

Epistle to the Colossians

(Chapters 1 & 2)

God's Own Love To Us!

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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" (vs 13-15).

Isn't it amazing, they didn't have huge, great, marvelous, wonderful standing congregations of thousands?

Verse 16: "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."

I would love to know what happened to that epistle. Don't ask me, I don't know what happened to it; 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 no 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. I 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.

{transcriber's note: Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*}

Colossians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle... [of Jesus Christ] ...by the will of God..." 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 that 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). 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. {note sermon series: *Grace of God*}. 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 *God the Father!* And the greatest, most exciting part we can preach about Christianity is that each one of us has **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. 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: *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.' 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' that 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
- the angels are there
- Christ is there
- 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.'

Rom. 5—you have to know a little bit of Greek to understand; to show you how fantastic God is and how He deals with us. It's incredible! 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..." (vs 6-8). 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...**" (v 8).

In the Greek it gives you the emphasis of 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! 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 in modern English *automobile*—spelled the same way: *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 offspring 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!

“...when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (vs 8-9).

Colossians 1:3: “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you continually since hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus...” (vs 3-4). Paul had not seen those in Colosse. 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 that *you have* toward all the saints; because of the hope that *is* laid up for you in heaven...” (vs 4-5). 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 it 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 before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel; which has come to you, even as *it* also *has* in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth...” (vs 5-6)—have to know the grace of God.

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, love God and bless God*. A man can bless God; it may seem a little strange, but a man can bless God. 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). 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.**” In Greek it’s emphatic. It is *the* grace of *the* God.

Verse 25: “The grace of God. And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God...” Very interesting 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.

Paul hasn't even started saying anything about doctrine, yet; this is all just leading up to it. Colossians 1:7: "Even as you also learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you; Who has also informed us of 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: "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..." 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 trying to teach you. 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, "...that you may be filled..." (v 9). 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 spiritual understanding" (v 9). *That's what God wants for you!* It's right here; it's available. 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! 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: "That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work..." 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—is to **think with God's Word!** *Know it enough to think with it!* 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, being 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?' *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, v 10: "For we are His workmanship, being 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.

Colossians 1:10: "That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in... [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!*
- 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!

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, 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 in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the **might of His glory**..." (vs 10-11). Can you endure any trial? *Sure! Sure* That's something! And the word *power* comes from the Greek word 'dunamis' which means *power*—from which we get the English word *dynamite*.

"...unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified..." (vs 11-12).

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.]

It says: "...Who has made us qualified..." (v 12). **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 qualifies 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, 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 made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the Light.**" 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!* What do you actually hold? *You hold some kind of ownership in that company!* 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. *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?
- 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!* You inherit a ranch, the testator has died, *you own it!* 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!* What does that mean? *He's going to inherit the universe!*

Rom. 8 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!*

When a husband and wife own property, how is it titled? *Jointly or community property!* 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..." (vs 14-15). God doesn't want the Church run on fear, because that leads to bondage!

"...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 15-17).

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—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!

Colossians 1:12: "...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. Once you really understand, once you really get that connection between you and God, that's a fantastic thing! It makes us *brethren!* 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.'

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 14: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins; Who is *the* image of God the invisible, firstborn of all creation... we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins; Who is *the* image of the invisible God, *the* firstborn of all creation" (vs 14-15).

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 Church; Who is *the* Beginning, *the* Firstborn from among the dead..." That's the creation it's talking about, not of everything that has ever been created, but that *special creation*, which is going to be finished through the resurrection, because ***we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus!***

Verse 16: "Because by Him were all things were created..." 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.

"...created, the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all... [that is has the preeminence] ...and **by Him all things subsist**" (vs 16-17). That's something. It says that 'by Word of His power He upholds ALL things' (Heb. 1).

We had a very interesting discussion 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. It's fantastic! By **His Word** He upholds it. 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!

- that is the God Who has called you
- that is the God Who has died for you
- God the Father is the One Who Himself loves you

Everything has been created by *wisdom*. 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, 'O 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 by Him all things subsist. 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 should dwell..." (vs 17-19). That's something! **All the fullness!**

My favorite Scripture, where God says He wants you to be 'filled with all the fullness of God' (Eph. 3). 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 that 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 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. It 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 50th day. 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, and 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.

