

## Epistle of Paul to the Colossians II

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then God is going to be able to open your mind, to give you strength, to give you wisdom, to give you understanding and so forth; “...according to the inner working of His mighty power” (v 19).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—... [The things which are not even counted to be important or worthwhile or anything.] ...in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; So that no flesh might glory in His presence” (vs 28-29). No one is going to walk up to God and say, ‘God, I knew it! You just had to call me’

because of this or that—yickity, yack!’ No such thing is going to happen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brethren, I just pray that we can come more closely to the kind of faith that is listed here in 1-Cor. 2:5. That it’s going to be in the power of God.

Now, we have a lot we need to do. We have a lot of things that need to be accomplished, but we can only do it if we have this kind of faith. And God has to provide.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

concerning our lives and how we need to conduct them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 15: “You know this, that all those who *are* in Asia have rejected me...” And I still

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the Kingdom of God is not here. But, we are under the jurisdiction and governance of the Kingdom of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Now let's look at some other Scriptures and expand this out just a little bit here. Who is the *true* Light? Let's go to Acts 26:18 and see that the whole Message of the Gospel is to transfer us away from the power of this world. The Apostle Paul showed that was the whole entire purpose of his ministry. When he came to Rome and was preaching to them there, this is what he taught. He was giving his defense before he got to Rome showing what his mission was and was talking to Agrippa.

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

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

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

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

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

Now, let's go to Isaiah, the fifth chapter, and let's see compared with that how in living in this

world—that is wicked and dark and under the power of Satan the devil—what is actually happening in this world. We are seeing this today. As a matter of fact, you could read the whole chapter of Isa. 5. We will see this is really something, the way it is coming.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus spoke of this...let's go to Matthew, the sixth chapter, for just a minute here. It shows how that this darkness can affect so many human beings. When you have people, when the wicked are put in power, the vilest of men come to the fore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He is the *light of men!* John 1:5—when Christ came: “And the light shines in the darkness.... [Didn’t we read the prophecy that

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

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

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

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

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

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

It’s absolutely magnificent how God has inspired His Word and put it together. It is something else, brethren! It is just so great! And I hope that we can really study these things together and grow in grace and knowledge together.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [Notice He is going to judge us, He is going to condemn us, He is going to throw us out. He’s going to stomp us down, He is going to kill us. NO! It doesn’t say that] ...***If we confess our own sins***, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 8-10).

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

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

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

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

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

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

powerful for us to understand that when the resurrection occurs we will **then** be born again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Scripture References:

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

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

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

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

#### Also referenced: Sermon series:

*Scripturalism vs Judaism*

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