

Introduction

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

This is going to be a study series going through the beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God; and as I said in the preface when we put this together, that this is not meant to be an exhaustive study on it. But certain of these things we will do quite an exhaustive study on; certain of them we won't. And like everything else, you can read what is there, but many times you won't go and get your Bible and read the Scriptures. Now, let's just take a look at how we put this together. First of all it starts about:

The Nature of God—and this is very, very important for us to understand because you have to have the right God; and you have to understand the nature of God because the nature of God is at the heart and the core of what you believe. That's why the world believes in a trinity and they are very staunch in their belief of a trinity in the nature of their god.

Then we have to understand next, ***The Nature of Mankind:***

- What is man really like?
- Why did God make him?
- Why is he the way he is?
- Why does he need redemption?

And the reason we put the nature of mankind in that particular section is because God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness."

The Love of God, which is quite a long section here.

- God's Love to Us
- Our Love to God
- Our Love Toward the Brethren

The Holy Bible, concerning the inspired Word of God.

Laws and Commandments of God—now notice how this builds, step-by-step all the way through. Each one building upon the other.

- ***Laws and Commandments of God:***
 - ✓ The Nature of God's laws.
 - ✓ The Ten Commandments.
 - ✓ The Weekly Sabbath
 - ✓ The Annual Feasts and Holy Days
- *Sin*
- *The Holy Spirit*
- *Grace of God*
- *Repentance*

Now notice how these follow, you have:

- *Grace of God*
- *Repentance*

- *Baptism*
- *Justification*

And all of those follow in sequence. When you repent and have been baptized and have been justified and then you receive the *Righteousness*, which is from Christ. That's why we have:

- ✓ The Righteousness of the Law
- ✓ The Righteousness of Faith.

Then we have ***Sanctification***—because once that happens then you are sanctified; and that is by the *Baptism of the Spirit*.

The Baptism of the Spirit; the receiving of the Spirit, which then brings you to:

- *Faith*
- *Salvation*.

So you see how each one of these builds step-by-step.

- *Laying on of Hands*
- *Healing*
- *Church of God*
- ✓ *Ministry*
- *Christian Financial Responsibility*
- *The Gospel*
- *Kingdom of God*
- *The Resurrections*
- *Eternal Judgment*
- *Baptism of Fire*
- *Clean and Unclean Meats*

Each one of these is designed to be laid out step-by-step-by-step-by-step. And when we got it done we realized we didn't have anything on clean and unclean meats, so that's how it got at the end.

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The Nature of God—The God Family

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

All right, let's go back to the beginning; let's take our Bibles first and turn to Exodus 20; because everything that is done in relationship to God has got to be based on this very first commandment—*everything!*—because the first step away from the true God is having a doctrine which brings the incorrect nature of God. And when that happens then you're the first step removed away from God. Though you may not understand it, that's in fact, what happens. Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me." Everything in the whole Bible is hinged and keyed upon this—*everything*, as we will see.

Now let's read the statement here: *Nature of God—The God Family*. Why do we have God Family? Well, we have that because in Ephesians, the third chapter, it says: "In whom the whole family under heaven and earth is named." And we also have the definition through the words. So let's read it:

God—the Hebrew word is Elohim, a plural noun inherently meaning more than one—is a Holy Family of intelligent Beings, composed of spirit. The God Family is eternal and all powerful. The God Family is perfect in love, purpose and character.... [Notice how condensed and tight all of this definition is] ...The God Family is Lawgiver, Creator and Sustainer of all substance and life, and upholds and controls the universe. The Scriptures reveal that the God Family created mankind "after Our image and after Our likeness." (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg. 3 throughout)

Now, let's go to Genesis, the first chapter, where we find this. All the way through the first chapter of Genesis the word *God* is 'Elohim.' And you might go ahead and circle that right in the *Belief's* booklet there. The 'im' at the end means *plural*. Whenever you have a Hebrew word that ends in 'im,' it is plural. So this means *more than one*. Now, Genesis 1:26: "And God [Elohim] said, '**Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...**'"

Now, when we come to chapter two, we find something very interesting. Genesis 2:4: "This is the account of the heavens and of the earth when they *were* created; in the day that the LORD God..." Now here's the first place that we have YHVH. We have two booklets showing *The Two Jehovahs of the Pentateuch* and *The Two Jehovahs of the Psalms*. And YHVH is what is called the 'Tetra-grammaton'—which then means the four

letters, which is a name of God. But make careful note right here in this particular place, because this should read *and Elohim's* [possessive] *YHVH—Jehovah*—showing that Jehovah came from Elohim. All the way through the Old Testament 'Elohim' is plural—all the way through. The word 'Elohim'—God—means *plural*. 'Elo'—which then is singular; but 'Elohim' is plural all the way through. And the question is: How is that the Jews come up with only one God. That is covered in the two booklets: *The Two Jehovahs of the Psalm*; *The Two Jehovahs of the Pentateuch*. And part of it gets down to the paganism of Judaism. Part of it gets down to that.

The Scriptures reveal that the God Family created mankind "after Our image and after Our likeness." Therefore, God is the reality of the "image and likeness" from which man was created.

In order to have something made in an image or likeness of something you must have the reality of it. You cannot have the image and likeness without a reality. So this is why when Philip asked Jesus: "Show us the Father." He says, "If you've seen Me, Philip, you've seen the Father."

The God Family presently consists of God the Father and God the Son. These two members of the God Family have the same form, or "image and likeness," which They have given to human beings, though They are composed of spirit. One of Their purposes is to increase the God Family. According to this plan and purpose, They will share Their eternal spiritual existence and Their vast creation with those human beings who will be born again by the resurrection from death into the God Family, thereby inheriting Their magnificent love, glory and power as sons and daughters of God throughout eternity.

So that is quite an opening statement when you have that, talking about the nature of God. Now, let's look at some of the other Scriptures which are very important for us to understand and realize concerning this. Let's see where it shows, in the Scriptures, in the Old Testament—from the references that we have here—that there are two Divine Beings. Daniel 7:9—we have that right in the Scriptural reference, but let's turn there—two Divine Beings. This is important, and this is what really sets the religious world on end, because they believe in a trinity. But just like you cannot find Sunday mentioned as a day of worship in all of the Bible, nor can you find anywhere where it says the Holy Spirit is God!

Now, we know there are references to God the Father that HE is God—without question, without doubt. We'll see when we get to the section on Jesus that HE is also called **God!** But here in Daniel 7:9: "I watched until thrones were set in place... [Now where do you find a reference similar to this? *Rev. 20, when the Kingdom of God is set up.*] ...and the Ancient of Days sat, Whose raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was like flames of fire, and its wheels like burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court sat and the books were opened. Then I was looking because of the voice of the boastful words which the horn spoke. I watched until the beast was slain, and his body was destroyed and given to the burning flame" (vs 9-11).

As concerning the rest of the vision and so forth, v 13: "I saw visions in the night and, behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And dominion and glory was given to Him, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (vs 13-14). Brings us right down to the Kingdom of God on earth.

Now, let's go to Revelation 5—we don't have this in the Scriptural reference, so you might want to put it in your margin there—and we will see another description very similar to this concerning the throne, concerning the Son of man, and what we're going to see in all these things is that the Old Testament and the New Testament all tie together. They are parts of one continuous document.

Now Rev. 4 talks about the throne of God. Shows it with the 24 elders all around about it; rainbow all around it; on the Sea of Glass. Then we come to Revelation 5:6: "Then I beheld and lo, in the midst of the throne... [That is right in front of it] ...and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him Who sat upon the throne.... [Here we have two beings again, don't we? We have the throne. We have the one Who was the Son of man, the Lamb of God.] ...And when He had taken the book, the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having everyone of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. They sung a new song..." (vs 6-9).

Verse 11: "And I beheld and I heard *the* voice of many angels... [Now, notice how similar this is to Dan. 7—very similar.] ...many angels round about the throne, and the beast and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times thousand and thousands of thousands... [almost word for word, isn't it? *Yes!*] ...Saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb... [now He's called 'the Lamb' here, Who was the Son of God. Now put in your margin right there—we'll get to it when we come to Christ—John 1:29, where Christ is called *the Lamb which takes away the sins of the world.*] (now notice what He receives; how similar this is to what is back there in Dan. 7): ...was slain **to receive power**, and then **riches**, and **wisdom**, and **strength**, and **honor**, and **glory** and **blessing**'" (vs 11-12). Then the whole creation is subject to Him. So this shows **two** Divine Beings.

Now let's come to Matthew 11:25—that's not in the Scriptural reference, so you might want to put that in your margin there. "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth... [So this He's showing the Father is greater than He is. He said that in John 14:26—'My Father is greater than I am.'] ...because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes.... [That's why the world doesn't know.] ...Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.' And all things are delivered unto Me of My Father; no man knows the Son but the Father; neither knows any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (vs 25-27).

So in order to understand the true nature of God, that there are two God-beings in the Elohim of God, that's what has been revealed to us. No more! It doesn't show that there are three; it doesn't show that there are five; it doesn't show that there are dozens—as some people have come up with different doctrines trying to prove that there are dozens.

Now then, let's finish off here by going to Ephesians 3, to show that one of Their purposes is to increase the God Family—that is the whole key. Why is there God? And what is Their purpose? If you understand His nature, then He's got to have a purpose. Ephesians 3:9—we have that in the Scriptural reference—but let's turn there because this tells us an awful lot. This is the whole, overall goal that God has in His plan. And this is the thing that's so important for us to really continuously focus in on, brethren. And I know myself, whenever things get difficult or whenever there's a lot going on, I always turn here to really focus and keep in mind what it is that God wants; because the thing that's important in anything you do is ***always keep your mind on the goal, always keep your mind on Christ.***

Ephesians 3:9: "And that I might enlighten all as to what is the fellowship of the mystery... [We

have special relationship with God, being those called of the first fruits—we need to understand that, brethren. That’s why it’s so important for us to continue to grow in grace and knowledge and love and all of these things.] ...that has been hidden from the ages in God... [and revealed to those whom He’s called] ...Who created all things by Jesus Christ; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places*, according to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord... [There then is the whole story of the rest of the Bible; the whole purpose of God. And it’s a magnificent purpose. And that’s why, when we have the Holy Days coming up, how it’s very important for us to really focus in on that. Really keep that in mind.] ...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, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (vs 9-15). Now, we won’t go through the rest of it to the end of the chapter, I’ll let you read that.

The nature of God is the key and goes along with the very first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Therefore:

1. If you have the wrong god, you don’t understand HIS purpose.
2. If you have the wrong nature, then you are beginning to slip away from the truth of what God is doing.
3. Nowhere does it show in the Bible anymore than the Elohim Who became the Father; and the Elohim Who become the Son—does not show any more--**and those two are one.**

Let’s put in there John 17—let’s turn there. Those two are one! And so, when it talks about the ONE God, or God is one, that is a better statement. It is: God is one, rather than one is God. You understand the different between the two? If you say *there is one God*, you’re saying in number only there’s one. But if you say, *God is one*, then the statement has room for more than one being.

Now, John 17:20—and this also ties in with the whole purpose that we talked about here. “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word... [So *we* are going to become part of **God is one**. Therefore, the statement ‘God is one’—and it has been revealed that there are only two in Elohim—the rest of the plan of God shows that there’s going to be more Elohim or Gods in that statement.] (And it’s right

here): ...that they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us.... [So even when, brethren, we’re all in the Family of God as the children of God, God is ONE!] ...And I have given them the glory that You gave *to Me*, in order that they may be one, in the same way *that We* are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one; and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (vs 20-23). So this is key and important to really grasp.

Isaiah 43:10: “‘You *are* My witnesses,’ says the LORD, ‘and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that **I am He**.... [Now, I want you to circle ‘I am He’—because all the way through the book of John, Christ refers to Himself ‘**I am He**’—very important.] ...before Me no God was formed... [a true statement, because God has not been formed, yet] ...nor shall there be after Me.’” Now, what does that mean? If God is going to increase His Family, what does that mean? ***Yes, there will be no other God Family beside the one He creates.*** Yes, it would have to be, because if we are going to all be one in Christ and God the Father, you see then, we have to be included in that statement.

Verse 11: “‘I, even I, *am* the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior.’” So when Christ came, that also tells you that He was Lord before He became a human being—and there is no other savior. And the New Testament backs that up.

Now, we have the whole series that we did—which I’ll mention here—*Who is Jesus?* and *The Names of God*. All of those cover the various aspects of some of the things that you need to know in detail. And we go in great detail in each one of these. So that’s why the *Beliefs* booklet is meant to make some statements; and the statements are very compact, and they’re meant to be. But then everything else expands out from that.

Let’s talk about the glory of God here for just a minute. Exodus 34, God told Moses that “no man can see Me (that is in His glorified form) and live.” So when we come to Christ becoming a man He had to give up being God in order to become a man, because you can’t have 100 percent God and 100 percent man in the same package; because man in the flesh cannot exist in the presence of God. So, likewise with God. ***In order to become the Savior, God had to do something very profound and very special.***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 20:3
- 2) Genesis 1:26

- 3) Genesis 2:4
- 4) Daniel 7:9-11, 13-14
- 5) Revelation 5:6-9, 11-12
- 6) Matthew 11:25-27
- 7) Ephesians 3:9-15
- 8) John 17:20-23
- 9) Isaiah 43:10-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 20, 4
- John 1:29
- John 14:26
- Exodus 34

Also referenced:

Booklets:

- *The Two Jehovahs of the Pentateuch* by Carl Franklin
- *The Two Jehovahs of the Psalms* by Carl Franklin

Sermons series:

- *Who is Jesus?*
- *The Names of God*

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The Nature of God—God the Father

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

Let's come to the next section in *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 4)

God the Father is the supreme, glorious, Divine Spirit Being Who is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. God the Father accomplishes His will through the power of His Holy Spirit. (See The Holy Spirit.) God the Father, Who has all power and all authority, is love. He has perfect, Holy character and is full of grace and mercy. God the Father is greater than His Son Jesus Christ but shares all that He has with His Son. God the Father sent Jesus Christ, His Son, to reveal the Father's love and grace and His magnificent plan for all mankind. God the Father directly calls each individual to salvation, grants repentance, and imparts the Holy Spirit as a begettal, so that the individual becomes a child of God the Father. God the Father Himself personally loves each one He calls and is directly involved in the life of each individual, continually imparting His love, grace, mercy and blessings so that he or she can develop His loving, perfect, righteous character. He personally hears and answers the prayers of all His begotten children.

The question is: Why does it say that God the Father is greater than Jesus Christ? We have that in John 14:28—from what statement Jesus made. “You have heard Me say to you that I am going away, and *that* I will come to you *again*. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I said, ‘I am going to the Father’ because My Father is greater than I.”

Let's look at another one, let's go to 1-Corinthians 15—we have that in the Scripture reference. When everything is done on the earth that is done, through the whole plan of God, then what Christ does, we find here in 1-Corinthians 15:24: “Afterwards the end *comes*, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to Him Who *is* God and Father, when He shall have put an end to all rule and all authority and power. For it is ordained that He reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. *The last enemy to be destroyed is death*. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when it is said that all things have been put in subjection, *it is* clearly evident that *it does* not include Him Who put all things in subjection under Him.... [In other words, the *He* that is ‘excepted’ is God the Father. In other words, Christ is under God the Father—that's what it's telling us in that statement there.]...But

when He has put all things in subjection to Him, then shall the Son Himself also be subject to Him Who put all things in subjection to Him, so that God may be all in all” (vs 24-28). So filling out the fullness of the plan of God. So, God the Father is greater.

Now, just in the Scriptural references we have here, John 6:44: God calls each one. We receive the begettal from God the Father (John 14, and so forth). He is a Supreme Being. Let's go to Hebrews, the first chapter—this is not in the margin, but it has to do with Christ. And this is quite a profound chapter, quite a profound section of Scriptures, showing about God the Father and Jesus Christ. The first part of it shows that He's made in the image of the Father.

Hebrews 1:8: “But on the other hand, of the Son *He* says, ‘Your throne, O God... [So here Christ is called ‘God’] ...‘Your throne, O God, *is* into the ages of eternity; a scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your Kingdom. You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; because of this, God, *even* Your God... [In this case the second ‘God’ is the Father] ...*even* Your God, has anointed You with *the* oil of gladness above Your companions’” (vs 8-9). So there we have God the Father is greater.

Now when we come to Revelation 21 & 22 and showing that God the Father is sending down New Jerusalem to the earth and so forth; and that shows when God the Father's plan is concluded and then all will be “all in one.”

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptures referenced:

- 1) John 14:28
- 2) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28
- 3) Hebrews 1:8-9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 6:44
- Revelation 21, 22

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God the Son—Jesus Christ of Nazareth

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Let's go on here *Beliefs of Christian Biblical Church of God*, (pg 4-5 throughout):

Prior to His human birth, the Elohim of the God Family Who became the Son eternally existed with the Elohim of the God Family Who became the Father. All things were created by God the Father through God the Son.

Now, right there let's look at two things. Let's go to Psalm 2 and John 17. Question is: Is there any indication that the two Elohim were perfectly equal? Is there anything in the Bible which tells us that? *Not directly!* There was a time, there was a day, there was an instant when this occurred—and it occurred only once. Part of the doctrine that the Catholics have in their trinity is that the Father is eternally begetting the Son, which is a purely pagan doctrine. It happened on one day.

Psalm 2:7: "I will declare the decree of the LORD. He has said to Me, 'You are My Son; this day I have begotten You.'" There was **one day** that occurred, and that was the day the angel Gabriel came to Mary and said, 'The power of the Highest will overshadow you. And that which is being conceived in you shall be called *the Son of God*.' That's the only day that that occurred—right there. ***At that point, the one of Elohim became the Father and the other of Elohim became the Son***—at that point, not until.

Now then, let's go to John 17, because Jesus makes a statement here, and it's held up in the Greek. When I translated that I was really very excited about it. John 17:4: "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You **before the world existed**" (vs. 4-5)—showing that He was with the Father as Elohim and that there was the time when it came for Him to become the Son; and it was that one day that He was begotten. So that Greek verb 'was' (*KJV*) means *existed*. It is an infinitive form of the verb, very rarely used.

Let's come back to the *Belief's* booklet:

All things were created by God the Father **through** God the Son.

We have quite a few statements showing that. Let's go to Colossians, the first chapter. And you can put in there: Heb. 1. We have some very in-depth things given to us by the Apostle Paul; speaking of Christ:

Colossians 1:15: "Who is *the* image of the

invisible God, the firstborn of all creation... [Now when we answer that this way, that means *first born from the dead of all those created through the process of the resurrection*.] ...because **by Him were all things created**, the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *they* be thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by Him and for Him**. And He is before all, and by Him all things subsist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church; Who is *the* beginning, *the* firstborn from among the dead..." (vs 15-18). Now that's what it's talking about, the firstborn here. Not only was Christ the first-born of Mary, but He was the firstborn from the dead—both. And He's going to be in that office and title of firstborn forever; just like the Church is going to be in that office and title as the firstborn Church—the firstfruits.

Now, let's go to Hebrews 1:1 and let's look the other part of it here: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power... [So that shows the very power of Christ. That is something! ALL things.] ...when He had by Himself purged our sins... [Now why did He have to do it by Himself? *Because He's the one Who made all things!* Therefore, as Creator, He is responsible—correct? So therefore, He alone can solve the problem by making it right and by making it just.] (So He had to): ...by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high" (vs 1-3).

Let's then go to Philippians 2. Now, this is really quite a profound section of Scripture. First of all, we have to understand—and we have it in the series *Who is Jesus?* and we go into this in quite detail if you will recall. First of all, ***nothing is impossible with God***—that's what we have to understand. That's why, in understanding what He did here, we need to read these verses and see exactly what it says.

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus... [That's the whole purpose of conversion; and grace and knowledge; and growing and overcoming—to have the mind of Christ.] ...Who, although He existed in *the* form of God... [The Greek there is 'huparcho'—that was His being; He existed as God.] ...did not consider it

robbery to be equal with God... [And that has to do with His existence. Obviously, God the Father is greater in authority and power, because other Scriptures tell us that. But He is *equal* in existence with God.] ...but emptied Himself..." (vs 5-7)—means **He gave up all title, all authority, all power**—trusted it in the hands of God the Father. Now that's how much love and faith that there is between the Elohim Who became the Father and the Elohim Who became the Son, because He had to give up everything; retain enough of God in Him—however that was done through the begetting with Mary—that He could be called the Son of God. But you go all the way back in the genealogy—and remember Adam is called the son of God.

"...but emptied Himself... [So He gave up everything. That's quite something, too— isn't it? When you stop and consider what has God asked us to give up—in change and repentance and all of that. What did God give up?] ...and was made in the likeness of men, and took the form of a servant" (v 7). Now *servant* here in the Greek is 'doulos' which means *slave*. Same as an ordinary slave" The Greek for *likeness* is 'homoiomates' meaning *exactly the same as any other man*. Why was that important? He had to take on the same nature of man—with the 'law of sin and death' within Him; He couldn't take that upon Him as God, because God cannot sin. So He had to divest Himself of everything. 'No reputation' (KJV) [emptied Himself], *be made exactly like man*.

And it's important from this point of view: Let's go to 1-John 4—because some people in their theology say that Jesus never was flesh. They say that Jesus *appeared* as flesh, but never *was* flesh. 1-John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.... [This tells you the inspiration of the false prophets—doesn't it?] ...By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the flesh* is from God... [*flesh* there is 'sarx' or 's-a-r (the Greek character which looks like a combination of x and z'.)] ...And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God...." (vs 1-3). And that also tells you the inspiration behind that kind of doctrine. And that's part of the thing that comes with the doctrine of the trinity, which is that Jesus came and it looked like He was flesh, but He wasn't flesh. But He had to die, because He put the death sentence upon all mankind.

Let's go to Romans 8 and then we'll go to Hebrews 2. This is why He had to divest Himself of everything. Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ

Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit; because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death" (vs 1-2). And it's very important that everyone understand that. That's why we have a sinful nature; because we have not only the 'law of death' in us that we die—all flesh dies—but we also have a sinful nature, which is called 'the law of sin and death.'

"For what *was* impossible for the law to do... [the Ten Commandments and so forth] ...in that it was weak through the flesh... [Now why are the commandments of God weak through the flesh? Well, it's very simple: **human beings who have the 'law of sin and death' cannot keep the law perfect, because it's weak**. How is it weak? *Because it has the 'law of sin and death' in it*. That's how it's weak.] ...God, having sent His own Son in the likeness... ['homoiomates' in the sameness] ...of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (v 3). Now, He sent His own Son in the 'likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' How was He able to do that? Here is God's justice. God gave up being God—the One Who became Christ, to become a human being—and took within Himself the 'law of sin and death.' It says He was 'made in the likeness of sinful flesh.' And never sinned. Would that be complete triumph over sin under the most difficult circumstances? *Yes!*

Let's look at a couple more Scriptures here. Let's go to Hebrews 2:9, showing He took upon Him flesh and blood: "But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death..." Now, if you are a spirit being you can't die, so He had to give up being a spirit being. Angels can't die.

Hebrews 5:7: "Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death..." Jesus had to be saved from death. That's why when He was on the cross, the very last words He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.' Anything to do with life had to go to God the Father. So that He was literally dead.

Now just like as we mentioned concerning the tape recorder here, that the tape only works in a tape recorder. The machine without the tape is dead. So likewise, ***the body without the spirit is dead***. So when Jesus said, 'Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit,' He died! "...able to save Him from death..." (v 7). So He had to be saved from death. That's why He came. ***He came to die!*** That's what makes Him so absolutely fantastic and unique inasmuch that ***God did this to save humankind***. That's why we need to have strong faith in Christ, strong faith in the ability of God to forgive sin. He

took upon Him all of that of human beings in order to forgive sin because He put us under sin, and He gave us a sinful nature. So therefore, in order to be just, He took it upon Himself.

Now notice Hebrews 2:9: "...crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone.... [That means *every human being*. That's why His death, as a perfect sacrifice, covers the sins of ALL mankind; because He came in the flesh to die, carried the 'law of sin and death' within Him; and yet, DID NOT SIN!] ...because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (vs 9-10).

Verse 14: "Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same, in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil." So that's why He did that.

In other words, since we're made in the image and likeness of God, only the death of God could solve the problem of sin. In order for God to die, He had to give to God the Father that very last bit of life: His spirit. When He said, 'Into Your hands I commend My spirit'—and He died! He had to do that. No one else could do it. An angel could not do it. God the Father could not do it. Only the one Who became Jesus Christ was able to do that.

Verse 16: "For surely, He is not taking upon Himself to help *the* angels; but He is taking upon Himself to help *the* seed of Abraham. For this reason, it was obligatory for *Him* ... [God took an obligation upon Himself] ...to be made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in* things pertaining to God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered, having been tempted *in like manner*, He is able to help those who are being tempted" (vs 16-18).

Now come here to Hebrews 4:14: "Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet *He was* without sin" (vs 14-15). You can't be tempted unless you have a nature that could be *temptable*. Does that make sense? If He did not carry in Him the 'law of sin and death' there would be nothing to tempt Him with, because He would not have any proclivity or even the possibility of sinning. So therefore, temptation would be

meaningless.

A couple of good comments were made: That in taking upon Himself the 'law of sin and death' He also took upon Him the nature, which would have—without the Holy Spirit—put Him in the same category as all human beings; that is *an enemy of God*. When we are called and receive the Spirit of God, and through repentance and baptism and receiving of the Holy Spirit, then we have what is called *the circumcision 'made without hands' of the heart*, so then *we* are no longer enemies of God—and through the power of the Holy Spirit, *we* have that direct connection with God. That way, He could be tempted as we are; but with the Holy Spirit from conception, He was able to live without sinning. Now that is a great and a marvelous accomplishment!

Let's look at this way: As God, can God be tempted to sin? **No, because God is perfect!** As an angel, could He overcome an angel, not be subject to the temptation of human beings? *Yes, an angel is not subject to the temptations of human beings*; because an angel does not have 'the law of sin and death' within it, so it's not subject to the same temptations. So therefore, that's why it's so profound what God did in giving up being God to become a human being. Yes, just a speck of life, and then go through the whole thing that we go through.

Does that mean that when angels sin, their sins are far greater than ours because they do not have the 'law of sin and death'? It shows a determination upon their part. I'd have to say *yes*, looking at the sin of Satan the devil and the angels, yes, it would have to be far more premeditated. I mean, as human beings we're blinded; we're shut up unto sin; we're shut up under the 'law of sin and death'—and we just blither our lives through, not knowing. But angels, not subject to the 'law of sin and death' knowing God, their sin has got to be far greater.

Let's finish this section here—reading the section in the *Belief's* booklet:

Prior to His human birth, the Elohim of the God Family Who became the Son eternally existed with the Elohim of the God Family Who became the Father....

We're not told which one was which, so we have to put it in that framework.

...All things were created by God the Father through God the Son. The Son is revealed in the Old Testament as the Lord God and Lawgiver...

He's the one Who spoke to Israel. He's the one Who was on Mt. Sinai. He was the one Who led the children of Israel; so forth.

...and in the New Testament as the Word of God. In order to become the Savior of all mankind, He willingly divested Himself of His position in the God Family, giving up His majesty, glory and power, to become a fleshly human being, born of the virgin Mary and begotten of God the Father, Who directed that He be named Jesus. His full New Covenant name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. As a human being having sinful human flesh, He was subject to the same temptations as every human being, yet He never sinned. As the perfect Lamb of God, He gave Himself to be God the Father's special, unique sacrifice through the crucifixion as an atonement for the sins of all mankind. After being dead in the grave for three days and three nights, He was resurrected to eternal life through the power of God the Father, becoming the Firstborn from among the dead. He was again invested with the full Divine nature and power of the God Family. He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father as mankind's High Priest, Advocate and Intercessor with the Father, and as the Head of the Church. Jesus Christ will return to earth in the power and glory of His Father to establish the Kingdom and Government of God on the earth. As King of kings and Lord of lords, He will rule the earth forever with His brothers and sisters, the children of God the Father.

So as you can see, in each one of these statements, there's an awful lot behind each one of these statements.

Let's go to the Gospel of John, the first chapter; and this is one of the most fundamental Scriptures that there is. And this tells us also that at the time that John was writing this, they had much the same problem with the nature of Christ as we still find today with teachings of various religions.

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**.... [Very important!] ...He was in *the* beginning with God.... [double affirmation] ...All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him.... [double affirmation] ...In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (vs 1-4). In studying this in the Greek, we find something very interesting with the word 'was.' It could be translated, *had been*

or you could actually translate it this way: 'Before the beginning was the Word.' It's possible to translate it that way. And 'the Word was or had been with God. And the Word was God.'

Now, we can get very technical in going into this; however, what we need to understand is this: When you come to the first verse and 'the Word was God'—you have God without the definite article: 'ho logos en theos' which means *without the definite article that* the Word was God in everything that God is God. Wasn't *less than* God, was not *a* God—although technically you could say that when referring to the Father. So He was everything that God encompasses.

Now, with that in mind go to Hebrews, the first chapter. And everywhere you go where the New Testament talks about the pre-existence of the one Who became Christ, you always find that He is Creator. And that becomes very important when you understand that He became the human being to pay for the sins of all mankind, because He made everything. So, it's not like Harry Truman said, 'The buck stops here, and if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen.' It's not like that.

God is the Creator, and if He's going to bring everything back to perfection—HE must do it! No one else can. It's like the same situation with each one of us. I cannot live my life for you, and you can't live your life for her, and you can't live your life for him, and you can't make choices for the other person—though you may see things that are right or wrong, and you may see things that need to be done—you cannot choose to do it.

So that's why Christ was the One Who became human, because He created it and He was responsible to the nth degree. Now that's why Hebrews 1:1 is so important: "has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things.... [put in your margin there: Rom. 8:19, because we're co-heirs with Christ.] ...by Whom also He made the worlds.... [And 'the worlds' here is *ages*, the *eons*, the *times*. Now notice, it's talking about another aspect of how we understand about Christ. Back here in John, the first chapter, it says, "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now then, this adds more to it.] ...Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person... [looks exactly like the Father] ...and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself... [and that's a key, important phrase: 'by Himself'—He alone could do it] ...purged our sins..." (vs 1-3).

The fact that He *appointed* shows that God the Father was greater at that time than the One Who became Jesus Christ—yes, it does. So what we have is this: They were equal in existence, but not equal

in authority and office. And this is very profound when you understand it: ***You can have your sins forgiven by no other means than Jesus Christ and the blood of His sacrifice—period!***--because He did it by Himself. That's why any other physical thing, that's why when the Catholic Church says that you have to do these works to earn the grace; you can never earn grace because grace is no longer grace if you earn by work. Grace is a free gift of God. So He had to do it by Himself for many reasons.

1. He was Creator
2. He gave all human beings human nature, the law of sin and death, in them
3. He had to be responsible for it because He created it
4. And since no other human being could purge the sins of any other human being, just human-to-human, it had to be God coming in the flesh to do it—and that's why God chose to do it this way.

So it's a very profound and personal and intimate thing that He has done.

Now then, since the Hebrews were into angels and angelology, v 4: "Having been made so much greater than *any* of the angels, inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them.... [more excellent!] ...For to which of the angels did He ever say... [Now, this is interesting because the Mormon religion believes that the angel Maroni epitomizes what the saints are going to become. Christ, they believe, was a created being Who was like an angel. This is an old, old doctrine. Mormons did not invent it. This came out of old Gnosticism. And this is what Paul is combating here at this particular place.] ...For to which of the angels did He ever say, 'You are My Son; this day I have begotten You'?.... [That goes back to Psalms 2] ...And again, 'I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me'?" (vs 4-5). And that ties right in with what we were covering back here in the first chapter of the Gospel of John.

Now, let's go back there again. John 1:10: "He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him... [So this tells us that, again, He was God Who created the world, because He couldn't come into the world unless He had created it—there's a reaffirmation of it.] ...but the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.... [And 'to receive Him' means to welcome someone as you embrace them into your bosom.] ...but as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become *the* children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name; who were not begotten by bloodlines... [not of human blood, because it was what? *Begetting of God the Father.*] ...nor by *the* will of *the* flesh... [passions and

desires of the flesh] ...nor by *the* will of man... [by just sitting down and a man saying, 'we're going to do this.' One is by passion. One is by plan.] ...but by *the* will of God.... [So that applies more directly to Christ than to us. You can't say this of any of us: 'who are born not of blood.' All of us were born of blood—correct?] ...nor by *the* will of *the* flesh.... [Some of us were mistakes—that's passions of the flesh—correct? That happens!] ...nor by *the* will of man, but by *the* will of God" (vs 10-13). So when God calls us and gives us His Holy Spirit, we are already in this condition here. Christ was the only one to have fulfilled this condition, not us.

Now notice, v 14 follows right along with that: "And the Word became flesh... [Why? *Because the Word was God, and the Word became flesh*—'sarx' is the Greek there, same word that applies to *our* flesh and our fleshly nature; 'sarx'—'that which is born of the flesh *is* flesh; that which is born of the spirit *is* spirit.'] ...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." Which shows then that everything from Christ comes from His very being down to us.

Now, let's go back to the *Belief's* booklet, and this becomes—right here, in going through this—the dividing line between the Truth of the Scriptures and the theology of men. And there's a lot of theology of men out there, which are twisting and turning things. For example: When we get to the Holy Spirit, but I'll just project ahead here—***nowhere*** does it say the Holy Spirit is God, ***nowhere*** in the Scriptures. It clearly does of God the Father. It clearly does of Jesus Christ—doesn't it? ***Never*** does it say the Holy Spirit is God! That is a theological elevation which men have put on it to justify a later doctrinal stance.

In order to become the Savior of all mankind, He willingly divested Himself of His position in the God Family, giving up His majesty, glory and power, to become a fleshly human being, born of the virgin Mary and begotten of God the Father, Who directed that He be named Jesus.

Now that covers an awful lot of Scripture. If you wanted to go through all the Scriptures on it, you have part of what we covered here; you have Luke 1 & 2; Christ growing up and so forth.

His full New Covenant name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. As a human being having sinful human flesh, He was subject to the same temptations as every human being, yet He never sinned.

Now let's look at that a little bit more. Let's go to Romans, the eighth chapter. This is so important! It

is one thing to have a possibility to sin. It's another thing to have the possibility of sinning but *never* sinning. He could not be tempted unless He had the possibility of sinning. There would be no value in the temptation—would there? Now what if you had an electronic shield that was around you all the time; and that with this electronic shield nothing could get to you—bullets, arrows, spears, daggers, electricity, lasers—nothing could get to you. Would you have your life threatened unto death by any of those things? *No, you'd be impervious to it!* So it's the same way with Christ.

Romans 8:2: "Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death.... [Now this is a culmination of Rom. 7—we covered this in the Roman's series. Every human being has 'the law of sin and death.'](Now notice, it tells us very clearly that Jesus took on that same nature): ...For what *was* impossible for the law to do... [that is powerless] ...in that it was weak through the flesh..." (vs 2-3). That's interesting! The law can only state something—can't it? Can the law, stated, enforce something? *No, it has no power to enforce!* It says, 'You shall not kill.' But does it have the power to enforce 'you shall not kill'? *No!* How is the law going to enforce that? *It can't!* Same way with adultery; same way with idolatry; same way with false witness; same way with any of the commandments. Any of the things stated in the law then depends upon the character of the person who's going to follow that—correct?

Now if the person has the 'law of sin and death' in them—which everyone does—can human beings fulfill the law? *No!* Why? *Because it's weak with the 'law of sin and death.'*

Verse 3: "For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh... [because of the 'law of sin and death'] ...God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh... [Now *likeness* in the Greek is 'homoiomates'—which means *the same, identical*; not a different kind; not a better kind; but the same kind. He was made flesh. He became flesh—which means *He carried human nature within Him and all that human nature means*—which means He had the

- potential to sin
- potential to be an enemy of God
- potential to do any of the things that human beings would do.

But, being begotten of God the Father and having the Holy Spirit without measure He never did sin. But He had to have that kind flesh to overcome all the things that He gave His own creation. So, "...in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, **and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.**" And that's how He condemned sin

in the flesh, by never sinning though carrying the 'law of sin and death' within Him. So it does not say that Jesus never, at any time, yielded to any of the pulls of the flesh. It had to be there in order for Him to be tempted.

Now, let's go to Hebrews, the fourth chapter, and let's see that—very important. This is why Christ is so exalted by God the Father. Hebrews 4:13: "And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight... [that means *laid bare*] ... but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who was tempted in all things* [points] according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet He was without sin" (vs 13-15)—in *all points*.

That would have to do with everything concerning obedience to God; everything to do with loving God and loving neighbor. That's why it's so important when Jesus said that everything hangs on the two commandments of 'loving God and loving your neighbor. It's very important that when—and you will experience in your own life with the power of the Holy Spirit—that when you are yielding to God, to love Him and love your neighbor and love each other, that you are going to find yourself overcoming the pulls of the flesh and sinning less than you did previously. Sometimes when you work so hard on a problem that you are going to do it, that you forget to love God; that you forget to cry out for

- **His strength**
- **His Spirit**
- **His love**
- **His understanding**

that you get so concentrated on it that your problem ends up being worse. I know I've experience that. I've done that, and you have to come to the point where you really understand that only the love of God can intervene and change that. That's the whole predicament of human nature. Yes, we can go along and do good things for a while, but what happens? Bam! Something always happens, doesn't it? And then we get discouraged and we think: Where is God? *Well, God is still there*—the problem is not God! It's the weakness of the flesh. So that's why I don't believe enough can be said about the love of God—we'll cover that a little bit later here, but that's very important for us to understand.

"...yet *He was* without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in

time of need” (vs 15-16). And we need that grace continually. As we had in the book of Romans:

- *We stand in grace*
- *We walk by faith*
- *We live in hope*
- *and We dwell in love*

Those are all the operation of the Spirit.

Now, let's come down here to Hebrews 5:7—it talks about the one Christ Who became Melchizedek. “Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death...” Now that sentence tells us very little, but an awful lot—doesn't it? Christ had to be saved from death. It says so right here—right? *Yes!* Which means that any sin that would come along that He would do would bring a death penalty upon Him—correct?—for His own sins. You also have this: God the Father had to save Him from death, the death that He died, to raise Him back to eternal life again. Had to have both. So there had to be complete love and complete trust between the Father and the Son in order for that to be done. Because when Christ died He said, ‘Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.’ It's all in the hands of God the Father at that moment.

So He had to be saved from death. “...and was heard because *He* feared *God*. Although He was a Son, yet He learned obedience...” (vs 7-8). Now, that is a powerful statement when you understand that. Christ, carrying the ‘law of sin and death’ in Him, had to learn obedience through the love of God, doing the things that please God, and you'd have to know that His was the toughest case of all. He wasn't welcomed or received by anyone. The only one that loved Him was the Apostle John. Even the rest of the apostles were pretty carnal until after the resurrection—weren't they? *Yes, they were!*

He had to carry all the sins of the world. He had to know human nature inside out. We know that He could understand the thoughts and hearts and mind—right? So going through that and really understanding that He was really alone, *tremendously alone!* And His life, though it was joyful in the Father, was filled with sorrow.

Let's come here to Isaiah 53. I mean, we can read this and we can say, ‘Oh yes, this is a prophecy of Christ.’ But if we put it in context of what we are talking about, this becomes very profound. Isaiah 53:1: “Who has believed our report?... [Who has believed this thing? That God would do such a thing?] ...And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?... [In other words, showing what God is doing.] ...For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He

has no form nor comeliness that we should look upon Him, nor beauty that we should desire Him” (vs 1-2). Even though He was the Son of God, He did not take the best looks, the most perfect whatever. Just as an ordinary human being. Why? *So no one can say*, ‘Well Lord, when You were here You were successful because You were strong and good looking.’ No, because there are a lot of people who are not in that condition that Christ is also saving—correct? So He also understood what they were going through by what He went through.

“*He is despised and rejected of men... [No one accepted Him. Came to His own. No one accepted Him! Remember, He went back to Nazareth and they said, ‘Well, who is this?’ Jesus could not even do any miracles there—just lay hands on a few sick folks and they were healed. And totally rejected! You read the book of Acts and what happened after the apostles started preaching—My! What a thing that was!] ...a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief... [So you would have to say that He was acquainted with the greatest grief of anyone, the greatest sorrows of anyone. And how much more so knowing that you made and created all of this, and that you do not want your creation to be destroyed; but you want to save it. You talk about hard to love—correct? But He had to always love God the Father and always love human beings regardless of the situation there. Unconditional love that He had, though He was all of these things here.] ...and we hid as it were our faces from Him, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; yet, we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*” (vs 3-4).

That's what they said: ‘If You're the Son of God come down off the cross; we'll believe You then.’ But it wasn't God's will for Him to do that—correct? *Yes!* “But He *was* wounded for our transgressions; He *was* crushed for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and with His stripes we ourselves are healed” (v 5). So He had to carry all of that. Quite a thing, brethren, that Jesus did!—when you understand what Jesus did.

Being lonely like that, that's why He was comforted by the Father. Of course, God the Father also suffered with Him when He was doing that. Let's go to 2-Corinthians 5—we need to understand that, too. God the Father is not removed as sort of a remote God way off some place that is not involved; because God the Father is the one Who calls us—correct? *Yes!* Was God the Father involved with Christ and the operation of reconciliation? The operation of what Christ was going through in His life? *Yes!*

2-Corinthians 5:17—this is really

something! “Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creation.... [*being created* because the process of salvation is creation] ...the old things have passed away... [meaning *are passing away*] ...behold, all things have become new.... [that’s a process of conversion—the way you live your life; the way you view everything] ...And all things *are* from God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ... [So God the Father was active in Christ. What did Christ say? *The Father dwelling in Me is doing the works*—correct? *Yes!* So it was even greater than just seeing what Jesus went through. *The Father, through the Spirit, experienced what Christ went through.* Not in exactly the same intense, personal way that Christ did—because He was the recipient of the suffering, and God the Father was also recipient of this, second hand, through the Spirit.] ...Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation... [now that’s quite a thing we need to understand, bringing people back to God] ...which *is*, that God was in Christ...” (vs 17-19). There it is!

Go to the Gospel of John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the Truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.... [That’s why there are not a ‘jillion’ ways to God. There’s ONE; that is Christ! And that’s why Satan wants the world to hate Him.] ...If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also... [because 2-Cor. 5 says that Father was ‘in Him’—correct?] ...But from this time forward, you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long a time, and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, “Show us the Father”?’” (vs 6-9). And of course, that was hard for him to fathom.

So He asked him a question: “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?... [And that ties right in with 2-Cor. 5—that God was *in* Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.] ...The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, Who dwells in Me, does the works.... [through the power of the Holy Spirit] ...Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves” (vs 10-11). So He even gave them a choice: ‘If you don’t want to believe just exactly what I said, then believe what you’ve seen being with Me during this ministry all these years.’

Now, back to 2-Corinthians 5:19—let’s just review that again: “Which *is*, that God was in Christ, reconciling *the* world to Himself, not imputing their

trespasses to them... [Because if God is going to judge us upon what we are, by our character without Christ and without grace, the sentence is DEATH! There can be no question. But He’s *not* imputing them *because of Christ*—that’s the operation of grace.] ...has entrusted to us *this* message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; *and* God, as it were, is exhorting *you* through us. We beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, ‘Be reconciled to God.’” (vs 19-20). Then he shows how to be reconciled to God.

“For **He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin for us....** [Whatever all of that statement means, including the potential for every kind of sin—would have to be—correct?] ...so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him” (v 21). Therefore, when Christ was put to death sin was put to death in the overall spiritual operation. But then that is (how shall we say) given to each individual as God calls, in His time-plan of calling whom He’s going to call. It didn’t take away all sin with no participation of the sinner to come to repentance. It opened the door for the removal of all sin once there is repentance and baptism and yielding to God. First of all, **God calling**. So with the sacrifice this great and going this far and doing this much, God is not going to leave it to chance. He’s just not going to.

“...made Him Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him” (v 21). Now, when we come to the imputed righteousness of faith, then we’ll cover that a little bit more in depth. Isn’t that something? Let me just summarize it this way, what Christ did: He took His righteous character and took upon Him the ‘law of sin and death’ so that He could be the sin sacrifice that when He died, He died for our sins. But we have to repent and accept that sacrifice. When we do that, He imputes to us His righteousness. Now that is profound! Gives it to us by grace. Not that we go around and say, ‘Oh well, I’m as good as Christ is now.’ No! We have our part. We have our choice. We have everything involved in it; that we ‘might be made’—notice: *be made*. A process. “...the righteousness of God in Him.”

Now, let’s go to 1-Timothy 3. I think I even did a sermon on this one time. I went through the Bible and looked at every chapter 3 and verse 16; because of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

1-Timothy 3:16: “And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness.... [And we just talked about part of that, what Christ has done. And the other part of the mystery is Christ in us. That He is re-creating *Christ in us*.] ...God was manifest in *the*

flesh.... [Now, there's no way you can get around the fact that Christ was God before He became a human being.] ...manifest in *the* flesh, was justified in *the* Spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the* Gentiles, was believed on in *the* world, was received up in glory." Now there's the quickest summary of the life and death of Christ, right there, one verse!

Now let's continue in the *Belief's* booklet:

As the perfect Lamb of God, He gave Himself to be God the Father's special, unique sacrifice through the crucifixion as an atonement for the sins of all mankind. After being dead in the grave for three days and three nights, He was resurrected to eternal life through the power of God the Father, becoming the Firstborn from among the dead.

We find that in Romans 8—"firstborn from among the dead." It talks about Christ as being the firstborn. We have His birth. When Mary brought Him forth, brought forth her firstborn. We have his physical birth and then we have His resurrection birth.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God... [So there again, it's keyed on the love of God. It won't work for good if you're not loving God—it may be a complete, total disaster.] ...to those who are called according to *His* purpose, because those whom He did foreknow, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His own Son, that He might be *the* firstborn among many brethren" (vs 28-29). So there it is, 'the firstborn from among the dead,' as we saw last week in Col. 1, and 'among many brethren.' And if we're going to be spiritual, brethren, that ties in with the other Scriptures that we will see Him as He is for we'll be like Him. And it goes back to the whole purpose of why God made man the way He did—in His image. Two purposes, two very important reasons:

1. So Christ could become a human being to redeem man.
2. So we could become the sons and daughters of God to be like Him.

...Firstborn from among the dead. He was again invested with the full divine nature and power of the God Family. He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father as mankind's High Priest, Advocate and Intercessor [and Mediator]

We find that in 1-Timothy 2:5: "For there *is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself *as* a ransom

for all, the testimony *of which is to be preached* in its appointed times" (vs 5-6). So again, you find that His sacrifice covers all the sins of all mankind. So He's a Mediator.

...with the Father, and as the Head of the Church.

And this is where most of the Churches of God get off the track—and every other church, as a matter of fact; because they do not constantly point all the brethren to God. That's why the Church is likened unto a body. We have some experts in the medical field here, so if I'm wrong you can correct me. But, each nerve cell has independent access to the head—but it's part of the body. And that's the way God wants it with every one of us. We all have immediate access to Jesus Christ, nothing else in-between. It's just like if you stub your little toe, your little toe instantly let's your brain know, uth-oh you've done something! That's what it always has to be, brethren. And another thing that's important, too, is this:

I heard a sermon this week someone sent to me about hierarchy. ***God has not called us to a hierarchy; He's called us to a relationship.*** That's important to understand, because bringing the hierarchy so much into the Church and even saying that a marriage is a hierarchy is incorrect. The man is the head, but that doesn't mean a hierarchy; because there's authority, because there is a structure does not mean it's a hierarchy. *Marriage is a covenant relationship*—is it not? *Yes!* Same way with a family. A family is not a hierarchy, though there is control, the father is the head of the family, and so forth. It is a relationship. And the children born are from your own bodies, so they are part of you. So you have a relationship by creation. You have a relationship by covenant. And it's the same way with God. We have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, which is not hierarchical though God the Father is over all. We have a relationship with God that is on the family basis.

Looking back and thinking how many things that we did wrong in the Churches of God, because we had everything based on a hierarchy and saying that a family was a hierarchy. No! That's why when you come to the New Testament Jesus said, "If you love Me keep My commandments." Because it has to be based on love; it has to be based on a relationship. And that's very important to remember, especially when we understand what Christ has done here for us.

With carnal human beings, I think the army is the epitome of a carnal organization where you need absolute hierarchy. It's not based on love; it's based on destruction. It's not based on service; it's based on war. It's based on blind obedience unto

death to serve the purpose of the one who declares war; which then is just to serve carnal purposes. Yes! So that's why with everything carnal in the world, you need that. But that's why Christ said, 'With you it shall not be so.' It's going to be a different relationship. And I'll have more to say on that as we get down the road here. Let's finish this section here on Christ.

Jesus Christ will return to earth in the power and glory of His Father to establish the Kingdom and Government of God on the earth. As King of kings and Lord of lords, He will rule the earth forever with His brothers and sisters, the children of God the Father.

I just want to add one other thing that's important here with Jesus Christ, and that is this: The Catholic doctrine is that the Son of God—Christ—was begotten in eternity and is eternally begotten. And that's why they have the trinity. If you will get the old study that we had on the trinity and look in that section that we took out of the Catholic faith, to show the symbolism that they had for God the Father, the Holy Spirit and so forth, and you will see that that is their declaration. Whereas, when we went through and showed that God said, 'Today, have I begotten You.' There was only one instance in all the history of eternity when the one Who became Jesus Christ was literally begotten—only one instance!

Now, let's go to Luke, the first chapter, and let's finish that section up concerning it; and just cover a couple of other things that are important for us to understand. Let's just make a special note concerning Gabriel. Luke 1:26: "And in the sixth month of her pregnancy ... [with John the Baptist] ...the angel Gabriel was sent from God..." When you go back in Dan. 9, you find that it was also Daniel who brought the prophecy of the 70-Weeks Prophecy and the coming of the Messiah. So we can conclude from this that Gabriel is the angel that is in charge of working out all of the events up to the birth of Christ; because when Daniel wanted to know and he finally got the answer, it was Gabriel who gave him the answer.

Daniel 9:21: "Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man, Gabriel... [Now that's how he appeared unto Daniel—so that's the angel] ...whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, came to me about the time of the evening sacrifice. And he *made* me to understand, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight and understanding. At the beginning of your supplications...' (vs 21-23) were heard and so forth. So then He gives the 70-Week Prophecy to

Daniel concerning the coming of the Messiah. We won't get into all the details concerning that. We have covered part of that in the book *When Was Jesus Born?*

But Gabriel continues on with his responsibilities—we saw in v 26 that it was Gabriel—Luke 1:19: "And the angel answered *and* said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to announce this good news to you'" So not only did he give the prophecy of it back there in Dan. 9, he was also responsible in fulfilling all of these things of the prophecies that he gave and to do them at the specific set time.

Let's come down here to v 30: "Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found grace with God; and behold, you shall conceive in *your* womb and give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called *the* Son of *the* Highest; and *the* Lord God shall give Him the throne of David, His forefather; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob into the ages, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.' But Mary said to the angel, 'How shall this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?' And the angel answered *and* said to her, '*The* Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and *the* power of *the* Highest shall overshadow you; and for this reason, the Holy One being begotten in you shall be called *the* Son of God'" (vs 30-35).

Now, it's very interesting right there: 'shall be born' is not a future tense verb at all. It is a present tense participle meaning *that which is now being begotten within you*—at the moment that he was speaking. And that is *the* day—*this day*, as we saw last week in Psa. 2—'have I begotten you.' This is the day. So Jesus was NOT eternally begotten. Jesus was NOT a created being, as some say the very first created thing that God had made. When we went through the series *Who Was Jesus?* we go through each one of these things step-by-step-by-step.

Remember, not only is He mankind's High Priest, Advocate, Intercessor, but *He's the Mediator*.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 2:7
- 2) John 17:4-5
- 3) Colossians 1:15-18
- 4) Hebrews 1:1-3
- 5) Philippians 2:5-7
- 6) 1 John 4:1-3
- 7) Romans 8:1-3

- 8) Hebrews 2:9
- 9) Hebrews 5:7
- 10) Hebrews 2:9-10, 14, 16-18
- 11) Hebrews 4:14-15
- 12) John 1:1-4
- 13) Hebrews 1:2-5
- 14) John 1:10-14
- 15) Romans 8:2-3
- 16) Romans 8:3
- 17) Hebrews 4:13-16
- 18) Hebrews 5:7-8
- 19) Isaiah 53:1-5
- 20) 2 Corinthians 5:17-19
- 21) John 14:6-11
- 22) 2 Corinthians 5:19-21
- 23) John 3:16
- 24) 1-Timothy 3:16
- 25) Romans 8:28-29
- 26) 1 Timothy 2:5-6
- 27) Luke 1:26
- 28) Daniel 9:21-23
- 29) Luke 1:19, 30-35

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Romans 8:19

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Romans*
- *Who Was Jesus?*

Book: *When Was Jesus Born?*

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Nature of Mankind I

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

Now, let's come to the next section in the *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, (pg 5 throughout). As we did with the other ones, we'll read through it, we can make comments, questions, we'll look at the Scriptures. And this is really quite a thing here when we come to fully understand it.

