

# God's Grace & Commandment-Keeping I

Fred R. Coulter—April 3, 2010

Today is the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and, of course, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread there are two principles we need to understand.

1. We put out sin—God forgives it, but you put it out.
2. We have to be responsible for our actions and responsible for our thoughts.

So, when we put out leaven, it's putting out the puffed-upness of human nature and pride and vanity and the things of this world. We come to a Biblical understanding of what man really is.

Let's come to Psalm 39, and see how David described this, because one of the most important things to understand is the limitations of human life, human thought, etc. In the world they exalt it, but God wants us to know that *we have been specially made by Him for His plan and purpose*. But when we are cut off from God, and when we think that we are something and when we think whatever that men think how great they are, the Bible shows us the weakness of human beings. The way to be strong in the Lord is to understand the weakness of our own nature, our own ways and our own existence.

Psalm 39:1: "I said, 'I will take heed to my ways so that I do not sin with my tongue... [Perfect description of what we need to learn during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.] ...I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked are before me'.... [cautious in what you say] ...I became dumb, keeping silent; I said nothing good, and yet my sorrow grew worse. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue: 'O LORD, make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how short lived I am'" (vs 1-4). Compared to God Who lives eternally, we are very short lived even if we live to be—as Solomon said, 'What if a man lived a thousand years twice told and died?'—and that was the end of it? That's vanity, because God lives forever. But God wants us to live forever as well through Him and through His plan.

So v 5: "'Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth... [Nebuchadnezzar could have saved himself from all the trouble he went through if instead of standing out there and looking at Babylon and saying, 'Look at this great Babylon that I have built,' if he would have put his hand up in front of his face and said, 'Hey, Nebby, that's the length of your life.'] ...and the span of my days is as nothing before You. Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity.'"

Now what I'd like you to do, especially those who are young, I'd like you to take this verse, and I would like you to go through, all of us as adults can do it as well, and examine every television program and apply this verse. "Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity." You will see nearly everything on TV is based upon that—is it not? Watch them. Listen to them, and especially our illustrious President. No more need be said with that.

Today, what I want to cover is this: How is it that we are saved by grace, yet, we know we should keep the commandments? Because today people do not understand and even the Church of God—and even us—have not really understood keeping of the commandments under the New Covenant, what that really means. Because we've been in a battle between grace-only—Protestants, and commandment-keeping—Churches of God.

Now, let's come to Matthew 7. Now we know Jesus said in Matt. 5, He didn't come to abolish the law; we understand that. But here in Matthew 7:21, we find something very interesting that we see in the world today and is for us today to understand how we are to keep the commandments of God and why we are to keep the commandments of God. Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven." The will of the Father is *not letter of the law* commandment-keeping. We need to understand that! *The will of the Father includes and encompasses everything that the New Testament and the Bible teaches*. 'Doing or practicing the will of My Father who is in heaven.'

Verse 22—you've heard this many times, but let's go over it. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?... [Many preachers. Jesus said many would come saying that He was the Christ, come in His name, prophesying, preaching, predicting, healing.] ...And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?'... [Great works! What is He going to say?] ...And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you.... [Now they claimed to have known Him—right? They used His name—right? They said He was Lord—correct? But He says, 'I never knew you.' They prayed to Him—correct? Obviously, they would have to. 'I never knew you.'] ...Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness'" (vs 22-23).

Now lawlessness comes in two forms:

1. Rebellious against law, rejecting law— which is an impossibility.

An atheist says, 'I don't believe in God, but I'm moral.' So you ask him, 'Oh, you mean, you don't think we should lie?' *Yup!* 'You mean you don't believe in killing?' *Yup!* 'You mean you don't believe we should steal?' *Yup!* 'Well, you agree with God, Whom you say you don't believe in, because He gave those commandments.' That's one form of lawlessness.

2. Adding to or taking away from what God has said.

All the traditions of men! All the religions of men! And remember, there's not a religion on earth that hasn't had some miracles, somewhere along the way, and they didn't come from God. Because there's another 'god of this world' who is called Satan the devil. Let's concentrate on what we need to do.

