an amplification here of the seven times seventy. This is the kind of forgiveness we need among each other. But I’ll tell you one thing that is so important, if you are concentrating on Christ in you, loving God and growing and overcoming, each one of us, individually, I tell you what, there are going to be so few offences that you are not going to need the 490 times a day to handle the difficulties with your brothers or your sisters.

Then He gave this parable, v 23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents.... [Now that is an awful lot, we’ll just liken that say to \$50-million, just to round it out. It is somewhere close to that in today’s money.] ...But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made” (vs 23-25).

Now let’s understand something, you couldn’t in over a hundred thousand lifetimes repay that if you were sold into indentured servitude to repay the loan. This is likened unto our debt against God. You can’t pay that back as a debt. In other words, *you cannot, by your works, repay God for the sins of your life*. God can forgive you that,

through Jesus Christ. Then that puts a different obligation upon us. It also shows the price God paid for sin. It also shows the value of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Of what value are you going to put on the sacrifice of Christ—Who was God—Who became flesh, so that He could die to pay for our sins? There is not very much you can do to compare that in a matter of money or monetary remuneration or wealth or whatever.

Verse 26: “Because of this, the servant fell down... [I guess! If you owed that amount of money and someone said, ‘You are going to pay every last dime.’] ...*and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt.”

Still, in forgiving the debt, that is really something only God can forgive. You see how quickly, in this example, that the lord of the servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt. Being loosed, we are loosed from the bondage of sin—right? It has the same exact meaning and connotation there. You can tie that in with Rom. 6.

Verse 28 shows what we do in our pompous arrogance and self-righteousness if we don’t have the mind of Christ in us. “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins.... [that’s like saying one hundred dollars] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything’.... [Isn’t that how people do? They focus in sometimes, on the most minute, picayune little thing and just become incensed and inflamed and bitter and run for the throat—right? *Yes!*] ...As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed” (vs 28-30).

How do we cast people in prison? Well, we literally don’t run down and throw them in the jail—do we? *No!*

- We cast them in the prison of estranged fellowship.
- We won’t talk with them.
- We won’t look at them.
- We won’t recognize them.
- We won’t be kind to them.
- We’ll turn our head and be snippy and gossip behind their back and all that sort of thing.

So, in a sense, when you have this *unforgiving attitude toward brethren*, then you end up in a situation that you are literally putting them in prison. And many times, they don't even know what is going on. All of us have experienced that—haven't we?

Verse 31: “Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. Likewise... [in the same manner] ...shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart” (vs 31-35).

Just remember the words of Jesus when He was on the cross dying, He said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And remember the words of Stephen when he was being stoned to death, he said, ‘Oh, Lord, lay not this to their charge.’ So, it shows the tremendous obligation we have in love and forgiveness and so forth and in being able to follow through as the Apostle Paul said in forgiving one another.

Colossians 3:13: “Forbearing one another, having an attitude of tolerance and understanding; forgiving each other, if anyone has a dispute with anyone else, or a complaint or criticism against any; exactly as Christ forgave you (blotting out, forgiving and forgetting all you sins, transgressions and offences against Him).... [the New Covenant: ‘our sins and iniquities, He will blot out and remember no more’ (Heb. 10: 17)] ...in the same way, you also should be doing (the same thing). In addition to all these things (above and beyond the basic qualities of Christian character) be putting on and clothing yourselves with **THE LOVE**.... [in the Greek, it has that impact] ...(that Godly, Divine love), which is the bond of cohesiveness that unites us all together in spiritual maturity and Christian perfection” (vs 13-14).

Now let's go to 1-John 4 and let's learn a real, tremendous, absolute lesson. And I'll tell you what, brethren,

- the more that we study on love
- the more that we think on it
- the more that we try and practice it
- the more that God gives us
- the more that we realize how much we lack it.

I tell you what, if you prayed and asked God: ‘Oh,

help me to have more love.’ Don't be too surprised at some of the circumstances you find yourself in so that you may show that *love*.

(go to the next track)

1-John 4:10: “In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God... [We are not going to come and claim any great spiritual initiation on our part or any goodness from ourselves.] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.... [notice how John writes very similar to how Paul wrote] ...Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another” (vs 10-11).

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.... [that is what we want brethren; that is how God wants it to be with every one of us] ...By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment...” (vs 16-17). See how that is juxtaposition there with judgment. Love and forgiveness and mercy compared to judgment.

“...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God” (vs 17-18). If that is the struggle that you are going through, just go to God and say; ‘Oh, God, I don't know, just help me and guide me and grant me your Spirit and just grant me your love and the understanding.’ And it's going to be a lifelong pursuit, it is not going to come like some sort of funnel being put in the top of your head and God is miraculously going to pour it in. It won't happen that way.]

Verse 19: “We love Him because He loved us first.”

- God is the One Who *calls* us.
- God is the One Who *gives* us of His Spirit.
- God is the One Who *gives* us of His love and understanding.
- God is the One Who *works* the character in us.

Here is a real, lifelong lesson: **God is always going to give you someone somewhere that is going to be most difficult to love!** Verse 20 “If anyone says, ‘I love God’... [it's like the Pharisee there in Luke 18] (now remember): ...**and hates his brother, he is a liar.**”

Now we come back here to 1-John 2:9: “Anyone who claims *that* he is in the light, but hates his brother, is in the darkness until now. The one

who loves his brother is dwelling in the light, and there is no cause of offense in him. But the one who hates his brother is in darkness, and is walking in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (vs 9-11).

Brethren that is what is happening to too many of the people of God, with all of these false doctrines coming in and the things that are happening. I just cannot believe the things the different ones are telling me that is happening in the Churches of God. It comes down to pitting one against the other. Judging one against the other, and they are all beginning to walk in darkness and go back into this world.

1-John 4:20: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?”

This is the test, this is perhaps the whole fulcrum, the crux of our Christian existence: *not only are we to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul and being—which we are; and love our neighbors as ourselves—which we are, but we are to love each other as Christ loves us!*

(So he says, “...**For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?**” And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs 20-21).

I would just have to say, brethren, that at the Feast of Tabernacles, this year, I think we had that kind of spirit and attitude that God gave to us. We are not going to stand up and take any credit and say hurray for us, because God is the One Who has to give it to us, and that is something we need to continually keep in mind.

That is why I put it this way in bringing to bear and focusing in on this verse, Colossians 3:14: “In addition to all these things (above and beyond the basic qualities of Christian character) be putting on and clothing yourself with **the love**, (that Godly, Divine love), which is the bond of cohesiveness that unites us all together in spiritual maturity and Christian perfection. And let the peace, harmony and tranquility of God rule and predominate (be the governing force in) your hearts and minds, by which [peace and rulership] you all were called into one body, the Church; and always be thankful and filled with gratitude (reflecting the preciousness of your calling)” (vs 14-15). That’s a whole mouthful in itself there.

Let’s go back and just review a couple of things concerning this. Let’s go back to John 14,

because Christ has given us the kind of peace, which the world cannot give. The very words of Jesus Christ, and He is the One Who made the way for the peace. He is the One Who paved the way because of His life.

John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give *it* to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear.” So, that’s the kind of peace we need. Christ is there, advocating for us. Christ is there, interceding for us. We don’t have the hostility toward God because we have peace through Jesus Christ. Now, you go back and read the introduction to every one of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul and you will see that he has, ‘grace and peace be to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.’ And that is the reason that he is putting it there.

Let’s understand something. Let’s go to John 6:44, this is what is so important. “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him... [That means *reach down and select him*. That’s why brethren, we are to have the love of God and the love of each other because God is the One Who has done it.] ...and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’.... [Christ in you, God the Father in you] ...everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me” (vs 44-45).

