

God's Calling

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Living in the world that we live in today:

- How is someone going to find God?
- How is God going to find us?
- What gives you the right to be right, as compared to others being wrong?
- What makes you think that you have the Truth and others don't have the Truth?
- How can the majority be so wrong?

The Bible shows us that Satan the devil is deceiving the whole world. It also tells us that the world is eating off the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. There are many good things in the world. {see sermon series: *Good Works, Evil Works*} Not all *apparent* good—and that which can be defined as benefits—come from God. Remember what Satan said to Jesus during the temptation? He said, 'If you will bow down and worship me'—he's also called 'the god of this world' and he's the one who blinds the minds of those who don't believe. He said to Jesus, 'If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world.'

- Would you not think that that is a benefit?
- How many people have striven to rule the world? Empires?

There is a movie—it was also on the History Channel—*Alexander the Great*. But he died! Out of all of this,

- How does God operate?
- How does God fulfill His promise that we see in Matt. 16?

Jesus Christ gave this promise!

Let's see how God operates, Matthew 16:13: "Now, after coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples, saying, 'Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But you, whom do you declare Me to be?' Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona... ['son of Jonah'] ...for flesh and blood did not reveal *it* to you, but My Father, Who *is* in heaven'" (vs 13-17).

There is the first key: ***God reveals Himself to those that He calls.*** We'll see how He does it, and it's really quite an amazing thing because in doing so, the world doesn't know it. That's quite an amazing thing that God is doing.

Verse 18: "And I say also to you, that you

are Peter... ['petros' (Greek) meaning *little rock*] ...but upon this Rock..."—meaning *a great massive cliff*—and that's why in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order* I have a full footnote explanation of that.

"...I will build My Church..." (v 18). What does this tell us? This tells us right here—as affirmed in other places—that *Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church*. Who is going to do the building? *Jesus Christ!* He will build His Church. We will see how He calls, how He builds, etc.

"...and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it" (v 18). In other words, it will never die out.

I always had fun when I was pastoring in Salt Lake—I pastored there six years in WCG—and I remember one time someone sent a letter into Pasadena and said: 'I want a visit of one of your ministers and talk about baptism and so forth.' They sent the letter to me, so I went out to see this man. The man's name was Job—which he pronounced job. Five minutes after I get there and we're talking, there's a knock-knock on the door and two elders from the Mormon Church come in. He says, 'I had you come over because I would like you to debate them as to which is the right church.'

Well, needless to say, I had done a lot of study of the doctrine of Mormonism. And the basic sum of it is this: The Church died out and God raised it up through Joseph Smith, and he was back in New York someplace. Well, historically speaking, there was a Church of God Seventh Day less than 50 miles from where Joseph Smith allegedly had the vision from God. The first clue that it was not the true God was that he fell on his back. Whenever anyone has an encounter with the *true* God they *fall on their face!*

I turned to this Scripture and I said, 'Well, now let's read this. Jesus promised that the gates of the grave—or the gates of hell as it is in the *King James*, which the Greek word is 'hades' that means *grave*—shall not prevail against it.' I looked at them, I said, 'Now, I'm confronted with a problem: Either Jesus lied or Joseph Smith lied. Since Jesus does not lie, I accept His Word, and therefore, what Joseph Smith said could not be true because it contradicts the Word of God and Jesus Christ Himself.' And I got up and left; no use continuing the argument.

As we find in the Gospels, Jesus specifically called and chose 12 disciples, and by time we come to after His resurrection, there were 120 that were

meeting in the upper room (Acts 1). From the time of Jesus' resurrection until the end of the age here's what God is going to do. Somewhere on earth this is always going to be being done, whether it's in the local area, or whether it is with the mass media and communication that we have today.

Here's what he said, Luke 24:44: "And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (vs 44-45).

Key things:

1. God *reveals* Himself to the individual personally.
2. In order to understand the Scriptures, *Christ has to open the mind.*

That becomes a very important thing

- if we *follow* the Word of God
- if we *believe* the Word of God
- if we *live by* the Word of God
- if we have the Spirit of God
- if our minds are opened to the Scriptures

Then we *know* things—not because we're great or because we're important, because we're not!—***because God has done it!***

We're not standing up and saying, we are right because the world is wrong and we judge them so.' What we find out is: God is the One Who says the world is deceived. God is the One Who controls who He calls and opens their mind. When we get to some of these other things about *God's calling* and how God dealt in our lives, you might think about it. How is it one day you were going along minding your own business and then something changed—because it did! Just like here with the apostles, something changed that didn't happen before—right? Remember, before this time, He said, 'Oh, you of little faith! Slow to believe! Why are you hard-hearted?' You open their minds to understand the Scriptures.

