

## Keys to Answered Prayer II

### How Not to Pray—#2

Fred R. Coulter—August 26, 2006

Let's look at it and see why prayers are not answered and what it is about human nature that somehow after God blesses you, you begin to fail. And it's right there in human nature—the whole thing. Now think of this: a lot of people would say, 'Well, if I could see God then I would believe. If I could see some miracles then I would sure obey Him. And if I knew that He was present with me all the time I surely would pray to Him every day. I would have no problem praying.' Well, let's see, because there was a time in history when that occurred.

Let's come to Psalm 78; let's look at their behavior. This is when God was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, was there in the pillar of fire by night and cloud by day, Moses was right there, and we're going to go through it in some detail—because what it does, it shows something very, very important about human nature. Human nature wants the blessings of God without obedience. People want God to recognize them, to answer their prayers, to do things for them in spite of their behavior. It's much like the criminal. Some of the most vicious murderers, when they're finally caught, what do they say when the police surround them? "*Don't shoot! Don't shoot!*" Yet, they wiped out a good number of people—snuffed out their lives.

We might go though a good part of this because this shows how human nature is; and even though today we're converted and have God's Holy Spirit, we're also going to see that there are problems that people who have the Holy Spirit have, because they're still too self-willed, and it causes lack of answer in their prayers.

Psalm 78:1: "Give ear, O my people, to My law: incline your ears to the words of My mouth. I will open My mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide *them* from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He has done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart

aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God" (vs 1-8).

Now, there are a lot of people that way. Just like I said last time, there are many, many people who have just enough religion so that they can be accepted in the world—not too extreme, not too different—and just enough religion so when they get in trouble or when things go wrong they can cry out to God and God is supposed to rescue them. That's exactly what happened with 9/11—wasn't it? As soon as it hit, boy, the churches were full, the synagogues were full, God Bless America, and then as soon as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell the next day said, 'It came because of the sins of the people,' boy' they got lambasted and blackballed and kicked off the network until they became good submissive boys again.

"The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.... [That's when they found out the news that when they wouldn't accept that God was ready to take them into the 'promised land' and the 12 spies came back after searching out the land for 40 days, and said, 'Oh, we can't do it, the cities are walled up and there are giants.' And only Caleb and Joshua said, 'No, God will fight for us.' So they boo-hoed all night and said they wouldn't go—refused to go. So God said, 'All right, you're not going in.' So then they said, 'We've sinned! We're going to go in.' Moses said, 'Don't go up.' So they went up and they got beaten back.] ...**They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law...**" (vs 9-10). Now, think about that for a minute.

- Do you walk in the laws of God?
- Do you walk in the commandments of God?
- Do you accept?
- Or do you believe what you are told that Jesus abolished the law?
- Or do you believe what you are told: 'Well, it's all right worship on Sunday because Jesus rose on that day.'

*Both of those are not true!* So you're refusing to walk in the law of God.

"...and forgot His works, and His wonders..." (v 11). Now, you go back and you read all the plagues and all the signs and all the wonders and the destruction of the firstborn, walking through the Red Sea as on dry land and all the miracles that God did, the sending of manna, the sending of quail

and everything like that. You'd think that would convince them—right? *No! No!*

He says, v 12: “Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers” (vs 12-16). And they all got on their knees along side that newly created river and drank and thanked God and raised their arms to heaven saying, ‘Oh God, thank You for the water. We know that You’re watching over us. We praise You for Your goodness.’ *No!*

“**And they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust**” (vs 17-18). You can read that in Exodus 16, and also the account in the book of Numbers. Instead of coming to Moses and saying, ‘Moses, we’re so grateful God has brought us out, we know this is a difficult journey, thank you for yielding to God, that He would use you to lead us and we’re really hungry, we really would like to have some flesh and we know that God can do everything, so would you pray for us and pray with us that God would send us some meat?’ No, they came and said, ‘Why did you drag us out here in this wilderness to kill us.’