In other words, in this calling that God gives, we have not emphasized the fact that, you must ***hear and answer*** that call and ***learn*** of the Father, and that is because we are coming to Christ. That is really something when we understand it. That’s why *we* have peace. That’s why in all the troubles and difficulties that we see in the world. ***We can have peace through Christ!*** It doesn’t mean we don’t have compassion. It doesn’t mean we don’t understand their suffering. It doesn’t mean any of those things. It means that *we have peace with God the Father!* We are *in* Christ and *in* God the Father! That is what is so profound and what is so important.

Put in your notes Rom. 8:1-13 showing how then we overcome the whole carnality of our humanness through Christ, Who came in the likeness of sinful flesh and has sent His Spirit to be with us.

Colossians 3:16: “Let the word and message of Christ be dwelling, living and residing in you...”

- That’s why *study* is important.
- That’s why *prayer* is important.
- That’s why *meditation* is important.
- That’s why *communicating* with each other is important, and so forth.

“...residing in you, richly and abundantly, in all wisdom and understanding; teaching and instructing, admonishing and reminding each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts and minds to the Lord” (v 16). Now that’s really, really quite a thing and it expands into:

Verse 17: “And in everything, whatever you may be doing, in word (whether in speech or written communication) or in work... [which means]: ...(any deed or endeavor), do all things in and through the name of the Lord Jesus, our Master and Ruler, giving thanks and praises of gratitude to God, even the Father, by and through Him.”

Now let’s go back and let’s amplify vs 16-17. What is the basic message of God? This is basic and this is profound. This is something that we continuously grow in the knowledge and understanding of, that we continually experience the profound spiritual Truth of this verse:

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” Christ was willing to go, because Christ divested Himself of His Divinity and took upon Him human nature, took upon Him, as we saw in Phil. 2, the form of a human being as, not only the form but was a human being in every aspect as we are. So He gave His only begotten.

“...so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life...” (v 16). That is the profound message that we need to focus in on, but not just that verse, this is the overview, all of the rest of the love of God and the New Testament and the Bible, Old Testament, New Testament combined, come together to create this.

Verse 17: “For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit... [See how that ties in with Col. 3 so marvelously?] ...Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death.... [Just like loosing that man from his debt, you have been *freed from the law of sin and death.*] ...For what *was* impossible for the law... [that is just the principle of the law itself] ...to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**” (vs 1-3).

That’s why there is no condemnation to us, brethren. We need not go around with a guilty conscience and being smitten down because of

things like that. Go to Christ. Unburden yourself through Christ:

- through prayer
- through forgiveness
- through yielding to God

He did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that it might be saved.

Now let’s come back to John 3:18; “The one who believes in Him... [The word *on* comes from the Greek ‘eis’—which means *into*. A profound and deep belief, out from yourself and into Christ and from Christ back into you.] ...is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged... [God doesn’t condemn them, they condemn themselves] ...because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: that the light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed; but the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*” (vs 18-21).

From vs 16 thru 21, that is the whole message of the Gospel. The rest of it is expanded out from there. So, if you have this mind and this heart and you are doing these things and in yielding to God, that is the message to focus in on.

There is something else that we do in fellowshiping with each other, in coming together and understanding God’s Way and God’s Truth. I ran a little survey one time doing Malachi 3:16 in as many books of the Bible as possible, I just did it for a study and it’s amazing how frequently they come up and hit right on and coordinate with John 3:16. If someone might want to do that I would appreciate it if you would do it and write it down.

Malachi 3:16: “Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard....”

- God listens to us
- God answers our prayers
- God, with His Spirit in us, has given us eternal life

so that we can grow and change and overcome

“...And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. ‘And they shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels...’” (vs 16-17).

God is going to give us a crown of life. And God is going to give us eternal life and a place in

New Jerusalem. Didn't Jesus say: 'I go to prepare a place for you'? *Yes, indeed!* And when New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, there is going to be your name written where you are going to be, your abode, your dwelling place in New Jerusalem.

God says: "...in the day that I will make up My own special jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him" (v 17). That's a tremendous thing, brethren, when it says: 'let the message of God dwell richly in you, deeply in you.' That is what it is talking about.

Malachi says, v 18: "Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him." That's tremendous, those are really fantastic and marvelous and wonderful things.

Now let's concentrate on where it says singing psalms in your heart—Psalm 95. We are going to spend a little time in the book of Psalms; there is quite a bit here that we can learn and know and understand.

Psalm 95:1: "O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise... [that's for all of us who can't sing] ...to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to Him with psalms" (vs 1-2). So, you see how the Apostle Paul expanded that when he comes to Col. 3 and how we are to grow and how we are to change and how we are to overcome.

Verse 3: "For the LORD is a great God and a great King above all gods...." Part of the reason we get down and discouraged is because we don't look to the greatness of God and the power of His might.

Notice what David wrote here, v 4: ". In His hand are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are also His. The sea is His, and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our maker, for He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand...." (vs 4-7). We have a hymn in the hymnal, which is taken right out of Ps. 95.

"...Today, **if you would but hearken [hear] His voice:** 'Harden not your heart as in the rebellion, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness when your fathers tempted Me, tried Me, even though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, "It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways"—to whom I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest" (vs 7-11). Put in your notes, right there, Heb. 4 showing that that also applies to us.

Psalm 96:1: "O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, bless His name; proclaim His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all people, for the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods, for all the gods of the nations are idols; but the LORD made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary" (vs 1-6). That's where God wants us to be brethren right there with Him. In the sanctuary, seeing Him, serving Him, loving Him, understanding Him.

Verse 7: Ascribe to the LORD, O you kindreds of the people; give to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; bring an offering and come into His courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth." (vs 7-9).

Brethren, worshipping God in the beauty of Holiness is having the Spirit of God *in* you, in an earnest desire and loving attitude

- when you are praying to God
- when you are studying His Word
- when you are yielding to Him
- when you are in the very deep most inner part of your heart and your mind and your emotions
- when you are coming to God to pray

—you are all alone before God and with His Spirit and you worship and praise Him that is the beauty of Holiness, with Christ *in you*—that you can offer back to God the Father for all of His greatness and all of His love and all of His goodness.

Psalm 145:1: "I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" (vs 1-3).

That's an absolutely fantastic way to come before God. Brethren, may we learn that! That's why, at the Feast, I said, Brethren, if you are having difficulty in prayer and in study, go through some of these Psalms and then go pray to God.

Verse 7: "They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power, to make

known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom” (vs 7-12).

Let’s turn to another aspect of God’s works. The greatest work that God is doing is not the creation of the physical things. The greatest work that Christ is doing is *in us*, by the power of the Holy Spirit through God the Father, is Christ in you. This ties right in exactly. I don’t know if the Apostle Paul was back there at Psa. 145 when he was thinking and writing here:

Ephesians 2:8: “For **by grace you have been saved through faith**, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is the gift of God*, Not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship... [Brethren, *we* are the greatest work of God. *We*, in growing and overcoming—which is Christ in us—are *His workmanship*.] ...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 8-10).

So when he brings out here in Psalm 145, when it talks about all of His glorious works, brethren, that is talking about all of those in whom is the Spirit of God that God is working with to create His Family. Can there be any greater creation than His Family? God can create stars and suns and universes and all the physical things that there is. But:

- Is there someone who loves God?
- Is there someone who seeks God?
- Is there someone who is really striving after God?