A change! That's important because today a lot of people read the Scriptures. Just like when I was back in Goshen for the Feast, I checked in on the religious channels back there and here's Charles Stanley. He was giving a sermon going right down the line: this Scripture/that Scripture, this Scripture/that Scripture,—and I said 'Hey! Right on.' Then he gets to the end and he says, 'Now all you need to do is believe in your heart and Jesus comes into your life.' I never can figure it out: Why do Baptists—who used to believe in baptism—say you don't have to be baptized today.

Verse 46: "And said to them, 'According as

it is written, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day. And in His name... [This is how God works. First way He works: He uses those that He has chosen to do this]: ...in His name repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. For you are witnesses of these things" (vs 46-48). Then He said, 'You go to Jerusalem and you'll be empowered to do so.' Let's see how long this was going to continue.

1. God has to reveal Himself
2. God has to open your mind to the Scriptures.

Remember when He opened their mind to the Scriptures, that was what is called today the Old Testament: *The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms* [Writings].

Come here to Acts 1:4, and here's what He told them: "And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to 'await the promise of the Father, which,' *He said*, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.' So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority; but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and **unto the ends of the earth**'" (vs 4-8).

That is quite a prophetic statement, too. The apostles are still witnessing to all nations 'unto the end of the earth' through their word. We'll see how God and Christ also said He would work. We also know that He said there would be false prophets, and 'Don't let anyone deceive you.' He put it upon us. ***It is our individual obligation to prove the Truth!*** If we do, *God will open our minds to understand the Truth*—and we'll see how He does that in just a bit.

Here's what He said, Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations...' (vs 18-9). Disciples are learners of Jesus Christ. As I've mentioned many times, *the whole goal and purpose of a disciple is to become as the teacher*—and Christ is the Teacher—correct? *Yes!* That's the whole goal. That's the whole purpose.

"...baptizing them **into** the name of the Father... [because we receive the begetting from God the Father] ...and **of** the Son... [because it's through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we have our sins

forgiven] ...and **of** the Holy Spirit" (v 19).

Notice, it's *not* 'in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit.' It's 'in the name **of** the Father and **of** the Son, and **of** the Holy Spirit.' All three are involved, though this does not prove a trinity. If you look back at it from today's point of view, as has been taught in so many churches, you can think that it is Trinitarian, but it's not! It is showing that God the Father is involved; Jesus Christ is involved; and as Jesus said in Acts 1, 'You will receive power of the Holy Spirit.' And the Holy Spirit is involved. ***You cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ without the Spirit of God!***

It's not *in* the name but *into*—in other words, the person doing it is only a vehicle because *you're going to bear the name of the Father*, not the Church! Not the minister! This is really an amazing thing that God is doing. I was thinking about this, I was struck by the fact that what is really needed is a good book on church history. There are several books out that different ones have written and so forth, which are pretty good. What you might do, you might try giveshare.org or biblesabbath.org—I think they have some fairly good ones there. Church history, as the world writes it, is not about the history of the *true* Church of God, but it's the history of how the *counterfeit* church came about. Which, in the New Testament is called 'the mystery of iniquity' or 'the mystery of lawlessness'—which Paul said began in his day and would last until the return of Jesus Christ. So, here we have these two systems coming down now side-by-side.

Verse 20: "Teaching them to observe **all things that I have commanded you**..." That's an interesting study—isn't it? You might go through the New Testament and say, 'What did Jesus command?' And also with that, you can see with the Sabbath, what did He show by example concerning the Sabbath—not only declaring Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath, but what He was doing in good and healing and teaching and things like this. That is how the Sabbath is to be used.

"...And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age. Amen" (v 20).

How does God do it? *Let's see!* It's quite a process that God does. It's something that the world does not know. It's something that happens to an individual as God is dealing with that person.

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age... [this is a promise to all that God calls] ...*even* the Spirit of the Truth..." (vs 15-17). That is a key that God deals with when He begins to call

someone.

Not only does God work through our lives and circumstances and situations, but let's understand that one of the key things that comes along when God begins to call us is this: **What is the Truth?** You begin asking that question when you begin reading the Bible, because today we have the whole Bible, which is a great and tremendous blessing that we have it. That's why there are so many today that want to destroy it by corrupting it. That's Satan's attack so that people won't understand the Word of God. Well, God is not going to be denied! And the Word of God is *never* going to die out. It will always be there.

