

# Epistle of First Peter XI

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We're going to cover essentially the last part of 1-Peter, the third chapter. Let's go back and review just a little bit; let's come to 1-Peter 3:12, and we'll just review this one as a very important Scripture. Of course, I think it's important, brethren, that we do go through these series so that we do not get in a rut as to what I preach; and we don't get into a rut as to what is taught. But it gets our nose into the Bible and of course, as I've said, this translation is not designed as a replacement for the Word of God, but it is designed as a study aid with a wide margin and so forth so it will help you in studying.

1-Peter 3:12: "Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their supplication...." And that's something we need to really understand and realize that

- God is there to hear
- God is there to help
- God is watching over us

As Jesus said, *the Father is not going lose one*. And I see that very clearly. God may let us wander for a while. God may let us go hither and yon for a while, but God isn't going to give up on us; because God has such a tremendous plan for all of us to be in the Kingdom of God that He's not going to give up on us at all whatsoever.

"...But the face of the Lord is against those who are practicing evil" (v 12). Do you see how that is? See how that makes it nice and clear? Many times people think that God is not taking into account what the evil people are doing. But God is!

Let's go to the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter eight. There are two things involved with God when we're talking about people that do evil. Sometimes the punishment is immediate. Sometimes it's not. God wants to know what's in the heart. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. So, when we look at all of these things that are happening, we have to keep all of that in mind when we look at the world around us. But here is a truism:

Ecclesiastes 8:11: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily... [people think they get away with it] ...therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." When you tie all of these things together, sooner or later they are going to have to 'face the music,' so to speak. *God knows!* God knows those who are practicing evil. God is hoping that the wicked will repent. After all, that's the whole purpose in all of it—isn't it? You go back and you can tie in that also with the parable of the prodigal son.

Now those of us who are sinners like to cling on to the part when we come back to God He's there

to help us, but there's another side of the story, too. The other son should have been just as happy that the brother repented; but instead, he got mad and said, 'Well, hey, I've been here all the time doing all this and you never had a banquet for me.' The father said, 'Son, you're ever with me.' It didn't take away from the other son's inheritance at all. Sometimes we get that way toward people in the world when we see evil going on. In self-righteous indignation I've said it. How could they do that? Well, they could. God knows. He'll take care of it. Maybe they will be so miserable in what they're doing that they'll repent to God. So let's hope that that may be the case.

We'll cover 1-Peter 3:13-18 and then come back. "And *is there* anyone who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good? Now on the other hand, if you do undergo suffering for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.... [Many times it's not going to feel that when we're going through it.] ...But you should not be afraid of their terror, *and* you should not let yourselves be intimidated... [very interesting Greek word there] ...but sanctify the Lord God in your own hearts, and always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope *that is* in you, with meekness and reverence; having a good conscience, that, whereas they may speak against you as evil doers, those who are reviling your good way of life in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, *for you* to suffer while doing good than to *suffer for* doing evil; because Christ indeed once suffered for sins, *the* Just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God—on the one had, having been put to death in the flesh; but on the other hand, made alive by the Spirit."

Let's pick up some different Scriptures that tie right in with that. Psalm 56 is a tremendous Psalm, and lots of times, brethren, if your prayers get stale or things get tough or whatever it may be, go to the Psalms and use those in your prayers—to start out your prayers—and that will be real helpful for you. Here's a tremendous prayer which I think has a lot to do with the very ministry of Christ and the things that He went through and the things that happened to Him.

Lot's of times we get the opinion that it was pretty easy for Jesus. But when you read back there in the Heb. 5 that He had to cry out with prayers with strong cryings to Him Who was able to save Him from death. Though He were a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Think of it this way, Jesus—Who was perfect—must have suffered every day by the things that He saw going on.

Think of Christ when we read this Psalm 56:1: “Be gracious unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all the day, he oppresses me.... [I don’t know of anyone who’s gone through it that way except Christ.] ...Those who lie in wait for me would trample me, for many are those who proudly fight against me. When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God—I will praise His word—in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?” (vs 1-4).

We can tie in several things there: John 6:63: ‘The flesh profits nothing.’ There may be people who can do things to you, but what difference is that going to make in the long run, when you really consider it. We’re coming into some pretty tough times, and we can see it all around us. When the general society as a whole does not follow the precepts of the Word of God you end up with people out there trying to establish their own righteousness, and you end up with more things like the Waco problem—or some other problems. We don’t have to fear what flesh can do to us.

Verse 5: “All day long they pervert my words... [twist the words of Christ] ...all their thoughts are against me for evil.” You go back and look at the confrontation that Jesus had just before He was crucified, when He came to the temple and the Pharisees came and tempted Him and the Sadducees came and tempted Him. They tried to kill Him. They wanted to stone Him. They wanted to arrest Him. They wanted to find Him in some kind of evil. Even His disciples couldn’t go through the field and just pluck up some near ripe grain and just rub it in their hands and eat it without the Pharisees coming along and saying, ‘Your disciples are harvesting on the Sabbath.’ He had it pretty tough.

