

God's Grace & Commandment Keeping IV

Fred R. Coulter—April 17, 2010

We have never really connected *grace and commandment-keeping* it the way that it should be in the New Testament. We've always had this battle with the Protestants. This afternoon I'm going to give a sermon on the *evangelical Bible*.

You can read in the Scriptures, New Testament, that we need to keep the commandments—right? Is commandment-keeping against grace? and If we're keeping the commandments are we trying to justify ourselves by works? or Is our commandment keeping different in the New Testament than what was required in the Old Testament? *The answer is yes!*

Let's review just a few Scriptures here. Let's come to Romans 3, the focal point in understanding commandment-keeping in the New Testament, and we have never really viewed it and defined it this clearly before. I think you're going to be amazed. We've read the Scriptures, but we haven't focused in on it. Let me just state this since I go through Rom. 3 quite thoroughly on *God's Grace and Commandment Keeping #2*, so I won't go through all of Rom. 3.

Note this: 'Justification' is *being put in right standing with God through repentance and forgiveness of sin by the shed blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ*. Justification comes no other way! So our commandment-keeping is not seeking to be justified, whereas in Judaism *works of law*—and we have in the Appendix Z in the Bible *All Paul's Difficult Scriptures to Understand*. Most of his Scriptures that are hard to understand are centered around the fight between Judaism and the New Testament church; has nothing to do with the commandments of God, but Judaism's view of their traditional *works of law*, which they did to seek to be justified. We can also put in there, as long as the temple stood with the sacrifices at the temple, which were for the forgiveness of sin (Lev. 1-7).

Now we have something entirely different—don't we? The blood of animals could never forgive sin. The blood of animals could never make the conscious pure. But through the remission of sins through Christ, through baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, we can have our conscience cleansed. The Bible calls that 'the washing of the water of the Word.' The water is the Spirit of God, the washing is the active Spirit of God in our minds, combined with the Word of God, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Once we have been justified before God, freely—you can't earn it, you can't buy it, you can't appropriate it, you can't claim it—it has to come

through repentance and forgiveness and acceptance of Christ and His sacrifice. Now the Protestants think they have that correct, but they're only half way there. If you're going from one destination to another, if you get half way there, have you arrived? *Of course not!* Here's what they miss:

Romans 3:28: "Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified... [That is, put in right standing with God in heaven above. Could never be done under the Old Covenant, never happen! Letter of the law-keeping will result in physical blessings, but it does not convert. Conversion comes only through repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, because you've been] ..justified by faith, separate from works of law."

Now this term—and I'll do another serious study on this as we go along—in the Greek it is 'works of law.' And even a repentant Orthodox rabbi, who was into Judaism, totally immersed in it, repented and saw that in the New Testament the term 'works of law' were the *works of Judaism*. That's why this book we're going to have here, *Judaism—Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?* is so important. Because we've been told all along, 'Well, the Jews are just like us except they don't believe in Jesus.' How many have heard that? *Wrong, not true!* Absolutely not true!

"*Is He* the God of the Jews only?... [and the Jews today do not want Gentiles keeping the Sabbath. They do not want Gentiles especially keeping the Holy Days. So this is striking right at the heart of it. He's not the God of the Jews only.] ...*Is He* not also *the God of the Gentiles?* YES! *He is* also God of *the Gentiles*" (v 29). The only advantage the Jew has is this: the gospel was preached to them first and salvation was offered to them first. And if they understood the law and kept the law, then that would give them a greater understanding of how the New Testament would work, if they would truly become converted.

Verse 30: "Since it is indeed one God Who will justify... [put in right standing with God] ...the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.... [Only way to be justified. So the Protestants have it wrong when they say, 'If you keep the Sabbath, you're seeking to justify yourself through law.' *Not true!* God said keep the Sabbath spiritually. We pray that God will put His presence in the Sabbath. We have God's Spirit. We all come together in love and understanding and peace before God. God sends His Spirit. We study His Word. And we are taught the way of God. All of this becomes an operation of grace.] ...Are we, then, abolishing

law through faith?... [Now notice how I translated it, all caps.] ...MAY IT NEVER BE!... [The *King James* says, 'God forbid,' but the Greek is 'me ginoito'—meaning *let this thought never come into existence*. So 'MAY IT NEVER BE!' is a better translation.] (the key): ...Rather, **we are establishing law**" (vs 30-31).