The Elohim of the God Family Who later became Jesus Christ personally created Adam and Eve with His own hands. He created them in the image and likeness of God, or Elohim, but a little lower than God. Human beings are made of flesh and blood and do not have inherent immortality.

There's no such thing as an immortal soul. As we already covered, 'the soul that sins it will die.'

However, God has added to the human brain a spirit essence called the "spirit of man." This spiritual dimension in the human brain imparts reasoning power and intellect, and gives human beings the capacity to think, to speak, to learn, to write, to plan, to devise, to create, to build, to control, to teach, to choose, to worship, to build character, and to experience every emotion.

Now, let's look at the Scriptures concerning that. That's very important for us to understand. Let's first of all go to Zechariah 12. And this 'spirit in man' is what distinguishes between men and animals. They've analyzed just the brain-matter of different animals and they have found that the brain-matter is not much different from human beings. But why is it that human beings can do so much more than animals? I guess a whale is supposed to have the largest brain of any mammal in the world, but it can't get out of the sea. And it hasn't built any buildings down there, and it doesn't have any...well, I suppose you can say it goes along the superhighways of the currents of the ocean; but it hasn't built any roads, hasn't constructed anything.

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." Made specifically for the human mind. That is what gives man the real ability to think. Now animals have a certain capacity for doing certain things. The other night there was a show about dogs, showing how the dogs have a sense of humor; that if you look at them and understand they can smile and they like to play games; but if you get angry with

them, they get real drawn back and so forth. But that's about the extent of it. Same way even with the gorillas and the orangutans. There's a certain intelligence that they have up to a point. They can teach them certain basic little things—up to a point—but they can't go beyond that. The reason they can't go beyond that is because the animals do not have the 'spirit of man'—which God formed within man.

Now let's go to 1-Corinthians, the second chapter; and here's where the Apostle Paul shows how the 'spirit of man' then uniting with the Spirit of God puts us in a completely different category as far as our standing before God. But it is a spiritual thing, so therefore it's not necessarily just physically discerned. You may be able to see that there's something different about this person, or there's a different attitude that this person has; but just to see them walking down the road, you could not tell who has the Spirit of God and who does not have the Spirit of God.

1-Corinthians 2:11: "For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him?... [which God formed within] ...In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God." So this is important for us to realize, too. Once we receive the Holy Spirit of God then we can begin to understand the things of God. We can't necessarily understand them in the way that we ought to, without the Spirit of God. Now, people can understand certain things of the letter of the law—you shall not kill; you shall not steal—and those things are all derived from the laws of God. But to understand the deep things of God, you see, one of the deep things of God is how Christ came to be Who He was. And the world doesn't understand that. They cannot even comprehend that.

And also, there's another power—which happens to human beings, which can come along—called the *spirit of this world*. Verse 12: "Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God... [*of* in the Greek is 'ek'—means it comes *from* God; not just *of* but *from*; because it is a gift. You repent and are baptized and you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit—it comes *from* God.] ...so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God.... ['ek'] ...which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order* to communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*" (vs 12-13). And that's how then we're able to understand the Word of God.

Now, God gave this 'spirit in mankind' to be *able to receive* HIS Spirit. That's why mankind was made a little lower than God; made in the image of God, and then the whole plan and purpose of God as it unfolds.

Let's come back here to our Belief's booklet. There's something else that God did with mankind that He did with no other animal, which is this:

God made male and female [that is mankind] with the capacity to express intimate, personal love for each other as husband and wife...

And of all the creation of God in expressing that physical love, they are the only creatures who are face-to-face. None of the other creatures are face-to-face. And I think that is to show the closeness that mankind will eventually have with God. But also think of it in terms of Christ and the Church, how close then we are going to be. Also He's given us the unique ability as well as the other animals.

...and through this physical union to create children after their own kind and produce families, clans, tribes and nations.

This is why Satan likes to get in and disturb and tear apart the families. And that's why every program of Satan the devil is designed to tear away and destroy the family. We're living in such a world today that there are so many forces out there and the way that the laws are and the land and everything, that our children virtually have very little protection from it. And once they get involved in it there's very little that even Christian parents can do with them. It becomes very difficult, even though you have good intentions and all of that.

But if we, and the world would know, which we're going to help bring to the knowledge of the people in the Kingdom of God in the Millennium, the tremendous blessing that will take place because of being able to create children after their own kind. And I'm sure, at that time, that the curse of Eve will be lifted. And I'm sure that childbearing will not be what it is today. Childbearing becomes a very difficult thing in many cases.

Adam and Eve were created sinless but with a nature that was subject to temptation.

If they chose to yield—God did not make them sin. God did not force them to sin. God did not cause them to sin. They had to choose.

...God gave them freedom to choose between obedience and life, or disobedience and death.... [That's the

whole story of all the human race.] ...After they sinned by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God sentenced them to suffer the pain and sorrow of living with a sinful nature and finally to reap the penalty of death. This penalty of death was passed on to all mankind by the physical inheritance of sinful human nature.... [We are born with it!] ...Human nature is inherently and naturally hostile to God and is not subject to His laws and commandments. From birth, human nature is a mixture of good and evil, and all die in Adam. When a person dies, his or her conscious thoughts cease. The body returns to the dust of the earth, and the spirit of man goes back to God. Only through God the Father's gracious and merciful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ is it possible for a person to be redeemed and saved from this sinful nature of death. God's ultimate purpose for each human being is complete reconciliation with God the Father through Jesus Christ so that he or she may enter into the Family of God as a literal son or daughter of God, sharing the same eternal existence as God.

Now that, though it is a short statement, contains an awful lot concerning mankind and his nature.

Let's go back to Genesis, the second chapter now, and let's see how God set the format here; and how God left it in their hands to choose. And God gave every blessing. God gave everything that man needed. But this also shows the power of choice. God could have made us as robots. He could have made us as automatons. He could have made us as the animals, just to operate by instinct. But He didn't; *He made us just a little lower than Him!*—and for tremendous purposes.

Now we know that out of the ground—Genesis 2:7: "Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" This also proves that the soul is mortal, because the soul was not living until he had the breath of life in him. This tells us quite a bit. Not only in v 26, as we read last time; this tells us God's intimate relationship with mankind that He desired to have from the beginning. Not like we have today: Where is God? Who is God? How do we find God? And all of this. But a very close relationship. And notice, that's why He made the Sabbath. And I've often thought about that first Sabbath. Boy! That must have been something! Can you imagine that first Sabbath when God and Adam and Eve were together

and God was teaching them and instructing them. That must have been something! They were created with a language already in their minds. We'll see that in just a minute and know why. God also made the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And He also made a garden. Not only did He create the world—"and everything that He saw, behold, It was good!"—now there're some people who believe that everything that God created was evil and it wasn't good; one of the most depressing religions in the world. No, *God made it good!*

Genesis 2:15: "And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat... [no cost, no charge, no ATM, no banker, no bill at the end of the month] ...But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die'" (vs 15-17).

Now they didn't die that very day that they ate of it; but in dying they received the death sentence in them at that time. So what we find with the creation of Adam and Eve, they were created neutral. They were not against God. They didn't have a hostile nature against God at that time. God set the choices before them, and I firmly believe—sermon, *What the World Would have been Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned*—I firmly believe that the plan of God would have been worked out in an entirely different way. And that Adam then would be the one to represent God. So we can think on that! All that is is just speculation, we don't know for sure. So the Hebrew here, 'you shall surely die' means *'in dying you shall die'*—and we know that he lived to be 930-years-old, which is getting pretty close to about 18 percent of all time as we know in relationship to the revealed time of the Bible.

Verse 18: "And the Lord said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make an help suitable... [and that means *compatible*] ...for him.'.... [so it was a special creation]...And out of the ground the Lord formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them... [So there's how we know that he had a built-in language already. How could God instruct Adam if he didn't have consciousness, thought, capacity to choose and a language? *He couldn't have instructed him with anything.* That's why he could not have been like an infant. What can you instruct an infant? Oooooo, that takes a long time to grow to even begin to understand the language. So he was fully operational.] ...And whatever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all of the cattle, to the fowl of air, to

every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help suitable for him" (vs 18-20). And that was part of the object lesson in God doing this; not only to name them, but for Adam to see of all the creation that God had, there was not one that was compatible and suitable for him.

So then, "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof" (v 21). That doesn't mean that men have one less rib than women. The question always comes up: Did Adam have one less rib all the rest of his life? *It's possible that it could have grown back if God did it in a certain way*, but that's not the question that we have here. He didn't take any of the ribs of the animals, but one of the ribs of Adam, and with that then He ***built***—as the Hebrew is—a woman and brought her to the man.

Now, there's a great lesson in this—which we'll cover a little later, not at this particular time. In 1-Cor. 11 the man is 'ek'—*from God*; and the woman is 'ek'—*from the man*. And is still true to this day; the man determines the sex of the children. There's nothing anybody can do about it. No movement of any kind, no education of any kind, no thoughts to the contrary of any way—that's the order of creation and God made it that way, and that's the way that it is. After 6,000 years of men trying to do things differently, it's still that way. And there also is a great lesson in that with the Church, which we'll cover here in just a minute, and then we'll come back and finish this.

"And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.... [Whether God said this or whether this was put in there by Moses when he compiled the first five books of the Bible, we do not know.] ...Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh.... [Well, obviously, God did not say that to Adam and Eve because He just created them. There was no father to leave, no mother to leave—He just married them. So this was put in there, undoubtedly, by Moses when he compiled the first five books of the Bible. And I think v 24 was *inserted* between 23 and 25.] ...And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (vs 23-25). So their nature was not the kind of nature that we have today.

Now let's look at the lesson we're going to have. Let's go to Ephesians 5:29: "For no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For we are members of His body—**of His flesh and of His bones**" (vs 29-30). Why is that listed that way? Why

isn't it 'of His flesh and of His Spirit'? Why 'of His flesh and of His bones'? *Well, I think that refers back to the creation of Eve*, that just like Eve was created from one of the ribs of Adam—in other words: from the inner most part of His being—so the Church, through the crucifixion of Christ of His flesh, are created from the innermost part of His being. That's why the reference there is to *the bone*.

Then He has the same thing here: "For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh" (v 31). And that is to give us the meaning of what it is going to be *one spirit*. And he said that this is a mystery he's speaking concerning Christ and the Church.

Oh, and by the way, what they're trying to do with this is to make Mary the *co-redemptrix*, they're trying to have it this way: Eve was the first Eve and Mary was the second Eve, just like Adam was the first Adam and Christ was the second Adam. So they're trying to work it that way.

Now then, we find something very important when we come to Genesis 3—and I know we have been through this time and time again. We won't necessarily go through everything here, except come to chapter three and let's see how God then changed the whole nature of His creation—at this point. There's a good lesson that we have in here, and that is: ***You don't go to Satan the devil to find out about God!*** That would be the basic lesson here. And Satan cannot give you what He [God] promises.

Genesis 3:11—after he said he was naked and hid himself: "And He said, 'Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?' And the man said, 'The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'.... [Now who's fault is it then? *God's fault*—because 'You gave me this woman.' NOT SO! And isn't that what people do? What is one of the first things that people do when there's sin? *They accuse God!*] ...And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What *is* this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' And the LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this you *are* cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed...' (vs 11-15).

Which then comes down to Mary and Christ. "...He will bruise your head... [and when you bruise the head of a serpent, it is gone, over and done] ...and you shall bruise His heel" (v 15). So right here is the promise and prophecy of redemption; and

here begins the story of the One Who was to become Jesus Christ. And the One Who gave this was the One Who became Jesus Christ, because all things were made by Christ. So He made Adam and Eve. He gave this prophecy.

"To the woman He said, 'I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception... [And this means more than just pain at birth, this means the difficulties of childrearing and the agony of seeing them grow up and not do the way that they should. And that is the real difficult thing with all parents. We would all love that our children grow up and be more than respectable, that they would grow up and be baptized and be in God's Church—and all of these things; be wonderful! But that isn't how it turns out. It didn't turn out that way for Adam and Eve either.] —in sorrow shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And to Adam He said, 'Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat *of* it!"—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you, and *thus* you shall eat the herbs of the field'" (vs 16-18).

So the whole nature of everything was changed. I believe at this time the nature of the animals was changed, too. You're going to change the nature of the plants, you're going to have thorns, you're going to have thistles, you're going to have weeds. Boy! Can you imagine what it's going to be like in the Millennium to have a garden and no weeds? That's why it says that the 'plower is going to overtake the reaper' and say, *Get out of the way I am plowing!* And the whole world is going to be so vastly different than we understand it today. They'll still have the law of sin and death in them, but there won't be Satan around to stir it up.

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return" (v 19). The question is: What about cremation, there's no dust going back to the earth. Well, remember when they arrested this guy out here in Discovery Bay here in northern California. He had the remains of what?—700-800 people, all the ashes that he was supposed to have sprinkled out over the ocean. It *is/was* dust; it's just dirt. The spirit goes back to God. God controls that. But just like with this cassette machine, if you do not have a cassette in it, the machine is worthless and the cassette is worthless. You have to have a live, living human brain in order for the spirit of man to have consciousness.

Now let's go back to Hebrews 12—we're pretty well done here in Genesis, because you could say, well, we're all waiting the resurrection. That is true, but what happens to people who are cremated and are burned up? *They return to dust very quickly.* Whereas, when you're just put into the grave it happens rather slowly. And I suppose the ants and the maggots and, you know, all of that has something to do with it.

The question was brought up that there was a funeral recently and the wife's ashes were buried with the husband, but half the ashes were taken home by the daughter to put on the mantel at home over the fireplace. Now what is this? Is she going to be raised as split human being—half over here and half over there? And then the question comes up: What happens if you die at sea and they bury you at sea and then you become a shark-feast. Now what happens to you? And then you're digested and now what happens to you? It goes to the bottom of the ocean floor and crabs get that—now what happens to you? You could go on and on and on. And then along comes the lobster fisherman and he brings up the lobster and it goes to a restaurant and someone eats it—now what happens to it? Reincarnation! NO! You have to think about that; it's rather a gruesome thing. But nevertheless, God is greater than all of that. If that created problems for God, then God wouldn't be God, would He? Point is not to save your physical body, you want a new body; you want a new mind. What about cannibals, now what happens?

Hebrews 12:22 helps us solve the problem here: "But you have come to Mt. Zion... [that is in heaven above] ...and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering; and *to the* Church of *the* firstborn, registered in *the* book of *life* in heaven and to God, *the* Judge of all; and *to the* spirits of the just who have been perfected" (vs 22-23).

So when we die the spirit goes back to God, but there is no personal consciousness of that spirit—it's dormant, without a mind, without a body. When it's put into a new body, with a new mind, then your whole personality and everything will come into being, just like it would be if you were created like Adam was, and breathed into you the breath of life and to become as Adam was at that point. Only this time it will be spirit. So the spirit goes back to God, has to! because the circumstances under which people are and have lived and died. It would create many problems if you had to have the whole body buried just in one place. But that's no problem for God, because everything that you are is recorded on that spirit. That's why you need to have

the grace of God, the forgiveness of God, the blotting out of sin; because that will then be erased from your spirit when you are resurrected. You will have none of that sinful nature, but human nature now is quite the opposite; because of their sinning.

Now let's go back to Mark, the seventh chapter, and let's see what human nature is like—and it comes from within. And then you add to that Satan the devil and the demons and all of the evil that gets multiplied. That's why you have to have certain standards even in the letter of the law—and it does keep people from getting involved into too much evil. But now what we are seeing is the society going down and down and down and down and down and down and down—and there is not even a morality in the letter of the law, so more demonism and spiritism is running rampant.

There are certain things that God does not tell us. He brings us up to a certain point and that is it. We 'see through a glass darkly.' We always have to understand that. We can speculate on some of these things. You can think about some of these things, which is not wrong to do; but don't get carried off into the weirdoism of science fiction. God is greater than that!

Now here's what we understand concerning human nature. We're going to look at human nature, the evil side of it. There is good in human nature. There are emotions to do good, to help, to serve, to uplift; but all of these things are very temporary. They are for serving people in this life. If God did not give us the good side of human nature, this whole world would be so absolutely horribly wicked, that there would be no good, there would be no help, there would be nothing! And because God has given some good to human nature, does not mean that equates to salvation. God expects all human beings to live by the Ten Commandments. That's why He gave them. That's why almost all laws of human government have some things contained in the commandments of God. God expects that.

Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts... [And these are going to be in degree, depending on how the children are reared. If they expose themselves to things like demonism and things like we have today. Not only the entertainment but even the video games get into some real deep, evil things—like *Dungeons and Dragons*—and have even caused children to lose their sanity. So it's from within. Now what he's talking about here is the human heart not puffed up by Satan the devil—just naturally.] ...go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders... [gets right into sex and life] ...thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye,

blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man.”(vs 21-23). Makes it worse!

Now when you couple that with the ‘prince of the power of the air’ (Eph. 2)—let’s add that to this point; because human nature becomes more evil. And especially when the standards, when even letter of the law righteousness in society have been broken down to where there is no standard, then Satan is given more of a free reign.

Ephesians 2:2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [That’s why God says, ‘Don’t love the world neither the things in the world: ***lust of the eyes, pride of life are all of the world***; and the world’s going to perish.] ...the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air... [That is a description of Satan the devil who can transmit thought waves; who can connect with the human mind] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; 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.” (vs 2-3).

And a lot of those things are desires to do good, to be better, to be greater, to be faster, to be stronger, to be more beautiful. All of those are part of just human nature to be better, but not going to God to really find the true spiritual good. And there’s a vast difference. That kind of good is better than evil where they are killing and hating and looting and warring—that is true. But it’s still not going to result in anything long-lasting.

Now let’s go to the book of Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it.” So the question is: What do you mean desperately wicked? Why desperately wicked? Obviously, when we’re born we don’t start out *desperately* wicked. We have the ‘law of sin and death’ in us, without a doubt—but ‘desperately wicked’—how can it come to that point? This also shows that even any good that human nature would have by choosing even to do some good, it comes to no good in the end run. And I think human government is a perfect example of that. And even the good that we can do, which we could say is truly good even in the flesh lasts how long? *It’s all transitory! It’s all momentary!*

How can we have *choice* if the heart is deceitful this way? How can there be choice to choose good?—being desperately wicked? ‘Desperately’ here in the Hebrew means to be *frail, feeble, desperately sick, incurable*. What he’s really

showing here is that the human heart cannot be cured *by itself*—that’s what he’s showing.

Okay, several comments were made concerning this that what it’s really describing is what happened when Adam and Eve sinned. When they sinned they could no longer stand the presence of God—that’s why they went and hid themselves; and that then became the flaw of human nature which is passed on by inheritance, which means we are desperately and always weak. Flawed because of the ‘law of sin and death’ in it, and it is so deceptive that who can know it? People can think that they are doing a right and good thing, and even unto the pretense of doing something good they have an evil motive in mind. So no one can know it. And it can’t be cured by human beings, so the question is: Why then does God hold us responsible for choosing right and wrong if we have that? Human nature then would come from the *spirit of man*, which has then the ‘law of sin and death’ in it, and yet, there is still enough goodness in human nature in spite of its wickedness in the letter. Not goodness unto salvation—it can’t have goodness unto salvation—but it can still choose to do some good in the letter.

Human nature then has got to be a deficiency by inheritance—in other words, by creation. But we’re still held accountable to choose right and wrong even in the letter, in a carnal world. God has decreed that. He hasn’t made us totally evil to where there is no good at all. But all the good that human beings would do, their own righteousness cannot save them.

Human nature loves to have a righteous mask, but it’s deceitful. And I think the epitome of that is like Christmas and Easter, and that sort of thing. That it is desperately wicked! But I tell you what, you go out and try and tell some of the people in the world that those things are desperately wicked and they say, ‘Well, look at all of the good that we do.’ And it’s incurable for them to understand what you’re saying—they can’t comprehend it. That’s why God has to call us. That’s why God has to change us with His Holy Spirit by what is called *the circumcision of the heart*. There’s has to be a change, a removing of that human nature.

Now for people who are in the world their goal is to become good, even though they know that they have wickedness in them, they still try and be good. Our goal is to become righteous, which creates a greater and more difficult fight, as we find in Rom. 7, which we covered there in the series in Romans. You find that there is a greater battle in resisting evil in your mind, because the Holy Spirit is exposing that. Whereas, before the Holy Spirit is in your mind, there is no resistance to the evil, because there is no exposing it to the degree that the Holy Spirit

does, unless you've had some sort of training even just in the letter of the law. But none of that leads to salvation unless you have the Holy Spirit. That's why the struggle becomes more profound. That's why Paul said that he wasn't able to do the things that he wanted, though he desired to.

Now the book of Jeremiah is very instructive in the human heart. When it gives itself over to evil and gives itself over to Satan—Jeremiah 17:1: "The sin of Judah is engraved with a pen of iron... [So there are degrees of sin. That's why there's the unpardonable sin. That's why there's a 'sin not unto death.'] ...with the point of a diamond; *it is* carved upon the tablet of their heart and upon the horns of your altars." Here they just give themselves over to evil, and we are entering a time in this society, where because all of the letter of the law moralities are being broken down and not followed, coupled with the fact of increased occultism—which then includes all the things like magic and everything that goes along with that. We're entering into a time of society that's going to be like it was when Jeremiah was preaching.

When Jeremiah started preaching, it was after Manasseh died. They had 55 years of getting into as an occult society with familiar spirits, with demonism, with divination, with passing the children through the fire, with adultery, with fornication, with all kinds of wickedness, that when Jeremiah came on the scene, the die was already cast. That's why He talks to Jeremiah the way that He did, and He said, 'Don't be afraid of them.'

Now let's come to Jeremiah 2:11—this is what we are doing today. We did have God the Father and Jesus Christ in the letter, through Protestant Christianity, before it became subverted; howbeit, not perfectly. That's not to say they necessarily had salvation, but at least they had some understanding. Jeremiah 2:11: "Has a nation changed *their* gods who are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit." And that's what we are doing today. This society is changing its gods. Now they're becoming more pagan, more pluralistic, more demonic—by degree—and as that happens, you're getting into a generation then which more describes the end-time generation than say 25-years ago; because the evil is multiplied and increased.

So much so, v 12—and this is not the first time that Israel's done it: "'Be amazed, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be utterly desolated,' says the LORD, 'For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters... [Remember, this was within the letter of the law. So God would give some respect to the letter of the law.] ...and hewn out cisterns for

themselves, broken cisterns that cannot hold water'" (vs 12-13). And I think the epitome of seeing this happen is to see the rise of Buddhism and the other religions here in America that are just plain purely pagan and demonic to the core. And we are doing that more and more and more; and that's what this ecumenical movement is all about to do it here.

So what happens to a society when that takes place? We find down here in v 17: "Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the LORD your God, when He led you by the way? And now what profit is there in going the way of Egypt... [You can tie in there Rev. 11:8, because the world's society is as Egypt and Sodom. That's where we're going back. And notice on all of the documentary programs how much they're getting back to Egypt, to Egyptology, to Egyptian religion, Egyptian way of thinking, etc.] ...Your own evil shall correct you... [So God lets it come to a point, lets it boil on up] ...and your backslidings shall reprove you; therefore know and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing* that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and that My fear *is* not in you,' says the Lord GOD of hosts" (vs 17-19). And we're going to see society deteriorate even worse, because human nature then is programmed and trained to do evil. And so, you end up with greater evil than just, what we could say, normal human nature.

Question is: Does this happen with or without Satan? *I think it's a step-by-step thing.* The more you go away from God, and God gives you a warning and you don't turn back, then He let's you take the next step and let's Satan come a little closer—step-step-step, closer and closer, closer. Without the Holy Spirit, we'd be the same way, without a doubt.

Read Rev. 3 and look what happened to the Church even with the Holy Spirit, and that is because *they didn't exercise the Spirit.* That led to great problems.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Zechariah 12:1
- 2) 1 Corinthians 2:11-13
- 3) Genesis 2:7, 15-25
- 4) Ephesians 5:29-31
- 5) Genesis 3:11-19
- 6) Hebrews 12:22-23
- 7) Mark 7:21-23
- 8) Ephesians 2:2-3
- 9) Jeremiah 17:9, 1
- 10) Jeremiah 2:11-13, 17-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 11

- Romans 7
- Jeremiah 1
- Revelation 11:8

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

- *What the World would have been Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned?*
- *Romans*

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Nature of Mankind II

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

We have been going into the situation concerning mankind—which is *The Nature of Mankind*; and we went into it quite a bit in detail. And what I want to do today is cover some other aspects of it, because the question is: If we are so inherently evil, because we have the ‘law of sin and death’ in us, ***why does God hold us responsible for our choices?*** Well, I think the answer is this: ***The ‘law of sin and death’ can also be magnified to do more evil within you by practicing evil***—a person giving him or her self over to evil.

Now, let’s go to Deuteronomy 30, because human beings were made to choose; and you can go to any place in the Bible—Old Testament, New Testament—beginning with Adam and Eve and you find this exact same principle that God has given to every human being. And one way or the other, with or without the knowledge of God, people have to come to this point of choosing.

Deuteronomy 30:15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.” Now that’s almost like saying here’s the tree of life and here’s the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—correct? Very similar to it, isn’t it? *Yes!* And God sets this before every human being. Now what happens if they don’t have the law?

Let’s go to Romans, the second chapter, because this fits in and is very important for us to understand. God judges all of the nations, regardless of what their particular religion is, all nations are under the judgment of God. The more that they sin the more punishment that they receive. The more that they strive to do some things in the letter of the law, even though not having the law, which are correct, the more that God will bless them.

Romans 2:14—this becomes important. “For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the* law... [They were not given the law; God did not give them the Ten Commandments as He gave it to Israel.] ...practice by nature the things contained in the law... [And they have many of their laws based upon this. And this then reflects the good part of human nature, because it’s a mixture of good and evil.] ...these who do not have *the* law are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the law written in their own hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also, as they accuse or defend one another)... [Now God is going to take these things into account. Remember there’s the first resurrection for the elect. There is the second resurrection for those who have not committed the unpardonable sin, but have lived at least a decent

enough life so that they can be in the second resurrection—so they will have an opportunity for salvation.] ...in a day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel” (vs 14-16). Then it goes on and shows that God is no respecter of persons and so forth. We covered that quite thoroughly in the series on Romans.

God leaves the choice entirely within the hands of each human being. This is why you have the old saying—they refer it to horses but they apply it to people—‘you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink.’ You can also drown the critter but he won’t drink; same way with human beings. You can lead them right up to the knowledge of God. You can give them the Scripture, but if they don’t want to open the Bible, and if they don’t want to follow God, and if they don’t want to do what is good, you’re not going make them do good. That’s why there are the civil powers to keep evil from running rampant. And all of this is how God views all the nations. You can get into evil two ways:

1. by choosing to sin and do evil and break the commandments
2. you can have your own way of righteousness which leads you into evil, but while you’re thinking you’re doing good—and that is the worst kind.

That’s why Christ said ‘beware if the doctrine of the scribes and the Pharisees.’ So with that then it becomes a deception and you’re blinded to the Truth, and then it gets to the point that you will not let the Truth come in, and that’s where the danger of that kind of thing comes along. Not only does God set before us life and good and death and evil, He also has given us His Word, and now today, in this generation, there are plenty of Bibles around the world that everyone can have it available just at the drop of a hat, or whatever. They can get it in the library; they can buy it; they can computerize it—whatever.

Let’s come to Deuteronomy 30:16—notice the first command, and this is the thing that’s important that God wanted with all human beings. God does not want just obedience, because obedience and law and order do not necessarily generate love. Love is a whole different attitude which is a choice that you must make. Deuteronomy 30:16: “In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God... [so He wants your love first—that’s what He wants foremost.] ...to walk in His ways... [and this is very profound] ...and to keep

His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply....”

So even for people in the world who don’t have Christ; or who have a form of religion; or have a form of Christ—which in the letter is fairly good—there’s going to be certain blessings come because they obey to that point. That doesn’t mean that they are called unto salvation. Called unto salvation is another whole different situation. But at least it keeps the society from running into total anarchy all the time, and that’s what God intended here.

Verse 17: “‘But if your heart turn away... [and this is where He’s then dealing with the heart and the emotions] ...so that you will not hear... [and that also is a choice] ...but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them. I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice...’” (vs 16-20).

Now notice the priority that He has here. So love comes first, then obedience, because then you will desire to—and that’s what God wants. ***God wants, from your heart, to desire.*** That’s the important thing. When that comes, ***then you have crossed over the bridge from ‘being religious’ to living God’s way***—and that’s the difference. Remember, there are the *religious* people and there are the *converted* people, and sometimes you can’t tell the difference right off.

But the way that it is distinguished, as God brings out here, ***first you love Him*** then you *obey His voice*, v 20: “...that you may cleave to Him... [now ‘cleave to Him’ is like you’re embracing with your arms and your legs—***cleaving! Holding tight!***] ...that you may cleave to Him, for He is your life.... [Letting you know everything you have comes from God. You can put right there: 1-Cor. 4:7, *that we have nothing we didn’t receive.* And brethren, that’s so important. Everything that we understand, ***we have nothing we didn’t receive.*** God created everything that there is, everything that we have comes from God one way or the other—even though some people may have had a hand in helping get it to us—***we have nothing we didn’t receive.***] ...for He is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob to give them.”

Now let’s look at what happens when evil. as a whole civilization. is chosen. Let’s go to Genesis 4 first, because *choosing* the way of evil and

knowing that you’re choosing the way of evil is quite evident. That’s why we start out first with the account of Cain killing Abel. Deliberate choice based upon knowingly sinning, having been warned of God, having rejected that warning, and then killing his brother. So that’s what we have here in Gen. 4:7—we won’t go through the whole thing; you can read the other verses.

Genesis 4:7: “If you do well, shall you not be accepted?... [That is true. People are accepted of God on the level that they are. If you have someone who is righteous in this society, God accepts them at that level; but that doesn’t mean that they are called *to salvation*. Because being called to salvation is another whole different program of God.] ...But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.... [Cain knew right and wrong.] ...Its desire *is* for you... [it should read: *sin will have its desire upon you if you follow it.*] ...but you must rule over it!” So here it’s showing that we have to rule over and put down the pulls of the flesh. Even people without God’s Holy Spirit have to do that to a certain degree. There it is right there. Well, he didn’t do it. You know what happened. He killed his brother Cain and was then exiled further.

Now, let’s come to Genesis 6, because here we have a whole civilization given over to evil. And as we read this let’s understand what Jesus said on the Mt. of Olives concerning the way that the society is going to be at the end. What did He say? ‘As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.’ And we also have in Rev. 11:8 that the society is likened unto Sodom and Egypt. They have, generally on Discovery Channel, about these past civilizations. They have been getting a lot into new Egyptology, which they haven’t been into before—and also into the Mayan civilizations down in Central America. And you can see how wicked and evil that these societies were. So what we have here in Gen. 6, with something so worthy of judgment that God destroyed all life. I mean, that’s rather radical! You consider that! That is a radical solution, which means that the problem of evil corrupting was so widespread that there was no hope of even change in the letter of the law.

Genesis 6:5: “And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth...” And we’re beginning to return to that kind of thing—***great!*** And some of the greatest wickedness, brethren, is not as obvious as we would think. Some of the greatest wickedness going on right now is all of this high-tech genetic experimentation; and cross-species and cross breeding; and all of this. ***That is gross sin!***—because you’re actually in there tinkering with the very creation of God! So I’ll give

a sermon on this kind of tinkering, but that's one of the greatest evils.

Now, the whole perversion of everything is going on that they had here; "...and every imagination... [and that means every single thought; and 'imagination' means *the process of your thinking*—that's what it is when it talks about there in 2-Cor. 10, 'bringing down every vain imagination that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.' That is bringing down the process of human thinking. So here's the whole process of human thinking that is evil.] ...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was only evil continually*" (v 5). So there comes a point in wickedness and evil that there is no repairable or reparation in this life—nothing that can be done.

That's why this whole thing of getting rid of the death penalty works to the reverse; because there's certain crimes that when they are done—especially like with pedophiles and murderers—that something happens to their minds that they should not live. When you let them live they destroy society even more. And so here the whole society—I don't imagine we can really conceive how barbarous it was, but it was so bad "And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart" (v 6). That's really quite a verse—*isn't it?* I mean, you think about it! God was so upset!

Notice what it was after He created everything there is, and man and woman. Genesis 1:31: "And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was exceedingly good....*" ***It was very good!***

Now back here to Genesis 6:7: "And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.'" With this statement here and having to kill all the animals is why I've said I suspect that they had an awful lot of cross-genetics between animals and people and so forth. Today they have already cloned sheep and cloned calves and now they're saying what a great and wonderful thing this is going to be. ***Every imagination of their thoughts was only evil continually.*** That's part of it in addition to the corruption and the murder and so forth. So God had to kill all the animals, all the creeping things, all the birds—except those that he [Noah] took in the Ark; so that there would be a pure genealogy from those animals.

Verse 8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These *are* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations... [This does not mean he was perfect in the letter of the law. This means he was perfect in his pedigree;

he had no cross-genetics in his system, which then is telling us: Did all the other human beings? *I don't know!*] ...for Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt—for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them *with* the earth.'" (vs 8-13). And God gave the promise He would no more destroy the earth with a flood (Gen. 9) after it was over. But He is going to come and shake the heavens and shake the earth, which is what the Feast of Trumpets is all about. So that's what happens when you have individuals who give themselves over to evil like Cain. You have a whole civilization that gives itself over to evil like before the Flood.

Now let's come back to the book of Job, because here we have an example of a man who was, in the letter, perfect! But what it also shows us is this: You can only go so far in that perfection with 'the law of sin and death' in you and without the Holy Spirit. Two key things:

1. you can only become so righteous in the letter of the law
2. without the Holy Spirit you can't see that self righteousness.

That's the whole lesson of Job.

Now, we're not going to go through much of this. We'll just look at the beginning and the ending. Job 1:6: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD. And Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil?'" (vs 6-8). So there you have it, in the letter of the law, perfect. But what is the difficulty in perfect in the letter? ***You're not perfect in heart!*** And notice it was: "he fears God and shuns evil." That shows the highest level of righteousness that a person can do. They can do things in the letter. They can be honest, they can be forthright, they can help the poor, they can help the sick, they can do good works, they can do all of those things like Job went through and reiterate all of those. But all of those things haven't changed the heart. ***The change of heart comes from conversion.***

So then you know the story. Satan said, 'Okay, I'll take all that he has.' He took it, then destroyed his family. Job still didn't curse God.

Smote him from head to toe with boils—so bad all he could do was just scrape it and flies and dust and everything around. And then his three friends came and sat there, just looked at him seven days. Can you imagine how bad it was sitting there seven days looking at each other, not even saying a word? Sitting there trying to analyze, ‘Now Job, why did you get into this? Well, you must be a sinner, Job. Now come on, confess.’ Job couldn’t see that he had sinned and so forth.

The end of the matter is, and here’s the difference between the righteousness in the letter and righteousness in the spirit. Let’s go to the end—Job 42. Now I know this is a quick summary of it, but what this does, this shows us the two extremes of human nature without the Spirit of God. It can be good to a certain degree and horribly evil to a greater degree on the other hand.

Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You. *You asked*, “Who *is* he who hides counsel without knowledge?” Therefore I have spoken that which I did not understand...” (vs 1-3). He finally came to the conclusion that though he was perfect in the letter of the law, and though he did all these things, he didn’t understand. And this is the experience that people have when God calls them—out of Protestantism or Catholicism or whatever—and they may have been quite righteous in that religion. Then they begin to understand, ‘Boy! I never understood, I never understood the Scriptures.’

Job continuing: “...*things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said*, “I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.” I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear...” (vs 3-5). We can know about God, we can hear about God. It’s like all these people who go to Sunday school and go to church on Sunday. They hear about God. They hear the name of Christ. They hear all these good things; yet, they’re out there perpetually sinning every week; they’re out there breaking God’s law in that way. They’re not a lot of murderers and adulterers and things among them, so they have some righteousness just like Job.

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You.... [there comes a point then that God takes away the veil across your mind and you begin to understand God. You begin to understand

- the greatness of God
- the love of God
- the calling of God
- the Word of God

all of those things together with it.] ...Therefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes” (vs 5-6).

So then all of this is to bring us to repentance. Now we have seen that aspect of it. We could also see another modern-day aspect of it if we would—you could put in your notes, Manasseh (2-Chron. 33)—perhaps one of the most wicked men in the world, **but he repented**. So the whole thing that God wants out of this thing is *repentance*—‘To this one will I look.’

I mean, even in the world with the kind of repentance that someone might have, not unto salvation—but at least repentance even in the letter of the law—God will accept. Again, we are not talking about salvation. When we are talking about salvation, here is what God looks to; and this, brethren, is something that we all need to strive for. I do, you do, all of it; and it’s a thing that we need to teach and bring to the brethren, too.

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me?...’” And oh, if we could understand that! How important that is. Remember, David said, ‘I want to build You a house.’ And God said, ‘No, I’m going to build you a house. I’ll let your son build a house.’ But the important thing here is this: ***No man is going to go to God and say, ‘God, I’m going to do a work for you.’*** Isn’t going to happen! It is not going to happen! I try and keep that in mind all the time, brethren; because if don’t, then I could get off the track just like anybody else and think oh my, I can do this, that and the other thing. Nonsense—if I don’t constantly understand ***I have nothing I didn’t receive***, and whatever is going to be done is what God wants done. So I need to yield to the will of God so that I’m doing what God wants me to do. Now in that, I can make mistakes and have made mistakes. In that, you can make mistakes and you do make mistakes. But in that there is repentance and there is latitude and there’s choice that God gives all of us.

But here is what we need to understand—v 2: “For all these things My hand have made, and these things came to be,” says the Lord. **“But to this one will I look, to him who is of a poor and a contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word.”** You tremble at the Word of God and then God will lead you to His love. Has to start out with the ‘fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.’

What is the difference between Job and Paul? Job was doing everything in the letter of the law to try and be good, without the Holy Spirit; and I think there in Job 42 when he repented, that’s when he really received the Holy Spirit. What about Paul

there in Rom. 7 where he has the 'law of sin and death' and he says the things 'I want to do I can't do'—why is so difficult for Paul? We can say US—let's put our hands there. Let's go ahead and handle that question, because that's very important for us to realize. I'm sure he had the Holy Spirit with him. I think there are many people have the Holy Spirit *with* them. I think it is this: Before Job had the Holy Spirit of God in him, he could not see his own evil. That's the key, *he couldn't see it!*

When you have the Holy Spirit of God—because it is righteousness and comes from God—it will convict you of sin, and will point out sin, even in your mind before it's overtly done out here in action. And sometimes you end up with great struggles of mind. And that's what he was talking about here. And this is the whole purpose, this is the whole thing. We could also summarize Job's life with this, too. Job was trying to keep it in the letter. But he didn't understand. Paul was trying to keep it in the letter and then, after conversion, he understood.

Romans 7:7—we'll just cover the whole thing here; because this is the enigma of growing and overcoming; and this is why we need grace. That's why we need to stand in grace. And as I mentioned before, *walk in faith, live in hope, and dwell in love*. Those things do more to overcome the problem of sin than actually getting out there and beating it to death. Romans 7:7: "What then shall we say? *Is the law sin?*.... [And that's what every carnal person says—right? Isn't that what they say about Sabbath-keeping vs Sunday-keeping. 'Oh well, that ole law, you know, God changed that.' Well, what you're saying is, the law is sin.] ...MAY IT NEVER BE! But I had not known sin, except through the law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the law said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, having grasped an opportunity by the commandment, worked out within me every *kind of lust*.... [He began to see that evil originated in the mind. Evil was not out here someplace just going on, and the law defined the evil out here. If you take away the human mind there is no evil. That's what he's pointing out.] ...because apart from law, sin was dead" (vs 7-8).

Job was satisfied with his life and doing it in the letter of the law. And there are a lot of people who are satisfied in doing it in the letter of the law. In their minds, not having the Holy Spirit, do not go on to really understand the depths of evil, which may be in their hearts and mind because they haven't had the Holy Spirit in them to expose it.

"For I was once alive without the law... [He said, 'I was living.'] ...but after the commandment

came, sin revived, and I died.... [So Paul ceased writing any more of the epistles—NO! This means he died *spiritually*. How? *In the operation of baptism!* That's the way he died. *Self-died.*] ...And the commandment, which *was meant to result in life*, was found *to be* unto death for me... ['Because spiritually speaking, I couldn't keep it'—that's why he found it unto death.] ...because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment... [Because the commandment defines the law. Commandment defines sin. So therefore, when you break it, there is a occasion of sin.] ...deceived me, and by it killed *me*" (vs 9-11). What he's really saying is, '*I deceived myself!* And the law by the demand of the 'wages of sin is death' was killing me.' That's what he's really saying.

"Therefore, the law *is* indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good.... [You've got to have that, otherwise there's no definition of good and evil.] ...Now then, did that which *is* good become death to me? MAY IT NEVER BE! But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin... [Now notice he expresses it twice here.] ...But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin..." (vs 12-13). In other words, *to show sin for what it really is!* Beginning this way, for example: we'll just use the example of hate—a lot of people have hate. I hate this one. I hate that one. I hate the other one. But they haven't murdered—in the letter of the law. And this hatred, to them, is a mental protection against the evil. We are to hate evil. But then they hate people. And they don't realize what is happening in their minds. Then when the Holy Spirit comes and convicts you, the hatred is the first step in murder. Then you begin to understand.

Now notice: "...But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin in me by that which is good... [the law is good because it defines sin, but the breaking of it brings about death.] ...was working out death; so that, by means of the commandment, sin might become exceedingly sinful" (v 13). And that's where it goes back to the thing right there in Gen. 6:5 that every thought was wicked. And that's where we have there, Jer. 17:9—that 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked'—without the Holy Spirit of God to expose this and give you desire to overcome it. That's why God does not let all carnal human beings know how evil they are because they have to have a desire to overcome it. Why show you how bad evil is if you just say, 'Oh, hooray! Let become more evil!' You see, you need something—God's Spirit—to change that; that you desire to overcome the evil. Then the ensuing battle goes on that people in the world do not have.

Verse 14: “For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin; because what I am working out myself.... [It means *he doesn't want to*.] ...I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do” (vs 14-15). So there is this inner battle going on that Christians have that other people do not have to this degree. And you look back and you see before God called you, did you know what evil was? *No!* You knew right and wrong to a certain degree, that's true; but did you realize how bad and evil and wicked the human mind can become? *No!* Had God exposed any of that to you? *No, because only the Holy Spirit of God can do that!* And that's what's important here. Then you realize that, ‘Hey, unless I yield to God and love God I can't do anything on my own that's going to amount to anything spiritual.’ And that's what he's talking about here.

“I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do. But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the law that *it is good*.... [The law is still good because it says ‘you shall not’ do this; ‘you shall not covet’; ‘you shall not kill’; ‘you shall not bear false witness’; ‘you shall not commit adultery’—all of those things are good! And it gives the motivation then.] ...So then, I am no longer working it out myself... [Why? *Because I ‘ego’ died in baptism.*] ...rather, it is sin *that is dwelling* within me... [This is where he's leading up to the ‘law of sin and death’ as we find in Rom. 8:2, the last sentence there, the ‘law of sin and death.’ That's what he's leading up to.] ...because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me... [and this is the whole point of conversion. This is where Job came to when we read Job 42. ‘I heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.’ *That's a point of conversion.*] ...—that is, within my fleshly being—*any good*....” (vs 15-18). Isn't that what Job had to learn? ‘Lord, I did all this. Lord, I did all that. Lord, I did everything else.’

Let's go to Luke 17—and this is what the carnal mind does not comprehend. Now this principle we find right here. Luke 17:5: “Then the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’ But the Lord said, ‘If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, “Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,” and it would obey you. But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say to *him* when he comes in from the field, ‘Come and sit down *and eat*’? Rather, will he not say to him, “Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink”? Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded

him? I think not” (vs 5-9).

Now there's a principle. Everything that Job was doing was required. And he did it, and it was required. But of what account is that, by and of itself? Who gave the law? *God did!* Who made the requirement? *God did!* So why was Job getting so hoity-toity over himself?

Verse 10: “Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, “We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do.”” That's the whole difference there. It's our duty to do the things in the letter of the law. It doesn't ascribe any salvation to us. So that's why when we're over here, talking about the Spirit now, and changing—the conversion changes the source of the self-righteousness on one hand, and reveals the source of evil in the mind on the other hand. **Complete change!** And this is what must happen with everyone with God's Spirit. Sooner or later it's going to happen. God will intervene in their lives and work with them so it does happen.

Now let's come back to Romans 7:18—that's why he says: “Because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any good*....” So you do everything that's required in the letter of the law.

- And what have you done? *Everything God expected!*
- Have you added anything to God? *No!*
- Have you added anything to yourself? *No!*
- Have you kept from sinning to a certain degree? *Yes!*
- Did you remove the origin of sin—the human mind? *No!*

That's what conversion does.

“...For the desire to do good is present within me... [the desire is there to good] ...but how to but how to work out that which is good, I do not find....” That which is *truly* good. And I find this, brethren, and I'll just tell you: There are times when I do things which are good, which are inspiring and I know that God has inspired me to do it and so forth. And I found this a couple of days later: I fall to the bottom. The reason is, is for me to know that no good thing dwells in me. Now, I don't know if you've experienced the same thing or not, but I'm sure you have. And if you haven't, you will, because God is working with you and God is trying to lead you to conversion.

We all go through this and the question is: Why does God *want* this? To say *allow* is not correct. Why does God *want* it? *Because I don't think, brethren, with the ‘law of sin and death’ in us*

we truly understand the greatness of righteousness of God—until we can get that comparison of how sin is right there in us. And lots of times the worst sins that we do are when we think we are right. Yes, that way God can teach us true humility and true love—because it doesn't come from within us, it's got to be from God *into* us. In other words, just like the Greek says: *from God*: 'ek'—down, out to us *from God*. Not from us up—'ek'—to God. We're the recipients of this, and in order for us to understand the great love of God and the great righteousness of God, He allows us to go through this exercise of fighting evil so that we understand sin is *exceedingly* sinful. It's what he's talking about here. We don't understand that until we go through it and fight it.

Part of this is the long-suffering and overcoming so that we realize that we have to yield to God in everything that we do. Oh yes, all of these things then will bring us to the desiring the fruits of the Holy Spirit, that's what it's for.

And So Christians are the ones who have this battle. Romans 7:18: "For the desire to do good is present within me; but how to work out that which is good, I do not find..."—that is from yourself. You can do certain things in the action and on the outside, but to do it really motivated from the love of God because you love God and that's why you're doing it, and not looking for anything for yourself is the whole converted attitude that comes from this.

"For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing. But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me.... [That's why we have the 'law of sin and death' in us. It is just enough to show us the severity of sin. It can be trained to be greatly evil, like we saw earlier. Or it can be trained to be righteous like Job—but not righteous like God.] ...Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members" (vs 19-23).

And here's a truly converted attitude: "O *what a wretched man I am!* Who shall save me from the body of this death?.... ['Deliver' means *who shall bring me salvation?*] ...I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the law of God with *my mind*; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve the law of sin*" (vs 24-25).

Now, let's look at how Paul progressed in what he did here. Let's see how Paul's conversion

brought him to a greater understanding of himself. Let's go to 1-Corinthians 15, since we're dealing with human nature, the nature of mankind and what God is going to do with it. Let's see how Paul progressively understood this in Rom. 7 in greater detail as he went on through his life, and as he got closer to the time when he was going to die.

1 Corinthians 15:6: "Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time, of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage.... [the Greek there means *one who had been aborted*.] ...I am the least of the apostles... [Now notice his attitude here. He had what? *He had a proper understanding and perspective because he was fighting the 'law of sin and death' within him*—and he could understand human nature as he never understood it before, and most greatly his own human nature.] ...For I am the least of the apostles, *and* am not fit *even* to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.

10. But by *the* grace of God I am what I am.... [That's how we stand in all this. We cannot possibly overcome without the grace of God.] ...and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them; however, *it was* not I, but the grace of God with me" (vs 6-10).

Now notice Who he gives all the credit to. Notice the whole change of emphasis: not Paul, what I'm doing; but Paul, whom 'am less than the least of the apostles' and what God is doing. Let's come to 1-Timothy, the first chapter, and let's see how also Paul viewed himself and you will see a progressive understanding of Paul in seeing how bad human nature really is, or how carnal it really is—and he was seeing in himself. 1-Timothy 1:14: "But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (vs 14-15). The number one sinner! It's what he's saying. So that now he progresses from *least of the apostles* to *chief sinner*—and this is all a part of conversion. This is all a part of understanding the great depths and depravity of human nature.

Now let's come to Ephesians, the third chapter, and let's see his attitude just before he knew he was going to die. He was in prison. Ephesians 3:1—so we can get the thought-flow here: "For this cause I, Paul, *am* the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you; how He made known to me by revelation the mystery

(even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ)... [that is the plan of God, the secret plan of God] ...(even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men... [Now, that's a tremendous thing, brethren. I don't think we really grasp how great it is, the plan of God, and that we have been able to have it revealed to us through the Word of God and Spirit of God. Marvelous thing! Greatest plan of God revealed!] ...as it has now been revealed to His Holy apostles and prophets by *the* Spirit; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power" (vs 1-7).

Now notice v 8: "To me, who am **less than the least of all the saints**..." So what the Holy Spirit does in exposing the sin and bringing the humility, to understand that it all comes from God. So he went from being 'least of the apostles' to 'chief sinner'—now, that he is 'less than the least of **all** the saints' is this given. Why should it be given to him, he was saying? What a marvelous and fantastic thing it was. And then he wrote the rest of Eph. 3, which is one of the most inspiring sections of the whole Bible.

He said, "...that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—even the unsearchable riches of Christ..." (v 8). That he had the blessing and responsibility of doing it. He was just saying, 'Look, here I am, this sinner, miserable and rotten; but he said, 'I am what I am.' And that's all by the grace of God.

Now, let's come back to the *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, (pgs 5-6 throughout):

This penalty of death was passed on to all mankind by the physical inheritance of sinful human nature. Human nature is inherently and naturally hostile to God and is not subject to His laws and commandments. From birth, human nature is a mixture of good and evil...

And we have seen, can be trained to be perfect in the letter of the law or trained to be perfectly evil on the other hand. There's that wide spectrum in between and it's by choice.

...and all die in Adam. When a person dies, his or her conscious thoughts cease. The body returns to the dust of the earth,

and the spirit of man goes back to God. Only through God the Father's gracious and merciful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ is it possible for a person to be redeemed and saved from this sinful nature of death.

That is a key. What we just covered today was what this sentence says. It's only possible through Christ.

God's ultimate purpose... [which is greater beyond] ...for each human being is complete reconciliation with God the Father through Jesus Christ so that he or she may enter into the Family of God as a literal son or daughter of God, sharing the same eternal existence as God.

Let's see that this is so. One of the things that the different religions of the world say is that, anyone who says that you're going to be exactly like Jesus Christ is a heretic. Anyone who says you're going to be born in the Family of God is a heretic. Well, let's go to 1-John 3, very profound Scripture. And this is something, as I've mentioned before, when you get down and out, when you need help and encouragement, you come and you read 1-John 3:1-3—and this always encourages me, and also just inspires me, brethren, when we understand that what this says, what this says is so great! And reveals in these three verses some of the greatest things of God!

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love... [and this is why, when we get into the next section: *The Love of God*, it's very important for us to understand **what kind of love**.] ...the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!... [and there the Greek is 'tekna' meaning *His own begotten children*—not adopted, but **HIS**, His through His Holy Spirit.] ... For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God..." (vs 1-2). Why? *Because God 'calls the things that are not as though they already are.'* And that's a great point of faith. If we're going to walk by faith we have to believe that, like Abraham did. He said, 'In your seed shall the world be blessed.' And how long did it take? **But he believed!** Same way with us.

"Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know... [This is what we're to know, and let this sink deep into our hearts and mind, brethren.] ...that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (v 2). And I tell you, that just really takes away your breath when you understand that! And I think that through the whole experience of life, and the older we get, and the more frail we become, and the more

we ‘rust out,’ the more we understand that that is a profound statement! And that is a tremendous thing!

Now notice, v 3: “And everyone who has this hope in Him... [*in Him*—part of your heart and mind and being and love of God.] ...purifies himself, even as He is pure.” What is that? How are you purified?

- Through Christ
- Through the washing of the water of the Word
- Through all the experiences that we’ve just been talking about here

The book of Romans and overcoming human nature and all of that—that’s how we’re purified. Be just like Him.

And then, oh my! Let’s come here to Philippians, the third chapter. This is why we are made in the image of God. There is a reason. And that’s all a part of the nature of the way God created us. We’re made in the image of God for two purposes:

1. That God could become a man.
2. That man could become God.

That’s very profound!

Notice, here again Paul goes through and brings out his feelings on the whole thing. Philippians 3:10—and then we’ll go on. After he said that everything in this life he counted as dung, he says, “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection... [What is that moment going to be like for all the saints when they hear the voice of Christ? The hour is coming when all who are in the grave shall hear His voice.] ...and the fellowship of His sufferings... [Paul began to understand one of the reasons for his suffering was to learn the love of God; to understand the truth of God; to realize that everything comes from God.] ...being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (vs 10-11). That is the hope that lies within us, brethren.