Verse 19: “Yea, they spake against God; they said, ‘Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?’... [Now remember this: there are two Scriptures which say, ‘Nothing is impossible for God.’ So what did he do?] ...Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore, the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; **because they believed not in God**, and trusted not in His salvation” (vs 19-22). They wanted a ‘hip-pocket’ God, much like a rabbit’s foot. When they need help, they can reach back and they can pull God out of their pocket and kind of shake it like a rabbit’s foot and they’re going to have good luck, God would have to obey them. *Well, not so!*

Let’s review one more verse where we started out last time here in Hebrews, the sixth chapter, which is this: If you want your prayers answered you’ve got to trust God, you’ve got to believe God. Don’t accuse Him. Don’t be angry with Him. Maybe you don’t understand the circumstances in your life. That’s fine. Confess that you don’t

understand the circumstances in your life. Lay it before God and ask Him to give you understanding. Don’t come with anger and hatefulness and bitterness and accusing God like they did to Moses and Aaron: ‘You drug us out here.’ And what did God say to them? ‘Well, they’re not complaining against you, they’re complaining against Me!’ They didn’t trust God, didn’t believe Him.

Now here’s a principle that applies Old Testament and New Testament: Hebrews 11:6: “Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*... [You’ve got to have faith, you’ve got to believe, you’ve got to trust.] ...For it is mandatory... [we’ll just add again here: **on God’s conditions**—not on man’s conditions. For after all, Who’s Creator. God is!] ...*for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Not complain, not gripe, not accuse God as they did. So here’s a great lesson for us.

Back to Psalm 78:22 again: “Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation: Though He had commanded the clouds from above... [And don’t you think they should have been thankful everyday for clouds to cover them in the desert. Have you ever walked in the desert? *Yes*. Go out and take a leisurely stroll without any covering upon you at 110° and after you’ve gone about a mile or two you’re going to be saying, ‘Man, I wished I had some kind of covering.’ Well, God gave it. He gave the cloud every day. You need that. That was God’s protection.] ...and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels’ food: He sent them meat to the full.... [That’s something—isn’t it? What happened? After a while they said, ‘Oh, we’re so sick and tired of this manna. We boil it. We bake it. We deep-fry it. We beat it. We eat it raw. And all we have is this manna. Manna, manna, manna everywhere and no meat.] (v 26): ...He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by His power He brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: And He let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; they were not estranged from their lust.... [In other words, it was all **lust**] ...But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel” (vs 22-31).

Now, if you see all that happening around you, you think you’d fall down on your knees and repent, cry out to God. Think about it for a minute. What if it happened to your husband or your wife? You lived, they died because of their rebellion

against God. What would you do? Would you still fall on your knees and say, 'Oh God, forgive us'?

Verse 32: "For all this they sinned still, and **believed not** for His wondrous works. Therefore their days did He consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. When He slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God" (vs 32-34). Now, that's why there are disasters and things that come. People want it peaceful so that they can continue in their sins. When God corrects them because of their sins then they return to God for a *short* while.

"And they remembered that God *was* their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. **Nevertheless**, they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with Him, neither were they stedfast in His covenant. But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath. For He remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passes away, and comes not again. How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, *and* grieve Him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (vs 35-41).

Well, you can read all the rest of there. And it goes all the way through. That's quite a Psalm. So when you read this and go through it, ask yourself these questions:

- Does this describe me?
- Do I believe God?
- Do I trust God?

Always, in all circumstances, at all times, whether things are good or bad? And if you think you've had it bad, go read the book of Jeremiah and see what he went through. Then read the book of Ezekiel after that and see what he went through. That was something!

Now, let's come to Job 35, and this is where Elihu is talking to Job, and Elihu is speaking the words of God. Now, let's look at the other side of the coin. What if you're religious? What if you believe in Jesus? Now the New Testament shows that you have to believe in Jesus the way Jesus said to believe in Him—so you need to think about that. And what if you go to a nice Sunday-keeping church? Well, Job was righteous in the letter of the law—probably much more righteous than most religious people today who confess Christianity. So much so that he couldn't see his own sins. So if you're a Sunday-keeper, try this on for size and see how it fits. Test your reaction. The Bible shows conclusively that Sunday-keeping is a sin and against God and if you worship Jesus on Sunday, as

your official day of worship, you're worshipping Him in vain. Now, you think about that. Oh, you have your righteousness. You have a set of standards. You have a moral behavior that you ascribe to—don't you? *Yes, indeed!* So listen to the words of Elihu to Job:

"Elihu spoke moreover, and said [to Job], 'Think You this to be right, *that* You said, "My righteousness *is* more than God's?"...."' (vs 1-2). Do you not do that when you reject the Holy Sabbath of God, which He said to 'remember it, to keep it Holy'? And do you not say, 'My righteousness of Sunday is greater than God's on the Sabbath'? What if you have an idol and you read the commandment where it says (as we covered last time) about not making idols, not bowing down to them. But you say, 'Well, God accepts this because my 'holy father' told me it's okay. Or my archbishop told me it was okay.