How do you establish law? Did not God give the Ten Commandments? Does that not establish it? or Is there something else that has to happen as well? As we've covered in Matt. 5, 6, and 7, Jesus said the same thing, 'Don't think that I've come to abolish the Law and Prophets. I didn't come to abolish, but to fulfill. Until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law. And if your righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you're not going to enter into the Kingdom of God.' That's why this book *Judaism—Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?* is so important, because they have their own laws that they have placed around and blocked off the Ten Commandments.

How is it then that we keep the laws of God? What did Jesus say concerning murder? *Murder begins with hatred in the mind*—correct? However, in the letter of the law, as long as you don't take that life, you haven't sinned in the letter of the law—correct? All right, let's look at another one: adultery. What did Jesus say? 'If you look upon a man—and we can say a woman looking upon a man and a man looking upon a woman, because today there's lust all around—isn't there? You've what? *Committed adultery already in your heart*. So what kind of commandment-keeping are we talking about in the New Testament that establishes the law?

Let's ask another question: When we repent and receive the Holy Spirit, what then is to take place in our minds after this? *We're to be converted*—right? How far is this conversion to go? *Unto death!* But how far is this conversion to go? *Jesus said, 'Become perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect'*—correct? Let's tie some of these other things together again.

Let's come to John 1. Now as we're turning there, if we are to have the mind of Christ, let's see and understand what the requirement then is. So I'll tell you what it is right now, so you can see it as we're going along. *Today we keep the commandments of God spiritually through the grace of God*. It is not grace *or* law, it is grace *and* law together to establish it spiritually. Until the mind is changed you never really get rid of sin—isn't that right? *The way God looks at sin, the way Christ looks at sin*.

Let's see about Jesus here. John 1:14. Now as we read these Scriptures, we're going to ask some

questions. "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth." Now He had the fullness of it, but what are we to receive? The same thing—right?—*grace and truth!*

Let's come down here to v 16: "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.... [If we receive the Spirit of God, which we do. If we're to grow in grace and knowledge, which we are. And if we are to keep the commandments of God, which we do—and that also identifies us, doesn't it? What does it say in Rev. 12? 'Here are they who have the testimony of Jesus Christ and keep the commandments of God.' End time—correct? *Yes!* Rev. 14:12: 'Here are those who have the faith of Jesus and keep His commandments.' End time—correct? How do we do it? Full of grace and truth, just exactly as Jesus did.] ...For the law was given through Moses, *but* the grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ" (vs 16-17).

Now let's come back to Romans 5, and let's put this all together. I'm going to give a sermon on the evangelical Bible, and we will see how they entirely miss the whole thing. Romans 5:21: "So that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also might the grace of God reign [rule] through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:1, it continues right on: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?... [We've read that verse over and over and over again—haven't we? *Yes!* We have been established through grace. The law is established through grace that now we keep it through the Spirit and grace of God. That's why we need to distinguish that from what the laws of Judaism and *works of law* are.] (So he shows here 'me ginoito'): ...MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (vs 1-2).

Now let's carry this a little bit further and let's see how it has been explained here. Let's talk about the grace of God. Let's come to 1-Peter, the first chapter. What we are going to do, we are going to analyze: How did the apostles write to the brethren. We'll find out. This tells us an awful lot. Sometimes we get so busy that we want to get to the important things, that we leave out the more important things. You know how that goes?