“Not as though I had already received...[because He was struggling, he was overcoming] ...or have already been perfected; but I am striving... [That’s why when things come along where we have to change and repent and go ahead, we follow after. We don’t dwell upon and we don’t get discouraged, regardless of how bad circumstances may be.] ...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.... [he may attain it] ...Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained... [No, he knew that there was a lot to do.] ...but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind... [and that’s so important. You have to ask God, not only for the

forgiveness, but for the forgetfulness] ...forgetting the things that are behind...” (vs 12-13).

What good is it going to do to dwell on it? Is it going to change it? *No!* I mean, if you want to know how futile it is to try and fix something that’s already messed up, go out and look at a totally destroyed car. Don’t dwell on it. You have to put it behind you. You may need a new car, but you can’t dwell on it. And you can apply this to anything.

- Your sins
- Your difficulties
- Your faults
- Your mistakes
- The good things you’ve done

Well, I did this and that and the other thing. So what! Look at Job! Remember Job!

“...forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead... [Always having that hope. Always reaching out for that!] ...I press... [because it’s difficult] ...toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (vs 13-14). It’s a high calling! Great calling! ***To be called to be the very sons and daughters of God!*** Can there be anything greater? Can there be anything more perfect? Anything more wonderful? *No!*

“So then, let as many as *be* perfect... [so we can, in attitude and in heart] ...be of this mind... [by just what he said here—put all of these things out and then here’s a promise]: ...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15). So what is he saying? Who is revealing the sin within? *God!* So that we may change and grow and repent.

“Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained... [Whenever we’ve gotten to this point] ...let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for* an example. (For many walk *contrary*; I have often told you *of* them, and I tell *you* now *with* weeping... [we’re living in that day again today, aren’t we?] ...*they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame; *for* they mind earthly things.) But for us, the commonwealth *of God* exists in *the* heavens... [now this means *our politics*] ...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform our vile bodies... [there’s a beginning; there’s an ending] ...transform our vile bodies... [what are our bodies compared like to what it’s going to be the body that Christ is going to give us. And to take that hunk of old worn out junk, and to do what He’s

going to do here] ...Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (vs 16-21).

So brethren, that’s the whole purpose of mankind—the whole purpose. And God and His plan and His way and His time is going to bring it for all human beings. So that’s, in summary, the nature of mankind; and the Bible is the whole story.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 30:15
- 2) Romans 2:14-16
- 3) Deuteronomy 30:16-20
- 4) Genesis 4:7
- 5) Genesis 6:5-6
- 6) Genesis 1:31
- 7) Genesis 6:7-13
- 8) Job 1:6-8
- 9) Job 42:1-6
- 10) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 11) Romans 7:7-18
- 12) Luke 17:5-10
- 13) Romans 7:18-25
- 14) 1 Corinthians 15:6-10
- 15) 1 Timothy 1:14-15
- 16) Ephesians 3:1-8
- 17) 1 John 3:1-3
- 18) Philippians 3:10-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 4:7
- Revelation 11:8
- 2 Corinthians 10
- Genesis 9
- 2 Chronicles 33
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Romans 8:2

Also referenced: Sermon series: *Romans*

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The Love of God God's Love Toward Us

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

Now we've come to the section in the Belief's booklet, *The Love of God*—and as I mentioned, I hope everyone would go back and review the whole series on the Love of God, and if you haven't been able to finish it to go ahead and see what you can do to do so. This is the important thing: When I was over in Denver, we were talking about prophecy, and a lot of people want to know and understand about prophecy. And just a little diversion before we get into this: How are people going to understand prophecy? Is studying prophecy the major key to understanding prophecy?

I'm not saying not to study prophecy, but is that the major thing? And in our discussion, it was brought up that Daniel was a man well-beloved of God. Why was he well-beloved of God? *Because he loved God.* And he was given the major prophecy of the Old Testament—wasn't he? Now then, who was given a greater prophecy than the prophecy of Daniel? *John!* And John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. And John was the one who wrote more about the love of God than anyone else. So the key to understanding prophecy is not going to be just studying prophecy. You can study prophecy day and night, but if you don't love God you're not going to have an understanding of it.

Now have we all been through that experience, too? Where there wasn't the love of God, but there was a study of prophecy? And how many of them came to pass? *Very few indeed!* So you see, the whole fulcrum of everything, that everything that God does, is based upon His love; and if you want to put it as kind of a teeter-totter, love is the thing that holds everything up. And the love that God has for us *comes down to us.* It's not something that we have inherently within us.

Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God, (pg 6 throughout):

The love of God is revealed in that the God Family created mankind in Their image and Their likeness and gave them dominion over the entire earth, which They had bountifully created for them. God the Father's profound spiritual love is fully manifested to mankind through His overall plan as revealed in the New Testament in the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. In His supreme love, God the Father offers every human being the opportunity to be born into the God Family

through the resurrection from death, becoming a literal child of God the Father, with the same form and spiritual composition as God the Father and God the Son. God's love and reconciliation is now extended to those He is calling, and will be extended to all mankind according to His plan. God the Father's love is manifested toward those He has called now through His grace and mercy which He daily bestows through Jesus Christ, His continuing intervention and blessings, and the care with which He chastens them.

Now, each one of these, you could take each sentence and you could almost have a sermon on each one, as you go along. And as we mentioned, we'll get into it in some detail, but we can't, obviously, go back and go through the series of love.

Now, being created in the image and likeness of God is one of the most wonderful things that we could even begin to comprehend and understand. That God would do such a wonderful thing. And there's a profound purpose for that. Not only that we are going to enter into the God Family, but also that God could come and that He could become flesh and then become the Savior and the Reconciler—through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—of all mankind.

First of all, let's look at some of the Scriptures. Let's go to Psalm 145, because God's love is very profound—and it's not just to us—there are degrees of love even to the world. Let's see how David responded back to God, because of God's love. Psalm 145:1: "I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" (vs 1-3). That's quite a statement when you stop and think about all of God's plan. Here we are at the end-time, having all of the Word of God, having the knowledge of the Word of God, the knowledge of God's plan—even to a greater degree than some of the prophets, and even David and some of the apostles. So that's quite a thing— isn't it? When you think about that, that God is letting us understand some of the greatness; and even beyond that, Paul said we're 'looking through a glass darkly.' So it's still unsearchable—almost unfathomable.

"One generation shall praise Your works to

another and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty and of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your awesome works; and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.... [These are all aspects of God's love that He extends even to His whole creation.] ...The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power.... [*that's the whole focus of our whole life—*isn't it? *Of our calling; of everything that we do.*] ...To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (vs 4-12).

Now, let's go to Matthew, the fifth chapter, and let's see something else about the love of God—how God extends it to all His creation. Now in different degrees, different forms, God provides the whole earth for all of mankind. What a beautiful thing that is! ***Whether the people know God or not, God has given the whole earth to them.*** And that's a tremendous blessing, brethren. I mean, lots of times you look down, or you read about the evil in the world and things like that, and sometimes you think, *boy, He ought just destroy the wicked instantly!* Wipe them off the face of the earth. Well, God hasn't done that has He? *No, because God is love!* His love is not so that they can continue in evil, but His love is so that perhaps maybe they can repent. That's what it's for.

Matthew 5:43—and this is a whole challenge of Christian behavior, here: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'.... [When we get down to what Christ did, we will see that's what He literally fulfilled.] ...But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you yourselves may be the children of your Father Who *is* in heaven... [So the requirement's a lot higher for us—*isn't it?* *Yes, indeed!*] ...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good.... [Because He is love—that is the very characteristic of God; and He's given it to all mankind.] ...and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as

your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect" (vs 43-48).

So right here Jesus sets the whole goal. And what is the perfection of what God wants us to have and to be? *To be as God is; to have the love of God.*

Now, let's see how God expressed this. Let's go to John 3:16, and this shows the love of God, which is very profound—and something that keys the whole plan of God. And I know that when you have a church where there is not love, they avoid this verse like a plague, because somehow it sissifies them. But no it doesn't! If the love of God sissifies man, then you would have to say that God is sissified—wouldn't you? *Because God is love*, so that could not be a true statement.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world... [that means *the whole world*. That doesn't mean just the Church. That doesn't mean just the people that He has called at this time. Because God has subjected the same thing in hope.] ...that He gave... [So this is showing that the love of God *comes down to us*. God gave—this is 'agape' love.] ...that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life." So the love of God comes to us.

The love of God is also a spiritual gift. The thing that I want to really emphasized here is: Lest any of us get to thinking that God just loves us and God hates the world. *No!* God hates sin, but he doesn't hate the world. He loves the world. And in His time, in His plan—as we know through the Holy Days—then He's going to save the vast majority of those that He has created. And that's all through His love. And it takes God's patience and love and mercy to do so; and to carry out His plan and to work it in the way that He has.

Let's go to 1-John 3:16—these two key one to the other, exactly the same. "By this *very act* we have known the love of God... [We are to see and know and understand it through this.] ...because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren." So this comes into the love of the brethren, which we'll cover a little later. So the two come together—don't they? *Yes!*

When did He lay His life down for us? Let's go to Romans, the fifth chapter. Because Jesus practiced what He preached. Jesus came to a world that hated Him. Jesus *came to His own* and they didn't receive Him. Jesus *came to His own* and taught the love of God and they hated Him and crucified Him.

Romans 5:6—and this is God's love to us: "For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time... [and that means that the set time in

God's plan] ...Christ died for *the* ungodly. 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.... [He didn't wait until we were righteous, because there's no way you can be righteous without the mercy and love and forgiveness of God.] ...Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies..." (vs 6-10). Christ died for His enemies! He epitomized it—didn't He? When He was on the cross, what did He say? '*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*' Now is that not a complete fulfillment of what we read in Matt. 5: 'Love your enemies, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you'? *Yes it was*, there they were putting the nails in His hands and in His feet. And He said, '*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*'

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (v 10). To a tremendous and glorious and wonderful purpose in the plan of God. That's really why we're here. That's why God made us. Brought us into this kind of relationship. Brought us into this kind of calling.

Let's come back here to v 1 and show the whole process *how the love of God comes to us* and why we go through trials and difficulties. One of the things that will help you develop love more than anything else is to be in as it were kind of in the same position as Christ—in degree albeit a whole lot less than He was. Now let's continue on with our study of God's love toward us and how we receive the love of God; that the love of God comes to us first through Christ. He is the full expression of the love of God to us in every form and fashion. He is the example. His life sets the pattern. He did exactly as He said there in Matt. 5. He came to save the world, not condemn the world. Let's see how this love of God comes to us. This is why it is through much tribulation that we enter into the Kingdom of God, which means then, it is through much tribulation that you grow in grace and knowledge and love.

Romans 5:1 "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace... [Now let's understand something concerning love and grace: *the two go hand-in-hand*. So when you get done reviewing the series on *love*, review the series on *grace* and then that section that we had in the book of Romans, too.] ...in which we stand..." (vs 1-2).

Grace is the whole relationship of the expression of love in which we are standing before God, as it were, spiritually in His presence—

- because we're human
- because we're flesh
- because we have the 'law of sin and death' in us
- because we are weak
- because we are sinners

—we need the grace.

Now an interesting comment was made concerning the difference between the grace of God and having the right status with Him and religious people getting together in an ecumenical thing. Ecumenism—where men agree with each other on their goodness—is the opposite of the grace of God. God's grace is that:

- He grants the forgiveness
- He grants the love
- He grants the access
- He grants His Holy Spirit
- He gives us of His way that we can have contact with Him

Men agreeing in ecumenism are agreeing to the lowest common denominator on what they agree with religiously, which is going away from God.

Verse 2: "...into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [trials and difficulties; I'm still edging up to that.] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance... [and that I understand; and what does it say about when you will be saved: 'he who endures to the end, the same shall be saved.' So tribulation *works patience or endurance*.] ...and endurance *brings forth* character..." (vs 2-4). And I'm glad we've had some experience in the things that we have done. Let us hope that we don't repeat the same mistakes as in the past.

I never will forget when I first went into the army. I remember there as a recruit all with my nice shaved head and my new fatigues, and I guess there were about four or five thousand new recruits there; we were down at Ft Ord right here in California, and the General came out on the stage, 'Welcome all you new recruits.' And he gave a speech and I never will forget what he said, though I don't know if I've always practiced it. He said, 'A wise man learns from his own mistakes; but a wiser man learns from the mistakes of others.' Which is a true principle.

So, can we not only learn from our own mistakes, which we all have bundles of it. That's why we need the grace and love of God. But can we learn from the mistakes of others and ask God to help us go in a right direction.

“...and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope.... [because then you have that relationship with God through love that the hope keeps growing.] ...And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (vs 4-5).

So the love which comes from God not only did He send His Son down to be that loving sacrifice for all mankind, but He sends His love down to us with His Holy Spirit. And so the love that God has toward us then is multiplied and magnified by the Spirit of God. Now the world doesn't have the Spirit of God. God shows His love to them by giving them the physical things in the world, providing the world for them, food for them and things like this—providing that they do some basic things. But God gives us of His Spirit so then we have a closer connection with God through the Spirit of God, so the working that God does with us, we can grow in that love. So that's how God's love comes down to us. Now He also chastens us, too—doesn't He? He also gives us correction—doesn't He?

Let's go to Hebrews, the twelfth chapter. Correction can come from many ways.

- Correction can come from circumstances.
- Correction can come directly from God.
- Correction can come from another person.
- Correction can come from the society.

If you're speeding along and get a ticket. I know this last week they had the biggest accident that I've ever seen—54 cars right down there. But I have to say, it was also a testament to how well they're making cars—no one was killed. They had a eleven injuries and only one was somewhat serious. So they've learned from mistakes of others. So they're applying some of these things. *Corrects us!* And the whole thing of it is, so that we overcome sin. The whole thing is so that God loves us, that He wants us to learn how bad sin is and to desire His love so much that we count His correction worthy of His love.

Now, let's pick it up here in Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps *us*; *and* let us run the race set before us with endurance, having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross.... [Why? *Because He loved God*, that's why!] ...*although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God.

3. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in

your struggle against sin” (vs 1-4). And I've never anointed anyone yet by saying, ‘Well, I got this wound because I was striving against sin.’ No!

“And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: ‘My son... [quoted from Prov. 3] ...do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him; for whom *the* Lord loves... [‘agape’ love, *active* love] ...He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives” (vs 5-6). So that's just part of it. And that's what the whole Church is going through right now—wherever it is; I don't care where you go, Church of God, whatever name—God is correcting the Church right now, because He loves it and He wants the Church to come back to Him. And that's what the whole exercise is all about.

“If you endure chastening... [and that's part of the endurance] ...God is dealing with you as a *Father* with *His* sons. For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly* be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*? For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them; but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness. Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous... [and we can all say by experience that is true, yes!] ...afterwards... [there comes the perfect 20/20 hindsight vision] ...it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it” (vs 7-11). So you have to let God do the exercising of it.

Now there's another aspect of love that Jesus has, which you could say is Jesus' special love for us. Let's go to the Gospel of John, chapter 13. And that's why with the Passover ceremony, that we have in the *Passover Ceremony* booklet, the whole covenant that God has with us is based upon the love of God. That's why we have in there: John 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17. And that's the covenant relationship that God wants. And I'll have to bring a sermon on the other side of the hierarchy and show the covenant relationship a little more. I think with the covenant relationship and kings and priests that there will be a structure that is not hierarchical being oppressive. That's what I mean in the hierarchy thing being oppressive—not against structure.

Now, John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you... [Why did He not give the new commandment until then? Why didn't He give this at the beginning? Why did He wait until just before

He was to be crucified? *The Holy Spirit was coming shortly afterward and they could not comprehend how they could do this without having the Holy Spirit to lead them*—with the Holy Spirit being in them.] ...I give to you: that you love one another... [So again, when you talk about the love of God it comes down to the brethren, too—doesn't it?] ...in the same way that I have loved you... [Now you think about all that Jesus did in His love toward us.] ...that *is how* you are to love one another.... [in the same way—*as*. And I think though we understand about the love of God, maybe we ought to focus a little more on this and ask God to help us understand this. I'll have to admit, I don't think I understand it the way I ought to. To really love each other as Christ loves us! That's quite a command. That's a lifelong command, isn't it? Something to grow into.] ...**By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another**" (vs 34-35).

Now, let's come over here to John 15:9—and here's how He loved us: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you... [Now how great is the love of the Father? So great that He sent Christ! So great that He would give us of His grace, that He could bring us into a covenant relationship with Him.] ...I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments..." (vs 9-10). And this is so profound: love first, then commandment-keeping; because then you can have proper commandment-keeping. And you can just put in your margin there, the second commandment: 'you shall not make unto your self any graven image of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; **nor should you bow down to them to worship them, to serve them**. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation of those that hate Me; and blessing unto thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.' That's the whole second commandment, which has the same identical principle: love/commandment-keeping—same thing that we have here.

Let's read that again: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. 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)—**live and dwell in His love**. And of course, that's going to be the ultimate when we enter into the Kingdom of God.

Now, come over here to John 16, and this is to really encourage us in our prayers. Today I was reading the paper, and there was something in there about a movie called *Devil's Advocate*—and I thought from the title it would be something different than the movie, but the ultimate of the

Devil's Advocate is that the movie says that they want to fill the world with lawyers—sort of spoof kind of thing. But anyway, there was another article about the Catholics. And the Catholics are having a big meeting in Rome, for a whole month, on how to get the new hemisphere back into the fold; because the Catholics are drifting away and there's too much independence, and they want to get everyone back in a Parrish, so they can have that command and control. And I was thinking that's just the opposite of what God is doing. God wants us all first to have that relationship with Him, then we come together in a congregation together because we love God first. Not come into a Parrish or congregation and all be organized and then be told—and I got another book I have to read, too, which is: *There's No Salvation Outside the Catholic Church*. So you know where the persecution is going to come from—and all be corralled together with all of these physical constraints—because that is what we've learned over the years. **You can't accomplish spiritual things by physical means!**

So Christ wants us to understand something very personal and very profound—which is the opposite of a hierarchy! And that is, you have direct connection with God the Father, and He's making it clear:

John 16:23: "And in that day you shall ask Me nothing..." That's why we pray to the Father. Now, it's not wrong to thank Christ Who's our High Priest at the right hand of God the Father;

- to thank Him for His love
- to thank Him for His sacrifice
- to thank Him for the life that He lived

But we don't ask Him for anything. That's what He said: "...And in that day you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you. Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." (vs 23-24). And we have more joy and less misery; and that's what we need as brethren in the Church of God—don't we? And the joy comes from what?

- from love
- from service
- from understanding
- compassion
- mercy
- grace

"These things I have spoken to you in allegories; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in allegories, but I will plainly disclose to you *the things* of the Father. In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I

will beseech the Father for you, **for the Father Himself loves you...**" (vs 25-26). And you've heard me say how many times: 'eth' (*KJV*) is what? *Active present tense participle*—the Father Himself is *loving* you.

Now, let's understand something about God's love toward us, toward mankind, but more particularly for us. God loves you, His love never ceases in spite of your sins. Now because of your sins, God's correction may come—which is love—isn't that true? But His love never ceases. Now, as human beings, we measure out our love—don't we? If you're good, I'll love you. If you're not good, I won't love you. Now that's not how God is.

"For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (v 27). Now that is, I think, one of the most profound things concerning the love of God toward us. And I know that has helped me many, many times when I get down to the bottom of the pit. And living in the world that we live in, we all get to the bottom of the pit quite often—don't we? *Yes!* Well, that's why we are to look up and look to God the Father—and that's direct. That's not through a church, that is not through an organization, that is direct with the Spirit of God between you and the Spirit of God—and NO ONE, brethren, can cut that off—NO ONE! No one can threaten to take it from you. We have plenty of examples, don't we, where they cast people out of the synagogue.

- Did that take away the Spirit of God? *No!* We have plenty of examples where people in the Church of God have been cast out of the Church of God because they went against *human* policy.
- Did that take away the connection with God the Father and Jesus Christ? *No!*
- Did it take away the Holy Spirit? *No!*
- Can any man take you from Christ? *No!*

Let's go to John, the tenth chapter—NO ONE can take you from the Father and Jesus Christ. You need to understand that. John 10:22—and I like this encounter here: "Now it was winter, and the Feast of Dedication was taking place at Jerusalem."

When you read most commentaries they say that this is Hanukkah, what is called Hanukkah today. However, you go back to the book of Ezra and they had the dedication of the temple, which was still in winter; so this may not have been what is called Hanukkah today—it may be different from what they have today. But trust me, Hanukkah is as *pagan* as Christmas. A lot of people say then, 'Since Jesus was there at the temple during the Feast of Dedication, therefore, it's all right to keep Hanukkah.' Well, it doesn't say that, and I don't find

that in Lev. 23, so you have to be careful leaping to conclusions in things like this.

"And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews encircled Him and said to Him, 'How long are You going to hold us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I have told you, but you do not believe. The works that I am doing in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me'" (vs 23-25). Now that's how God is going to separate out everything with all the scattering that's going on right now—right there, there's the answer!

"My sheep hear My voice... [which then understands the words of God—correct? Things out of the New Testament and the Bible? *Yes!*] ...and I know them... [how do you know them? '*He who says 'I know Him' and keeps not His commandments is a liar. The Truth is not in him.'*' (1-John 2:4). But if you keep His commandments then you know Him and He knows you. And if you have the Spirit of God He knows you.] ...and **they follow Me**.... [It's all part of the love of God—isn't it?] ...And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; and no one shall take them out of My hand.... [**NO ONE can take you from Christ!**] ...My Father, Who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one has the power to seize *them* from My Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (vs 27-30). So there again, telling the whole plan of God.

- They're *one* in purpose.
- They're *one* in love.
- They're *one* in thought.
- They're *one* in plan and everything.
- All ONE!

And that's what God wants us to be. The way that God is going to bring His Church together is not through the ecumenical compromise of men, but through the power of God's Holy Spirit and His love, and the grace of God—that's how it's going to be done. So **NO ONE is able to take you out of God's hands.**

All right now, let's look at a couple of other Scriptures—let's go back here, concerning the love of God—let's come to 1-John, the fourth chapter, and this is one of the most profound chapters in all of the Bible: showing the love of God, and showing what we need to do, showing how we need to conduct our lives. Let's back up and analyze this just a little bit here, right after I get done reading this verse:

1-John 4:5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the

Truth and the spirit of the deception” (vs 5-6).

Now here’s a real clue then, brethren: ***Only through the love of God are we going to be able to determine the Truth from error***—no other way! That’s how we’re able to then understand what is right doctrine, what is true understanding, put it all together the way that God wants it put together—and only with the love of God. And I think we’ll find out this: ***Everything comes back to the love of God.*** And that all comes back to what God did to send Jesus Christ down here and His expression of love, that God sent His love ***down*** to us. That’s the only way.

You stop and think now for just a minute. In the Churches of God where there was not a sufficient amount of love—what has happened? They were not able to discern between Truth and error—correct? Now if you love God, you’re going to love the Truth. And Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the Truth and the life.’ So through all of this—you combine that with John 10 that we just covered there, that Christ isn’t going to lose any; but He’s going to filter them through. But if they have enough of the love of God, they will be able to discern Truth from error. And that’s what God is putting all of the Church through: brethren, ministers, everybody.

- Do they love God?
- Do they love the Truth?
- Are they able to discern Truth from error?
- Or are they going to run off and go back into the world and listen to the world?

Christmas is a perfect example is how you need to discern Truth from error. Christmas is all based upon error, deception; using good enticements

- of things that people like
- of using human love of getting families together

But human love is not Godly love.

- using human desire to have things
- using human desire to be comfortable
- using human desire to do good for the kiddies, but at the same time, you’re lying through your teeth

People say they ‘love Christmas.’ And that was on the news last night. ‘Oh, I love Christmas, best time of the year.’ If you love Christmas, which is error, you can’t love the Truth. Therefore, if you’re keeping Christmas you can’t understand Truth. You can carry it one step further—correct? ***Yes! It blinds you!*** More suicides, more problems and difficulties at Christmas time. Of course, then we also have this, too—at Thanksgiving and Christmas time—Jesus said, ‘When you do your alms don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.’ So what do they do: ‘We’re giving away 10,000 turkeys, send down the TV crew. *Opposite of what Jesus said.*

“...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception. Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God.... [now, the word *of* in the Greek is a two-letter word also: ‘ek’—which means *out from* God to us. Not only just ‘of’ but ***out from*** God, because God’s love to mankind in His Church is *out to us!* And out to the world to even give the good things that God gives to the world.] ...and everyone who loves... [as God would desire] ...has been ***begotten*** ... [as it should read—not *born*, begotten.] ...by God, and knows God” (vs 6-7). So you see:

- if you *love* God, you ***know*** God
- if you *love* God you ***keep His commandments***
- if you *love* God you know the difference between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error

“The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.... [That’s the greatest characteristic of God. And I’ve often marveled: John wrote the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John and the book of Revelation—one of the very last things written. But look at how long it took him through all the experience of the Church to understand the love of God sufficiently to really put it together the way he’s written it. These are profound writings, brethren. These are really the greatest things that we can have, since the love of God is the greatest of all that there is. Now the other apostles understood about love. I think Paul understood it next to John. John understood it the greatest of all. I think Peter understood it somewhat, but John was the one who loved Jesus and Jesus loved. And John, as you recall, was the only apostle to stay there while Jesus was crucified—and that took a lot of guts and that took a lot of love. The women did to, they stayed there—all the other disciples ran off. So that’s something!

Now notice: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us... [God is the One Who must initiate it. That’s why God must call. That’s why we can’t come to God unless He calls. We can seek after God. And if we seek after God with a pure heart, He will call us. But that doesn’t mean that we come to God because of any great thing that we have.] ...In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God... [in other words, God is not responding back to us because then that would be from our human initiation—wouldn’t it? *Yes!*] ... not that we loved God [first]... [and God looked down here and says, ‘Oh, this one loves Me. Good!’ No! The other way around.] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the*

propitiation for our sins” (vs 9-10). And ‘propitiation’ means *continual source of atonement and forgiveness and love and grace and mercy and all of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit of God poured out upon us*.

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound... [*obligated*, we have an obligation from God] ...we also are duty-bound to love one another. No one has seen God at any time... [clear down to this time; early 90s A.D.] ...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us” (vs 11-12). And that’s the whole key, brethren. ***Our lifelong goal is to have the love of God perfected in us.*** And that comes with the things that we read there in Romans, the fifth chapter—through the trials, through the difficulties, through the overcoming, through the situations—for our desire and God’s Spirit in us, perfected in us.

“By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him... [and be dwelling—that’s something—to be dwelling in God, spiritually—with His love, with His Holy Spirit] ...and He *is dwelling* in us...” (v 13). Christ *in* us! And didn’t the Apostle Paul say, ‘Don’t you know whether Christ is in you or not except you be reprobates.’

- God wants us to know that we have His Spirit.
- God wants us to know that He loves us.
- God wants us to know that we understand His Word.
- God wants us to know that Christ is in us.

That’s what’s so profound. That’s what’s so magnificent, brethren.

“...that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit” (v 13). And this no organization has any control over except God the Father and Jesus Christ.

1-John 3:19—and notice how this ties in with what we’ve just covered here. “And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth.... [God want us to know with no shadow of doubt, concerning the Truth of God—that we are of the Truth.] ...and shall assure our hearts before Him, that if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things” (vs 19-20).

When will your heart condemn you? *Well, your heart will condemn you when you’ve sinned.* And at that point, you don’t like to go before God. But that’s when you *need* to go before God—because God knows you’ve sinned. How are you going to get right before God unless you go repent? *You can’t!* The big mistake a lot of people make is they sin and they say, ‘Well, I’ll pray when I get myself straightened around.’ No! Get yourself straightened around as you’re praying. Go to God

[when] you have to, and say, ‘God, I’ve been in a rotten, horrible, miserable, nasty, carnal, bad attitude. And I’ve sinned greatly before You. Forgive me. Help me. Cleanse my mind. Cleanse my heart.’ God is greater than our heart. There are other times when we haven’t sinned:

“Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God.... [And I know and you know that in those cases your whole prayer life is (how shall we say) ten times better? *Yes!*] ...And whatever we may ask we receive from Him... [that is if it’s according to His will] ...because **we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**.... [Now the way that we do the things that are pleasing in His sight is with Christ in us, with His Holy Spirit, by loving God, by keeping His commandments, by loving each other, and all of that.] ...And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us” (vs 21-23). Again, the love of God comes right back into loving one another.

“And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him... [that is in Christ] ...and He in him... [Isn’t it a whole lot easier to keep the commandments with Christ in you, motivating you, with the love of God? *Yes!*] ...and by this we know... [there again, ***we know***—so He wants us to know. And I tell you what, as we get closer and closer and closer to the day when we reckon with death, we need to know—don’t we? *Yes, and God wants us to know!* And also understand this, too: God knows that we’re going to get old and feeble, and God isn’t going to desert us because we are. God is not like the world. The world, when you get old, they dump you for something that is beautiful and handsome and strong all of that sort of thing. No, God is not like that. If you’ve been faithful to God and love Him, He loves you even more. And in your physical weaknesses He loves you even more still. Because Christ is in you, suffering with you. So you need to understand that, too. And that’s all a part of God loving us.] ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us” (v 24).

See how all that ties in together, brethren? ***God’s love toward mankind is so profound!*** And it’s not just that those who have the Spirit of God have the only corner on the market. No! God is even gracious and good to people in the world. So we need to understand that, too.

Now, let’s come back here to 1-John 4:14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness... [now ‘we have seen’—this is the apostles: John, maybe Andrew was there, maybe Bartholomew was

there. What happened to the rest of the apostles? Well, it's very likely at this time they came back to Ephesus with John and they helped write part of the Epistles of John and part of the Gospel of John—as a final record.] ...And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God... [Now, that means in the way that the Scriptures define we should confess it. Not just to say, 'Oh yeah, He was the Son of God, that's fine'—and go on down the road in your own way. No! Confess it that you believe, that it is your whole being.] ...God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and **the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him**" (vs 14-16).

And this is where it has to be, brethren. This is why God is putting the whole Church through everything that He's doing so that we will come to understand this. So that we can dwell in love and dwell in God. "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us..." (v 17). So again, it's perfected.

- we *grow* in it
- we *understand* it
- we *think* on it
- we *pray* about it
- we *read* about it
- we *study* about it
- we *apply* it
- we *live* it

And I know my experience has been whenever I've asked God to help me grow more in understanding of love, I end up with some great big trial. Why? *So that I can learn to understand the love of God!* That's how it's perfected. How do you think the love of Christ was perfected? *Through sorrow! Through rejection!* Yet, at the same time He had direct contact with God the Father—didn't He? Yet, at the same time He loved God the Father—didn't He? God the Father loved Him. They dwelt in love, but everything on the outside was one great trial. The love of God is powerful.

"...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment.... [There's going to be the day everyone is going to stand before the judgment seat of God, and luckily the minister who baptized you will give an account for you. NO! NO! NO! And everyone's going to give an account of himself or herself, right? *True.*] ...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God... [and I think that's the thing that helped get me started on understanding the love of

God more than anything else; because as I was studying that, the thought came into my head: if there's no fear in love, why did we run the Church with fear? And I think with that, God began to open my mind.] ...rather, perfect love casts out fear... [Again, a process! That's how it is perfected, by casting out fear.] ...because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.... [What is being described here, with God's love, is the whole overall goal that God wants us to have constantly before us—**constantly** before us!] ...We love Him because He loved us first...." (vs 17-19).

- God's love to mankind
- God's love to the Church
- God's love to each one of us
- the love of Jesus Christ to mankind, coming down being the sacrifice of God the Father
- to love the disciples
- to love each one of us as the Father has loved Him

Now then, we have the acid test: "...If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar.... [That's a hard one—isn't it?] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?.... [and that also is another acid test; if you want conviction of heart, there it is right there, brethren. And you have to start right there. That's right. And you can put any name there you want: brother, mother, sister, father, husband, wife, children—whatever] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother. (vs 19-21). And that's what the whole foundation of the Church needs to be built on, brethren—the very love of God. Anything else will fall short. Anything else, it will work for a while, but it won't hold together because it's not the real power and eternal Spirit of God which is doing it. That's what God wants to teach us.

Now, we all have enough sins and faults and mistakes. That's why we need to have the love of God to help us overcome. And I tell you, understanding the love of God helps you overcome sin more than anything else, because ***if you love God you want to leave the sin behind.*** If you love God you will want to love those that are even your enemies. Now, you may not quite have the opportunity to do it in the way that may present itself; but with us as brethren, which we will get into next time—our love toward God and then love toward the brethren—that this is the whole

foundation. Notice how we started out here. We start out first with the

- Nature of God
- God Family
- God the Father
- God the Son Jesus Christ
- Nature of Mankind

then the Love of God—which then is really the nature of God—isn't it? *Yes!* And then our love toward God that goes back. And isn't that something, that God is so great He gives us of His love, that it goes back to Him? *Yes!* And then our love toward each other.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 145:1-12
- 2) Matthew 5:43-48
- 3) John 3:16
- 4) 1 John 3:16
- 5) Romans 5:6-10; 1-5
- 6) Hebrews 12:1-11
- 7) John 13:34-35
- 8) John 15:9-10
- 9) John 16:23-27
- 10) John 10:22-25, 27-30
- 11) 1 John 4:5-13
- 12) 1 John 3:19-24
- 13) 1 John 4:14-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Proverbs 3
- John 13-17
- 1 John 2:4

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series: *Love Series Grace*
- Booklet: *Passover Ceremony*

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The Love of God God's Love Toward Neighbor

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1998

Now, let's continue on in our study through the Beliefs booklet—we just finished the section: *Our Love Toward God* and then the next section listed in the Beliefs booklet is *Our Love Toward Brethren*—but there's one that we need to insert in between those two, which is *Love Toward Neighbor*.

Now the reason that we need to put it there—let's go to Matthew 22 and let's see the reason that we need to put it there, because that's part of what God requires of us with our love. And of course, this is the foundation of all the law and the prophets, and this is really a very good Scripture. Just remember this: If anyone says 'you believe in commandment-keeping, we believe in love.'

This was a lawyer who was tempting Him, and he said to Christ: Matthew 22:36: "'Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?' And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment... [What's so important here is that God expects it complete. In other words, when God calls you and you're going to come to God, God does not want anything half-hearted, He wants it complete. What is another Scripture you can think of which tells us that God doesn't want it half-hearted? Rev. 3, you're lukewarm—right? That's half-hearted. God wants it all the way. He says, 'I wish you were either hot or cold.' So, if you're going to be hot, then what you're going to do is be loving God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul.] ...This *the* first and greatest commandment'" (vs 36-38). And this means that this is the great and primary, there is nothing greater than this. That's why Paul said that there is 'faith, hope and love'; but love is the greatest.' And that's why Paul said, 'love never fails.'

"'And *the* second *one is* like it: You shall **love your neighbor as yourself** [And so we'll investigate that today—we'll study through that today.] ...On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'" (vs 39-40). So everything that God has done is based upon love. There's not one thing that God has done that has not been based on love. Even to the exterminating of the wicked, to take them out of their misery and to keep them from contaminating other people who are not wicked—even that is based upon love.

Let's go back here to Exodus, the twentieth chapter, for just a minute—and this is important to realize, too. Now, part of it you're going to see as we

go through here. This is the giving of the Ten Commandments. Now, I'm not going to read every one, you should know them.

What we have in Exodus 20, is we have the first four commandments have to do with your direct relationship with God. The fifth commandment has a relationship between your parents and you and God, which says—Exodus 20:12: "Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you." So it is God Who gives you long life when you honor your father and mother. The fifth one transits between the relationship with God and the relationship with human beings—and it starts out with father and mother. And almost everything in the world today is designed to:

- dishonor father and mother
- dishonor home
- dishonor family
- dishonor everything

Then it goes on: "You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet..." (vs 13-17). All of those have to do with the relationship with your neighbor—any neighbor.

Remember when the man said, 'Who is my neighbor, Lord?' Then Jesus gave the parable of the Samaritan and the man who was beaten up and robbed—left over in the ditch to die. The priest came by and said, 'Oooo, I'll walk on the other side.' So he didn't help him out. A Levite came by and walked over and said, 'Oop I got to be on my way to do my religious duties.' Here comes the Samaritan. Now the reason why Christ used the parable of the Samaritan was because the Jews hate—with an implacable hatred—the Samaritans, above all people on earth. So he said the Samaritan went and picked him up, cleaned up his wound, put in wine and oil, took him into the inn, told the inn-keeper 'I've got to go and here's so much to take care of him. If it's going to cost more I'll pay you on my way back.' And the neighbor was the one to whom he did good.

So loving your neighbor as yourself becomes a very important thing. All of the statutes and judgments (Exo. 21), having to do with neighbor-to-neighbor—person-to-person. Whether it has to do with murder, whether it has to do with bodily injury, whether it has to do with stealing, all of these judgments and statutes have to do with *love your*

neighbor as yourself.

Now, if you get a little bored in your Bible study sometime, do this—I've recommended it several times, but you just do this: Take the Ten Commandments and write each one across the top of a paper. First Commandment, Second Commandment, so forth. Now then, on the first commandment, you'll have to have all the priest laws, because that has to do with the relationship they had with the priest. Then you can have, like the agricultural commandments, that'll be on the side, that's a little bit different. But outside of those two categories go through and take all the laws that you find in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and put those under the Ten Commandments and you will see that every one of them fit under the Ten Commandments—as some part of an expression or definition of how you apply the Ten Commandments.

Now this is God's way. Legalism then is when you take something and go beyond what God has done to split the hairs and try and create a system that rejects God's way but creates a legal system. So you will love your neighbor as yourself. Now in that then, we have a counterbalance. Let's go to 1-John, the second chapter, we have a counterbalance. This is a spiritual counterbalance so that we will not get involved with the sins of the world while we still love our neighbors as ourselves. In loving our neighbors as ourselves, that does not mean that we endorse their sins. That does not mean we participate in their sins. You're not going to love your neighbor by running over and having a hoopy-do Christmas party on his Christmas party night. Then he will not know that you are different.

1-John 2:15: "Do not love the world... [Now there's a distinct difference between your personal relationships with individuals. And, of course, anyone in that sense is your neighbor who is next to you or whatever wherever you are.] ...Do not love the world, nor the things... [now notice the difference here; we're talking about *things*, not people.] ...things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world... [That's loving this whole world's system—everything that is out there in the world, what it stands for.] ...the love of the Father is not in him, because everything that *is* in the world... [Now notice the difference here.] ...—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (vs 15-17).

Of course, the will of the Father is to love your neighbor as yourself. Sometimes that becomes very difficult, especially when you have difficult

neighbors; sometimes it is. Sometimes it really is! And I always remember in the *Fiddler on the Roof* movie, his young fella came up to the Rabbi and said, 'Rabbi, is there a blessing for the Czar?' and the Rabbi stroked his beard and thought for a minute and he says, 'Yes, may the Lord bless him and keep him far away from us.' And sometimes if your neighbors are of that kind, that is your prayer. You're still loving him!

Also we'll see some other things here concerning how to express loving your neighbor. Let's go to Matthew 5, and I think we'll see some very interesting things here, and I think we'll see something that perhaps maybe we haven't looked at in that particular way before. But nevertheless, let's come to Matthew 5:17—again, this is one you should have memorized.

All of those who say, 'Well, Jesus came to abolish the law'—the very first words out of His mouth when He began teaching here—and we're going to see something very important. Matthew 5:17: "Do not think... [that is don't let it enter into your mind, let alone even believe it and practice it] ...that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... [Haven't heard anyone say they would abolish the Psalms or the Writings. No one has come to that point, yet.] ...I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.... [Now to 'fulfill' means *to make full*. And what He's really doing, He is bringing the spiritual requirement to its fullest.] ...For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled" (vs 17-18). So there's no part of the law that is going to be done away.

Someone is going to say, 'Yeah, but what about the sacrifices?' Aha! Sacrifices have not been done away in the sense that they have been abolished that there is no more sacrifice. *The sacrifice of Christ is a greater sacrifice*, which supercedes the sacrifice of any animals. So we have a greater sacrifice. Same thing with circumcision; there is a greater circumcision—circumcision of the heart and mind—which now applies to men and women. So, "...until everything has been fulfilled."

Now then, here's another one, v 19—and we know this is very important because we're going to see this is part of how you love your neighbor: "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.... [Now again, you can relate back to Sunday-keeping/Sabbath-keeping; Holy Day keeping/holiday-keeping; and they teach against what they figure is the least commandment.] ...but whoever shall... [What?] ...**practice and teach**

them, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 19-20).

At this point let me just say you need to listen to the two tapes: *The Two Righteousnesses*—and we’ll cover that a little bit more in detail when we get to the *righteousness of the law* and the *righteousness of the spirit*.

Matthew 7:12: “Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Now, what I want you to understand, here is a very important thing—

Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.” Everything between Matt. 5:17 and Matt. 7:12 is explaining what? ***The law and the prophets concerning your loving your neighbor as yourself.*** That’s what it’s talking about.

Now let’s go back and we’ll see this. Matthew 5:21, and notice how He starts out here: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit murder; but whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment.’” That’s what it was said—however if you kill a Gentile you’re not responsible; if you steal from a Gentile, you can take all you want. ***That’s not what Christ said! That’s not what God meant.*** God said in the Old Covenant: ‘One law for the stranger and for the Israelite.’ Same thing applies to everybody.

“But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause shall be subject to judgment... [and ‘the judgment’ means *the final judgment*.] ...Now you have heard it said, ‘Whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be subject to *the judgment of the council*.’ But I say to you, whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna” (v 22). That’s Gehenna fire—so the whole standard now has been changed on how you love your neighbor as yourself. So you need to be careful.

What are you doing when you say these things? *You’re judging the person’s mind and heart.* That’s why it’s so severe. You can judge an action. You can say what you did was foolish. That doesn’t necessarily mean that the person is a fool. But this is judging the mind, judging the thoughts, when no one but the individual who has those thoughts knows whence they come from. And lots of times we do this. ‘Oh I know what you’re thinking?’ *Well, how do you know what I’m thinking?* ‘I just know.’ Wives guess pretty good, but that doesn’t mean they know every time. This is judging unto

condemnation, of course, otherwise it wouldn’t be so severe.

Verse 23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar... [So now He starts out with who do you start with then?] ...and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (vs 23-24). So loving your neighbor, loving your brother, has a relationship to your *standing* with God. And I know and you know, ***if*** you’ve got loose ends hanging around—between neighbors and between brothers and between husbands and wives all this sort of thing—how’s your prayer life? *Probably not so good!* And you can feel it. Once they’re reconciled and when you have the reconciliation it’s wonderful. Everything then fits together and everything comes together and it works just right. And I think we’ve all experienced that, too—haven’t we? *Yes, we have.* So that’s why it’s important.

Now then, He talks about agreeing with your adversary—and you won’t get thrown in jail. Verse 27: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*... [notice how He’s going down, taking the commandments, ‘You shall not kill’ is the first commandment after ‘honor your father and mother’—right? *Yes!*] (Next one is): ...‘You shall not commit adultery.’.... [In the letter you could come right up to the point of not committing it and not committing it. But in the spirit, now it’s a different thing—even for people that are out there in the world that you are dealing with.] ...‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (vs 27-28). And the same thing would apply for a woman to a man.

And then He shows here how important it is. He does not mean to pluck out your right eye or cut off your hand or cut off your foot, but you have to make the effort, because you can be blind in lust. As I said before, you can cut off both arms, both hands, both feet, you can gouge out both eyes and be a paraplegic in bed *and [still] lust unto sin*. So what He’s showing here is that you have to have the effort, and you have to put it forth.

Now then, we come down here to v 31—and now we’re talking about marriage and divorce. “It was also said *in ancient times*, ‘Whoever shall divorce his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.’.... [Well, that’s what they have today, anything, not even any cause. Today, people have prenuptial agreements preparing for divorce—before they even marry! So the whole thing is defeated from day one.] ...But I say to you, whoever shall

divorce his wife... [and today we can say husband, because back then the wives did not put away their husbands, but today wives can.] ...except for the cause of sexual immorality..." (vs 31-32)

Today there is such a variety of it that it's unreal. That's the only cause for divorce. Now the reason that's the only cause for divorce is because, just like anything else, you come back up here, if you have difficulty in your marriage then you be reconciled—that's why. Now, if there is an offending party that runs off and rejects God and commits adultery and so forth, then that's another whole case.

Verse 33: "Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, 'You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the* city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black. But let your word be *good*, your 'Yes' *be* yes and your 'No' *be* no; for anything that *is* added to these is from the evil one" (vs 33-37). In other words, let it be true. Now there are times when you can't give a wholly full answer because you may not have all the facts. So then you say, 'I may not have all the facts, but this much I know up to this point.' So there's the difference. In other words, you don't tell a person 'yes' and turn around planning to do 'no.' You don't give testimony in court and say 'yes' when you know otherwise.

All of this is 'loving your neighbor as yourself.' You don't tell your neighbor 'yes, I'll watch your yard and take care of it while you're gone on vacation' and then let all of the big four-wheelers come in and scroll up his lawn.

Now, v 38: "You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*'" Now when you go back—let's go back and clear this up right here. Let's go back to book of Exo. 21—because you'll have people say, 'Ok, now you see, back there if you lost an eye, you bring him in and you have someone take out their eye.' Lost a tooth, bring him in and say, 'Ok, open up your mouth'—BAM! Knock out your tooth. That's not what He's talking about. And we will find that today we have something very similar to it.

Exodus 21:22: "If men strive and strike a pregnant woman... [now is a child in the womb a child? *Yes!*] ...so that there is a miscarriage, and no harm follows... [That means that the child lives and the woman lives—no death.] ...he shall surely be punished... [So there's still a punishment to be

meted out.] ...according as the woman's husband will lay upon him. And he shall pay as the judges *determine*.... [So here was to be a fine. This is where we have in our legal system today the paying of a fine when something goes wrong. You pay a fine.] ...And if *any* injury occurs... [that is, one of them dies] ...then you shall give life for life.... [he's to pay with his life] ...eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (vs 22-25)—as the judge orders him to pay—that's what it has to do with. If you're in an accident and you lose an eye, then the person who caused it is to pay for the loss of your eye.

Now, we have insurance that takes care of those things today; that's why we have car insurance. Car insurance is 'loving your neighbor as yourself.' There are some people who have thought, well, we don't need any insurance—we don't need car insurance, we don't need house insurance, we don't need any of these things. But, yes you do, in case something happens and you can love your neighbor as yourself, compensate him for whatever may happen. What if he's over working with you, just helping you, and a man lost his fingers in a shredder. Now what are you going to do? Finger for finger—how much is a finger worth? Well, you go to an insurance company and they say a finger's worth so much; an arm is worth so much; a leg is worth so much, two hands are worth so much, etc. That's what it's talking about here—when it talks about 'eye for eye and tooth for tooth.'

Let's go back to Matthew 5:38: "You have heard that it was said, "*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*"; but I say to you, do not resist evil.... [Now this is when they come after you for what you believe. And this is where all the 'sovereignists' then go way off the deep end. They have their guns, they have their ammunition, they have their secret hideouts, they have all of these things so when the government troops or the UN troops come to take over the country and arrest them, they're going to shoot them. No! No!] ...rather, *if* anyone shall strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (vs 38-39). Is that not what Jesus did? *Yes, He did!*

What happened on several occasions when they were coming to get Him? He got away. So if you can flee, get away. What did He say in Matt. 10, when you are preaching the Gospel? You're hauled up before the council? *If they let you go then flee to the next city. If they come after you there then flee to the next city.* So sooner or later if they catch up with you then you do exactly what it is here.

Now, v 40: "And *if* anyone shall sue you before the law and take your garment... [so now we're talking about suing at law and compensation.

If you are truly guilty of it then, don't sit there and fight it just to resist it.] ...and take your garment, give him *your* coat also.... [All the way through it says 'loving your neighbor as yourself' is going ahead and being honest and open with him—that's what it's talking about.] ...And *if* anyone shall compel you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to the one who asks of you; and do not turn away from the one who wishes to borrow from you" (vs 40-42).

Someone really needs some help it doesn't matter who they are. *Help them!* I know, sometimes you get ripped off—but I remember on several occasions I come off the freeway in the rain, dripping wet and really miserable, and I've seen some of these men or Vietnam vets—they really have it tough—a lot of them do. And they're standing there freezing, shaking, shivering and I've given them three or four or five dollars as I'm stopped there; to help them out, because they really looked like they needed it. Now, I thought to myself, what if I was standing there—dirty, disheveled, freezing to death having gone through the Vietnam War and no one is helping out—and here they're all driving by in their cars, the windows rolled up and sticking their noses high in the air and driving along and not helping them. I'd rather give them something. And if they're truly ripping me off well then, that's on their head then. Now there are times when I haven't. There are times—I don't pick up hitchhikers anymore—but there were times when I'd pick up a hitchhiker. I remember I picked one up and this fellow was really in a bad way; just a terrible, terrible, terrible way—and I was glad I pick him up. So far I haven't been beaten over the head and so far no one has had a gun in the cast on their leg, like some of these programs you read about.

Now, v 43—here's a whole change in loving your neighbor; now it goes beyond: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies.... [And this is what Christ did. When you stop and think that when Christ came on the earth no one loved Him but God the Father and maybe His own mother. Now that's hard! Love your enemy. That doesn't mean you run out and embrace him, but that doesn't mean you stand there have vicious thoughts of hate against them. Just pray like the Rabbi did, keep him far away.] ...bless those who curse you... [and that is difficult. Just understand, that's what Christ did: 'Father forgive them they know not what they do.'] ...do good to those who hate you... [I wonder how many people Jesus healed that later on hated Him and rejected Him? Makes you wonder.] ...and pray for those who spitefully use you... [good example of the Apostle Paul—right? Remember what happened when Stephen was being martyred? He said, 'Oh Lord, don't lay this to

their charge.' God answered that prayer right away by calling Saul, who was the one standing there saying, 'Do it.' So it can turn around. God can turn it around. What you're doing in this case, you're putting it all in God's hands.] ...pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven" (vs 43-45). Now you can take this statement and reverse it around the other way around.

If you hate your enemy, hate all of those who spitefully use you and so forth, then can you be the children of your Father in heaven? Why does He say that? If you hate your enemy, have you done anything to him? He could care less. But if you pray for him, maybe perhaps God can do something with him. But instead if you're not, then God has to do something with you. If you hate your enemy with a vituperated hatred—let's just add that to it—then what you're doing, you're hurting yourself because you're cutting yourself off from God. Does it change anything that the enemy does? *No!*

Now notice, and this is what causes a lot of people difficulty; they can't figure some of these things out: "...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and on *the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and on *the* unjust." (v 45). Now, why does God do that? *Because He loves the world, that's true.* But why else? *Because He isn't judging right then.* Why else? *No respecter of persons.* All correct—why else? *We all live together.* You may have someone righteous living in this house and right next door you may have someone evil. *Space for repentance.* Okay, why else, there's another fundamental reason? *There's another fundamental reason.*

Let's go back to Genesis 8:20: "And Noah... [that is after he got out of the ark] ...built an altar to the LORD, and he took of every clean animal, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in His heart, 'I will not again curse the ground for man's sake... [in the way I did, because of what Adam did. There are still curses, but not in the same way.] ...—although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth... [the good and the evil; the just and the unjust] ...and I will not again smite every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (vs 20-22). Now that's why God made a promise and God made a covenant.

And as we were driving here today, we saw the covenant—didn't we? *The rainbow!* Because it has been raining. So that's why God does it. Now, if God is going to do that for the good and the wicked—who are we? What happens?

Let's go back here to Matthew 5 again, let's pick up where we left off there. What happens when you do not do it the way that God does? You're setting yourself up as greater than God—correct? You're setting yourself up in the seat of God for judging—correct? And God doesn't want that. So that's why back here in Matthew 5:44, He's saying that's why you are to “, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good [And there's summer and winter and harvest and seed and night and day] ...and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust” (vs 44-45).

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only... [and of course, that's always wonderful] ...what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” (v 46). That's why when Jesus came He went down and He was accused of spending time with the publicans and the harlots. Now this was very difficult for the religious leaders to figure out. And, of course, many of the religious leaders had a Gospel of hate—didn't they? Anyone who was not with them, they hated—hated the Samaritans; hated the Gentiles; hated everybody else.

I've heard some information about those down in the Essenes and the Coomaron community; and they have writings that are so vituperative that one person said you could only explain it as the 'gospel of hate.' In other words, if you were not down there in that little community—out of the whole world, 200 people—the gospel of hate.

Verse 48—here's what we're to be; so He gives us a whole lifetime goal—doesn't He? “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.”

So all of these are love your neighbor as yourself. Now then, when we come to Matthew 6, it's a little bit different. All of these are personal applications now. Since you are to love your neighbor as yourself, now what do you do?

- Don't do as they did.
- Don't have public worship.
- Don't have throwing your alms where everyone can see it.
- Don't use vain repetitions.

