

Don't Puff Up the Ministers

Fred R. Coulter—October 3, 2012

We will have a Bible study this afternoon; I have something in mind. Bob Hunnicutt gave me a couple things here that are very interesting. We have the Psalm which says, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.' Since most people don't know where the modern ten tribes of Israel are, they mistakenly conclude it's because of their initiative and their ability that they do things.

The United States of America is a little different. I think we can safely say that we are probably in the main when the country was started and developed from the tribe of Manasseh. I think that God has added different ones from all of the ten tribes to be within the United States of America.

I believe that in this time (speculation) that Ephraim who is the United Kingdom has gotten so exalted in their royal setup that even the loss of the empire and the loss of the commonwealth has really not brought them to the senses that they would turn to God. Because of that the preaching of the Gospel is found almost exclusively in America. Nowhere else in the world is the Gospel being preached in very much of a manner that it is known publicly. I think that the responsibility has passed from Ephraim to Manasseh. Remember Manasseh was the firstborn.

I have one suggestion for Mitt Romney. What he needs to say is, 'The founders of America were inspired by God because of the promise to Abraham—which he probably doesn't know—to raise up this nation and to separate it from a kingship, because the throne resides with Ephraim.' And yet we had the Word of God and we decided to *invite the Creator* into the formation of our government.

Even though you're not called to salvation and even though you may not be a recipient of the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ***whenever anyone brings God into their agreement, God is going to hold them responsible for what they agreed to do.*** Otherwise, you are taking God's name in vain.

So what Mitt Romney should say is this: The founders of this country established the United States of America to *separate itself from* the European form of government and the European form of taxation. We were founded on the principle of no taxation without representation. That's about the strongest they could get without bringing in the Bible.

Today people think we're all educated. The truth is we're stupid because we're not taught. Those

who put together the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were very well educated. They understood the Catholic system—*oppression!* They understood the kingship—*oppression!* They knew that if the people were educated that they should govern themselves and have representative collective organization so that the whole community and nation would function properly. If you've never read the Federalist Papers, you can download them off the Internet.

Here's what Alexander Fraser Tytler in 1776 wrote. They had the example of Greece, of Rome, of Europe. They didn't want a kingship. They wanted a representative, limited government by the consent of the governed. When you take away the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Bible from the public, dictators can take over.

When you have an educational system that doesn't teach the true history—which I gave was the shortest summary I could—and why the nation was founded. It was founded to honor God's blessing. It was founded so that people could worship God and there would be no state religion. It was to be representative republic, which was more like what you would find in the Old Testament with the tribes and the head of the tribes, the elders of the tribe, and so forth. Here's what he wrote.

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. People must agree with each other as long as they are in agreement with God.

That's a key thing. Otherwise you have no standard. Otherwise you end up doing what ancient Israel did, that 'everyone did what was right in his or her own eyes,' so therefore they needed a king. So God told Samuel, '***They want a king. Don't be upset. They're not rejecting you, they're rejecting Me. Nevertheless, even if you have yourself a king, if you keep My commandments I will still be with you, but if you don't keep My commandments I will not be with you.***' This is what has been taken from this nation.

Granted they weren't called unto salvation. That's not the question. A nation and the physical blessings from Abraham is not depended upon conversion; *it's depended upon the covenant that God made with Abraham.* It's not dependent upon the fact that we as a people are righteous of ourselves.

However, as long as they had the Word of God and taught the Word of God and taught the basic things out of the Bible in a letter of law, carnal

sense, God's blessing would be with the nation. It was not a pure democracy.

It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse.

Which then is the entitlement generation. Our current lawless President is paying off everybody he can to get re-elected, because he has his agenda that is going to destroy this nation because this nation has forgotten God. He becomes the punishment! His system becomes the oppressive enforcement because the nation has rejected God.

It started in the pulpits and it started when the Sunday-keepers had plenty of witnesses—that was back in 1893—that's why we have in the Bible *Rome's Challenge to the Protestants*. There is a reason why this Bible is designed the way it is. It is to fully establish that the Word of God has nothing to do with Sunday-keeping. It has nothing to do with Protestantism. It has nothing to do with the holidays of this world or Rome. When they founded the nation, even though they were Protestants, there were still a lot of Sabbath-keepers among them and their desire was to get away from Rome and get away from the arbitrary oppression of kings. That's why they limited terms.

Stop and think for just a minute. How do you suppose that Judah was after 55 years of King Manasseh. Now we have so many people receiving largesse from the public. What does the Bible say if you refuse to work? *Shall not eat!* 'Oh, that's cruel.' *No!* That means that you need to get out and do something. Yes, other people can help you. Yes, it may need a community thing to do so, but you can't take it from the government.