Colossians 1:20: "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, or the things in heaven."

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 are some people who say, 'Well, 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 that 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 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. It does say it. We cannot dogmatically say that 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: "For you *were* once alienated and **enemies...**"—the opposite of the word *peace*. It says you have 'peace with God'; no longer enemies, you're no longer fighting God

"...in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the 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 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: "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; if indeed... [conditional] ...you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that *is* under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant" (vs 21-23).

So, we have our part. He still makes it conditional, but 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 in my flesh that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church; of which I became a servant, according to the administration of God that *was* given to me for you *in order* 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: "*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... [in other words, God made the deliberate choice to be made known] ...what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles [nations]..." (vs 26-27).

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**; Whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (vs 27-28).

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 condition!* To present everyone perfect in Christ.

Verse 29: "For this cause I also labor, striving according to His inner working, which works in me with power." 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

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: "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..." (vs 1-2). Notice what the bonding force is that comes from God? *The love of God!* That's how you're 'knit together.'

"...into all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto... [Greek 'ice' which means

into] ...*the* knowledge 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 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 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) "In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (v 3)

Why does he say that?

B: (man) "Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you 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 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."

Admonished now, after he says don't let anyone deceive you; and that's strong. 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. We'll see how that is expressed here as we go along.

Verse 6: "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; **being rooted and built up in Him**... ['grounded and rooted in love' (Eph. 3)] ...and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (vs 6-7).

Watch out, take heed, this is a warning, folks. I'm writing you a letter; this is a warning, v 8: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive [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..." (v 8)—'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.

"...through philosophy and vain deceit..." (v 8). New Ageism, self-esteem or that we're going to crashing after the Holy Spirit and 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 traditions of men, according to the elements... [philosophy, empty deceits] ...world, and not according to Christ. For **in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily...**" (vs 8-9). 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

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, Africa, Tibet or South America and say, 'Oh, that's interesting, they do have power.'

You have your fullness in Christ! That's what Paul says:

Verse 10: "And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power." 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!** You're not

going to go through Christ by going through them.

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"—which then is a description of conversion: you have your mind changed, a part of you is taken away, that's the carnal mind.

Verse 12: "Having been buried with Him in baptism ..." 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 that 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 whom 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 buried with Him in baptism, 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... [your sins] ...and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses" (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, 'O 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:

Verse 14: "He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with the decrees of our sins...*" 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 contrary to us... [commandments of God are not adverse to us] ...and He has taken it away... [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] ...to the cross" (vs 14-15)—***not the Ten Commandments!***

What else has He done? Verse 15: "After stripping the principalities and the powers, He made a public spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it."

That is through the crucifixion. In other words, why bother with philosophies and traditions of men that 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: "Therefore, do not... [in light of this] ...allow anyone to judge you... [in the seat of God to judge you concerning your conduct in relationship to Christ] ...in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon, or *the 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! The other five days are not Holy, but they are still the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 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 foreshadow of the things that are coming..." Here is the key; here is 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 opening day of the Feast of Tabernacles, 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: "Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming..." That's literally what it means; because in the Greek, if you look at the Interlinear, 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 'toug.' You see the three letters right above 'of'—that is the definite article 'toug' which means then this is a participle of action present tense fulfilling, ongoing.

Verse 17: "which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming..."—which means you can learn from that always, your entire life. Exciting! 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 of 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: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you... [or cheat you out of] ...of the prize... [your reward] ...*by doing His will...* [the will of the one who says don't do it] ...in self-abasement and *the worship of 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. "...intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind... [and all of that leads to vanity] ...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).

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.
- the problems of weirdoes, spiritism, will-worship and *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 seen it happen! It is true! *Stick with the Word of God! Behold Christ, He's the Head!*

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 a mind to *think*. God gave us a wonderful, fantastic mind 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 it 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 I'm in the mundane and it's out here. That's why people in the world don't know anything about life. 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 exchanging 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 you 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 from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

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 1:12-15, 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 Series:

- *Grace of God*
- *Names of God*

Sermon: *What Should I Do to Qualify for the Kingdom of God?*

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