***That is the greatest creation!***

Psalm 145:13: “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom... [It is talking about when Christ is on the earth and on in the fulfillment of Rev. 21 & 22.] ...and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD upholds all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways and loving in all His works. The LORD is near unto all who call upon Him, unto all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever” (vs 13-21). Brethren, that’s a tremendous thing.

That’s why the Apostle Paul wants us to really focus in on growing and overcoming with Christ in us; to put in the character of Christ, the

Spirit of God, which He can give if we love God and yield to Him and love each other the way that He wants us to.

All Scriptures from The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version by Fred R. Coulter (Exception: Colossians—*Expanded Amplified* booklet)

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 3:1-8
- 2) Romans 7:19-25
- 3) Colossians 3:9-10
- 4) 2 Corinthians 4:14-18
- 5) Colossians 3:11-12
- 6) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, 12, 5
- 7) Philippians 2:1
- 8) 1 John 1:3-4
- 9) Philippians 2:1-8
- 10) Colossians 3:13
- 11) Matthew 6:33-34
- 12) Matthew 7:1
- 13) John 7:24
- 14) Matthew 7:2-5
- 15) Galatians 6:1
- 16) Matthew 18:21-35
- 17) Colossians 3:13-14
- 18) 1 John 4:10-11, 16-20
- 19) 1 John 2:9-11
- 20) 1 John 4:20-21
- 21) Colossians 3:14-15
- 22) John 14:27
- 23) John 6:44-45
- 24) Colossians 3:16-17
- 25) John 3:16-17
- 26) Romans 8:1-3
- 27) John 3:18-21
- 28) Malachi 3:16-18
- 29) Psalm 95:1-11
- 30) Psalm 96:1-9
- 31) Psalm 145:1-3, 7-12
- 32) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 33) Psalm 145:13-21

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6
- Luke 18
- Job 42
- Romans 6
- Hebrews 10:17
- Romans 8:1-13
- Hebrews 4
- Revelation 21 & 22

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians VIII

Fred R. Coulter

This brings us to Colossians 3:17—we left off last time with v 16, and we want to cover all the way through and into chapter four today; and this will probably be the last in the series.

Colossians 3:17: “And in everything, whatever you may be doing, in word, (whether in speech or written communication) or in work (any deed or endeavor), do all things in and through the name of the Lord Jesus, our Master and Ruler, giving thanks and praise of gratitude to God, even the Father, by and through Him.” We’re going to take this particular section and amplify it quite a little bit.

First of all let’s go to Mark 12, because the most important thing that we need to realize is that Christianity is not a ‘religion’—though it is defined as a ‘religion’ by people in the world; though it is defined sometimes by us as a religion in comparison to other religions. So, in that particular sense it is a religion inasmuch as people think of religion as when you are worshipping God or when you are studying His Word and things like this.

True Christianity is more than a religion. It’s just like this, Colossians 3:17: “...and in everything whatsoever you may be doing in word (whether in speech or written communication) or in work (any deed or endeavor), do all things in and through the name of the Lord Jesus, our Master and Ruler, giving thanks and praise of gratitude to God, even the Father by and through Him.”

That’s just another way of expressing Mark 12:30, where it says: “And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart...”

What we’re doing here in understanding about Christianity, as we have heard in the past: it is a *way of life*—but it is a way of life that gives us direction in everything that we do. In other words, when we say ‘Amen’ at the end of Sabbath services, that does not end our responsibility; nor have we fulfilled our responsibility to God by just being a warm body someplace on the Sabbath, because we know it’s the Sabbath Day. It is a whole way of life and it involves everything we think and everything we do, and our whole attitude toward every minute of every day, if we could look at it that way.

That’s why Jesus said—and this is the great and overall and first primary commandment—“...‘you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.’ This *is the* first commandment.... [and we know the rest of it] ...And *the* second *is* like

unto it...” (vs 30-31)—and so forth.

In Colossians 1:27 we see the way that this is possible. It’s not possible for people in the world to do this, because they don’t have the Spirit of God and they don’t have Christ in them. So, it makes it much, much more difficult for them. But here is the whole premise; the whole thing concerning the book of Colossians. We’re just going to take the very last bit of it, which is *Christ in you the hope of glory*. That’s the whole focus of this book: ***Christ in You!*** If Christ is *in* you, with the Spirit of God, then you can:

- *love* God
- *serve* God
- *worship* God

—with everything you do, whether it’s in word or deed, or in speech and communication—

- *give thanks and praise* to God the Father

This is *how we glorify God*. This is how God works through us and in us and develops the character of Christ that He wants us to have. So, this is what we are going to carry forward on in, past this physical life into the Kingdom of God and by the power of the resurrection from the dead. It involves a whole *way of life*.

I’m going to give you a little bit of an assignment here that you can do in studying the Epistles of Paul. I want you go ahead and survey the Epistles of Paul and I want you to go ahead and look at all of the sections. He’s got a section in almost every epistle, giving instruction on this day-to-day, ***how do we love God and serve Him and do everything to glorify Him***. There’s a part of a chapter in almost every Epistle of Paul.

Let’s go to Romans 12 and see exactly what I’m saying here; because Rom. 12 is that part of the book of Romans that does this. It gives us the day-to-day:

- The instructions on how to get along with each other.
- The instructions on how to grow and overcome.

But also notice how it starts out in Romans 12:1: “I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God... [He is entreating, beseeching. Notice, it’s not with the *whips* of God. It’s the ***mercies of God***.] ...to present your bodies a living sacrifice...” That’s what it means. In ‘whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.’ We’re a living sacrifice.



“...Holy... [We’re Holy because of the Holy Spirit that God has given to us. We’re Holy because we’re sanctified in Christ; we are sanctified in the Father; we’re sanctified by His Word of Truth.] ...and well pleasing [acceptable] to God, which is your [reasonable] spiritual service.”

Then he goes on to explain how we do this, v 2: “Be not conformed to this world...” Oh, that the Churches of God would understand that! Right now the biggest problem we have within the Churches of God is that they are trying to be conformed to this world; accepted by this world; thought well of in the world. Well, if you’re going to serve Christ, Jesus said that the world will hate you. And don’t be surprised at that! So, we should not try and be accepted by the world, conformed to the world, adapt our whole lifestyle to the world.

And along those lines let’s understand something that was just announced in one of the major Churches of God which is that the Passover should no longer be called *the Passover* but it should be called *the Lord’s Supper*. ***That, brethren, is conforming to the world!*** God says don’t be conformed to the world. Every other so-called Christian religion in the world calls what they do in their counterfeit Passover ‘the Lord’s Supper’ or the Eucharist. So if a Church of God does that then, ***they are conforming to the world!***

But here’s what we need to do on an individual basis, and on a collective basis, and on a church basis: “...but be you transformed... [and ‘transformed’ means *to be changed in a process*]: ...**by the renewing of your mind** in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (v 2). Notice how Paul always gives this kind of introduction; very similar to what he did back in Col. 3:17. Here in Rom. 12:1-2 is how he sets the stage for the whole rest of the chapter; that we are to have our minds renewed; and that is, obviously, with the Spirit of God. We are to be constantly proving ‘what is good and what is acceptable and the perfect will of God.’

Verse 3: “For I say through the grace that was given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think...” Would that would be the motto of all the ministers in the Churches of God. Remember, the Apostle Paul had certainly the right attitude on that, and he said ***there is nothing that you didn’t receive***. That is true! The more I think on that, and the longer I really let it dwell in my mind, the more I realize that there isn’t a single thing that we didn’t receive of God!