From that moment on the majority always votes for candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury... [in cahoots with the unions] ...with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by dictatorship.

How many heard of Thomas Sowell [transcriber's correction]. If you listen to Rush Limbaugh you'll hear him once in a while. You know what he said that has to happen if Obama is re-elected? He said it, a lot of people have thought of it. He said, 'We may need a military coup.' I don't think we understand how absolutely disastrous this coming financial tsunami is going to be.

The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years.

The northern tribes of Israel—232 years.

These nations have progressed through the sequence from bondage to spiritual faith,

from spiritual faith to great courage, from courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to apathy, from apathy to dependence, from dependence back into bondage.

The best government is the government of God with His Spirit in you. You need to think about all of these things and what's going to happen. I don't think that the people really understand once a nation gets so bad what kind of reform is really needed. You stop and think about what kind of reform is needed and it should start with the Supreme Court.

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come... [Is that true? *Yes, indeed!*] (Here's why): ...For men will be lovers of self... [not God] ...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... [What follows with that?] ...without natural affection... [That means brutality, homosexuality, animal cruelty.] ...implacable... [That means you can't reason with them at all. These are the ones who should have been executed instead of put in prison for life.] ...slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (vs 1-4).

- Don't we have the pleasures today? *Yes, we do.*
- How many sports things do we have? From every level in society—correct? *Yes, indeed!*
- How much entertainment do we have?

You look at the television that they put out that most people watch; it produces evil.

- Have you noticed how even the commercials are getting more cartoonish instead of real people?
- Why?
- *Because we have a moronic society teethered on cartoons. Babysat by television!*

So, we're going back in bondage.

Here's from Abraham Lincoln. All of these things are Biblical truths expressed in different language:

- You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich

What did Jesus say about the poor? *You always have the poor with you!*

- You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong
because there's no one to help

- You cannot bring prosperity by discouraging thrift
- You cannot lift the wage-earner up by pulling the wage-payer down
- You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred
- You cannot build character and courage by taking away people's initiative and dependence
- You cannot help people permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves

Isn't that true? *Yes, indeed!* That's absolutely true!

Now likewise, we have with the churches of the world and we have the Churches of God. That's why when I talk about tithes and offerings I talk about reciprocity, which is this: ***freely give so that people can freely receive. Those who freely receive should then freely give back of their tithes*** and offerings so that you have a multiplier effect of reaching out to people.

Once you have that, then you have got to have those who manage the funds not get carried away with luxury and expensive things and wasting what people send in. Look at the government today. That's exactly what's happening. You watch the news. Here's a scandal: another \$6-million wasted by this agency; another half-million dollars wasted by this give-away program. There's 'Uncle' Ben Bernanke printing money as fast as he can. Did you realize that all of the debt securities for the deficit spending the Federal Reserve has been buying themselves. That whole system of Federal Reserve is absolutely satanic. It is an independent, international banking corporation whose origin goes back to the bankers in Europe.

I know some of you may hold some stocks and bonds. Do you have the original stock and bond or do you have a statement of ownership and beneficial use? *The latter!* Who holds all the original stocks and bonds? The Depository Trust Company owned by the Federal Reserve.

You probably heard me say this before, but I'll mention it again: When a bank has a debt or mortgage or security, that is counted as an asset. All assets then are counted as reserve to loan money. They have a ratio of lending money of keeping 10% in reserve and loaning out the 90%, then what happens? The 90% comes back into the bank as a deposit and that becomes another asset on which to lend. This is called 'marginal lending.' Some banks have gotten to the point that they are down to less than 5% in reserve.

Taking all the assets of the Federal Reserve Bank, based on that formula, they have the ability to create loans to the tune of \$4.5-quadrillion. All of

that is building up to a big collapse. ***They want it to collapse!***

I hope many of you have been taking care of yourself financially while not neglecting God. Like one man said, 'I heard you say buy some gold and silver. I don't make much money.' I said, 'Can you afford—and at that time I said—\$16 a week?' He said, 'Yes!' I said, 'You do this: You run down to the local coin shop and you buy every week one silver dollar for \$16.' Since I said that some years ago, if he would have done that he would have probably had over 2,000 coins.

Now it's up to \$34 a coin. So on that \$16, like it says thrift here, he would have the equivalent of \$60,000 hard cold, heavy silver cash. Now that's being 'wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.' But some people in the Church will say, 'Oh, they're going to throw their gold and silver out to the moles and the bats.' That's when the tribulation starts. What are you going to do between now and the tribulation if there's financial collapse? Those things you need to consider.