Let's see how Peter wrote, what he wrote. 1-Peter 1:1 "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to *the* elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *Who have been chosen...* [the New Covenant is different. The Old Covenant you could go to the synagogue and there they would read the Old Testament, but then they

would keep the laws of Judaism and they call it all the law of Moses—that's where the confusion comes in. If you were a Gentile, all you had to do was be circumcised, and you would be accepted in the community—right? *Not so Christianity*. God has to call us. That's why in each one of our lives, somewhere along the line there was a signature event that took place and you can look back and know what that event was in your life that God began dealing with you—correct? All of you can. If I asked you to raise your hands, you'd all raise your hands.] (*We are chosen*): ...according to the predetermined knowledge of God *the Father*... [The revealed name of God is *the Father*. That's what Jesus said. That's why He said, 'Call no man on earth your father,' that is in a sense of what people would think is religious. Notice, predetermined knowledge, so you're called.] ...predetermined knowledge of God *the Father*, by sanctification through *the Spirit*..." (vs 1-2).

Now what does 'sanctification through the Spirit' mean? 'Sanctification' means *to be made Holy*—correct? How are you made Holy? *Through repentance and baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit*—correct? You have been justified and you have been sanctified. What does that lead to? "...unto obedience... [Obeying what? *All the teachings of Jesus Christ, all the commandments of God*.] ...and sprinkling of *the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you*" (v 2).

That's one thing, brethren, we need to understand. We'll talk about grace here in a little bit, but grace has to do with our relationship with God. Jesus says, 'My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, I give to you.' We need to have peace of mind, but because the Churches of God, and even people in the Church not understanding the Truth, everybody gets all torn apart. We're ready for another series of difficulties within the Churches of God. The way that the Church has been run in the past has caused sickness, disease, disillusionment, and abandonment—correct? Isn't that true? *Fear!* So the Church has been a big cause of the problems—right? You must have peace with God. That peace comes with the Spirit of God, and repentance, and drawing close to God—*close to God!* There should not be a day go by that we do not ask God for forgiveness and the cleansing 'of the washing of the water of the Word.'

See, because God wants us to get rid of all of those things in our mind, and our mind contains every experience we've gone through—correct? And *He wants those to be purified and sanctified with His Spirit through mercy and forgiveness and repentance, so that we can have peace with God*. Not too many people today have peace of mind—do they? Sometimes, a great number in the Church of

God do not have peace of mind, especially if they go to Sabbath services and they're given a sermon that blasts them 'to hell and back' with fear and trepidation. You go home like this. God doesn't want that. He wants the peace of God to be there.

'Be multiplied.' Well, if it's going to be multiplied, then it has to be on an ongoing basis—correct? If you don't have peace of mind, go claim the promise. Ask God to give you peace of mind. He'll give it. If you have things in your past still haunting you, ask God to give you repentance and forgetfulness. Cleanse it with the 'washing of the water of the Word.' We're told an awful lot in these verses. We're going to see this all has to do with keeping the commandments of God through grace in the Spirit, led by the Spirit of God, with our full yieldedness to God and complete compliance to God in our relationship with Him. I want you to understand how that the structure of the Church in the past, with the hierarchy, cuts that off.

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again... [I love this verse, and I love this in the Greek, because there ain't no way the *KJV* translators could say 'born again.' Because it is 'begotten again,' and there's no other way to translate it. So when we receive the Holy Spirit we're begotten.] ...**begotten again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**... [notice what he is doing—and how many times, and we're going to look at a couple more of the epistles which show us—but how many times do we not read the first verses in the epistles, when these set the stage for everything else.] ...unto an inheritance incorruptible... [What does it do? It points us to the goal—Kingdom of God, resurrection from the dead, immortality.] ...and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us... [Which Christ will bring with Him.] ...Who *are* being safeguarded by *the power of God*..." (vs 3-5).

That's something! Think of that! **Safeguarded!** God doesn't want to lose anyone. There're probably many prodigal sons and daughters out there that need to come back to God. They don't need to come back to an organization of men that will once again put fear in their lives. They need mercy and forgiveness and they need to be stirred up in spirit, in heart and mind to love God and to make the most of what they can with the time they have left. Brethren, look, you and I know—I'm going to save all the doom and gloom sermons on the economy for somewhere down the road, but it's going to come! So we need to be safeguarded through the power of God, which is what?