We have make our way through some of these corrupt versions, that is true. But, it is the Truth that you seek. Jesus said in another place, 'Your Word is the Truth.' John wrote that 'no lie comes of the Truth' (1-John 2:21_[transcriber's correction]). When someone is interested in God and wants to know about God and get in contact with God, and God begins working with that individual, one of the things that they are confronted with is: Do they want the Truth? If they want the Truth, what do they do? If they have the Word of God and they study the Word of God and begin to understand some of it, and then they look at the 'religions' of the world and they say, 'Wow! Look at all these things that aren't right.' And yet, all those things were going on before you even came to this point—right? Never gave it a thought!

Verse 17: "*Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it..." This is an operation that is accomplished without other people being able to observe necessarily what is going on.

"...but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you" (v 17). This is quite a statement!

When God begins dealing with a person it is a spiritual thing that occurs, and God's Spirit is **with** them. That's the first change that takes place. Then:

- begins to convict them of Truth
 - begins to convict them of sin
 - begins to convict them of how the way of man is
- that seems right but leads unto death—
- how then the carnal mind is 'enmity against God' and 'deceitful above all things.'

All of this is the Spirit of Truth **leading** that individual to repentance—if they continue on that course—and we know that God is the One Who is doing it.

"...and shall be **within** you" (v 17). That's

another key thing. There is a difference in God's Spirit that begins *with you* and *in you*. God's Spirit being *with you* is to *lead you to the Truth*. God's Spirit being *in you*—after repentance and baptism—puts you in a relationship with God that God Himself has begotten you with His Spirit and your whole goal and purpose now is to grow and change and develop and overcome to be in the first resurrection and be a son of God.

Verse 18: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also. In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you" (vs 18-20). When He was resurrected they saw Him. They understood that. Now then, He ascends into heaven—correct?

Here is the key—we've gone over this many times and this is fundamental, v 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him... [or reveal Myself to him]."... Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" (vs 21-22).

Here's how God begins to do it, v 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make **Our abode with him**'" (vs 21-23). That's a very important thing to understand. We will see that it also means *in him*. Very important! Having to do with the Holy Spirit.

Then here's the dividing line. Here is where the difference comes between those in the world and those that God is dealing with, and Christ is manifesting Himself to those individuals, but not to the world. They can be standing side-by-side and unless the mind is opened they don't know what's happening.

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words... [you can just apply that to anything] ...and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me." What we are dealing with in all these things, comes directly from God the Father!

We will see the operation of how God does it. John 6:44: "No one... [because God is the One Who is doing it] ...can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

The truth is, when we begin to understand the Word of God and the Truth of God—and we'll see, as it said there in Rom 10, 'a preacher has to be

sent, how shall they call upon him whom they have not heard?' and 'How shall they hear unless someone be sent'—God does the sending. Those who are to *do the preaching*. God does the *calling*. *The Father draws him!*

Verse 45: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God....'" That's where all the teaching comes. We may have the words in print, but what does it do to our minds and in our hearts? How is it that we come to the understanding of these things except it is that God Himself is teaching us? *That is something that only you can experience as you study and as you draw close to God, and as you begin praying!*

I don't know about you remembering your first prayer, but I remember my first prayer—and it was: 'God, help me. I'm down here and I really need Your help and You've said, *seek and you'll find, ask and you'll receive*. I need some help.' That was the extent of my prayer, which also illustrates another point—so we'll just inject this here. Here are the four keys that God uses in a person's life to bring them to Him:

1. **trouble**—especially trouble you can't solve
2. **trauma**—we experience something that leaves a lasting, life-long impression upon you
3. **trial**—you're going through an experience that is beyond your ability to cope with, and you realize your inadequacies
4. **temptation**

Through all of this, God begins to convict you, *if you're willing to be convicted*. If you're in *trouble, trauma, trials or temptation* and you don't yield to God—you blame God and condemn God—He's not going to deal with you. He will let you go your way.

But if you're convicted because of evil—personal evil and sin in your life and in the world—and you begin to understand human nature; and if you come down to a point in your life. Lots of times God will use sickness or accident or in addition to it, where you're lying there in bed and you think, 'Oh, God, why am I here? Is there a purpose in life? Who are You? Where are You?' Well, God uses all these things. How does God respond?

God always uses the technology at hand. When the printing press came, did He use the printing press? *Yes, He did!* When radio came, did He use radio? *Yes, He did!* Television? *Yes!* But who follows quickly behind with all the falsehoods? *Satan the devil!* Now we have the Internet, and God is using that, too, and so is Satan trying to bury everything. But the ones that God can call, He can lead them and He can bring them to where He wants

them to be if they are doing the things that we have said and seeking the Truth and so forth. So, we'll see how God responds.