Now, let's come to Matthew 19:16. There are those in the Protestant world who say that you're saved by grace and 'you don't need to keep the commandments at all,' and 'anyone who keeps the commandments of God is denying grace, because you're trying to work out your salvation.' Isn't that what they say? Well, what are they going to do with this?

Matthew 19:16: "Now at that time, one came to Him *and* said, 'Good Master, what good *thing* shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' And He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good?... [Why do you suppose Jesus would say that? *Because even though He's God in the flesh, compared to what He was as a spirit being, and God the Father and Their goodness and Their love, and Their eternal existence, He didn't call Himself good.*] ...No one is good except one—God. But if you desire to enter into life... [Do what?] ...**keep the commandments.**'.... [right?] ...Then he said to Him, 'Which?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and your mother; and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (vs 16-19). And the Protestants go right there and say, 'See, He didn't say the Sabbath.'—isn't that true? Jesus said He was 'Lord of the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27)—isn't that correct? If He is Lord of the Sabbath, what day are you to worship the Lord on and what day is *His* day? We won't go into that, because you all know that. I want to ask the questions:

- How are we to keep the commandments?
- How are we to look at it?
- Is it works or is it grace?
- How is it?

Let's come to the very last part of the New Testament, Revelation 22. Because men did not like this in the original Greek, different ones went in and edited the Greek to make it read, 'To wash your robes, to make them white in His blood,' instead of what it says here.

Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega... [That's the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet.] ...*the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last*.... [Notice v 14. 'Cursed are those who keep His commandments,' that's what the Protestants would have it read—is that not correct? As I've pointed out recently, they do not understand Gal. 2. We're not going to go there today, but that is a problem with Judaism and their laws, not the commandments of God. Notice what it says here. I'll read it correctly this time] ...**Blessed**... [Blessed from God.] ...**are those who keep His commandments,** that they may have the right to *eat of the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city*" (vs 13-14). So, if you don't keep the commandments, you're not going to have eternal life. And you can't pick and choose which commandments, because you didn't make them. God did. God *is* God.

Now let's look at commandment keeping from an entirely different perspective. Let's come to the Gospel of John, first chapter, and let's understand how—in the New Covenant in the New Testament, with the Spirit of God, and the relationship that God has called us to, to be with Him—that our commandment keeping is entirely different than *letter of the law* commandment-keeping. We are not trying to earn salvation. We are not trying to justify ourselves through law-keeping. But we do keep the commandments in a far greater way:

- through the grace of God
- through the Spirit of God
- through the love of God

—that can't be done otherwise, and we'll see why.

John 1:14: "And the Word... [which says there in v 1, 'Was God and with God; everything came into being through Him.'] ...became flesh, and tabernacled among us... [That means that He dwelt temporarily among mankind.] ...(and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the glory as of the only begotten with the Father*), **full of grace and Truth**.... [I want you to put that in your notes, because '**full of grace and Truth**' is the key as to how we keep the commandments of God.] ...John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, "He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was [existed] before me."' And **of His fullness**... [*The fullness of doing the will of God through Christ.*] ...**we have all received, and grace upon grace**.... [We're going to learn something for the very first time, because

we've been too busy fighting the battle between law and grace, Protestants and Church of God, that we have missed the point that *keeping the commandments of God by converted people is by grace*. Now maybe that sounds a little strange to first hear that, but we'll see it.] .....grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, but the grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ" (vs 14-17).

Let's see how the grace of God begins. Let's come here to John 6. We'll review just a little bit. Let me ask you a question: Being called of God, is that an act of grace by God?

- Grace then is *favor*
- Grace then also is *gift*
- Grace is also *your standing* with God

When we come to understand Christ and we receive 'grace upon grace,' it begins with the Father dealing with us.

John 6:44—you know this by heart, but let's review it: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him... [No one! No one! God is totally absolutely sovereignly in charge of His plan of salvation and whom He calls and whom He deals with, and *no one* can come to God and demand salvation; *no one* can come to God on his or her terms—even though in the name of God, name of Christ, they've done many wonderful works; though they've cast out demons.] ...and I will raise him up at the last day." When you understand the last day, that's the fiftieth day, because that's the last day of counting fifty—is that not correct? It's not the Last Great Day, that's another day. So don't get them confused.] ...It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father...' (vs 44-45). Who does the calling?