The problem is in the situation that the whole structure that has been in the Church that we’re familiar with, has always been one of comparison,

one of who is of this rank or that rank, or whatever it may be, and then they get to thinking more highly of themselves than they ought.

How did Paul think of himself? *He said, ‘I’m the least of all the saints, and that I should be called an apostle. I am the sinner. I persecuted the Church!’* So, the Apostle Paul set us the example in that.

“...but to think with sound-mindedness... [and that means *properly*] ...as God has divided to each one a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body... [that is the whole church] ...but all members do not have the same function [office]... [and that means the function and participation in the body] ...likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another” (vs 3-5).

This is always important for us to remember because ministers and deacons and members are all brethren together in Christ! And if we keep that in mind:

- then we’re not going to get over-lordship
- then we’re not going to create a hierarchy
- then we’re not going to have the things which separate each other within the Church

And it’s quite a shame—and I’ve experienced this, and you’ve experienced it: you’ve gone to attend Sabbath services in a congregation and the church is divided. You have this group over here and this group over here and this group over here and some people are included, and some people are excluded. The reason being is that they’re making a difference one with another, and they are really not understanding that God has called us all into one body and we are all brethren.

Verse 6 shows the difference—and there are some differences: “But each one has different gifts according to the grace that is given to us...” Notice how these gifts come. ***They come by the ‘grace that is given to us.’*** Again, whatever we have we have received. It is not something to say, ‘Well, this person has this; and this person has this great personality and all this sort of thing, therefore, he ought to be thus and such.’ Well, every time I’ve seen that done, where men are ordained and hands laid on them for whatever reason, and they are looking at the physical things, I have seen that they collapse, spiritually, somewhere down the road.

Whatever we have it’s “...according ‘to the grace that is given to us—whether prophecy... [that means inspired preaching or teaching] ...*let us prophesy*... [can also mean prophecy, too.] ...**according to the [proportion] measure of**

**faith...**" (v 6). Now, what this does, this helps us to really understand that whatever the grace is, whatever the gift is, whatever is done, it's according to faith! And then

- it must be exercised in the spirit
- it must be exercised in faith
- it must be exercised with the humility that God wants us to have

Verse 7: "Or service... [ministry or deaconing—that is the original Greek there: 'diakonos'] ...*let us tend* to service; or the one who is teaching, *let him tend* to teaching... [concentrate on that] ...or the one who is encouraging, *let him tend* to encouragement... [exhort, to help, to uplift, to bring the body of Christ, through inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, into the perfection that God wants it to be] ...the one who is giving, *let it be* with [simplicity] generosity... [liberally—and that has got to be from the heart as God motivates and inspires the person to do it.] ...the one who is taking the lead [oversees], *let it be* with diligence; the one who is showing mercy, *let it be* with cheerfulness" (vs 7-8). That's a challenge— isn't it? We go to God and we beg for mercy for us; and if someone asks mercy back from us again, sometimes we don't do it that way. So, "...*let it be* with cheerfulness."

Verse 9: "*Let love be* without hypocrisy [dissimulation]..." Now, there's a whole lesson to learn; there's a whole challenge— isn't it? In other words, you don't hate someone in your heart and put on a pretense and dissimulate and pretend that you like and love someone. That's what Judas Iscariot did; and he came and betrayed Jesus with a kiss, which is the greatest hypocrisy and dissimulation if there ever was one."

"...abhorring that which is evil *and* cleaving to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned toward one another in brotherly love. *Let* each esteem the other more highly than himself..." (vs 9-10)— preferring one another. These are almost like New Testament proverbs—aren't they? They are short. They are quick. They're right to the point. They have meaning. And they have practical, everyday application in what we should be doing.

Verse 11: "Be not slack in business. *Be* fervent in spirit. *Be* timely in serving." This is one way to overcome the blahs. You be fervent in spirit and realize that whatever you're doing is serving God. Just like we learned here in Col. 3:17.

Verse 12: "*Be* rejoicing in hope. *Be* patient in tribulation.... [that's a difficult thing] ...*Be* steadfastly continuing in prayer." Now, we're going to cover a little bit more about prayer when we come to Col. 4; but 'continuing *instant* in prayer' means this: Whenever you have a situation—regardless of

what it may be; during the day or whatever—that you be instant to pray to God for help, to thank Him, to love Him, to pray for someone who needs help. And too many times we sort of avoid praying the way we ought to because when we pray we want to do it up really right. Well, you just remember: 'continuing instant in prayer'—you don't have to wait until you're the best; you don't have to wait until you're in the mood. You pray whenever it's needed.

Verse 13: "Contribute to the needs of the saints, *and* strive to be hospitable. Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse" (vs 13-14). That is a tremendous challenge to do—isn't it? That's the exact opposite of this world! They curse their enemy and bless themselves! Now, the Apostle Paul really understood this, because he was persecuting the Church, causing true Christians to be murdered and executed before he was called. And now—after being called, and after being an apostle and serving the Gentiles—he was hated wherever he went by those Jews who wanted to cling to Judaism. So he understood it! And it is the most difficult thing to bless when you are cursed.

Verse 14: "Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (vs 14-15). I tell you, these things are all qualities, brethren, that flow from the Spirit of God. Too many times the congregations of God are what I would call 'uptight.' You walk in and the minister's all dressed out with his suit and his tie and he's very formal and he's very rigid and the people are very rigid, and it would be nice to see someone like that once and a while just really have some compassion and just do what it says here.

Verse 15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep... [That ties in with Phil. 2, where it is that we are to have 'bowels of compassion and mercy one to another.' That's just another way of expressing it here in v 15.] ...*be* of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high ambitions; rather, be accommodating with those of low estate. Do not be wise in your own eyes" (vs 14-16).

There's an awful lot here for us to learn— isn't there? *Yes, there is!* The wisdom of this world is just 'filthy rags' with God—it's meaningless. We need the wisdom of God; and the 'wisdom of God' is something that He gives; it's not something that we have. Again, "according as the grace that has been given.

Verse 17: "Do not render to anyone evil for evil..." We're going to see that on Sunday at the Superbowl—right? They're going to be one against the other. It's going to be war! It's going to be 'go

get the quarterback and kill him' and all this sort of thing. That's the way of the world.

"...*but* be prepared to do what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men.... [Sometimes that is most difficult. You do the best you can, and then take it from there and put it in God's hands.] ...Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; rather, leave *this* to *God's* wrath... [In other words, get out of the way; you don't have to worry about doing it] ...for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine!..." (vs 17-19). And I tell you the best way and the most effective prayer that you can give toward a situation that you know falls into this, where there are difficulties and problems, you put it in God's hands and you ask God to take care of it; and who knows, maybe that enemy of yours may even be called. Now you think about that!

Let's put the shoe on the other foot for just a minute. What if you were one of the relatives that had your aunt or your uncle or brother, your sister, your father or mother arrested by Saul? The rabbi sent by the high priest to arrest and take true Christians and to have them executed and bound and put in prison? That's the one who became the Apostle Paul. How many prayed and said, 'Oh, God, that man is evil and rotten and no good, but please call him and convert him'? That would be a tough prayer. So Paul is speaking from experience, here—isn't he? *Yes, he is!*

"...I will [repay] recompense,' says *the* Lord." (v 19). And the way that God repaid the Apostle Paul for what he did was to have him turn around and do just the opposite he was doing. Instead of killing and persecuting, he had to teach, he had to preach, he had to show them Christ, he had to write the words of God. So, sometimes what we think is a good and a proper sentence and execution against someone, maybe God has something better in mind than we would think. 'God is going to repay,' says the Lord."

