

Seven Proofs of God V Fulfilled Prophecy/Answered Prayer

Fred R. Coulter—October 27, 2012

We've covered the seven proofs of God. Let's just review them again.

1. **Creator**
2. **Design**
3. **Life**
4. **Sustainer**
5. **Law**

The next one is:

6. **Fulfilled Prophecy**

I'm going to add to it: *fulfilling current prophecy*, because we live in unusual times today. We saw in the book of Daniel; just review it. You have:

- Babylon
- Greece
- Persia
- Rome

Rome continues all the way down to the end.

Also, let's look at some prophecies at the end-time. Is it happening? We also have other sermons on the prophecies of Christ, all of those being fulfilled. In the Bible we have 28 prophecies fulfilled in one day, that is the crucifixion day.

Here in Matthew 24 we find some very interesting things that present themselves as an ongoing thing, but also special and particular things that will happen. This talks about the times in which we are living, but it also is a prophecy that is building to be fulfilled and being fulfilled that was not fulfilled in the past. We know that when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple was destroyed in 70_{A.D.} there were many of things in the first part of Matt. 24 that Jesus talked about that happened.

Matthew 24:21: "For then shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from *the* beginning of *the* world until this time, nor ever shall be *again*.... [How great is that tribulation going to be?] ...And if those days were not limited, there would no flesh be saved..." (vs 21-22).

At what point in history did we come to the means, the possibility, of destroying all flesh? Hadn't happened from the time of Christ right up to that time. There are wars, rumors of wars, nation against nation, false prophets, but at what point were we in history, and it was in all of our lifetimes here, that now the means was in the hands of men that had the potential to destroy all life? *The atomic bomb*,

that's correct! Never before! They've had things that killed a lot of people. They had all the incendiary bombs that they dropped on Germany and Japan. But those would not reach the point of causing all flesh to be exterminated.

Has that increased from the dropping of the first atomic bomb? *Yes, indeed!* Now we have bigger atomic bombs. We have hydrogen bombs. We also have bombs that are electromagnetic bombs. We also have things that can destroy food, destroy crops, to say nothing of our own self-destruction with the genetically modified foods. Now they're beginning to find out that there are sicknesses that we are suffering from that have been caused by the genetically modified foods.

We're reaching those days. Let's go back and look at some of them leading up to it, v 3: "And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him alone, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming, and of the completion of the age?'" They already knew a lot of things. They already understood.

Verse 4: "Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, 'Be on guard, so that no one deceives you.'" Very key important thing. This is why we are told to prove all things because many things that sound blessedly true, because they appeal to what we want, may not be blessedly true.

Verse 5: "For many shall come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ'; and they **shall deceive many**." How many versions of Christianity do we have today? *Can't count them!* They all think they're right. They all claim they're following Christ. People would even be willing to die for it.

"...shall deceive many." The many are the majority. Has that been fulfilled? Is Jesus Christ saving the world today? *If He is, He's doing a very poor job of it!* Is what are known as Christian churches preaching messages which are going to save the world? *No!* Here's another prophecy that we will see is being fulfilled.

Luke 12:32: "Do not be afraid, **little flock**..." Would you say orthodox Christianity is a little flock? Would you say that Protestantism is a little flock? Or some of the others that profess Christianity? *No!* What is a little flock?

“...for your Father delights in giving you the kingdom.” Is the Kingdom here? *No!* Is it coming? *Yes!*

Now back to Matt. 24 and we will see some of the events leading up to it. Let’s understand that today we live in a very unique time and we are in a very unique position that other generations and other people were never able to have the fulfilling of these things happen right in front of their eyes on a worldwide basis. When we get to the end-time *everything is worldwide*, global, international, all nations, all kindreds, all peoples, all tongues. Involves the whole world. Do we have such a society today? *Yes, we do!*

They would deceive *the many*. This happened leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem, but it’s happened in cycles ever since then. Also, I want you to think of it this way. Think of it as if you were watching your evening news. We can have something happen somewhere any place on earth and we know about it immediately.

Matthew 24:6: “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.... [We’re right in the middle of it—aren’t we?] ...See *that* you do not let *these things* disturb you. For it is necessary *that* all *these things* take place, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in *different places*” (vs 6-7). All of those are taking place right now. They have taken place in the past, but now *everyone in the world* can have the information and knowledge when these things take place.