Verse 3: ...For you said, 'What advantage will it be unto you?' *and*, 'What profit shall I have, *if I be cleansed* from my sin?' I will answer you, and your companions with you. Look unto the heavens, and see, and behold the clouds, *which* are higher than you. If you sin, what do you against Him? or *if* your transgressions be multiplied, what do you unto Him? If you be righteous, what gives you Him [God]?.... [Because God has commanded His righteousness.] ...or what receives He of your hand? Your wickedness *may hurt* a man as you *are*; and your righteousness *may profit* the son of man" (vs 3-8).

Yes, in a physical world it's better than being a criminal. But does it profit you *spiritually* before God? Does it add to the answering of your prayers? And now remember this, when the book of Job started, what was he doing? *He was praying to God for his children and he was offering sacrifices on their behalf just in case they might sin.*

"By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make *the oppressed* to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none says, 'Where *is* God my Maker, who gives songs in the night? Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the fowls of heaven? There they cry, but none gives answer, because of the pride of evil men.... [Now here's the key, why prayers are not answered. We also covered it last time where Jesus said, 'Don't do your alms in public. Don't pray in public. Don't make a pretense of long prayers.' And what do we see on television? *That very thing*—don't we? *Yes, indeed!* They have their reward. God says, through Elihu, talking to Job]: ...**Surely God will not hear vanity**, neither will the Almighty regard it.... [So that's why God didn't answer Job.] ...Although you say you shall not see Him, *yet*, judgment *is* before Him. Therefore,

trust you in Him. But now, because *it is* not *so*, He has visited in His anger; yet He knows *it* not in great extremity... [He's doing this for correction for him.] ...Therefore, does Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplies words without knowledge" (vs 9-16).

Now let's look at some more 'religious' people. What if you have all kinds of religious assemblies? Let's go to Isaiah, the first chapter. Now if you belong to a church and you have jobs and assignments to do in your church and you have Wednesday night Bible study, you have Sunday morning services, you have Sunday afternoon services, you have Sunday School; or if you're a Catholic you go to mass; or if you're a Muslim you go to the mosque on Friday; if you're a Jew you go to the synagogue on Saturday—whatever it may be—if you're a Hindu you can worship any day of the week, whatever.

What if you have all kinds of religious things? Let's go to Isaiah 66, then we'll come back to Isaiah, the first chapter. What if you have a beautiful, beautiful brand new building? What if you have like one of the largest Sunday-keeping churches in Houston, Texas, where they have three services of 16,000 a piece on Sunday? You have it all decorated or as those who know what happened in building a house for God in Pasadena, and the lesson we need to learn from this is, when you read and study the Bible, since God really didn't want a temple in the first place, everyone who built a temple to God got himself in trouble. So let's read it here. Here's why. Because when you look to the physical things and the physical things alone, you're missing the whole point.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where *is* the house that you build unto Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?... [Because *if you build it*, He says]: ...For all those *things* has Mine hand made, and all those *things* have been,' says the LORD... [So, can man make a temple that is fitting for God, just by using the things that God has created? Well, God let them go ahead and build the temple and you know what happened. Here's what God is interested in more, because the truth is, every human being was created to be a mini-temple of God for the Spirit of God. So this is why He says this]: ...'but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is poor* and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word" (vs 1-2).

That's what God is interested in more than anything else. And that's very important in relationship to answered prayer—that your heart is right with God. Remember this: ***God is always right! God is always true!*** So if you come to God with this kind of heart and this kind of mind, a

repentant attitude, of course, He's going to hear you. But on the other hand, even though God let them build the temple, even though He gave them all the sacrifices, even though He gave them all these things, if their hearts weren't right, what did it matter? That's what's important. And that's why prayers are not answered because people's hearts are not right. That's why the first thing we need to do in any prayer, after we glorify God and His name, is repent of our sins and our vanity and our stupidity and our self-willedness and all this sort of thing that we have as human beings. Because if not, if you're just doing it for the ritual, or if you're just doing it for show—and I imagine rich people came in and they bought all kinds of sacrifices and had them done. And other people said, 'Oh, did you see so-and-so? Did you know that he brought in 200 bullocks? Come on over, let's eat them, everybody come.'"