- Spirit of God
- Word of God
- angels of God

—all of those combined—right? *Yes, indeed!*) “...by the power of God through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in *the* last time” (v 5). Those first five verses are very important.

Come over here to 2-Peter; let's see how he begins this one. 2-Peter is fantastic! The first chapter especially is just absolutely amazing! 2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained ***the same precious faith as ours...*** [Isn't that something? How many times have the apostles included themselves in writing to the brethren? How many times did Paul say 'we'? Not 'you' and 'us'—but together. Isn't that something?] ...same precious faith as ours by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (vs 1-2). And that tells us again: How does peace come? *Peace of mind comes*

- with the Spirit of God
- with the grace of God
- through faith in God the Father and Jesus Christ
- through knowledge of Jesus Christ, which then comes from study
- through prayer, which keeps us in the relationship with God
- through commandment-keeping in the spirit

That's how we keep the commandments of God. Verse 3: “According as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue.”

Notice again how he always starts out. He frames it in such a way that we are looking at the goal, constantly. We are looking to whom? *God the Father and Jesus Christ*—right? We're not looking to men, we're not looking to the ministers. The ministers—let me just clarify this—whatever the Church does is not the work of God; it is the work of the ministry. ***The work of God is His work in each one of us, recreating us in the image of Christ, with the mind of Christ.*** Now think of that for a minute! So we are all together. That's why Paul wrote that it's for 'the work of the ministry for the perfecting of the saints.' There's something that happens which is mutually working together, which is this: If all of us who are elders and teachers are helping everyone to attain that relationship with God, and growing in grace and knowledge, then what'll happen to those who are teaching? *God will teach us in turn*, so we can teach the brethren, so we can all teach each other. We are all to be raised, edified, in the level and knowledge and understanding of God through the Spirit of God and through keeping the

commandments of God in the spirit through the grace of God. This will blow any Protestant completely out of the water, if you tell them, 'Through the grace and Spirit of God, we keep the commandments through grace.' That they won't understand, because to them it's either *grace and no law* or *law and you're under a curse*, because they don't understand the Bible. So there it is.

“...given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue” (v 3). God wants us to be like Him, His sons and His daughters. This is the whole purpose of church and church meetings. It's not for command and control, it's not for merchandizing and taking, it's not for organizing and being executives. They send me regularly this church magazine which is called, *Church Executive*. Well, that's what happened to the Church. They treat all the brethren as if they're employees of a corporation, when ***they're the begotten sons and daughters of God.*** It's an entirely different proposition.

Notice v 4 here now: “Through which He has given to us the ***greatest...*** [Let that sink in! Everyone that God calls is important to Him, because He called you. He's not wasting His time, He has chosen you, so we need to respond to Him.] ...He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises... [can't find it anywhere else] ...that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature... [Now that says an awful lot—doesn't it? He wants you, through His Spirit, and through His Word, and through your relationship with Him—through prayer and study and through keeping the commandments by the grace of God—then to fulfill these ***greatest promises that you can partake of God's nature.*** Now think of that! There can't be anything greater. So this is why we all need to quit playing church and playing religion, and look to God the Father and Jesus Christ, and realize what God has given to us. There it is.] ...having escaped the corruption *that is* in *the* world through lust.”

Now that says an awful lot—doesn't it? Let's come to 2-John, just a few pages over. Small little epistle of 13 verses. Let's notice again—let me ask you a question: When was the last time you read 2-John? Well, we're going to do it today.

2-John 1: “The elder to *the* chosen lady and her children... [That's an interesting way to express about the Church.] ...whom I love in Truth, and not I alone, but also all those who have known the Truth... [Who was full of grace and Truth? *Jesus Christ!* How are we sanctified? *Through the Truth*, which is God's Word, through the Spirit of Truth—correct? *Yes, indeed!*] ...For *the* sake of the Truth that is dwelling in us... [And what is the Truth that is dwelling in us, not only just the Word of God, but

Jesus is 'the way, the truth and the life'—right? Is He dwelling in us? *Yes!* Is the Father dwelling in us? *Yes!* Is that not all by the grace of God? And if we're motivated by the Spirit of God to keep the commandments of God in the spirit, in our minds, with love and truth, that is commandment-keeping through grace.] ...and shall be with us forever. **Grace, mercy, and peace shall be with us from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love**" (vs 1-3). That's all an operation of grace through the Spirit of God.