You need to be ready, have some food. I know Dave Wheeler keeps telling us you've got to have water. Isn't it interesting, all of the warnings that everybody's getting, but no one is paying attention to it. Every movie that comes out is a disaster movie and the end of the world. *Hello!* Everything has to do with fighting and warring and famine, death and destruction. *Hello!* And yet, nobody's doing anything. Listen, most people aren't going to do anything and they're going to run down to their supermarket and they're going to find there's a mob. They're going to find unless you have some hard cold cash you aren't even getting in the door. We're looking at some pretty tough times, brethren.

I don't say this to frighten you because there aren't words adequate in my vocabulary to frighten you to the point that you're going to be frightened when the event occurs. You never know what it's going to be falling off a cliff by someone describing it until you get to the cliff and you're falling off! So, don't wait for the experience to hit you before you have some kind of preparation, even if it's a meager amount. Do whatever meager amount you can.

When the state runs out of money, as I've said before and they're already doing it in California, they're releasing prisoners from the penitentiaries; those who have minor infractions. But what do you do when they get up to the hardened criminals that are in there for life and there is no longer any money to feed them? And they're there rioting, banging on the bars? All the guards are scared to death. Do you know what they are going to do? They're going to run into the electrical control room, throw all the switches, and run as fast as they

can to get out of there before the prisoners get them and kill them. Then what are they going to do? They're going to stalk the land looking for food, looking for money. If you don't have it, you're history. That's why we need Psa. 91, protection from God. So don't say I'm trying to scare you. I can't scare you sufficiently in any manner.

I'm just saying, we have got to follow the advice of Proverbs, 'Go to the ant, sluggard, and see that without an overseer they lay up store for the winter,' because all of this is going to come down on us. There are many other things we don't even know about.

How many have heard of the 272 free-trade zones in America that the United States government has set up? Let me go back one step further. How many understand that there are two United States of America? One was the United States of America that was founded. The other is the corporation of the United States of America founded during the depression to borrow money so they could pledge the public lands. You hear 'the good faith and credit of the US'? One of the plans they have are setting up these 272 trade zones. Go online, look these up. It's all online. If you're online, start looking these things up. The Chinese are investing in Toledo so much that they almost own the whole place. They're going to build a city south of Boise, Idaho, for 22,000 total Chinese city.

Being a free-trade zone they can bring anything they want to into that trade zone without passing customs. You don't suppose they might bring in weapons, would you? You don't suppose that if other nations also took advantage of that, that there would be an army within us to take down this whole nation? How many men does it take to shut down a freeway? *If you have 272 of those cities, and they have enough explosives* and they go out and blow up as many freeways as they can, no commerce, no trade, no food, no water, no gasoline, no electricity. Who is going to stop them from marching into the towns and villages, plundering and looting and killing.

You ought to read the book of Lamentations, what God did to Jerusalem where He put His name. That's a very, very difficult book to read. The things that are going to come upon this nation, we'll see it first in England. The Muslims have said, 'You Brits, you get Sharia Law into your system or we're going to take over.'

When God says because we've turned our backs on Him that we have denied Him and the behavior of our nation is lawless, drug filled, sex filled, pleasure filled. Then you have all of these false prophets and ministers and false teachings and everything like that. It's going to be awesome. It's

going to be something. I saw a special. It's interesting they had the special on there. It was talking about disaster survival. The first thing they said, 'You can live about 30 days without food, but you can't live much longer than three or four days without water.' Do we need food and water? *Yes, indeed!*

That's why, brethren, we need to really draw close to God. We really need to take into consideration all the things that God says we need to do. Too many of us in the Church of God have *played church* for so long we don't know what it really is to obey God. We really don't know what it is to be zealous for God. Just like today, we ate, we're full, we're happy, we're thankful. God has provided it, but we cannot depend that this kind of thing will continue without interruption. You need to understand that. That's why we need to pray for one another. We need to love one another.

All the Churches of God need to quit their stupid church wars! Every Church of God should do what it should do before God to honor God. God doesn't want one big amalgamated organization ever again. But all of us everywhere, doing what we need to do, God will help us. God will be with us. But we cannot go back to the stupidity that reigned in the Church of God and brought its destruction and everyone sitting lamenting, 'Oh, I wish it were like it was back then.'

The problem is the ministers lied to you, didn't tell you the truth. I was in California right at the place where all these things were going on at the headquarters. I knew what was going on. Some of you were there and you knew what was going on.