But if you're heart isn't right—v 3: "He that kills an ox *is as if* he slew a man; he that sacrifices a lamb, *as if* he cut off a dog's neck; he that offers an oblation, *as if he offered* swine's blood; he that burns incense, *as if he blessed* an idol.... [All those things God said to do—didn't He? But if your heart's not right, look at what it is]: ...Yea, **they have chosen their own ways**... [That's the key! You don't come to God and say, 'God, You accept my way.' God's answer may be, 'It's My way, or the highway'—just to use a little modern colloquialism here.] ...and their soul delights in their abominations.... [Now, abominations are idols, illicit sex behavior, etc.—sins.] ...So here's what happens; here's why prayers are not answered.] ...I also will choose their delusions... [because you're not willing to repent] ...and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer... [When did God call you? Or send a message to you? Maybe it was when you were in trouble. Maybe it was a warning when He rescued you from some disastrous situation. Maybe it was when you heard the Truth and you turned and went the other way.] ...when I spoke, they did not hear: but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose *that* in which I delighted not" (vs 3-4).

Now, let's come back to Isaiah, the first chapter, because here's a whole religious thing going on. And people delight in their religion. Now again, (as I mentioned last time) if you don't have the series on *Why God Hates Religion*, you can draw them down online or you can write in for them. There are a lot of 'religious' people out there. Many different kinds of religions, but have they brought peace to the world? Have they brought peace to their countries? Have they brought peace to their people? *No, they haven't!*

Let's pick it up here in Isaiah 1:10—you read the first nine verses and just read that and understand that it's talking about our country today. And think about it and meditate on it a long time. And if you're a religious person, then think about what he has to say here. "Hear the Word of the LORD... [That's the first place to begin. What is the Word of the Lord? *It's contained in the Holy Bible.* Those are His words. So if you don't read it, how are you going to hear the Word of the Lord?] ...you rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah. 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me?' says the LORD. 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.... [Yet, He commanded it. Why? *Because they came there to do it to try and force their way upon God—not in a repentant attitude.* So they had all kinds of religious ceremonies going on.] (v 12): ...When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this at your hand, to tread My courts?... [Because what did they do?] ...Bring no more vain oblations... [God won't hear vanity.] ...incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies... [Now, let's think about this: Did God command those things to be kept? *Yes!* Well, what if people didn't keep them the way that they should? Or what if they didn't keep them in the attitude they ought to? What if they were there for their own purposes, rather than serving God? Comment was made from audience: This is the way of Cain. Exactly! Exactly correct!] ...I cannot away with; *it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting*'" (vs 10-13)

Now notice v 14: "**Your** new moons... [so they had their own pagan new moons that they did] ...and your appointed feasts **My soul hates**... [Now, let me make it very clear and plain. If you come to God on Sunday, that's not the day that God chose. If you celebrate Christmas and Easter and New Years and Halloween and all the pagan holidays, those are the days God said not to keep. Now, if you don't have the book, *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?*, be sure and write for it. God hates those things. Now, we're getting closer to Halloween—aren't we? And as a matter of fact, I think within about a week we're going to start seeing Halloween things in the store and about five days after that, you're going to see all the Christmas stuff coming out. Are you merchandised with that? Do you think that's religious? The people who keep it, are they not religious? Are they not devoted? *Yes!* But that's not what God said to keep.

Now, what if you keep the Holy Days of God, but you keep them on the wrong day because you're so self-willed you have to have your own calendar that you go out and gaze at the moon? And

let me assure you this: Whenever you think you see the new moon, you're always late—guaranteed! Now God says: "...they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear *them*. And when you spread forth your hands... [that is to pray] ...I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: **your hands are full of blood**" (vs 14-15).

I couldn't help but think of that as I was coming down from Fairfield today, and I always turn on the news station to get the traffic report to see if there's a problem ahead on the way down. And all they were talking about were murders, killings, finding dead bodies and yet, look at how many 'religious' people there are. Because if you said the way to stop that is gather the whole city together, call a day of prayer and fasting, teach them the Ten Commandments of God, tell them this is how you ought to live: love God, love your neighbor, do no harm to him, and your crime problem will disappear. 'Oh, we got to have a separation of church and state. Oh, we have to diversity with the homosexuals. Oh, we can't talk against the Muslims. Oh, we can't talk against this person. Oh, can't talk against that person.' They can point out all your mistakes, but if you dare show them one of their mistakes, hey, you're in deep trouble. This is why God puts this here. How many people are willing to listen to it? 'Oh, we want to pray. We want to be good people.' *No, you don't! You want your own way!* That's what God is saying here.