He tells you how to pray. Let's just review that here in Matthew 6:9 on how to pray and let's look and see what is here, which is very important for us to

understand, too; so that we can have our relationship again reestablished with other people and one another.

Matthew 6:9: “Therefore, you are to pray after this manner... [This is an outline. This is a model. Now if you want another study, take this model prayer and go back and look at the Psalms and analyze and see how the Psalms many times just fits this same sequence that you have in this model prayer.] ...‘Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 9-15). So God lays the individual responsibility upon everyone—doesn't He? *Yes, He does!* Then He talks about fasting, and don't appear to be fasting to men. Then He talks about the faith that we are to have. We're to trust God to provide everything that you need.

Here's the overall goal that God gives us to follow all of our lives. You tie that in with Matt. 5:48—put the two together. “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.”:

Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness... [In other words, the primary thing that God wants us to seek is His Kingdom, rather than just the physical things here on earth. And this ties in with love not the world, nor the things in the world: ‘lust of the flesh’ and all of that.] ...and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow.... [that means *don't worry about it*—put it in God's hands. It doesn't mean *don't think, don't plan*. It means]: ...do not be anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself. Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of that *day*” (vs 33-34).

And sometimes, boy! you have bad days! And I also think this. I think if you're loving God, and you're following what He has to say, and trying; that doesn't mean you're going to be perfect. Maybe you're going to be falling short many, many times. However, if you are doing this, I think that God will show you what is going to come in the future at the time that He wants it known that it's going to be. And we've seen so many times: people studying prophecy, studying prophecy, and they just get so far off base that it's unreal.

Matthew 7:1—this sums up everything that we have covered so far; here's another part of judging: "Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned.... [And this is judgment unto condemnation] ...for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you. Now why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye?" (vs 1-3). And that's just the way human nature is. We always look for the little thing that the other person does wrong. And many times that is what you would call—and what He's describing here—in modern terminology is what is called a *ideological mask*.

What do I mean: an *ideological mask*? All right, how many have been trying to follow the investigation where all of the money comes for the elections? What's the first thing? 'Yeah, but they do it!' And true, the Republicans were taking care of theirs and they were coming down and seeing, 'well, the Democrats are doing worse—let's get 'em.' Of course, there's a lot of love between the both of them, you know that! So what they're doing, they're just back and forth and back and forth and back and forth—nothing is accomplished. So that is an *ideological mask*. You point out the fault of someone else to defer attention from you. Or you point out the faults of someone else so you won't have to face your own yourself and admit to God you have them; and I've got to do something about them.

Verse 4: "Or how will you say to your brother, "Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye"; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye? *You* hypocrite.... [So this is hypocritical judgment; not righteous judgment as we learned during the Feast.] ...first cast out the beam from your *own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye.... [Then you can do it. And if you're praying for him, maybe they'll run along and they'll find out they've got a little moat in their eyes themselves. And maybe they'll come to see. So that's what God wants done in a proper way.] ...Do not give that which *is* Holy to the dogs.... [In other words, don't take the good things of God and just throw it out there in the world.] ... nor cast your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn around and tear you in pieces" (vs 4-6) So there's some caution you need to exercise in these things.

Then here's a promise for prayer: "**Ask**... [And the Greek there has the meaning: *and keep on asking*. In other words, just don't ask once. Ask, keep on asking] ...and it shall be given you. **Seek**... [and the meaning is: *keep on seeking*; because we're

told right up here in v 33, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God' and that is a constant ongoing thing.] ...**Seek**, and you shall find.... [And maybe what you'll find is better than what you really want.] ...**Knock**, and it shall be open to you.... [If it's a door and it's God's will and all of that, it will be opened.] ...For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you who, if his son shall ask *for* bread, will give him a stone? And if he shall ask *for* a fish, will give him a serpent? Therefore, if you, being evil..." (vs 7-11).

Now that's quite a statement! Every time I come across that I think, boy! You know, here Jesus is talking to His disciples and He's saying, 'Now look, if you then being evil' "...know *how* to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father Who *is* in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?" (v 11). And of course He will give it without penalty.

Then He concludes by saying, v 12: "Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." So what He really did was expand and explain concerning the law and prophets in a way that had never been explained before, in that way. And you go back and read all these things and ask yourself the question: How do I want to be treated? *Just like Jesus said here*. That's what He's talking about. So that's all part of loving your neighbor as yourself.

Now there are other things we could add to that, but I think we've covered it sufficiently concerning loving your neighbor as yourself.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 22:36-40
- 2) Exodus 20:12-17
- 3) 1-John 2:15-17
- 4) Matthew 5:17-20
- 5) Matthew 7:12
- 6) Matthew 5: 17, 21-24, 27-28. 31-38
- 7) Exodus 21:22-25
- 8) Matthew 5:38-45
- 9) Genesis 8:20-22
- 10) Matthew 5:44-48
- 11) Matthew 6:9-15
- 12) Matthew 5:48
- 13) Matthew 6:33-34
- 14) Matthew 7:1-12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 3
- Matthew 10

Also referenced: Sermon Series:
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The Love of God Love Toward Brethren

Fred R. Coulter—January 17, 1999

Let's come back to the statement in the Beliefs booklet—*Our Love Toward Brethren*. And this is something which is especially critical now in the time when the Church is in such great upheaval. So let's just go ahead and read the statement here. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 7 throughout):

Christians are to have a special love for one another...

I think we've been developing that through the years, and I think we have it here, and I think the brethren, wherever we go we have it.

...because God the Father and Jesus Christ have individually called and personally love each one

Now, sometimes you're kind of stuck with your own carnality, and God has made it that way. Let's go to 1-Corinthians, the first chapter; we'll come back and finish the statement. Within the Church or fellowships there is always cause to not love someone, and there are many reasons why. That's why I wrote the statement in the way that I did. Now here's why.

1-Corinthians 1:26: "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world ... [Sometimes it's difficult to get along with brethren; sometimes it just is.] ...so that He might put to shame those who are wise [God is doing a greater work than beyond our initial first impression, or our initial impressions. You need to understand that.] ...and God has chosen the weak things of the world.... [Weak in many ways. Maybe weak in personality; maybe weak in personal resolve; maybe weak in whatever areas it may be; maybe physically weak. I would have to say, look at all of us the way we're all gimping around here—all physically weak.] ... so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence." (vs 26-29).

So that's why I wrote here why we are to have this special love for one another. Now, in spite of being weak; in spite of being foolish; in spite of being base; in spite of all of these things, we are to love each other:

...because God the Father and Jesus Christ have individually called and personally loved each one....

God the Father's the one Who called. That's very, very important to understand.

...As the begotten children of God, with the Holy Spirit shed abroad into their hearts, all true Christians share a special fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

That's why it starts out with: 'And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.' And that's what makes the fellowship and love among the brethren.

This fellowship is the foundation for the new commandment...

And it was a new commandment; and it was a new thing.

...which Jesus gave to His disciples to 'love one another as I have loved you.' This true Christian love is a sign by which all people can recognize the followers of Jesus Christ.

And I would have to say, unfortunately, I do believe that all the Churches of God—we'll just include ourselves in there—have fallen way short on that.

Now let's go back to John 13—this is that new commandment, but it's based on what? ***The old commandment of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being***—isn't it? *Yes!* John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you... [He didn't give this commandment to start with. Why? *Because this takes the Holy Spirit to do it*, that's why. And they didn't receive the Holy Spirit until when? *Until Pentecost!* He's talking to them on Passover night.] ...**A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you**... [Now did Jesus do anything against any of the disciples or anyone on earth? *No!* He loved them.] ...that *is how* you are to love one another." So God has given us a quite a standard—hasn't He? Look at the things we've covered already.

1. Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect
2. Seek the Kingdom of God
3. Love your neighbor as yourself

4. Love each other as I have loved you
Those are really profound and big principles of living that we need to follow every day—new commandment. “By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another” (v 35)

Now then, let’s come over here to John 15—some of this is just a little repeat of what we covered concerning the love of God, when I covered Jesus’ love for God. But nevertheless, this overlaps, and I think we really need to keep this in mind and just ask God to help us. Wouldn’t it be great, brethren, if we could really do it: **love each other as Christ loved us**. That is a lifetime goal, too—isn’t it? *Yes, it is*. And that is a continual, ongoing thing that we have to have. And we’ll cover one thing before we stop this time, on how to keep that going in spite of all the mistakes. And we’ve all done that. So I won’t be reiterating anything new there.

John 15:9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have I loved you.... [Now, you can’t have any more perfect love than that. And I think that with all of our carnality and all of our humanness, it’s really difficult to comprehend that—isn’t it? So this is *spiritually* discerned. We have to ask God for His Spirit to understand it and His Spirit to do this.] ...live in My love. If you keep My commandments... [So there is a way to understand how this begins.] (of course, then): ...**If** you keep My commandments... [Now, that’s ALL of Jesus’ commandments. We just read a lot of them back there in Matt. 5—didn’t we? *Yes, we did!*] ...you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love.... [and the word ‘abide’ can mean *dwell, live in.*] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full” (vs 9-11). In spite of all the difficulties and problems that you may have without.

“This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you.... [Now notice, He’s reiterated it three times. This becomes very, very profound.] ...No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends” (vs 12-13). We have another Scripture which takes right off on this one:

1-John 3:15—because in His laying down His life, also gave us an example of what we need to be doing. “Everyone who hates his brother... [notice the ‘eth’ in the *King James*, which means present tense.] ...is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. By this *very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to... [The word ‘ought’ (*KJV*) means *we are obligated—we have an obligation to*] ...lay down

our lives for the brethren.... [And I think all of us are doing that to the very best that we can, in whatever way that we can do that.] (And it starts out): ...But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him? My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in truth” (vs 15-18).

So that ties right in. This is what He means back here in John 15:13: “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.... [And, of course, not only did He lay it down for them, but *for the whole world.*] ...No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father. You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you... [That’s why we’re to have the love of the brethren, because God has chosen each one. **God chose them!**] ... that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another” (vs 13-17).

So all the way through, that’s why this is so important. That’s why John 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17 is the heart and core of the Passover ceremony that we go through every year at the Passover; because what God has for us *is not a religion. He has a way of life* based on a relationship of love with Him and with each other. And that’s how we need to keep these things in perspective. Then we can know, and grow and overcome and understand God’s way even more.

How then do you maintain this relationship?—and this also fits in with what we covered there in Matt. 5, that if you have somewhat against your brother, you go to him. I think we’re even going to learn just a little something here that we didn’t understand quite in the same way before. Now, if you love one another as Christ has loved you, and if you believe in following the Scriptures—and I think this is very, very important, brethren—I think this is the only thing that’s going to help bring brethren back together again in the way that they need to be.

Matthew 18:15: “So then, if your brother sins against you... [that means *any* trespass] ...go and show him his fault between you and him alone.... [Now, this is not dealing with a great, major sin. This is not dealing with just a great, major sin against God. It is **you go and you tell him alone**. You don’t tell other people first. You don’t tell a minister first. You don’t tell your best friend first.

You go to the person first.] ...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother.” What I suggest is this: Whenever something like this happens, you do it this way: You approach the person and say, ‘I have a Matt. 18 I need to discuss with you.’ When someone comes to you and says that, just keep your antenna up and be very sensitive—because you may be wrong. Now then, you can sit down and resolve it; and you will find that it will be easy to do if you have the Spirit of God and the love of God. You can get it resolved.

“But if he will not listen... [now we’re dealing in a very difficult situation] ...take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.... [get all the facts] ...And if he fails to listen to them... [Maybe you sit around and talk about it; you try and figure out a way to resolve the problem.] ...tell *it* to the Church.... [Now the Church is *not* the ministry. The Church is the congregation assembled. That’s what the Church is.] ...But if he also fails to listen to the Church... [So it would be just like a roundtable discussion. And if he ‘neglect to hear the Church,’ notice what happens then]: ...let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector” (vs 15-17). So the Church is the one that does the disfellowshipping. It’s quite the opposite of the practices of most Churches of God.

“Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven... [That is the solution to this problem or the judgment that was rendered when you all gathered together—whatever you decided *shall be bound in heaven*. Has nothing to do with the law and commandments of God, doing away with them, changing them or anything like that whatsoever. It has to do with that particular decision, that’s what it has to do with.] ...and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request, it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven” (vs 18-19). Now, does this not tie in with ‘let your *yes* be *yes* and your *no* be *no*’? If two of you agree? If you say, ‘Okay, that’s fine we’ll do it’? God is going to hold you responsible—it’s bound in heaven. There it is, right there. You have an obligation before God.

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name... [that is to solve this problem or to go over the difficulty] ...there, I am in *the* midst of them.... [Because you’re following the way of God and He will lead you to the proper conclusion. Now then, this secondarily applies that ‘wherever two or three are gathered together’—say, to fellowship together] ...there, I am in the midst of

them” (v 20). If you only have two or three, you get together on the Sabbath, God will be with you. But this applies primarily to making that decision to solve a problem—not necessarily just getting together on the Sabbath. (Comment was made): Church, it doesn’t call it the congregation. That is *the saints* gather together. Comment was made that our background in church history, this was never done. No, it was never done. Why?

1. Because they never taught the brethren
2. They would lose control

—and it was a matter of hierarchical control—that’s correct.

Let’s learn something here, because now, vs 21 & 22 have been used against people—that you’re not forgiving, when their gross sins were so gross against God, especially from a ministerial point of view—that they’re disqualified from ever opening the Bible publicly again—they turn to this Scripture and say you’re not forgiving. Has nothing to do with major sins against God.

Matthew 18:21-22: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me... [a personal offense—not a major sin against God] ...and I forgive him? Until seven times?’.... [Because what are we dealing with? *We’re dealing with personal foolishness, personal weakness and so forth* that we covered there in 1-Cor. 1:26. Or maybe we’re dealing with a personality weakness.] ...Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.’”

Now, we know one infamous minister who would stand up and use this and say, ‘Well, you haven’t forgiven me for my 10,000 cases of adultery.’ Has nothing to do with that! Has to do with personal little offenses that bug you—if I could put it that way. That’s what it has to do with. And let’s see the example that He uses in a parable to explain it. What He’s explaining is not a sin against God.

“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents.... [Now, is this sin against God? *No, this is a personal debt*—owed money.] ...But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’... [Notice his attitude: he was willing. He just didn’t have the

means to do it. It has nothing to do with murder; nothing to do with adultery; nothing to do with stealing; nothing to do with idolatry; nothing to do with taking God's name in vain.] ...And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt" (vs 23-26). So we're talking about a monetary debt.

"Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins; and after seizing him he choked *him*, saying, 'Pay me what you owe.'.... [Almost like shaking him.] ...As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed." (vs 26-30). And you earn like three cents a day in jail. What is it, seventy-five cents now, today? Somewhere around there.

"Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, '*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart" (vs 31-35).

And that's what's so very important. These are the inner personal relationship things that come along—having nothing to do with the great commandments of God or sinning against God. Those are in a totally different category.

And the love of the brethren must be the result of the fruit of the Holy Spirit from God. And that's what's so important. That's where the special love comes, because it should be Christ in us, with the love for each other as Christ has loved us. So it's a special and a particular and a very close love that God wants us to have which is different than any other kind of love.

- different than husband and wife love
- different than love of children
- different than love of neighbor

But this is a particularly very close love; and this is something which has really been missing in the Churches of God because it hasn't been taught, it hasn't been practiced. The Scriptures are very seldom read; and the thing that is important about love is that you must constantly emphasize it, you must constantly work at it. Especially living in this

evil, rotten world that we are living in which is so *loveless*.

Let's go to Matthew 24 for just a minute and show what we are dealing with the extreme of society against us. As I was discussing just yesterday regarding children in the Church—you can do real well with the children and then there is the world and BAM! Just like that, because they're not converted, they don't have God's Spirit. And the world today, even though it is wicked and evil as it is, looks so glamorous and looks so good and looks so successful. What we're dealing with, with everything, is this right here. And this is why love must constantly be worked at. There are so many things that come up everyday which go contrary to love. The environment in which you work; travel which you do; the people that you meet; the circumstances in your own life; your own carnality and the carnality of those around you all interfere to really tear down and take away love. So it's really something you need to work at.

Matthew 24:12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied... [and that means growing, multiplying, just increasing all the time] ...the love of many shall grow cold." And that's what we're up against. That's what makes love so difficult. Because in the world today, if you commit yourself as a person to love someone or befriend someone, too many times what happens?—BAM!—that commitment is cut off, that commitment is turned upside down, they turn on you, they misconstrue everything. And the way it is in the world today, people get offended so easily. Another thing as to why love grows cold is because people are easily offended. So in love for the brethren, we're going to have to really understand each other and work with each other—*forebear each other*—because we're coming from different backgrounds and different areas, so it makes it real difficult to have that real good camaraderie, buddy-buddy thing that, if we could liken it unto good old college days or school days or whatever. Do you understand what I mean with that? It's completely different.

Plus now, it's harder, too, with those who have been through different churches; those who have been offended; those who have been hurt. Now it's really difficult to develop that kind of brotherly love that comes from God. Not only did the love grow cold in the world, but the love grew cold in the Church. And it went from being the Church to being a corporation. And it went from helping people grow in grace and knowledge to being an organization of ridge militarism. And *all of that defeats love!* That cuts it in two. Now, you can have law—remember this: You can have law without love. So you can have rules; you can have regulations; you can have

all of this and still not have any love. That's why the love with the brethren is so important, and that's why we all need to work at it and protect it and nourish it and help it to grow the best that we can.

Now, let's come back here to the section on the *Love for the Brethren*—let me read that again:

Christians are to have a special love for one another because God the Father and Jesus Christ have individually called and personally love each one.

We might put in brackets here: In spite of their weaknesses; in spite of their quirks; in spite of their difficulties. Have to understand that. And that also makes loving each other even a little more difficult because we have all of these things—we're all so different. But if we know that God is the One Who has called; God is the One Who loves them individually.

As the begotten children of God, with the Holy Spirit shed abroad into their hearts, all true Christians share a special fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

And that's where it begins, brethren. We can't come to church on the Sabbath and that is the total activity of our spiritual life. Coming to church on the Sabbath—that is assembling together as God wants us to—is a highlight of the whole week of where we are studying, we're praying, we're getting close to God, we're fellowshiping with God the Father constantly. Then when we come together on the Sabbath, that's what makes the Sabbath so much better. Now, all of us are subject to what? *Slacking down on all of that*. And what happens? When I do, when you do—we what? *We all get carnal to a certain degree*—don't we? So that's why we have to keep working at it.

This fellowship is the foundation for the new commandment, which Jesus gave to His disciples to “love one another as I have loved you.”

And that is really something! That is really something!

- Does Christ suffer through with our problems? *Yes!*
- Does He understand us? *Yes!*
- Does He help us? *Yes!*
- Does He love us in spite of the difficulties? *Yes!*

Too many times, as human beings, we have conditional love. I will love you, *if*—and you can list all kinds of things there. And then when you have conditional love then you're moving away from the

love of God—you're going back to carnal love. And there is a carnal love.

This true Christian love is a sign by which all people can recognize the followers of Jesus Christ.

Now, let's see how then among ourselves we need to help this grow, help it develop and nourish it. Let's go to Colossians, the third chapter. There are things we have to do. Since love is the greatest; and love never fails; and love is something that we need to work at and cultivate and develop; God gives us, through the Apostle Paul, here is how we are to do it. It requires a real dedication to God,

Colossians 3:1: “Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ...” Baptism is a total commitment to Jesus Christ. Baptism is joining in the death of Christ. You are conjoined in His death. And so, you are telling God, just as Christ—to institute the New Covenant—died. Your covenant with Christ and co-joining with Christ you are telling Him, ‘Yes, I accept Your death instead of mine as a substitute.’ But yes, you're also telling Him that if you do not follow-through on it to the end, that you yourself will die in the same way.

Covenant relationships are more binding and more profound than just a legal relationship. A legal relationship can be changed; you can modify it. Covenant cannot! Covenant relationship—an agreed ratified covenant—when you were baptized you ratified the covenant between you and Christ, that's how you ratified it. Covenant relationship cannot be changed except upon death. Then it extinguishes that covenant. Now we are in an everlasting covenant, so you either fulfill it or that covenant to you is extinguished with the second death. So that's why he's saying here:

“Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ... [because we now have a living, eternal covenant] ...seek the things that are above...”

- the fruits of the Spirit
- the knowledge of God
- the Kingdom of God
- the Word of God
- and all of that are the things which are above

...where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth.... [Remember, last time we covered how we're not to ‘love the world nor the things in the world.’ This is just saying in a little bit different way.] ...For you have died, and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. When Christ, *Who is* our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with

Him in glory” (vs 1-4). And that’s the whole purpose. That’s the whole goal. That’s the whole meaning of where we’re headed, brethren.

Isn’t that something? If we really have the love of God and love each other in that way and understand that, that some day we’re going to be glorified sons and daughters in the Kingdom of God; and it’s going to be a marvelous and wonderful and tremendous existence. And I’m going to tell you right now, ***the only way that’s going to be forever is going to be with the love of God.*** It isn’t going to be based on any other thing. Yes, there will be law. Yes, there will be obedience. Yes, there will be all of those things. But since the greatest characteristic of God is that He is love, then the greatest characteristic of His Family is that there is going to be love—and be love through all eternity. That’s why He wants us to have this love now. Very special!

Now here’s what we need to do because we’re still in the flesh. “Therefore, put to death your members which *are* on earth—sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry.... [Now, every one of these things can happen in the Church if there is not the love of God. And if they’re not seeking, wholeheartedly, God’s way, it comes in, it creeps in, it develops. Even leaders are taken down by sins of these magnitudes here that we have just read.] ...Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, among whom you also once walked.... [That was the way of life. This is the way of the world. You can pick up the paper and read the news, or watch the evening television, or whatever, and you’re going to find it’s filled with all of this.] ...when you were living in these things.... [So that you’re walking in it, and so forth, equates as a way of life.] ...But now, you should also put off all *these* things...” (vs 5-8).

So after you get rid of the major things that are listed here: “...wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth” (v8). Now you get down to the other things of going to your brother if you have a difficulty—that’s how you maintain love among brethren—and forgiving them for their faults. Now we’re talking about some of the faults that are here that need to be taken care of.

“...wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth” (v 8). These were problems that brethren were having. We have to put these out. We have to ask God to help us with His Spirit and His love. And the way that you put these out is ask God for His love so that it will be put out; to become not part of the way that you live, but part of the way that Christ will have you to live.

Put these out!

“Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds, and have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him” (vs 9-10)—because salvation is creation. Christ being created in us; and being renewed. That’s why with having all the Word of God—and it’s just impressed upon my mind so much here lately—I do believe that God really puts a responsibility upon us, because now He’s provided this for us. What are we going to do with it now that we have it? And now that we have it, are we going to live by it? Are we going to love it? Are we going to learn so that we can go forward?

Now we can put in some other Scriptures there. Ephesians shows that we are being created in Christ Jesus. Now, that’s something! God is taking us as raw, carnal material and creating in us that spiritual character of Christ. I think this: The more that you understand the grace of God, the love of God, and really ask Him to help you grow in it, the more carnal that you see yourself. What do I mean by that? You begin to see more the greatness of God, and when you do, you begin to understand how carnal that human beings are—beginning with number one: ***the self!*** You really do! God slowly reveals Himself to yourself, that perhaps many other people see, that God sees.

Back here in Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship... [Now God is working with us. ***We are His workmanship!*** Can Christ be formed in you? That’s what he’s talking about here.] ...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [And the ‘good works’ here then are referring to the spiritual works of the fruit of the Spirit of God. And unto good works which then result in that: in helping people, in serving, in praying for them, in loving them, in helping them in their circumstances.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.”

Now notice, we saw here in Col. 3 that if you walk in them, that’s the way you are living. So if you’re walking in these things being created with Christ in you, then you’re walking in that way—it is a way of life!

Galatians 4:19: [the Apostle Paul wrote]: “My little children, for whom I am again laboring in pain until Christ has been formed in you...” So Christ has to be formed in you. And there is always our own nature, Satan the devil there to try and keep Christ from being formed in you, because this is the greatest work that can be done. What God is doing is the greatest work—creating in you, Christ—so that at the resurrection, when you are born into the spirit

world, then you will be equipped. To be a spirit being requires at least a beginning level of something. That's why we go through this life and we have so many difficulties and problems in overcoming. Christ being created in us so that when we are resurrected we will be equipped to do the spirit work that God wants us to do.

And this whole thing: 'we have to practice the Kingdom of God now by ruling' *No!* You have let Christ be formed in you first. You don't 'practice' ruling now. That's how the Church got itself in deep trouble, very deep trouble. *They should have practiced loving each other. They should have practiced teaching the Word of God the way it should have been done.* Then they wouldn't have the problems that they do. So what we need to do is let Christ be formed in us and walk in those ways of God; doing the good things that God wants us to do. We need to overcome our temper. We need to overcome our anger. Only Christ in us can overcome it. So all of this is part of putting on the *new* person—that is what is called *conversion*.

Colossians 3:10: "And have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew ... [So what God is doing is not dependent upon who you are as a physical person. That doesn't mean we don't exist as physical people. We do! And there are things we need to realize with that.] ...neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free; but Christ *is* all things, and in all" (vs 10-11)—because the whole goal is the same for everyone. And I'm sure that it's going to be, as God has shown, that those things which we, as human beings, esteem least will be counted greatest in the Kingdom of God. And those who count themselves as great now will be least in the Kingdom of God.

Now then, when you have these to be put out and be renewed, then here's what we are to do—v 12: "Put on [in] then... [The Greek there is *put in, inward, within*] ...Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections... [that your heart be tender; that you have compassion and understanding and mercy.] ...kindness... [not rudeness; not thoughtlessness; but kindness] ...humility..."—and 'humility' comes when you understand the greatness of God even more. And I think that the thing that we all need keep in mind for 'humbleness of mind' is this: *you have nothing you didn't receive—nothing!*

- We have our physical life—*God gave it to us.*
- We live in this physical world—which *God created for us.*

- We have His word—*which He gave to us.*
- We have His Spirit—*which He's given to us.*
- We have understanding—*because of God*—and God is the one Who gave it.

We can't stand up and say, 'How great we are with this; how great we are with that'—or anything like that. Now sometimes, because we stand for the Truth, people might count us arrogant. Well, that's a different story, that's not so. We need to have the humbleness of mind that we are willing to help and serve and do what God wants us to do. "...meekness and long-suffering; forbearing one another..." (vs 12-13). And that's one thing that really needs to be: *forbearing one another.* Remember this: *Do not treat brethren as doctrine.*

Doctrine's a different story. You compare it with the Word of God and it's got to be the way that God wants it—that's doctrine! But because we're all weak in the flesh, don't treat each other as doctrine; because you'll be just cutting each other off because you don't meet the carnal standard that is given. And so, I found that a lot with brethren; especially with the upheavals that are going on in the Church—when there's that kind of thing that you treat brethren like doctrine. Then you won't be kind to them. You won't be nice to them. You'll walk on the other side of the room—if you're in the same room. You'll be short to them. You'll snip at them—and all of this sort of thing. And unfortunately, too many brethren are going through that. And I know in some cases, part of it stems from kind of self-preservation; 'That I've been hurt so much by so many people for so long I don't know who to trust or what to do. And if I hear the least little thing wrong then I react.' Well remember, when you are trying to overcome human nature, there are going to be these problems that come along. And Jesus said what? *Forgive seventy times seven*—didn't He? *Yes, He did!* That's what it means 'forbearing one another.'

"...and forgiving one another..." (v 13). All too often it is: 'Well, I'll remember that!' Well, no, you shouldn't! What if Christ has already forgotten it? What if He's already forgiven it? Now in this "forgiving one another" we're not talking about great, huge, major things—are we? *No!* We're talking about the true love of brethren who are not out overtly sinning.

"...and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*.... [So this has to do with your own personal feelings; your own interaction of personality and so forth—and the conflicts that you may have that way. That's what it has to do with.] ...And above

all these things *put on* love.... [Now, the *King James* has ‘charity.’ But the Greek there is ‘agape’ which is *love*.] ...put on [in] love... [*put in*—it comes from *within*.] ...which is the bond of perfection” (vs 13-14).

Now why is that important? We’ll see why it’s important. How do you achieve what Christ has said? *Well, you achieve it with the love of God. You achieve it with the Spirit of God.* Here He shows what we are to be—Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” How can you be perfect before God? *By having love, that’s how*—because then everything is motivated from the right motivation.

That’s why it says back here in Colossians 3:14: “And above all these things *put on* [in] love, which is *the* bond of perfection.... [That’s how Matt. 5:48 is fulfilled.] ...And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.... [There is the self-control. That’s where the control comes from—from Christ in you. Let it rule, or reign. Let the peace of God govern your heart. How’s that done? *By loving God with all your heart and mind and soul and being.*] ...to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly... [As I said before, we need to learn the Scriptures; we need to think with the Scriptures; we need to understand the Scriptures; we need to put them together properly—and let it dwell in you *richly*.] ...in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (vs 14-16).

And I tell you what, when you do have the love of God and everything is right, what do you want to do? I don’t know about you, but I want to sing. So there is some truth to that. Now maybe not all of you may want to do that, but anyway...but ‘singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.’ This is to Him. It’s not necessarily to everybody round about. “And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him” (v 17).

That’s then how you develop and keep this bond of love and perfectness within the brethren. That’s how we are to love each other as Christ has loved us.

Now, let’s go to 1-Corinthians 13, and here He shows again the application of this. This ought to be one of these chapters that we need to really know and memorize and live by—and this will help us. I tell you what, next time you get in a bad attitude or get cantankerous or carnal, go read 1-Cor. 13, then think about it. And why do we get angry? *We get offended.* Why do we get offended? *Sometimes it’s*

because we think too much of ourselves. Or we’re offended in such a way that we react and burst out and that is not *righteous* indignation—that is carnal reaction. And what always happens when that occurs? *You did this. You did that.* And you do the same thing that all carnal human being do, you start comparing; when you compare then you’re in difficulty. So when you get in a bad, cantankerous, carnal attitude go read 1-Cor. 13. And the first part here is designed specifically for ministers.

Paul is speaking of himself—1-Corinthians 13:1 “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.” It doesn’t matter the eloquence. It doesn’t matter for all those who teach and preach. They need to conclude that it doesn’t matter what you’ve done in the past, because it really doesn’t amount to anything unless you’re serving God and doing it the way He wants to. You can be elegant. You can be persuasive. You can be whatever; speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, you’re nothing more than just a noise out there that’s going on that means nothing!

“If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...” (v 2). What if you could just recite the Bible by memory and have not love? You have nothing! And I think that if those who teach and those who preach and those who teach teachers and preach to preachers would help everyone of us to understand this, I think that it would be a whole lot better for all the Church. And I don’t think we would have so many contrary opinions about different things, because even if you understand certain prophecies, if you don’t have love it doesn’t make any difference.

“...and understand all mysteries... [That is difficult sections of the Bible it really doesn’t make any difference if you don’t love God.] ...and all knowledge... [Well, if you don’t live it and apply it with love it really doesn’t matter.] ...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (v 2). So when I hear people that say, ‘Boy, why don’t we have the gift of miracles, run around to hospitals and heal everybody?’ Well, that’s not based on the love of God. That’s based on just going out and doing something so you can be important. If and when God wants that, He’ll make it available and He’ll do it. Even Jesus only raised three people from the dead when He was here on the earth. So that’s something we need to consider when we read these things.

“And if I give away all my goods... [Now, it says ‘to feed the poor’—but it really means just *to give them away*—whatever effort there is, religiously speaking.] ...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have

gained nothing” (v 3). You haven’t gained anything with God. What are you going to do—that person—that’s going to impress God so much that He is compelled to do something for you? Which mountain are you going to climb? Which problem are you going to solve?—that you’re going to compel God? *No!* What will move God more than anything else is a ‘contrite heart’ and spirit of love and serving God. That’s what will move God. Remember Hezekiah when he was told ‘you’re going to die’? He turned to the wall and ‘wept sore’—he repented! And God saw his repentance and saw his heart. He said, ‘Ok, I’m going to add 15 years to you.’ Now when God does give you mercy, don’t do like Hezekiah, because his vanity got him down and he showed everything that all the riches and all the treasure and all of the secrets of Israel to the Ambassadors of Babylon and they came back ‘licking their chops’ and said ‘Man, we’ve got to conquer this country.’ So that’s what happened! So when God does do something, don’t get lifted up in vanity with it.

Verse 4: “Love is patient...” Not only just in the way of pains and aches and sickness and things like that, but suffers long with one another. That is *forbearing*. You know and I know that each one of us have some sort of idiosyncrasy that if we would let it get to us, rub each other the wrong way—correct? *Yes!* But what you do is, with the love of God you set that aside and you just understand, asking God to help that person to overcome that, and God will—given time, God will.

“...and is kind... [That’s what we need to be, brethren. I think we are.] ...love envies not... [No, it doesn’t say, ‘Well, that person has that why shouldn’t I have it?’ Well, if that person has it, *rejoice!* If someone has a benefit, be happy!] ...does not brag about itself... [That is it is not self-promoting—boasting on the self: I’m this, I’m that, I’m the other.] ...is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil...” (vs 4-5). In other words, is not out planning and scheming and plotting evil. It doesn’t mean not to be aware that evil things may be going on—that doesn’t mean that at all. It means that your way of thinking is not in an evil way.

“Does not rejoice in iniquity... [If someone has problems and difficulties, help them in it. Don’t come and add to it and go beat them down. Maybe you can help them. Maybe you can lift them up. Maybe you can show them a way.] ...but rejoices in the Truth... [and that is in all things that are true, of course.] ...*Love* bears all things... [regardless of the set of circumstances around it.] ...believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (vs 6-7). And I’ll

tell you what, that is really a testimony to the brethren in the Church that love God, because they’ve had to do this and go through these things—they’ve had to *bear all things*. They have had to believe in God in spite of it. So in order to make it through in today’s chaotic church, you have ‘bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and do all things.’

“Love never fails.... [And that’s what’s going to hold the Church together. That’s what’s going to hold the family together. That’s what’s going to hold the brethren together.] ...Love never fails.... [That’s why Christ told us to love each other as He has loved us, because He doesn’t want His Church to fail.] ...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease... [Yes, those are the human prophecies—not any of God’s.] ...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part” (vs 8-9). And that’s something we have to understand, brethren. Even if we come to the greatest, fullness of the knowledge of understanding that God wants us to have, now in this life, we still know ‘in part.’ Because what’s going to happen at the resurrection is going to be so great and fantastic that it cannot be compared to anything other than as Paul did here.

He said, “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside.... [And ‘Amen,’ yes, when that happens; that’ll be so great!] ...When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child” (vs 10-11). He’s making this comparison. And too many of us have too many different things that hold back from really expressing the love that God wants us to have to each other, in our families and so forth; because we still, too much, have the child in us—and we act and behave that way. So we need to put that aside.

Verse 12: “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face.... [So, our perception of things is always going to be in part. Even though we may understand the Bible as well as we do, it’s still in part. We need Christ to help us to understand and grow in the knowledge. And that can only come with the love of God.] ...but then *we shall see* face-to-face...” And that’s going to be some thing, brethren! When the resurrection takes place and we can see Christ face-to-face! See all the resurrected saints. We can meet Abraham. It’s going to be something to meet Abraham. One thing I want to ask him is, ‘What was it like when you were taking Isaac out to offer him for a burnt offering?’ I mean, we find no account like the movies, that he raged that night and beat his fists on a rock and

broke his walking stick or anything like that. He just quietly did it. What was in his mind? Here he was, he must have been pretty close to, I figure between 112-120 at that time. His only son whom he loved, given to him by a Divine miracle, and God asked him to go out and offer him as a sacrifice. The next question I want to ask him: 'How did you feel when you heard the voice?' 'Don't lay a hand on him.'

(Comments from audience)—Yes, if you're a child you can't implement that level of love. Abraham certainly must have had great and profound love for God to just say—when God says, 'Take your son, your only son, whom you love and you take him out to the place that I will show you and you offer him there for a burnt offering.' Abraham must have had a deep and profound and mature love for God at that time—more than we can comprehend. And then Isaac; you think of Isaac. Now Isaac, the only thing he said was, 'My father'—and he said, 'Here I am.' He knew what was coming. He said, 'I see the wood and you have the fire...' As a matter of fact, he was carrying the wood. And he said, 'But where is the lamb for the offering?' And Abraham said, 'The Lord will provide.' And then Isaac, I want to ask him, 'What did you feel like when your dad was binding you and laid you on the wood?' How old do I think he was at that time? I guesstimate between 12-20—because he's called 'a lad.' The other men that were with them were called 'young men.' So I would assume that he was still a teenager.

So when we see some of them face-to-face and able to talk with them, we're going to have enough conversation for eternity. Then the Apostle Paul. I could ask him what was it like, two things: 'What was it like when God called you and you were knocked off your horse? You had such a quick change of attitude, from adversary to 'Yes, Lord, what will you have me to do.' And then, 'How did you feel when you were left for dead, stoned?' And then the disciples came and picked you up, hauled you back—and I imagine Luke, the physician was daubing his wounds and so forth. But he got up, God gave him strength, turned around and went back and continued on preaching; and then came right back through the cities again. That's something!

So the kind of love and dedication that we find in the Scriptures that they have done, I think God is going to also lay upon us again sometime, if He's not already doing it right now.

Now notice: "...but then *we shall see* face-to-face; now I know in part..." (v 12) And for the Apostle Paul to say 'I know in part' is quite a statement, because he had visions up into the third heaven, did he not? *Yes!* He was taught of Christ three and half years in the desert—by vision and

personally—correct? Now he says, 'Now I know *in part*.' And look at all that he learned. I can't help but think when I go back and I read, especially Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians—those three books that he wrote in prison—how much you can see that he had grown in knowledge and love in the circumstances that he was in. Just think what Paul is going to feel when he's resurrected.

"...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known" (v 12). So when we're transformed from physical to spiritual what is God going to put into us, add to us? We don't know. But it's got to be something. Just consider: When God made Adam and Eve, He made them complete with a language. What's it going to be when we're resurrected? It's got to be complete with a language. Surely we're not all going to speak English. So that's quite a statement.

Now, v 13: "And now, these three remain... [this is *living*—these are living things; spiritually living things] ...faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is love*." Now, don't ask me why the *King James* has 'charity' here. The best reason I can give is this—the only way I've been able to figure out is this: They divided the translating of the *King James* down into different committees; and I think the committee that had John's Gospel and his epistles translated 'agape' love all the way through—they understood that. The committee that had 1-Corinthians decided to go with 'charity' instead of 'love'—that's the only difference I can figure. But it really means *love*.

So these are the things that give us love. And then to share our experiences as we go along, of the things that take place. Now, a couple of other things we need to cover with this—let's go to James, the fifth chapter—because then this gives us the loving ability to do as it says here.

James 5:16—now this takes love: "Confess *your* faults one to another... [Now, if someone comes to you and says, 'I have this fault, I have this problem, will you please pray for me'—please keep it confidential. No one knows. It's not talking about a great sin. This is a fault. Like we're talking about Matt. 18.] ...Confess *your* faults one to another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. *The* supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective." Then He gives the example of Elijah. He prayed and shut up the heavens for three and a half years and prayed again, and it flooded everything.

Now v 20—we can do this with brethren: "Let him know that he who brings back a sinner from *the* error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." That is brotherly love. That's all part of it.

Now, what happens when you get into a dispute? Paul and Barnabas had a dispute. Let's go to Acts 15:36. It was hot! It was an argument. And in this case it took time to heal. It wasn't something that was healed just instantly. "And after certain days, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back to see how our brethren are doing in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord.' And Barnabas was determined to take with *them* John *who* was called Mark.... [Now he must have been an older teenager at this point—say 18-19] ...but Paul did not think *it* good to take him *because* he had departed from them at Pamphylia, and did not go with them to the work" (vs 36-38). So they were out on one of their trips and Mark just said, 'Hey, I'm going home.' So Paul was angry with him. He was upset that Mark would do that, because Paul was a worker—He was out to work, work, work, work. He was probably wearing Mark out—killing him. So Mark said, 'Hey, I gotta go.'

"As a result, *such* a sharp contention arose between them... [between Paul and Barnabas. 'Contention' there means *a hot, heated argument*. They must have even shouted at each other.] ... that they parted from one another. And Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus... [I imagine what their discussion was like—I'll have to ask Barnabas about that.] ...but Paul chose Silas and departed, after being committed to the grace of God by the brethren. And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, establishing the churches" (vs 39-41). Now then, did Paul forgive? Was that breach healed? *Yes!* Let's go to 2-Timothy, the fourth chapter. Completely! And this is all a part of brotherly love. This is when he was just finishing up his epistles to pass them on to Peter.

2-Timothy 4:9: "Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens, to Galatia; Titus, to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark *and* bring him with you, because he is profitable to me for *the* ministry of *the* Word" (vs 9-11). So there he rejected him because he said, 'Look you're lazy, you're no good; I don't want you going with me.' And Paul and Barnabas had a big fight and argument over it; and they went their ways. Now at the end, look: "Take and bring Mark with you for he is profitable to me for the ministry." So he ended up being a profitable situation for Paul there, and help do it.

Now, let's look at one other thing for loving the brethren—let's go to John 21. The brotherly love has to start with those who are teaching; it has to start with the ministry, because everything else is reflected down with that—and Jesus knew that. So, this also has to be a part of it.

John 21:15: "Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?'.... [Now, He asked this question because Peter was perhaps one of the most political involved. And when we get into the *Scripturalism vs Judaism* somewhere down the road again, we're going to see that Peter succumbed to some political things, some people up in Jerusalem—which he should not have done. 'These' being the other disciples; because the disciples were there.] ...And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.'" Now, in the first case *love* is 'agape'—spiritual, Divine love. And when Peter answered back he said, 'You know that I love You'—this is 'phileo'—which is having personal affection. 'Yes, I have personal affection for You'—is what he's saying.

So then, He [Christ] wanted to make sure that he got the point, so "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep'" (v 16). The first time He said up there, 'Feed My lambs.' Now He says, 'Feed My sheep.' Part of the loving of God that any minister has, or any teacher, is to ***feed the sheep of God***—teach them, help them, uplift them, encourage them; that's all a part of it.

"He said to him the third time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.... [All that's part of the love of God.] ...Truly, truly I say to you, since you were young, you have dressed yourself and walked wherever you have desired; but when you are old, you shall stretch out your hands, and another shall dress you and bring *you* where you do not desire *to* go.' Now He said this to signify by what death he would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, 'Follow Me'" (vs 17-19). So there it is, by the very circumstances. "Follow Me" in spite of everything!

Now, v 20—here's what Peter said, Peter being his political self: "...But when Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had sat at the supper and *leaned* on His chest, and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is betraying You?' Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, what *shall* happen to this one?.... ['What's going to happen to him. You told me what's going to happen to me; what's going to happen to him?'] So Peter had a hard time getting the point.] ...Jesus said to him, 'If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is* it to you? You follow Me.'" (vs 20-22)—in spite of the

circumstances.

So then, here's how rumors get started in the Church—recorded right here: “Then this saying went out among the brethren, that that disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say to him that he would not die; but, ‘If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is it* to you?’ This is the disciple who testifies concerning these things and *who* wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true” (vs 23-24). So that's quite a little insight into the workings of apostles and disciples and so forth.

So, let's see that Peter learned the lesson. Let's come to 1-Peter 5:1. Peter did learn the lesson; and he taught that lesson! “*The elders who are among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: Feed the flock of God that is among you.... [Did he learn the lesson? Yes, he did!] ...Feed the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly ... [not because it's a job to do, but willingly; because you love the brethren. That's the whole point!] ...not in fondness of dishonest gain, but with an eager attitude*” (vs 1-2). You don't go and say, ‘What's in it for me?’ You go into it, ‘What does God want me to do?’ What if nothing comes out of it for you, as a person? Doesn't make any difference, you still serve God ‘of a ready mind.’

“Not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions... [God doesn't want the Church overlorded. That's why I'm against hierarchical government. And that makes a lot of people angry at me, because they lose their hierarchy when people come back to them.] ...but *by* being examples to the flock of God.... [to inspire them; to encourage them; to help them] ...And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory” (vs 3-4). ***So the Apostle Peter did learn the lesson. Yes, he did!***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
- 2) John 13:34-35
- 3) John 15:9-13
- 4) 1 John 3:15-18
- 5) John 15:13-17
- 6) Matthew 18:15-35
- 7) Matthew 24:12
- 8) Colossians 3:1-10
- 9) Ephesians 2:10
- 10) Galatians 4:19
- 11) Colossians 3:10-14
- 12) Matthew 5:48

- 13) Colossians 3:14-17
- 14) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- 15) James 5:16, 20
- 16) Acts 15:36-41
- 17) 2-Timothy 4:9-11
- 18) John 21:15-24
- 19) 1 Peter 5:1-4

Referenced, not quoted:

- John 13-17
- 1 Corinthians 1:26

Also referenced:

- Sermons: *Scripturalism vs Judaism*

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Holy Bible

Fred R. Coulter—June 20, 1999

We are going to talk about the Holy Bible, the Word of God. Let's just go ahead and read the statement—and I think when you go through and read each one of these you're going to see that each paragraph has a lot of information in it. Here's what we have: *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, (pg 8 throughout).

The Holy Bible is the Word of God. God directly inspired His chosen servants by the power His Holy Spirit to record the Scriptures for all mankind. The Holy Bible consists of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language and preserved by the Massorites, the Levites who were appointed by Ezra as the official guardians of the Old Testament. The New Testament was written and preserved in the Koine Greek language by the original apostles of Jesus Christ.

John, Peter and Paul were the ones who canonized the New Testament.

The Apostle John completed the New Testament just before his death, writing the book of Revelation as the final book of the Bible.

The closing there pretty well indicates that that's the last of the written Word of God.

God has preserved the New Testament text through the Greek-speaking church. Called the Byzantine text, it was the official text of the Greek-speaking church after the days of the apostles, from 125_{A.D.} onward [date corrected from booklet text]. This text, also known as The Stephens Text of 1550, was used to translate the New Testament into English for the King James Version in 1611.

The Holy Bible contains vital spiritual knowledge revealed by God which man cannot discover for himself. It also records the essential outline of history from the beginning of creation to Abraham, from Abraham to the birth of Jesus Christ, and from the birth of Jesus Christ to the end of the apostolic era in approximately 100_{A.D.} The book of Revelation reveals major events prophesied to take place from the end of the apostolic era to the return of

Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The Bible is the very foundation of knowledge, imparting understanding of salvation through Jesus Christ and showing mankind how to live God's way of life in both the letter and the spirit of His law. True Christianity is based on the entire Word of God as it applies to the individual Christian and to the Church.

Now you can see that is a very compact statement but it contains an awful lot; from which then much more can be derived as we go along. And I want to start this a little bit differently. I want to start by going to the Gospel of John. This is perhaps one of the most fundamental and profound three verses in the Bible. The reason is because this connects the Old Testament LORD with the New Testament Christ in a very profound way; and also, the very fact that He is called the *Word*—very important to understand—***He is the Word!*** All that was inspired in the Old Testament He inspired. All that was inspired and recorded in the New Testament He either personally spoke or personally inspired the apostles and writers of the New Testament to write it so we could have the Word preserved for us today.

That's why these words—John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word...”—and with that then, let me make a note here for you to study on your own, which is:

- ‘to obey My voice’
- ‘hearken to My words’—(and ‘hearken’ (KJV) means *to listen intently to apply*)

and then just take the opposite:

- ‘did not obey’
- ‘did not hearken’

—and just go through and do a study on that to show how powerful the words of God really are. What we are dealing with and having the Word of God here is: ***We are dealing with the mind of God given to us in print***; so that every human being would have available to them the Word of God—because if a person says, ‘Well, I wonder if God were here what He would say to me?’ And this contains it.

“...and the Word was with God... [showing that He pre-existed as God] ...and the Word was God.... [Those are very profound verses!] ...He was in *the* beginning with God.... [And all the way through here he gives a double affirmation of ‘***was with God***’; was in the beginning.] ...All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him” (vs 1-3).

I might interject here that we have a whole detailed study on the first chapter of the Gospel of John where I go through and outline how important that that is. So this is why it's important for us to understand.

Now, let's connect that with 2-Timothy 3. The favorite thing that they want to do, and in particularly the Jesus Seminar with the New Testament; they want to exorcise out of the Bible all the miracles, all the parables against the Jews, eliminate the whole Gospel of John and substitute the Gospel of Thomas for it. And they're going to try and come out with this gospel at the turn of the century—that New Testament.

So brethren, it's very important that what we're able to do in getting these things out and getting the translation out, getting the study books out and everything, ***we are in a high-level battle for the Word of God such as we have never experienced in our entire lives*** with the exception of when they were burning Bibles because the Catholics didn't want anyone to study the Bibles. Only this time Satan is going to flood us with so many different counterfeits that it's going to be absolutely mind-boggling. And then it will be said, 'Well, who's to say what the Word of God is? We've got this verse and that verse and the other verse and this version and that version; and they're going to be absolutely right for a carnal person just looking at it. So that's why understanding about the Bible and the Word of God is absolutely essential.

Now, 2-Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child [you, Timothy] you have known the Holy Writings... [And that's what we want to do, brethren. The Word of God is here for us to know.] ...which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus.... [Remember, Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' There's only one way, He is the way.] ...All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (vs 15-16).

- To lead us in the way of God
- To help us overcome human nature
- To be filled with the mind of God; the Spirit of God

That's what it's for. That's why God gave it. And that's why different ones gave their lives, the way that they gave their lives, for the Word of God. The video on *The Indestructible Book* [shows] what a tremendous thing that God did with William Tyndale to bring us the English Bible. Not only that, but what God did to bring the Greek text, to get it out of the hands and the clutches of the Catholics so that we would have the freedom and the availability

of the Word of God. And ALL of the Word of God is true. There may be some little mistranslations here and there, but the basics of salvation are found in the *King James Version*. No question about it. Even some of the other versions, you still can't get away from ***repentance and baptism and that salvation is a gift of God***. They may have all kinds of other doctrines mixed up, but those three you can't get away from in any version of the Bible. So God is not going to have His Word destroyed. He may allow Satan to mix it up a little bit here and there; but it's up to us to really know and understand the Word of God. And the Word of God is a 'sharp two-edged sword'—it cuts right through.

Here, let's go to Hebrews, the fourth chapter; this is what the Word of God is for. The Word of God is not for a religion. The Word of God is not to just start some sort of corporate church organization as such. ***The Word of God is God's communication to us.***

- for God telling us how we need to live our lives
- who He is
- what He's doing
- how He's doing it

and with the Holy Days, as we understand it, basically

- when He's going to do it.

So this is really a wonderful thing, that here we can sit right here on the Sabbath day, have our Bibles open, laid out on the table, take notes, mark what we're going to mark up, understand the Word of God. Boy! What a tremendous time this is, brethren, and we all need to take advantage of it and really, really just drink in of it.

But, here's what the Word of God will do—Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God *is* living and powerful... [Now that means *living*. These are not just words on paper. These words, with the Spirit of God, convey the Truth of God and the meaning of the Word of God. And since we're carnal and human, in order to become as God is, it's going to be living and powerful. And it's going to get to us. And we're either going to have to repent and change or it's going to cut us asunder. That's just the way it is. No one's exempted.] ...and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints *and* of both the joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart."

Now let's understand something: There is no other book on the face of the earth that lays bare human nature as the Bible does. There is no other book on the face of the earth that shows the true salvation of God as the Bible does. So you have

them both: *you have exposing of the evil and then the way out of it*. And that's what the Word of God is for.

All right, let's go to 2-Peter, the first chapter, and let's see something very important here concerning the Word of God—how that the Apostle Peter knew when he was writing that he was leaving a written record. 2-Peter 1:15: “But I will make every effort *that*, after my departure, you may always have a *written* remembrance of these things....

- That's why God told Moses, ‘*write*’
- That's why He told Jeremiah, ‘*write*’
- He told Isaiah, ‘*write*’
- and He told the apostles, ‘*write*’

God doesn't want it just by Word of mouth. He wants it in writing so everyone can know. This is God's contract with the world and with His Church. With this He judges the world. With this He judges the Church.

Verse 16: “For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory.... [And they stood right up there in that Mt. of Transfiguration and saw Christ transfigured right in front of them. To where His countenance was as the sun, and His clothes were as just lightning. And then saw Moses and Elijah there standing talking with Him. It was a vision. If you have that burned in your mind, you're never going to forget it—right? Peter *never* forgot it.] ...because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when *the* voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved in Whom I am well pleased.’ And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word...” (vs 16-19).

Now, that means *inspired preaching*—which he said he was going to what? **Write!** In other words, he's talking here about the New Testament: ***the more sure word of inspired preaching***. This is not referring to just prophecies in the Old Testament. The ***inspired preaching of Christ!*** of Matthew; of Mark; of Luke; of John; of Paul; of Peter; of James and Jude.

“...to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns... [And we're going to see that the Word of God is like a light—that's what he's talking about here.] ...until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own

private interpretation” (vs 19-20). And that's where so many people go wrong with the Word of God. They treat it like it's their own. They treat it like it's something like any other book, and they can read it like any other book. *It can't be read or understood like any other book*. We've already covered that in Isa. 28: ‘precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little there a little.’