They had a volcano go off in Indonesia and earthquakes there. They’re still having earthquakes in Japan. Look what happened when that took place. The whole world knew of it instantly. We have famines; we have pestilence.

Verse 8: “Now, all these *things are* the beginning of sorrows.” We would have to say that that statement ‘the beginning of sorrows’ can apply in different times coming down to the end. But it’s going to apply particularly at the end. Let’s see what will happen here:

Verse 9: “Then shall they deliver you up to affliction... [Is all Christianity being hated? *Yes!* Whether the false kind or the true kind.] ...and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.” That’s happened down through history. You read the history of the so-called Christian church. They persecuted and martyred heretics.

Verse 10: “And then shall many be led into sin...” That’s happened from that time until this. Are

more and more people being led into sin? *Yes, indeed!* A greater number through greater means. Now we have all the high-tech things. We have all the media things. We have education. We have government gone amuck, schools gone amuck, churches gone amuck, rejection of God.

“...and shall betray one another...” That’s happened over and over again. But here in America there’s a very unusual thing now. You can call a government hotline with a ‘hot tip.’ You can accuse someone of something and if they’re arrested, they don’t have to know who you are.

Verse 11: “And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.... [Turn on your television. Look in your yellow pages. How many churches are there?] ...And because lawlessness shall be multiplied...” (vs 11-12). Lawlessness is casting aside the Law of God. Are people doing that today? Lawlessness is also creating laws by government, which are *lawless against God*. How about the last part of this verse?

“...the love of many shall grow cold” (v 12). How’s our society? Loving? *No!* Here in this little town of Hollister because of a recent murder of a girl and a woman. Those of us who are older, when we grew up we could walk to school; no problem. We could go down to the park and play with the kids; no problem. Today, don’t have that. Today, right here on this street, right in front of where we meet, they’re going to the high school. Parents go down and pick up their kids. Same way with the grade-school. They don’t dare let the little kids walk home. Who knows who is going to kidnap a child, be molested or killed. ***Lawlessness!***

“...the love of many shall grow cold.... [Who can you trust? Who can you believe?] ...But the one who endures to *the end*, that one shall be saved” (vs 12-13). How do you endure to the end? That’s worth another whole sermon in itself, but you do it by:

- loving God
- keeping His commandments
- being wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove

Don’t throw yourself in the midst of trouble. Like it says in the Proverbs: ‘Don’t interfere in a dog fight because you’re going to get bit.’ We have to endure what? Today, what are the things we have to endure?

- all the oppression from government
- all the lies from the religious institutions
- all of the wrong teachings in the schools
- all of the rebellious children who have never taught to obey their fathers and mothers and they don’t know what is decent

It says back in Isa. 3 that *children will be your oppressors!* We have to endure that. We have to be on guard on every one of these things.

- Who is telling the truth?
- What is the truth?
- Why is Truth in the Bible the Truth?

And something that someone devises over here, though it sounds like the truth, is not the truth, so therefore we don't do that—all of these things.

We have all of these challenges now heaped upon us and every one of them has been prophesied and they are happening. Let's see then what has to take place. People want to know: When is the end? Jesus said, 'You don't know the day or the hour.'

Verse 14: "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed **in all the world** for a witness to all nations, **in all the world...**" Are there the means to do it today that were not available to the apostles, that were not available until the advent of the printing press? then the radio? then television? and now all the media devices?

You can sit right here in this room because almost everyone here has some type of hand-held media device; I hate to call it a phone because it's more than that. Just to show you how quickly it can be done: someone can send you a text message and you may have your phone turned off, but if you have it in your pocket it will make a sound. You take it out, 'Come home instantly. Your house is on fire!'—whatever the message. Didn't have that ability before.

Before the advent of telephones and all of the things that we have now, all of the media devices and communication media, whoever thought that you'd be able to sit down to a phone hooked up to your computer that's got a little teeny camera right up at the top of it and you sit there and you go through a certain program and you can contact grandma 2,000 miles away. All the grandkids can be right here, 'Hi, Grandma,'—real time. So, when these things come about, we're looking at *real-time fulfillment*.

"...proclaimed in all the world for a witness to all nations... [We can do that. I'm still waiting for my first communication from the South Pole. Verse 15 has not yet happened; this was not fulfilled when the temple was destroyed in 70_{A.D.}]: ...Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place..." [When the temple was destroyed in 70_{A.D.} there was no abomination of desolation. This is a future one. We can look to it.] (This is why you have the parenthetical statement here): "**...(the one who reads, let him understand)**" (vs 14-15).