Verse 20: "Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping coals of fire on his head.... [In other words, if he truly stays your enemy after that, then God is going to take care of him; and God is going to take care him in the way that is right and proper and He's going to rescue you.] ...**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good**" (vs 20-21). That's why Col. 3:17 is so important in everything that we do.

Let's come back to Colossians 3 and let's continue on from there. We're going to see that this is merely a parallel section in Eph. 5 & 6. We'll come back and coordinate this with some of the other Scriptures as we go along.

Colossians 3:18 "**Wives**, be subjecting, submitting and subordinating yourselves to your own husbands, (having the type of conduct and attitude) that is fitting, proper and becoming in the Lord."

"**Husbands**, be loving your wives (with Godly Divine love); with compassion, understanding and tenderness and do not be not bitter (or oppressively demanding and with a heavy hand; or be rash, harsh, tyrannical or overbearing) toward your wives" (v 19).

"**Children**, be obeying your parents, be in compliance in accord with their wishes because this is well pleasing to God. He accepts this behavior with pleasure and delight" (v 20).

"**Fathers**, do not be provoking, irritating or frustrating your children, so that they will not be discouraged and lose heart, or feel rejected and unwanted" (v 21).

"**Servants and slaves**, be obeying and be in compliance with your masters in this physical life; never with eye service (only while you are under scrutiny or inspection), as only men pleasing; rather, be doing all things in the simplicity and sincerity of your heart, fearing God, and pleasing Him. And whatsoever you may be doing, be working heartily with zeal and motivation from within, exactly as if you were working directly for the Lord, and not just for men" (vs 22-23).

"Always knowing and understanding that from the Lord you shall receive the recompense and the reward of the inheritance (the spiritual inheritance from God); because in reality, you are serving the Master and Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, anyone who is doing wrong, who is living his life contrary to God's way (as He revealed it to us), shall receive a just recompense for whatever he has done wrong; and there is never respect of persons, or partiality or favoritism with God" (vs 24-25).

Let's come back to v 18—and Paul doesn't pick on the wives first (I want you to understand that) because he also touches everything in relationship to the family: wives, husband, children, fathers and servants. This parallels right along with o Ephesians 5 and we will see exactly how this is done.

Let's understand something concerning marriage, which is very important. ***Marriage is a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church.*** So therefore, as we live our lives as husbands and wives, it's very, very important that we understand that relationship; and we understand the foundation of the whole creation of male and

female, and the whole relationship between the Church and Christ. When I get the parallel on this and put it in written form, I'm going to parallel Eph. 5 with Col. 3 and then we have somewhat the same thing in the book of Philipians.

Here's how we do everything, Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks at all times for all things to God and the Father in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ.... [Notice how similar that is to Col. 3:17, and then he comes right along in the next verse talking about almost the same situation.] ...Submit yourselves to one another in *the* fear of God.... [and this is the Church overall in the whole Church] ...Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (vs 20-22).

I tell you, that is a tremendous jewel in the sight of God if that is done. If any man has a wife who does that, and he doesn't love her and is not kind and understanding to her, then God is going to take care of you! But here's the reason for it; it's not because women are lesser human beings. It's not that they are to be put down. It's not that they are 'second-class citizens' in the Kingdom of God—we understand that! But it's a matter of proper order. It's a matter that God has made things that way.

God has, by creation, made: "...the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church... [which means then, there's no dispute] ...and He is *the* Savior of the body.... [not the overlord, not the harsh handed; but the Savior.] ...For even as the church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives..." (vs 23-25).

And this is a tremendous and important thing that needs to be done; because too many men go around—because they're the head—saying, 'Well, I'm the head and you submit to me and therefore, when you do, everything will be fine.' Well, I tell you what, why don't you humble yourself and see if you can love your wife in the way that Christ loves you, and then you're going to see some things change I'm sure. I know a well-noted evangelist that used to brag from the pulpit that he would 'spank' his wife. Well now, that is not in the Bible. Nowhere does it say—I think that's in the book of 'rod-handed' chapter one and verse one in family relations: 'Thou shalt spank your wife.' **NONSENSE! NONSENSE!**

It says, v 25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and **gave Himself for it.**" You go back and you study the life of Christ, and you study how He worked and served and everything He did was for coming to the crucifixion, so that there would be the Church; because without that there wouldn't be the

Church.

Verse 26: "So that He might sanctify it... [make it Holy] ...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word." And that's why it's so important with the action of the Holy Spirit, which is a type of water with the Word of God that is in our minds, that constantly we are being cleaned, we're being washed, we're having our minds set in order by the Word of God. That's why the Sabbath is Holy. That's why the Holy Spirit is Holy. We come together on the Sabbath and we learn the Holy things of God by His Spirit.

- to *wash* us
- to *cleanse* us
- to *uplift* us
- to *encourage* us
- to *inspire* us
- to *strengthen* us

Verse 27—here's why Christ did it all. "That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies.... [you have an obligation to God] ...He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the church" (vs 27-29). That's a tremendous thing for us, brethren:

- that God loves us
- He's nourishing us
- He's cherishing us
- He is creating that whole situation there for being resurrected and being in the Kingdom of God
- being spirit beings
- being the Bride of Christ

Verse 30: "For we are members of His body—of His flesh and of His bones." When I read that several years ago, I was wondering: What does it mean 'of His flesh and of His bones'? The only thing I could figure out was this—and I think that this is correct: 'of His flesh' is through the crucifixion; because that pays for our sins; forgives our sin.

And 'of His bones' is Christ is called 'the second Adam'—isn't He? *Yes, He is!* How was the wife of Adam made? From what was she made? *She was made from his rib!* Here we have an analogy between the first Adam and the second Adam. Just as the first Adam had his wife Eve created for him from one of his bones—his rib—so ***the Church is from the innermost being of Christ*** coming as it were from His bone. So, this becomes very important for us to understand, that Christ is creating

the Church from the innermost part of His being. In other words, that's how He loves the Church. He *willingly* gave Himself. He *willingly* provided Himself as the sacrifice for the Church—"from His bones." We are to have that close relationship with Christ for all eternity.

Verse 31: "For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh." Now, I might mention here that Carl Franklin is doing some research on *The Lord is One*. But he's discovered a very clever slight of hand, which is this: The Lord is one—one is an adjective. It is not a noun. It is not a cardinal number, being *one* as a noun. It is *one* as an adjective—which means that that helps us understand, in a more clearly defined Elohim, which is plural. So, just like this—it says right here: "...they two shall be one flesh"—that is a *descriptive* condition. That's what they *will become*: one flesh. They're still two separate individuals, but they become *one flesh*. That's exactly how God is—God the Father and Jesus Christ—and that's exactly how the Church and Jesus Christ will be.

Verse 32: "This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let each one of you love his wife even as himself; and *let each* wife see that she reverence *her* husband" (vs 32-33).

Let's go back to Colossians, the third chapter, and let's see how this ties in. Verses 18-19 have to do with husband/wife relations; and there are others you can put there: 1-Peter 3:1-7. It's very interesting, where it says there—let's go to 1-Peter 3, because this is important for us to understand; important for us to realize that there is a tremendous thing concerning our lives and having prayers answered and so forth.

1-Peter 3:7: "Likewise, *you* husbands, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel, giving them honor *as* women, and as joint heirs of *the* grace of life so that your prayers may not be cut off."

In other words, if there is a situation where there's a lot of fighting and hassling and going back and forth and all this sort of thing, the prayers of both are going to be hindered. What good is it going to do to have a fight with each other and then run off and sanctimoniously pray to God and not repent and not confess your sins and not ask God to help you and help your wife or help your husband. Your prayers will be hindered. So, if you feel that there have been some difficulties with getting through with some of your prayers, well, maybe examine that area.