And the more that you love God, the more that you're going to get rid of self; and the more that you get rid of self, the more that God's going to open His Word to your understanding. It's just an automatic, spiritual law that takes place; because the Word of God is living. And how dare any of us take a private interpretation out of the Word of God. And yet, that's what's happening with all of those who are setting themselves up as teachers. They have the private doctrine of this and that and the other thing.

“Because prophecy... [or inspired speaking, or in this case, inspired writing—all of the Old and New Testament.] ...was not brought at any time by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit” (v 21). Now that's what we need to understand concerning the Word of God—

- they were *moved*
- they *spoke*
- they were *inspired*

that God ***breathed*** these very words into their minds to write. So they actually just became a tool. They actually became, in God's hands, what He wanted them to become: a tool to express His mind and thoughts. They couldn't take it directly from God. They long since ago turned their back on God, but maybe they would listen to a man.

Now let's go to Psalm 12 lest we think that the Word of God is filled with all kinds of gross error. *No, it's not!* There may be some mistakes in transmission here and there. There may be some more refinement in translation, which can be done. But let's understand something concerning the pure words of God. This is true in the Hebrew, and this is true in the Greek.

Psalm 12:6: “The words of the LORD are pure words.... [That's why I started out with John 1:1-3—‘In the beginning was the Word...’] ...pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” That took place down through a period of time in history. And Ezra, for the Old Testament, was the final instrument that God used to record the Old Testament for us. And to preserve, in the Old Testament—all of those things necessary—which tells us about what God was doing;

- which tells us about God's plan

- which tells us the prophecies of Christ
 - which tells us the prophecies of the New Testament Church
- and God inspired him to put that in there.

He also inspired him to take out certain books. So when you read in the Old Testament that it's like in the book of Jashur or it's in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, God inspired that that not to be encumbered into the Bible; because God wanted to have a book of books—His Word—that contained all the essential knowledge; not just weighted down with all kinds of things that were nonessential. So it's been 'purified seven times.'

Let's continue on, let's go to Psalm 111—and here we see some instructions for us concerning how to understand the Word of God. Now the Word of God is not understood intellectually. You can come to a certain intellectual understanding of some things of the Word of God, that is true; but, for conversion, you have to come to a **heart understanding** of the Word of God—that's entirely different. Job had his intellectual knowledge of God—his works in the letter of the law; but he didn't have the convicting **heart knowledge** until he went through the whole trial he went through and God finally says, 'Job, I'm going to talk to you, now you answer Me.' Then he had a deep, profound, spiritual conversion—didn't he? *Yes, he did!*

Psalm 111:7: "The works of His hand are Truth and justice... [and the Bible is the work of His hand.] ...all His precepts are sure.... [No question about it!] ...They stand fast forever..." (vs 7-8). Let's just use one: 'the wages of sin is death.' Since the beginning of time, man has endeavored to turn that around—correct? Has anyone succeeded death except Christ? *No!* Does the Word of God stand fast? *Yes, ALL of it!* If you get into other gods, then you suffer the penalty of that. If you get into idolatry, you suffer the penalty of that. And all the way down the line with the commandments, which we will get to in the next section.

"They stand fast forever and ever; they are done in Truth and uprightness" (v 8). Now, this is why an atheist will never understand the Bible; they don't believe that it's the Truth, the Word of God. They don't believe that it's meant for them to pierce their heart to be converted, so God will let them see and not understand; He will let them hear and not comprehend; because God is the One then Who has to intervene and call. So also in this I want you to understand how great the calling of God is. In particular when we see the way that the world is going. This is really something! ***How precious are the Words of God!***

"He sent redemption unto His people; He has commanded His covenant forever; holy and awesome is His name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (vs 9-10). Just the beginning!

First of all you have to have knowledge, and then you have to have wisdom; and wisdom then is knowledge with experience; and then you come to understanding. That's why, in school, we learned the rote. I'm sure you still remember the song: 'A, B, C, D, E, F, G...'—rote! Remember the *times table*: $2 \times 2 = 4$; $9 \times 9 = 81$; $12 \times 12 = 144$, all the way through. Then you had to remember your fractions table, right? $2/3 = .666666$; $1/2 = .50$; and all of that. Then when you learn all of this by rote, then you have experience, now you are ready to start applying some of this so that you can have some understanding. And this is true in whatever you do, whatever endeavor of life you go into. There's always an entry level that you start and you get knowledge—correct? And then with knowledge then you get experience so that you get some wisdom in it; and then after that then you have understanding in it, in what you're doing with your trade or your business. And God wants it to be that way so that we always can be fulfilled. And yet, still be filled more. And to be filled with the Word of God is the greatest thing, you see.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments...." (v 10). There is the key! That's the difference between an intellectual hearing and a **heart convicting** action.

Let's see how Christ applied this with the Word of God. Now we also know something very profound. As the Apostle Peter said, 'We have not given you cunningly devised fables.' Now, a fable is a lie. The most profound thing with the Word of God is that it is the TRUTH! And it is something that you have to **work at**. It's something you have to **do**. Once you have the knowledge of it, if you do not do it, you soon lose the knowledge of it—and we've seen that happen with people, too—haven't we? The reason is, is because it's living. It is spiritual. Jesus said, 'The words I speak to you they are spirit and they are life.' And brethren, we have that written down here for us to study; so that with the Spirit of God in us, when we study these things, God's Spirit gives us the meaning and the heart conviction

- that we can change our lives
- that we can repent
- that we can grow
- that we can overcome

That's what God wants. John 17:17: "Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth." God's Word is TRUTH!

Now John, the eighth chapter—and this is how we need to approach the Word of God. This is why it's important that we understand historically how we got the Bible; historically how we got the text—so that we can have confidence that down through history, even though it may have gotten down to just one man, God still preserved His Word. That's important to know.

John 8:29: "And He Who sent Me is with Me.... [Brethren, that's what we want. We want the Father with us. We want Christ with us, in everything that we do.] ...The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him.' As He spoke these things, many believed in Him. Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him..." (vs 29-31). Now notice, this becomes important; here again shows the dividing line between saying, 'Oh yes, He's a good man, I want to follow Him, I believe Him.' Then when it gets down to the nitty-gritty—do you really believe? 'Oh, this sounds like a wonderful religion, but I don't know about that Sabbath.' You see, you're already dead in the water because it's not a religion. And if you want to work on the Sabbath you aren't going to understand the Truth; because His Word is Truth, and you don't keep the Sabbath, you won't understand it. But if you keep the Sabbath you will! Especially if you ask God for understanding in keeping it. It's a living law, because it's the living Word of God.

Notice what Jesus said: "...to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If... [condition is always on us, never on God. You don't go to God and say, 'God, IF You will do this, I will do that.' No way! You go to God and say, 'Oh God, I'm a sinner, lead me in the way that I need to go.' Total difference! Religion goes to God and says, 'God, You do this.' God, Who wants us to walk in His way, says, 'Here's the way, walk in it.']. ...**If** you continue in My word... [And that's interesting because that means everything that Jesus spoke. Who is what? *The Word!*] ...you are truly My disciples And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.'" (vs 31-32). Based on what? *IF you do it!* That's the whole key concerning the Word of God. **"The truth shall make you free."**

Now, if you're not willing to listen you're going to answer back. "They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to anyone. What do You mean by saying, "You shall become free"?' Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin... [or that is practicing sin, which means *living in sin.*] ...is a servant of sin.... [And then He virtually said] ...And the servant does not live in the house forever; *but* the Son lives forever. Therefore, if the Son shall set you

free, you shall truly be free'" (vs 33-36). And that's what God's Word does.

Now, even in this society, when you have just the society that in the letter of the law will apply the Ten Commandments—as we'll see a little later here when we get into the nature of God's law and the Ten Commandments—do they not have freedom from crime? You still have some, but it's way down—correct? *Yes!* Do they not have marriages and families that stay together? *Yes.* They may not be perfect, but at least in the letter of the law they receive that blessing for at least doing that; because God is no respecter of persons. Then when we are called and we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God and put into the Church of God, then everything changes from just the letter of the law to the spirit of the law (as we will see later), and how then that is so important for salvation.

Let's come back here to Psalm 19. I want to mention right here that we have a sermon series called *The Prophetic Words of Jesus and the Law*, and that goes through Psalm 119. That is a whole, special devoted study to the laws, the commandments, the statutes of God; which are called *Truth*; which are greater than all silver and all gold. And so, you need to study through Psa. 119. And if you want to know a converted attitude toward the laws and commandments of God, Psa. 119 is the best, most detailed, broken down in such a profound way. And if you want to really let it sink in, study that whole Psalm on your knees. Take each verse, read it, think about it, pray about it, ask God to help you understand how it applies to you. And then when you're done with the whole study of that, you will understand more of the whole attitude of God.

Now let's continue here. Psalm 19:7: "The law of the LORD... [now this is not only the law, but that's part of the Word of God] ...is perfect.... [So not only is it true; not only has it been tried seven times; but **it is perfect!** In other words, you can't improve on it—right? Now, if it's perfect, why would you want to change it? That's why there are such dire consequences that are said if you 'add to or take away from'—because when you do that, then you make it imperfect—correct? Then you make it less true, though what is still there is still Truth.] (notice what it does, if you let it have its work): ...restoring the soul.... [changes your heart and mind and your attitude.] ...the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right... [the Holy Days are statutes—are they right? *No question about it!*] ...rejoicing the heart... [And that's what God wants us to have with the Holy Days.] ...the commandment of the LORD are pure, enlightening the eyes" (vs 7-8). That is, giving you the

understanding of the mind of Christ, of God. There be nothing greater than that, brethren.

“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (v 9). Notice how David really just brought out the importance of it. And yet, our own human nature is what? Well, you’ve got the greatest thing sitting right in your hands or on the shelf at home. ‘Well, I’ll study later. I want to watch this important TV program.’ or: ‘I want to go see my friends, I’ll study later.’ You get home and you’re tired: ‘I’m too tired to study, I won’t get anything out of it, I’ll go to bed. So I’ll study when I get up.’ And then what happens when you get up? Something else is there. So it’s something that you have to *apply yourself* in to study—as we’ll see a little bit later on. Because the Word of God is the greatest, greatest thing that He has given us, brethren; absolutely marvelous beyond belief. That’s why God doesn’t want it taken to be used for personal things or personal agendas or to twist it and turn it and pervert it and turn it upside down or do like the Jews did, have so many traditions that surround it that they have rejected the commandments of God and made them null and void. That’s not what God wants. So you see, if we’re going to continue to grow in understanding this is what we have to do. Come back to the very basic things.

Verse 10: “More to be desired than gold, yea, much fine gold...” And yet, people give up on the Sabbath so they can keep their job—not trusting God to, in faith, to believe. I think Ed made a very good comment: He wants me to give a sermon some time on the difference between no faith, false faith and true faith. And that’s a profound statement. If you don’t have faith, Satan would like to move you into a false faith, so you think that you have faith, but you don’t. You understand? *Yes!* It’s very important. You have to have faith to keep the laws of God. But if you know it’s perfect; if you know it’s true; and if you know that it’s greater than anything else in this whole world; and if you let God’s Spirit stir you up and revive you back to the love of the Word of God, you’re going to find that everything’s going to open up to your understanding—step-by-step-by-step-by-step as you pursue it. And God made it to be a lifelong thing to do.

Notice: “...yea, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned.... [How to keep out of trouble. Or what to do when you do get into trouble. You’re warned!] ...in keeping them there is great reward.... [And what can be compared to eternal life? And here’s what it does. This ties right back in with Heb. 4:12.] ...Who can understand his errors?”

(vs 10-12). Isn’t that true? Because everything everyone does is right in his or her own eyes—unless you compare what you do with the Word of God; unless you let the Spirit of God convict you to do what is right. And God’s Spirit will.

“Oh, cleanse me from *my* secret faults; And keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; do not let them rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.... [Notice that expression: *innocent from great transgression*. He doesn’t say *free from all transgression*. There’s a great difference, because having the ‘law of sin and death’ in us we know we’re still going to sin; but kept back from *great transgression*. Give us the understanding.] (Now notice how David approached this): ...Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer” (vs 12-14).

Now, here are three Scriptures—we’re only going to turn to one. But I want you to write down all three of them; these you should have memorized: Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3; and we will go to Matt. 4:4—those are the three. They quote exactly the same thing.

Now, let’s ask a question concerning a principle here that’s very important. What does God say concerning witnesses? ‘In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.’ Very important to realize. God follows that same principle in laying out His Word.

- How many major prophets do we have?
Three: Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
Correct? *Yes!*
- How many minor prophets do we have?
Twelve—four times three.
- How many synoptic gospels do we have?
Three—then the Gospel of John, which adds a greater witness to it.

So with these three verses, God is telling us something very profound, because they all say the same thing. Let’s read it:

Matthew 4:2—always good to get the context. “And when He had fasted *for* forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was famished.... [Now, notice this is very important for us to understand. It is the ‘Spirit that gives life and the flesh profits nothing.’ And this is a living experience that Jesus went through. At His weakest in the flesh, could He still overcome Satan the devil? Did He make any excuses? *No!* Did He give Himself any latitude for sin? *No!*] ...And when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘**If**... [now notice what happens when you go to God and say *if* to God—never works. The *if* is always on us:

- IF you will continue in My words then you will be My disciples indeed!
- IF you keep His commandments
- IF you do this
- IF you do that

But Satan comes along and he says to God, in the person of Christ]: ...‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread’” (vs 2-3).

Now if you hadn’t eaten in forty days and forty nights it would be very tempting—wouldn’t it? I mean, just put yourself on a three-day fast one time and see how you are at the end of three days. Try walking through the kitchen on the second day, with a nice leg-o-lamb roast there. Fresh bread cooking in the oven. This is what Satan was laying out to Him.

“...command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written... [Now, brethren, how important is the Word of God that is written? *So important and true that Jesus quoted it as a defense against the devil.* Now that’s very important to realize. So here’s what He quoted]: ...‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”’” (vs 3-4). And everything that we have written here proceeded out of the mouth or the mind of God. You go back and you read the first five books of the Bible where God speaks to Moses, and God says: ‘Moses, tell the children of Israel thus and such.’ So Moses turns around and says, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ *The very words of God!*

That’s why I had you, at the beginning, write down there about “obey My voice”; ‘hearken to My voice’ or ‘not obey My voice’ and ‘not hearken to My voice’—because God brings that upon the whole world. The reason the world is going to be judged the way it is, is because they have rejected the Word of God and God sent it to be a judgment for them. So that’s how important it is. We are to “live by every Word of God.” That’s why it’s the Truth; that’s why it’s important; that’s why we do it that way.

Now, let’s come over here to Proverbs 30:4—because this is actually written somewhat this way. This is a prophecy of Christ, and Paul wrote of this; and it’s also referred to in Deut. 30. (Part of the way of memorizing the Bible is remember what’s in the chapter. That way you only have to remember the chapter, because you can always turn there and find the verse.)

Proverbs 30:4: “Who has gone up to heaven and has come down? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in His garments? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son’s

name, if you know?... [We know. God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He correct you and you be found a liar” (vs 4-6).

Let’s come to Galatians, the first chapter. I have a little bit more to say about that in *Scripturalism vs Judaism*, about the Apostle Paul. With the deep and profound conversion of the Apostle Paul, you can be guaranteed that’s why God called him, so that he would write the Truth. He had gone through and he had suffered so much that he came to this point concerning the Gospel; and this is what’s so important. That’s why he has fourteen epistles in the New Testament. Paul had to suffer an awful lot. But I tell you what, *when you suffer in the flesh, you hold fast the spiritual Truth.* It’s almost a living law. That’s why suffering, though we don’t like it, is good. That’s why Paul, when he was suffering, he appealed to God to remove it from him three times. But [God] didn’t, and was saying that, ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ and ‘I am glorified in weakness.’ So the Apostle Paul: he knew, he understood and he wrote very profoundly and very directly; and concerning the Word of God, which is so important to understand.

Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel.... [Now, what was happening in his day is happening in our day. There are many people being removed from the Gospel of Christ, in many different avenues; in many different ways. Some to give up on it; some to water it down; some to make it more ridged—but it’s happening.] ...Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*... [In other words, he’s saying, ‘Look, there’s only one Gospel.’ You can have something that you can call a gospel, but it’s really not *the* Gospel; because as we just read in the Proverbs there, you’ve add to or you’ve taken away from it; and then you’re found a liar.] ...Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you... [And boy, is that not the state of the Church today?] ...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But if we... [referring to the apostles; himself. That’s why he wrote *we* here, even though it can include the brethren that were with him. But, he’s referring directly to the apostles because in chapter two he had to correct Peter very severely.] ...But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!” (vs 6-9).

Now notice. Here's what's important with the Word of God. And this is where we all have to come to, every single one of us; but in particular, doubly so, anyone who's a teacher will receive the sterner judgment—correct?—as James 3 said? *Yes!*

“For now do I persuade men or God?... [That's the key. 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.' So therefore, you are then what? *You are being persuaded by God*—correct? And if you adhere to that, then you persuade God of your honesty and truthfulness—correct? *Yes!*] ...Or am I motivated to please men?... [Now it doesn't mean you have to make yourself obnoxious. But then, on the other hand, you give no quarter to that which is a lie. You give no quarter to changing the glorious Gospel of Christ into something else.] ...For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ.... [Now that's how important the Word of God is. And that's why he wrote so many epistles, which are now the Word of God.] ...But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (vs 10-12). And that's how we are taught it with the Word of God. Today we are taught with the Word of God and the revelation of Christ through His Holy Spirit.

Now let's just add a couple of more things here to it, to finish this off. Let's go to John 14, and we will see how the Holy Spirit is going to do this for us. Not only is the Word of God true—and God preserved it for us that we might have the Truth of God—but also He has given us the tools on how to understand it. Now, I did not cover Isa. 28, but you put that in your notes there about 'line upon line; precept upon precept' and so forth—because I've covered that in other things.

But here's what the Holy Spirit will do, which is also called the Comforter. And like we commented earlier, you are blessed if you're persecuted; you're not happy necessarily. I don't know of any persecution or any difficulty that is easy to take. But if you have the Spirit of God you are blessed. And that's why the Holy Spirit is called *the Comforter*. And there's something that's very important with the Comforter that we're going to see—which is called 'the Spirit of Truth.' And in studying the Word of God, this is what we always need over is the Truth of God—*always!* Every single one who names the name of Christ is responsible to be under Truth, because that is the Word of God. Is any man greater than the Word of God? *No!* The Pope may claim to, but he's not—and he's going to be judged for it. Everyone is subject to the Truth of God. No one is exempt. And doesn't that keep, as

they say in modern terminology, the playing field level? *Yes. Yes, it does!*

John 14:17: “*Even* the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive... [Now, I'm going to read it the way it should be translated. If you don't have our in-depth study on the Holy Spirit, write for it (we have it with 8 tapes); going through explaining the Greek here in quite detail] ...which the world cannot receive... [Why can't the world receive the Truth? *It has no room for it because it must give up its lies and its fables.*] ...cannot receive... [That's why the world loves Christmas; loves Easter. That's why they have all these things that they do on the Sabbath day, because they can't receive the Truth that the Sabbath is Holy to God. That's the first step to begin, as we'll see a little later when we get into the commandments of God.] ...cannot receive... [It's impossible for the world to receive it. And so what did the Church of God do? *It went to the world's professing Christianity seminaries to find out their understanding of how they interpret the Scriptures and they got a whole package of lies.*] ...can't receive...”

First thing the Sunday-keepers need to do is repent of Sunday! They may appropriate the name of Christ; they may use the name of Christ; they may be blessed to the extent that they keep the other commandments; but they do not have the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit of Truth will not be with those who live a lie. That's why the world can't receive it. “...because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you” (v 17).

Then he says down here about keeping the commandments. Let's come down here to v 23, so that we won't encumber it, but this is very profound, very basic, very fundamental. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...’”

Come up here and read v 15: “If you love Me keep My commandments.” It's all part of the Word of God.

Verse 23: “...he will keep My words.... [And yet, don't people come along and try and say, ‘I wonder what words Christ wanted us to keep and not keep.’ ALL of them!] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me” (vs 23-24). So that's profound— isn't it? You want to know what the Father would tell you if you sat down and had a conversation with Him? You've got it right here, all the words of Christ. Therefore, until we know and learn all the words of Christ and have them written in our heart and mind and soul and

being, then we're not going to hear the Father tell us anything else; because we already have what He would tell us. That's why it has to wait until the resurrection. So for a man to say, 'Well, if God would come down and talk to me'—if you have someone tell you that, say, 'He already has, here it is right here.'

"I have spoken these things to you while I am yet present with you. But *when* the Comforter comes, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that one shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you" (vs 25-26). That's how the Holy Spirit then will interact in our lives to bring us that understanding.

Now, we can't get any more than what's already in the Word of God. That's true. Since it is the Spirit of Truth, if you don't adhere to the Truth and the simplicity of Christ, and you reject that, then you're not going to understand. You've done it to yourself, you've blocked your own salvation, no question about it. If you truly have the Spirit of God then He can revive you later on, hopefully. You go back and you study Matt. 13 and the parable of the sowers—both of them there. And then you look around and remember when we had the fields full of unfruitful wheat and tares? Now where are they? And then take that same principle and look at the whole world that professes Christ. And where are they? The prophecy is being fulfilled; that which they have is being taken from them. It's being taken. Happening to ministers within the Church, ministers outside of the Church. Happens both ways.

The Word of God is so absolutely important for us. Let's come to the book of Revelation, the first chapter. Now this is one book that the world doesn't understand, so they just as soon get rid of it. I think some of them have enough understanding that it convicts them of who they are, so they would like to exorcise it from the Bible.

Revelation 1:1: "*The* revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants the things that *are* ordained to come to pass shortly; and He made *it* known, having sent *it* by His angel to His servant John; who gave witness *to* the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things he saw. Blessed *is* the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy..." (vs 1-3). That's why He had it written. That's why He said, 'Write! And send it to the seven churches, which are in Asia. The things which you have seen, write!' That's why the Word of God is important—special message to us.

Now notice: "Blessed *is* the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and

who keep the things *that are* written therein.... [Now, I'll give you another study project, which is this: write down the Ten Commandments; then go through the book of Revelation and see where every one of the Ten Commandments are in force. Some are listed straight out, as they don't repent of their idolatry or their whoredoms or their thievery. But all the Ten Commandments are there. One key thing: if you know the Ten Commandments and you know the Word of God, you'll begin to understand the book of Revelation. If you don't, you won't. Living principle. So not only is this why the Word of God is the Word of God, but this is also how to understand the Word of God. You must deal with it honestly and forthrightly.] ...who keep the things *that are* written therein; for the time *is* at hand" (v 3). Well, if he wrote this in 95_{A.D.}, think what it is today—I mean, think about that!

And then let's go to Revelation 22 and we will finish this section here; and let's see how this finishes off the whole Bible. And I'm sure that when John wrote this, he not only wrote concerning the prophecies of this book, but he also wrote concerning the whole book. The book of Revelation is written in such a way that it assumes you understand everything up to this point, and you are living by the Word of God, and you're understanding the Word of God. So when you go through and analyze the Ten Commandments out of here, you have to decipher it out of the language that is in there, because it doesn't repeat the Ten Commandments per se. But it makes statements based upon the Ten Commandments, based upon the Word of Christ, all the way through. And this will become a very interesting study. I think you will find it very profound if you do that.

So, when we're talking about Revelation 22, here's the fitting conclusion to the whole Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, because it also bears in mind exactly what God said in the Old Testament, too. Which is: 'you shall not go to the right hand or the left hand, you shall not add or take away.' He said that in the Old Testament, too—didn't He? *Yes, He did!* Says that in the New Testament, here it is right here:

Revelation 22:18: "For I jointly testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book.... [Not only just Revelation; that is direct to Revelation, no question about that. But is not the whole Bible the inspired Word of God? And is not the Old Testament and New Testament one book together? *Absolutely!*] ...*that* if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book."

Are there plagues written in the Old Testament? *Yes!* The prophets? *Yes!* The Psalms? *Yes!* The Gospels? *Yes!* About the fire of Gehenna, there 'will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' The Word of God is so great and so marvelous and so expansive, that when you read some of these statements, it's not just a limited little thing—like a lawyer would approach something in court, in the letter of the law. They can subpoena one thing. There may be something else related to it, but unless they specifically ask for it, they don't get it. Now the Word of God is not like that. The Word of God includes everything in it. So that's why this is an all-inclusive statement here, referring to the book of Revelation but also the whole Bible.

Verse 19: "And if anyone takes away from the words of *the* book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from *the* book of Life..." Now, in order to have your name taken out of the Book of Life, it has to be written in there—doesn't it? Does this not show the unpardonable sin? How valuable is the Word of God? *So much so that if you tinker with it you're going to lose salvation!* Not only that, if you're not converted and you do it, there's still a book of Life for the second resurrection. So you may have yourself taken out of that one as well. I'm in reference to those people who have the Jesus Seminar, which is merely a front for Judaism; getting rid of the New Testament. That's all it is. Take away the words of God. Well, maybe they won't even be in the second resurrection to have an opportunity for salvation if they so lightly handle the Word of God—to vote on it by marbles.

"...from *the* book of Life, and from the Holy City, and from the things that are written in this book" (v 19). That's a way to end the whole Bible—isn't it? *No question about it.* So the Word of God is really profound.

Now the other things into the preservation of the text, we'll try and have more of that as we get going, and more things to do. But we need to stay right with the very basic things that we have. You can never, never, never, never go wrong by believing and living by every Word of God. That's what God requires. Oh, we'll add one more Scripture here that's very, very important.

Let's come to Hebrews 10. This is why God had it written down. There are many purposes, but for us we have a profound purpose. Because what this does, this is the programming for conversion. God is literally re-writing our minds and our thinking with His Spirit and His Word. That He's doing something eternal and profound in every one of our lives with His Word and with His Spirit.

Hebrews 10:16: "'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord: 'I will give My laws into their hearts... [It's only going to be there if you love it. It's only going to be there if you know it's the Truth. God will put it there. Isn't that something! God will put His Word into your heart. And what does it say, 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.' That's why it has to be **heart converting** knowledge and information. And that's why the Spirit of God is so profound and powerful behind it; because God wants us in His Kingdom. He wants us there with knowledge, with understanding, with His laws written in our heart and mind. He's not going to re-educate us in any basic thing at the resurrection. It's got to be there as part of your very being.] ...and I will inscribe them in their minds.'"

And He made our minds to be inscribed, to have it written in our hearts and inscribed in our minds. To give us the very way of thinking, so that then we can grow and have the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." Who originally existing as God "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." So therefore, to have the mind of Christ formed in our mind, that's what the whole purpose of it is.

Now, when you understand that, you can see how so easy it is to get off track and to treat the Word of God in a way that it should not be treated. Now, we'll just end where we began. Let's just read again this statement on it, and I think maybe it will mean a little bit more to you this time as we read it again.

The Holy Bible is the Word of God. God directly inspired His chosen servants by the power His Holy Spirit to record the Scriptures for all mankind. The Holy Bible consists of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language and preserved by the Massorites, the Levites who were appointed by Ezra as the official guardians of the Old Testament. The New Testament was written and preserved in the Koine Greek language by the original apostles of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John completed the New Testament just before his death, writing the book of Revelation as the final book of the Bible.

God has preserved the New Testament text through the Greek-speaking church. Called the Byzantine text, it was the official text of the Greek-speaking church

after the days of the apostles, from 125 to 1453_{A.D.}

The reason 1453 because that's when the Erasmus text came into what is called western Europe.

This text, also known as The Stephens Text of 1550 [which is the completed Erasmus text], was used to translate the New Testament into English for the *King James Version* in 1611.

And to this day the *King James Version* has gone all around the world, and has a greater impact than any other book in the whole history of mankind.

The Holy Bible contains vital spiritual knowledge revealed by God which man cannot discover for himself. It also records the essential outline of history from the beginning of creation to Abraham, from Abraham to the birth of Jesus Christ, and from the birth of Jesus Christ to the end of the apostolic era in approximately 100_{A.D.} The book of Revelation reveals major events prophesied to take place from the end of the apostolic era to the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The Bible is the very foundation of knowledge, imparting understanding of salvation through Jesus Christ and showing mankind how to live God's way of life in both the letter and the spirit of His law. True Christianity is based on the entire Word of God as it applies to the individual Christian and to the Church.

- Isaiah 28
- Luke 4:4
- Deuteronomy 8:3
- Deuteronomy 30
- James 3
- Matthew 13

Also referenced:

DVD: *The Indestructible Book* by W. Kenneth Connolly

Sermon Series:

- *Gospel of John*
- *The Prophetic Words of Jesus and the Law.*
- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- *Holy Spirit*

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Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 1:1-3
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:15-16
- 3) Hebrews 4:12
- 4) 2-Peter 1:15-21
- 5) Psalm 12:6
- 6) Psalm 111:7-10
- 7) John 17:17
- 8) John 8:29-36
- 9) Psalm 19:7-14
- 10) Matthew 4:2-4
- 11) Proverbs 30:4-6
- 12) Galatians 1:6-12
- 13) John 14:17, 23, 15, 23-26
- 14) Revelation 1:1-3
- 15) Revelation 22:18-19
- 16) Hebrews 10:16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

The Laws and Commandments of God

The Nature of God's Laws

Fred R. Coulter—July 25, 1999

I want you to notice something that's very important. I saw a *belief's* booklet by another Church of God, and in this *belief's* booklet it says: "**we** believe"; "**we** believe"; "**we** believe" Now that's fine, but you'll notice a distinct difference in the way that this is written. What we do, we show what the Scriptures say and we are to believe the Scriptures; because what we believe, if it's not in line with what the Scriptures really are, is meaningless. So to say, 'we believe' that's almost like *we have discovered it*. That's not correct. **God has discovered us—called us!** That's why we always refer it back to the Scriptures.

Let's just do a little quick overview while we're at it here. Notice how that this is laid out.

- God Family
 - ✓ God the Father
 - ✓ God the Son, Jesus Christ
- Nature of Mankind
- Love of God
 - ✓ Our Love to God
 - ✓ Our Love Toward the Brethren
 - ✓ God's Love to Us
- The Holy Bible
- The Laws and Commandments of God
- The Ten Commandments
- Weekly Sabbath
- Annual Feasts Day and Holy Days

Then we define what sin is. And we use all the Scriptures on it.

- Sin
- Holy Spirit
- Grace of God
- Repentance
- Baptism
- Justification
- Righteousness
 - ✓ Righteousness of the Law
 - ✓ Righteousness of Faith
- Sanctification
- Baptism of the Spirit
- Faith
- Salvation
- Laying on of Hands
- Healing
- The Church of God
 - ✓ Spiritual Body of Christ
 - ✓ The Ministry
 - ✓ Christian Responsibility
- The Gospel
 - ✓ The Kingdom of God

- ✓ The Resurrections
- ✓ Eternal Judgment
- ✓ Baptism of Fire
- ✓ Clean and Unclean Meats

So it actually goes right in the progression from the most important right on down to the other things. The only reason Clean and Unclean Meats is last is because we had it already put together and we had a blank page and we needed something on clean and unclean meats, so it goes there. We intended to end up with Baptism of Fire, because that's the last. But it follows in a proper progression going from God to mankind to us and all the things down the line, and it relates back to the Scriptures.

Let's come here to *The Laws and Commandments of GOD*. And the first section here is: *The Nature of God's Laws: (Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God, pg 9-10 throughout)*.

The laws and commandments of God as revealed in both Old Testament and New Testament are a Holy and perfect set of principles based on the love of God.

Because everything hangs on loving God and loving your neighbor. All the commandments of God are based upon that—correct? *Yes!*

God's laws and commandments are designed to teach man how to love and worship God and how to love his neighbor. God has made known His laws and commandments to the world from the beginning...

Now, many people don't believe that. Many people believe that the Ten Commandments were only given when they were given at Mt. Sinai, and they didn't not exist before then. But, you see, they have wiped out half the history of the whole world by saying that. And that's very easy to answer. 'Where there is no law there is no sin,' so therefore, God could not have judged Adam and Eve and destroyed the world with the Flood because there would have been no sin. And then there's another argument that they use, which is very clever, which is a slight of hand, which is this: 'If it's not restated in the New Testament then you don't have to do it.' NOT SO! For Jesus to say He's Lord of the Sabbath—when we get to that—that is sufficient; and to show that He kept it is sufficient. Doesn't need to be restated. That's why we have the Old Covenant/New Covenant, the Old Testament/New Testament.

God has made known His laws and commandments to the world from the beginning and requires all mankind to keep them. The laws and commandments of God define what sin is, and where there is no law there is no sin. No one could be counted as a sinner, or under sin, if God did not require all the people of the world to keep His laws and commandments. The Scriptures show that God judges all nations according to their obedience or disobedience to His laws, bringing blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience or sin. Because of sin and wickedness in Noah's time, God destroyed the world with the Flood. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because they were sinners before God. The Ninevites were a Gentile nation not in covenant with God, but God warned them through His prophet Jonah of His impending judgment for their sins.

And of course, then they repented and God withheld His judgment—didn't He? That also ties in with what we've been going through in *Scripturalism vs Judaism* and the calling of the Gentiles and so forth. What the Ninevites did there was a very profound thing. What other nation have you read of that ever really did that. I mean, not even Israel. I mean, some of the kings did, but not the whole nation of Israel. You read where Jehoshaphat was a mighty king and a righteous king and he did a lot to get rid of paganism, but he couldn't get rid of all of the groves and all of the illegal worship of demons that they had. So that was something!

The inhabitants of the land of Canaan were expelled because of their religious and sexual sins. The people of Israel, God's chosen nation, also sinned grievously against God and were sent into captivity. Through sin and disobedience to God's laws and commandments, the whole world has become guilty before God. Generation after generation has yielded to the sinfulness of human nature and has utterly failed to meet even the minimum requirements of the letter of the law.

While God has always required mankind to keep His laws and commandments in the letter of the law, He desires that every human being learn to worship Him in the spirit of the law. The full spiritual intent of God's laws is that each one learn to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, being and strength; and to love one's neighbor as oneself. The Scriptures reveal that

obedience to God's laws in the spirit is a condition for receiving eternal life. Only through the gift of the Holy Spirit is this obedience made possible. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, each Christian can have the laws and commandments of God written in his or her heart and mind and can learn to walk daily in the spiritual obedience that God desires. The laws and commandments of God are not contrary to grace and faith but are truly established by faith.

So, you have to have obedience in order to be justified.

Now, we've covered in Romans, the fourth chapter, about the belief of Abraham, justified him and the obedience of Abraham justified him—James, the second chapter.

Now, let's begin right here. Let's just go through some of the Scriptures that we have listed here. Let's go to Genesis 3, and let's see what we have. We know that God put the two trees in the Garden of Eden: the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And we know that God gave mankind choice. So Adam and Eve were able to choose.

Genesis 3:11—showing that God held them accountable for sin. Now we don't know all the details of it, but we do know that it probably involved considerably more than what the Scriptures tell us. But this is sufficient for us to understand it. "And He said, 'Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?'"

This is like an overarching commandment. You have certain overarching commandments of which all the others follow from. For example: 'You shall have no other gods before Me' is the overarching commandment for the Ten—correct? And is the reason for all the rest of the commandments. Above that or right next to that then is 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and being.' Those are overarching commandments from which hang everything else. So, when God told them to not eat of the tree, that was an overarching commandment which then revealed that there was more if they did. There would be more difficulty and more problems.

Verse 12: "And the man said, 'The woman whom You gave *to be* with me...'—always got to blame someone else. Human nature is that way. It's an accurate quote, yes. This is not to discriminate against women, but he did eat it. He did not have to eat it, but he did. Now, I don't know what would have happened if he didn't. Just Eve eating it and he

not eating it, I don't know what would have happened—so don't ask me the question. I do have a sermon that I did: *What Would the World Be Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned?*—so if you don't have that one, write for that. Merle Olsen asked that of me in 1987, somewhere around there, and I had to do a lot of thinking on that. But that's a question that someone would always want to know: what the world would have been like; it would have been different than what it is today.

Verse 12: "...she gave me of the tree, and I ate." Now look! Let's go back and read that again, see what happened here. Verse 6: "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes... [Appearance! Jesus said, 'Judge righteous judgment, do not judge by appearance.' And this is what is so deceptive about sin. Sin appears to be pleasant in the moment. You never go by appearance.] ...and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise... [in other words, a shortcut on being a super brain. But that's not what God desires. He wants you to learn. You've seen these things with *Train Your Children*. You get these flashcards, flash it them, and they're just weeks old and months old and so forth. All you do is you're just burn them out, they're not ready for any of that.

As a matter of fact, I believe like Delores does: Children should not go to school until they're nine years old. You can teach them a lot of the basic things at home; you have them go to school at nine and you can graduate them at sixteen with all the equivalent of twelve years. Their minds are just not set to go to school and spend all day. And you think about some of these kids that are coming along now, that are, after ten days—they're born and ten days old, BAM! they're with someone else or in a daycare, and you go through all of that. All they're doing is just raising them with a communal mentality in these daycare things. And you're creating a socialistic society by doing that. And in those daycare things they make everybody dependent on everybody else.

God wants you to be dependent upon your parents when you're growing up. Then when you're grown up He wants you to be independent, on your own two feet! And then when you grow up then you establish a relationship with God—not this communal, socialistic, communistic type of thing that the world has today—"...to be wise!" (v 6)

"...she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.... [Now, right at that point he could have said, 'No, I don't want it.' He could have told her, 'Don't pick it.' But he didn't.] ...And the eyes of both of them were opened... [which really means, spiritually they were

closed. They were opened to what? *Satanism and demonism!* That's what happened.] ...and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Then Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden" (vs 6-8).

Well now, they didn't even understand about God. You can't hide from God. There's nowhere anybody can hide from God. He knows everything going on in the universe and on the earth. He even knows when a sparrow falls. But again, ***it shows the deceptiveness of human nature and how that people just deceive themselves*** and kid themselves into things.

"And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where *are* you?' And he said, 'I heard You *walking* in the garden, and I was afraid because I *am* naked, and so I hid myself.'" (vs 9-10).

Now, v 13—here comes judgment. When there is sin, there is judgment and there is a penalty—correct? *Yes!* "And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What *is* this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'" Now, if there would have been another person there I imagine they would have blamed them, but only the three of them; so they can't blame anybody else.

"And the LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this you *are* cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed.... [And then here's a prophecy of redemption.] ...He... [her Seed; being the one Who was to be Christ] ...will bruise your head... [being the serpent] ...and you [serpent] shall bruise His heel'" [referring to the crucifixion.] (vs 14-15). So right there, whenever there is sin and punishment, God also opens the way of redemption, But their redemption was not immediate for them at that point, because it had to wait until the time when Christ came. So, they'll get their opportunity later.

Then He brought the judgment upon the woman: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow in your conception and in sorrow shall you bring forth children.... [And that's not just in childbearing, but that's the whole process. But isn't it true: How many of our children grow up to be exactly what we would want them to be? And the mothers have more sorrow over it than the men, because they get emotionally involved in it. And that's just a living thing that God set forth.] ...And your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you" (v 16).

And to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened unto the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree which I commanded you, saying: “You shall not eat of it”; cursed is the ground for your sake and sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles also shall it bring forth to you...” (vs 17-18)—and they always grow faster than food—don’t they?

I remember one time, that we were up in Boise, Bill Sherer had this acre of land and he said, ‘Well, we’ve got this acre of land we’ve got irrigation water here and everything and we can put in a garden, we can put in beans and corn and tomatoes and cucumbers and really have a great garden.’ So we put them in. He had it all plowed up and we put it in and then we went out for a week’s camping, somewhere down the line. We came back and that garden was overgrown with morning glories. The whole thing was just covered. And you know how they do, they wrap around every plant, and to try and get that down, we lost half the garden just getting rid of the morning glories. So it’s true. You drive along the highway—and I don’t know why the county doesn’t do anything about it, but they have these big thistle plants that grow about like this—and I don’t know why they don’t go along and burn them down; but down around Hollister we’ve got about five miles of thistle plants right alongside and the wind blows and so here go all the thistles going off someplace else. And every time I see that I think of this.

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return” (v 19).

Then He gave them a bit of redemption, as we read here—v 21: “And unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord make coats of skin and clothed them.” Now, I am sure that these were sacrificial animals for taking care of that transgression. It didn’t forgive them so they could come back into the Garden of Eden. The judgment was that they were to be out of the Garden of Eden, but God would still deal with them if they would come to the east entrance of the Garden of Eden where the two cherubim were.

So right at the beginning there is sin. Now this sin is called, as we come back here to 1-Timothy, the second chapter, it is called *sin*! Sin then, is the ‘transgression of the law’ (1-John 3:4)—one of the very first Scriptures you should memorize. And I never could understand how the Protestants talk about sin, but then they throw away the law, which then is sin—isn’t it? Kind of hard to make sense of. Paul writes a little bit about this and he calls it sin.

1-Timothy 2:13: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived... [which really made his sin more deliberate—correct? So if you sin and you’re not deceived, that is more deliberate.] ...but the woman came to be in transgression by being deceived” (vs 13-14). That doesn’t mean that Adam was without transgression; because God judged him—didn’t He?

Now we come to Romans, the fifth chapter, and it talks about the sin of Adam’s sin. Let’s read that. So we’re covering the overall nature of God’s laws and commandments. Romans 5:12: “Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world... [So what Adam did was a sin—right? *Yes!*] ...and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way, death passed into all mankind; *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned.... [this really means *it is for that reason* that all have sinned.] ...(For before *the* law... [that is the giving at Sinai] ...sin was in *the* world. However, sin is not imputed when law does not exist.... [What he is saying here is: *the law did exist from the time of Adam*. That’s what he’s saying. Otherwise, God would not charge them with sin.] ...Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression... [So we read in 1-Tim. 2 of Eve’s transgression; but here we read of Adam’s transgression.] ...who is the figure of Him that was to come” (vs 12-14). He was the first Adam; Christ is the second Adam.

So there is the sin. Now, because of that God then judged the world before the Flood. And we’ve gone through that many times. You can read that in Genesis, the sixth chapter: That God looked down on the earth and ‘behold the imagination of man’s heart was only evil continuously.’ And there was violence and there was corruption and God had to destroy the whole thing. So God judged it.

Now, let’s come over here to Deuteronomy 28 and let’s see how the nature of God’s laws work. There are blessings for keeping them; there are cursings for not keeping them. For example: There are a lot of people out there today on the Sabbath going around doing their shopping. You wouldn’t think of that as being a curse—would you? They might not because they’re out there getting the sales and everything; *but it is*. What is the worst kind of cursing that you could have? *Being cut off from God*. They’re cut off from God and don’t know it—quite a thing—isn’t it? I mean, think on that!

Now, you might think cursing would be a great sickness—that’s true, that can be a cursing. But it’s a greater curse to be cut off from God and go around minding your own business and not even knowing it. Now here’s what God set forth for the

children of Israel. Here's how important all the laws and commandments of God are.

Deuteronomy 28:1: "And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD your God to observe *and to do all His commandments*... [Too many people go along and say, 'Which ones, Lord?'] Jesus said, 'Man shall live by which ever commandment he chooses to live by.' NO! He did not! *Jesus said*, 'Man shall live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' Totally different.] ...to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth."

Now also, this commandment right here, 'set you upon high,' you have to also realize that there are the blessings and promises given to Abraham, which were irrevocable. So the descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, being the twelve tribes of Israel, are recipients of the blessings of God because of Abraham—not because they are so good. So that's why God has been long-suffering with the children of Israel all the way through, because He's bound to keep His promise to Abraham. That's why we are where we are as a nation today. But we can be sure that when God says sin is sin and enough is enough, it's going to come to an end real quickly.

Now let's continue here, v 2: "And all these blessings shall come upon you and shall overtake you IF... [It's always conditional. Condition is never on God; always on us. God doesn't need any conditions because God is perfect.] ...IF you shall hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord your God."

Now again, I might mention and you might want to do a study on it, that go ahead and study every place *obey or not obey the voice of the Lord*. I think you will be amazed how many times that you find that in the Bible. And this is what the politicians promise. But remember, *politicians can never deliver what only God can give*. That's what's the matter with the society today. They look to the Democrats or the Republicans or the Libertarians or some other political movement; exclude God, kick Him out of the schools; kick Him out of the society. Let me just read this for a minute. This was given to me today. This will fit in good. This is why the blessings are not coming.

Excerpts of a prayer delivered on the floor of the Kansas legislature by Joe Wright of Central Christian Church in Wichita and repeated in the U.S. House of Representatives: "We have ridiculed the absolute Truth of God's Word, and have called it pluralism."

That's what people do. Read this here, and some will say, 'Well, that's the Old Testament.' Yeah, it may be, but it's still the Word of God—isn't it? Do you want these blessings that are listed here? *Yes, you do!* Well, then the condition is "IF you will hearken to the voice of the Lord your God." Now, if God has been merciful and kind because of His promise to Abraham and you've been recipient of many things for which you are not worthy, don't get all caught up and think how great you are.

Continuing now with this excerpt.

- We've worshipped false gods and have called it *multiculturalism*.
- We have endorsed perversion and have called it *alternative lifestyle or diversity*.

God calls it 'Sodom and Gomorrah and abomination.'

- We have exploited the poor and called it the *lottery*.
- We've rewarded laziness and called it *welfare*.
- We have killed the pre-born and called it *choice*.
- We have neglected to discipline our children and we have called it *building self-esteem*.
- We have polluted the airwaves with profanity and pornography and we've called it *freedom of expression*.
- We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and have called it *enlightenment*.
- We have censured God from our public life and call it *religious freedom*.
- We have abused power and called it *political savvy*.

Yet, they want all the blessings. They can't figure out why they don't have the blessings. So let's read how the blessings come **IF** you obey:

"Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the field." (v 3) Now, we're not anything but that this year—aren't we? With all the weather conditions—we've gone from 'El nino to la nina'—now, I don't know what that means, but we'll find out as we go along. We haven't had a day of over 100 degrees yet; which is almost unheard of. But we're told we have 'global warming.' That's unreal. Never mind, I'm getting carried away here, let me go on.

"Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, the increase of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep" (v 4) That's what everyone wants—

isn't it? Yet, they are not willing to obey. If you bring up about God, they get all angry.

"Blessed *shall be* your basket and your store. Blessed *shall you be* when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. The LORD shall cause your enemies that rise up against you to be stricken before your face.... [Now they're walking in by the droves—called *immigration*.] ...They shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon you in your storehouses, and all that you set your hand to. And He shall bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you" (vs 5-8). Tremendous! I mean, you talk about a constitution! Can the Constitution of the United States even stand up as a small, little birthday candle compared to this? This is something!

"The LORD shall establish you a Holy people to Himself, as He has sworn to you, if you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.... [Don't have to have a large standing army—have God be your army.] ...And the LORD shall make you abound in goods, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD shall open to you His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain to your land in its season..." (vs 9-12). It's anything but that. It's either rain or drought; fire or flood. One of the two.

"...and to bless all the work of your hand. And you shall loan to many nations, and you shall not borrow.... [Now, we're the biggest debtor nation in the world—no question. And that was since what? 1981! Remember, we were going to get rid of deficit spending. How many voted for Ronald Reagan? Did he do it? *No!* Politicians can't deliver.] ...And the LORD shall make you the head, and not the tail. And you shall be always above, and you shall not be beneath, if... [There it is again.] ...you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today, to observe and to do them. And you shall not go aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right hand or the left, to go after other gods to serve them" (vs 12-14).

"And it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD your God to observe and to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.... [Just the opposite of all the blessings that we read here.] ...Cursed *shall you be* in the city, and cursed *shall you be* in the field. Cursed *shall be* your basket and

your store. Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, the increase of your livestock, and the flocks of your sheep" and so forth (vs 15-18). And all the other things that are to come. You can read the rest of Deut. 28. In light of that, does God mean what He says? *Sure!*

Let's come here to Deuteronomy 4, and let's understand something that most people do not even realize: ***God has given the commandments for our good.*** But He has given the choice whether we will keep them or not. That's why there's the blessings and cursings that have been set—so we will choose which way to go.

Deuteronomy 4:1: "And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you, in order to do them, so that you may live.... [What a tremendous thing it would be if every person could live to be whatever age they come and it's time for them to die that they just say 'good night,' go to bed and it's over with. No sickness, no pain, no wearing out. I tell you that would be something!] ...that you may live... [have healthy children. Worse thing in the world is have something happen to your child. Not only happen to them, but how about those poor situations where there be deformities and things like this—it's just heart-rendering. Really is something! God doesn't want that. He wants it so that you LIVE.] ...and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives to you. You shall not add to the word which I command you; neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal Peor. For the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men that followed Baal Peor" (vs 1-3)—and all the men who followed Baalpeor. But He says He destroyed them.

Verse 4: "And you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive, every one of you, this day." Therefore, keep them. Do what is right. And He has done this for our good! 'For your good always.' He says that so many times.

Come over here to v 37—Why did He do this? Why did He deal with Israel? What a wonderful thing God has done with Israel. You think of that, brethren! I mean, think of it! You know, this world would be like China and Africa and Tibet and South America if it weren't for what God did to Israel. And hasn't the United States and British Commonwealth, in spite of their mistakes, been a blessing to the whole world? *Yes! Yes, they have!* "And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought you out in His sight with His great power out of Egypt, in order to drive out from before you nations greater and

mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as *it is* this day. Therefore, know this day and fix it in your heart that the LORD *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is none other. Therefore, you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you this day, so that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and so that you may prolong your days upon the earth which the LORD your God gives you forever” (vs 37-40).

God never ever gave one commandment which was not for the good of mankind. And if He did, then He would not be the God of love—is that not correct? Everything God has done is good. And that’s what needs to be said. That’s what needs to be preached; because people go around just like Adam and Eve. God is the evil one. God is the one who is wrong; because He’s given all these commandments and laws which says don’t do this, don’t do that, don’t do the other thing. And they don’t realize what a tremendous blessing it would be if they all kept the commandments of God. Why, you’d have ‘Maytag policemen’ then—you know that? Because there would be nothing for them to do. Just think of that! See How much you’d save in taxes. And all the taxes are a curse—aren’t they? Because they reject God. They have the government for god, so hey, they’re going to take it. They’re going to take more than what God wants. It’s something! If you sat down and you figured out—I think I’ll try and do that for one of the tapes for the Feast of Tabernacles—how much money could be saved IF everyone kept the commandments of God.

How can we figure it out? We can just estimate what they spend on crime; estimate what they spend on welfare; estimate what they spend on all those things. My! We could have an income one-tenth of what it is and a surplus—couldn’t we? That’s something to think on. So God did it for our own good. That’s the nature of God’s laws, and that’s what God wants us always to do.

Now, let’s come over here to Psalm 111. The reason I’m not getting into too many specifics is because I want you to understand the *nature*—that’s what it is, *the nature of the laws of God*. Why He gave them. They’re absolute! They’re a living, spiritual things which are working all of the time. But we need to understand the *nature* of them.

Psalm 111:7: “The works of His hands are Truth and justice.... [now *verity* is a synonym for *truth*.] ...all His precepts are sure.... [Means they’re *active, alive, living*. If you break them, they’ll catch up with you. God is merciful. He doesn’t bring judgment upon you immediately. But sooner or later He’ll come upon you if you don’t repent.] ...sure. They stand fast forever and ever...” (vs 7-8).

They stand fast forever and ever—how can you do away with them? Circumcision is not done away. There’s a higher standard: *circumcision of the heart*. Obedience to the laws and commandments of God are not done away. There’s a higher standard. There’s a spiritual standard. They’re to be written in your heart and mind. That’s a greater and higher standard.

“They stand fast forever and ever; they are done in Truth and uprightness.... [So if you accuse God of giving harsh commandments, then you’re accusing God of being evil.] ...He sent redemption unto His people; He has commanded His covenant forever; holy and awesome is His name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever” (vs 8-10). So if you want to know the will of God, as we covered this morning, do the will of God and you will know that it’s from Him. Then you’ll have understanding.

This is important for us to understand—very important! Now, let’s go to Matthew 22—this gives us the very basic foundation and reason for the commandments of God. In the sermon series on *Why God Hates Religion*, what you’re going to find is this: You’re going to find that God’s way in the Bible is not a religion, but it is a way of life. And you’re also going to find that the commandments of God are all based on the love of God. And all of these are then for relationships. The reason that all the commandments and laws of God are for relationships is because they’re based on love. And this is the thing that religion has done: it has taken God’s way and turned it upside down and made it something that it is not. And so, most people have a false conception of who God is and what God is; why He gave His laws. They have a misconception that God is some evil, hostile, wrathful god up in heaven; kind of like a sadistic person over an anthill, waiting for one of us little ants to make a mistake so he can just kind of squash us and get us. That’s not true! That’s not the reason for it.

Here’s what Jesus said—Matthew 22:37: “And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart... [this is a full commitment] ...and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment” (vs 37-38). Now, a lot of people go ahead and read this and they parrot this and then they turn around and they throw out the commandments of God. Because they say if you have love in your heart that’s all you need. Well, you need more than love in your heart. You not only need love in your heart, you need the laws and

commandments of God in your heart.