If you have a red-letter Bible, if that's in red letters Jesus did not speak those words. Those were added there by the Apostle John because in Rev. 11 he had a vision of the temple and told to measure it. He got that vision in Revelation about 95_{A.D.} That was 25 years after the destruction of the temple. The Romans made sure that no one was going to rebuild the temple. *No one!*

They tried to do it 135_{A.D.} with the Bar Kokhba Revolution. Rabbi Akiva and Bar Kokhba, was proclaimed the messiah. The Romans came in and absolutely crushed them. You've seen the movie *Masada*? That's that desert fortress high on a pinnacle cliff south and east of Jerusalem. The last of the rebellious Jews got up there and they withstood the Roman army for two full years. They had food; they had water; they had everything there.

The Roman general was so determined to get those Jews. He took all the Jews that he had captive and they had to build a rampart going up, way up the side of that cliff. They finally got up there and they finally got in there. All the Jews deprived them of the slaughter because they committed suicide. Through all of that no abomination of desolation. The temple area has been overrun by the Muslims and Gentiles ever since. The Jews came back in 1948.

Let's bring in another prophecy here, Zech. 12. What is it that the Jews have believed after rejecting Jesus for 2,000 years? They have believed what? *That when the Jews control Jerusalem and build the temple then Messiah will come!* In a sense that is true, but it's not His first coming, it's His second coming.

Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the Word of the LORD for Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him." Showing that God is Creator, Designer, Sustainer, and all the things that we've talked about here earlier.

Verse 2: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling... [Is this true today? Remember, this was written about 2400 years or more ago.] ...unto all the people all around, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people..." (vs 2-3).

Stop and think about what's happening there around Jerusalem. They haven't yet built the temple—have they? What's involved? *We've got the Turkish army, the Syrian army, Jordanian army, Hezbollah, Hamas—everyone around there.* Remember, right there at Jerusalem the widest point from the Mediterranean Sea to the eastern boundary

of what they call Israel is 12 miles! Like driving from Hollister to Gilroy. That's it! You've crossed the country. What has happened to fulfill this?

God is going to protect them, and that's why I say when Ahmadinejad says, 'We're going to destroy the Jews,' someone needs to send him the book of Esther to remind him what happened to the Persians, their ancestors, when they tried to kill all the Jews.

"...All who burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces... [Have we had successful peace negotiations? Have we had successive wars? bombings? Have the Jews armed themselves to the teeth? *Absolutely!*] ...though all the nations of the earth be gathered together against it" (v 3)

Let's see what is going to happen. One of the things we were told by Jesus to watch for, not only the things that we have just talked about. He says this has happened in the past when the Romans conquered Jerusalem, but Jesus is again talking about the end-times. This is a parallel chapter to Matt. 24.

Luke 21:20: "But when you see Jerusalem being... [present tense passive in the Greek] ...being surrounded by armies... [How close do they have to come? Are there armies nearby? Hateful enemies nearby? *Yes, indeed!*] ...then know that her desolation has drawn near."

What have they said? *If Jerusalem is attacked it will start WWII*—right? All the prophecies show it's going to happen, but it's going to work out differently than most people have thought. So, there are some of the prophecies that are taking place right today.

It's going to get to a point that those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, v 21: "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those within her go out, and let not those in the countries come into her; for these are *the* days of vengeance, so that all things that have been written may be accomplished" (vs 21-22). Everything that God has said is going to take place and will happen.

It's not going to be very nice times. Let's see what it was prophesied. As we read Zech. 12 again, I want you to recall the 1967 war—the Yom Kippur War. Everyone thought because the Arabs had their armies, they all gathered around. Egypt came in with their tanks and everything like that. They expected the Jews to be defeated. But you never attack God's people on His Holy Day. Let's read what happened to them:

Zechariah 12:4: "'In that day,' says the LORD, 'I will strike every horse with terror, and his rider with madness. And I will open My eyes upon

the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the people with blindness.'" Since they were riding in tanks and trucks and things like this, it happened to the vehicles. Remember how few of the planes and munitions and things that the Jews had, and yet, they destroyed the whole Egyptian army in the Sinai.