Now let's read what else he says here, and here we make the connection establishing what we've covered so far that the commandments of God we keep through the grace of God *spiritually*. What have we covered before, which we'll cover again here a little later on? Where are the commandments of God to be in our lives? On tables of stone? *No!* Just in the Bible alone? *No!* Where are they to be? *Written in our hearts and in our minds*—correct? *Yes!* Is that not grace to have that given that way? And if we keep the commandments of God that way, with them written in our heart and in our minds, is that not through the grace of God? *Of course it is!*

Let's continue on here now. Verse 4: "I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth, exactly as we received commandment from the Father.... [Now he's writing to converted people—correct? This also shows that the Christian way is a way of life, a way to live] ...walking in the Truth, exactly as we received commandment from the Father.... [Also remember, everything that Jesus spoke came from the Father—right? *Yes!*] ...And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have *observed* from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is the love of God: that we walk according to His commandments.... [How? *In grace and mercy and peace!* Is that amazing? It's been here all these years, and I've preached all these years and finally just put it together here during the Days of Unleavened Bread. And that came because I've been studying on the Protestant religion, so I could do some *Church at Home* videos on it.] ...This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from the beginning, that you might walk in it" (vs 4-6).

What was the very beginning that Jesus said? 'You've heard that it was said of old, you shall not murder, I tell you, *you shall not hate*. You've heard it said of old, you shall not commit adultery. I tell you, *don't even think about it.*' Those are spiritual requirements that mean there has to be a change in the mind.

(go to the next track)

Now let's continue on here in 2-John 6: "And this is the love of God..." Let's talk a little bit about the love of God here.

Come back to Deuteronomy 5 ^[corrected]. Under the Old Covenant, God also told them that they were to love Him—correct? Now after He gave the Ten Commandments, as we reiterated here in chapter 5, let's see the difference between the covenant with Israel and the covenant with the Church. They were not given the Holy Spirit. After God gave the Ten Commandments, the people said, 'Oh, we don't want to listen. Moses, you speak to us.' God said, 'They meant well.'

Then He said, Deuteronomy 5:29: "Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" So even though He gave the Ten Commandments, He didn't give them the Spirit to do so; it was in the *letter of the law*. Translate that out to people who keep the commandments of God in the letter of the law not knowing about the spirit. And if they keep them, they receive certain blessings—don't they? *Yes, indeed!* God is no respecter of persons—correct? *Yes!*

Let's see what He also says, Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's on, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey" (vs 1-3).

Now this ought to be read to the Tea Partiers. They want to bring the nation back to where it was, but the problem is they need to understand that **God gave it** and that the miracle of America and Britain and the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, was not because of their own ingenuity, their own work, their own skill, **it was because of the promises given to Abraham**. So if they really want to make the Tea Party work, then if they think they're doing right in politics, then **they better get right with God first**. The only way they can do that is to begin keeping the commandments of God in the minimum, in the letter. We'll talk about evangelicals, and so forth, a little later. They've got a lot more work to do, because we are in a land that flows with milk and honey. Everyone's saying we've got to do this, we've got to do that, we've got to do the other thing. Some are saying we need to get

back to the *faith once delivered* by the forefathers who signed the Constitution. That's better than what we have now—correct? But that's not the whole question, is it, that's not the whole answer. That's only part of it.] ...Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the LORD, the LORD*.... [Now that's the best translation possible of it.] ...And **you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might**.... [That's what was commanded.] ...And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart” (vs 3-6). But what was the problem with the people? *They didn't have the Spirit of God and they could only go so far, and they went and followed Baal and Ashtoreth.*

When we come to the New Testament, Jesus repeats the same thing in Matt. 22 and Mark 12—right? ***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, all your soul, all your being.*** Now He gives the Holy Spirit of God through the grace of God, through repentance, and justification, so that we can actually do it, and have a relationship with God. That relationship is

- through prayer
- through study
- how we live and walk in the Truth

It's a complete way of life. And all of that is with the grace of God.