“‘And *the second one is* like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (v 39). As I’ve mentioned before, if you look at the world today and you start saying, okay, now if people really did these things, what a different world this would be. We wouldn’t have like we had yesterday where someone went into the Capitol Hill and shot a couple of guards and went into shoot some of the congressmen. We wouldn’t have that kind of thing. But you see, the world does not comprehend it.

Now notice v 40—here is the key: “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Meaning that this is the very nature and reason for the laws and commandments of God. Because God is love, He wants every one of us to love each other, to love Him and to get along with one another. So therefore, He gave all the laws and the commandments.

Now let’s see how this ties together. Let’s go to 1-John, the fifth chapter, and let’s see how important that this is; because since all the laws and commandments of God are hung on loving God with all your heart and mind and soul and being—and of course, if it hangs; that means *what supports it*. It’s not that the laws support the love. The love supports the law.

So we have it right here in 1-John 5:2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God...” Now notice, it is **love God FIRST**—that’s what’s important. And God wants that relationship of love with each one of us. And God wants us to have a loving relationship with each other. And I think, brethren, in the local fellowships and congregations, we’re going to have a revolution in understanding how we are to get along with each other when we truly grasp that what God has done to bring us together is a *created relationship*. You think about that. And a *created relationship* is really very profound and important. *Created relationship* is God to man; man to God; husband to wife; wife to husband; children to parents—it’s all a *created relationship*. And since we’re being re-created in the image of Christ, our relationship then is to be based on loving each other as Christ loved us.

So we need to have a whole different perspective on how we think and how we do these things and how we interact with each other based upon the love of God. It’s a completely different thing than you have understood concerning religion. And how are we going to—if we make it into the Kingdom of God and become kings and priests with Christ—how are we going to rule and reign without love? It isn’t going to happen! All we would do is repeat what’s out in the world today. And if the

Kingdom of God is going to be no different than the world today, then we’re in really bad shape—aren’t we?

Verse 2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God... [so there is that love to the children of God] ...and keep His commandments.” So the two go hand-in-hand. It’s kind of like this: now, several of you have some water here I see. I don’t know if it’s cold or warm or in between; but nevertheless, what is water made of? *Water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen*—right? It’s called H₂O. Now when you have a different mixture, you get hydrogen peroxide. Now what’s the mixture of hydrogen peroxide? H₂O₂. Just one little change. And outside of the oxygen in it, it can be very toxic and very poisonous—though it may be able to do some things to cleanse the system if it’s handled in a correct way. But it’s not like water.

So likewise, when you break these two, *the love of God and the commandments of God*, then you have something that is different. That’s why so many churches and religions end up being so ‘lovey’ that they’re wishy-washy and have no stability to them. And you have on the other hand, those that become very militant with no love; because they have all law or all love. But you see, just like hydrogen and oxygen, if it’s not put together H₂O for water—then what do you have? You have gas floating around in the air. And strange enough, the two things that compose water—hydrogen and oxygen—are also two things which when combusted burn furiously—hydrogen and oxygen. So that also shows the miracle of God in making water that can put out fire, though they’re composed of the same thing. So that’s why with love and the commandments of God you have to have them together. You can’t have one without the other. It’s an impossibility.

“For this is the love of God... [showing the complete cycle] ...that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome” (v 3). They are, all of them, good! Not grievous at all. And so, this is the thing that we need to understand, concerning the commandments of God.

Now let’s go back to the book of Genesis, because there are many contrary arguments about when God gave the Ten Commandments. But remember this; here is a profound thing to understand concerning commandments and laws: **Where there is no law there is no sin**. Remember that! So therefore, if there were no laws from the time of Adam to Mt. Sinai, then God could not have convicted the world for sin, could He? Now, it’s the same way in our own lives. If you come up to a corner that has no stop sign and the policeman pulls you over and gives you a ticket for running a stop

sign, you go to court and it's thrown out—correct? Because there was no stop sign law there, therefore, you could not have transgressed the stop sign because it wasn't there. So it's the same way with all of God's laws.

Now, let's come back here to Genesis 26:5, because this is very important and this gives the whole basis for the New Covenant. So that we understand today exactly what it was that Abraham did, because Gal. 3 tells us that 'if we are Christ's, then we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promises.'

Genesis 26:2: "And the Lord appeared to him [Isaac] and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you.... [Isn't that what everyone wants? Doesn't everyone want God to be with them and bless them? *Yes, they do.* But where does the problem come in? *The problem comes in that everyone wants God to be with them and bless them, on their own terms, rather than God's terms.* And that creates a problem, because our terms are not righteous. Our terms are carnal. God's terms are righteous and Holy and perfect. And if God came to us on our terms, then we would literally be telling God what to do, because it reverses it the other way. So you think about that.] ...for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens... [and we've covered that; and now that refers to the coming spiritual glory that God is going to give the sons of God.] ...and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (vs 2-4).

Now notice v 5—this is very key concerning the very nature of the laws of God: "Because that Abraham obeyed My voice... [and everything in the Bible comes from the voice of God. He either spoke it, had it written or inspired it and had it written. That's why, in going through the *Beliefs* booklet, we covered the Holy Bible first, then the commandments of God. So we understand exactly what it's all about.] (now notice): ...and kept My charge... [so it's more than just commandment-keeping—*His charge!*] ...My commandments, My statutes and My laws." Now, Abraham is called the *father of the faithful*. So Abraham then, without a doubt, kept all the laws and commandments and statutes and judgments of God, in a way that was pleasing to God, because he loved God.

And what did Abraham have with God? *Abraham had a personal relationship*—didn't he? Abraham was called 'the friend of God.' Abraham walked with God and talked with God. And that's

what God wants with us; exactly the same thing. So this is important for us to realize and understand as we go through and understand these things.

Now, let's come to Matthew, the fifth chapter, and let's see something that is also very important—one of the first things that Jesus said when He began His ministry; that He wanted to make it absolutely clear as to what He was going to do, how He was going to do it and so forth.

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law... [and the word 'destroy' (*KJV*) there means *to abolish* or *do away*.] ...or the Prophets.... [Have all the prophecies been fulfilled? *No!* I mean, we're going to see more of them fulfilled in our lifetime than perhaps any other generation.] ...I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.... [What does the word 'fulfill' mean? Well, some people think the word 'fulfill' is another word for 'do away with.' The word 'fulfill' means *to fill to the full*; means *to bring to a higher standard*. If you have a cup here and it's half full, you say, I'm going to fill it to the brim. Now that's what the word 'fulfill' means.] ...I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled" (vs 17-18). Now, that is quite a thing!

So if you want to know, if you just answered it in very simple terms: Are the laws and commandments and prophecies of God still in effect to this very day? Well, the answer is *if the heaven and earth are still here, yes they are*. And it is true, the heaven and earth are still here! Now then, notice what else He says:

"Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments... [and isn't that always something that happens. Someone comes along, one of the false prophets comes along and says, 'You know, we don't need to do this. We don't need to do that. We don't need to do the other thing.'] (Notice what happens here): ...and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.... [and that means virtually non-existent] ...but whoever shall practice... [which means *to practice as a way of life*] ...and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (v 19).

So there we have it. These are the *nature of God's laws*. And God requires everyone to keep them.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 3:11-12, 6-10, 13-19, 21
- 2) 1 Timothy 2:13-14
- 3) Romans 5:12-14

- 4) Deuteronomy 28:1-18
- 5) Deuteronomy 4:1-4, 37-40
- 6) Psalm 111:7-10
- 7) Matthew 22:37-40
- 8) 1 John 5:2-3
- 9) Genesis 26:2-5
- 10) Matthew 5:17-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 4
- James 2
- 1 John 3:4
- Galatians 3

Also referenced: Sermons:

- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- *What Would the World Be Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned?*
- *Why God Hates Religion*

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The Laws and Commandments of God

The Ten Commandments

Fred R. Coulter—July 25, 1999

Now, this is a shorter section in the *Belief's* booklet, because we've already covered the nature of God's laws and commandments. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 10, throughout)

The Ten Commandments, spoken by God to Israel, are the foundation of all of God's laws.

You think about that. If you're studying the Bible and you go through and you come across a law, you stop and ask the question: What does this apply to? Which of the Ten Commandments does this relate to? And you'll find that it does.

They have been in effect from the beginning of mankind, over 3,000 years before their pronouncement at Mt. Sinai. Their written form is the summation of the spiritual laws which function at all times, whether a person is aware of them or not. Obedience to these commandments brings blessings, and disobedience brings curses.... [We covered that last time in *The Nature of God's Laws*.] ...The Ten Commandments teach us how to express love toward God and our fellowman. They must be obeyed as a condition for receiving eternal life.

Now, many people don't believe that. So let's start at the end. Let's go to Revelation 22, and let's see what we are told here, concerning the commandments of God—and then we will go to Exodus 20 and look at the Ten Commandments one-by-one. And I think we'll find them very, very profound indeed!

Revelation 22:12: "And behold, I am coming quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each one according as his work shall be.... [And if his work is loving God, keeping His commandments, loving neighbor, loving the brethren, your reward is going to be fantastic.] ...I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who keep His commandments... [Now, some translations have it: 'Blessed are they who wash their robes.' But that comes from a different Greek text. That comes from a Sinaiticus or Alexandrian or Vatican text. And again, 'to do His commandments' means *to practice them*.] (Now notice what this gives you the right): ...that they may have the right to *eat of the tree of life*, and may enter by the gates into the city" (vs 12-

14).

Let's ask the question the other way—as we're turning to Exodus 20: If someone is sinning are they going to enter into the Kingdom of God and righteousness? So sometimes when you're stuck with some of these things, ask the opposite question. All right let's just start out with the first one. Again, we're going to see that all of these are for relationships:

1. To God, based upon loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being
2. Love your neighbor as yourself

And these relationships are a *created* relationship. That's something that really hit me this past week. You'd think that you take all these years, all these years, are you thick-headed or not? *Yes, Fred, you're thick-headed.* We're all thick-headed. And the hardest thing is to get preconceived notions out of our mind and have the things of God in our mind.

1. Exodus 20:3: "You shall have no other gods before Me."

Now, when you stop and understand that there is one true God, **and He is the one true God**, how ridiculous it is to have any other kind of god before Him—because it cannot be a god. Now then, look at all of the gods of Egypt that they had: all of their animals; the river was a god; the cobra was a god; alligator was a god; the scarabs were gods; the flies were gods; monkeys were gods. Now, when it came time for all the plagues and everything that happened, did it spare them? *Nope!* Did it save their firstborn? *Nope!* And all of the gods that we have in the world today are one form or another of the gods that came out of Egypt—whether it be Buddhism or Hinduism or Catholicism or any of the other religions.

Now some people may have some knowledge of God, but not according to true knowledge, so therefore, they're kind of walking down the side of the road with all the clutter. Now, you try driving your car down alongside the freeway and instead of on the freeway you're going to find out you're going to have great trouble. But if you stay on the freeway of God, being the commandments of God, you're going to go the way that God wants you to go.

2. "You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in

the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God... [it actually means *zealous God*] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments” (vs 4-6).

There we are full circle back to “love Me and keep My commandments”—right in what? *The second commandment*. Now, let’s look at this second commandment a little bit more and come back at it. If you have an idol you don’t love God—it’s that simple. Think of that.

He says, let’s read it again, v 4: “You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything*...” ANY likeness! That includes everything: crosses, crucifixes, stars of David, statutes of saints, all of that—because they’re all a likeness, aren’t they? *Yes!*

And I remember when I was on KABC, “Religion on the Line,” I was the Protestant representative—supposedly—for four Sundays. That was on from nine at night to midnight, and it was a call-in show. They had a Catholic priest, and I never will forget, it was Father Dumeyer, big 300 lb. German; and then they had Rabbi Franklin. So I always tease Carl about that, too. But anyway, you always have a Jehovah witness call in and harass the Catholic priest with the second commandment. And the answer is: ‘Well, we don’t view these as idols or statues, these are just reminders, and we don’t worship them.’ And when he got done explaining it, I said, ‘Well, you’re correct, but you miss the point. You shall not make unto you any graven image of any likeness. You’re not even to have them, let alone think of them as reminders.’ Well, needless to say, I scooted out of there very quickly at midnight. What did he say? *He didn’t say anything, but he sure was breathing!* And I don’t want to tangle with a 300 lb. Jesuit ‘father,’ so-called. Why? Because idolatry cuts you off from God, that’s why. And how can you make a likeness of God Who’s spirit? *You can’t!* Who is made in the likeness of God? *We are!*

3. Now then, v 7: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

And, of course, this applies not only to swearing and cursing, but it applies to all those who are false prophets and teachers. Are they not taking the name of God in vain when they say ‘God said’ when God didn’t say? That’s why we—we’ll see in just a

minute that’s why we—meet on the Sabbath, because God says, ‘Remember the Sabbath day.’ If we meet on any other day and proclaim that God’s day—whether Friday or Sunday, being a Muslim or a Catholic or a Protestant—then are we taking God’s name in vain? *Yes, we are*, because God didn’t say so—did He?

Sometimes these get down to some very simple things. And that does away with a lot of these high-minded flatulent arguments that people have, one way or the other.

Now let’s read the one concerning the Sabbath. The Sabbath, again, is *for a relationship*. As was mentioned in the opening prayer, that we can fellowship together; that we can fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And there is to be a special blessing when you come together on the Sabbath. That’s very important to realize. So that’s why we need to come together on the Sabbath—for the blessing that God alone can give. So just keep that in mind.

4. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God...” (vs 8-10)

—‘of’ defines ownership—God owns it, it belongs to Him. It’s not our day. Sunday is my day; Monday is my day; Tuesday is my day; Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—I can do whatever I want on those days—right? But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. That’s God’s day, and God says it’s an appointed time, so if you want to have a relationship with God, then you keep the Sabbath.

“...In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates” (v 10).

Now, why did God give this commandment? He gave that commandment so you will miss all the good Saturday shopping specials, that’s why He gave it because He’s a mean, nasty God and He doesn’t want you to save money ^[with sarcasm]. NONSENSE! Of course not! But some people think that way. Or some people think, ‘Well, God gave the Sabbath to the Jews, to punish them.’ But God didn’t give the Sabbath to the Jews to punish them.

He gave it to ALL mankind as a blessing for ALL mankind. And He gave it to the 12 tribes of Israel, of whom the Jews were only one tribe. And so, some people say, ‘Well, since the Sabbath is a

curse, a punishment, the Jews have it, look at them, look what they go through.' Well, they're going through what they go through because they rejected Christ. They're not going through what they go through because of the Sabbath. It's a whole different story. They say, 'Well, we don't want to join them, we need to keep Sunday.' Or the Muslims say, 'Well, we couldn't possibly do that, Mohammad says, Friday.' Here's the reason:

"for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (v 11).

Let's go back to Genesis 2—from the beginning God wanted the relationship with mankind. That's why He created the Garden of Eden and put man in there. And since it wasn't good for man to be alone, God made a helpmeet for him—took one of his ribs and created Eve—a *created relationship*. Man was to have then the seventh day as a created relationship with His Maker, to come to God. And after all, what is the most important thing in life? ***The most important thing in this physical life is to know God and love Him and to receive His Spirit so you can be in the Kingdom of God.*** Isn't that right? What if you live your whole life and that never happens to you? Well, God has a way of solving that later on, but I mean, for us today. I mean, think about it! It's quite a wonderful and precious thing that God has given with His Sabbath. I'm kind of overflowing into the next message, which is the weekly Sabbath and so forth, but these kind of blend together, so we'll just take it that way.

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work which He had made... [and that should read the sixth day, not the seventh. And there are actually some theologians which go there and say, 'Ok, well He ended his work on the seventh day therefore that's why we keep the first day. No! No!'] ...And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it... [that is made it Holy.] ...because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (vs 1-3).

Now, can you imagine what the Sabbath must have been like before Adam and Eve sinned? To sit down and talk with your Creator face-to-face? You talk about an absolute blessing! You talk about something that just kind of sends shivers up and down my spine just to even think about it. What an absolute thing, a wonderful blessing that would be. So man, in his sins, says, 'Oh no, God, I don't need You'—starting with Adam and Eve. So God is

further and further and further pushed away. We're out in the world today, people say, 'Well, God, where's God.' Sad thing! All because they don't "remember the Sabbath."

Now, let's come back here to Exodus 20 again. Also, in keeping the Sabbath there comes another blessing with it, too. If you keep the Sabbath and really love God, you will never believe in evolution, because you will know that God created everything. So, just think of all the problems, which are going to fall by the wayside when Christ returns and everyone is keeping the Ten Commandments of God. I'm going to have to have someone do—I'll find someone to do an economic study as to what would happen in eliminating taxes, fines, penalties from the economy if everyone kept the commandments of God. As I mentioned once before, you would probably have 'Maytag policemen'—nothing to do.

5. Now let's come to the next commandment, Exodus 20:12: "Honor your father and your mother..."

—which then is a created relationship—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* It is a created relationship. It's not a hierarchy; it's not partnership; it's not a company or corporation. It is what? *A family*—and a family is a created relationship that God designed. That's why our relationship with God is so very, very important.

"Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you."

So the first thing that Satan does in the schools today is to teach children to dishonor their fathers and mothers; that their lives may be short, filled with drugs and sex and violence. And if they survive that, during their twenties and thirties, then they're going to be debilitated with diseases and things in their forties and fifties and die a very early life—if they don't die earlier.

So that's again, one of the reasons. Just think where the world would be today if we had this commandment obeyed: "Honor your father and mother..." What a different story it would be.

6. "You shall not murder" (v 13).

That's what it should read—should not murder. Wouldn't it be nice if everyone could have where they would not be in fear of their life.

7. "You shall commit adultery" (v 14).

Why? *Because committing adultery breaks the created relationship of husband and wife.* Very profound. I want you to think on that now! It just came to me this past week as I did that for the Feast

of Tabernacles. I want you to think on this concerning the created relationships that God has given. And that's why God wants us to have the love for Him; love for each other; husband and wife and brethren and neighbors. God created all human beings, so it's a created relationship, isn't it? *Yes, it is!*

So these last six commandments tell us how to get along with our neighbor in this *created relationship*. Now maybe some neighbors it's awfully hard to love, especially if they're pesky neighbors. We have one that way. He's almost like he has a periscope on top of his head, walking back and forth our back fence to see what's going on in our backyard. And the best way we can love him is to just leave him alone. We'd like to have it different, but sometimes it has to be that way. You can't run over and create problems with him.

8. "You shall not steal" (v 15).
9. "Shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (v 16).
10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's" (v 17).

All of these are to maintain the proper relationship between you and God and you and your neighbor. And then when we come to the New Testament, all the relationships that we have of loving each other as Christ has loved us. So the Ten Commandments are very, very profound and important and I want you to be sure and take the *Beliefs* booklet and read the two sections on *Faith* and *Grace*—because the commandments of God do not do away with faith and grace. As a matter of fact, all of them are together. Everything comes in a package, all of it together.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 22:12-14
- 2) Exodus 20:3-11
- 3) Genesis 2:1-3
- 4) Exodus 20: 12-17

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Laws and Commandments of God Weekly Sabbath

Fred R. Coulter—August 8, 1999

What we're going to understand is this: *The weekly Sabbath is one of the very first things that you begin to understand when God calls you.* Now when I was growing up I was never religious; never in a church. I had an aunt who was a Sunday school teacher, and her name was Aunt Grace; and whenever she would come and visit us she would bring her little felt-board thing and she would teach us with her little felt-board thing. I always got absolutely bored to tears. And whenever she would come I would say, 'Oh! No! Not again!'

When I was ten years old, my folks wanted me to be a 'good boy' so they sent me off to Lutheran catechism. So this was held up at the minister's house and my mom would drive me up there, I'd get out of the car, wave bye-bye, walk up the porch. As soon as she was gone, I'd jump over the edge of porch and run off—as I didn't want any religious instruction. So finally they gave up on trying to make me take catechism, and I had no religious exposure at all to anything until I got out of the—or was I still in the service? I think I was still in the service. I must have been about 22 at that time, and I was visiting my sister over on Bainbridge Island. So I thought I would go to church and I didn't want to go to a Catholic church, so there was an Episcopalian church. So I walk into this Episcopalian church on Sunday morning and lo and behold it looked just like a Catholic church. I couldn't get over it. And here the priest with his long robes and he has his little staff with the sun-disk on top of it, walking down the aisle and all of that sort of thing. I thought to myself: how's this any different than the Catholic Church.

Oh, one other time—I was delivering papers—I must have been about 15, and it was Sunday morning and they were having Easter sunrise services, so I wanted to see what that was like. Here are these thousands of people out there, and so I got my paper route done early and I was standing there watching it and as soon as the sun came up they all bowed down—and I wondered: what on earth is this? *It was all Catholic.*

So, I had no exposure to religion at all. I was not convinced that Sunday was right one way or the other. But, as soon as I heard about the Sabbath, something happened in my mind. It was just like God took a switch and turned it; because I said, 'Ahha! That's got to be it!' I do recall one other event. That was one of my aunts—another aunt on my mother's side (you can tell I'm getting older, I'm

reminiscing)—she was a Seventh Day Adventist. Of course, my mother always thought that Seventh Day Adventists were weird. Of course, she proved it to me. My aunt's daughter came over to visit us, and of course, at that time, the Seventh Day Adventists were very strict vegetarians. My mother made up some tuna fish sandwiches and put a lot of eggs in it. So she gave it to her daughter and she loved them. She said, 'Oh this is delicious, what is it?' My mother said, 'Well, it's deviled eggs.' She ate a huge stack of them, not knowing that it was tuna fish and eggs. Well, I didn't know that they were vegetarians until my mother told me with this tuna fish thing.

So then sometime later, we went up to visit them. And we get up there and she has meatballs and gravy prepared for us. And I thought, well now, that's really down right nice of her. Here, she's a vegetarian and we come and visit and she makes meatball and gravy for us. So, pass around the meatballs, the potatoes and meatball and gravy and everything, so I said I'm going to show her how much I appreciate her effort. So, I heaped on lots of meatballs and lots of gravy and my mother's going like this, you know, and I didn't know what she was trying to do until I took my first bite of the meatball. It was the first 'mock meat,' old soybean stuff that I ever had in my life. And I knew for sure vegetarian was wrong from that day forward.

And there's one fallacy in Ellen G. White's prophecy that all meats would be polluted at the end-time—two fallacies:

1. So are the vegetables
2. They have organic vegetables and organic meat now

You have to shop around for it so you can get it.

So, that was about the sum-total of my religious experience, until I went to college in San Mateo after I got out of the army; and I started the day course, and they require you to take a course in paleontology, which is eighteen weeks long—six weeks of paleontology, six weeks of geology and six weeks of biology. This was my first opportunity in a big class—we had a big class, it was theater style and I was sitting about halfway back up. And all the students filed in, filled it all up—there must have been three or four hundred students there, and the professor comes out and he says—the very first thing—he gets up there and walks back and forth until it's quiet. One way to get the students to quit talking is to say nothing and walk back and forth, pretty soon it gets quieter and quieter and quieter

and finally there's silence. He stood up there and he looked at all the students and he said: 'Anyone here who believes in God and the Bible, there is the door. I don't want to hear it during the course of this class.'

Well, not being religious, it hit me the wrong way! How dare anyone tell me that I can't believe in God—though I didn't! It's just kind of a quirk of human nature. I wasn't an atheist, but I didn't believe in God. And all my religious experience with my family told me that it couldn't be right. So anyway, that really got me to thinking.

So, what's the first thing you do? *You try and coordinate evolution with creation*—correct? But that didn't work. And then, lo and behold, one night in my car I heard the *World Tomorrow* program. At that time they were really preaching the Bible, and it was Herbert W. Armstrong. He was on KGO at 9:30—and as soon as I heard that program something else clicked in my mind and I knew that that was it. So I wrote in and I got the literature and the *Plain Truth* and as soon as I heard about the things; there was a series on the Ten Commandments; reading that. There was also a series on the two Babylons—*Satan's Great Deception*; out of the book *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop—and that's very important for people to understand. So, I immediately got the book and I started reading a couple pages every day, going through it, and I heard about the Sabbath and I knew about the Sabbath and I knew that I needed to keep the Sabbath, but I kept putting it off.

So about August I went on down to Ambassador College, and a dishwasher—he worked at the same restaurant I did—he went down with me; because where I was working I was passing out literature and I'd listen to the program at night while I was there. I would save all my preparation work to do it back in the kitchen. I could turn on the radio and listen to the *World Tomorrow* program. So he wanted to go and he was a friendly, outgoing guy and so forth; so he went down with me to Ambassador College.

I counseled about baptism, and I wasn't keeping the Sabbath and I was still eating bacon and tomato sandwiches. So, I decided I was going to quit eating bacon and tomato sandwiches and I'm going to keep the Sabbath. I came on back and I told my boss, I said, 'Look, I'm going to give you two week notice that I need to have off from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, or I quit.' So he said, *What for?* I said, "For my religion." He said, *When did you get religious?* I said, "Ok, if you can't do it, let me know." He went back and looked at the schedule and he came back and says: *I can't do it.* So I said, "Do you mind if I look at the schedule?" *No, go*

ahead. So I went back and figured it out. And here's how I figured it out: In the winter I would work for the chef from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon on Friday. Then in summer I would work from eleven to seven—get off before sunset. And then I would have all day Sabbath off from sunset to sunset, and then one o'clock in the morning on Sunday morning I would come into the killer graveyard shift. So that's how I was able to keep the Sabbath.

So, everyone who comes into contact with the Truth is going to have to cross the Sabbath bridge somewhere, and you're going to have to make a decision: what am I going to do? ***Because the Sabbath is the first step in beginning to understand the Bible.*** Absolutely! You can understand certain parts of it. There are many Sunday-keepers who understand certain parts—that is true. And there are many Sunday-keepers who have not investigated the Sabbath, and in some cases, they can be very sincere in what they believe. But what is happening with Sunday-keepers now, with the advent of the coming one-world religion moving in, more and more Sunday-keepers are losing what they have according to the Scripture that Jesus said, 'Even that which they think they have shall be taken from them.' So, there is that aspect of it, too, that I think is going to open up a whole lot more concerning the Sabbath in the years as we go down the road here.

Why is Sabbath-keeping the key to understanding the Bible? Very important to understand. Why is Sabbath-keeping the key to beginning to understand the Bible? *Yes, because it's in the Ten Commandments, that's right.* Now, let's give you an example here. Let's go to James, the second chapter. This applies to Sabbath-keeping as well. Now, when James wrote this, he was writing to those who were attending the synagogue. Now if you attend a synagogue, do you attend it on Saturday or Sunday? *You attend it on Sabbath, Saturday—right?* So therefore, he doesn't mention about Sabbath-keeping here.

Another very important thing that we will cover in the series that I'm doing on the Sabbath is this: It does not have to absolutely re-duplicate what is said in the Old Testament, in the New Testament. It doesn't have to duplicate it. If it shows it as a practice then it shows it as a binding commandment for New Testament Christians; because that's one of their arguments. 'Well, the New Testament doesn't say anywhere about the Sabbath.' We'll see. Yea, it does!

But here's a principle—James 2:8: "If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as

yourself,' you are doing well. But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*... [now remember, these were all Sabbath/Holy Day-keepers at this point he's talking to, right here. So therefore, their biggest problem was not understanding the Sabbath or Holy Days—was it? *No!* Their biggest problem was getting along with each other—correct? Is that not the biggest problem we have today, too? *Yes, very similar!*] ...For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave: as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom" (vs 8-12).

Now, we can apply the same thing. We can apply the same thing to the Sabbath. We'll see that in a little bit. Can you then take and have another god and still worship the true God? *No!* So I'm going to take the first four commandments; he took the last six there as he was applying them. You apply it to the first four commandments: 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' You can't worship the true God by worshipping a false god—can you? *No!* If I'm going to send you a thousand dollars and I send it to him, you never get your thousand dollars—do you? It's the same thing. I sent it to the wrong person. *If you have the wrong god, you can't possibly have things right.*

Now you might have the right God, but you might be doing it wrongly. So that's why the next commandment: 'You shall not make any graven image of any likeness of anything that's in heaven above, the earth beneath, water under the earth, nor bow down to worship them.' So you might have the right God, but if you have an idol then you are worshipping God in the wrong way.

Now, if you have no idols, then you come to the third commandment: 'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain—and if you say, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say'—then what are you doing? *You're taking His name in vain.* Now also this particularly applies to ministers who, if they teach false things in the name of God, are taking His name in vain—isn't that correct? *Yes!*

Then you come to the Sabbath one. Let's go to Exodus 20 and let's read that commandment. It's very profound, very important commandment; right in the middle of all the Ten Commandments. Think of it this way: Think of the Ten Commandments as a whole body. Think of it as a human body, all connected one with the other. Starts out with the head: the first commandment; and ends up with the

toes: the last commandment—right? Now what if you took this human body and you cut out one foot in the middle, do you have a whole human body? *No!* As a matter of fact, you might have something kind of dead—right? So think of that way. Maybe it'll help you understand about the Sabbath a little bit more.

Exodus 20:8: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep **it** Holy.... [Very profound. It does not say, 'one day in seven, honor Me.' That's also very profound, because that's what most people think.] ...Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God..." (vs 8-10). Now, that's very interesting phraseology when you look at it. It belongs to Him. It is His day. And we're going to see a little later on He created it.

Now, if it belongs to someone and you steal that time, are you stealing from God? *Yes!* Or you can look at it another way—we'll talk about it a little bit more here. Let's go on. "...In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (vs 10-11).

Now there's quite a bit we can learn from this, too, also which is very important. The Sabbath always reminds us that God is Creator. And when we know that God is Creator, we won't believe in evolution, will we? *No!* Now also it tells us something else: That **God hallowed it**—which means *to make it Holy*. God alone can make something Holy because God is Holy. Can a man make something Holy? *No!* We're going to see, when you see the series on the Sabbath, that Sunday-keeping really gets into some very judgmental things concerning God, which are very profound, and most people don't realize it. But sufficient to say, ***the Sabbath was made for fellowshiping with God.*** It is a day He said, 'It is a Holy convocation.'

Let's go to Leviticus 23 for just a minute. And 'on this day I have set it as a perpetual appointment.' Now this is why then you begin to understand about God, because something happens when you keep the Sabbath that does not happen when you keep Sunday. If you keep Sunday you can understand certain things up to a point. But you really don't know God—and that's a vast difference. Keeping the Sabbath is a day, that we're going to see, is a day God made an appointment so that we may know Him.

Leviticus 23:1: "And the LORD spoke to

Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, “*Concerning* the appointed Feasts of the LORD... [Now, we’ll cover the Feasts when we get done with the Sabbath.] ...which you shall proclaim *to be* Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts” (vs 1-2). So they belong to God. ‘Holy convocations’ could also be translated: *appointed times*. In other words, God has given an appointed time every week that He says, ‘I will fellowship with you.’ Now, since He’s not here on the earth, He does not do it face-to-face. He has sent His Holy Word so He fellowships with you through His Word and, and as we’re going to see, through His Spirit.

Verse 3: ““Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.”” So what God desires, since it is a Holy convocation, we are to come together whenever there are enough people to come together—and even if there are only two or three—God says He will be there in the midst.

Let’s come to 1-John, the first chapter, and let’s see the overriding reason for the Sabbath—which God has set forth for us. And God wants us to have, as we will see, a relationship with Him. And this relationship is based upon His Word and His Spirit, through His Son, Jesus Christ. And this is what the Apostle John was writing to all the people there, so that they can have the fellowship with him.

1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves... [‘looked upon’ is not just see with the eyes, but ‘looked upon’ is to actually have seen Him in His glorified form. To have gazed upon Him; because John was one of those who was on the Mt. of Transfiguration—correct? *Yes!* So that’s what it’s referring to here.] ...and our own hands handled... [even after He was resurrected from the dead] ...concerning the Word of life; (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ” (vs 1-3).

Now that’s the whole purpose. That is the very *whole* purpose of the Sabbath. He does it spiritually.

1. God has made sure we have His Word. What God has to say to us is contained here.
2. God will spend His Spirit to be with you, if you’re seeking truth. And when you’re baptized, will be in you—which then the fellowship becomes even closer.

Now let’s come all the way back to Genesis, the second chapter, and let’s look at this concerning the Sabbath. This is very important for us to understand. Genesis 2:1: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.... [And it should read here]: ...And by *the beginning* of the seventh day... [because all the way through it says, ‘for in six days God made the heaven and earth and all that is in there’—and this should read ‘sixth day.’ And that’s the way George Ricker Berry translates it and shows it in his Hebrew Interlinear of the first chapter of Genesis.] ...God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made” (vs 1-2).

Now, on this first Sabbath God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve. Think of that! And I’ve often wondered—and I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again—I wonder what that first Sabbath was like, when God talked with Adam and Eve. He says, ‘Now, I’ve made you. I’m your God. I’ve made this beautiful Garden of Eden here for you and look and behold everything is there. You can freely eat of all the trees in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And in the day you eat thereof you’re going to die. And that means in dying you will die—meaning that the whole process of aging and everything that goes along with it will occur. But I’m going to meet with you every Sabbath day right here in the garden.’ Kind of reminds me of that hymn, *I Come to the Garden Alone*.

And if Adam and Eve had not sinned, which I have a tape on that, which was a little difficult to do because that’s quite a question: *What Would the World have been Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned?* It would truly be a different place, we know that. It would be more like what it’s going to be like when Christ returns. So that’s why God did it. He wanted to fellowship with His creation, and He made us in His image for that very purpose.

Now, let’s come to the *Belief’s* booklet with all of that as a background, and let’s read the statement on it and you will see how we’ve written the statement, and of course, how the layout of the whole *Belief’s* booklet follows step-by-step-by-step all the way through to teach: beginning with God down to the end.

Now, I saw a belief's booklet recently where it says all the way through: '**We** believe'—everything that they believe starts out that way—*we believe, we believe, we believe*. Which is okay if it's really true, but what it really should be—anything concerning beliefs—it should show what God wants us to believe and explain what the Bible teaches us. So that's what we've tried to do here with this. Now, it's a very short statement. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 10-11 throughout).

The weekly Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, known as Saturday today.

Now, that has to be clarified—doesn't it? Why does that have to be clarified? How many here have seen a European calendar? The European calendar has Sunday as the seventh day. All business corporations run Sunday as the seventh day. So you see, the whole system is already set up for it. All they need to do is just change the calendar slightly, and of course, if you destroy the knowledge of the background of the truth concerning the Sabbath, then you can come out and say, 'Well look, Sunday is the seventh day.' So it has to be defined carefully. Continuing now in the statement:

In the beginning, the Sabbath was created by God. He blessed and sanctified the seventh day at creation as a special day for rest and fellowship with Him. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation and was made for all mankind. It was the commanded day of weekly worship for 3,000 years before the Ten Commandments were given to Israel.

Now we're going to look at some other Scriptures, which also help define that.

The Fourth Commandment is a reminder to observe and to keep the Sabbath day Holy. As Lord God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ created the Sabbath by resting on the very first seventh day and by blessing and sanctifying it. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ proclaimed that He is Lord of the Sabbath day.... [We'll look at that Scripture in just a minute.] ...During His ministry on earth, He reaffirmed the sacredness of the Sabbath and taught its proper observance. Jesus Christ Himself showed by example that it is right to do good on the Sabbath day, in addition to resting from one's physical labor and secular business. The apostles of Jesus Christ and the early New Testament Church observed the Sabbath and taught Gentile Christians to observe it.

In the series that I'm doing on the Sabbath, I have quotes showing that it was clear up to 300_{A.D.} that the Sabbath was kept. Then the edict of Constantine to shift it over to the Sunday and Constantine was *the beast*. And he is the one who ordered the formation of the Catholic Church by government edict. That's when the order came down to quit keeping the Sabbath—punishable by death. So I have all of that there. The whole history of the Sabbath is one bloody mess—you need to understand that.

The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is a special sign of the Covenant between God and His people. God commands that it be observed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.... [So we have to define that.] ...During this Holy time, Christians are commanded to rest from their labor and to assemble to worship God and to receive instruction from His Word. Observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is essential for salvation and for true fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

That's about as complete a statement as we can have concerning that. Let's look at two things, which are very important we need to understand. Let's go to Exodus 31. Now this is a special covenant. Let's also understand something concerning covenants. All covenants of God have laws and commandments, which must be kept. A covenant is an agreement on how you will do it—or the terms of it—very important to realize concerning a covenant.

Exodus 31:12—and I want you to notice the phraseology that God uses as He tells Moses: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying...' Now, let's understand something here that's very important for those who may not realize it. The Jews do not consist of all the children of Israel. Though the Jews claim that they are. Let me give you an example here:

What if you had eleven brothers, and all the eleven other brothers were not identifiable. Then you and your descendants claim everything that belongs to the eleven other brothers. And you palm yourself off, and your extended family, as all twelve brothers. Not true! There were twelve tribes of Israel, of which the Jews—the tribe of Judah—were one tribe. So this is not talking to Jews, though today, Jews, looking back say it's only talking about them. Not so! It's talking to all the children of Israel, all twelve tribes:

"...saying, 'Truly... [and *verily* means *truly* or *in truth*] ...you shall keep My Sabbaths... [because He owns them.

- It's not a hint.

- It's not a suggestion.
- It is not an idea.
- It's not whether you want to or not.

Now, you can choose, as we saw last time, whether you want to obey God or not—that is true. But if you want to obey God then keeping His Sabbaths is a very important thing. Notice it is also a plural, which when we get to the Holy Days, we'll explain that that also encompasses the Holy Days.] ...for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations... [Now then, 'your generations' covers a long, long time—doesn't it? We're going to see a little later on, He says: 'perpetual covenant.' That's important to understand.] ...to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you"" (vs 13-14). [So in other words, if you don't keep the Sabbath you don't know the Lord. Really! You may know of Him. You may know certain things about Him. But you don't *know* Him! That's why He gave the Sabbaths; *that you may know Him*. And with the Holy Days you may know His plan, through Jesus Christ.

Notice, v 14: ""You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it *is* Holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death... [This is telling us, spiritually, no Sabbath-breaker's going to be in the Kingdom of God—correct? Would have to!] ...for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people."" God does not reach down and kill instantly. And this, to the carnal mind, is deceptive. But it is really a greater punishment...what is one of the greatest punishments you can have in the world and not even know it, and maybe not necessarily even feel any pain right away? What do you suppose the greatest punishment would be? *Rejection; being cut off from God*.

Now, most people out in the world today are out there doing their shopping—correct? They don't know they're cut off from God—do they? They don't even understand that it's part of the punishment; because in that they're having a good time. So you see, being cut off from God has a much different meaning and connotation to it than most people realize. They just don't know. And you've heard it said, 'If you don't know, you don't know that you don't know!' On the other hand, what else do you have? *You have to understand how blessings work*.

Who was the most blessed man to ever walk the face of the earth? *Jesus Christ!* Direct access to God the Father—correct? *Yes!* He was called, 'This is My Son, the beloved'—right? He was called, 'This is My Son, the beloved'—right? *Yes!* Was He always blessed of God? *Yes!* Did He live a miserable life in the flesh? *Yes!* Especially His last three and a half years and crucifixion—no question! So you

have to discern how blessings come. But He did all of it for 'the joy that was set before Him.' That doesn't mean He was happy; because when He was on His way up to Jerusalem, He was distressed. He knew what was going to happen. But He was blessed. So you're right, it's understanding how blessings come. And blessings don't come—like I said in the series on James—they don't come like an ATM machine. You just walk up and put your card in and ching! here it comes. It's totally different.

""Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, Holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant.... [Now, let's look at this statement again, here. Who is the Israel today? *Israel today is the Church*. The spiritual Israel of God is the Church of God today.] ...It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed"" (vs 15-17). So those are some pretty powerful commandments there.

Let's finish this section by going to Mark, the second chapter. Since Jesus Christ is the one Who made the Sabbath, He owns the Sabbath. He was the Lord God of the Old [transcriber's correction] Testament Who became Jesus Christ, the Son of God, of the New Testament. So when He makes this statement here—Mark 2:27: "And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man...'" The Greek there is 'anthropos' which means *mankind*. God made it for all mankind.

Yesterday I had to go shopping. I had to go get some videos and paper—we get it at Costco because we get it there cheaply—and it was jammed; and I couldn't help but think, it really struck home. You know the new scanners they have—boop, boop, boop—and as I was pushing the cart and getting the stuff, all I could hear was boop boop, boop, boop! And I thought, you talk about merchandizing; you talk about making money; and you know, on Saturday, that place is jammed to the gunnels. Just think how much better the whole world would be if they kept the Sabbath in the letter. Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to travel miles and miles to come to church—all we would have to do is walk out the door and go down a couple blocks and there's a church right on the corner. No steeples, no idols, no crosses, no crucifixes. The whole neighborhood is keeping the Sabbath. They almost had that down in Loma Lynda, California; that's a Seventh Day Adventist town—and they actually closed the post office on Saturday and opened it on

Sunday. I didn't know that until I talked to a postal worker who worked down there.

Just think! All the problems that we have in Sabbath-keeping today would be solved—right? *Yes!* So we'll talk about the problems of Sabbath-keeping a little later on. God originally made it for all mankind. And if mankind had the knowledge of God—even in the letter of the law—wouldn't that be a marvelous thing indeed? *Yes, it would!*

“...‘The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath.... [God did not make the Sabbath and then make man? He made man and then made the Sabbath and said, ‘Here’s the Sabbath. Fellowship with Me on this day.’] ...therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath’” (vs 27-28). He is LORD! Now, if anyone professes Him to be Lord, what should they do? They should keep the Sabbath—correct?

Now, we'll finish with this Scripture in Matthew 7:21—very important. We all need to understand this, not only in relationship to the Sabbath, but in relationship to everything concerning God. “Not everyone that says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’... [He said He’s Lord of the Sabbath. So just saying He’s Lord, that’s fine. But that’s not all there is to it.] ...shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but the one who is doing the will of My Father Who is in heaven.”

- What is the will of the Father Who is in heaven?
- Did Jesus Christ always do the will of the Father?
- When He created everything that there is, was it the will of the Father that He did it? *Yes!*
- Was it the will of the Father that He made the Sabbath day and made it Holy? *Yes!*

So therefore, that’s why He is LORD of the Sabbath. And if you say, “Lord, Lord,” and do not practice the will of the Father in heaven above, you’re not with God. You may have part of God. You may have some knowledge of God. You may have some things of truth of God. But you don’t know God, because He created the Sabbath so that you may KNOW Him. That’s the whole reason.

Verse 22: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?.... [Millions of preachers everywhere. Prophesied means just *to speak*.] ...And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness’” (vs 22-23). That is *lawlessness* or

against law.

So if you are against the Sabbath day, are you against a law of God? And if you are against a law of God, are you practicing lawlessness in rejecting the Sabbath?
Yes! Ultimately, yes!

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*
Scriptural References:

- 1) James 2:8-12
- 2) Exodus 20:8-11
- 3) Leviticus 23:1-3
- 4) 1 John 3:1-3
- 5) Genesis 2:1-2
- 6) Exodus 31:12-17
- 7) Mark 2:27-28
- 8) Matthew 7:21-23

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament* by George Ricker Berry
- Sermon: *What Would the World have been Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned?*
- Sermon Series: *James*

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Annual Feasts & Holy Days

Fred R. Coulter—August 22, 1999

What we're going to do, we're going to cover concerning the Holy Days today. And that follows right after the section on the weekly Sabbath, so if you'll turn there, please. Now let's understand something very important: If you had the Bible and Bible only and you were somewhere in the world where you had no influence by any other forces than the Bible; and you wanted to find out what God wanted you to do; and you made up your mind that you would follow whatever you found in the Bible because, as far as you were concerned, the Bible would be the Word of God. In doing that, as we have seen, you would find nowhere that you are to keep the first day of the week Holy—*nowhere!* Likewise, you would not find anywhere where God says that it's all right to keep the pagan holidays. And as a matter of fact, when you fully understand all the holidays that are in this world—according to some information that I just recently received—they are all based around the cycles of six and seven weeks based upon what the occult society, which runs this world, wants us to have.

Now please understand that all occult societies have the inner knowledge—as we covered concerning the depths of Satan the devil. There are two processes:

1. Satan's way, which is the process of *perversion*; where you come to the depths of Satan the devil by step-by-step-by-step, by degree—Rom. 1.
2. Then there is the process of God, which is *conversion*; where step-by-step-by-step you grow in grace and knowledge and understanding with the Holy Spirit of God, in the process found in 2-Peter 1.

And that there are the children of the devil on the one hand, and the children of God on the other hand. So if you are going to be the children of God and follow what is in the Bible, you will not find one word mentioned about keeping things such as Easter or Christmas or any of the other holidays of the world—which are all pagan abominations to God.

Now, let's see that God directly and strongly, with no equivocation, condemns Christmas. If you have a more modern translation, such as the *NIV* or the *New American Standard Version*, those translators deliberately changed and watered-down certain verses and words so that it would not appear that this would be Christmas. Let's understand one thing, very important, before we get into the Holy Days, and that is: ***All the holidays of***

the world are designed to honor Baal, who's Nimrod; Tamuz, who's the illegitimate son of Simaramis; and Simaramis, who is Ishtar or Easter. Everything is based upon that in different degrees. All of the things, even including some which appear to be innocuous holidays of the world—such as Valentine's Day, Groundhog Day, May Day—they are all apart of the occult holidays that have been foisted upon this world by Satan the devil. The two main ones being Christmas and Easter, God roundly and soundly condemns. So before we get to the Holy Days of God, we need to look at the holidays—these two—and see where God condemns them. So if you had the Bible you would also know that you were not to keep Easter and Christmas. It would become very evident.

Jeremiah 10:1—now, there's a whole lot more here that meets the eye if we just read the words and let the words tell us something. "Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel" Now, this is what God is speaking. This is not something that Jeremiah concocted. This is not an idea of his emotion or his own standard of righteousness. All of the prophets—Moses and every one of them did what? What did they do?—God said, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say...' 'Speak to the children of Israel and say...' So these are the words of God. And all the way through the book of Jeremiah what do we have? 'Obey My voice'; 'because you didn't hearken unto My voice.' Go ahead and just read through the book of Jeremiah and you will see how powerful it is. "Thus says the LORD... [So this is God speaking] ...'Do not learn not the way of the heathen...' (v 2). That's a powerful statement—isn't it?

Go to Deuteronomy 12 and let's understand something very important. And we need to realize this especially if you have been in the Church of God and now you're on the verge of keeping Sunday because the church leadership says it's all right to do it and it's all right to keep Easter and Christmas. ***Know that that is the perverted voice of Satan the devil and his doctrine*** by the children of the devil who are tares, who have 'snuck in unawares.' I mean, we just need to label it for what it is. Now, these men can be very intellectual. They can be very charming. They can be very persuasive. But if they speak not the words of God, God didn't send them. That's just what it is. We need to understand it.

Deuteronomy 12:29—God gives a warning: "When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, take heed to

yourself... [watch out; beware] ...that you do not become ensnared... [that is *entrapped* with carnal thinking] ...by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods... [which is the way of the heathen] ...saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?' You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it" (vs 29-32).

Now that's very strong—isn't it? **Very strong!** And it needs to be said, and it needs to be told, that this is the way that it is. Now, Deuteronomy 13:1: "If a prophet rises among you... [that means anyone who's speaking] ...or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder... [people like signs and wonders—don't they? They're intrigued with them—aren't they?] ...and the sign or the wonder which he foretold to you comes to pass, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,'... [There's a little twist that they do to it. They say, 'We're doing this to the Lord—so therefore, it's all right. Christmas is all right because we're doing it for Christ. Easter is all right because we're doing it in remembrance of the resurrection. And besides, it's all for the little kiddies.'] ...you shall not hearken to the words of that prophet... [but people sit around and listen to it] ...or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God *is* testing you" (vs 1-3).

- So, with the Sabbath and Holy Days, are you being *proved*? *Yes!*
- Are these then *test* commandments? *No question about it, if God is proving you!*
- Is that not a test? *Absolutely it is!*

"...to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.... [So there it is, it gets back to loving God—doesn't it? Upon which all His commandments hang—correct? *Yes!*] ...You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death because he has spoken to turn *you* against the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slaves, to thrust you out of the way.... [And again, God's way is **a way** not a religion.] ...in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put the evil away from the midst of you. If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the

wife of your bosom, or your friend who *is* like your own soul, lures you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods'—which you have not known, you nor your fathers, that is, of the gods of the people who *are* around you, near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth—" (vs 3-7). Now, can there be any more inclusive statement than that? I mean, think on that! If we are to 'live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,' as Jesus Christ said, is this not absolute dogmatic statements by God, telling us what we should do? *Yes!*

"You shall not consent to him nor hearken to him. Nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall surely kill him. Your hand shall be first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And you shall stone him with stones so that he dies because he has sought to drive you away from the LORD your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this among you" (vs 8-11).

But did the children of Israel do what God said? Let's go to the book of Judges, chapter two, and let's see. There's certain very key chapters here in the Bible which help us understand what we need to do—and then we'll get back to Jer. 10; because all of this has to do with the instruction given in Jer. 10. Satan makes things look very nice and very quaint, and what he loves more than anything else is to cloak sin in humor; and to cloak sin in doing good—which is the whole basis of what Walt Disney does in all of his occult movies: to entice children into demonism and witchcraft and spiritism. Which, if they don't get into it, then it blocks their minds so that they will not be inclined to follow God's ways. So one way or the other it turns them away from God.

Now, in Judges 2—this is a summary of the whole book of Judges, so it's important to understand. Now, Joshua "...died, being a hundred and ten years old" (v 8) "And they buried him..." (v 9); "And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers..." (v 10)—and this is why all of this goes in cycles in the Church. Here's the reason: "...And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor even the works which He had done for Israel" (v 10).

What happens when that takes place? You have free choice involved. And then you have statements like:

- Well, I don't believe that God would be against something, which is so fun and entertaining.

- I don't believe God would be against our children having fun.
- And after all, a good Easter-egg roll on the White House lawn, sanctioned by the President, is a wonderful event.
- And besides, they get new clothes and we give gifts to them and we are doing good to them. I don't believe God would be against doing good.

Now that's the carnal reasoning that takes place, because they look out and see all the people around them whom they didn't conquer the way that they should have, doing all of these things. And they say, 'My, isn't that quaint and nice?' And they see them enjoying themselves. And they see them relatively happy; *because God is not judging them at this particular time*. And they should have judged them and eliminated them from the land, but did not do it.

So they didn't know the Lord. Then what happened? Verse 11: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served Baalim"—who is the sun-god. And everything wraps around that, with Nimrod and Tamuz and Simaramis and all the host of the names that they are called in all of the religions of the world. And every one of the religions of the world, which God said that are 'upon the whole face of the earth, near and far' we are not to get involved in—didn't He? *Yes!* They all go back to it. And the deeper you go into these things, the deeper you go into the depths of Satan the devil.

Now, notice what happens: "...served Baalim.... [that is various forms of the sun-god. Notice the 'im' at the end of the word—that means plural in English: Baals—different aspects of it.] ...And they forsook... [because you can't serve two masters—isn't that what Jesus said? You either 'love one and hate the other; hold to one, despise the other; no man can serve two masters; no man can serve God and mammon.' And the religions of the world are mammon; physical things.] ...they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they followed other gods... [Now, what does it mean to follow other gods? *That means to walk in the way of their religious practices*; to worship them; to serve them; to observe their days; to follow their customs; to adhere to their traditions—yes!] ... and bowed themselves to them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (vs 11-13). Now Ashtaroth is just another word for Ishtar or Easter or the Queen of Heaven.

"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of spoilers..." (v 14). Now I'm going to say right

here, if the anger of the Lord is not hot against this country, it's soon coming! *It is soon coming!* Because not only is President Clinton being judged, the whole country is being judged on their level of morality as well. No doubt about it. And I don't know what God uses for a barometer, but I do know this: the first barometer He uses is His Church. And if His Church is going back into the world, which it is; and if His Church is going back to these pagan holidays, which they are; then God's anger is going to wax hot not only against the nation—*but us!* You need to understand that. This is something that is really a very important thing.

So they spoiled them and "And He sold them into the hand of their enemies all around, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless... [Because God is merciful] ...the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who spoiled them. And yet they would not listen to their judges, but they went lusting after other gods, and bowed themselves to them. They turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, for they had obeyed the commandments of the LORD; these however did not do so. And when the LORD raised judges up for them, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge, for the LORD took pity because of their groanings by reason of their oppressors and their crushers. And it came to pass when the judge was dead, they returned and made themselves more corrupt than their fathers in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way" (vs 14-19).

Now, those are pretty strong words. But I tell you what: Do not these words apply if you go up against Sunday-keeper? You want to find out rebellion real quickly? You want to find out stiff-neckness real quickly from very nice, upstanding people in this society? You start stepping on their toes concerning Sunday and holidays and clean and unclean meats and illicit sex. You're going to hear them squeal and howl and condemn. Even a sinner can be nice and patient and seemingly kind if no pressure is put upon him. And one of things that psychologists have learned is that serial killers, when you go talk to them in prison, are very nice people. But that doesn't remove the fact that they are habitually addicted to killing. So we have the same thing here.