Verse 5: "And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The people of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.' In that day I will make the governors of Judah... [that is all the leaders] ...like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire among the sheaves" (vs 5-6).

- What happened when they went into Lebanon?
- What happened when they went into Egypt?
- *Took the Sinai!*

"...And they shall devour all the people all around, on the right hand and on the left hand. And Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her place, even in Jerusalem" (v 6). Then this leads up to the return of Christ.

We can look and say those things have happened. These are contemporary prophecies that we have seen. We can talk about ancient prophecies, true, but these are quite something when you understand that. Maybe this will help you understand the news a little more when you watch what is happening.

(go to the next track)

Let me suggest that you read in the book, *The Day Jesus the Christ Died*, or *The Christian Passover* book (pgs 363-371), 28 prophecies fulfilled in one day all concerning the events of the crucifixion, the scourging, and death of Christ. Everything that happened, right on down to the vinegar, right on down to casting lots, right on down to the very words He would say. All fulfilled.

Fulfilled prophecy and prophecy being fulfilled proves the existence of God! Because no one else has said any of those things and no one else has the power to make them happen. In the book of Isaiah God prophesied and named the Persian emperor Cyrus by name that he would come and release the captives of the Jews from Babylon. The prophecy was given that the gates would open by themselves.

The way Babylon was constructed, it was constructed on both sides of the River Euphrates. Coming down to the River Euphrates they put steps, they had walls going down into the water. They had a wall all around the city. In the north wall they had iron bars coming down to keep anyone from coming into the city through the river.

The prophecy was that Cyrus would just walk in. How was that going to be done? History shows, what did Cyrus do? He looked at the River Euphrates and says, 'I've got an army of 100,000 men here; get out your shovels, bring in your horses and your donkeys.' He built a channel to divert the River Euphrates away from Babylon. When they opened up the diversion to take the water away, he put his troops right in the riverbed and they walked right under the iron bars. The big brass doors that were down at the River Euphrates were all unlocked. He walked in and took Babylon without throwing a spear. That's before 'without firing a shot.'

The Bible is so full of proof that God's Word is true, His prophecies are true. Everything that He has said will come to pass.

7. Answered Prayer

What kind of prayer does God want? We have a small booklet on the *Eight Keys to Answered Prayer*. What does God want? Praying to God is not by reciting a special memorized thing that you do. Rather Jesus gave an outline on how to pray.

Matthew 6:5: "And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the street, in order *that* they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret..." (vs 5-6).

Your prayers are between you and God directly. You don't have to go through a priest. You don't have to go through a minister. You don't have to go through an idol because prayers given before idols God does not hear.

"...shall reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*; for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard" (vs 6-7).

These are rote prayers like with the Catholics they have you do 'hail Marys' and 'our fathers,' and I don't know what else they have you do, but those are the two main ones that they have you do. If you've sinned a sin, the priest will say your sins are forgiven but you go do 200 'hail Marys.' How do you count 200?

It's not the number of words that are important. It is your words and your heart and your mind in talking to God directly. The Bible also shows you should pray on your knees. The Bible also shows that you can pray while you are in bed. The Bible also shows that you can pray whenever

something comes up during the course of the day. You can pray silently to God.

Here is the outline prayer that He told us to follow, v 8: "Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.... [But He wants you to ask Him. He wants to hear from you.] ...Therefore, you are to pray after this manner..." (vs 8-9). This is an outline.

If you take this outline prayer and you go through the Psalms, you will see that most of the Psalms follow this kind of an outline. We also have 21 sermons on the *Keys to Answered Prayer* covering all of them, every circumstance. Here's how we are to pray:

- Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (v 9)

We're looking to God.

- Your kingdom come (v 10)

That's important. We're looking for the return of Christ, but also if we are submitting to God we are submitting to His rule and control in our lives. It's not the control of the Church. It's not the control of the priesthood. It's not the control of the ministers or elders. *It is with the Spirit of God, God wants to rule in your life!* So, you acknowledge God.

- Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven (v 10)

That means *Your will be done in my life*. Remember not every prayer is a *Yes!* Some prayers you ask are *No!* Some prayers must be prayed over and over again when there is still a need until there's an answer.

- Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven (v 10)

No rebellion going on in heaven!

- Give us this day our daily bread (v 11)

Which shows this is a daily prayer.

- And forgive us our debts... [or our sins] ...as we also forgive our debtors (v 12)

We're to confess our sins to God and ask God's forgiveness through the sacrifice of Christ.