- Did God correct it? *Yes!*
- Did He take care of it? *Yes!*
- Did He eliminate it? *Yes!*

We can't be like the silly Jews, hoping that Nebuchadnezzar would bring back the implements of the temple. That was a false hope. We have to be realistic. If we love God and serve Him, let's be thankful that we can do as God said to the Jews who went to Babylon: You go to Babylon and I'll make you a low vine and I will preserve you and I will watch over you.

Remember it was the tall cedar tree? God cut it down. I think we need to understand with the brethren—this is not a matter of being angry, this is just a matter of being sincerely concerned for them—we love the brethren in the other Churches. It doesn't matter what they say about me. That isn't going to bother me. Everything that matters is how we stand before God.

- Do we love God?
- Do we love each other?

- Do we really believe God?
- Do we have a relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ?

That's what it's all about. The day of coming to Church on the Sabbath and you've done your work, is over. It's like one man said, 'God is with me while I sleep and then when I wake up I'm on my own.' God doesn't have anything to do with him. None of those things work.

I want to shift gears here and I want to talk a little bit about church government.

(go to the next track)

When things like this come along, and they're prophesied that they're going to happen, they will happen. Do you believe every Word of God is true? *and* That every transgression is going to be judged? In order to change this and turn it all around, there would have to be a dedicated week of fasting and prayer of the whole nation, starting with the Supreme Court, the President, the Congress, all the governors, all the state representatives, all the county commissioners, all the mayors of cities, from the greatest to the least, like it was there in the days of Josiah.

That would mean that every drug addict would have to stop. Every drug peddler would have to stop. All fornication and adultery would have to stop. All pornography would have to end. All pornographic websites would have to be closed down. All bordellos would be closed. All homosexual bathhouses would be destroyed. They would have to proclaim the Sabbath as the day of worship. They would have to proclaim the destruction of all the holidays. They would have to upset the whole economic system that they devised around the holidays of this world.

That's why Christ has to do it. The task worldwide is so great that ***only the return of Jesus Christ is going to be sufficient to do it.*** That's why it's imperative that we really draw close to God in

- love
- service
- prayer
- growing and overcoming

Look at the world out there all satiated with everything they ever needed. I thought about that the other day walking into the hotel. The door opens automatically: *you don't have to do anything.* Food: *order it.* Clothing: *buy it.* Lodging: *pay for it.* Everything at your fingertips. Stop and think of this!

- Do we have the whole Word of God? *Yes, we do!*
- Do we have the understanding of the Sabbath and the Holy Days? *Yes, we do!*

- Has God given warning to His Church?
Yes, He has!

We likewise in the Church have been satiated, not from the point of view that we should now become spoiled and entitled and lazy, but so that we would have more zeal. We could grow greater in grace and knowledge and understanding. We can take advantage of everything that God has provided for us to have the means of understanding His Word.

That's how I personally feel about what we are doing. I pray every day, 'God, what do we do? How do we do it?' And that God would open whatever doors He wants.

We can't sit up and all of a sudden contrive a business plan from the world and bring it in and attach it to the Church. If God does not send His seven Spirits out there to call new people, and if we're not out there preaching the Gospel so God can use that because He's determined to use human beings to do it, then likewise, God is going to have punishment against us again.

That is on the basis of the Church. Read Rev. 2 & 3. I was talking to Marlin coming up here and he said, 'You'll never believe all the Churches are keeping the Feast of Tabernacles around here.' He named off five of them. I was talking about the seven churches of the book of Revelation and he said, 'Today you'll probably speak to the seven churches.'

- Do we have some that have lost their first love? *Yes!*
- Do we have some that are persecuted? *Yes!*
- Do we have some who believe in the doctrine of the Nicolaitans? *Yes!*
- Do we have those who like the doctrines of the Protestants and how successful they are and we ought to take and follow their thing? *Yes, we do!*
- Do we have those who are nearly dead? *Yes!*
- Do we have those who are faithful? *Yes!*
- Do we have those who are rich and increased of goods and have need of nothing? *Yes!*

We're all here! But God says to the churches: ***Overcome!***

After God said, 'Go down to the potter's house and watch what he's making on the wheel.' So, he went down there, watched him working. Jeremiah 18:4: "And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you *even* as this potter?' says the LORD...." (vs 4-

6). That shows there has to be a complete restructuring of the way that Israel would go. Just like you take clay and smash it all down, put a little more water on it, put it on the spinning wheel and make a new vessel.

“...‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hands, so *are* you in My hand, O house of Israel’” (v 6). God is in charge of everything, brethren, because in Him we live and move and have our being. Everything that we do is dependent upon God.