I want you to think back to that time that something happened one day in your life, whether through trial, whether through struggle, whether through a challenge, whether through difficulties, something happened in your mind—didn't it? You can probably look back at that day—I can look back, I know the day that began. That was in 1959, when my paleontology professor at San Mateo Junior College announced at the beginning of class, 'Anyone here who believes in the Bible, believes in God, there's the door.' I wasn't religious. I hadn't gone to church, but that did something in my mind. I said, 'How dare you do that!' I remember that day and subsequent events that led up to repentance and baptism.

"...And they shall all be taught by God..." Everything you learn, brethren, is from God—from His Word, from His Spirit. That's why all ministers and elders are to be teachers; we are to feed to flock of God. We all together are perfected in Christ.

That's what Paul said. We are to up-build the brethren, the Church of God, not rule over them,

- to up-build them
- to help them
- to serve them
- to help them understand the Word of God

So that everyone can understand the Word of God as taught by God's Spirit in their minds as they read and study the Word of God. God is the one Who's doing the teaching. How many times have you gone along and it's almost like—Bing!—a light goes on; you understood something. Who taught you? *The Father!*

Let's come to Ephesians 2; we're going to see some really tremendous things today through Scriptures that we have gone over many times in the past, but which we're going to add a little more to it this time. There are some Protestants out there who believe that for every human being that there is, God has assigned a demon to them. Doesn't need to. Satan has been given permission to control this world. He is called here 'the prince of the power of the air' and he has many, many, many helpers—doesn't he? Radio, television, printed word, Internet, other people who teach evil things—many helpers. *God doesn't assign a demon to every human being.* That's nonsense! But Satan does control this world and we are influenced by the world—correct? *Yes!*

Now here's how Paul wrote of it here, Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins... [We all die in Adam—correct? We all have the death gene from Adam. Then when we're living in sin, we are destined, if there is no repentance, to another death.] ...In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [So, yes, that attitude that comes from the world is there and that comes from Satan the devil.] ...Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath*, even as the rest of *the world*. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ.... [That's to raise us up in the calling. Our behavior is to be different and He's going to show the completeness of His plan.] ...And He has raised *us* up together... [Through the operation of baptism.] ...and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus" (vs 1-6). Not yet, we'll see.

What we have from God, with the Holy Spirit, is heavenly—is it not? Comes from God—correct? *Yes!* Sitting in the heavenly places will be

when? *At the resurrection!* Notice v 7: “So that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith**, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God” (vs 7-8). We read what? *We received from Him grace upon grace!*

- Our calling is the grace of God
- Repentance is the grace of God
- Baptism is the grace of God
- Receiving the Holy Spirit is the grace of God

And we're going to see:

- **keeping the commandments of God** in the Spirit is the grace of God

Have you ever thought of that? We'll think of this for a little while as we're going through this.

Verse 8, again: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this especially is not of your own selves; it is the gift of God. Not of works... [Because no human work—without the grace of God, without the Spirit of God, without what God does, any work that is generated from our selves—*will not save us*. So therefore, some conclude, you don't need any works. You don't need to keep the commandments, but that's not true.] ...Not of works, so that no one may boast.... [Here is the key of the understanding of what God is doing and the work of conversion and keeping of the commandments of God in the spirit.] ...For **we are His workmanship...**” (vs 8-10).

Remember where God says, ‘I am the potter and you are the clay.’ You go back and read Jer. 18. He told Jeremiah, ‘I want you to go down to the potter's house and I want you to watch him make a vessel.’ So there he is on the potter's wheel, spinning. He makes a vessel with clay. Something happens, he doesn't like it, so he mashes it all up, sprinkles a little more water in it, and starts again. God said to Jeremiah, ‘I want you to tell the children of Israel: *I'm the potter, you are the clay. Can I not do with you as this potter does to the clay?*’ **‘We are His workmanship.’** Isn't that something? You are, I am, all those who have the Spirit of **God are a work of God.**

Let's understand this: *The work of God is not what a church is doing.* Ever think of it? How many times have you heard, ‘The work of God, the work of God, the work of God, and that means the work the Church is doing. That is the work of the ministry, that is not the work of God. The work of God is **His workmanship in each one of us.** That's God's work.