Colossians 3:20: "Children, be obeying your

parents, be in compliance with their wishes, because this is well pleasing to God. He accepts this behavior with pleasure and delight." We have so many things in the world that are distracting and taking away our children. It's happened to almost everyone. It's because the way that the world is set. When you find a child who really has this kind of loving and obedient attitude it is really a jewel! Now, a lot of children may feel—because of their carnal nature—that this makes them less of a human being, because they have to obey their parents. But this is not so. It makes you a better person. It makes you stronger in the eyes of God because you do so.

Ephesians 6:1 tells the reason why that this is important. And you look at all the way that the world is; you consider all the things for children and teenagers today. They're ending their lives in suicide; drugs; rock music; and their so-called great idols that they follow, like Michael Jackson—nothing but a perverted wretch of a human being, who is part of this world and instrumentality of Satan the devil and not even worthy of consideration to watch or anything. We hope and pray that in God's way and His time that He's going to work with people like Michael Jackson and bring them to repentance and into the Kingdom of God, but maybe it's not the time now. In the meantime, why should we take this evil and set it up as the idol and the guide for our living? Why not take God and His way and set that up as the true worship of God and the true way to live and the blessings of God?

And that's what Paul brings out here in Ephesians 6:1: "Children, obey your parents in *the* Lord, for this is right." That's why it's so important that parents not get all sanctimonious and conceited in their great authority as parents, and become overbearing and harsh and all that sort of thing against their children—which Paul warns against here, as we'll see in the verses right after this.

Now then, he quotes the Scripture—v 2: "Honor your father and *your* mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with you, and *that* you may live long on the earth" (vs 2-3). That's really something— isn't it? Think on that!

My son Stephen was in a car wreck. He was doing things that he shouldn't have been doing. And he survived it and he is most thankful that he has survived it. His whole attitude and everything has changed because he could see that if just a couple of other little things would have happened, he would have been gone! He was out doing things that he knew that we would not approve of. But since he's 21, he can get out and do those things, and, of course, the society says the parents have no control. Well, we're thankful to God that He spared him.

We're thankful that there was no lasting injury. We're thankful that he is turning his life around, and this is going to be a very important thing. That's why we need to really come to God and just ask Him to work with our children in His way, in His time, and to help bring them back to Him.

I think—in the Churches of God that we know of—we drove off many children. Oh, we tried to have the programs and activities for them; and that became a corrupted mass of politics, and even in some cases, near sexual orgies—and the parents were told to stay away. That doesn't work either. It's got to stay right within the family.

We had a whole way of childrearing—didn't we?—where we spared the love and we wielded the axe, and we caused a lot of this that Paul says not to do.

Colossians 3:21: "Fathers, do not be provoking, irritating or frustrating your children, so that they will not be discouraged and lose heart or feel rejected or unwanted." And all of that goes back to the whole premise that a human being is born perfect.

No, a human being is not born perfect. A human being is born—as sweet and lovely as little children are, and infants and babies are—with the *law of sin and death* in them. Since it is in them you can't beat it out of them, you can do more by loving them to help them overcome it than you can by beating them.

But unfortunately, we had a whole way of childrearing, which was really not in compliance with what God teaches in the Bible. We put spanking first, beating first, depravation first, and we caused a lot of difficulties with our children. I'll be the first to admit that in trying to zealously follow along with what we were taught, I did a lot of things which v 21 says not to do. I just pray that God will help me and help them so that we can overcome the difficulties that have come along.

Ephesians 6:4: "And fathers, do not provoke your children [to wrath]; but bring them up in *the* nurture and admonition of *the* Lord." Now notice, it says *nurture*: caring, helping, loving.

There needs to be discipline when there needs to be discipline; that's not to take that away. But I tell you what, if there was more *nurturing* and less beating, then children are going to be a whole lot better off. But you can't discount the discipline when it really needs to be. When it is—because you are nurturing and you are loving—then whatever discipline you have is going to be a whole lot more effective; and you end up having to correct less. Because if you "...bring them up in *the* nurture and admonition of *the* Lord," that's the way that it

should be.

(go to the next track)

There are many Scriptures that we can tie in with this, so we'll go through and we'll read this section here and we'll tie in the Scriptures. Colossians 3:22 "Servants and slaves, be obeying and be in compliance with your masters in this physical life; never with eye service (only while you are under scrutiny or inspection), as only pleasing men..."

That is the whole premise of unions; you just do well while you're being watched. Unions have served some good; but on the other hand we have strife, we have all of one against the other and competition. Companies now are learning that you get along better if everyone is a part of it, and you don't oppress, you don't put down, and you don't provoke your employees. But when you all work together they're finding that works a whole lot better. That's just following a principle in the Bible; that is truth:

"...rather, be doing all things in simplicity and sincerity of your heart, fearing God, and pleasing Him" (v 22). So the whole purpose of v 22 is this: **God knows!** God knows every hair on your head. He knows what you're doing. He knows what your thinking, and so forth. If you're doing it to please God, then you're surely going to please your boss, and you might even be surprised how well that will work.

Let's come over here to Ephesians 6:5—the parallel account: "Servants, obey *your* masters according to *the* flesh with reverence and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not *merely* with eye service..." (vs 5-6). There's the politician. And if you work with a company that has their politicians; they go along and stroke the boss. Every time the boss comes around it's almost like a panting dog that hasn't had water for days and days, and here comes the boss. I've seen that in the ministry. And brethren, let me tell you something: in the ministry of the Church of God we are paying the price and reaping the harvest of what that kind of political eye-service and stroking in ranking and everything has reaped upon the Church.

"...as *do* pleasers of men; but as servants of Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart.** Do service with goodwill, *as* to the Lord, and **not to men**; knowing that whatever good each one has done, this shall he receive from the Lord, whether bond or free" (vs 6-8).

There are some very practical things for working, for doing as we ought to. Here again, it just re-iterates what we had there in Eph. 6. Colossians 3:23 "And whatsoever you may be doing, be

working heartily, with zeal and motivation from within...” That’s the whole thing of everything that we do. When you are motivated from within, when it comes truly from your heart, whether it is serving God or serving someone else, then it’s an entirely different matter. I tell you one thing: If you are motivated from within to do what God wants you to do, do you need a schedule? Do you need a list of priorities? *No, you don’t!*

I’ll never forget. We had a management class in the advanced classes there at Ambassador College, and they brought in a management fellow and he was an ‘expert.’ We had him for the whole day. We had him from nine till noon and then from one to four. So, we had him for six hours, and he went through and showed how what you need to do is to prioritize everything that you have. Make a list and then prioritize the list: A, B, C, D or 1, 2, 3, 4—whatever it may be. Then work on A or work on 1 and get that one done and then do B and get that one done, and then everyday kind of move everything up the line—and you get done what you need to get done. He went through and spent the whole day telling us how we can be the best managers in the world, etc., etc. Then, the last twenty minutes he said, ‘Now I want to tell you one thing: If you’re truly motivated from within, you don’t need any of these lists; you will automatically do it.’ You will automatically prioritize the things. The only reason you need a list is so that you can understand what you need to do and not forget it.

So, isn’t that something! Isn’t that the way it is with Christianity. If you truly, from within, love God and serve Him:

- Do you need to be beaten to pray?
- Do you need to be beaten to keep the Sabbath?
- Do you need to be beaten to love your neighbor?
- Do you need to be beaten to love your wife?
- Do you need to be beaten to love God?

***No! All the shouting and verbal abuse in the world isn’t going to change unless you do it from within!*** That’s the whole point!