- And lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one (v 13)

Because no man can get out of the clutches of Satan the devil without God's help—no man or woman.

- For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever (v 13)

Let's look at some other aspects of prayer. Will God hear a prayer of someone who is a sinner but caught in trouble and will say, 'God, help me'? *If they are really sincere, yes, God will!* He even answers atheists' prayers who are in the pitch battle

and bullets flying. ‘Oh, God, spare me.’ But they forgot about it afterwards.

Here’s a condition, too, v 14: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.... [because you cannot come to God and pray for His blessing with hatred in your heart. It won’t work.] ...But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 14-15).

Let’s look at some conditions for answered prayer. Let’s go to the Gospel of John, chapter fourteen.

- God is there *to help us*
- God is there *to intervene*
- God is there *to fight our battles for us*

But God is not a hip-pocket or a purse-pocket rabbit foot or like a cross or crucifix in a superstitious way. Shouldn’t have any anyway. Let’s see what Jesus said here. This becomes important to understand because what we have just covered there in Matt. 6 is the outline. What is the structure of prayer?

- pray to God
- let Him know your needs
- ask forgiveness of your sins
- forgive others
- praise God again

That can vary depending upon the circumstances. Let’s read this carefully:

John 14:14: “**If**... [there’s that big two-letter word] ...you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.” What was one of the qualifying things that we read in Matt. 6? *According to Your will!* This is anything ‘according to Your will.’

There’s another *if* right after that. There’s something you need to be doing, v 15: “**If** you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” So, you can’t be living in active sin.

A lot of people say they love God, but they’re not willing to believe God and obey God. ‘Oh, Lord, I love you. Everybody come to church on Sunday.’ God says, ‘I never sanctified that day.’ *Oh, but we’re good people.* ‘I may have mercy on you in some instances, but are you keeping My commandments?’ *No!*

This becomes very important to see the relationship, John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit; but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit” (vs 1-2). *God is in charge!* God is weighing the hearts of men and women:

- their attitude

- their love
- how are they doing before God
- how are they treating their fellowman
- how are they treating the brethren
- how are you living your life

Verse 3: “You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you.... [Listen to this because this becomes very important]: ...Dwell in Me and I in you....” (vs 3-4). This is accomplished through repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and then Christ *in* you and you *in* Him through God the Father.

“...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine...” (v 4). You can’t go off and do your own thing. You can’t go off and ignore God. You can’t go off and throw away His commandments and live a wild life, etc. You’ve got to remain in the vine, and that means with Christ.

Let’s understand how men can turn and twist this a little bit. The Church is the Body of Christ, meaning all the members everywhere who have the Spirit of God, regardless of where they are in the world, regardless of the organization that they belong to as a Church of God. If you have the Spirit of God you belong to God.

When we come together as a group we are the Church. The Church cannot come along and say, ‘If you leave *this* church, you’re leaving Christ.’ Can’t do it! You have to stay with Christ because He’s the vine.

“...but only if it remains in the vine, neither can you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me” (v 4). What are we to develop? What is it *spiritually* we are to develop? *The mind of Christ!* We are to bear fruit by obeying God, doing the things He wants us to, loving God, loving our neighbors, loving the brethren, even loving our enemies. Far easier to turn them into God’s hands and let Him fight the battle for you—right? Does He have better weapons than you? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 5: “I am the vine, *and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...”

- you can change
- you can grow
- you can overcome
- you can do the things that God wants

Together then we love God and keep His commandments and give tithes and offerings. We use that money to reach out to new people, to produce things so that they can learn of God, so that God can deal with them and call them as well.

“...because apart from Me you can do nothing...” (v 5). You cannot go out and say, ‘I’m going to do the will of God *my way*.’ You have to do the will of God God’s way.

Verse 6: “If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned.” Notice this promise. You have a prayer that needs to be answered? You have a prayer that you have beseeched God for, for a long time because there hasn’t been an answer from God? *You keep praying!* That’s not a vain repetition. As long as there is a need, you keep praying about it because it is not a vain repetition as long as there is a need.

Verse 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you...” Think about that. Keeping His commandments, following what God says, thinking with the Word of God, thinking with the Spirit of God.

“...you shall ask whatever you desire... [What is the condition? *According to the will of God!*] ...and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (vs 7-8). Here are the keys that help tie all of it together.