Verse 7: “‘If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy it.’” What did we read on the very first Holy Day? *That God rules in the kingdoms of men and He does it through His angels and through Satan and the demons!*

Verse 8: “‘If that nation...’” This is any nation. What do you think is happening in China? Why is China growing the way that it is? Because God is going to raise it up to be the biggest power in the world to punish the world and to raise up the armies of 200-million. They are being raised up as punishment against Israel as well as the Islamists. Christ is going to have to deal with them Himself when He returns.

Verse 8: “‘If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil...’” Isn’t it interesting, the only account of the nation that repented was Nineveh the Assyrians? Not Israel, not God’s people, the Assyrians.

He says, “‘...I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them’” (v 8). That was the argument between God and Jonah. Jonah said, ‘Why should I go there, because if I go there they’ll repent and You won’t do it.’ God said, ‘I sent you to tell them. I prepared this great fish and he’s going to take you up there and I’m going to spit you out on the land and you’re going to go into Nineveh and give the warning.’ I wonder if that sounds a little like Laodiceans? *I’m going to spit you out of My mouth!*

They repented! How? Just like I described earlier, in sackcloth and ashes from the greatest to the least of them and all of the animals as well! So, God turned back the hand of His judgment for 120 years.

Verse 8: “‘If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them. And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant it; If it does evil in My sight, that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good’” (vs 8-10).

Same way with the Churches of God; God is no respecter of persons. Now notice what He said. Sometimes there are things we are to say regardless of how people’s feelings may be hurt.

Verse 11: “Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah, and to the people of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Behold, I am forming evil against you, and devising a plan against you. Return now, each one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.”’... [*repentance*] ...And they said, ‘There is no hope; but we will walk after our own ways... [Like this one woman said, ‘I’m going to vote for Obama because he gave me a cell phone.’] ...and we will each one do according to the stubbornness of his evil heart’” (vs 11-2).

I will leave that part concerning the nation at that point. There are many other things that could be said, but now I want to talk a little bit about church government.

Church Government

What we need to understand, brethren, is this: *God’s plan is so good and so great and so fantastic!* Eternal life is going to be far better than we can imagine. We can’t even have a thought in our head as to how great it’s going to be. When we begin to understand it as we’re praying to God, we end up crying with tears that we can’t continue any further to try and understand it because it’s spiritually understood. It’s just like as I mentioned earlier talking about the little children what they would be like when they grow up.

Paul had some troubles here, so we need to follow through with the context of it. This will help us understand about ourselves. This will help us understand about church government, too.

- What is the greatest government of God?
- The minister?
- The evangelist?
- The apostle?
- The teacher?

or

- Christ in you?

Christ in you!

We are told in Col. 3, ‘Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.’ God does not want ministers ruling over people, because you keep them in kindergarten and they cannot grow in grace and knowledge. That’s why you’ve been given the Holy Spirit. That’s why we’re to grow in grace and in knowledge. That’s the greatest thing that God wants us to do.

People were trying to exalt Paul. So he says here in 1-Corinthians 4:7: “For what makes you

superior to others? And what do you have that you did not receive?....” In other words, what did you do of your own, by yourself, without God at all? *You couldn't do anything without God* because you wouldn't exist.

“...But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?” (v 7). Now we'll come to the other verses that lead up to it. We'll just review some of the problems here—1-Cor. 1. Here's what to understand. Notice how Paul always opens his epistles. People get all excited about studying important things in the Bible, but this verse here is the most important one because everything else that comes from this is a result of this verse.

1-Corinthians 1:3: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.” If you haven't gone through the sermons, *Grace Upon Grace*, by all means go through them. The greatest grace is that ***Christ and the Father live in you!*** That's also a story of the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles—is it not? God doesn't want to dwell in a temple. New Jerusalem isn't going to have a temple, it's going to have God the Father and Jesus Christ. God wants to dwell in us. We're made in His image. He wants us to be made after His spiritual image. That's what God wants.

Remember this: ***God loves each one of you special and in particular, and has called each one of us!*** You compare that to playing church. There's no comparison. God is going to do something great on this earth and He's called us to be an integral part of it, to rescue the human race. ***Unless Christ returns there will be no flesh saved alive!*** That's why

- it's urgent that we grow in grace and knowledge
- it's urgent we do the things spiritually we need to do

Verse 3: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.” Directly, with God's Spirit to each one of us. You will notice he didn't say ‘through me.’

Verse 4: “I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus; And that you have been *spiritually* enriched in Him in everything, in all discourse and knowledge, according as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; So that you do not lack *even one spiritual* gift while you are awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 4-7). Not one spiritual gift.