Verse 6: “They stir up strife; they hide themselves; they watch my steps as they wait for my soul. Because of iniquity cast them out.... [Are they going to get away with this in the long run.] ...In Your anger cast down the people, O God. You number my wanderings, O put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?” (vs 6-8).

This is David going through this Psalm, so we’re kind of going in and out of David’s experience personally, and the prophecies referring to Christ. Obviously, we don’t want to go around and when we have something where we really cry, we put a little bottle up to our eyes and we catch the tears and then we can hold it up and say, ‘Lord, I have suffered.’ It doesn’t mean that. This is a metaphor that God doesn’t let any of the tears escape Him. God doesn’t let any of the tears escape Him. **He knows! He knows!**

Verse 9: “When I cry out to You, then my enemies will be turned back. This I know because God is for me.” Always understand that:

- God is for you!
- God loves you!
- God has called you!
- You have a tremendous purpose!

Verse 10: In God—I will praise His Word; in the LORD—I will praise His Word. In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Your vows are upon me, O God; I will give thank offerings to You, for You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” (vs 10-13). That’s a tremendous Psalm!

Let’s go to Matthew, the tenth chapter, and see how this applies. Here’s a Scripture that we have known and gone over quite a few times. This really helps us. This should help us in everything that we do; because I’ll tell you what: Lot’s of times we get to thinking that only in our lives do we have trouble. But I tell you what, the lives of almost everyone in the world has trouble today. So we can have strong confidence in God’s way. We can have strong confidence that God knows.

Matthew 10:28: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna.... [then Jesus adds]: ...Are not two sparrows sold for a coin? And yet not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father *taking account of it*.... [That means *without His knowledge*. So God knows!] ...But even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (vs 28-30). In other words, when it says that the eyes of God are upon the righteous, it’s not for hair-counting. But it is that God knows you so well, and is involved in your life so deeply that He knows that, and He knows our every thought. That’s why we can have this kind of courage that Peter’s talking about.

Let’s go to Isaiah 50:7, and here again is a tremendous section of Scripture. And I’ll tell you what, my experience has been that God will get you into a position in your life sooner or later, somewhere sometime, to where your only help is God; to where you feel that there’s absolutely nothing left in your life but to go on your knees before God because there’s nothing else you can do. When that happens, you feel pretty miserable. I know I did; and have. God doesn’t feel miserable because He’s there to help you. **God is there to help you!**

Isaiah 50:7: “For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I have not been disgraced. On account of this I have set My face like a flint...” Not in stubbornness against God, but in the strength and power of God’s Spirit, that **if God is for you nothing can be against you**. Just put in your margin Rom. 8. I’ll let you study that and add to it.

“...and I know that I shall not be ashamed. *He is* near who justifies Me... [God is always there to help] ... who will contend with Me? Let us stand together; who *is* My adversary? Let him come near Me” (vs 7-8).

I’ve just been lambasted by those who disagree with the Passover book. I’ve been called the agent of Satan the devil, spreading lies to the brethren. But I do know that what I wrote stands the test of God’s Word. I’m not going to be concerned what they say or do. Jesus said that ‘if they call Me—referring to Himself—Beelzebub, how much more are they going to call those of the household.’ It doesn’t do any good to throw accusations back and forth because that isn’t going to solve anything. What’s going to solve the problem is getting our noses in God’s Word.

“...who *is* he *who* shall condemn Me? Lo, they all shall grow old like a garment; the moth shall eat them. Who among you fears the LORD, who obeys the voice of His servant, who walks *in* darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God. Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who gird yourselves *with* firebrands; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which you have kindled.... [This is saying: your own work, your own thing that you are doing.] ...This you shall have of My hand—you shall lie down in sorrow” (vs 8-11). In the long run, God is going to turn it to the good!

Isaiah 51:1—because it follows right along; here’s some more encouragement for us: “Hearken to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD: Look to the rock *from which* you were cut... [Who’s that Rock? *Christ!* And did not Peter say we are to be lively stones cut out from the Rock? *Yes, indeed!*] ...and to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah *who* bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and made him many.’ For the LORD shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places...” (vs 1-3)—and then it goes into the redemption that comes when Christ returns. So those are some tremendous Psalms for us.

So, the whole lesson of 1-Pet. 3:13 is that no one can harm you if you follow God. No one can under any circumstances! Don’t let yourself be all put down over it. 1-Peter 3:14: “Now on the other hand, if you do undergo suffering for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed...” There are blessings. It doesn’t feel like a blessing when you’re going through it—does it?

There are the whole blessings that are given in the book of Matthew and we’ll cover all those when we do the survey in the book of Matthew; but it’s going to be exciting as can be, brethren; and it’s

going to really just increase our faith into what God has done with the New Testament; the whole thing that Christ has done and the apostles have done. It’s going to be really exciting.