This is the separating point between the true Christians and the professing Christians, v 9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; **live in My love**.... [The Ten Commandments are the love of God. Loving each other as Christ has loved us.] (Notice what He follows it up with): “**If** you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love” (vs 9-10). When we have this kind of attitude of prayer, when we come before God, He will then hear us.

Luke 18 shows us how we are to be persistent in prayers that need to be answered and also the attitude that we need. Luke 18:1: “And He also spoke a parable to them to show that it is necessary to pray always, and not to give up, saying, ‘There was in a certain city a certain judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city; and she kept coming to him, saying, “Avenge me of my adversary.” Now, for a time he would not; but afterwards he said within himself, “Although I do not fear God and do not respect man, yet, because this widow is causing me trouble, I will avenge her... [the principle of the squeaky wheel] ...lest she wear me out by *her* continual coming.”’ Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says’” (vs 1-6).

Listen! There’s a principle to be learned here. But since he did this, think about what God will do, v 7: “And shall not God execute vengeance

for His elect, who cry out to Him day and night... [continual prayer] ...and patiently watch over them? I tell you that He will execute vengeance for them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find the *true* faith on the earth?” (vs 7-8).

Prayer is a fundamental thing, but there are many aspects to it. So, we have many things that tell us about prayer so we will know how to pray. Know this, if you get on your knees and you start praying and you say, ‘God won’t answer me,’ that’s true; He won’t answer you. You are to believe. If you don’t believe, there’s a parable that shows us what we are to do. We go to God and say, ‘God, help me with my unbelief. Help me to believe.’ God will help you with that.

Here’s an attitude: It’s not *who* you are, it’s *what your attitude toward God is*, v 9: “And to some who trusted in themselves... [Notice where the trust was lying, not with God but with themselves.] ...that they were righteous, and despised others...” We have to hate the evil deeds, but don’t despise the person. Who knows who will repent? Who knows? Look at the most wicked king in Jerusalem—King Manasseh—55 years; *he repented!*

“...He also spoke this parable: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one was a Pharisee... [very righteous] ...and the other a tax collector... [the most despised of all] ...The Pharisee stood and prayed... [notice this phrase] ...with himself... [didn’t go very high] ...in this manner: “God, I thank You that I am not like other men...”’” (vs 9-11).

What does it say about those who compare themselves among themselves? *They’re not wise!* “...extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week... [goody, goody for me] ...and I give a tithe of everything that I gain.’.... [Wonderful, God said to.] ...And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner’” (vs 11-13). He was repenting to God. Obviously, you come back here to v 11:

- we’re not to be extortioners
- we’re not to be unrighteous
- we’re not to be adulterers

If we do what God commands us to do, whose work is it that you are doing? Yours? or God’s? *God’s!* If He says keep the Sabbath and you keep the Sabbath, you can’t go to God and say, ‘Oh, God, I kept the Sabbath my whole life; therefore, you have to give me eternal life.’ But you hated and despised other people. You were arrogant and self-righteous. You may have kept it, but ‘I want it kept

from the heart.' Our heart relationship with God is the key to prayer.

Verse 14: "I tell you, this man... [the tax collector] ...went down to his house justified, rather than the other... [the Pharisee] ...For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted."

Now let's look at some things concerning prayer. We'll spend some time in the Psalms and in some of the Proverbs.

Psalms 62:5: "My soul, wait in silence for God alone... [nothing else; no saints in heaven, alone] ...for from Him comes my hope. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him... [that's where all prayers are to go] ...God is a refuge for us" (vs 5-8). Then it gives a little reminder.

Let's look at the political scene, v 9, no comment, just read a verse, watch your news, see it fulfilled: "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."

Because what God is doing with *His* people, that is those who are in covenant with God, God is preparing us for eternal life. We've got this little grandchild back here taking a nap. She doesn't know anything except she's with her wonderful grandmother—loves to be with her—and Grandma loves her. She doesn't know anything else. She doesn't know where to go, what to do, what is up, what is done, what is right, what is wrong, unless she's told don't do this, don't do that, don't do the other thing.

Likewise with our relationship with God. What we find in the Bible here are the things that God wants His children to do because He has the greatest thing to give us—*eternal life, to be like Jesus Christ*. To see Him as He is, to be like He is.