Don't worry about your troubles and difficulties. Remember this: Every time you have a problem and you find yourself in difficulty,

remember the promise: ***All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose, and you have been!***

Verse 8: “Who will also strengthen you to the end... [notice what God wants]: *...that you may be* unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What God is doing is perfecting what He wants in you. What you go through may be a little different than what someone else goes through. But nevertheless God uses all.

Verse 9: “God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called into *the* fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” As John wrote, ‘Our fellowship is with God the Father and Jesus Christ.’ You know what they had, they had problems. So, he started in on them.

Verse 12: “Now this I say, since everyone among you says, ‘I am of Paul’; or ‘I *am* of Apollos’; or, ‘I *am* of Cephas’; or ‘I *am* of Christ.’.... [Began building up men instead of being built up in Christ] ...Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?” (vs 12-13). Let's see how Paul presented himself.

- 1-Cor. 15—where Paul said ‘I'm the least of all the apostles’
- Eph. 3—where Paul says ‘I am less than the least of all the saints’

So, you understand where Paul is coming from. He understood this. This is why he says;

1-Corinthians 2:1: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom, in proclaiming the testimony of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling *when* I was with you; And my message and my preaching *was* not in persuasive words of human wisdom; rather, *it was* in demonstration of *the* Spirit and of power” (vs 1-4). Why? ***To uplift the brethren!***

Verse 5: “So that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God.” We are to have the Holy Spirit lead us all the time.

I'm also doing a couple of sermons on *How to Overcome the Sin Within*. Let me just say this: ***Every day we are to repent!*** Every day, especially living in this society we have a lot of evil things flashed into our minds. Many of them so unconsciously that we don't even know it. Begin examining some of the advertisements on television. Begin to think about them and analyze what they are doing. Think about the images of semi-porn and evil and adultery and things that are portrayed on

television that flood into our homes. You can't get away from it because if you turn your television on it's there. You can't run there fast enough and turn it off. If you had a gun to shoot it, you'd lose the television so that wouldn't work.

We all have bodily processes—don't we? What do we do every day? We get rid of the waste—don't we? *Yes!* Think of this *spiritually* in a parallel. All the garbage that comes into your mind you need to get rid of every day and you do that through prayer and study and the washing of the water by the Word. The water is the Holy Spirit. The Word is the cleanser to change and reprogram your mind and thoughts that are there.

The thoughts and difficulties that come in your mind because of activities you've done in the past will be flashbacks that will come because they are still in your mind. You need to go to God and ask for the washing of the water by the Word every day. Then as it says, 'Bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ' (2-Cor. 10:5). That's the power of God. That's where our faith needs to be.

Verse 9: "But according as it is written... [Remember he says where we began, 'You do not have anything that you didn't receive.'] ...*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*" That's why it's so fantastic what's going to happen, brethren. We can believe that on faith.

Verse 10: "But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit... [Everything that we have comes from the Spirit of God. His Word is God-breathed.] ...for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God."

Brethren, God has given us the deep things of God to understand through His Holy Days, through His Word, through His Truth, through daily living, and things like that in a fantastic manner. We have all those opportunities before us that weren't in the ages past. How many times has it been in the history of the world that there was a period of time like we have today where the brethren of God can get together in peace, where we can all bring our Bibles, where we can all open them up and study the Bible? Then we can be taught from the Word of God.

Listen, brethren, I'm taught from the Word of God. My job is not to rule over you. That's not what God has sent me to do. Christ needs to do that. But He wants me

- to teach and unless I yield myself to God, *as every minister needs to do*

- study the Word of God, *as every minister needs to do*
- learn to think with the Word of God and apply the Word of God
- think about preaching and teaching the things that are going to encourage and inspire the brethren

We have the greatest opportunity set before us and God has revealed them by His Spirit, even the deep things of God.

Verse 11: "For who among men understands the things of man except by the spirit of man..." Look what men can do and the spirit of man it says, which is in him. Look at the things they can make and what they can build and all of these things. But all of that is carnal and all of that is coming nothing because the greatest thing that God is doing is what God is doing in each one of us here:

- conversion
- faith
- love
- hope

All of that!

"...In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except by the Spirit of God.... [there's nothing we didn't receive] ...Now, we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God; which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Holy Spirit in order to communicate spiritual things by spiritual means" (vs 11-13).

What is that spiritual thing that occurs in our minds when we together read the words of God or you study in private and you read the words of God and it enlightens your mind and you think with the Word of God? Just stop for a minute and consider how few people of the nearly 7.2-billion there are in the world that God is doing that with. That's something!