Matthew 5:10: “Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake. Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you” (vs 10-12). So we have that as a tremendous thing, brethren.

Out of it we’re going to learn a lesson. Why should those things happen to you? Why would God put you in a position that those things would happen to you?

1. Because we’re not of the world
2. God has called us
3. Christ has suffered before us

But, we all have something to learn very deeply.

Verse 43: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you” (vs 43-44). That’s hard to do. That’s the hardest thing in the world to do. For sports fans it’s real hard. When your team loses you don’t say *hooray!* You’re looking for heads to roll—right? It’s not in our nature to do this, unless we have the Spirit of God. That’s why we’re put in positions sometimes where we’re going to have the opportunity to love our enemies.

“...and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you, so that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect” (vs 44-48).

So there’s the whole goal! You might tie that in with Eph. 4:17 where it’s the ‘fullness of the stature of the measure of Christ.’ Now, I’m going to ask you a question and before you answer it, I want you to think about it. What are the love commandments in the New Testament, and what should be the order of them; what is the order that they should be? It’s not very tricky; but it sounds tricky! We just read one of them. And the first one is

‘love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being.’ We’ll cover something which is very fundamental; so I’ll cover it because of these things. Matthew 22:37: “And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment... [That’s the first one. The second one however, has been bumped down to number three by Jesus’ own words.] ...And *the* second *one is* like it... [if you don’t like us to bump it down to number three, keep it number two] ...‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (vs 37-39). Now we’ve got three of them:

1. Love your enemies
2. Love God
3. Love your neighbor
4. Love the brethren

‘You shall love each other as I have loved you’ (John 13:33-34; 15:9-12). Those are the four love commandments in the New Testament.

Verse 40 is a key verse: “**On these two commandments hang...** [and that means *are suspended downward from*] ...**all the Law and the Prophets.**” A very key, fundamental thing concerning law is: ***you cannot have law without love!*** Love must come first so that you can have the proper laws. What happens when you don’t have the proper love? *You end up with the improper laws!* When we get into a little study of Judaism you will see how that happened. Just a little review here to keep that in mind.

When your children were growing up—since most of us have children that are growing up or nearly grown up—why did you have the rules for your children that you had? *Because you love them*—right? You could say that was the law of your parenting—correct? Did you, at any time, contrive in your mind toward your own children anything that was not based on love, even the correction as severe as it may have to have been? *No!* I don’t know of any. Does that mean you’re free from mistakes? *No!* We all look back and we can see that we should do what we should have done. Can God overcome those? *Yes, He can!* But did you not do everything that you did. Did I not do everything that I did for my children, because I love them? *Yes!* That’s why ***you cannot have law without love!*** Very profound and fundamental thing that we need to understand.

Let’s go back to the book of 1-Peter 3:14: “Now on the other hand, if you do undergo suffering for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. But you should not be afraid of their terror... [you don’t have to go around and be afraid and intimidated by this world or people around you. Some people go around and they’re just paranoid of fear. Don’t be that way.] ...*and* you should not let yourselves be intimidated.” That’s a very key, important thing

here, too. That doesn’t mean that you rise up and be smart-aleck about anything. But you’re not to be intimidated. ***Don’t let the world intimidate you, what you believe. Don’t be intimidated by circumstances;*** especially today, get the psychological grip over you to manipulate you and intimidate you. That’s what that means: *don’t be intimidated!*

But, instead of that, do this, v 15: “But sanctify the Lord God in your own hearts, and always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope *that is* in you, and meekness and reverence.” That’s why it’s important that the minister always teach the brethren, because how are you going to answer unless you know? How is the minister going to be able to teach unless he grows in grace and knowledge, too? That’s got to be. You can’t have a set of doctrines that’s approved by a doctrinal board, and we all agree with this—basic doctrine, that’s true, but then do we remain static and never grow in grace and knowledge and understanding? *No! We’re to constantly grow in grace and knowledge!* Be ready to give that answer!

Let’s go to John 14:1—here we go about not fearing and not being intimidated. We can just put this verse in here. “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.” So, if you believe in Jesus Christ you don’t have worry; you don’t have to be fearful; you don’t have to let anyone put you down; you don’t have to let anyone shove you around. You don’t have to rise up in rebellion against them or come at them with a fist in the face—that’s not the point.

I saw a report on something: A man got real angry one time and turned around and busted this fellow in the jaw. He hit him so hard that it knocked the jaw loose and it went up and pierced his brain and he died. I thought, man! Just one angry burst! Poor guy had to do some jail time. But if he would not have allowed himself to be fearful and be intimidated that wouldn’t happen.

Let’s go to Psalm 26:1—again, there’s so many of these Psalms that tie in with it. When you study Peter, there are an awful lot of Psalms that are in there, if we always put ourselves in God’s hands.