For people who don't know the Bible, many of them would be in the same position as this little granddaughter. If I said to her, 'Little girl, you're going to grow up and you're going to have children.' If she had a little dolly, that's what she would think of. 'And you're going to grow up to be a very beautiful woman.' That has good and bad with it. She wouldn't understand a thing. 'You're going to get educated and you're going to learn a lot of things.' Wouldn't understand it. Let's compare that kind of thing to how God is dealing with us. When we first start out with God we're much like that little baby. But we're to grow in grace and knowledge.

God gives us knowledge and understanding *in preparation for eternal life*. We get so wrapped up in the things we're doing, living today, and yesterday and tomorrow, we can't even think ahead really for a whole year. We might have a calendar and write some things down, but God is going to give us *eternal life*.

Let's look at some other things concerning prayer. Here's how to pray: You feel miserable, you feel down, have you sinned? Have you done something wrong? Do you have a guilty conscience? Do you need forgiveness? Go to God, pray a prayer like this:

Psalms 54:1: "Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your might.... [Do you doubt if God is going to hear you?] (Just do like this): ...Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth" (vs 1-2). You're in trouble? Read the Psalms. You think you have trouble in your life? You read the Psalms what David went through, what Asaph went through, what the Ezrahite went through.

Verse 3: "For strangers have risen against me, and violent men seek after my soul; they have not set God before them. Selah.... [Here's a promise you can claim]: ...Behold, God is my helper; the LORD is with those who uphold my soul. He shall reward evil to my enemies. Destroy them in your faithfulness" (vs 3-5). That's one way to pray for your enemy.

1. God, keep them far from me!
2. God, lead them to repentance!
3. God, keep them out of my way!

If they don't do any of those things, if that doesn't happen then you say: God, let them be caught in their own devices and You destroy them. You don't have to kill them to destroy them.' Things can go wrong in their lives. You leave it all in God's name.

Verse 7: "For He has delivered me out of all trouble, and my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies."

Let's look at some Proverbs. If you pray this way—you're going to have to learn how to pray; you're going to have to apply these things—and if you do you will begin to see answers to your prayers. That doesn't mean you're not going to have trouble. That's doesn't mean you're not going to have obstacles to overcome.

Proverbs 15:8: "The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright *is* His delight." Think about that. Have you ever thought that God delights in hearing you pray to Him?

- You have God's Spirit
- You have God's way
- You have God's Word
- You're trusting in Him

"...the prayer of the upright is His delight."

Verse 29: "The LORD *is* far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous." The righteous are those who love God and keep His commandments, as we have covered.

Proverbs 28:9: "He who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." But God delights to hear the prayer of the righteous.

All of these—as we go through these—are *promises that you can claim*. If you have a hard time believing the promises of God, remember this. You can start out, 'Oh, God, I'm having a hard time believing this, so help me in my unbelief, but you are a God Who cannot lie. You are a God Who will hear and answer, so I'm pouring my heart out to you. Help me, intervene for me.' There was the occasion where they were coming to the temple and Jesus cursed the fig tree. Next morning they came back and it was all dried up. All the disciples were amazed at it.

Mark 11:20: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith *from* God'" (vs 20-22). Part of the fruit of the Spirit of God is *faith; love, joy, faith, mercy, kindness*, etc. 'Have faith from God.' If you're lacking faith, you ask for it. 'God, grant me faith.'

Then He gives this as the extreme example, v 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say."

Again, according to the will of God. If it's necessary to move a mountain, God will do it. What is harder to move than move a mountain? What is the hardest thing of all? ***The mind! To convert the mind is greater than moving a mountain!*** A mountain is an inanimate thing that God has created. With His Spirit in your mind and you can change and you can grow and you can overcome, that is greater than moving a mountain. If this happened willy-nilly, you'd go along and say, 'Everybody come over to the house, we're going to have a mountain-moving party. We'll have a feast ahead of time. We'll kill the fated calf. Who is your enemy?

Oh, he is, we'll drop it right on his house.' God doesn't want you to use it that way.

Ephesians—let's see how God will answer our prayers. This extends clear into eternal life. This is quite a section in the Scripture here. It also tells us about the greater plan of God. Not just 'Oh, Lord, I'm starving.' You've probably heard this joke: This widow woman was praying and the window was open. She had no food, no money. She said, 'Oh, Lord, I need some bread.' A couple of smart-aleck brats heard her and they went to buy some bread, and they threw it in the window while she was praying. She said, 'Thank you, Lord.' The boys laughed and said, 'God didn't do that, we did.' She said, 'Well, ***God just used you*** to bring me some bread.'