(go to the next track)

Let's ask some questions now. Since we are saved by grace—which we are—and we are God's workmanship—which we are—all of that has to be by God's grace—correct? Could it be otherwise?

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus... [Now Jesus was what? *Full of grace and Truth*—correct? So if we're created in Christ Jesus, this creation has to be a work of grace—does it not? *Yes*, because you're not doing it; **God is doing It!** If God is doing it, it is by grace—*His grace.*] ...unto *the* good works... [Everyone has works—don't we? What are the good works? Let's ask another question concerning works: How are we going to be judged? *By our works!*—‘each one according to his works.’ If these works are done or wrought in Christ—is that not grace? If these works lead to salvation—is that not grace? Because ‘by grace we have been saved.’ But let's also see that the works now is also a process.] ...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.”

So what we're viewing is this: The good work of salvation that God is doing in us by grace is creating in us—the what? *The mind of Christ! The character of Christ!* That is a process. Let's look at the process first. **Salvation is a process or work of grace, which requires our participation in good works.** All of that is by grace.

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now **standing**; by which you are also being saved... [In the Greek that is a present tense passive, ‘being saved,’ *a process and work of God.*] ...**if**... [there are conditions to it.] ...you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise you have believe in vain” (vs 1-2).

We'll see the same thing again, 1-Corinthians 1:18: “For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness; but to us who are being saved...” This is important to understand, because one of the false doctrines that is preached here in Bible-land is that ‘once saved, always saved and nothing can take you away from Christ.’ *Not true!* ‘Being saved,’ present tense passive. It is an active work, by the grace of God, by the Spirit of God.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith... [Brethren, that is the only way you can be justified; that's through Christ.] ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand...” (vs 1-2). So you're standing in grace. That is kind of like an umbrella of grace over us, from which comes the love of God, the mercy of God, the Spirit of God, etc.

Verse 6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly.... [And the appointed time was the Passover day, 30<sub>A.D.</sub> Not Easter, not anytime people want to take a mass, etc. We won't get into that. We're not arguing that today.] ...For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us.... [even before we existed, He had died for us] ...Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (vs 6-9). So salvation is:

1. *have been saved* from Satan the devil
2. *are being saved* as long as we are walking and standing in the Gospel
3. *shall be saved* at the resurrection of the dead.

Three steps to salvation; that's the process of creation that God is using.

Let's ask some other questions. Let's come here to Ephesians 1. This also tells us more of what God is doing. And the whole process of salvation is *a process of grace*, which includes commandment keeping and commandment keeping in a far, far different way than the view of the world looking at the Ten Commandments written on a slab of stone, or written in the Bible for the letter of the law.

Ephesians 1 is one long sentence in the Greek. It's very difficult to separate out these thoughts, because they are all added one on top of another. Ephesians 1:9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will... [the secret of God's plan, and the secret of God's plan is manifested how?

- through the Spirit of God
- through His Sabbath and Holy Days
- through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

—all together; not part of this, part of that, but all together.] ...Having made known to us... [Now stop and think for a minute how great that is. Is that not an act of grace that He would make known to us His will? That He would make known to us His plan? He tells us the rest of the world is blinded out there, but blinded because of two things:

1. Satan the devil
2. They don't believe

That brings automatic blindness. Just like when anyone rebels, especially young people against their parents, you're blinded to what they're trying to say to you because you won't listen. Because you want to do what you want to do and you won't hear it. Then many of them what? They end up what? *Like the prodigal son who's out there feeding the swine,*

the worst thing any Jew could be assigned to do— and ‘he came to himself.’] ...Having made known to us the mystery of His own will... [The secret of the will of God! Isn't that something? There's also the mystery or secret of lawlessness, which is Satan's way that controls this world.] ...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself” This is God's plan. God the Father and Jesus Christ are dealing directly with each one of us. That's what we need to understand. That is by grace. Everything we do is by grace.