Verse 14: "But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand *them* because they are spiritually discerned."

Let's come to chapter three because this will help us understand how Paul thought of himself, what we need to do. 1-Corinthians 3:1: "And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual..." I think here we've been talking pretty spiritual to all of us here.

"...but as to those who are carnal—even as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, and not

meat; for you were not yet able *to receive spiritual meat*; and neither are you able now" (vs 1-2).

- There has to be that *willingness!*
- There has to be that *yieldedness* to God!
- There has to be that *love* to God!
- There has to be that *desire!*
- There has to be that *hungering and thirsting* after God, for His Word!

If you find yourself in a Laodicean trap, go back and read and study Psa. 119 on your knees. Then when you're praying, open up the Bible to the Psalms and let those Psalms start you out by reading them. Then let the Holy Spirit of God lead you with your own words and your own prayer to God. That will help you grow in grace and knowledge. That will help you develop the relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ evermore.

Verse 3: "For you are still carnal. For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal?...." We don't need that, brethren. We don't have it here and I'm happy and thankful we don't. How many here have lived through political catastrophes in the Church? *Everybody!* That's where it leads to.

"...*Are you not* walking according to human ways? When someone says, 'I am of Paul,' and another one says, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal? Who then is Paul?...." (vs 3-5)—or any one of us who are elders. Who are we of ourselves?

- if we don't yield to God, if we don't discipline ourselves
- if we don't change and grow and overcome
- if we don't fight the battles we have to fight

—because we all do—

- *then we're not going to be able to be the kind of servants we need to be*

"...And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, each as the Lord gave each one" (v 5). God had chosen to work through men but men have to follow God's instructions on how He works through us. Not because of us but because of Christ. Yes, we have our part, but that doesn't exalt us at all because everything comes from God.

Verse 6: "I planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither is he who plants anything..." (vs 6-7). Paul is saying, 'I am nothing,' instead of having people look to him as some great thing. What did he say concerning all the things in the world? everything that he had in his past life? all of what he had in Judaism? He says, 'I count it but dung that I may win Christ' (Phil 3). And that he needed to strive for the resurrection. He said, 'I haven't attained.'

Verse 8: "Now, he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; *and* you are God's husbandry, *even* God's building" (vs 8-9). Husbandry—Jesus said, 'I am the vine, you are the branches. My Father is the husbandman' (John 15)—right? *Yes!*

Verse 10: "As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me. I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*.... [then, he lays out here our own responsibilities]: ...For no one is able... [that means does not have the power] ...to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ" (vs 10-11).

Here's our responsibility, v 12: "Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones... [all of them are made better and stronger and worth more when they go through fire] (or): ...wood, hay *or* stubble"—which are all burned up with fire.

Verse 13: "The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is... [God is the one Who is doing the judging.] ...If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved..." (vs 13-15). Just like He told those in Sardis. He said, 'If you strengthen the things that remain, I'm not going to blot your name out of the book of Life and you are worthy to walk with Me in white.'

These next couple of verses are so important for us to understand, brethren. It has great meaning for the Feast of Tabernacles; great meaning when we understand this even more in our prayers and study and our personal relationship with God.

He says, v 16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?.... [that's what it needs to be] ...If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are" (vs 16-17).

You are special to God. He's dwelling in you. Christ is dwelling in you. God is leading you. God has called you to His sonship. The *King James* says adoption. We're not adopted, we are begotten—a vast difference. Going to be His very own children. John writes, 'Behold, what glorious love that the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God.' The Greek there is 'tekna' meaning *His own begotten!* Christ was specially

begotten to come in the flesh to be God manifested in the flesh. He is the Only Begotten that way.

The rest of us are all begotten again with the Spirit of God through the power of the resurrection of Christ (1-Pet. 1). 'Which temple we are.' That's something! That is a tremendous thing, brethren!

Verse 18: "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God's sight*. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God for it is written, 'He entraps the wise in their own craftiness'" (vs 18-19). Never worry! God is always in charge! They are going to get trapped in their own devices. Always happens!

Verse 20: "And again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.' Therefore, do not let anyone boast in men; for all things are yours, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours; And you *are* Christ's, and Christ is God's" (vs 20-23).

He does all of this to set the stage for the function of the ministry. All of that is to set the stage. Notice what he has done: *he has exalted the brethren above himself*. Isn't that what Christ said? He said, 'He who is going to be greatest among you, don't be like the Gentiles which lord it over them and have authority over them. The one who is the greatest is going to be the servant of all. I am here serving you.' That's why He washed the disciples' feet.