So here's what God says, v 16: "Wash you... [through the blood of Christ, through repentance] ...make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil... [And what is evil? *Transgressing of the commandments of God—Ten Commandments of God—plus many of the other commandments of God.*] ...Learn to do well... [Doing well does not come naturally. You have to learn from God's way.] ...seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together... [God wants you to come. And how do you reason before God? Like Job? 'God, why don't you recognize my righteousness? God, why don't you accept my Sunday? God, why don't you accept my Christmas?'] ...Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet... [and *sin is the transgression of the law.* And sin defined from the Greek is: *sin is lawlessness*, which means you reject the laws and commandments of God and replace it with your own!] ...they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If... [So God gives a condition] ...you be **willing** and **obedient**, you shall eat the good of the land..." (vs 16-19). This war on terror is fighting the effects, and the more you fight the effects, the more dedicated that the terrorists become because they have been

raised up by God as an instrument of correction. So without going to the real cause, which is sin, which is rejecting God, rejecting His Sabbaths, rejecting His Holy Days, rejecting the true sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there will be no let-up.

Now, think about it today: What do we have today in the news? *Fires in the Northwest, flood in the Southwest, drought in the middle of Texas and Oklahoma, tornadoes up through the Midwest, flooding in Ohio and the Northeast.* And what else do we have? *Another hurricane developing in the Caribbean.* Where is it going to land? Will it hit New Orleans again? Now if you read Deut.28, God says that He does all these things because of sin. And that's to say nothing of all the sickness and disease because of sin. Will you follow in the footsteps of ancient Israel? Continue to rebel? How are you going to have your prayers answered if you do?

He says here, v 20: “‘But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword,’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*.” It's going to happen! It's going to happen! All the things that we think are political problems are really theological problems.

Now let's see what happens with complacent people who have been blessed materially. God gave a warning for this.

(go to the next track)

Now, let's come to Deuteronomy, the eighth chapter, and this was given to the Israelites just before they went into the 'promised land'—because God wanted them to go in there. After wandering in the desert 40 years, everyone over 20 years died and were buried in the wilderness. Now their children were going in. And the whole chapter here is really quite a tremendous warning against the laxity of human nature; and, a warning that you need to learn from your trials and difficulties that you have experienced.

So he says, let's begin here in Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do, **that you may live**, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness... [Now, how were they to remember it? *It was written down. They were to read it, they were to study it.* Now isn't it interesting that many of the things in the Old Testament people don't read anymore. Because they're told, 'Well, we don't need the Old Testament.' And even some Catholics are told, 'We don't even need the Bible to preach the Gospel.' Well the truth is what they preach is not from the Bible, so it's true, they don't need it. It's not the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's not the teaching of God. You're to remember. That's why we're to read and study.] ...these forty years in the wilderness... [Now what is the purpose of every trial and difficulty that comes along? No one likes trials. No one likes difficulties. No one likes these things coming, but they do come. And living in this world and living the way that the world is today, they're going to be all around us on every side things that we don't even have a contribution to or are responsible for. Just like Lot living in Sodom and Gomorrah. He was frustrated every day with their behavior. Only problem is he should have moved before God had to take him out of there. Now, why do you go through it? Just like with Job]: **...to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart...** [That's what God wants to know in every case, what's in your heart] **...whether you would keep His commandments, or no.** And He humbled you... [Notice He said it twice here.] ...and [allowed] suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know... [In other words, they had no experience with it before it came.] ...that He might make you know... [Now here is the whole key thing that goes clear back to where we started in the first two sermons in Heb. 11:6—got to believe God, rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. These are repeated by Jesus in Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4] ...that he might make you to know that man doth not live by bread only... [not by food, not by the physical things] **...but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.**” (vs 1-3). Now, that's why we have the Bible and the Word of God, so we know what God says.

Now if there's any change in what God has done from the Old Testament to the New Testament, or from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, He lets it be known—we know what it is. We cannot of ourselves arbitrarily take it to ourselves to eliminate the Word of God or change the Word of God or add to the Word of God. We have to live 'by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' And Jesus was God manifested in the flesh so that includes what He said. That's why He repeated it there in Matthew and in Luke.