Now, let's come back to Jeremiah 10:2—we didn't get very far in it, but I want you to understand

what it's talking about here. "...Do not learn the way of the heathen, and do not be terrified at the signs of the heavens... [Because every one of the holidays of the world are based upon a sign, zodiac, in the heaven—correct? Easter is; summer solstice; fall equinox; winter solstice—correct? And so are all the other so-called minor holidays based upon a seven and six-week cycle within a thirteen-week quarter.] (So He says) ...for the nations are terrified at them. For the customs of the people *are* vain; for one cuts a tree out of the forest with the axe..." (vs 2-3). Well today you can put in *chainsaw*.

Now what do we have all around the United States? *Christmas tree farms*—right? Don't we? Where you can go, take your axe or your chainsaw, and go cut down your own tree. "They adorn it with silver and gold... [and all of this has occult meaning to it; with the colors.] ...they fasten it with nails and hammers, so that it will not move.... [In other words, so it won't fall down, that's what it's talking about.] ...They upright like the palm tree... [now where they didn't have the evergreen tree, they took a small palm tree; did the same thing.] ...but cannot speak. They must surely be carried because they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them; for they cannot do evil..." (vs 4-5).

And you see, that is the thing that most people now miss concerning Christmas, which is, if you did not have a Christmas tree, and if you did not decorate it with the specified sexual ornaments on it and the lights and the candles reflecting worship to the sun, you would be cursed. So this is what it's talking about. It doesn't mean it's a harmless thing, that because He says don't be dismayed at it. What he's saying is: in not practicing this, you are not going to be cursed—now, that's what He's saying, because people are superstitious. That's why there are rabbit's feet; that's why there are good-luck charms—that's what He's talking about here.

"...nor good, for it is not in them" (v 5). So it's not going to make you good before God if you do it in any way. And some people look at that and say, 'See, can't do evil; also can't do good.' But what did God say at the top here: 'Learn not the way of the heathen.' So He's saying very clearly, do not do that.

Let's look at the spring festival which most people have—Ezk. 8 & Jer. 7. Now, let's go to Jeremiah 7. Both of these are prophets sent by God to warn them to repent, otherwise they're going into captivity—correct? Why were they going into captivity? Let's see what God condemns. So it is true, God does talk about Christmas and Easter in the Bible. So if anyone says to you the Bible says nothing about it, why you can show them that God says plenty about it. Very important to understand.

And with that is connected Sunday, because Sunday is the day of the sun—all comes together.

Now, here's how bad it got—Jeremiah 7:16: "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up cry nor prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you." Now that's really bad— isn't it? Go back here to Jeremiah 5, just to show you that God is merciful and kind; and God is ready to forgive. So when God makes that statement that you're not to pray, because 'I'm not going to listen to you'—there is a reason for that happening. And one day that's going to happen to the United States. And one day what has happened here in the warnings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Isaiah are going to take place here.

Jeremiah 5:1: "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in her open places, if you can find a man... [one person; one single, solitary person] ...if there is one who does justice, who seeks the Truth; and I will pardon her." He said, 'I will pardon the whole nation of Judah and all of Jerusalem if you can find one man. Now was God fair in what He did then? *No question about it!* They were so corrupt that He could not find one man.

Now let's think about that in relationship to the Church. Why it's so important that we really understand the absolute necessity of the Sabbath and the Holy Days, and the reason for it. Very profound! The most important things that we do. He says, "I will pardon her. And though they say, 'As the LORD lives'; surely they swear falsely.' O LORD, *are* not Your eyes on the Truth? You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; You have destroyed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return" (vs 1-3).

Now, let's come back to Jeremiah 7—right after he was standing right there in the temple of God; that was quite a job that he had to do. Jeremiah had to stand right in the temple of God and condemn them for all the pagan practices which they were doing in the temple of God. Right in the temple of God they were burning incense to Baal; and lying and cheating, committing adultery, murdering and swearing falsely. That's why He said, 'Don't pray for these people.' Then what did they do—right after he got done doing that? So this was right at the time of Easter that he did it. Because it says:

Jeremiah 7:17: "'Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven [Ishtar]..." (vs 17-18). A family affair. 'Why, we're all enjoying

this. Everyone is having fun.’ These are what are traditionally called *hot-cross buns*. And the cross on it is to Baal.

“...and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. Do they provoke Me to anger?’ says the LORD. ‘Do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?’ Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, My anger and My fury shall be poured out on this place, on man, and on beast, and on the trees of the field, and on the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be put out.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Add your burnt offerings... [Not God’s—*theirs*. Who are they offering the offerings to? *Baal and Ashtoreth*.] ... to your sacrifices, and eat flesh.... [Now, He’s being cynical and mocking them.] ...For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.... [is the whole flow of the story; because He did His burnt offerings and sacrifices—He spoke to them about it.] ...But this thing I commanded them, saying, “Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, so that it may be well with you”’” (vs 18-23). And this is what God wants for all of us.

“But they did not obey, nor bow their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels, in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. 25. Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them, yet they did not hearken to Me, nor bow down their ear, but hardened their neck. They did worse than their fathers”” (vs 24-26).

Now, let’s come over here to Ezekiel 8 and let’s see what they did here. Now the reason I’m covering this first is so that we will know that the Scriptures do talk about these days—of the holidays of the world—in condemning them. It’s one thing to point out why we need to keep the Holy Days and why they are good for us—which we will in just a little bit here—but it’s also another thing to understand that God roundly, soundly, totally and absolutely condemns these holidays of the world.

Then if we understand that, and if we have the conviction of it—so that we can also teach other people who are now wavering, who now have been dumbed-down and Christmas looks appealing and Easter looks fun. Well, if you put a Christian label on it, it’s okay. You can take a bull and you can put a label on it and you can say that this is a goat. The label doesn’t change the reality of thing. It is still a bull. So likewise with the holidays of the world. You

can attach the name of Christ to it, but it doesn’t make it Christian. It is still pagan. This is so important for us to understand. Now let’s see what he talks about here.

Ezekiel 8:3: “And He put out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head. And the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the opening of the inner gate facing north, where there *was* a seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy?.... [Where does God say He’s jealous? Which commandment? *Second commandment*—having to do with idolatry. So this is talking about an idol. We’re going to see, right in the temple of God—the inner gate.] ...And, behold! The glory of the God of Israel *was* there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, lift up your eyes now to the way of the north.’.... [look toward the north] ...So I lifted up my eyes toward the way of the north, and behold, northward at the gate of the altar the image of jealousy *was* at the entrance” (vs 3-5). Now, what was this? *This was an idol to Baal; to Nimrod*—right in the temple of God!

“And He said to me, ‘Son of man, do you see what they do; even the great abominations which the house of Israel is doing here, that I should go far off from My sanctuary?.... [Vital lesson to learn, very important lesson to learn: If you get involved in these holidays of the world, God goes from you. Isn’t that what He said? *No question about it!*] ...But turn again, *and* you shall see greater abominations.’ And He brought me to the opening of the court.... [right in where the priests should be] ...and I looked, and behold, a hole in the wall. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, dig in the wall now.’ And I dug in the wall, and, behold, an opening” (vs 6-8). This is symbolic of the secret societies of Masonry, of Illuminatism, of secret worship of other gods, Rosicrucianism—all of that.

“And he said to me. ‘Go in and see the evil abominations that they do here.’ And I went in and saw. And behold, every kind of creeping thing, and hateful beast, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were carved on the wall all around.... [It’s like walking into an Elks lodge or a Masonic lodge, or a Knights of Columbus lodge.] ...And seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel.... [the leaders in the community. Do we not have the same thing today? *No question about it!*] ...and Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, standing in front them, these were before them, and each man with his censor in his hand. And the sweet smelling cloud of incense was rising. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, each man in his room of idols?.... [and they always do these

things in the dark—don't they?] ...For they are saying, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the earth'.... [it's okay to do these things] ...He also said to me, 'You shall see greater abominations that they are committing.' And He brought me to the opening of the gate of the LORD'S house, toward the north. And behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz" (vs 9-14)—the son of Nimrod, the supposed incarnation of Nimrod, come back to life in an evergreen tree.

"And He said to me, 'Have you seen this, O son of man? You shall see greater abominations than these.' And He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house.... [This is just like talking about the Worldwide Church of God today, brethren, because that's where it happened—at the inner top of the leadership.] ...and behold, at the opening of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men... [yes, the core of the cadre of those who are the leaders—correct?] ...with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east'" (vs 15-16). And that's what Sunday-worship is all about.

"And He said to me, 'Have you seen, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they do the hateful things which they do here? For they have filled the land with violence and have turned to provoke Me to anger still more. And lo, they put the branch to their nose.... [Now, what is that? *That is the branch of the oak tree, symbolizing Adonis, who is Tamuz and their religion.* And they are sticking it up in the nose of God saying, 'God, You must accept these abominable forms of worship because we're doing this at your temple.' That's what it's talking about. Another part of the branch is *the cross*, which is upon every church.] ... Therefore I will also deal with fury; My eye shall not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in My ears *with* a loud voice, I will not hear them'" (v 18).

So we've seen very resoundingly what God thinks of the pagan holidays of this world. And they are of the system of Satan the devil. And it does not matter what kind of label they put on it. It doesn't matter how nice a songs that they sing on it. And one thing I'm happy about. God made sure that *The Messiah* is sung every Christmas—which is kind of like the strong man coming into Satan's house and making the Gospel be preached to them every Christmas when they are worshipping Baal, Christ is preached to them, hopefully that they may repent. It's not a thing to bolster that what they're doing is good; ***this is a witness against them!***

Now, let's come to *The Annual Feasts and Holy Days*; let's just read the statement, then we'll

go through the Scriptures. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 11-12)

The Scriptures teach that there are seven annual Feasts and Holy Days which were ordained by God to be observed as special commanded convocations. These Feasts and Holy Days portray God's plan of salvation for mankind. The observance of these Holy convocations is a sign between God and His people. God's annual Feasts and Holy Days were observed by His people during Old Testament times. In the New Testament, we find that Jesus Christ's entire ministry was centered around the spiritual meaning of these Holy Days.... [And we will see that.] ...The New Testament apostolic church faithfully observed these annual Feasts and Holy Days.... [Which we'll cover today.] ...The Scriptures reveal that they will be observed by all mankind after the return of Jesus Christ.

As the Holy Days are annual Sabbath days, they may fall on any day of the week (except Pentecost, which always falls on a Sunday). When a Holy Day falls on a weekly Sabbath, the special observance of the annual Holy Day takes precedence. God's Feasts and Holy Days are to be observed from sunset to sunset in accordance with the calculated Hebrew Calendar as preserved by the Levitical Jews. The seven annual Feasts and Holy Days are as follows:

- 1) Passover
- 2) Unleavened Bread
- 3) Pentecost
- 4) Trumpets
- 5) Atonement
- 6) Tabernacles
- 7) Last Great Day

Now, let's look at some Scriptures concerning it; so we're going to go from Old Testament to New Testament; but first of all we need to review Exodus 31—this becomes very important because this is a profound Scripture. And this is something we need to understand very thoroughly, because if anyone comes to you and says that the Holy Days were just ritual days and when God superceded the rituals by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, He did away with these days. What is your answer? First of all, the answer should be this: *No Holy Day is a ritual day.* In other words, the day itself is not a ritual, which can come and go with a covenant. It is a day, but on which with the Old Covenant there were rituals attached to it. In the

New Testament, it is a day—as we will see being the weekly Sabbath or an annual Holy Day—as to which there is worshipping God “in spirit and in truth” intrinsic to keeping of the day; because the day is a day separate from a ritual that was done under the Old Covenant or worshipping God in spirit and truth in the New Covenant. That’s important to understand. And it’s also important to understand: Exodus 31—now, we covered this last time, but I want to review it again because it’s very important; because we need to understand that this is a *special covenant* in addition to the covenant given at Sinai; because the covenant given at Sinai was sealed in Exo. 24.

Now we come to Exodus 31:12, and we have something special in addition to it. “And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, “Truly you shall keep My **Sabbaths**...”’” (vs 12-13)—plural—and every Seventh Day Adventist better read that and understand that they are also under obligation to keep the Holy Days. And every Church of God Seventh Day needs to read that so that they know that they are under obligation to keep the Sabbaths of God. We’ll see in Lev. 23, every one of these days are called Sabbaths. So if you keep one, then you must keep the others.

““Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths...”” (v 13). Now let’s ask the question: How many times must God say something for it to be something we need to do? *Just once!* That’s quite sufficient—isn’t it? Let’s ask the question another way: If you don’t think it’s sufficient, then are you saying that God spoke in vain? Are you accusing God of saying something He didn’t mean? And if you’re accusing God of saying something He didn’t mean, then what you’re doing, you’re calling God a liar! Sometimes we need to get it down to these real black and white issues to understand it just the way it really is. I realize that I’m ‘preaching to the choir’ here. You all believe this! But how many people did we suppose at one time believed it like we do—*and no longer believe it?* So it’s important.

So God says, “Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, for **it**... [that is *the keeping*] ...is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations...” (v 13). Now why is it *the keeping*, because you can have these days listed on your calendar, but if you don’t keep them, that is ‘it’ *the keeping of them* is a sign—then it means nothing to you.

Now notice: “...between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you” (v 13). That is *set you aside and make you Holy*. Now, when you apply that to the New Testament, which we will do a little later

on, you are going to see that we are called ‘Holy saints.’ We have been sanctified—correct? *Yes!* Sanctified

- by the Spirit of God
- by the love of God
- by the commandments of God
- by the way of God

—all of it together through God’s grace and mercy and love.

Verse 14: “You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it *is* Holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done... [He’s talking about the weekly Sabbath; and why does He talk about it here? *Because the weekly Sabbath comes every seventh day*; whereas, the annual Sabbaths come once seven times in a year—but He starts out with Sabbaths (plural).] ... but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, Holy to the LORD.... [Because God, as we saw with the weekly Sabbath, put His special presence in that day. And that’s really something!] ...Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death” (vs 14-15). New Testament doctrine: Romans 6:23: “Wages of sin is death.”

“Therefore, the children of Israel... [Now what is the Church? *The Church is spiritual Israel*—correct? *Yes!*] ...shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant” (v 16). This is a special perpetual covenant that did not end with the death of Jesus Christ. That is important to understand. The death of Jesus Christ ended the covenant with the tabernacle and the temple so that we could have a greater tabernacle, a greater temple, a greater way of worshipping God—*in spirit and in truth*—on the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days. So this is special. Now, ‘perpetual’ means *perpetual*, where you have the word ‘forever’; ‘forever’ means *as long as the circumstances are there*. That’s why God could change the covenants with the death of Christ; but this is perpetual. It doesn’t say forever. This is a covenant.

Now, let’s understand one thing: Whenever you have a covenant made, a covenant is binding unto death. This special covenant then was given so that all the people of God would know through all generations, because we have the Old and New Testament—correct? That we are to perpetually keep these things, and it is a perpetual covenant. “It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed” (v 17). So we need to rehearse that and know that.

Now, let's understand some things which are very important for us to realize. We'll come to some things in the New Testament here in just a bit. Let's just rehearse something: Gen. 2: God made the Sabbath. He blessed it. He sanctified it. He made it Holy.

Now, let's go to Leviticus 23—we're going to review these, but we're coming down to the time of the Holy Days in the fall season, so I'm spending a little extra time on it here. We will see the same pattern that we have here, that God has all the way through. Leviticus 23:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "*Concerning* the appointed Feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* Holy convocations, even these are **My appointed Feasts**"' (vs 1-2). I want you to understand, God owns them. He created them. He made them special time. And again, let's understand something very clearly, if you only had the Bible what days would you come up with? You would know for sure:

1. all the pagan days are wrong—right? That's why I covered it first
2. now you know which days He says

Verse 3: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation.... [that means an appointed time—and God made the appointment.] ...You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings." Then He talks about the annual Holy Days. Notice the Sabbath then is the overarching sanctification for all of the Holy Days—correct? *Yes, He starts out there.* Now when we come to the annual Holy Days, what is the overarching connection that binds all the Holy Days together? *With the weekly Sabbath.*

"These *are* the appointed Feasts of the LORD, Holy convocations..." (v 4)—appointed times—'Holy [convocations]' means you are to come together. That's why we are to assemble on the Sabbath. That's why we are to assemble on the Holy Days. And there is a responsibility not only to assemble, but there's also a responsibility for those who are teaching to preach the Word in season, out of season and to teach the people of God how to love God and serve Him. That's what these are for. If we go six days during the week, that's about all we can go until we need to be re-connected with God again in a profound way with the Sabbath. There have probably been times when you have not assembled on the Sabbath, and if you didn't do something special at home, I don't know about you, but I know an occasion or two I have done that and figured I have worked hard and I've done a lot of things and I'm just going to rest—it was a lousy day. So that's

why God wants us to get together. That's why our relationship to each other is a created relationship through Jesus Christ—that we love one another and fellowship with one another; because we're fellowshiping with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Now, back here to v 4: "These *are* the appointed Feasts of the LORD... [Again, noting ownership] ...Holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons." Now does He say, 'These are Holy convocations, which *if you want* to proclaim, you may; which, if you feel that you are good before the Lord and you want to do what is extra, then you do this'? That kind of thinking is from Satan the devil. And that's how they shifted people from Sabbath to Sunday. I mean, it's very profound how it is done. It is very slick in the maneuvering that is done.

"...in their appointed seasons. In the fourteenth *day* of the first month, between the two evenings, is the LORD'S Passover" (v 5). It starts out with the Passover and the Passover then is the overarching thing which then renews the covenant and then all the other Holy Days flow from that:

- first and last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Wave Sheaf Offering Day
- Pentecost
- Trumpets
- Atonement
- Tabernacles
- The Last Great Day

They're all there for us.

Now, let's come to v 37 and let's read this and we will show that all these days are Sabbath days. "These *are* the Feasts of the LORD... [which is a summary of what He's just given them] ...which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything on its day; besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD" (vs 37-38). So all these days are called *Sabbath days*—every single one of them.

Now, let's look at what happened here. We will take two instances where when the children of Israel had gone after Baal and Ashtoreth, what they did to come back to God. Let's go to the book of 2-Chronicles, and so if you have drifted from God and you want to get back to God, we should follow the same example here in principle and do the same thing. Let's come to 2-Chronicles 30—Hezekiah was king. Israel and Judah had given themselves

over to all kinds of paganism and Baal worship, even into the temple of the Lord. So what he did then, he commanded that the temple be cleansed. And so, they had the temple cleansed, but it was not in time for the Passover in the first month, because they did not get it done until the sixteenth day of the first month. So they decided that they would keep it in the second month, according to the command of God as found in Num. 9. So they returned to God. God shows this as a great return.

So he sent out letters, 2-Chronicles 30:8: “And do not be stiff-necked like your fathers *were*, *but* yield yourselves to the LORD and enter into His sanctuary which He has sanctified forever. And serve the LORD your God so that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you... [Now, we can apply this today for you, if you’ve drifted from God.] ...For if you turn again to the LORD, your brethren and your children *shall find* compassion before those who lead them captive so that they shall come again into this land.... [By this time, part of the northern ten tribes had gone away into captivity. So he’s saying if we really repent maybe God will bring them back.] ...for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him” (vs 8-9). So they sent it out.

Now let’s pick it up here in v 13: “And many people gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened *Bread* in the second month, a very great congregation. And they arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense *to other gods* they took away, and cast *them* into the Brook Kidron.... [That is all the false, pagan, idolatress things that they had even at the temple. So there was a great purging of the land.] ...And they killed the Passover, on the fourteenth *day* of the second month. And the priests and the Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings” (vs 13-15) and so forth. Then it shows what they did there.

Let’s come over here to v 21: “And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day with loud instruments to the LORD.... (v 23): And the whole assembly took counsel to keep another seven days. And they kept *another* seven days with gladness.” Then they went out with great fury—*great fury!* Then they had an idol-destroying party. They went out and tore down every idol, as we find here in the last part of chapters 30 & 31.

Now let’s come to 2-Chronicles 34 ^[corrected], and we will see here the other great revival. Didn’t

last long. You can read the story. As I mentioned before, there is the cycle that Israel went through in all of this because they didn’t believe God. This has to do with Josiah. And Josiah was a man who was after God’s heart and who was tenderhearted. Perhaps one of the most converted of all of the kings of Israel. So what happened here? We need to understand what it was that he did. Now notice, when there is a repentance and a return to God it always comes back to keeping the Passover and the Holy Days and the Sabbath—every instance! Here’s the message that Huldah, the prophetess, gave him:

2-Chronicles 34:26: “And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall you say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words you have heard, “Because your heart *was* tender and you humbled yourself before your God when you heard His words against this place and against its people, and humbled yourself before Me, and tore your clothes and wept before Me, I have even heard *you* also,” says the LORD. “Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, nor shall your eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and upon its people.”’ And they brought the king word again. And the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people from the great to *the* small. And he read in their ears all the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the house of the LORD” (vs 26-30). They had so much paganism that they even lost the Word of God.

“And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD to walk after the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all who were found in Jerusalem and in Benjamin, and the people of Jerusalem, to stand *to it* according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.... [So here again, they had a great revival. And, brethren, we need a great revival in the Church of God, for people come back to God through the Passover and Holy Days and Sabbath, again.] ...And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the territories that *belonged* to the children of Israel. And he made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD, the God of their fathers” (vs 31-33).

Well, we’ll make a long story short—2-Chronicles 35:1: “And Josiah kept a Passover to the

LORD in Jerusalem. And they killed the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month.” This revival was so great that when I read this I think, my, wouldn’t this be a wonderful thing for the Church of God if something like this could happen. If God could stir up the spirit of the people who have strayed, lead them back to Him. Verse 18: “And there was no Passover like that kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. Yea, none of the kings of Israel kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the people of Jerusalem.”

Then we come into the time of Ezra, and they kept the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread there. And always it’s a return to God. Now, let’s go to the New Testament and let’s understand some things in the New Testament, which are very important for us to realize. Let’s come to Mark 2. Let’s understand a false argument of all of those who are against the Holy Days and Sabbath-keeping. And that false argument is this: ‘If it is not restated in the New Testament you don’t have to do it.’ Now how do you answer that statement? But it is written, it is written if you understand. Not only by their actions, but it is stated. So hold your place here in Mark 2 and let’s go to Matthew 4—here’s how to answer it. Did Jesus restate it? *Yes!*

Matthew 4:4: “But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God.”’” That restates what? *Everything!* Correct? Does that include the Sabbath and Holy Days? *No doubt! No question!*

Now come over here to Matthew 5:17 and He restated it again, in no uncertain terms. “Do not think... [What does that mean? What does ‘think not’ really mean? It means *don’t let it enter into your beady, little brain!* That’s what it means. *Don’t think it, let alone, act upon it—correct?*] ...Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.... [which means *to bring it to the full*. Going to fulfill the prophecies concerning Himself and bring the law to the full. That’s what Matt. 5, 6, 7 is all about. To fill the law full with the spiritual requirements from the heart, not just in the letter. Now this is important for us to understand.] ...For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away... [You can’t get a greater witness than this—no one can miss this—because if heaven and earth are not here, *you’re not here!* Is that true? *No doubt about it.* So this is a tremendous witness.] ...one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled”(vs 17-18).

Now what is one Scripture that is going to be fulfilled concerning the Sabbath and Holy Days? ‘And it shall come to pass, from one Sabbath to another Sabbath, and from one New Moon to another Moon, **all flesh shall come before Me and worship Me!**’ That hasn’t been fulfilled, yet—has it? *No!* Now, again, if you think you can get away with breaking the commandments of God and say God didn’t mean what He said; and the most ridiculous statement (which we’ll cover a little later when I do the other one on the Sabbath commandment) is that ‘Christ is our rest so He fulfilled it for us.’ Which is a lying, satanic statement! He didn’t fulfill anything for us. He made it so, with His Holy Spirit, we could fulfill *by keeping; by loving*.

Now notice v 19: “Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments... [Now what is the *least* commandment? *Any commandment you think you don’t have to do because you hold it in less esteem.*] ...and shall teach men so.... [So they go out and teach them—don’t they? *Yes!*] ...shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”(vs 19-20). Did the scribes and Pharisees observe the Sabbath and Holy Days? *No question about it.* But they did not do it in ‘spirit and truth.’ So therefore, if you observe it in ‘spirit and truth’ then your righteousness will exceed the scribes and Pharisees. If you’re truly, honestly look at the Bible, there is no place anywhere where it gives any sanctification of doing away with the Sabbath and Holy Days of God.

Now, let’s come to Mark ^[corrected] 2:27—and while we’re turning there, let’s remember what we learned in Lev. 23: what sanctifies the overarching thing of all the Holy Days. Here is a dogmatic statement, which applies to the Sabbath and the Holy Days, because all the Holy Days are Sabbaths. Mark 2:27: “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath... [Because man was created first and then the Sabbath, so he could first of all fellowship with God, the very first thing after he was created.] ...therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (vs 27-28)—which is telling us what? *That it is a LIE to say that Sunday is the Lord’s day.* Because Jesus did not say so. Men have said so. Jesus said He’s Lord of the Sabbath day. No question about it!

Now, is anyone in the mood to argue with God or Christ? Some people are. ‘Well, I believe...’ ‘Well, I think...’ ‘Well, it seems to me...’ **“There is**

a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.” and **“The wages of sin is death.”**

Now, let’s go the book of John and let’s see that John wrote everything that he had here, concerning the life of Christ, around the Holy days. John 2:13: “Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.... [and what did He do? *He got rid of sin.* Leaven is what? *Type of sin!* So He cleansed the temple, didn’t He; and He kept the Feast day.] (v 23): ...Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the Feast, many believed on His name, as they observed the miracles that He was doing.”

And let’s understand something very profound; another lie that needs to be exposed: ***Jesus was not under the Old Covenant when He was doing His ministry. He was under the standard of the New Covenant for the spiritual-keeping of God’s ways.*** So a lot of people say, ‘Well, Jesus did it because He was under the Old Covenant.’ That is a satanic lie! That is not true!

Let’s come over here to John 4:34—this is not a direct statement concerning the Holy Days. But it is alluding to the harvest of the firstfruits when “Jesus said to them, ‘My meat is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do not say that there are yet four months, and *then* the harvest comes.... [Now what is four months away from Pentecost? *The fall harvest!*] ...I say to you, look around. Lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are already white to harvest” (vs 34-35). And then He talks about reaping, and so forth.

Let’s come to John 5:1. While chapter five does not define exactly which Feast this is, in following the chronology, this is probably referring to the Feast of Trumpets. “After these things *there* was a Feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” And then He healed a man on the Sabbath day, which is a Holy Day. So here in the New Testament it shows that the Holy Days are also called *Sabbaths*—no doubt about it.

Let’s come to John 6:4: “Now the Passover, a Feast of the Jews, was near.” And what did He teach us in chapter six? *He taught us about His body and His blood*—which are part of what? *Keeping the Passover.*

Let’s come to John 7:2—since this is a survey, we’ll do it as quickly as we can. “Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was near.” He didn’t go up with the brethren, but He went up as soon as they left; because He went up secretly. And He kept the Feast of Tabernacles and preached at it. Kept the Last Great Day—v 37: “Now in the last day, the great *day* of the Feast...”

John 10:22: “Now it was winter, and the Feast of Dedication was taking place at Jerusalem.” Now, some people today, even one of the Churches of God, has said it’s okay to keep Hanukkah. But this Feast of Dedication could also go back to the time of the dedication of Ezra’s feast, which was in the month Adar, before the Passover, which was in winter. So we don’t know that this was the Feast of the Dedication, which later became to be known as Hanukkah, or the one of the dedication of Ezra. And besides, it doesn’t show that he was doing any worshipping there, he was just there and witnessed against the Jews. Nowhere does it say Jesus kept Hanukkah.

Now let’s come to John 11:55: “Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up out of the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, so that they might purify themselves.”

John 12:1: “Now six days before the Passover...”

John 13:1: “Now before the Feast of the Passover, knowing that His time had come to depart from this world to the Father...”

John 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17 have to do with all the words of the covenant of the Passover for the New Testament Passover.

Now, let’s come to the book of Acts 2:1—the day of Pentecost. This is New Testament. You cannot get anymore New Testament than this—correct? Because they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost—correct? “And when the day *of Pentecost*, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled... [that’s what it should read] ...they were all with one accord in the same place” And you can read the rest of it. God sent His Holy Spirit to be with them.

Acts 12:3-4—speaking of Herod: “And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (Now those were *the* days of Unleavened Bread.) And after arresting him, he put *him* in prison, delivering *him* to four sets of four soldiers to guard him with the intent of bringing him out to the people after the Passover *season*”—the Greek is Pascha, Passover. So what days were they keeping? How were they calculating the time?

Let’s go to Acts 18:21: “But took leave of them, saying, ‘I must by all means keep the Feast that is coming at Jerusalem;’...” Because with going to Jerusalem, you might as well go there for the Feast. It doesn’t mean that that’s the only time the Feast should be kept.

Let’s come to Acts 20:6 and see: “But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread; and in five days we came to

them at Troas, where we stayed *for* seven days.” So you’ve got the Feast of Unleavened Bread, then you’ve got the days in between, then you come to a regular Sabbath, and then on the first day of the week He was speaking and left—*has nothing to do with Sunday-keeping*.

Let’s continue; let’s come to Acts 24:14—remember, this is the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. “But I confess to you that according to the way which they call heresy, so I serve the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets.” Now where are the Sabbath and Holy Days? *In the law and in the prophets*—correct? Did he believe it? *Yes!* Did He keep it? *Yes!*

Let’s come to 1-Corinthians 5:7—and this is a real clincher: “Therefore, purge out the old leaven, so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are unleavened. For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.... [So the very fulfilling of Christ’s sacrifice—He is our Passover.] ...For this reason, let us keep the Feast...” (vs 7-8). Now, there’s a direct command to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread to New Testament Gentile Christians. Couldn’t be any more plain. He didn’t say, ‘Let us keep Easter.’

Now there are other Scriptures we could add to it. Let me recommend you write in for our series on the book of Colossians, which covers in detail Colossians, the second chapter.

So, this shows Old Testament/New Testament that God condemns the holidays of the world and upholds all of His Holy Days.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Jeremiah 10:1-2
- 2) Deuteronomy 12:29-32
- 3) Deuteronomy 13:1-11
- 4) Judges 2:8-19
- 5) Jeremiah 10:2-5
- 6) Jeremiah 7:16
- 7) Jeremiah 5:1-3
- 8) Jeremiah 7:17-26
- 9) Ezekiel 8:3-18
- 10) Exodus 31:12-17
- 11) Leviticus 23:1-5, 37-38
- 12) 2 Chronicles 30:8-9, 13-15, 21, 23
- 13) 2-Chronicles 34:26-33
- 14) 2-Chronicles 35:1, 18
- 15) Matthew 4:4
- 16) Matthew 5:17-20
- 17) Mark 2:27-28
- 18) John 2:13, 23
- 19) John 4:34-35
- 20) John 5:1

- 21) John 6:4
- 22) John 7:2, 37
- 23) John 10:22
- 24) John 11:55
- 25) John 12:1
- 26) John 13:1
- 27) Acts 2:1
- 28) Acts 12:3-4
- 29) Acts 18:21
- 30) Acts 20:6
- 31) Acts 24:14
- 32) 1-Corinthians 5:7-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 1
- 2 Peter 1
- Exodus 24
- Romans 6:23
- Genesis 2
- Numbers 9
- Matthew 5, 6, 7
- John 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17

Also referenced:

- Sermon series: *Book of Colossians*

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Sin

Fred R. Coulter—April 23, 1999

Now let's turn to the section *Sin* and let's read that. And I think that you will find that this is quite an accurate definition here. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs as-13).

Sin is the transgression of the Holy laws and commandments of God, whether in the letter or the spirit of the law. Therefore, sin is lawlessness or anti-law. Sin is also a defilement of one's conscience. When a person knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin. The ultimate penalty for sin is eternal death. Upon deep and sincere repentance toward God, one's sins can be forgiven by faith in the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the payment of those sins through the mercy of God the Father. The only unpardonable sin is persistent, knowledgeable and willful transgression of the commandments and laws of God. This sin cannot be forgiven because it is willful rejection of God's salvation, willful rejection of and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God the Father, and despising the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as an unholy thing. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the sin of condemning the works of God the Father, accomplished through the power of His Holy Spirit, and attributing such works to Satan the devil. When a person has committed the unpardonable sin, his or her conscience is seared with a hot iron, and it is impossible to be convicted by the Holy Spirit and be led to repentance. God's judgment for the unpardonable sin is the second death, or eternal death, from which there is no resurrection.

Now in the New Testament, I think you'll find it very interesting. All sin is not necessarily 'a sin unto death.' Now, we'll cover that in the Scripture in 1-John, the fifth chapter, in just a minute. But here are the different words which are used from the New Testament Greek to define sin:

1. hamartia—that means *missing the mark*; and if you had a target, instead of missing the bulls-eye you would hit the outer rim. You have *missed the mark*. When applied to moral things, the idea is similar, it is missing the true end or purpose of life and so it used as a general term for sin. It means both the *act* of sinning and the *result*—the sin itself.

2. hamartema—meaning *only the sin itself*; not the act. It is a particular manifestation as separate deeds of disobedience to a Divine law.
3. asebeia—which is *ungodliness*; which means *a condition of direct opposition to God*.
4. anomia—here is the one used to define *sin*—which is *lawlessness*. A contempt of law; a condition or action not simply without law, as the etymology might indicate, but it means *contrary to law*. This is the word used 'anomia' in 1-John 3:4: "Sin is lawlessness"—contrary to law. The law is usually, by implication, the Mosaic law; but also can mean *the commandments of Christ*, as well.
5. paranomia—that only occurs once and it's equivalent to 'anomia'
6. parabasis—which is *transgression*—the passing beyond some assigned limit. It is the breaking of a distinctly recognized command. It consequently means *more than* 'hamartia'
7. paraptoma—is used in a different sense—a milder sense—usually meaning *an error or fault*, sometimes a *trespass*; it can also mean *a willful sin*.
8. hettema—denotes being worsened, defeated, or it means *a failure in duty or fault*.

Now, the most often ones used are *anomia* or *paranomia*, which then is the non-observance of a law. That's the one used mostly in the New Testament.

Now, let's look at the Scripture which defines sin. Let's go to 1-John 3:4. God is very clear. When God wrote the Ten Commandments, He did not do it by a Gallop CNN poll. He did not ask people what they would like. And the Ten Commandments were not the Ten Suggestions—need to understand that. If you believe in the law of gravity; and the laws of physics; and the physical laws around us which control the universe and things like this; and you believe those to be ongoing, ever-occurring immutable laws, which are continually having its effect upon us—such as the law of gravity, and heat and cold, and all of those different things, then you need to understand that the spiritual laws of God are far more binding, and far more in action, and far more applicable even though you do not have the same visual or intellectual

understanding of it. But they are there and they're always working.

Now it says in 1-John 3:4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness." Now God makes things very simple. And it's the simplicity, which gets people down; and the reason is, is that it doesn't give any wiggle room—when you really understand it. For example: 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' Now that is simple—isn't it? And that is the first commandment which everyone breaks. What they do, they just ignore it, or they say, 'God, I will acknowledge You, but I'm good enough to acknowledge You my way.' Ahla, brother Cain!

Now here is a better translation of it: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness... [In other words, they are practicing a way of life which is contrary or opposed to the laws of God.] ...for sin is lawlessness." Which is 'anomia' for *lawlessness*—and this is the *sin* 'hamartema.' So we have both of those up there.

But isn't it interesting; it's *practicing*. It's not what you would say, though you have a single instance of doing something where you sin. That's missing the mark. That is falling short. This is, what we're talking about here, when you are opposed to law in the *practice* of your way of life and your way of thinking. So that is an entirely different proposition. Now, that can go to the point of leading to the unpardonable sin.

Now, let's come to Romans, the seventh chapter; let's see what it says about the laws of God. It's very important to understand. Now, you've heard it said that it's impossible for a human being to keep the commandments of God; because we're all sinners by nature. Now that is a partially true statement, inasmuch as that those who are not converted cannot keep the commandments of God. Those who are converted can keep the commandments of God, but they will not be committing 'anomia'—they will not be committing the sin of being contrary to the laws of God. What they will be doing is *missing the mark*. Totally different thing. If you have the Spirit of God within you, you're going to love God and love His commandments and desire to do them. So, you see, with the Holy Spirit, God has provided the way and the means to keep His commandments—even though we have the tug-of-war with the flesh. So that's something to really grasp and understand.

Romans 7:12: "Therefore, the law *is* indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good. Now then, did that which *is* good become death to me? MAY IT NEVER BE! But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin in me by that which *is* good, was working out death; so that, by

means of the commandment, sin might become exceedingly sinful" (vs 12-13). ***The purpose of the law is to show what sin is.*** That's the whole purpose of the law. That's why law-keeping is required for salvation, but law-keeping cannot save. Let me repeat that: ***law-keeping is required for salvation.***

Revelation 22:12: "And behold, I am coming quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each one according as his work shall be.... [So we are to have good works, which are created in Christ Jesus, as we are led by the Holy Spirit of God.] ...I am Alpha and Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last.... [Now notice v 14 in particularly.] ...Blessed are they who keep... [the word 'do' (KJV) there in the Greek means *practice*—same word we covered when we read 1-John 3:4 about those who *practice* lawlessness. Those who are truly converted—what? *Practice commandment-keeping!*] ...Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments, that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life..." (vs 12-14). And I submit to you, that if you don't eat of the tree of life, you do not have life—correct?

So commandment-keeping is *essential for* salvation; but commandment-keeping ***does not bring*** salvation. That is a gift of God through Jesus Christ. Now if it is a gift of God, you cannot earn it. Otherwise you do it of yourself. That's so important for people who are just beginning to understand about the commandments of God. You must keep the commandments of God. Let's raise it another way: Can you live in sin so that grace may abound? What did Paul say, 'God forbid!' or 'May it never be!'

"...that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city" (v 14). Let me repeat it again. ***Commandment-keeping is required, but commandment-keeping does not bring salvation***—because salvation does not come through your works. Salvation comes through Christ. Or to phrase it another way: No one can practice sin and enter into the Kingdom of God. No one can practice sin and receive the Spirit of God—because, as we will see, what must one do when they find themselves a sinner in order to receive the Spirit of God. *They must repent and they must be baptized.* There are people who keep some of the commandments of God in the letter of the law. They may be good and sincere people. But that does not bring salvation. Salvation is a gift of God; commandment-keeping is a requirement of God as a way to live. Now, when you are converted and you have the Spirit of God, then you understand that all the commandments and the prophets of God hang upon the two major commandments of loving God

with all your heart, and all your mind, all your soul and all your being, and your neighbor as yourself.

- Then you go from the letter of the law to the spirit of the law, which is loving God.
- Then you go from the love of God into a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

And that's the process of spiritual growth over a period of time. You don't enter into it all at once.

Now, let's carry this a little bit further and let's see how this works. Let's look at the forgiveness of sin, and the operation of it, by going to 1-John 1:5: "And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him.... [Now, this reveals that John was writing against the early forces of Gnosticism, which says there are many gods—the highest one has all light and the lowest one is all darkness; gods and demigods.] ...If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth" (vs 5-6). Now, let's look at this sentence very carefully. If you are walking in darkness, you are not coming to Christ Who is the light.

Hold your place here and go to the Gospel of John, chapter three; because the light of Christ does something to our lives—which it does not do to those who are not willing to follow God. John 3:18: "The one who believes in Him is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now, that makes it pretty clear. People out here in the world can argue about religion all they want—go to and fro with words and bring all of their causes, bring all of their philosophies, bring all of their statements all they want, but the Bible simple says that if you do not believe in Jesus Christ, you are condemned already! Now, people don't like those plain statements.

Now here is the condemnation, v 19: "And this is the judgment: that the light has come into the world... [being Christ—'I am the light of the world,' He said.] ...but men loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." In other words, they did not want their sins exposed. 'Don't bother me with the Truth, let me live my life the way I want to live it.' You're walking in darkness. You're not allowing the light of God's Word to turn you from it.

"For everyone who practices evil hates the light... [Now this means, everyone who is *practicing* evil, which is what? '*anomia*'—*contrary to law*] ...hates the light, and does not come to the light... [and that's what you do when you want to find God. You seek God, you come to the light, Who

is Christ. Now most people don't want to do that—why?] ...so that his works may not be exposed"—or exposed. Meaning, corrected and exposed for what they are.

Verse 21: "but the one who practices the Truth... [now this broadens things out considerably—doesn't it? Because, what is Truth? *God's Word is truth. His commandments are true. His judgments are true.*] ...but the one who practices the Truth comes to the light... [and this is in a present-tense participle sense in the Greek, meaning it is *an ongoing process*.] ...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God.*" that They are worked in God, not in the self. And this also becomes important when we understand why we need to live God's way and not have a religion of it.

Now, the hardest thing to see is your own self-righteousness. That is the hardest thing to see. And we'll cover that a little bit later. That gets into other things, we want to stay with the basic thing here now.

How do you have your sins forgiven? Let's go to 1-John 1:7—which then we defined already in John 3—"However, if we walk in the light... [And we saw you have to be coming to the light] ...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin." Now, this tells us something—doesn't it? Tells us something very powerful, that in order to be under the grace of God, to have your sins forgiven, you must be walking in the light. And then you have a special blessing that comes, which is this: The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from *all* sin, which means *literally every sin!* Which means that this does not apply to the world, yet. Why does it not apply to the general society of the world at this time? *Because they're not walking in the light of God*—very simple. Why does it not apply to the world? *Because Satan (Rev. 12:9) is deceiving the whole world.* So you see, when you really begin to understand the true teachings of the Bible and the New Testament, it's just like Jesus said, just like Paul wrote.

Let's come over here to Hebrews, the fourth chapter. And just like people who are sinning—or '*anomia*'; contrary to law—do not like to come to the light of God's Word, so they do not like to hear the straight, divisive, sharp, clear, true words of God. It makes them uncomfortable. And people in that category, when they hear things like I'm saying now, they believe that it is a personal attack against them. And they believe it is a personal attack against their religion. Well, it's not! But if it's true, are you willing to accept the Truth of God's Word? Let's

phrase this another way: Do you think you can be saved without accepting the Truth of God's Word?

Now, let's notice here—Hebrews 4:12—this is why the carnal mind cannot handle the Word of God: "For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.... [There's an ad that the Marines have on that they play every football game—don't they? It's the one concerning a sword and to be a Marine; and it shows this young fellow with this very courageous set jaw and his hat and his gloves and he's got this sharp, two-edged sword. And that's supposed to be impressive; to make young men want to go down and join the Marines; to become one of the Marines, one of the elite. Well, the Word of God is sharper than that sword.] ...sharper than any two-edged sword..." that any man could make.

Now, if you make a sword that is razor-sharp and you swing it real quickly, you could actually cut through a person's neck, cut off their head and the head still stay there for a bit. Now that's pretty gruesome, but the Word of God is sharper than that—because here's what it does:

"...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit... [because the Truth of God, without repentance of your sin, makes you very uncomfortable; and you want to find a way out to justify it if you don't want to give it up—isn't that true? When you deceive yourself in your sin, isn't that true? *Yes!* That's why repentance is required.] ...and of both *the* joints and *the* marrow... [now that's getting right down to the life of your very being—isn't it? Because in the marrow of your bones, blood is produced, and that continual production of blood—from the marrow of your bones—ensures the continuing physical well-being of your physical body. So that's right down to the very smallest thing in life—isn't it?] ...and **is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart**" (v 12).

Now, lest anyone think they can fool God, or that you don't believe the Word of God, or that you don't believe that you have ever sinned, read v 13: "And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight.... [and that actually means *neither is there any creature which is not laid bare in His sight.*] ...but all things are naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account." Notice, because it's so powerful. And the light of God's Word is so affective and penetrating.

God is interested in forgiveness and mercy and saving; so therefore, He follows with v 14: "Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God... [Now you show me, try and produce a greater high

priest on the earth. You cannot do it. The Pope will never suffice because he's a man. The Dalai Lama will never suffice, he's a man. The highest ranking mullah of Muslimism will not suffice, he's a man. ***The One you need to go to forgiveness for is Jesus Christ!***] ...we should hold fast the confession of *our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses... [God knows the weaknesses that we all have, because God was manifest in the flesh. Jesus Christ had the same flesh so that He could have mercy and compassion upon those who are overcome by sin and have a sinful nature, like all of us do.] ...**but one Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet He was without sin**" (vs 14-15). That's why you can go to Him for forgiveness. Because in every temptation that He endured, and yea, some of them far greater than any other human being has ever had to endure—when you think of the 40-day temptation that Jesus suffered in the wilderness under the hands and coercion of Satan the devil. To not sin under that!

- so you have a *perfect* High Priest
- you have a *merciful* High Priest
- you have a *forgiving* High Priest

Verse 16: "Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Now let's come back to 1-John 1:8—so this is what it means here, that He cleanses us from all sin. "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us."

Now that ties right in with v 6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth." Now, 'the heart's deceitful above all things.' And the most deceitful thing that it has is that it wants to be thought of as good.

You can see this with the interviews of those who are on death row—correct? You go in and talk to these people and you think, my, how could this person do this deed? Likewise, we don't like to look at ourselves as sinners and have to go to Christ and repent and be forgiven. But you know, that is the only way! There is no other way it can be done. So if you say you have no sin; that is, you do not have a sinful nature or you are not a sinner by nature, 'are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.' Meaning also that the Truth cannot enter in.

"If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness... [Now, let me ask you

a question: Do you want your sins forgiven? Do you want all of your unrighteousness cleansed from you? Do you want them removed from you as far as the east is from the west? Well then, you have to come to Jesus Christ. There's no other way.] ...If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (vs 9-10). Now the worst thing in the world you ever want to do is to call God a liar. The champion liar who has done that is Satan the devil.

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And yet, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ *the* Righteous—" that we go to in time of need and help, that we may receive grace and mercy and forgiveness; and forgiveness is just as far away as saying, 'Father, forgive me.' That's how close forgiveness is. You do not have to confess your sins to a priest. You do not have to go to a minister. You do not have to do 'hail-Marys' or 'our fathers.' You do not have to do laps around the Buddhist beads, or laps around the Muslims beads. ***You go and say, 'Our Father, forgive my sins in the name of Jesus Christ.'*** Nothing can be more simple than that. But when you do, you have to mean it!

Verse 2: "and He is the propitiation for our sins... ['propitiation' means *a continual source of forgiveness and atoning.*] (now notice the next sentence): ...**and not for our sins only**... [lest we become conceited] ...but also for *the sins of the whole world.*" Now, in order to understand that statement, then you need to understand about the Sabbath and Holy Days and the plan of God, and how He's going to do it for the whole world. Today it's not applied to the whole world. That's obvious. All you need to do is just look around to see that.

Now let's go to Acts, the second chapter. There's something that has to happen to you as an individual; and it is a profound act and calling of God for that to really happen. In order to be a true Christian, indeed, it is not a matter of signing a membership role at a local church down the corner or up the street from where you live. It's not a matter of going and visiting various churches to see which church you feel comfortable in. Because if you feel comfortable in that church, and they are not preaching the Word of God the way they should, the reason you feel comfortable is because you're comfortable in your sins and there is no pressure for you to repent. So something has to happen in each person's life—individually.

Now, let's read it right here in Acts 2:36—this is the conclusion of Peter's tremendous sermon that he gave on the day of Pentecost: "Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified,

both Lord and Christ." Now let's ask a question here: If Christ died for the sins of the world, does that include yours? *Of course it does!* Does that include yours personally? *Absolutely, it does!* So taken to its nth degree, if you were the only person on earth, Christ would have to die for you because you are a sinner; and you need to take the death of Christ in that personal way for the forgiveness of your sins.

And when you do, v 37 will happen: "Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart.... [and that is what has to happen. God's Spirit and power and word and light and Truth must pierce into the inner part of your being and prick your heart unto repentance.] ...and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '**Repent** ... [Turn from your ways; turn from your sins; stop, go in God's direction, not yours; go to the light instead of the darkness; walk to the Truth instead of error] ...and **be baptized** each one of you... [in an individual, particular way (we'll cover baptism when we get to it)] ...in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**' (vs 37-38). So, that's how your sins are forgiven.

Let's see how James defines sin—let's go to James, the second chapter, and this is very basic for us to understand. And this is so important concerning many, many things. James 2:8: "If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well." Now in this, he's talking about the second great commandment of 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The first great commandment is, 'you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, mind, soul and being' is not excluded. He's just not expounding that part of it here. But that is also included in the "royal law." And we know that in Matt. 22, it says on this 'hangs all the law and the prophets.'

Verse 9: "But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin.... [that is in loving your neighbor] ...being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law... [that means ALL the law] ...but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all." Why? *Because you have sinned*, and 'sin is the transgression of the law.' And if you sin in one point it's no different than you sinning in another point. So you can't say, 'I keep nine of them and therefore, I'm righteous.'

Now, he gives the example here, v 11: "For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* law." Now, let's

just take this example and carry it one step further; because this is true: If you keep nine of the commandments—and mostly those who do it are Sunday-keepers; and yet, when you really understand it, they really don't keep all nine, do they? So what they are doing, they are breaking all of the Ten Commandments of God while they break the one. So if you don't keep the Sabbath, then you're taking the name of God in vain if you go to church on Sunday and use the name of God and proclaim that to be Holy. And most Sunday-keeping churches have some kind of idol—don't they?

And most people miss the whole point of idols. The Catholics say, 'Well, we don't commit idolatry, we just use these as reminders so that we can venerate those who are honored of God.' But if you go back and read the commandment very carefully, it says, 'you shall not make any image of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, that's on the earth beneath or that is under the sea on the earth.' So you're not even to make it!

Then He says, 'You shall not bow down to them, to worship them.' So all of those who break the fourth commandment then break the third commandment, then break the second commandment, then they are naturally breaking the first commandment—aren't they? Because they have another god before them, because they are not at the appointed time of the weekly Sabbath where God says that He's going to fellowship with you. So this fits right in there. When people want to understand what sin is, then they need to consult all the Word of God; because if you break one part of the Word of God then you've broken the whole thing.

Let's come over here to James, the fourth chapter; and what happens when people do this—and we have a sermon on this one: *To Judge the Law*—that then becomes something, because this is what everyone does. When they pick and choose which part of God's Word they will or will not keep, then what they are in effect doing, they are judging the law of God. So they are determining in their own minds which law they think is a good law, which they will be willing to do. And then they will pick out the good law—which they think in their minds is a good law—which they say, 'We are willing to do.' But then they also pick out and judge and choose the laws that they do not think are good laws, and reject it. So that's what happens here.

James 4:11: "Brethren, do not talk against one another. The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the* law, and is judging the law.... [Now, I want to focus in on 'speaking evil of the law.'] ...But if you judge *the* law... [that's the important part that I want to make here] ...you are not a doer of *the* law; rather,

you are a judge." And that constitutes the greatest kind of sin, because then you judge part of God's Word as worthy of your acceptance; but part of God's Word as not worthy of your acceptance. So therefore, you're sitting in the seat of God, determining which laws of God are good when the Bible says they are ALL good. And they mostly do this so they can keep their Sunday; or they can keep their idols.

Here's the point, v 12: "*But there is only one Lawgiver, Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another?*" So, if you judge the law of God and accept one point over another point, then, as James has said, 'you are transgressor of the whole law.' Which means this: That all who are Sunday-keepers are breaking the commandments of God, which they profess they are keeping, every week that they go to church on Sunday. Now, you can put some of it off to ignorance for those who don't know; but you can lay the blame directly on all of the Sunday-keeping ministers who are then teaching people to sin. And you cannot be in right standing with God if you are living in sin. And that's the whole point in defining what sin is. It is the 'transgression of the law' or 'lawlessness.'

So what we are actually doing is exposing that all of this kind of judging the law is in effect, ***lawlessness—because you are rejecting the commandments of God.*** If you believe that the Word of God is true, then you must believe that all of the Word of God is true. You can't believe just part of it and understand all of it. You cannot keep part of the law and yet, transgress in another part of the law and not be a sinner. That's the whole point.

Now, let's come to Galatians, the fifth chapter, and we will see the works of the flesh. And the works of the flesh then are all transgressions of the law of God. Now when you look at the general society around us and all the sin that is around us, you will see that what we are going to read here in Galatians 5 is a perfect description of the society in which we live. A society which is based upon a Christianity of Sunday-keeping. And remember:

- they have rejected God
- they have rejected the second commandment
- they have rejected the third commandment
- they have rejected the fourth commandment

And you cannot worship God by just proclaiming that you're going to follow the last six commandments because you won't know how to keep the last six commandments unless you know

how to keep the first four commandments—because the first four commandments, of the ten, give you the understanding as to *why* you need to keep the last six.

And so, when it is all watered-down, then you end up with a society like we have today. Let's read it right here in Galatians 5:19: "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest... [that is, they are revealed; they're open to see] ...which are *these*:"

- **adultery**

We have a President who is adulterer; who goes to church every Sunday; carries his Bible—has in his hand right there 'you shall not commit adultery; has in his hand right there where Jesus said, 'Verily, verily I say to you, you have heard it said in old time that you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you, you shall not look upon a woman to lust after her for you've already committed adultery with her already in your heart.' It doesn't do any good to pretend. That's all that people do who go to Sunday services; they are pretending.