2-John:6: “And this is the love of God: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the beginning, that you might walk in it*.... [through the grace of God] ...Because many deceivers have entered into the world—those who do not confess *that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is the spirit of the deceiver and the antichrist.* Watch out for yourselves in order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished, but that we may receive a full reward.... [Notice how John includes *we*—the brethren and himself, all of us together—we're all brethren.] ...Anyone who transgresses and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. *But* the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (vs 6-9). What is the doctrine of Christ? *All the teachings of Jesus Christ!*—very simple.

Let's go on, see what else we can learn from this. Let's come to 2-Corinthians 3. Let's see what happens with what Paul calls 'the circumcision of the heart.' Now he talks about that in Rom. 2. The comment was made that it has to do with Christ revealing the Father Who was not revealed in the covenant with Israel, except just in a few prophecies. Absolutely true! That's all the teaching. In other words, when it says *the doctrine of Christ*, doctrine

singular, that means *all the teachings combined in one big unit*, like we have in the New Testament.

Let's see what happens with the circumcision of the heart and the mind. Now, first of all, as I have explained before, but I'll just summarize here. Israel was a nation, the Church is not a nation. A nation has geographical territory, people, commerce, all the things of a nation. In the covenant that God gave with all nations after the Flood, He gave them the 'administration of death'—isn't that correct? He said, 'He who kills a man, he will be put to death.' Israel, then, being a physical nation had to have also statutes and laws to deal with varying degrees of transgressions—correct? The ultimate thing that they had was the death penalty.

Here is something we can understand a little more today, because of the phenomena of the Muslims. You cannot have two sovereigns within one geographical location, because a sovereign state sets its own laws. Now what's happening in the United Kingdom, when they're allowing Sharia Law? *They are allowing another sovereign to be set up within the country that's contrary to the sovereign laws of the United Kingdom.* Such as, sooner or later they're going to have to come across the problem if Islamic honor killing—right?

The Church does not have the 'administration of death.' If anyone says by keeping the commandments of God we are going back to the 'administration of death,' is stupid, uneducated, prejudicial, and unknowledgeable. *We're not!* But the greatest power that the Church has collectively is what? What's the greatest power of the Church in a disciplinary way that the Church has? Israel had the death penalty—what does the Church have? *Disfellowshipment!* That's it! We have no other law to enforce. We do not have the *administration of death.*

Now think of it this way: if God gave the administration of death to the Church, and the Church was to go into all nations in the world, what do you think would happen to the Church when they started executing people because of transgressing the law? They would say, 'Where did you get the right to do this? We are the sovereign nation.' God never gave it to the Church, because He did not want to go against what He established right after the Flood with Noah for all nations. The sovereign nations have the *administration of death.* This is what he's talking about here:

2-Corinthians 3:12: “Now then, because we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech; For *we are* not like Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not gaze to the end upon *the glory* that is *now* being set aside.... [Unfortunate translation in the *King James*,

'abolished.' The death penalty is set aside. The Old Covenant requirements are *set aside*, not abolished, because the prophetic pronouncements of Israel down through time in the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob carry right on through. So it's not abolished, *it's set aside for the purposes of the Church.*] (Let's see what is set aside): ...But their minds were blinded; for to the present hour the same veil *has not been removed*... [Is that not true? Do not the Protestants have a veil over their eyes toward what is called the Old Testament, the laws and commandments of God? *Yes!* And they have a hardness of heart. They refuse to keep them.] ...their minds were blinded; for to the present hour the same veil *has not been removed, but remains at the reading of the Old Covenant*... [Right?] ...which *veil is removed in Christ*" (vs 12-14).