Psalm 26:1: “Judge me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity. I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart, for Your loving kindness is before my eyes; and I have walked in Your Truth. I have not sat with deceitful men, neither will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the congregation of evildoers and will not sit with the wicked.... [here’s one that has to do with Christ]: ...I will wash my hands in innocence; so I will go about Your altar, O LORD” (vs 1-6). If we can have that kind of confidence. There it is in hating

the evildoers, that doesn't take away from loving your enemies. You hate what they do, but you love them.

Here's a tremendous Psalm which also has been composed into a really magnificent song. You've probably heard it. You've probably even sung it. Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid... [Notice, no intimidation here at all. Nothing but faith and confidence in God.] ...though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I have desired from the LORD, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple" (vs 1-4).

Now, if you take this verse and expand it out, brethren, to the whole plan of God, to be with God; then this just opens up this Psalm really tremendously. Then it goes on here—v 5: "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me upon a Rock." And, of course, *that Rock is Christ*. So that's really tremendous.

Verse 14: "Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD."

Psalm 28:1: "I will cry to You, O LORD; my Rock, do not be silent to me, lest, if You be silent to me, I become like those who go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your Holy place. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace to their neighbors, yet evil is in their hearts" (vs 1-3).

Verse 7: "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him. The LORD is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His anointed. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever" (vs 7-9).

Those are some real Psalms that we need; helps strengthen us. I tell you what, we're just (in some ways) kind of battered and bruised by this world and everything around us. Put in your notes Matt. 10: that when you give the answer it's going to be the Father in you Who speaks. It's going to be the Father Who going to inspire you to speak. How can you give an answer unless you know the Word of God? How can you have God inspire you if you don't have His Word in your mind? That's how God is going to inspire us; because we have His Word in our mind.

Let's go to Ephesians, the third chapter, and we will see the whole purpose, the whole goal of what our heart is to become. And in a sense, if we can use an analogy, if we grow up in Christ to the fullness of the stature of the measure of Christ, we have a very unique thing, which I will call *dependent independence*. The more you depend upon God the more independent your behavior becomes. What do I mean by that? Sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it's not. ***The more Christ is able to rule in your heart and in your mind because you are relying on Christ!*** So therefore, your behavior becomes more independent because of Christ in you and someone doesn't have to come along and tell you do this and do that and do the other thing. That's the whole goal of Christianity.

Ephesians 3:16: "That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith..." Now that, brethren, is how you can give an answer for the hope that lies within your heart—***by having Christ in your heart—and being rooted and grounded in love***. So it all fits together really tremendously. That's how we're able to give the answer. That's how it's able to be done.

1-Peter 1:16: "Having a good conscience, that, whereas they may speak against you evildoers, those who are reviling your good way of life in Christ may be ashamed."

(go to the next track)

Verse 17: "For it is better, if it is the will of God..." Some people like to go out and shove a spiritual fist in people's faces—and they get persecuted—which is not the will of God. They're getting back what they've shoved out. That isn't what God wants us to do.

For example: What good would it do to turn people to Christ if you unilaterally ran around your neighborhood and, on Christmas Eve, sought to go into every house and destroy their Christmas trees? Then you're taking a *righteous fist*, as it were, and shoving it in their face. So any persecution you would get from that you deserve. God's way is not that way.

"...if it is the will of God, *for you* to suffer while doing good... [then it's for your *doing good*, not out trying to do evil to correct someone to try and make them do good.] ...than *to suffer for* doing evil. Because Christ indeed once suffered for sins, *the Just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God—on the one hand, having been put to death in the flesh; but on the other hand, made alive by the Spirit; by which He went and preached to the spirits in prison.... [the way I've translated it brings it into its proper context here and what it means in the

Greek] ...*which* disobeyed in a past time, when once the long-suffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, *while* the ark was being prepared..." (vs 17-20). That's when Jesus, as a spirit being—the Lord God of the Old Testament—went and preached to the spirits in prison. There are several other Scriptures we can tie in here.

Let's put in there 2-Peter 2:4: "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned... [Here's where basic Scriptures help us a lot. What is sin? *Sin is the transgression of the law*. When they sinned, they went against the laws of God.] ...but, having cast them into Tartarus [hell]... [the Greek there: 'tartaro' which is *a place of restraint*] ...delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept for *the judgment*." When they sinned, He cast them down. Why did He cast them down? What was their sin?

Jude 6—ties right in with the same thing: "And the angels who did not keep their own original domain, but deserted their habitation, He is holding in eternal bonds under darkness unto the judgment of *the great day*." The angels didn't want to do the will of God. They weren't willing to accept what God had for them. Then we tie in there Rev. 12, and when they rebelled a third of them went with Satan the devil. Lots of times when we think of that, we say, 'How did that happen?' Probably the same way that happens within the Church. You set up a hierarchy and then the hierarchy says *trust me*—instead of trusting God. So Satan put himself between God and the other angels and said, 'Now, I'll talk to God, you talk to me, and I'll tell you what God says.' So they rebelled.