Temptation—well, maybe you're under a great temptation of Satan the devil and you want out of it. For example: What if you're living in San Francisco and all there are around you are homosexuals and you have great temptation to get involved with them—and you cry out to God to help you out so you don't get involved. He answers that prayer. So, you seek God to deliver you out of it. Let's see a promise that Jesus gave and then we will see how He fulfills it, and it's reciprocal.

Matthew 7:7: “**Ask**, and it shall be given to you.... [Of course, we know if you're asking in Truth, you want to know the Truth—it'll be given to you.] ...**Seek**, and you shall find.... [There has to be an initiative on our part. We'll see how God responds.] ...**Knock**, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened” (vs 7-8). The Greek means *seek and keep on seeking, ask and keep on asking, knock and keep on knocking*—and God will respond.

Let's see how God responds. Who is God looking for? How is He going to find them? Quite profound! The earth is a big place—isn't it? There are billions of people on the earth. I'm convinced and know that God is—probably, but undoubtedly—doing far more than we know, through far more people than we ever thought. For example: We have one man in Egypt seeking God. All alone! All he has is the Word of God. He does have a computer; he's gotten online and come to our website. He's asked us what to do. It's really quite a thing and he lives in such a society that he's very fearful for his life. But he's still seeking God. Let's see how then—since we're commanded to seek—God responds.

A lot of people think you have to be in a certain place to worship God. Not today! You have to have a certain *heart* to worship God; the place doesn't matter.

But it used to be said, John 4:20: “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain... [that is Mt. Gerizim near Samaria] ...but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father’” (vs 20-21).

Yet, today you can write to Jerusalem and you can put a prayer on a piece of paper and pay so much and they'll go out and stuff it into the Wailing Wall out there. Maybe that's why the Wailing Wall is ready to collapse, there's so much paper stuffed in there. And a lot of people think that will guarantee

an answer to that prayer. Look, you could fill the earth with paper, but if your heart isn't right, you're not going to get an answer.

Verse 22: “You do not know what you worship.... [most people don't know what they worship] ...We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth... [we'll see *how* God responds] ...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner.... [How's God seeking?] ...God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (vs 22-24).

Let's see how God does this. What if there's someone out there just saying, ‘Oh, God help me in my life. I really want to get my life squared around. I really want to understand about You’—whatever the circumstances may be. Does God hear that prayer? *Yes, He does!* Let's see a *use* of God's Spirit, which is not the begetting of the Holy Spirit, but the *use* of God's Spirit to fulfill what God has promised here in seeking those who worship Him.

Revelation 1:4: “John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia: Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before His throne.” What are the seven Spirits? What do the seven spirits do? *Obviously, they have a job to perform*—don't they?

Let's see it repeated again—Revelation 3:1: “And to the angel of the church in Sardis, write: These things says He Who has the **seven Spirits of God** and the seven stars. I know your works, *and* that you have a name as if you are alive, but are dead.”

Revelation 4:5: “And proceeding from the throne were lightnings and thunders and voices; and seven lamps of fire, which are the **seven Spirits of God**, *were* burning before the throne.”

Revelation 5:6—this tells us a little bit more about the seven Spirits. What do they do? “Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, *was* standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits of God** that are sent into all the earth.”

So, these seven Spirits are sent. You might liken them unto spiritual seeing eyes and robots that God sends into the earth. What do they do? *They seek out those who are seeking God!* I believe when a person first is being drawn by God, one of these Spirits is doing the work, and to see if they will continue to follow after God and do the will of God, and then Christ becomes more involved. Look,

Christ is the One Who is doing it! The seven horns and that Lamb are likened to the seven churches. The seven Spirits then are sent into all the earth.

(go to the next track)

Let's come to 2-Chronicles 15 and we'll learn another very important principle here; because God has set before every human being life and death, blessing and cursing, and He wants us to choose life, to love Him. But *He leaves the choice up to us!* God is not going to force us. God is not going to make us do something just for the sake of doing it. Otherwise that would abrogate free choice. *Free choice* has to be **free choice** or we would just all be robots, so He leaves it up to us—but He works with us.

2-Chronicles 15:1: "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa... [king of Judah] ...and said unto him, 'Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; **The LORD is with you, while you are with Him...** [it's a mutual thing] **...And if you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, he will forsake you**'" (vs 1-2).

That's a principle that we can apply to every single human being in the world. Not only was this a true statement that he made, but it was also a prophecy, because then what happened? *Asa got all the people of Judah together and they all made agreement that they would seek God, that they would do His commandments!* God heard them and answered them and gave them rest from their enemies all around about. And he took down the idols and the groves and took down his mother from being queen—removed her from being queen—and the grove that she had made and so forth.