“Your raiment waxed not old upon you, neither did your foot swell, these forty years. You shall also consider in your heart... [God wants a relationship with you in prayer based upon your heart of loving God, believing God, humbling yourself before God, and so forth] ...that, as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you.... [And that's why these things come, that we can learn from them.] ...Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him. For the LORD your

God brings you into a good land... [He gave them the good life. And everyone today wants the good life—right? Every ad on television is to make you happy, to make you richer, to make you wiser, to make you more abundant, whatever it may be.] ...For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack any *thing* in it..." (vs 4-9). And I always think of that when I go to the supermarket. Everybody goes—if you go to one of these warehouse places like Costco or Sam's Club—people come out with their baskets heaping with everything, overflowing with everything. You know, today, people in poverty live in a house or an apartment. They have television, a refrigerator, a stove, a car in many cases—sometimes two cars—and they're poverty ridden. No they're not, it's all just by comparison. Now you need to realize the whole world is not like we are. You go to some places like South America and Africa, their street is a trail which you walk on. And if you're lucky you can ride a bike on it. They don't have refrigerators, they don't have electricity, they don't have all of these things right at their fingertips. So we've been blessed. We have more than any other people in the history of the world! And we're getting more and more trouble. Why? ***Because we've forgotten God!*** And yet, people go to church on Sunday. People say they believe in God. But more and more are saying they really don't believe the Bible is the Word of God. So here's the warning. Now let me ask you a question:

- Have you eaten without scarceness of food? *Yes!*
- Does that apply to you then? *Yes, indeed!*
- Do you really lack anything? Now, you might desire a lot of things, but do you really lack anything.
- Are you spoiled?

Well, one good measure of that is: Open up your closet filled with clothes and then say, 'I have nothing to wear.' Or you look on the floor of your closet and there are dozens of pairs of shoes. So if you're Imelda Marcos you have 3500 pairs of shoes and you say, 'I don't have a shoe to wear.' Or you go to cupboard and it has so many things in it, you say, 'Well, I'm hungry for something, I don't know what it is. Not this, not that, not the other thing.'

"...you shall not lack anything... [Now in addition to that]: ...a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills you may dig brass.... [So God expects us to use the things out of the land that He created.] ...**When you have eaten and are full...**

[key statement—and this is where a lot of people are today] ...**then you shall bless the LORD your God** for the good land which He has given you" (vs 9-10). Be thankful to God. But how many people are spoiled brats because they have so many things? And how many kids growing up today are just absolutely, incredibly spoiled? And how many tantrums do you see in the stores because the kids don't get their candy or their sucker, or you know, go down and shop at the North Pole at Macys for Christmas and they don't get what they want so they have a temper tantrum there?

"Beware [warning!] that you forget not the LORD your God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you this day" (v 11). And isn't that the first thing that people do? Yea, even Christians who are 'rich and are full and rich and increased with goods'—isn't that what they do? (Rev. 3)—they forget God and look to the physical things and say, 'Hey, everything's kool. Everything's good.' You think God is going to answer those prayers when you forget God? You've got time to do everything else in the world, but you don't have time to pray to God. You've got time to do everything else you need to do in your life, but you can't take a half-hour to study. You can't take a half-hour to pray. Oh, you can spend a lot of time on the phone talking to people. You can spend hours watching all kinds of sports. You can watch soap operas. You can watch News-Watch...***but you don't pray!*** And then when you pray, you expect God to answer you because you pray? **"Lest you forget God!"**

Comment was made that shopping in a upscale grocery store in Monterey, the rich people from Carmel and Pebble Beach come in and they buy anything they want and they're just haughty and so forth in what they're doing from their appearance—which ties right in here:

Verse 12: "Lest *when* you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*; and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein were* fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, **that He might humble you...** [There it is the third time—right? God will look to this one 'who has a humble spirit and a contrite heart'—right? *Yes!*] ...and that He might prove you, to do you good at your latter end...

[God wants to give you even *more*, if your attitude and heart are right. So don't ever accuse God of not wanting to do good for you, because He does. And all of our trials and difficulties are to do us good in our latter end—right? *Yes!*] ...And you say in your heart... [Now, doesn't this sound an awful lot like Job, that we discussed earlier?] ...'my power and the might of *mine* hand has gotten me this wealth'" (vs 12-17).