Revelation 12:4: "And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth..." This is that 'great red dragon'—v 9 says it's Satan the devil. We all know the basic Scriptures of Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28—we won't turn there. But when the ark was being built God gave them a witness personally. Jesus Christ, at that time, was the Lord God of the Old Testament; was a spirit being. He went to this 'place of restraint' that you could only get to as a spirit being. Now exactly where that is I don't know. I don't particularly care to want to know. I don't want to go there. Some say it's the bottomless abyss—maybe.

Here's when He went, when the ark was being built. Here's the condition that they brought the whole world, as one of the factors that Jesus says it's going to be like just before He returns. Genesis 6:5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually." That's really a state of affairs!—isn't it?

I got this article—April 12<sup>th</sup>, *Time Magazine*—about this new computer thing that's

going to happen. And it's going to happen! Boy, they're going to have it. You can have it coming in your house; 500 television channels. I mean, think of it! If you're mind is going 'coo-coo' over 12 or 14 or 20, think what it's going to be with 500 coming into your house by a fiber optic, which is a glass wire. Now that sounds contradictory, but it's really something. They will also have books, magazines, articles—anything you want. You can sit in your home and never have to move. You can order anything. Just call up and dial it in—and it'll even talk back to you. Imagine that! You're bored to death with your computer, you can sit there and say, 'Computer, talk with me.' *Yeah, what do you want to talk about?*

I thought about this: Try and combine this what we have today, every sort of evil can come through that. If you think there's evil now with the channels we have, think what it's going to be with 500! But it's going to give an opportunity to preach the Gospel more, too—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!* So you can have an opportunity to hear the Gospel or watch live pornography taking place right on the TV. Maybe even watch demonism, Satan-worship, the whole thing.

God is going to have it so that mankind is not going to say, 'God, why did You come and destroy this earth? Why did You send Christ back here?' God is going to let everyone, I think, come to a point that in this world, in their rebellion against God and all their evil and the imagination of their thoughts, everyone is going to feel so important that he or she is going to feel that each one is a god. Now, maybe I've overstated it, but I can see it happening!

Are the kids spoiled today? *Oh yes they are!* I went into Burger King to get a hamburger—I still like the hamburgers—and here was this little kid in there with his father. Spoiled brat! Wanting his own way! I thought: What can you teach a kid like that? What is a kid like this going to learn? I kind of looked at him and I thought if he were mine I'd tell him, be still. But he wasn't mine so I didn't dare do that, I might get the fist in my mouth.

But I thought: What is that generation going to be satisfied with? *Nothing but being made to be wholly satiated with everything that you could possibly do to the mind and the body!* Now, maybe I've overstated it, but I tell you what, it's got to be something so fantastic that they're willing to fight Christ when He returns. So therefore, brethren, you can be absolutely sure that there is no reforming of this world—it is bound to be destroyed. So when Jesus went there He was saying, 'Now look what you've done with this whole world. Everyone is evil. Everyone except Noah.' He probably told him what their situation was going to be.

Let's come back to 1-Peter 3:20: "...while the ark was being prepared... [that's when He went there] ...into which a few—that is, eight souls—were saved through water; of which a like fulfillment *is* baptism..." (vs 20-21). You can put in there Rom. 6, the whole thing of baptism and we're 'co-joined in His death; we're to be co-joined in the newness of life.'

"...of which a like fulfillment *is* baptism, and is now also saving us—not the removal of the filth... [the King James has 'filth' and that is equal to dirt. But after going through and studying this and understanding what it really means, it's not the removing of dirt in a cleansing like a bath, but it is] ...the removal the flesh... [which is a reference to circumcision. Why?] ...but an appeal to God for a good conscience... [circumcision of the heart] ...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (v 21). That should read 'the filth of the flesh,' referring to circumcision.

Since I covered it recently in some sermons, we'll just put it in here for the sake of study and for the notes. We're to be circumcised where? *In our hearts!* Deut. 10:16: 'Be circumcised therefore in the foreskin of your heart.' Rom. 2:28-29: 'The circumcision of the heart'—not the flesh. Col. 2:11<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: 'In the circumcision of Christ not made with hands.' That's what it has to do, which then does what Peter says here, the last part of 1-Peter 3:21: "...but an appeal to God for a good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Why is that important? Why does he key it on the resurrection of Christ? *Because Christ had to rise and ascend to heaven to be our High Priest at the right hand of God!* I'll just have to mention, brethren, that about six or seven years ago I started the series in 1-Corinthians and since none of those problems applied to the Church, this congregation, I suspended it after we got into about eight chapters. But I'll tell you what, we're going to understand and discover why these heresies were there. Carl Franklin's doing some research for us on it; but as I mentioned, there was the Pharisaical problem, the Sadducee problem, the priest problem, the circumcision problem. All these heresies reflect on those different things. If you're a Sadducee and you don't believe in the resurrection, then you're going to heaven—right? *Never do it!*

I often wondered this: How was it that the Church of God had people in their preaching that 'the dead don't rise'? When the whole thing of Christ is based on the resurrection of Christ—right? Never could figure that out. I think maybe we'll be able to understand that now.