“That in *the Divine plan* for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance... [We are going to inherit the Kingdom of God. An inheritance means *part ownership*.] ...having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will. That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ” (vs 9-12). Notice how this all has to do

- with God's plan
- with Christ
- with grace
- with mercy
- with kindness
- with forgiveness
- with growing
- with overcoming

“In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth... [Jesus was what? ‘*Full of grace and Truth*.’] ...the Gospel of your salvation... [It's called the Gospel of Jesus Christ—isn't it? What did Jesus say, the first thing He said after John the Baptist was put in prison, He came into Galilee and He said, ‘Repent and believe the Gospel’—right? *Yes!*] ...after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... [Because after believing, believing then encompasses repentance and baptism, then you receive the Holy Spirit.] ...Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory” (vs 13-14). So this is telling us how God is doing. What a tremendous introduction to the book of Ephesians. What an absolutely inspiring understanding that Paul gives us.

“For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers... [Is this not grace; an action of grace?] ...That the God our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you... [Remember where we started, ‘all shall be taught of the Father’? Remember that?] ...may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.... [We are to grow in the

grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—is that not true? *Yes!* That's all a part of God's way, which is through grace.] ...And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.... [That's all by the grace of God. It also has to do with commandment-keeping, because commandment keeping and grace work hand in hand. Because the commandment-keeping that we are doing is motivated spiritually. We'll see that, because of another act of grace that God is doing, which is part of the process of conversion, part of the process of being saved, and it all fits together in one big package.] ...And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power" (vs 15-19). We are *His workmanship*—is that not correct? And that's the inner working of His power through His Spirit in our minds and in our hearts and in our lives. All of that is grace—is it not? All of that is a gift of God—is it not? *Of course it is!*

Now let's come to Colossians 1, see how he explained it to the Colossians. What we're dealing with, brethren, is that God is constantly teaching each one of us at different levels according to how we yield to God and the timing of our calling. Those who have been recently baptized, you're going to learn more and more and more. Those of us who have been baptized for many years, are learning more and more and more in depth and understanding of the Word of God. The secret and the key is it's been here in the Word of God *all the time*. It's like the Proverb said, 'It's the glory of God to hide something, and it's the honor of the king to discover it.' The only way we discover it is that the King, being Christ, opens our minds to see. We even have a hymn there—don't we? *Open My Eyes That I May See*. All that's part of salvation.

Colossians 1:21: "For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works... [That's the carnal mind—isn't it? We all have works—wicked or righteous, of the world and Satan, or of God and Christ.] ...but now He has reconciled *you* In the body of His flesh through death... [by the Passover death] ...to present you holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him.... [That's the goal! He's going to perfect you. I could also follow this up with a sermon on what God is doing to perfect us, which is also grace—is it not? *Yes!*] ...**If**... [*Conditional!* Remember this: carnal men like to put the conditions upon God, but **no one tells God what to do**. God is perfect so you can't give Him any conditions. The conditions are upon us because we are flesh and we have to endure to the end.] (So that's what he says here): ...If indeed you continue in the faith... [We can look out and we can

see there are a lot people we've known for years who did not follow through on v 23—is that not correct? They didn't understand the 'if.' They didn't understand their part and their responsibility within the grace of God, because within the grace of God there are conditions as it says here.] ...If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which... [What? *'By which you are being saved*—is that not correct? *Yes!* (we read that)] ...which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that *is* under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant" (vs 21-23).

Now then, he explains something very important here. Let's come down to v 26: "*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints... [Not to the world—to His saints. Who are the saints? *All who have the Spirit of God and love God and keep His commandments*.] ...to whom God did will... [did purpose] ...to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (vs 26-27).

He writes in Phil. 2, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' That is the workmanship that God is doing in us. Brethren, once we really understand this, once we really grasp it—and would that all the ministers of God would understand this and for them to all get off their 'Lord Fauntleroy' high-horse and include themselves in the brethren, with the brethren to teach them and to help them. Understand this: ***God the Father and Jesus Christ are working in your lives, directly***. We are to do!

Come back here to Acts 20 and we'll just do a little side study here. Let's see what Paul told the elders at Ephesus. Paul has given us the example. What did he say of himself? He said, first of all, 1-Cor. 15, 'I am the least of all the apostles, because I persecuted the Church.' Then he also said when he was in prison and in chains, and God revealed to him the things that we've been reading now, he said that he was 'less than the least of all the saints. Now does that sound like the 'God's only true apostle' on the earth? You see how far astray we've gone? All of you have left that. You're out of that going astray.