What does this tell us? *This tells us that through Christ we have understanding of the Old Testament.* What did Paul say to Timothy? *That you've known the Holy Writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through Christ Jesus*—right? So this gives us understanding of the Old Testament, understanding of the prophecies through the Sabbath and Holy Days—correct?—because the veil has been lifted.

"For to this day, when Moses is read, *the veil lies upon their hearts.* But when *their hearts turn to the Lord,* the veil is taken away.... [Which then also tells us what? *Most of those in Protestantism are not converted.* They won't like that.] ...Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of *the Lord is,* there *is freedom*" (vs 15-17). Freedom from what?

- **Freedom from sin**, because we now have access to God the Father; we have justification through Christ
- There is **freedom from the veil**
- There is **freedom from the hardness of heart**

"But we all, with uncovered faces beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are being transformed... [That's the whole purpose of the New Covenant—*be transformed in mind, in heart, in life, everything that you do.*] ...into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (v 18). So this is also what happens to us, in receiving the Spirit of God.

Let's come to 1-Corinthians 9; here is one that in the *King James* is hard for the Protestants to figure out. I'll show you the verse, because they say anyone who keeps the Sabbath is what? *Under the law*—right? Isn't that what they say? *But that's not true!* 1-Corinthians 9:19: "For although I am not under bondage to anyone, I have made myself a servant to all, so that I might gain the more. Now to

the Jews I became as a Jew... [In other words, he started from their perspective.] ...that I might gain *the Jews*; to those who are under law, as under law, that I might gain those who are under law... [Now that does mean there 'under law' in that particular case. But there's going to be a change in the wording in the Greek here in just a minute.] ...To those who are without law... [Never have any of the laws of God.] ...as without law... [Now notice the parenthetical statement:] ...(not being without law to God, but within law to Christ)..." (vs 19-21). Now it says in the *King James* 'under law in Christ.'

Now what are you going to do with that, I mean either reading? What are the Protestants going to do with that? But in the Greek it is 'ein nomos'—*within law*.. Meaning what? His life was within law, how? *Through the grace of God!* That's why you cannot have profession of Christ and lawlessness. He says, "...that I might gain those who are without law" (v 21).

Now let's come here to 1-Corinthians 14; let's see how Paul viewed what he was doing and what he wrote to them. I like this section of Scripture. 1-Corinthians 14:36: "WHAT?..." After all the debate. Man, they had a wild congregation back there in Corinth! They had a group over here speaking in tongues. They had a group over here that followed Peter. They had a group over here that followed Apollos. They had another group over here with something else, prophesying, and so forth. "WHAT! Did the Word of God originate with you? Or did it come only to you *and no one else?* **If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are commandments of the Lord**" (vs 36-37).

He said in another place that his mission was 'to complete the Word of God' (Col. 1). "...commandments of the Lord. But if anyone *chooses* to be ignorant, let him be ignorant. So then, brethren, desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in *foreign* languages. Let all things be done decently and in order" (vs 37-40). So what we have with the New Testament is a continuation of the Word of God, the commandments of God.

Let's come to Ephesians 1; I want to show you something interesting and you can observe this in all the rest of the epistles; I'll let you do that on your own. Ephesians 1:1. Again notice how similar this is to how Peter wrote. It's amazing. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ" (vs 1-3). What are the heavenly things in Christ that we have received?

- Holy Spirit
- Grace
- His Word
- All the teachings of Christ
- Knowledge of the Father
- Access to the Father

Is it not being a Holy thing that when we get on our knees and we pray and we say, 'Our Father in heaven above,' and our prayers go right to the throne of God, is that not a heavenly thing? *Yes, indeed!* So this is really tremendous when you understand it. Sometimes we read the words, because we're in a hurry to get to the important things, and the important things are right in front of us.

Verse 4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before the foundation of the world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love..." Now this is how then, we need to ask God to help us in everything we do, everyday. I'll tell you what that will do. That will help cleanse your mind, get rid of the carnalities that are still there. ***God wants us to develop the mind of Christ***, that's the greatest heavenly thing that can happen to us—correct? *Yes, indeed!* All of that is by the grace and peace of God.