1-Corinthians 15:12: "But if Christ is being preached, that He rose from *the* dead, how *is it that* some among you... [there in that congregation

preaching] ...are saying that there is no resurrection of *the* dead? For if there is no resurrection from *the* dead, neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching *is* in vain, and your faith *is* also in vain" (vs 12-14). That's why Peter is referring to it here in 1-Pet. 3—that Christ had to ascend to the right hand of the Father for the forgiveness of our sins, but also for eternal life.

And he says, v 15: "And we are also found *to be* false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise, if indeed *the* dead are not raised. For if *the* dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. But if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is* vain; you are still in your sins" (vs 15-17).

Peter is referring to this. So, the only way we can have a good conscience is by the resurrection of Christ. 1-Peter 3:22: "Who has gone into heaven *and* is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been *put in* subjection to Him."

Verse 21: "...but an appeal to God for a good conscience [circumcision of the heart] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who has gone into heaven *and* is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been *put in* subjection to Him" (vs 21-22).

Now, brethren, we're going to see that with Christ at the right hand of God that this is a tremendous thing for us; and that we need to understand and realize more fully how much God is for us (in spite of the circumstances around us) and how much God's calling really means to us. So let's go back to Isaiah 48 and see what it means to be "at the right hand of God." Why is that so important and what does that have to do with us; and what does that have to do with what God is doing in our lives.

Isaiah 48:12: "Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called..." That's an interesting phraseology—isn't it? We know that Jacob's name was changed to Israel, so why would both be used here? Here's just a thought: Perhaps 'O Jacob' refers to the 12 tribes of Israel and 'Israel' can refer to the Church, the new Israel. Now that's not a dogmatic statement, it's just something that perhaps it could be. But it's interesting that it gives both here: "O Jacob and Israel, **My called...**" You can go back and review:

- God's calling
- that none comes to Christ except the Father draw him
- that we are to be called
- we are the elected
- we are the selected

How great God's plan is that we have been chosen in particularly by God the Father. "...I *am* He... [or I

am the One—that is the One Who is God.] ...I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.” That ties in with several things.

Let’s go to Revelation, the first chapter, because we find that this identifies Jesus Christ. This identifies that the One Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament was the One Who became Jesus Christ. Revelation 1:5—and this then is greetings: “From Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness...” ‘Witness’ is a very interesting word in the Greek: ‘*martus*’ which can also mean *martyr*—not only a *witness* but a *martyr*. This applies, both, to Jesus Christ. He was faithful, He was a witness, and He was a martyr.

“...the Firstborn...” [The Greek there is not ‘*monogenes*’ which would be *begotten*, but it is ‘*prototokos*’ which is *firstborn*] ...from the dead... [and everything that we do, brethren, is keyed by the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead] ...and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loved us...” (v 5). We need to understand how much Jesus Christ loved us by understanding that He willingly suffered everything that He went through and endured the suffering of death on the cross ‘for the joy that was set before Him.’

“...and washed us from our sins in His own blood... [You know and understand that no other sacrifice can do what the sacrifice of Jesus Christ does. So it had to be with His own blood.] ...and has made us kings and priests to God and His Father...” (vs 5-6). Of course, that’s the future office that we are going to hold; but He is referring to it as already done because He looks at the ‘things which are not as though they are; and the things that shall be as though it has already occurred.’

If you are faithful and if you love God, and if you respond to Him, it is as good as done. Now, that doesn’t mean we go to the extreme in this life and say, ‘Well now, I’m going to practice being a king and a priest and I’m going to become a little tyrant around here and be an egocentric and take everything to myself and lord it over everybody.’ Doesn’t mean that at all, brethren. No one’s going to be a king or priest with Jesus Christ unless they learn humility. When you really truly understand it, the most humble being in the universe is God! So we need to keep our perspective on that.

Verse 6: “...to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen.” Now, it’s interesting in the Greek, because there are going to be ages in the eternity to come. There are going to be ages in which we are going to be doing things as the very sons of God. The first of that age is going to be *The Millennium Age*—we already know that. Then there’s going to be the age of the resurrection of the unjust, and the resurrection of the incorrigible

wicked. And then there’s going to come New Jerusalem down out of heaven, which then begins a whole new age in eternity. So wherever you see ‘forever and ever’ just translate that into ‘the ages of eternity.’

Verse 7: “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and **every eye shall see Him...**” It makes you wonder why that some people preached there’s going to be an ‘unseen’ hand from nowhere which is going to save the world. The truth is, when you don’t preach Jesus Christ, you preach another Gospel. And if you preach an ‘unseen hand’ you’re preaching another gospel—because *every eye* shall see Him.