Then he came to a point where he didn't do what God wanted him to do. Let's come to 2-Chronicles 16:7: "And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said unto him, 'Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria and have not relied on the LORD your God; therefore, the army of the king of Syria has escaped out of your hand.'" Which then is a fulfillment of this prophecy, that **'as long as you are with God, God is with you.'**

Verse 8: "Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. **For the eyes of the LORD** run to and fro in all the whole earth..." (vs 8-9). Those are the seven Spirits of God. So, not only does He have his angels, who are running and controlling things on earth, but He has His eyes, which are the seven Spirits, which go through the whole earth to see and seek out those who are seeking God.

"...to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart *is* perfect toward Him.... [In other words, a repentant heart and repentant attitude and so forth.] ...In this you have done foolishly; therefore, from now on you shall have wars" (v 9).

You can go back and you can analyze the life of David, how he did well until the affair with Bathsheba; and from that time he had trouble. God was still with him but he had troubles. Here we have the principles. This is how God begins dealing with individuals and the world doesn't know it. We could take it this way: What if you are an independent prospector who virtually lives in the hills alone and you have a Bible, and you begin to seek God, He can find you and you can find Him.

Let's look at some other things that go along with this. Let's look at a principle: 'Many are called but few are chosen' (Matt. 22:14). Why are few chosen? *Because few repent!* They come along, just like the parable of the sower: The cares and riches of the world choke out the Word so that it's not profitable. You have those who get excited for a short time, but give up on it because there's a little trouble and difficulty that comes along. Then you have those who fall into the good ground and so forth, and they produce. That's why there are 'many called and few chosen,' because *few* repent.

When a person repents and yields themselves to God—let's see this in action. {note sermon: *Administration of Death vs the Administration of the Spirit*. But on the Day of Pentecost God poured out the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and all the 120 who were there, and the apostles began speaking and preaching simultaneously in many languages,. How many thousands and thousands were there at the temple we don't know.

Let's see the result of it after Peter preached and said, 'You with wicked hands have taken Christ and have killed Him'; let's see what he tells them to do:

Acts 2:36: "Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." We're going to see there's another aspect of repentance that comes along with it, which is the knowledge and conviction that since Christ died for our sins, our individual sins have their part in killing Christ.

Verse 7: "Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive

the gift of the Holy Spirit” (vs 37-38). Remember, a lot of those people who were there were probably some of the same ones in the crowd who were saying, ‘Crucify Him! Crucify Him!’ when Jesus was brought up to be judged by Pilate. It really got to them, and their repentance was profound at this point.

“...and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (v 38). We’ve seen how the seven Spirits work as God’s eyes, to be with an individual. We’re going to see how the other part of that is fulfilled, as Jesus said, ‘Holy Spirit is with you but shall be *within* you.’ We’ll see what happens here.

Verse 39: “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, as many as *the* Lord our God **may call**.” The way that a person is chosen is that they *answer* the call.

Verse 40: “And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who joyfully received his message were baptized; and about three thousand souls were added that day” (vs 40-41).

We don’t know how many people were there at the temple. I’m sure that there were probably 30-40 thousand all jammed in there on that day of Pentecost. And they all heard the same thing, but only 3,000 repented. When we look at our small groups we think 3,000—Wow! That’s a lot. But 3,000 out of that whole group there was really not that much. We see several things involved here: God does the calling and we do the repenting. You can put in your notes there: ‘The graciousness of God **leads us** to repentance’ (Rom. 2)—that is if we respond to God.

Let’s see what Jesus said to the apostles. Once we repent and receive the Holy Spirit of God we’re to grow in the grace and knowledge and the love of God. After baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit, which is a beginning, then we are in training for eternal life. That’s quite an amazing thing when you think of it that way! *We’re in training for eternal life!* That’s why, when you strip away all the façade of ‘religion,’ and all of the ‘do-goodism’—because people want to do good and be thought of as good, and a lot of them are sincere and upright in the world—God just hasn’t called them, that’s all. God has His time for them later on, as we know through the Holy Days.

John 15:9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you...” We now have a love coming from Jesus Christ as expressed in His sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. {Isa. 53—the prophecy of His death; and Psa. 22}. Jesus went to the cross

looking for the joy that lay ahead and despised the shame—*for us*—and all those down through history when He has called.

“...**live** in My love.... [the *King James* says ‘abide’—but that means *to live, to remain, to stay*] ...If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full” (vs 9-11). That’s a prophecy!