Colossians 3:24: “Always knowing and understanding that from the Lord you shall receive the recompense and the reward of the inheritance (the spiritual inheritance from God)...” So all of these things relate to being Christ in us, doing everything the way God wants us to—and these are some practical, everyday things that Paul has written down. Remember, go through and find the section that every one of the Epistles of Paul where he brings these day-to-day things:

- how to grow
- how to change
- how to overcome

—which you can call New Testament proverbs of daily living.

I want to give you some other Scriptures you can take down, and these are found in the Proverbs—this all has to do with being diligent; the hand of the diligent, and so forth; Prov. 10:4, 26; 12:24-25; 21:5.

Let’s go to Hebrews 11:6, which tells us how we need to operate our whole life—not only just as people would call, the religious part of their life; because we’ve seen there’s no such thing as the religious part of our life. It’s a way of living and it’s all tied to this one verse:

Hebrews 11:6: “Now **without faith it is impossible to please God...** [This is very important for us to understand when we realize that you can’t go out and do a work and compel God to accept that as accounting to spirituality unless you do it *in faith*; unless you do it because you’re motivated to *pleasing God*; unless you do it because you’re motivated to *love God*.] ...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Now, when we have these things deep in our heart and our mind, then we will pray, then we will study, then we will do what the Apostle Paul says: ‘In whatever we do in word or deed, do it all in the name of God’—and serve God; realizing then, as it says here in Col. 3:25, we don’t need to worry about the other person, because the one who’s doing the wrong, God is able to take care of.

Then he talks again to the masters, or those who had slaves, Colossians 4:1 “Master, give to your servants that which is just and right; even that which is fair and equitable...” So this whole thing of the depiction of slavery that they like to depict in the modern media today is not the kind of slavery that God intended. God intended that there would be people who would serve. They could be freed. There are provisions for freeing them.

But some people need to learn; they need to grow; they need to change; they need someone to lean on, so they could go an indenture themselves to a person, to what would be called *a master*; and serve them. If they had a program similar to that, they could sure solve a lot of problems today. Can you imagine how they could really change things if they would take some of these welfare recipients and say, ‘Okay, now we’re going to have such that if you promise you won’t have any children, any more

children—you've got these one or two or whatever it may be—and if you promise to get your life straightened around, instead of giving you welfare, we will let this family over here take care of you. You live with them; you help them; you serve them; you go to school; you learn; you change your life; you get it all worked around; and they'll take care of you—instead of having the welfare department do it.

Now, don't you think that that would work a whole lot better? Don't you think it would work a whole lot better if we had a system where if someone, unfortunately, because of economic circumstances, lost their job, didn't have a home—if you had it where there were homes where they could go, where they could live, where they could get their lives straightened around; where they could develop their skills; where they could have a nice place for their children and things like that? I think that would work a whole lot better than this so called great system of liberty we have today, because it's not liberty. What happens? *It enslaves and chains every one of them to the government, and they become a slave of the government; they become a vassal of the government;* and so forth. They don't have dignity; they're not uplifted and taught the way they need to be. So, if we had this kind of society and system, it certainly would work a whole lot better as far as I'm concerned.

Verse 2: “Be steadfastly continuing in prayer and entreaty to God (being alert and awake; not slackening up or falling asleep) and always be praying in an attitude of thanksgiving and grateful praise.” I brought in certain things there. Remember the disciples, when Jesus said, ‘Pray.’ What happened? *They fell asleep.* Always be alert! Awake!

If we're really serving God in a way that we ought to; if we're really loving God; then prayer will become something that you don't have to beat yourself to do. And I remember years ago, they said, ‘Now, you've got to pray an hour a day.’ So you get out there and you set the clock and you pray, and you pray, and you pray, and you repeat, and you pray, and you pray,’ and you think you'll never get through that whole hour of prayer. Why? *Because you're trying to do something spiritual by physical means!* That's why everything has to start out that you love God first; that you have faith in God first; and that you believe Christ first! And then your prayers will be a whole lot better! Won't they? You won't have any trouble worrying about being instant in prayer and constantly praying.

Let's go to 1-Thessalonians, the fifth chapter. Here's another one of these chapters where he's got the daily living for the brethren to do. 1-Thessalonians 5:17: “Pray unceasingly.” That

doesn't mean that you go around like some of these Buddhists and you have prayer wheels that you spin, and every time it spins the prayers are wafting off to heaven. It means that you never allow your prayers to be interrupted by your own activities. In other words, that your own activities become so important that you neglect God. That's what it means, “continuing in prayer.” It also means “pray without ceasing.”

Let's go to Luke 11; let's learn something very important—and I have learned this, and I'm sure you have, which is: Not every prayer's answer is *yes*. Not every answer is the one that you want, because maybe the one you want may not be what God wants you to have. God is going to give you what He's going to give you. If your heart, your mind, your attitude please Him, then it will be right; then it will be fine; then it will be good.

Luke 11:1: “Now it came to pass *that* as He was praying in a certain place, when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say...’” (vs 1-2). Here is the outline prayer

“Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name...” (v 2)—when we focus in on

- the *righteousness* of God,
- the *goodness* of God,
- the *love* of God,
- the *faith* of God,
- the *greatness* of God,
- His fantastic creation.

When we do that, and the reason that He has us start our prayers this way is so that we get our minds off ourselves. Too many times when we start praying, our minds are not in gear to pray because they've been on the things that we have had our minds on. I think it's very helpful, in many cases, to go ahead and turn to the Psalms. Maybe begin your prayers by reading a Psalm or two, so you get your mind on God. If you have to, just ask God ‘to help me really get my mind on praying to You and loving You and serving You, because Your way is so fantastic, and You've given me Your Spirit’—and all of that's included in this first part of *hallowing God's name*.

“...Your kingdom come...” (v 2). That doesn't necessarily mean it's going to come in the time you think; but for you—you have to keep your mind focused in on the Kingdom.

“...Your will be done...” (v 2). Too many times, in our prayers, we're going to God to try and make Him do *our will*. NO!

“...as in heaven, *so* also upon the earth.”



Then we get to the things we need.

“...Give us our bread *as* needed day by day...” (v 3\_). After we’ve seen the earthquakes out here, you know how important that is, because things can change from one day to the next. That’s the way it needs to be in our lives. ‘God, help us today. God, provide for us today.’ And He will.

“...and forgive us our sins...” (v 4). That’s so important. As we covered last week, forgiving our sins.

“...as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us...” (v 4). God will also forgive us.

“...and lead us not into temptation...” God never leads us into temptation. This means *don’t let us be led into temptation*”

“...but rescue us from the evil one” (v 4). And there are plenty of things out in the world to tempt and to be led away. That’s why we should pray in this particular way.

Then it shows in Matthew 6 that we are to close our prayers in the situation concerning the praise and honor an glory back to God. Another Bible study assignment for you. Take the outline prayer—either here in Luke 11 or in Matt. 6:12—and break those components of the prayer down: God’s name, thanking God, loving God—all this sort of thing, and outline some of the Psalms. You’re going to see that the Psalms follow exactly the outline that Jesus gave on how to pray.

I’m going to give you another assignment here, which is Daniel 9. You go through and you read how fervent in fasting and seeking God, confessing sin, that Daniel was; and the answer that he got. His prayer so inspired God, and the attitude there of just confessing his sins to God and the sins of the people and the things that had happened to the Jews, to be carried away into Babylon, that God was inspired and motivated then to bring in the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. Now that is something— isn’t it? Let’s hope and pray that our prayers will be more like that.