“...and those who pierced Him... [which includes every human being on earth, because it is our sins that killed Him] ...and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen” (v 7). Now when you see ‘even so, Amen’ that is a dogmatic affirmation that we can say, in modern English in slang today, means *you can count on it absolutely!*

Now notice, how Isa. 48 ties in with v 8: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* Ending,’ says the Lord... [Not only was He the One Who is—where it says back there in Isa. 48, ‘I am the One.’ Well, now Jesus has expanded that title out even more because of His first coming.] ...‘Who is... [currently existing] ...and Who was... [Jesus Christ in the flesh and the Lord God of the Old Testament] ...and Who *is* to come... [the returning Christ in power and glory] ...—**the Almighty.**’”

The beautiful part about studying the Bible is that when you truly study it, and you sight it for what the Bible teaches—and as Peter said, ‘the Scriptures are of no private interpretation,’ but you let the Scriptures interpret itself—you will find that the Bible does not contradict itself. It is all wonderfully and wholly and fantastically and spiritually put together so that we can grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and understand what God has for us.

Now, let’s go back to Isaiah 48, and let’s see what ‘the right hand of God’ means. This ought to give us an inkling of the power of the authority of the absoluteness of God and His Word—what He’s going to do.

Isaiah 48:12: “...I *am* the first, I also *am* the last. My hand also has laid the foundation of the earth... [we know this all very well and we’ve memorized it, but put in your margin: John 1:1-3] ...and My right hand has stretched out the heavens...” (vs 12-13). Just imagine in your greatest imaginations Christ standing in the universe and saying, ‘Let there be the stars’—and just put His hand out and they just, with the power of His Spirit coming



out of His mouth and from His hand they were created in the vastness of the universe. That's why Peter says that He's at the right hand of God. That's a very powerful thing for us. It's very powerful for us to understand this in relationship to

- what God is doing *for* us
- what God is doing *through* us
- what God is doing *in* us
- being able to come to God in prayer
- being able to come to God and understand His Word

Remember what Jesus said just before He left the disciples. Let's go to Matthew 28, and let's see the parting remarks that Matthew recorded concerning Jesus Christ. We're going to see that it's profound.

It really makes you wonder how it is that we can get ourselves in to such spiritually weak conditions; or lazy conditions; or lethargic conditions; or whatever it is and we're just sort of oh-hum. 'I know I need to pray'—but don't. 'I wish God would bless me, but somehow He doesn't.' Well, part of that has to do with our faith and our reaction in our response to God. Because if we have this in mind, what I'm covering here right now, then we don't have to go to God with that kind of attitude, with that kind of weakness, with that kind of sniveling, human whiny character.

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them... [He's talking to the disciples—and there are even some that doubted it (v 17).] ...saying, '**All authority**... [Which means the authority over everything that there is, that God the Father has given Christ to do] ...**in heaven and on earth** has been given to Me."

- Do we lack anything?
- Do we have someone who cannot answer our prayers?
- Do we have someone who does not know us?

*NO! We have Someone Who has the power, Who can answer our prayers*—and that's why Peter said that 'He [Christ] is at the right hand of God.' And he said that 'angels and authorities and powers having been put in subjection to Him.'

Now, let's go back to Isaiah 48:13, again: "My hand also has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens. When I call they stand up together." We're going to see that in Hebrews, the first chapter, in just a little bit—the very power of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 110—because here is one of the most powerful things that was preached by the apostles. And this is the thing that just drove the religious leaders and the priest and the Pharisees and the scribes absolutely nuts. Every time they heard it they gnashed their teeth. This is a pretty profound verse,

and we're going to see that Peter preached it all of the time.

Psalm 110:1: "The LORD [Yahweh] said unto my Lord..." Adoni—so this is one of the two or three references in the Old Testament which reveal an inkling of God the Father. The Old Testament does not reveal God the Father, they did not know God the Father until Christ came and revealed Him. But here's one place which gives an inkling above and beyond; so there is more than one personage in the Godhead or God Family.

"... 'Sit you at My right hand...' The right hand is symbolic of power, of authority, of work, of creation and all of those things have to do with the right hand. It has nothing to do with discrimination against left-handers. So, if anybody out there is left-handed don't feel bad. God made you left-handed, so don't worry about it. What we're saying here is that the right hand is symbolic of all of this power. ...until I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Now, that ties directly in with 1-Corinthians 15—let's go there and see that the Apostle Paul preached exactly the same thing. When you really understand the Bible, when you put it together, when you really put everything the way that it should be, Paul and Peter and James and John and Luke and Mark and Matthew all preached the same Gospel—without a doubt. Maybe using different words, they all preached the Gospel.