Now when we come to the end of the year and talk about tithes and offerings, we're going to talk about this very situation again right here, because isn't that what we've done as people in the western civilization? We're industrious. We're inventive. 'We, by our power have done this. We, by our power have done that. Oh, God helped us, but *we* did it.' And then to see the arrogance of some people, not only forgetting God, but rejecting God and see atheists on television bragging that they don't believe in God. So, who are they worshipping? *Themselves! Their minds!* God will deal with them. That's what happens. And that holds back prayers from being answered because you're looking to the physical things—you're trusting in the physical things. And if God blesses you that's fine, thank God for it. But don't trust in it. Don't sit back and say, 'Well'—like the one man in the parable there in the book of Luke, after God blessed him—let's turn there.

Luke 12:13: "Then one from the multitude said to Him, 'Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me'.... [I tell you what, you want to know when greed and lust and covetousness comes out? *When mom and dad die and the kids share the estate.* Yes!] ...[Jesus said]: 'Man, who has appointed Me a judge or a divider over you?' And He said to them, 'Watch out, and keep yourselves from covetousness, for no one's life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses.'... [key thing—and I don't know about your house, but I know about my house, it's filled with many, many, many, many things. But we need to understand they are only things, and they can come and go just as quickly, as with the snap of the fingers. Or you can. Like all the Pharaohs—all the wealth they buried with them, thieves got it! Did they go to heaven? *No, they are still there and they are still dead and they didn't eat one bit of the food they put in there.* Today when you're buried, it's only you and the casket. None of your goods go in there. So watch out for covetousness.] ...Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly.... ['Yes, God blessed me. Oh, this is wonderful.'] ...And he was reasoning within himself, saying, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to lay up my fruit?"... ['I got all this surplus around me.'] ...And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater *ones*, and there will I lay up all my produce and my good things. Then I

will say to my soul, [Re-tire!] 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest, eat, drink *and* be merry'"(vs 13-19). That's exactly the image portrayed of people today.

"But God said to him, "Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?" So *shall it be* to the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God'" (vs 20-21). And that's the whole beef that Jesus has with the Laodicean church—rich and increased with goods, have need of nothing and don't pray and don't study and don't take the Word of God seriously—but, want all the blessings of God! And then squawk and scream when trials and difficulties come because they don't do it, and say: 'God, why are You doing this?' Well, read the book, He tells you why—read the book!

So Deut. 8 and Luke 12 has really quite a lesson for us in the way of physical goods. So one of the reasons why prayers are not answered—the major reason—is you look to the physical things and you think that God is blessing you because of it. Now, let me give you one other thing that you need to consider. Let's come to Luke, the fourth chapter.

Now Satan cannot bless you the way that God blesses you, but Satan will reward you *abundantly* if you worship him. Now let's pick it up here in Luke 4:4—we'll just read the quote from Deut. again—"But Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God."' Then the devil led Him up into a high mountain *and* showed Him all the kingdoms of the world **in a moment of time**.... [Now today you could kind of think of this like one of these TV shows, that people come in and if they do the right thing they're going to win the prize. They're going to get the car, get the yacht, get the home, get the money. Or like with the lotto, you know, win \$56-million! Or you could hit the power-ball lotto: \$310-million!] ...And the devil said to Him, 'I will give you all this authority, and the glory of them *all*; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I desire.... [Satan will reward you! Yes, if you serve him he'll reward you! But later God will punish you.] ...Therefore, if You will worship me in *my* presence... [that is worship him as God] ...all things shall be Yours'" (vs 4-7). So in covetousness and physical things people look to those.

Now, let's visit a Protestant church in Isaiah 30. Or visit a false 'Christian' church. You don't dare want to 'rock the boat.' You don't dare want to cause problems. Just speak good things, smooth things, encouraging things. Now there are times for that. Isaiah 30:8: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book... [It's here—isn't it?