The fullness of joy is going to come *at the resurrection!* He said in another place, ‘In this world you will have tribulation, but be courageous, I’ve overcome the world.’ So, this ‘fullness of joy’—yes, we have joy now, true, absolutely—but to be *full* of joy is going to be at the resurrection.

Verse 12: “This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you.” This is the challenge. He has called us from diverse backgrounds and different things and so forth. To learn to love one another can only come through the Spirit of God and has to be exercised.

Verse 13: “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you” (vs 13–14).

Stop and think about this: You ever thought of that Jesus is not only your Lord and Master and High Priest in heaven above, but **He’s also your Friend!** A friend in the Biblical sense is someone who we would say in today’s language: ‘true blue’—meaning:

- someone you can trust
- someone you can love
- someone who is for you
- someone who is going to help you
- someone who cares for you

Verse 15: “No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father.”

Which is quite a thing! How do we know the plan of God? *Christ reveals it!* Just go out into the world. Look at the philosophy books. Look at the ‘religions.’ None of them can tell you what God is really doing. Satan has been in there and mixed everything up so they don’t know. I think if you take and look at the ‘religion’ of Hinduism, you can see the great confusion that is there, and they don’t know what the plan of God is. If you’ve been a bad boy or a bad girl you’re going to be re-incarnated

and become a fly, and then you're going to have to work your way up through all the levels of souls until you can again possess a human body. If you do good then you're going to make it to nirvana. Or you can ask the Protestants or the Catholics—you go to heaven. How does that happen when the Bible says there's a resurrection? He let's us know what He's doing. This ties in with what we covered there in John 6:44.

Verse 16: "You yourselves..." In the Greek that is the 'middle voice verb'—which means *you of your own initiative, of yourself*.

"...did not choose Me, but **I have personally chosen you...**" {not sermon: *God's Personal Calling*} This is what's so marvelous, brethren, and God wants us to always remember and not forget: **God the Father and Jesus Christ are personally involved in our lives!** They do it by His Spirit. They do it because They love us. That's why when you have something where men are put between you and God, that's not right. **You have direct connection to God the Father and Jesus Christ!**

"...I have personally chosen you and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you." (v 16). That's a tremendous promise! I mean, that is something!

Let's look at the Holy Spirit. We saw there that you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. When that happens—at baptism and the laying on of hands—God's Spirit comes *within* you to unite with the spirit of your mind. That is what is called the *begetting* of the Holy Spirit. We're begotten of God. Just like when we were first conceived in the flesh, our fathers begot us and our mothers delivered us. Begetting comes first, birth comes after nine months of gestation period for human beings. So likewise when we are begotten of the Holy Spirit that is a begetting and the birth; **being born again does not take place until the resurrection.** That's one of the reasons I have the appendix in there:

- Appendix P: *What Do You Mean to be "Born Again"?*
- Appendix Q: *What Does it Mean to be "Born of God"?*

There's so much confusion that's out there in the world. Let's see how all of this comes together with the Spirit of God. I just want to remind you what we read earlier in John 14: where Jesus said, 'If you love Me, My Father will love you and WE [that's two] will come and make Our abode with you.' In other words; 'live *in* you by the begetting of

the Holy Spirit' which is the earnest, as we'll see in just a bit, that God gives us.

Romans 8:6 it defines it a little bit more—this is the way the world is: "For to be carnally minded *is* death... ['There's a way that seems right to a man, the ends thereof are the ways of death.'] ...but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God... [we were all enemies of God at one time] ...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. However, you are not in *the* flesh, **but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you....**" (vs 6-9).

Didn't Jesus say, 'The Spirit of Truth is with you and shall be *within* you'? *Yes!* That takes place at baptism and laying on of hands. God views us—even though we're still walking in the flesh—as His Spirit-begotten sons and daughters. He's going to re-create Himself *in* you with the mind of Christ and the begetting of the Father!

Let's go back and look at the physical birth again. A baby is begotten, grows and develops, and it actually does everything in the womb to prepare it to be ready for birth: sucks its thumb, opens its eyes, smiles, yawns, sleeps, practices walking by kicking its feet and moving its arms and things like this, and all mothers know that's the thump, thump, thump, beat, beat, beat that they feel while they're carrying their children. Just before the baby is ready to be born, she feels like she has a watermelon in her and the baby becomes quite still after it comes in the head-down position first—with the exception of perhaps a breech birth, which occasionally does happen. When the baby is born it immediately has to do something that it never has done—that is, breathe, and it breathes the rest of its life—involuntarily. God put that in there, involuntarily until death. Isn't that an amazing thing?