1-Corinthians 4:1 "So then, let *every* man regard us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." The word *steward* is not used to describe people very often now because the meaning of it has been lost. A steward is *someone who was given someone else's property*—like the parable of pounds and parable of talents—to *go out and use that property of the owner to increase the wealth of the owner*, not to build himself up. Maybe that will ring a few bells. 'Stewards of the mysteries of God.' When the ministry starts building itself up, guess what happens? *They are entrapped in their own craftiness!* Isn't that true? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 2: "Beyond that it is required of stewards that one be found faithful. That's what we have to do. But to me it is an insignificant matter that I am judged by you, or by man's standard; and neither do I judge myself. Now, I am not conscious of anything against myself, yet I am not justified by this; for the One Who is judging me is *the Lord*" (vs 2-4). The one who is judging all of us is the Lord.

Verse 5: "Therefore, do not judge anything before *the time*... [unto salvation] ...*wait* until the Lord comes, Who will bring to light the hidden

things of darkness, and will make manifest the motives of *all* hearts; and then shall each one receive praise from God."

Everything I have read leading up to v 6 is the prelude to come to the heart of the matter. "Now these things, brethren, I have applied to Apollos and myself for your sakes; that in us you may learn not to think *of men* beyond what is written..." What does it say of every man? *Behold, every man is vanity*. That's why Christ manifested in the flesh said, 'I of Myself can do nothing. It's interesting from the Greek—'ek'—*out from His own personal choice*. He came to do the will of the Father—right? He came to preach the words of God.

"...so that no one among you is puffed up on behalf of one of us against the other" (v 6). What did we start out with? *I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ,* and all of these things. They were trying to puff up.

I am glad all of you love me and care for me, but please don't puff me up. I don't need it. That's why my lovely wife always says, 'Fred, just talk.' She said, 'I sat in the auditorium and heard many ministers in their vain displays.' She said, 'Frankly, I got sick and tired of it.' She is my right hand in keeping the puffing away.

Listen, brethren, I do what I do *not* for any recognition of self. The only reason my name is on books and articles is so you know who wrote it. I remember one time there was a group of men who said, 'Oh, we don't want your name on any article. We'll have a committee over here.' I said, 'Isn't that lovely.' How do you write a letter? Dear committee, who are you? You don't know. That's the only reason my name is on it. But I do what I do because when I see the Word of God and see that's what needs to be done, I better be doing it. If I see faults and difficulties I need to overcome, I better be looking at them and repenting—shouldn't I? *Yes, I should!*

If I see the things in here that God wants us to know, I better preach it. If we're all to grow in grace and knowledge, if all of us collectively are not growing in grace and knowledge, how can we learn new and deeper things from the Word of God? God is not there to hold back. God is there to give and to give abundantly. We are to be yielded to God because of what He has done through Christ.

That's why He goes on to say here, v 7, where we started: "For what makes you superior *to others*? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?"

That's why we study. And there's never, never a time when you don't need to study. What is

the Word of God? *It's a Light; it's a lamp to our feet! It's the washing, the cleansing of our minds!* If we're standing in the Light, but turn around and walk the other way we're walking away from the Light. For a while we still have Light alongside us because it's behind us. But we're not coming to it.

or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.

Verse 8: "Now you are satiated. Now you have been enriched. You have reigned without us... [they are already in the Kingdom of God] ...And I would that you did reign, so that we also might reign with you. For I suppose that God has made us apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men" (vs 8-9).

I've said all I need to say here. As we go down the line, brethren, we hope and pray that God will continue to bless us in the things that we do; the things that have been done, we should have done; the things that are yet to be done, God will let us know. We need to be thankful and yielded to God in everything that we do because *God the Father and Jesus Christ are dwelling in us*. Can't have any greater Feast of Tabernacles than that.

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Timothy 3:1-4
- 2) Jeremiah 18:4-12
- 3) 1-Corinthians 4:7
- 4) 1-Corinthians 1:3-9, 12-13
- 5) 1-Corinthians 2:1-5, 9-14
- 6) 1-Corinthians 3:1-23
- 7) 1-Corinthians 4:1-9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 91
- Revelation 2, 3
- Colossians 3
- 1-Corinthians 15
- Ephesians 3
- 2-Corinthians 10:5
- Psalm 119
- Philippians 3
- John 15
- 1-Peter 1

Also referenced:

- Appendix N, *Rome's Challenge to the Protestants* (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, a Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter)
- Sermon Series: *Grace Upon Grace*
- Sermon: *How to Overcome the Sin Within*

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