Colossians 4:3: “And at the same time, continue praying for us, in order that God may open a door (provide the occasion and opportunity) to speak the Word, to announce the message of the mystery of Christ, on account of and for the sake of which (the good news of the Gospel) I am bound and imprisoned...” He needed the door of the prison opened, too—didn’t he? He was released from this imprisonment and apparently he went to Spain after this, and then came back and was arrested and crucified later. But we can pray the same thing.

I think, brethren, one of the most important

things we need to do is this: How many ministers are out there, Protestants and also Churches of God, with what they view is the ‘Ezekiel Message’: you need to be the watchman on the wall and warn the people. As I mentioned to him, I said there have got to be at least a dozen Ezekiel’s sitting out there on the wall. Where is the Ezekiel sitting on the wall to warn the people in the Church of God? There needs to be that. I’m not going to try and play Ezekiel. I don’t want to be that. If you want to be Ezekiel, you go back and read what he went through. You think about that again, especially there in the first couple of chapters where he was told to mix up all this evil and abominable stuff and put it in human dung; and he said, ‘Oh, Lord God, not human dung!’ And God said, ‘All right, I’ll let you substitute cow’s dung. But you go eat this before the people, to let them know of their sins.’ So anyone who wants to be Ezekiel, try that on for size!

At least, brethren, what we can do is to help and serve and love the brethren and warn them and help them restore themselves back to God. The best way we can do that is show them the love of God and what they’ve been missing by playing religion instead of really serving God.

Paul was in prison because of that, and he said, v 4: “That I might make known, manifest and reveal it with understanding as it is ordained and appointed for me to preach and proclaim.” Now, the parting words—and the rest of it is pretty much just admonitions, as we’re going along; and, of course, he would write this being in prison, not knowing whether he would see them again or not—and all chances, he didn’t.

Verse 5: “Be walking (that is conducting your lives and affairs) with wisdom and understanding toward those without (those who have not been called into the Body of Christ, the Church) redeeming, buying back and rescuing the time (which so easily slips away).” That’s what we need to do: *redeem the time; while there is life, redeem the time!* Buying back and rescuing the time.

As we have said before, it’s kind of like Matt. 25, the church bazaar is opened. Go buy! Go sell! Go find those who are doing whatever God is inspiring them to do and then you make sure you get your life right with God. And be as the ‘wise virgins’—not as the foolish.

Verse 6: “Let your words, your speaking and communication, in every circumstance, always be with grace and dignity, seasoned and sprinkled with salt... [with bits of wisdom and understanding]... that you may know how you ought to answer every person.” Now, there’s a whole challenge— isn’t it? Sometimes we don’t answer them the way we ought to.

Now, let's just finish up chapter four and we will be done with the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, v 7: "All things concerning me and my condition and how I am fairing will be made known by Tychicus, the beloved and dear brother, even a faithful and loyal minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I sent and dispatched him to you for the same purpose, that he might know and understand the things concerning you, and how you are fairing and what is your condition and that he might encourage and uplift your hearts and minds. I am sending with him Onesimus, who is one of you, having come from that region; he is a faithful and loyal minister and servant, even a beloved and dear brother. They will make known and show you all things which are done here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends greetings; and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received commandments, (so then, if he comes to you, receive and welcome him" (vs 7-10).

And it's interesting that Mark was the scribe then who probably helped finish compiling and writing all the books that we have in the New Testament. That's another whole topic, but I'll just mention it here in passing.

Verse 11: "Also Jesus, who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These are my fellow workers and co-laborers for the Kingdom of God who a consolation and encouragement and comfort to me (otherwise I would have felt deserted and abandoned)." In other words, he's saying these are the ones who came to him while he was in prison, otherwise he would have just had no comfort or encouragement at all.

Verse 12: "Epaphras... [Epaphras was the minister there in Colossae] ... who is one of you, having come from your region, salutes and greets you. He is a minister and servant of Christ who is always striving and agonizing, in his prayers and supplications to God for you; as if carrying a burden for you, exerting special care and effort on your behalf..." This also shows us, again, how we need to be praying. Again, it shows that if your prayers are from the heart, that's how you're going to be praying.

Brethren, that's my prayer for you. And I look out and I see all the brethren of God who have been beat upon and everything with playing religion, and authority, and everything that has happened to them. And brethren, we ought to have that kind of prayer and concern for them. And I hope that this book: *Lord, What Shall I Do?* is really going to be helpful for them; because it's going to give them some clear things to think about. And one thing I don't do in there: I don't say 'come and join us'—because I know that they have to choose God first. I

hope and pray that they choose God first. Now, they may not be able to be with us. That would be nice if they could, but it just may not happen. If we can help them into the Kingdom of God, that's what we ought to do; because it's not a matter of numbers and it's not a matter of money; it's a matter of serving God and that's the way that it needs to be.

"...that you may be able to stand, being spiritually mature (growing up in Godly perfection) and that you may fulfill and complete (in every thought, and action and attitude) every wish and desire of the will of God" (v 12). There is the perfect goal to shoot for, brethren.

Verse 13: "For I am bearing witness of him, testifying on his behalf, that he has a great abundance of zeal, ardent favor and generous affection for you, and for those in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you and send you greetings. Give my salutations and greetings to the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which meets in his house" (vs 13-15). Even at that time there was a small little church, just like we have here with this communication we have. I'm preaching into two houses. There are brethren there assembled and that assembly is the Church—just as Paul points out here.

Verse 16: "And when this epistle has been read in the presence of all of you, make sure and cause it also to be read in the church of Laodiceans; and that the epistle from Laodicea likewise be read to all of you." That one epistle we don't have. God did not see fit to put it into the New Testament. But He gave a message to the Laodiceans in Revelation.

Verse 17: "And be sure to remind Archippus, to take heed and be careful, and pay attention to the service and ministry which you have received, which has been graciously given to you by the Lord, and that you fulfill this sacred service. The salutation and the signature of my own hand, by Paul. Be remembering (in your prayers) the bonds of my imprisonment. The grace (God's Divine blessing and generous gift) be with you [all]. Amen" (vs 17-18).

That has really been wonderful being able to complete this on Colossians. Now, my goal is—and I hope and pray that we can do it—is to take the Amplified Expanded Version of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians and the recorded cassette sermons to go with them and to have it all compiled into a harmony-like study, just like *A Harmony of the Gospels* and to put that all together with the introduction, with the background and everything for each book; and to put it into a book which would be entitled *Paul's Inspirational Epistles for Christian Growth*.

That's one of the long-term goals that I want to do; this has been a major step in getting that done.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (Exception: Colossians: *Expanded Amplified* booklet)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 3:17
- 2) Mark 12:30-31
- 3) Romans 12:1-21
- 4) Colossians 3:18-25
- 5) Ephesians 5:20-33
- 6) 1-Peter 3:7
- 7) Colossians 3:20
- 8) Ephesians 6:1-3
- 9) Colossians 3:21
- 10) Ephesians 6:4
- 11) Colossians 3:22
- 12) Ephesians 6:5-8
- 13) Colossians 3:23-24
- 14) Hebrews 11:6
- 15) Colossians 4:1-2
- 16) 1-Thessalonians 5:17
- 17) Luke 11:1-4
- 18) Colossians 4:3-18

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- Colossians 1:27
- Philippians 2
- Philippians
- 1-Peter 3:1-7
- Proverbs 10:4, 26; 12:24-25; 21:5
- Colossians 3:25
- Matthew 6:12
- Daniel 9
- Matthew 25

Also referenced:

- *The Lord is One* by Carl Franklin
- *Lord, What Shall I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

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