Now likewise, when it comes time for the resurrection, when we are born again out of the grave, BANG! all of sudden things are going to be entirely different as a spirit being! But just like the baby in the womb had to prepare for physical life, so likewise, when God calls us and gives us His Spirit and it is dwelling within us, this is preparing us to be born again at the resurrection.

We'll see the two aspects of the Spirit of God from Christ and from the Father, v 9: "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." There's another dividing line, which the world cannot see. God sees it! God knows it! He's given the Spirit. God is the One Who makes the decision—*no man!*

Verse 10: "But if Christ *be* within you... [one of the things that we are to do is to grow in the mind of Christ] ...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..." (vs 10-11). Very interesting statement—isn't it? Who is this referring to? *This is the referring to the Spirit of the Father*, which was in Jesus—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 9: "...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ..." This fulfills the verse where it says, 'We will come and make *Our* abode with him.' ***The Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of Him Who was within Christ!***

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 because of His Spirit that **dwells within you.**"

Let's look at the meaning of baptism so we can get to the point of receiving the Holy Spirit this way. Why does God do it this way?

1. to ensure that through His plan there will be those who will be the firstfruits and in the first resurrection
2. because the world, being cut off from God, He's going to save at a later date, and He doesn't want anyone to 'miss the boat'

That's why! He said in another place, 'I would you were hot or cold.' In other words, those in the world are *cold*—God hasn't called them. He isn't dealing with them; and He *will* deal with them according to the Last Great Day.

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?" (vs 1-2). That's what baptism is. *It is a death!* We'll see what kind of death. Yes, it is a *symbolic* death. I've always raised everyone out of the water. But the truth is, if you stayed under the water you would literally die.

Verse 3: "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" (vs 3-4). Our lives are going to change.

- now we are converted
- now we walk in the way of God, the way of the Lord
- now we keep His commandments

- now we love God
- now we trust God
- now we believe God
- now we walk by faith

Totally different than before we were baptized.

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death..." Remember the Scriptures which Jesus said: 'If any man come after Me, let him hate his father and mother'—that is to love God more in comparison to—'father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, children, lands and yes, his own life also and does not pick up his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.' That shows how we are conjoined to His death. How the very sacrifice of Christ is applied personally and individually to our lives.

"...so also shall we be *in the likeness of His resurrection*.... [that's the hope we look forward to] ...Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed..." (vs 5-6). When we're raised out of the watery grave, we have a job to do: grow in grace and knowledge, and that the body of sin might be destroyed. That we overcome sin. We overcome human nature.

"...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin... [It *doesn't say you will cease* sinning. You're *not enslaved* to sin—doesn't *rule over* you.] ...because the one who has died *to sin* has been justified from sin. Now, if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (vs 6-8). That's what we look forward to.

Let's see how this is described by the Apostle Paul. Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians are those very, very spiritual books which God inspired to be written by the Apostle Paul, so we can all draw closer to God, so we can all receive the fullness of gifts and of His Spirit. In Greek, almost the whole chapter is one long sentence. Bad English! But let's look at it here, let's see what he says:

Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ..." To receive the Holy Spirit of God, is that not a spiritual blessing? It says, 'heavenly things'—I think the *King James* says, 'places'—but in the Greek it is just *heavenlies*. Having the knowledge of the Truth of God, is that not a blessing? Having understanding as God gives us understanding concerning His prophecies, is that not a blessing, as we understand them? *Yes!* Here's the thing we need to realize:

- God has called us because *we are the weak* of the world.
- God has called us because *we are counted*

as nothing by the world.

And as a matter of fact, as far the world is concerned, who are we? That's why God has chosen us the way that He has. God is going to do something absolutely magnificent! He's going to take that which the world rejects and is going to convert them with His Spirit and teach them with His Word so *they* can rule and reign on the earth with Christ. Quite a thing—isn't it? That *they* can be in the firstfruits and be in the Family of God the Father. Tremendous and high calling.

"...blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ" (v 3). They're heavenly things because they didn't come from the earth, they came from God! Including His Word.

Verse 4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will" (vs 4-5). Isn't that something? We can call God 'our Father.' That to me, as long as I've been preaching and teaching, is really a very overwhelming thing to me. What a fantastic blessing that that is! Now then, He talks about how He has made known His will to us.

Verse 13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth..." So, we come back full cycle to where we began:

- the Word of God
- the Word of Truth

How does God begin calling you?

- by convicting you of Truth
- by giving you knowledge

"...the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing... [and other Scriptures show 'baptized'] ...you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**" (v 13). Comes from God the Father and it is the begetting from God the Father to be His sons and daughters. And it also gives us the mind of Christ—'Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2:5). We're sealed!