1-Corinthians 15:20: "But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep. 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... [that's symbolized by the Wave-sheaf offering] ...then, those who are Christ's at His coming" (vs 20-23). So this shows very clearly:

1. no one has gone to heaven
2. no one has been resurrected to immortality
3. no one will be until Christ returns

Verse 24: "Afterwards the end *comes*, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to Him Who *is* God and Father, when He shall have put an end to all rule and all authority and power. For it is ordained that He reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. *The* last enemy *to be* destroyed *is* death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when it is said that all things have been put in subjection, *it is* clearly evident that *it does* not include Him Who put all things in subjection under Him. But when He has put all things in subjection to Him, then shall the Son Himself also be subject to Him Who put all things in subjection to Him... [Jesus said, 'My Father is greater than I.'] ...so that

God may be all in all” (vs 24-28). This ‘all’ has to do with the power of Christ at the right hand of God.

Let’s go back to the book of Daniel 7 and let’s see another reference referring to Christ, referring to the only other reference in the Old Testament which gives then an allusion to God the Father. Then we will see how Christ Himself even used this speaking of Himself. And we will see that the scribes and the Pharisees understood what Jesus was saying when He said this. Let’s look at this very carefully. And for quoting this and applying it to Himself was one of the main reasons that the priests and the Sadducees said ‘He is blaspheming; He is worthy of death.’ So they understood this Scripture, but they did not understand that it applied to Christ.

Daniel 7:13: “I saw visions in the night and, behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days...” ‘Son of man’ refers to Christ—He referred to Himself as ‘the Son of man’ over and over and over again as we find in the Gospel accounts. And the ‘Ancient of Days’ refers to God the Father. But God the Father was not revealed in any other places than these two: Psa. 110:1 and Dan. 7:13. They didn’t know about God the Father. The only thing they knew about was Yahweh or Elohim or El Shaddai or one of the other names of God that He used in the Old Covenant.

“...and they brought Him near before Him. And dominion and glory was given to Him, and a kingdom...” (vs 13-14). This is when Christ receives the Kingdom. This is fulfilled when? *When Christ returns!* How does He come? *In the clouds!* That’s why it says ‘with the clouds of heaven.’ And when does He receive these kingdoms? *At the last trumpet!* (Rev. 11).

And it’s going to be “...that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, **which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**” (v 14).

Brethren, our calling is absolutely fantastic! A little later, as we get into some other things, I will prove to you that **religion is not of God**. ‘Religion’ is by people to show their goodness. God’s way and God’s calling is a way of life; and **God has given us the greatest hope and the greatest goals and the greatest calling that possibly could be!** We need to keep that in mind.

Let’s go to Luke 22:66 and let’s see what happened when Jesus Christ referred to Himself as the Son of man coming with the clouds of glory. And this absolutely (if you could say anything) set a fire in the elders and chief priests and the scribes— they could not contain themselves.

Luke 22:66: “Now as soon as it was day, the elders of the people assembled together, *with both the chief priests and the scribes*, and they led Him into their Sanhedrin... [an abbreviated form] ...saying, ‘If You are the Christ, tell us.’ And He said to them, ‘If I should tell you, you would not believe *Me* at all; and if I should also ask *you*, you would not answer *Me* at all, nor let *Me* go. Hereafter shall the Son of man be sitting at *the* right hand of the power of God.’.... [Isn’t that something!] ...And they all said, ‘Then You are the Son of God?’ And He said to them, ‘I am that *one*, as you say’” (vs 66-70). In other words, if we could rephrase that just a little bit: ‘You have just said that I am.’

Notice their reaction, v 71: “Then they said, ‘What need do we have of any other witness? For we ourselves have heard from His *own* mouth.’” It records in one of the other places where the high priest ripped his clothing. Many people don’t really understand the powerful thing that was, when the high priest ripped his clothing.

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

✓ Exception: 1-Peter, from *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Peter 3:12
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- 3) 1 Peter 3:13-18
- 4) Psalm 56:1-13
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- 6) Isaiah 50:7-11
- 7) Isaiah 51:1-3
- 8) 1 Peter 3:14
- 9) Matthew 5:10-12, 43-48
- 10) Matthew 22:37-40
- 11) 1 Peter 3:14-15
- 12) John 14:1
- 13) Psalm 26:1-6
- 14) Psalm 27:1-5, 14
- 15) Psalm 28:1-3, 7-9
- 16) Ephesians 3:16
- 17) 1 Peter 1:16-20
- 18) 2 Peter 2:4
- 19) Jude 6
- 20) Revelation 12:4
- 21) Genesis 6:5
- 22) 1 Peter 3:20-21
- 23) 1 Corinthians 15:12-17
- 24) 1 Peter 3:22, 21-22
- 25) Isaiah 48:12
- 26) Revelation 1:5-8
- 27) Isaiah 48:12-13
- 28) Matthew 28:18
- 29) Isaiah 48:13
- 30) Psalm 110:1

- 31) 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
- 32) Daniel 7:13-14
- 33) Luke 22:66-71

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- Hebrews 5
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- Romans 8
- Ephesians 4:17
- John 13:33-34; 15:9-12
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- Revelation 12:9
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