Here is what Paul told them here. Acts 20:17: "Now from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus *and* called for the elders of the Church. And when they had come to him, he said to them... [He knew he wasn't going to see them any longer, so he wanted to leave them a final message.] ...'You know how, from the first day I came to Asia, *and* all the time I was with you, I served the Lord with all humility and *with* many tears and temptations, which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; And how I

did not keep back anything that was profitable, *but* preached to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, Earnestly testifying, both to *the* Jews and *the* Greek, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.... [Now that's just a sum of the whole Gospel.] ...And now behold, I am bound in the spirit, *and* am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall happen to me there; Except that the Holy Spirit fully testifies in every city, saying that bonds and tribulations await me. But I myself do not take any *of these* things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, will see my face no more" (vs 20-25).

Because of all that, then he gives them a warning, a testimony, v 26: "Wherefore I testify to you on this day... [I would like to know what day that was. It was between Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.] ...that I am pure from the blood of all, For I have not held back from preaching to you all the counsel of God.... [Now here's what every elder and minister and anyone who becomes an elder or minister needs to understand as *the greatest responsibility and thing to be kept in mind.*] ...**Take heed therefore to yourselves...** [You have to watch yourself, you have to watch your own actions, you have to teach yourself from the Word of God and the Spirit of God.] ...and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit **has made you overseers...** [Not overlords. An overseer is like a coach on the sidelines. He is to get all of the players involved.] ...**to feed the Church of God,** which He purchased with His own blood" (vs 26-28). Once we understand that, then we understand we're stewards. We understand we are to teach the Word of God. We are to understand that we are not to exalt ourselves above the brethren. We are to understand that we are to teach and encourage and inspire them, because that's what it's all about.

"For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock... [We've seen that—haven't we? *Yes, indeed!*] ...And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves" (vs 29-30). This is something that we all need to realize and understand. The Church is not a corporate organization. The Church is the spiritual body of Christ. Jesus is the Head of the Church. He's called all of us, so that we can all grow in grace and knowledge and develop the Godly character that He wants us to have through His grace, through His love, through the faith of God.

Let's go on and see how this is done. Let's come to Hebrews 10. Here we're going to see tremendous part of the grace of God. It all has to do with the sacrifice of Christ, has to do with Jesus our Passover. So let's see what this grace is to do for us. Hebrews 10:14: "For by one offering... [That is of Himself.] ...He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified.... [Now you are sanctified when you receive the Spirit of God.] ...And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said... [Now here is part of the work that God is doing in us which is by grace.] ...'This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord: "I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds"" (vs 14-16). **That is a work of grace.** So therefore, since that is a work of grace and we are to keep the commandments of God, in the New Covenant we keep the commandments of God *because and through* the grace of God. Far different than just trying to analyze grace and law. But everything we do is through the grace of God.

Now remember when God gave the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5). The children of Israel they saw the fire on top of Mount Sinai, they heard the voice of God giving the commandments of God, they heard the trumpet and the thunder and the lightning and the whirlwind, and everything, and they said, 'Oh, Moses, don't let us hear the voice of God any more. You speak to God and we'll hear you.' So God told Moses, 'Well, they meant well with that.' What else did He say? He said, 'Oh, that there were a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always.' They never did—did they?—only sometimes in the letter of the law.

In keeping the commandments of God in the New Covenant it is all through the grace of God—motivated by the Spirit in our minds, and having the laws and commandments and the Word of God written in our hearts and in our minds, which is through the power of the Holy Spirit an act of the grace of God—in creating us in the image of Christ.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 39:1-5
- 2) Matthew 7:21-23
- 3) Matthew 19:16-19
- 4) Revelation 22:13-14
- 5) John 1:14-17
- 6) John 6:44-45
- 7) Ephesians 2:1-10
- 8) 1-Corinthians 15:1-2
- 9) 1-Corinthians 1:18
- 10) Romans 5:1-2, 6-9
- 11) Ephesians 1:9-19
- 12) Colossians 1:21-23, 26-27
- 13) Acts 20:17-30

14) Hebrews 10:14-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5
- Mark 2:27
- Galatians 2
- Jeremiah 18
- Philippians 2
- 1-Corinthians 15
- Deuteronomy 5

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