We are set apart from the world, *spiritually* speaking. The world looks at us, we're walking around, they cannot see or understand what God is doing in our lives, unless they notice we keep the Sabbath; unless they understand we've done things to help them and because they're our neighbors, we love them, etc. But still they don't understand that we are sealed with the Spirit of God.

Verse 14: "Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance..." In other words, this is the down

payment that God has given us. This is the guarantee that God gives us. That we will make it to the resurrection if we are faithful. He provides everything for us so we can make it

- regardless of the trial
- regardless of the difficulty
- regardless of the struggles

that we go through. {see sermon: *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You*} When everyone has deserted you and the world hates you and no one cares for you and no one loves you and you feel alone and cut off and things are just miserable and down and rotten, **remember, God loves you! And He's given His Spirit to you so that you know that.**

"...*the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession... [We have been purchased by the blood of Christ. **We belong to God!**] ...to *the* praise of His glory" (v 14).

The rest of the Bible and the things that we will learn will teach us the things that we need to do. Let's come over here to Ephesians 2 and let's see the things that God is going to do with us. It's through the whole exercise of growing in grace and knowledge:

- through prayer
- through study
- through fellowship

Look at it this way: Look at every Sabbath and every Holy Day—and this is the way I try to look at it in preparing for teaching and preaching, which is this: ***It is an opportunity to be educated and taught God's way in preparation for eternal life.*** This means that as we use and apply the Word of God in our lives, with the Spirit of God, and we develop the very mind of Christ. We're able to understand that God is going to give us His Divine nature at the resurrection.

This way Sabbath and Holy Days become a very profound and important thing that we do and observe. Yes, we have to put our effort into it, that is true, *yes!* And as someone who teaches and preaches, I need to put myself into it and ask God to help me, to inspire me, that I may know His Word, that I may understand it, that I can teach you. That's why when you look at the religions of the world and all of the authority and over-lordship and things that they have, they are so **far removed** from what God wants. God has something **greater** for us! And that's what His calling is.

Now notice what He's going to be doing, Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you have been saved..." God's mercy, love, calling, forgiveness, repentance, giving of the Holy Spirit—that's all included in grace.

“...through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God” (v 8). That's why when someone dies, it's very, very instructive. Unless God gives eternal life, they can't save themselves. So, a lot of people, because we keep the commandments of God, accuse us of trying to earn salvation. There is no way you can earn salvation—it is a gift of God, by grace. We keep His commandments so we can have the mind of Christ. We keep the Sabbath and Holy Days to be educated spiritually to be His sons and daughters.

Verse 9: “Not of works... [we have works to do] ...so that no one may boast.” It's not going to be a contest at the resurrection, going something like this: ‘I was the first one to find Christ.’ If you don't believe that, go back and really study the book of Job.

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship... [we become the workmanship of God] ...created in Christ Jesus... [Christ formed in us, the mind of Christ] ...unto *the* good works...”:

- of love
- of faith
- of peace
- of hope
- of joy
- of self-control
- of the ‘good works’ of keeping the commandments of God like He said
- of the ‘good works’ of loving our neighbor as our self
- of the ‘good works’ of loving each other as Christ has loved us

“...created in Christ Jesus...” (v 10). God the Father, after you receive the Holy Spirit, is doing a work within you *to create you in Christ*. To prepare you for the resurrection.

“...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10).

That's how God works. It's quite an amazing thing!

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

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 16:13-18
- 2) Luke 24:44-48
- 3) Acts 1:4-8
- 4) Matthew 28:18-20
- 5) John 14:15-24

- 6) John 6:44-45
- 7) Matthew 7:7-8
- 8) John 4:20-24
- 9) Revelation 1:4
- 10) Revelation 3:1
- 11) Revelation 4:5
- 12) Revelation 5:6
- 13) 2 Chronicles 15:1-2
- 14) 2 Chronicles 16:7-9
- 15) Acts 2:36-41
- 16) John 15:9-16
- 17) Romans 8:6-11, 9, 11
- 18) Romans 6:1-8
- 19) Ephesians 1:3-5, 13-14
- 20) Ephesians 2:8-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 1
- John 2:21
- Romans 10
- Matthew 22:14
- Romans 2
- Isaiah 53
- Psalm 22
- Philippians 2:5

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Good Works, Evil Works*

Sermons:

- *God's Personal Calling*
- *Administration of Death vs the Administration of the Spirit* (#12 Refuting Sunday Keeping series)
- *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)

From *The Holy Bible in It's Original Order*:

- Appendix P—*What Does It Mean to be “Born Again”?*
- Appendix Q—*What Does It Mean to be “Born of God”?*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 2-10-08
Reformatted/Corrected: 9/2014