We're reading it, yes!] ...that it may be for the time to come forever and ever... [and the margin says, 'the latter days.'] ...That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD... [You try this: If you're a Sunday-keeping minister, stand up in your pulpit if you believe in the Sabbath and tell them all that you're going to have services not on Sunday anymore, but on the seventh-day Sabbath. Expect everyone to come. Then you're going to find out how rebellious the people really are. Because here's what they say]: ...which say to the seers, 'See not.'... ['Oh, don't read that Scripture.] ...and to the prophets, 'Prophecy not unto us right things, **speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits**... [just tell us how good we are, how wonderful we are. 'Oh, we're God's people. Oh, if you attend this church you're surely going to be in the rapture and miss the Great Tribulation.' No you're not! Because what they do, when you bring in your own way—here's what you tell God]: ...Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.'... [God has a message for you]: ...Wherefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, 'Because you despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon, therefore, this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit'" (vs 8-14). We're in a time in our history, in this nation, in the western civilization, and in the Churches of God and all professing Christian religions combined with it, we better hear the Word of the Lord. We better repent and yield to God. Now let's see what happens when you become super-religious and really get involved in some of these things.

Want to know why prayers are not heard, look at the society around us. Let's go back here to Isaiah 58 for the super-religious. We'll compare this for the super-religious with the wicked society that they live in. Because we've created the false thing, you can have your religion, but have it in your home and have it in your church, don't dare bring it in this society. 'We want our murders. We want our crime. We want our homosexuality. We want our whoredoms.' They don't say it exactly that way, but that's what they're saying.

Isaiah 58:1: "'Cry aloud, spare not... [And that's what God says we're supposed to do.] ...lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.... ['Oh, but we're religious, good people.'] ...Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My

ways... [they claim] ...as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.... [So they're very religious. Just tie that in where we covered earlier in Isa. 1.] ..."Wherefore have we fasted," say they, "and You see not? *Wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and You take no knowledge?"... [Here's the answer]: ...Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: you shall not fast as *you do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high..." (vs 1-4).

You're not going to make God hear just because you're religious. If you're not seeking God's way and doing His will, why should He hear you? You parents: What if you have rebellious children that never listen to you? Are you willing to do things for them? Or does it turn you off, and after a while you say, 'No, no more, no more!' Yes! Well, how does God feel when you say, 'Oh, God, I love my Sunday, but I hate Your Sabbath. Oh, Christmas is the greatest time of the year, and Halloween is such fun for children—not knowing that you're drinking out of the cauldron of Satan's way, which is all glitterous. And look at the society that we have created.

Come to Isaiah 59:1—and let's read here. And does this not describe our society and western civilization very, very well? *Yes, indeed!* "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear... [God doesn't have a hearing problem. He doesn't have a short arm. But what separates you from God?] ...But your iniquities... [Which is sin, the 'transgression of the law'] ...have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *His* face from you, that He **will not hear**.... [That's why prayers aren't answered, because you want your own way. You want your own sin. You want to define to God what sin is, rather than let God define to you what He says sin is.] ...For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness" (vs 1-3). It sounds like channel-surfing on Direct TV with 450 channels and there's nothing on but sin, wretchedness and debauchery. I know I sat down with someone who had Direct TV and I said, 'Ok, let me test it out. I went through 278 channels—**278!**—it took me the better part of 45 minutes to do it, just to see what was on. There it is, right there. Look at any of the movies. Do they promote violence, hatred?

Verse 4: "None calls for justice... [Oh, they call for justice—their own kind, but not God's!] ...nor *any* pleads for Truth... [Only their *truth*—only what they want to accept and allow.] ...they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.... [It's exactly

what's happening.] ...They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eats of their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood... [This sounds like the Middle East—doesn't it?] ...their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace" (vs 1-8).

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And so, the next few verses bring this out: Well, I wonder what's wrong with the society that we have all of these things going wrong. And they get 'experts' in there: 'What do you think?' or 'What's your opinion?' Not one of them says, 'You're sinners against God!' They were trying analyze this latest thing on Jonbenet Ramsey and the fellow who supposedly confessed of it. And those who are supposed to be talking about why people get into sex problems like so many people are today. They don't dare condemn it! So prayers aren't heard because God won't answer.

Old Testament Scripture from the *King James Version*  
New Testament Scriptures from *The New Testament in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 78:1-22
- 2) Hebrews 11:6
- 3) Psalm 78:22-41
- 4) Job 35:1-16
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 6) Isaiah 1:10-20
- 7) Deuteronomy 8:1-17
- 8) Luke 12:13-21
- 9) Luke 4:4-7
- 10) Isaiah 30:8-14
- 11) Isaiah 58:1-4
- 12) Isaiah 59:1-8

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 16
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy 28
- Matthew 4:4
- Revelation 3

#### Also referenced:

- Sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*
- Book: *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?* by Fred R. Coulter