But remember this—and everybody gets down and out—I've been down and out; I've been depressed; I've been forlorned. I know through the experiences that I've gone through, I remember one signal event when we were going through all the traumas and trials that we were going through, which I won't repeat. You all have gone through them. What happens when you focus on what has gone on, that what you do you really can't think—isn't that correct? And you kind of muddle your way through the day—isn't that true? *Yes!*

So at that time I had become a loan broker to do loans. Marvelous! two of the most hated occupations: loan broker and minister together. What a combination, hard-to-get loans. I'd drive around real estate offices, and all this sort of thing, and I was out driving around out of Hollister and I was really depressed. I just couldn't focus on anything. I was driving along this country road on the backside of the hills where Hollister is and there was this hill. So I just decided to get out of the car. So I parked my car, got out of the car, started walking up that hill. I got up to the top of the hill there and looked around and the only thing I could say was, I just knelt down and raised my hands in the air and said, 'Oh, God, heal my soul.' That's all I could say. That was a signal point in my life.

So if you are down and discouraged and in places like that, ***you go to God and ask God to heal your mind, heal your heart, heal your thoughts,***

grant the Spirit of the 'washing of the water of the Word.' It'll take time, but God will do it.

So remember: "...He has personally chosen..." (v 4). That's interesting in the Greek, *personally chosen*. Why did I translate it *personally chosen*? The Greek there is a middle voice verb. Middle voice we don't have in English quite the same way, because when you have the verb, within the verb is also the noun, and within the spelling of the verb is also the tense of the verb, or participle. Middle voice is that the one who does the speaking *also is the object of the action*. God obviously is not the object of the action, but it's in the middle voice to show that ***He is personally involved*** in every one of our lives. God has invested His Holy Spirit in you for a great and tremendous purpose.

How do we come to God the Father? What did Jesus say? *'I'm the way, the truth, and the life. None can come to the Father except through Me.'* How do we come to Jesus? *'None comes to Me, except the Father draw Him'*—correct? ***Both together involved in our lives***. This is a personal effort *by Them to us*. So if you come to a trial that you're right in the 'valley of the shadow of death,' remember God loves you and has personally called you and has a great plan for you. Everything in the physical life here can be worked out satisfactorily ***if*** you yield to God. May not work out like you envision, but it's going to work out for the best.

"...has personally chosen us for Himself before the foundation of the world... [Because He had His plan before the foundation of the world—right? When was Christ set to be slain? *From the foundation of the world* (Rev. 13:8)—correct? *Yes, indeed!*] ...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will.... [Now the whole book of Ephesians is absolutely incredible.] ...To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved Son" (vs 4-6).

We just read how he began the epistle. So what I want you to do is take every single one of the Epistles of Paul, and I want you to read the beginning and I want you to read the closing. You're going to see how tremendous that this is and how it figures in with the love and grace of God.

Ephesians 6:23: "Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God *the* Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Grace *be* with all those whose love *for* our Lord Jesus Christ is uncorrupted. Amen" (vs 23-24). What a way to end it!

Now we'll explore some of the other closings of the Apostle Paul here as we go along.

Scripture References:

- 1) Romans 3:28-31
- 2) John 1:14, 16-17
- 3) Romans 5:21
- 4) Romans 6:1-2
- 5) 1-Peter 1:1-5
- 6) 2-Peter 1:1-4
- 7) 2-John 1-6
- 8) Deuteronomy 5:29
- 9) Deuteronomy 6:1-6
- 10) 2-John 6-9
- 11) 2-Corinthians 3:12-18
- 12) 1-Corinthians 9:19-21
- 13) 1-Corinthians 14:36-40
- 14) Ephesians 1:1-6
- 15) Ephesians 6:23-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Leviticus 1-7
- Matthew 5, 6, 7
- Revelation 12; 14:12
- Matthew 22
- Mark 12
- Romans 2
- Colossians 1
- Revelation 13:8

Also referenced:

- Book: *Judaism—Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?* (coming soon)
- Sermon: *God's Grace & Commandment-Keeping II*

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