On an expansive note, this will be how we can say, we start out with a grain of prayer or a seed of prayer. That grows into understanding, same way in growing in grace and knowledge. Paul is looking to the great expanse of the fulfillment of God's plan and here he was in prison not able to preach; in chains. He wrote this and think how expansive this is.

Ephesians 3:11: "According to *His* eternal purpose..." He's looking at the whole plan of God. What is God going to do? How is God going to do it?

The other night I was reading in the book of Ezekiel. It was talking about Israel and Judah and the different nations and you know God made absolutely no difference between those who were right there and the Jews who went into captivity and then how He was going to change them and how He was going to bring them every good thing. But that prophecy went from that point all the way down through time to the return of Jesus Christ through the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment at the end. I thought how expansive is the Word of God. Amazing!

"...*His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, In Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith. So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working* for your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 11-14). He was praying, even in chains.

Verse 15: "Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.... [Think of the expansiveness that Paul was thinking of while he was in whatever cell or dungeon he was in.] ...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 comes from God] ...That

Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (vs 15-17). As we read there in John 15. You dwell in Him and He dwells in you and we dwell in the Father.

Verse 18: “*And* that being rooted and grounded in love... [None of what we are talking about here can be accomplished without the love of God.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [this is what God wants] ...what is the breadth and length and depth and height.”

As we are able to look at some of these great pictures of the universe today, which in ages past they couldn't do. If they were awake at night, no smog around, they could go out and look at the stars but think at what we are able to see. Think of what we're able to grasp. ***God has made it for His family!*** What is that going to be like? That's why we've got to come to the resurrection to be changed. Our minds can't handle it. Our bodies can't handle it. We need a spirit mind; we need a spirit body. Where time is nothing. We'll live on the level of eternity. That's God plan.

Verse 19: “And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” That is truly mind-boggling. John wrote that when Christ returns we will see Him as He is because *we will be like Him* and all the glory and power that He is.

The last two verses because this will help us with our prayers. After hearing several sermons is not enough, so if you need the series we have on *Keys to Answered Prayer*, just let Jim know, he'll send it to you.

Verse 20: “Now, to Him Who is able to do... [Notice what God wants to do. You think you want to do good things to your children? To your grandchildren? Think on this!] ...exceeding abundantly... [You can't get any greater superlatives than that.] ...**above all that we ask or think...**” When we read these words and we get inspired and this uplifts us, that's just kind of a little quick glimpse into the future.

“...above all that we ask or think...” Have you ever just thought something, and said, ‘Oh, God, this would be nice,’ and just go on your way, forget about it, forget you even said about it. Lo and behold, somewhere down the road God answered that thought. You didn't even spend time in praying. In passing you said, ‘Oh, God, that would really be nice.’ I've had that happen many times.

“...according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 20-21).

You take these seven proofs of God and if you run into an atheist you can give him our booklet, *God or No God?*, and you can tell him, ‘I agree with you 90%. The churches really do not represent God and what you have seen expressed by the churches called Christian is not what God wants.’

Then you can hand him that booklet and you can say, ‘Next time you want to convince yourself of the things that are right, you don't believe in God, then when you get up in the morning and you look in the mirror you say to yourself, I came from nothing. Maybe that will help you understand a little bit more about God because God is greater than any of those churches. God's plan is more fantastic than anything they ever thought of.’

Those are the seven keys to proving that God exists.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 24:21-22, 3-5
- 2) Luke 12:32
- 3) Matthew 24:6-15
- 4) Zechariah 12:1-3
- 5) Luke 21:20-22
- 6) Zechariah 12:4-6
- 7) Matthew 6:5-15
- 8) John 14:14-15
- 9) John 15:1-10
- 10) Luke 18:1-14
- 11) Psalm 62:5-9
- 12) Psalm 54:1-7
- 13) Proverbs 15:8, 29
- 14) Proverbs 28:9
- 15) Mark 11:20-23
- 16) Ephesians 3:11-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 3
- Revelation 11

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Keys to Answered Prayer*

Booklets:

- *Eight Keys to Answered Prayer*
- *God or No God?* by Duncan Macleod

Books:

- *The Day Jesus the Christ Died* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

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