Now, they may be sincere in their pretending, but they are still pretending. They may be convinced that they are doing right, but they are still pretending, because you can be as convinced about a lie, with the exact same fervent feeling, as you can be convinced about the Truth—and be willing to give yourself for a lie. Now you need to think on that one, very carefully. *It's not what you think or what you feel, it's what the Word of God says, and what you believe!* That's the criteria.

- **fornication**—which is all kinds of sexual uncleanness and immorality; including: homosexuality, bestiality, incest and all of the things that God forbids as listed in Lev. 18 & 22.
- **uncleanness**—uncleanness covers all kinds of diseases and unclean behavior; unclean thoughts.
- **licentiousness**—is delighting to do sin in a reveling manner;

which you could throw right in there—if you want a classic example of that: San Francisco is classic of licentiousness; especially on Halloween night. Because they have all of their licentious parties in which they delight in their wickedness and flaunt their sin and sensuality.

- **idolatry**—(v 20)

this is why, when Christ returns, He's going to destroy all idols. That means every church building is going to be destroyed. That includes Catholic Church buildings and cathedrals, St. Peter's Basilica; that includes all of the mosques of the Muslims; that includes all of the temples of the

Hindus; all of the temples of the Buddhists; and wherever there may be an idol, it is going to be destroyed.

Idolatry then is also idols that people have in their minds. Ezek. 14 makes it very clear that you cannot come before God with an idol in your mind because idolatry, where you make it, is only an outward manifestation of what you believe in your mind. So this is why we have to have a clean heart—ask God to clean us up.

- **witchcraft**

Go to Deuteronomy 18:9: "When you are come into the land, which the Lord, your God, gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of the nations.... [Now, all the works of the flesh, that we're reading of in Gal. 5, are abominations before God.] ...There shall not be found among you anyone who makes a son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination... [familiar spirits] ...or an observer of times... [that goes into turet cards and ouija boards and all of those things.] ...or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (vs 9-11)—and all of these things are prevalent on modern TV today, and accepted and promulgated from Walt Disney all the way through the most horrific kind of MTV music video that you could ever imagine. And they are all glorified.

Now notice, v 12: "For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord.... [So now you have gone from idolatry, you're taking other steps down into the depths of Satan and the sin that is abomination.] ...And because of these abominations, the Lord, your God, does drive them out from before you." And that's why this nation is going to be driven out from before the face of God—one of these days.

Now let's come back to Galatians 5, and here is some more of these works of the flesh:

- **hatred**

you hate one another; you have somebody that you hate. All right, the whole society is built on hate. 'Yea, I love my team, but I hate my enemy.' Jesus said, 'You've heard it said of old time you shall love your neighbor as yourself and hate your enemy; but I say unto you, you are to love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you and despitefully use you, that you may be the sons of God.' So there can't be hatred.

- **strifes** [variance (KJV)]—and most people up there are at variance with God; then they're at variance with each other.
- **jealousies** [emulations (KJV)]—Now emulations means *to emulate some kind of behavior*.

Do we not have that today with all the so-called movie stars and people like that, that people want to emulate it; sports stars and emulate that. Emulate the evil that is around you. All emulations—God doesn't want you to emulate anybody. God wants you to be yourself with His Spirit in you so that you are truly a son or daughter of God without having to emulate anybody. Now if there's anyone to imitate, we are told we are to imitate Christ. We are to follow God.

- **indignations, contentions [wrath (KJV)]**

One of the things that they said with those who commit mass murders, that they have no anger control. So now they're going to counsel them for anger control. Well, that's just wrath of evil people.

- **divisions, sects**

Now that's why there are heresies in religion, because they are carnal works of the flesh. And it goes back to judging the law and telling God what you will accept and what you won't accept.

- **envyings, murders' drunkenness, revelings,**

and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past, that those who do such things shall not inherit *the Kingdom of God*" (vs. 19-21).

Now, we'll get into the fruit of the Spirit when we get into the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Holy Spirit and how we're to live our lives that way, which we'll do in the next section.

Now, let's come to Romans, the sixth chapter. Let's see what all sin will earn you. It will earn you something, and it is a promise from God. You have two promises: The wages of your sins or the gift of God. Romans 6:23—and for those who have heard anything of religion, they have probably heard this time and time again, but it is true: "For the wages of sin *is* death..."

Now sometimes people, because they don't have the Word of God, do not know what sin is, so therefore they do what the proverb says in Proverbs 14:12, which is this: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death." They don't realize, but even without the law and the knowledge of God, they are still going to be punished for their sins; because sin is sin. Now, as Christ said, those who do not know will be beaten with few stripes. So they're still going to receive punishment. But those who do know will be beaten with many stripes. So that's what all this carnality and sin earn you: DEATH!

"...but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Now those are the choices laid out before us that we need to take.

Now, let's go to one more place. Let's go to 1-John, the fifth chapter; and this will help us come to the question concerning the unpardonable sin. Everyone wants to know about the unpardonable sin. I hope to explain it to you as clearly as I can so that you will understand.

1-John 5:16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death.... [Is this a contradiction of what we just read in Rom. 6:23? It appears to be, but it is not because of this: ***A sin that is not a sin unto death is a sin which can be repented of;*** because you have the conscience of God's Spirit which pricks your heart so that you see you have done wrong and you want to repent and get rid of that. Now, if you don't repent of it, then it would be a 'sin unto death.' But this is a sin which you can repent of.]: ...If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death, he shall ask... [that is: pray for that person that they will come to repentance] ...and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death...."

Even converted Christians, after they're converted and receive the Holy Spirit, still sin—but they are not living in sin—and there's a distinct difference. If you are living in sin, you are perpetually living sin; but if you are living in Christ, and have the Holy Spirit and are obeying God, you sin because you miss the mark; you sin because of the 'law of sin and death' in you. But it is not your determination to live in sin. And that is a distinct difference. Now this is where then the division between the sin which can be repented of, and the sin which cannot be repented of begins to manifest itself.

John writes: "...There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make any supplication to God.... [Why? *Because the person cannot be pricked to repentance, that is why.* They sin a sin that is so grievous they have no conscience toward God; they have no remorse for anything that they have done. That is a sin unto eternal death; ***that is an unpardonable sin,*** which will be punished by being cast into the lake of fire.] ...All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death" (vs 16-17)—because you can repent of it.

Now, let's see about the sin which is unto death. Let's go to Matthew, the twelfth chapter. And it is a sin that is so incorrigible and so calloused and so hard and so unrepentant in attitude—as a matter of fact, it is eager to accuse the good as being sin. So this is quite a deliberate thing that is done. And most people worry about committing the unpardonable sin. Well, if you worry about committing the unpardonable sin, you have not committed it.

Because if you worry about it, that means you have conscience that you don't want to do it—correct? But if you really commit the unpardonable sin; you delight in it; you're eager to carry it out; and you have absolutely no remorse at all of any kind for what you have done.

Matthew 12:22: "Then was brought to Him one who was possessed by a demon, blind and dumb; and He healed him, so that the one *who had been* blind and dumb both spoke and saw. And the multitudes were all amazed, and said, 'Is this the Son of David?'.... [Knowing that it was the Christ.] ...But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, 'This *man* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, prince of the demons.... [When they knew that one of the signs of the Messiah was that He would cause the blind and dumb to see and to hear. And the dumb to speak.] ...But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.... [And of course, Satan's kingdom is divided. What he wants to do is come in and divide the Truth and enter in error.] ...And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?'" (vs 22-26). And that's precisely what Satan does—does he not? *Yes!* So therefore, we know of assuredly that his kingdom is not going to stand.

"And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? On account of this, they shall be your judges But if I by *the* Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how is anyone able to enter into the house of a strong *man* and plunder his goods, if he does not first bind the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters. Because of this, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men except the blasphemy against the *Holy* Spirit; *that* shall not be forgiven to men... [*All manner!* But, of course, it has to be repented of, as we'll see when we come to the section on repentance.] ...**except the blasphemy against the *Holy* Spirit; *that* shall not be forgiven to men**" (vs 27-31). Why? *Because this comes directly from God the Father!* So what they were doing, they were blaspheming God the Father. Not Christ, God the Father, Who was the One Who was empowering Christ to do this.

"...except the blasphemy against the *Holy* Spirit; *that* shall not be forgiven to men." *Because you've rejected the highest Authority.* And just like the Pharisees here, they delighted in doing it. They were plotting to kill Christ. They were scheming to destroy Him and get rid of Him.

Verse 32: "'And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming *age*.'"

Now, let's come to Hebrews, the sixth chapter, where we have another definition of the unpardonable sin. And we will see that this is absolutely deliberate; that is absolutely malicious; and that those that commit the unpardonable sin have absolutely no remorse whatsoever. They have no conscience, they are delighting in their sin; they are happy to call the good that God does, through His Holy Spirit, evil. And they mock and repudiate Christ; mock and repudiate the Holy Spirit; mock and repudiate God the Father. Now that is such a deliberate and calloused and evil kind of sin, there can be no forgiveness. And what happens then, there is no way to revive them to repentance.

Hebrews 6:4: "For *it is* impossible for those *who were* once enlightened... [So God has to open your mind and give you life in His Holy Spirit and wisdom of God] ...and who personally obtained the heavenly gift... [that means the gift of the imputed righteousness of Christ (which we'll cover a little later here)] ...and became partakers of *the* Holy Spirit... [Actually receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit] ...and who have tasted *the* good Word of God... [and understand how the Word of God works in their life. And almost all of these things the Pharisees did—didn't they?] ...and *the* powers of *the* world to come" (vs 4-5). And they saw it through Christ—didn't they? That is why Christ warned them about blaspheming the Holy Spirit and committing the unpardonable sin.

"if they have fallen away, to renew *them* again unto repentance..." (v 6). You can't renew them. You can't convict them. You can't reach into their heart and mind and prick their conscience that they will repent; because once the unpardonable sin has been committed, it is ***impossible to renew them***. That's what it says here: **'for it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.'**

Now, this brings into question about those who fall away—and that means to apostatize. And there are those who will apostatize. And you can identify them by this kind of attitude.

If you love God and you are pricked in your heart because of your sins, and if you want to overcome your human nature, then you have not committed the unpardonable sin. You just have not. If you are of the point that Paul was, that he hated himself, and hated what the sin that he did, then you have your conscience pricked. And it is something that you can repent of, so that we can have our sins

cleansed continuously (as we covered earlier). We go to God and He forgives us our sin, cleanses us from all unrighteousness and perfects us. So you see the difference here.

Now he continues in v 6: "...seeing that they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves, and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt." And that means that you actually, in committing the unpardonable sin in word and in deed, repudiate the sacrifice of Christ. Now that then is the unpardonable sin, because that came from God the Father.

Now, let's go one step further, let's come to Galatians, the first chapter, and let's apply this to the preaching of the Word of God; because there are many ministers out there who are convinced that they are doing the work of God. But if you pervert the Gospel of Christ, you are in trouble.

Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *gospel*... [because there's only one true Gospel; Gospel of the Kingdom of God with the grace of God, forgiveness of sin, the receiving of the Holy Spirit—and there's only one way to receive that and that is through Jesus Christ. And there's only one way to exhibit your faith and your love of God and that is by keeping His commandments.] ...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ" (vs 6-7).

Now notice how the true Gospel of Christ is so profound and important—v 8: "But if we... [that means any of the apostles; any of those brethren who were with him—because v 2 says, 'all the brethren with me...'] ...or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!" Which means that they have committed the unpardonable sin.

So any minister who takes upon himself to judge the Word of God (as we covered there in James 4) and to exclude the commandments of God; and to pervert the Gospel of Christ; to change the laws and times which God has given with His Sabbath and Holy Days—***they are under a curse!*** Especially for those who know and have had their eyes opened. There may be some that are blinded and they don't know. But in this case that Paul is talking about, he's talking about those who did know but did pervert it.

Now, we've seen examples in our lifetime where there are ministers and teachers who taught and believed the Sabbath and Holy Days of God and the commandments of God who have now turned

their back on it and have accepted Sunday and Christmas and Easter, and the day of their unrepentance is just around the corner and they are going to find themselves under this curse and will have been committing the unpardonable sin. Because it says, 'Desire not many of you to be teachers, for know you not that we shall have the sterner condemnation or judgment.' So if you begin teaching people contrary to the Word of God... Even Jesus only preached the Word of God what He was commanded to preach. And if any man preaches other than what Christ teaches or what's in the Bible, then he's proclaiming himself by that very act to be greater than Christ and disbelieving in Christ.

So this thing of what sin is covers a broad thing, but when you get into the unpardonable sin, you're getting in to premeditated, predetermined, planned and executed sin, while you call it righteousness—whenever you're a teacher who preaches that.

Now notice, v 9: "As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!.... [So there's a double curse. And I tell you what, if a double curse is not bringing out the unpardonable sin I don't know what it is.] ...Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (vs 9-10). Because if you seek to please men, then what you do, you do not preach the sharp sword of the Word of God. You preach smooth things; you preach nice things; you preach psychological things—so that you can please people. And all you have to do is watch the Sunday 'religious comedy hour' and you will see that there are those who are doing it. In the final analysis, when they please men then they're sinning against God.

Now, those who do not repent; those who then take the sacrifice of Christ and trample it under foot, let's look at their reward. Let's go to Hebrews 10:26: "For if we willfully go on sinning... [that means *with premeditated malice*. That's not under the duress of temptation and you sin because of the pulls of the flesh. This is premeditated malice.] ...after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries *of God*" (vs 26-27). And we know that in Rev. 21 that that is the lake of fire and the second death.

"Consider this: anyone who rejects *the* law of Moses dies without mercy under *the* testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has

trampled underfoot the Son of God.... [and that means *trodden under His sacrifice; trodden underfoot*—in other words, counted as an *unholy thing*. Reject it, repudiate it, condemn it as of Satan the devil. Ghastly! To even say that sends shivers up and down my spine. But there are those who did. There are those who have. And we have read some of those things that they have published. Read where one man says, ‘I repudiate Christianity and I repudiate Jesus Christ.’ That is the unpardonable sin.] ...and has regarded the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, *as* an unholy thing, and has scorned the Spirit of grace? For we know Him Who has said, “Vengeance *belongs* to Me. I will recompense!” says *the* Lord.’ And again, ‘*The* Lord will judge His people.’ *It is* a fearful thing to fall into *the* hands of *the* living God” (vs 28-31)—especially if you have committed the unpardonable sin.

So there are more that we could go through on it, but this covers the whole section concerning sin, what is sin, and we’ll come to the section of the Holy Spirit next time; and then we’ll go right on into repentance and baptism and so forth.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 John 3:4
- 2) Romans 7:12-13
- 3) Revelation 22:12-14
- 4) 1 John 1:5-6
- 5) John 3:18-21
- 6) 1 John 1:7
- 7) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 8) 1 John 1:8, 6, 9-10
- 9) 1 John 2:1-2
- 10) Acts 2:36-38
- 11) James 2:8-11
- 12) James 4:11-12
- 13) Galatians 5:19-21
- 14) Romans 6:23
- 15) Proverbs 14:12
- 16) Romans 6:23
- 17) 1 John 5:16-17
- 18) Matthew 12:22-32
- 19) Hebrews 6:4-6
- 20) Galatians 1:6-10
- 21) Hebrews 10:26-31

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 12:9
- Matthew 22
- Leviticus 18, 22
- Ezekiel 14
- Galatians 1:2
- Revelation 21

Also referenced: Sermon: *To Judge the Law*

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The Holy Spirit

Fred R. Coulter—May 15, 1999

Continuing on through the *Belief's* booklet and we come to the section on the Holy Spirit. Now, the Holy Spirit is one of the central doctrines which separates the truth of the Scriptures from the professing Christian world known as mainstream Christianity, or orthodox Christianity; and is one of the things that separates the *true church* from all the other churches; because nearly every church—which is of the world and in the world and part of the world or has been indoctrinated with some of the doctrines of the religions of the world—believe in a trinity. They believe that the Holy Spirit is a third person. And there are many places in the translation of the New Testament where it is improperly translated from the Greek, where it reads that the Holy Spirit is *he*, instead of *it*. So with this section we will go through, let's turn there and read the statement on it. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 13)

The Holy Spirit is not a person or a third member of a so-called *trinity*.

When you fully understand that, you will see that the trinity goes back to the Babylonian mystery religion. And you need to get the book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop. Now you won't be able to buy this book in any ordinary bookstore. You're going to have to search for it, but you can find it—and that will show you how that all of the pagan religious practices were brought into what is called the Roman Catholic Church today, the Orthodox Church and also much of the Protestant world. The Protestant world began to leave Catholicism with the Reformation; they never finished the process. So instead of coming out so they could become part of the true Church of God, they remained and kept Sunday and Easter and Christmas, and they retained the trinitarian belief. So you need to get that book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop.

The Holy Spirit is the power by which God the Father and God the Son accomplish Their will. The impregnation of the Holy Spirit from God the Father as a spiritual begetting is granted freely to each believer upon repentance of sins, baptism by immersion... [which then is full water immersion] ...and the laying on of hands. This begetting of the Holy Spirit is the earnest and assurance of the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. It is the power of God which makes each begotten child of God a partaker of the Divine nature and imparts the ability to develop

the love of God. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit imparts the power to each individual to live in accordance with God's will and to overcome the temptations of human nature, the world, and Satan. As the spiritually begotten believer seeks to serve and obey God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will lead him or her into all Truth that is contained in the Word of God and is essential for salvation.

Now, how does one get the Holy Spirit? Let's go to Acts 2:38—we'll also cover that when we come to repentance. This is very fundamental and this is a place where everyone has to begin. Everyone has to start at this point. They have to do as the Apostle Peter said here on the day of Pentecost. And by the way, for an interesting study, if you wanted to study through the Scriptures on your own, you try and find one place in the Bible where it talks about Sunday as a day of worship on a weekly basis, and you won't find it. There is not one word concerning that. Neither will you find it concerning the holidays of this world. You will find that in every place the Bible talks about the holidays of this world, they are condemned by God because they are pagan practices. And God will not give His glory to another. God will not give His glory or His way to pagan, idolatrous religions. So there needs to be repentance.

Repentance is right here in Acts 2:37: "Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart... [you have to come to repentance. It has to be something that happens within you.] ...and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (vs 37-38). So the Holy Spirit is a gift. It is the power of God. And when you are baptized, this is the earnest of the Spirit.

Let's go to Ephesians, the first chapter—and we need to ask the question: If the Holy Spirit were a person, how could you possibly get the earnest of a person? Ephesians 1:11: "...in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance... [and that's why with a spiritual inheritance you have to have an earnest of it.] ...having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will..." We

need to understand that. That's very important. God is not going to work things out according to our will or our purpose or the purpose of any man, because if that were so, then it would not be the purpose of God. That's why when men endeavor to do something for God, *and they do it their way*, then they are not doing what God really wants. They may use the name of God; they may read some Scriptures; they may attach the Bible to it; but it really is not the will of God.

Now here's the will of God: "That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; in Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth... [so you have to hear it; you have to understand it; you have to believe it] ...the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing..." (vs 12-13). Now notice what you have to do:

- You have to hear the Word of Truth—the Gospel of your salvation
- You have to believe in Christ—have to believe in what He did; Who He was; how He did it.
- You have to believe in God the Father, Who sent His Son—because it said there that God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Now then, after that, then you are led to repentance (as we will see when we come to the section on repentance) and are baptized, then "...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... [That is the gift of the Holy Spirit that God promised.] ...which is *the* earnest... [now 'earnest' means *down payment, the beginning part*, the first that you receive.] ...of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory" (vs 13-14). Now, what does it mean, 'until the redemption of the purchased possession'? *When you repent you have been redeemed*. But you are not wholly redeemed until you are resurrected from the dead; then you are given a body and a mind that is composed of spirit. You then are the sons and daughters of God.

Let's see how the Holy Spirit is to act in our lives. Let's come to Romans, the eighth chapter. This talks about a very important principle in how the Holy Spirit works in our lives and what it does for us. Showing that it is not a person, but it is the power of God by begetting, dwelling in you. And actually what happens is, when a person receives the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit unites with the spirit of their minds—and you then have been begotten by God the Father; and you are counted by God the Father as one of His children. Now, since the Holy Spirit is the earnest, it is leading us, it is guiding us

as we will find here, Romans 8:9. And it puts you in standing with God that is different than the people of the world. That doesn't make you better. That means that God has called you; that means that God is dealing with you; and that now you are responsible to God.

So if you have the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:9: "However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies... [that means *give life to your mortal body*] ...because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live" (vs 9-13)—because the Holy Spirit is that which gives us the power to overcome.

Verse 14: "For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God." So the Holy Spirit is going to lead you. Now one thing we need to understand about the Holy Spirit, which is this:

- The Holy Spirit will not push you.
- The Holy Spirit will not pull you.
- The Holy Spirit will not compel you.

But you have to use the Holy Spirit *as it leads you*:

- to love God
- to follow God
- to keep His commandments
- and to serve Him

That's the whole purpose of the Holy Spirit so that it will do that. So it *leads* you.

Now let's notice another thing here; continuing on in v 15: "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear.... [And that's what we all were before God called us; before God led us; before we were baptized to receive the Holy Spirit—we were in the spirit of bondage unto fear.] ... but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Now one thing the Holy Spirit does—it's very important to understand—which is this: You are able then to pray directly to God. You do not have to go through a priest. You do not have to go through a minister. You get on your knees and you pray directly to God. That's why Jesus gave the prayer in Matt. 6, which starts out: 'Our Father, Who is in heaven, Holy is Your name. Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.’ You have direct access to God.

Now, we will see when we come to the section on repentance, likewise you repent to God. You don’t repent to a priest. You don’t go to a minister. That is between you and God and Christ as your High Priest. And it puts you in this relationship with God that you are one of the children of God.

Now, notice what else it does here to show you how the Holy Spirit works with our spirit. “The Spirit itself... [that is a correct translation here because in the New Testament ‘the Spirit’ comes from the Greek word ‘tau pneuma’—a neuter word. It is not a masculine word. If it were a masculine word, indicating he or a person, it would be ‘ho pneumos’—but it is not, it is ‘tau pneuma.’] ...The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our spirit... [because it’s united with the spirit of our mind] ...*testifying* that we are *the* children of God” (v 16). That’s very important for us to understand and realize and to grasp.

Now, let me just mention here that we have a fifty-five page special Holy Spirit series study with eight tapes that goes in-depth into the question concerning the trinity and all the technicalities concerning why it should be ‘it’ as it is right here in v 16, expressing itself as *itself*. And it should not be *he* or *him*. So, if you want more information on that, then you get that in-depth study and it will take you step-by-step through the aspect of the trinity; through the aspect of what the Holy Spirit is; and all the technical verses that we have in the Gospel.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 2:37-38
- 2) Ephesians 1:11-14
- 3) Romans 8:9-16

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Matthew 6

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series: *Holy Spirit*
- Books: *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop

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The Grace of God

Fred R. Coulter—May 15, 1999

Let's read that statement concerning the grace of God. What we're going to find out is that the grace of God is so important, the grace of God is so marvelous that it puts you—with the Holy Spirit of God—in a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ that is very special. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 13-14 throughout).

Grace is the free and undeserved... [and also we can add: *unearnable and unpurchasable*] ...gift of God the Father through Jesus Christ.

There is no work that you can do, which is an exterior work, such as doing: 'Our Fathers'; or 'hail Marys'; or praying to saints; or crawling on your knees; or flagellating your back with whips; or having yourself—as some do in the Philippines, crucified to a cross every Easter. There is no amount of good works to neighbors that you can do; no amount of money that you can give to any church. No amount of any of those things will obtain the grace of God for you. ***It is His gift.*** He does conditions for it: repentance and baptism, which we will get to here in just a bit.

The grace of God is the greatest expression of God the Father's love and all-encompassing mercy. Grace is more than the forgiveness of sins. To be under grace means to continually be receiving God's Divine love, favor, blessing, gracious care, help, goodwill, benefits, gifts and goodness.

So, it is like an umbrella that covers your life. You live under this grace.

God the Father is the source from which grace comes to the believer. The ONLY MEANS by which grace is granted to the believer is through the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice of God the Father. The believer enters the grace of God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his or her sins.... [that's just the start] ...God the Father grants His grace to each believer upon repentance of sins and baptism by immersion, which is the outward manifestation of repentance. Through grace, the believer's sins are forgiven and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to him or her.

Now, we'll cover that in more detail when we get to the two righteousnesses—the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith.

Grace establishes a new spiritual relationship between the believer and God the Father and Jesus Christ. Through the unearned and unmerited gift of grace, the believer is not only chosen, called, forgiven and accepted by God the Father through His Beloved, but is also begotten with the Holy Spirit, making him or her a child of God and an heir of eternal life. From this point, the spiritually begotten believer begins a new life under grace. As the Scriptures reveal, living under grace requires the believer to live by every word of God with complete love and devotion to God the Father and Jesus Christ. Grace does not grant one license to practice sin by ignoring or rejecting the commandments of God. Only those who keep His commandments can abide in His love and remain under His grace. Every believer who receives the grace of God has a personal obligation to God the Father and Jesus Christ to forsake his or her old, sinful thoughts and practices and to live a new life, daily growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. For every believer who lives under grace, Jesus Christ acts as Redeemer, High Priest and Advocate. If the believer commits a sin, He intercedes to propitiate the Father and to obtain His mercy and grace. The grace of God which comes through Jesus Christ keeps the repentant believer in a continual state of blamelessness and sinlessness... [and we can add: *before God.*]

So this is a tremendous thing that God gives.

Now, let's see how this works in our lives. Let's go to Ephesians 1:1—so we can get the full flow of the Scriptures. And here's a principle whenever you're studying the Bible. You always—if you have something that is difficult to understand—read the Scriptures before and the Scriptures after. And if it doesn't clear it up then, you read the whole chapter. And if you still have questions about it, then what you do, you get out a concordance and you do a word study and look up all the Scriptures in reference to it. So if you do not have a *Strong's Concordance*, let me recommend—there are several you can get—one is *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, which you can get at any Bible

bookstore. Another one is *Crudence Complete Concordance*, which you can also get at any Bible bookstore.

Ephesians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God... [this is important to understand: Paul was called according to the will of God, and likewise, everything he taught and preached was according to the will of God. So when we read the writings of the New Testament, we are reading the will of God written to us. So always keep that in mind.] ...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.... [When he says ‘grace be to you’ he means that the grace of God, under which you are living—this whole umbrella of grace.] ...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).

When you receive the Holy Spirit (as we covered in the last section) to receive that then is a spiritual blessing which does come from heaven—the power of the Holy Spirit—to you, to impregnate the spirit of your mind. And then all of the other blessings that come are all part of the spiritual blessings.

Verse 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Him...” So here’s something that’s very important to understand: If you are seeking God, God promises if you seek you will find; if you knock it will be opened—He promises that. So if you are seeking God and you are understanding the things that you are learning and reading and hearing, then you also need to realize that **God is choosing you; He is calling you**. And you have to respond to the call of God. And the responding to the call of God will be through repentance and baptism and loving and serving Him and keeping His commandments. Because the whole plan of God is so fantastic that it is just a marvelous thing for you to realize that God has called you to be a part of it. That when you receive the Holy Spirit, then (as it says here): you have been ‘chosen in Him.’

Now, God has this plan all worked out “...before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love.... [that is the whole purpose and operation of grace. This is something that we, being in the flesh, cannot accomplish ourselves. This can only come by a Divine act of God with His Holy Spirit, which makes us acceptable to Him.] ...Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us... [that God had a predestined plan] ...for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ... [So, in creating His family, God the Father is calling to Himself. So this

is very profound to understand.] ...according to the good pleasure of His own will” (vs 4-5). Not according to the religions of the world, with fear and intimidation and hierarchy and militancy; but into the Family of God, with the love of God; with the Spirit of God; with the grace of God; with the love of God. It is a whole, complete, different approach than you find in religions of this world. Most religions of this world view grace as license to sin; or grace as something that a priest or a minister dispenses to you. That is not so. Grace is God’s Divine intervention into your own life, personally, as an individual—in His love!

“...according to the good pleasure of His own will, to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace... [And that’s what you receive] ...wherein... [that is *in this grace or through this grace*] ...He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*” (vs 5-6). And the ‘Beloved’ is Christ. As it said in the Gospel, when the voice came from heaven: ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.’ So you are made **accepted** in Christ.

Now, this is profound and important for us to understand; because in the world, many of us are rejected by people. Many of us are rejected by friends, by family, by community. Many of us feel alone and cut off and not knowing where we should go and what we should do and how we should live our lives. And in that, God has

- led you that way so that He can call you and have mercy upon you to realize that His grace is greater than anything in the world
- that His love is going to fill you
- that His love is going lead you and guide you in the way that He wants

So this means that all of the sorrow, all of the pain, all of the difficulty in the world that you have experienced is now going to be relieved through the power of God and His Holy Spirit to understand that those things can lead to a deeper and more profound spiritual conversion, through the grace of God. Because when God loves you there is no greater love that you can receive. When Christ, Who also loves you, died for you when you were still the enemy of God, that is to lead you to a great and profound and deep repentance and acceptance of God’s will.

“...He’s “He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (vs 6-7). Great overflowing, overabounding riches of God. Now, when you look out into the universe and see the stars in the heavens and all that God has created, just realize, in terms of money, how much all of that

would be. Why, there's no way to calculate it. But God's plan is greater than all of His physical creation, which He has made. So the riches of His grace is worth more than all the universe, which then He is sharing with you and all of those that He calls to receive the Holy Spirit and become part of His family.

That's why you need the grace of God. That's why it is so all encompassing in your life and your relationship with God. That you're now going to establish through prayer and through study, through love and obedience to God and Christ.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us... [given us an overflowing amount] ...in all wisdom and intelligence.... [Now, that is *Godly* wisdom and *Godly* prudence—taken from the Word of God, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit of God.] ...Having made known unto us... [this is what you will come to see and know and grow in understanding as you continue in God's way, to grow in grace and knowledge.] ...Having made known unto us the mystery of His own will" (vs 8-9). The 'mystery of His will'—or the secret of His will—the world cannot know. You cannot go to any organized religion in this world and find out about the whole will of God. As a matter of fact, the religions of this world condemn the will of God as blaspheme! Because God shows that we are to become the very sons and daughters of God and to have an existence and body like Jesus Christ so we can dwell in the Family of God. And every other religion in the world calls that *blasphemous*!

Well, let's look at the Scriptures and see that that is not blasphemous—that is the Truth of God. And you might as well begin to understand the real will of God—the mystery of His plan, of His purpose, for you and all mankind. Let's go to 1-John, the third chapter. This is important to understand. We'll come back to Ephesians 1, so just hold your place there. And the reason that the world calls God's plan blasphemous, and the religions of the world call it blasphemous, is because ***the religions of the world are not of God***. And if they are not of God then they are of Satan the devil, and Satan the devil does not want God—since he's an adversary of God—to increase His family by bringing you into the grace of God, so that at the resurrection you can become a full spirit son or daughter of God. He does not want that. So therefore, He labels it as *blasphemy*!

Now what are you going to do with this Scripture here in 1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him." Now, I want you to think about this

for a minute. If the world didn't know Christ—which they don't today—they profess, as Jesus said: 'Many will come in My name saying I am the Christ.' They will profess, but they will be of the world. Therefore, they will *use* the name of Christ, but they don't know Him. That's why

- they don't know His will
- they don't know His plan
- they don't understand what God is doing

And when you get right down to the bottom line—and you ask any priest or minister: What is God's plan? *Well, it's to be in heaven and view the face of God forever*—which is a beatific vision. Now, that is what is blasphemous! They don't know God, so how can they know His will; how can they know His plan. But you see, God, in calling you and revealing this knowledge to you, is letting you know part of His plan. So that if you answer the call that God is giving to you, that you can become a part of it to be the children of God.

Now, let's continue on here, v 2: "Beloved, now are we the children of God... [and from the Greek *children of God* is 'teknon'—meaning *His own begotten offspring*; not adoption. You are the children OF God, not somebody else's child.] ...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" Now, that is a profound statement of the purpose of God.

What is this to do for us? *This is to inspire us and give us hope of our calling—to be the very sons and daughters of God*. So that's why v 3 reads: "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." That is, through the grace of God; through the love of God.

Now, let's go to Revelation, the first chapter, and let's take a glimpse as to what Jesus Christ looks like in His full, glorified form. And remember it says that 'we shall see Him as He is; for we shall be like Him'—that is, spiritually speaking. So, you're learning some of the will of God, the mystery or the plan of God, that He is doing—that no other people know. Only those who are called of God and have the Spirit of God know this. If you don't believe me, go to your local priest, or go to your local minister, and ask him: What is the plan of God? What is the purpose of God? What will I be like after the resurrection? And then you will find that they don't know the Scriptures. They don't know the Bible. And therefore, they are not sent of God. And you need to understand that.

In what God is doing, in bringing this information to you, is bringing a dividing line between the world—and it's religion—and God the

Father and Jesus Christ and Their way of life, which you are to live. That's what is happening here. And the choice is laid out there before you.

Revelation 1:13—the Apostle John, in vision—in the future Day of the Lord; that is all the events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ—saw the glorified Jesus Christ. “and in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *one* like *the* Son of man, clothed in a *garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate. And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice *was* like *the* sound of many waters. And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword [Word of God] went out of His mouth, and His countenance... [this is what we need to come to]: ...His countenance [visage] *was* as the sun shining in its *full* power” (vs 13-16).

Now to show you that we are to become part of that, in that way, let's go to Matthew 13. I want you to grasp very importantly the great and dynamic and overall plan of God. Just a bit of it so that you will be inspired to go forward. To show that all of those who will be in the resurrection will have glory and be like the stars of heaven in their glory.

Matthew 13:43: “Then shall the righteous... [those who are resurrected] ...shine forth as the sun... [Didn't we just read that the countenance of Jesus was as the sun in its full strength? This is part of the *mystery of God!* The plan of God!] ...shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.” And that also reveals that it is a mystery.

Now, let's come back to Ephesians, the first chapter, please. Now when the Apostle Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus, he was reiterating that God had made known (what we just covered now) in a brief way, made known this mystery to them. Ephesians 1:9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself.” So God has His purpose in Himself.

Now, let's come to Ephesians 2, to show that salvation is by grace, not by works. And please understand that any commandment-keeping, any law-keeping, is not earning salvation. All commandment-keeping is required by God of all believers. Because if you are not keeping the commandment of God (as we covered in the section on *Sin*) then you are a sinner. So we're going to see that the grace of God does not give us license to sin. The grace of God is that which saves us.

Ephesians 2:1—to show how God begins dealing in our lives; begins dealing in your life.

“Now you... [speaking to the Ephesians there] ...were dead in trespasses and sins... [Because while you're living in the world and living in sin, you're as good as dead. 'The wages of sin is death.' Death does not happen instantly, but the 'wages of sin is death; the gift of God is eternal life.' So God counts all those who are living in sin as though they are dead.] ...in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [Living in the world; living in this society—by its standards; by its morals; by its way; by its religions.] ...according to the prince of the power of the air... [That is Satan the devil—and Satan the devil operates by being able to transmit thoughts; by being able to influence the minds of people.] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also **we all** once had our conduct...” (vs 1-3)—as it should read. It says *conversation* in the *King James*, but it's *conduct*.

Now let's look at that statement again: *We all*. Paul was including himself—was he not? And Paul was Saul before he was called; and he was a destroyer of the Church of God. So He's including himself in that.

- Did he repent? *Yes!*
- Did he receive the Spirit of God? *Yes!*
- Was he used of God? *Yes!*
- Did he always remember what he did to the Church in persecuting it? *Yes!*

“...we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind...” (3). And all of those things are greatly manifest in what you would call *the self-improvement philosophy* of this world, as espoused by many, many teachers—to improve in business; to improve in personality; to make yourself better and stronger; to have a better mind; to have more success in business; and all of those things are all the desires and the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. So because you have a thought in your mind, which appears good to you, does not necessarily mean that it's right with God. Now it may benefit you in the flesh. It may increase your income. It may give you a better *carnal* personality, but that doesn't change your standing before God. Many devoted, sincere, law-abiding people in the world are of this ilk right here, and follow it and practice it, but they are fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

“...and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world. But... [so here's the 'but'—God intervenes in your life.] ...But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love... [because what God is doing with His grace, in dealing with you, is motivated by His love.] ...with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ.

(For you have been saved by grace.)” (vs 3-4). Salvation is ***only by grace!*** Please understand that.

We’re going to see that we have a way to walk in, which has to do with the commandments of God (as we’ve already covered); but we are ***saved by grace***. No human being can save you. No work can save you. No amount of money can save you. No amount of self-discipline can save you. It is the grace of God, by the Spirit of God, that you are saved.

Now, let’s come down here to v 8—he repeats it again: “For ***by grace you have been saved*** through faith... [because you have faith in God; and you grow in that faith to come to have the very faith of Jesus Christ.] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves... [now this is important to understand: This grace and this faith is not something you can generate from within yourself, apart from the Spirit of God. Cannot be done! Because it means in the Greek *to come forth from you*. In other words: *of your own initiative*.] ...not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God.” The faith, the grace, the salvation, the Holy Spirit are all gifts of God through His grace.

Verse 9: “Not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship... [God is working with us.] ...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works.... [And those ‘good works’ are

- keeping the commandments of God
- the laws of God
- loving God
- loving our neighbor
- loving the brethren
- even loving our enemies

Those are all the works that God has given us to do.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 9-10). So that shows that God’s way, through Christ, is a way of life—and we walk in that way of life. We live by Christ—that’s why it’s by grace.

Now, let’s come to the book of Romans, please, chapter three. The Apostle Paul has written here some very deep things concerning law and grace, the nature of man—and if you want an in-depth study of this, you can write in and request our entire series on Romans. It’s quite lengthy. This will ground you in the basic fundamentals of true Christianity. This is something that we need to really understand and realize, and so if you want that be sure and write for it.

Now, Romans 3:20—remember how we read there, it’s not by works: “Therefore by works of law... [I’m going to read it the way it should be translated] ...there shall no flesh be justified before

Him... [And this is the hardest thing for people to understand. We are to keep the commandments of God—that is required; but please understand this: *Justification* to God the Father in heaven above is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ **ONLY**. ***There is no other means!*** Now, that’s fundamental to understand.] ...for through *the law is the* knowledge of sin.... [That tells us what not to do, because that is sin.] ...But now, *the* righteousness of God... [that is the grace, the justification of God] ...*that is* separate from law...” (vs 20-21).

That doesn’t mean without law—and that’s where most people get off the track. Most Protestant’s religions now refer to that as *without law*. That is, you don’t need any law; once you have grace you do not need to keep the commandments of God, you do not need to keep the laws of God; because it says ‘without law’ in the *King James*. Now, it really means *separate from*; because there are two different functions:

1. Laws and commandments tell you what sin is.
2. Justification is being put in right standing with God.

Two different functions. You need to be put in the right standing with God because you have been a sinner and were not in right standing with God; and all of the law-keeping in the world—***unless you repent and turn to God***—is not going to benefit you one bit to make you right with God.

Let me give you an example: Suppose there was a man who murdered someone, and he got away with it; and he said to himself, ‘I’m going to live an upright life from now on. I’m going to go and move into another town and I’m going to be a good, obedient citizen.’ Then twenty years later he is recognized, and he is arrested for this murder. And he says, ‘Well, ever since then I’ve been a good, upstanding citizen. I haven’t murdered anybody, and I’ve kept all the law.’ And the judge says, ‘You still have to pay for the murder that you committed twenty years ago. All your good living that you had in your life from that time until now does not count anything. The only way you’re going to be made right with this community is to have the penalty of the law enforced upon you; because you took another human being’s life.’ *But, Judge, I’ve been good.*

It’s the same way with us. We cannot, by our good works, undo our past sins. Now, that’s what this is talking about here. “...*the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ.... [You must ***believe*** in Jesus Christ for

the forgiveness of your sins; that His sacrifice is what has done it. And then the grace of God comes to you. That's most important to understand.] ...through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are being justified freely by His grace... [means to be *put in right standing with God*.] ...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (vs 21-26).

Now, let's ask and answer the same question that the Apostle Paul did. Right here, let's come to v 31: "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law." So now, you begin keeping the laws of God according to the spirit of God's law. Why is it then that we establish law? We establish law in its true spiritual significance.

Now let's understand something more concerning grace. Turn to Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE!.... [and the Greek here means: *may it never be!*] ...We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (vs 1-2). Now we'll see when we come to *Baptism* that when you're baptized—which is a burial of the old self—you die to sin. So this is what he's talking about. So we establish law; we establish God's way through grace; we don't do away with it.

Now then, let me also mention to you here that we have a full, thorough, complete study on the grace of God—six tapes—so you can write for that. So what you're going to find in these things is this: As we go through the *Beliefs*, what we're doing is laying a foundation; and then that foundation has to be built with the Word of God, on that foundation, to get the whole picture, or to build the whole house as it were; or to fill out the full doctrine and teaching of the New Testament. We have a sermon series on the *Grace of God*, you can write for that and that will give an in-depth, detailed study going through all of the Scriptures, all of the technicalities of it, and likewise with the series on the book of Romans.

So this is for the serious; and if you're serious and really want to learn God's Word then this will be one way which we can help you do it, so you can really know the plan of God, the grace of God and His love.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 1:1-9
- 2) 1 John 3:1-3
- 3) Revelation 1:13-16
- 4) Matthew 13:43
- 5) Ephesians 1:9
- 6) Ephesians 2:1-4, 8-10
- 7) Romans 3:20-26, 31
- 8) Romans 6:1-2

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Romans*
- *The Grace of God*

Books:

- *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*
- *Crudence Complete Concordance*

FRC:bo

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Repentance

Fred R. Coulter—May 15, 1999

Now let's come to the next section, which is *repentance*. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 14-15):

Repentance is complete remorse and sorrow for one's sins, which are the transgressions of the laws and commandments of God. Repentance is the first step in the sinner's reconciliation with God the Father and Jesus Christ. True repentance begins when God the Father opens a person's mind to understand that he or she is a sinner against God the Father, and that his or her own sins had a part in killing Jesus Christ. The graciousness of God the Father leads each sinner to repentance. Repentance moves each one to confess his or her sins to God the Father and to ask forgiveness, remission and pardon for those sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. True, deep, godly repentance will produce a profound change in a person's mind and attitude, called conversion, which will result in a continuous desire to live by every word of God. The truly repentant person will turn from evil thoughts and ungodly practices and will seek to conform his or her life to the will of God as revealed in the Holy Bible and as led by the Holy Spirit. Repentance and confession of sins is an ongoing process in a Christian's spiritual growth toward the perfection of Jesus Christ.

Let's go back to Romans, the second chapter, and this is important to understand. What happened in one day in your life or in my life that you began to think about God; that you began to see that your sins were really sins? Part of it probably occurred that you were either lonely or cutoff; or that you did some great horrible thing to someone; or that your life was just promiscuous and corrupt; or in today's world, people get involved in drugs and all kinds of satanic things in this world, and your life is miserable and rotten and you come to the very bottom. If you're at the very bottom and you're beginning to understand God's Word, well then, God is leading you to repentance, because God knows that you can't do it of yourself; because there's a sorrow of the world—and the sorrow of the world does not work the righteousness of God. There are many people who are sorry for things they have done, but that is not true in deep repentance. Nor is it a repentance that has been led of God.

So let's begin here in Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness... [and that can read *graciousness*] ...and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" Now, in leading you to repentance, it is going to do a very profound thing.

Let's go back to Acts, the second chapter, that we briefly touched on before (in the section concerning the Holy Spirit). Let's understand concerning the sacrifice of Christ. That you look at your life and you look at your sins, and you look at all of your failures, and all of your mistakes, and all the rottenness, and all the selfishness, and all the vanity, and all the greed; and you look at your life and you pretty well consider it worthless. Well, *that's God leading you to repentance*.

Then you have to also understand in your repentance that since Christ died for your sins, your sins also helped kill Christ—important to realize. Acts 2:36—Peter said: "Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance... [so this is a statement to all the house of Israel. And of course, all of them could not be there at the temple on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was given. So this is inspired of God to make us all realize that this goes out to ALL Israel, then ALL the world, because they were to preach repentance of sin beginning at Jerusalem and into ALL the world. But God, in His greatness, is able to apply the sacrifice of Christ to each one of us *individually*.] ...let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Now, if you understand that

- when Jesus was beaten, *you were beating Him*
- that when He was scourged, *you were scourging Him*
- that when He was crucified and had the nails put in His hands and His feet, *you put the nails in Him*
- that when the spear was thrust in His side and He died, *you thrust the spear in His side*

Because He died for ALL mankind—as a whole and individually.

So what this has to do to you then is with the Spirit of God leading you to real remorse and real repentance, which then will bring tears, and yes, it will bring great remorse. Yes, it will bring great sorrow that you did this.

Verse 37: “Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart... [So repentance has to come from the heart; has to come from within you. It can’t be feigned; it can’t be like little children who get caught in something and say they’re sorry and turn around and go and do the same thing again. No, not that!] ... cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent!.... [That means stop, turn, go the other way; because your life has to change. Your life now has to be conformed to Christ, and the beginning of that conformity is baptism.] ...and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!’” (vs 37-38).

Acts 3:19: “‘Therefore, repent and be converted... [There’s that great and profound change that will take place; because now, with the Spirit of God, your mind will be changed. You will be converted; and conversion is a life long process as we walk in those good works, which we’re ordained to walk in.] ...be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out!....’ Be completely removed.

Now let’s see how far away God removes sin from us. Let’s go back to Psalm 103. When your sins are forgiven, ***they are forgiven! All of them!*** God does not just forgive some sin and then hold other sin over your head to make you pay and pray and do ‘our fathers’ and ‘hail Marys’ and other works of penance. NO! When you confess your sins, you confess them to God. When you repent, you repent to God.

Now, Psalm 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.... [you’ll see why in just a minute.] ...Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not ***all*** His benefits.... [And the greatest benefit we’re going to see He enumerates right after that.] ...Who forgives ***all*** your iniquities, Who heals ***all*** your diseases.... [Profound! Profound! So when you repent, ***He forgives them all!***] ...Who redeems your life from destruction... [Weren’t we all headed for destruction, living in the world and going our way? *Without a doubt!*] ...Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (vs 1-3).

Verse 8: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger... [That’s why you’re still living, even though you may be miserable living in your sins—He’s merciful, slow to anger!] ...and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins... [He hasn’t, because the ‘wages of sin is death.’] ...nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those

who fear Him.... [And this ‘fear’ means *reverential awe*, based upon love.] ...As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 8-12). Now think about that! ***When you repent, your sins are forgiven***, and you repent directly to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

- you don’t go through a priest
- you don’t go through a minister
- you don’t go to ‘confession’

You go to your own private, quite place or closet, and you get on your knees and you cry out to God and you ask for His forgiveness; and you have a repentant heart. ***And He forgives!***

Then that’s why baptism must follow. And when we get to the section on baptism, we’re going to see many people have been ‘dunked’ in what is called *baptism*, but since they really did not repent and receive the Holy Spirit, that baptism was no more than just a ceremony of men—had nothing to do with the true righteousness of God.

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, for He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them” (vs 13-18). So, once you repent of your sins, you have to live and ‘walk in newness of life’—as we have seen.

Now, let’s come back to the book of Romans. Let’s understand something that’s very profound that you need to realize in relationship with the crucifixion of Christ and why He did it and when He did it.

Romans 5:6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time... [that means *at the set time, the appointed time of God*.] ... Christ died for *the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man.... [So ask yourself the question: Would you die for your worst enemy? Would you die for your best friend?] ...But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (vs 6-7). And even before we were conceived—correct? *Yes!* Because God loves us! And He wants you to understand that love so that you in turn can also love God, love Jesus Christ; and you, when you understand that God did this for you

when you were an enemy of God, when you were a sinner, that you likewise can grow in love that you can likewise love your neighbor; love your brethren; love your enemy.

Verse 9 ^[transcriber's correction]: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood... [That means *put in right standing with God through His blood.*] ...we shall be saved from wrath through Him.... [‘shall be saved’ means *at the resurrection when Christ returns.*] ...For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (vs 9-10).

So this is to really bring us to the point of understanding of how great and marvelous that God is, so that we can repent. One of the things that really helps us to repent is to understand the goodness and the graciousness of God.

Let’s go to the Epistle of 1-John 1, please; and let’s read how this whole operation works. Now, what you need to do—you see sin in your life: you want your life to be changed, to be turned, to come to Christ, then here’s what you need to do:

- You need to go to God and confess your sins.
- You need to go to God and ask for forgiveness.
- Then you need to be baptized. And to be baptized, it needs to be a right baptism

—and we will cover that on the next section in the *Beliefs* booklet so you can fully understand about baptism.

Now, here’s what you need to do in repentance: 1-John 1:6: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him... [and that’s the ultimate that God wants in the relationship between you and God the Father and Jesus Christ. That your relationship is such that it is a fellowship and you will come to understand that after you’ve been baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God.] ...but we are walking in the darkness... [that is if you say you have fellowship with God, or even know Him (as we covered concerning the commandments) then you’re a liar.] ...we are walking in the darkness... [and ‘darkness’ is Satan’s way.] ...If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth.” You must live by the Truth, which is light!

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light... [and the light of the world, by the way] ...*then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.... [Now this means from

EVERY sin. So when you repent, you are forgiven all of your sins.] ...If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (vs 8-9). Notice, you do not go to a priest to confess. You do not go to a confessional booth. You ***go directly to God, privately***, and confess your sins to Him!

- God hears
- God will answer
- God will forgive

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (v 10).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [So once you confess your sins, you’re to walk in the truth and righteousness and commandments of God, and not to be sinning.] ...And *yet*, if anyone does sin... [and that means *yet, if anyone sin*, because we’re human, because we still have human nature to overcome. ***We will sin!*** And we will cover that as we continue with that. What do you do in that case?] ...we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ *the* Righteous—and He is *the* propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (vs 1-2).

Let me just mention also, the reason we have the *Beliefs* booklet is because if someone says, ‘What do you believe?’ We can say, ‘Well, if you’d like to read it, here it is.’ Now, we can say, ‘If you’d like to have some sermons with it, you can receive them.’

Now let’s look at some Scriptures concerning this. Let’s first of all let’s come to Hebrews, the fourth chapter, and let’s see what the Word of God does. Now, for some people it’s very difficult to see their sins. And part of the reason is that the goodness that they have which they see does not come from God but comes from the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’ There are a lot of ‘do-gooders’ out there. All that goodness comes from the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’ True goodness from God comes through His Holy Spirit and His Word.

Now, let’s pick it up here in Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... [Now, I remember a movie—and I don’t know how they did it, but however they did it, it was something! This soldier had a sword that was so sharp that he whacked the neck of this other soldier and all it did was just show the blood-line where it had cut. You could hardly tell that it went through, it was so sharp. Then his head fell off. And every time I read

this I think of it.] ...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart. And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account” (vs 12-13). That also means *laid bear*.

So that’s what the Word of God does. Then, this brings us the **conviction of sin**. Now what do we do when we do that? *We have to go to Christ*, as he finishes here in v 15: “For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses... [In other words, He is there to help us. He does feel it. And Wayne gave a sermon on *Does God Have Feelings?* He’s going to send it to me. Yes, God grieves. Yes, God has joy. Yes, God has feelings. So He is touched with our feelings. Now, very important point: the next phrase.] ...**but one Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet He was without sin...**” [So there’s every temptation every man has gone through; every woman has gone through. God knows!] ...Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (vs 15-16). So that’s the way out of the dilemma of human nature.

Now let’s come back to Jeremiah 17—and as we’re turning back there, remember the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee couldn’t understand his own nature. Because he came to God and he said, ‘God,’ (as he prayed to himself, you know, he wasn’t praying to God) he said, ‘I thank you I’m not like other men. I’m not an adulterer, an extortioner,’ add anything you want in there. Oh, of course none of those things God wants you to be, right? I mean, He expects you not to do those things—correct? And then he went on to say: ‘I tithe of everything I possess.’ And then he went on to say: ‘Thank you that I’m not like this publican down here.’ The publican was a tax-collector. Today they work for ‘Uncle Iris’ [IRS]. And the publican down there, beating on his chest, crying out to God, saying, ‘Be merciful to me, a sinner.’ And Jesus said, ‘I tell you, that man went down to his house justified rather than the other.’ So he couldn’t see that the goodness he was doing was required of God. But in the attitude that he had, it was really a sinful attitude. Because John wrote that if you ‘hate your brother whom you can see how can you love God Whom you cannot see.’ And that’s exactly what he was doing. And where was he doing it? *Right in the temple of God!* It’s amazing what human beings do—*isn’t it?*

Now, let’s come here to Jeremiah 17:5: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the LORD.... [That’s why Christ is the Head of the Church. We’re to follow no man. God provides teachers and elders, but He also wants all the disciples—that is all the brethren—to become as the teacher. And the ultimate Teacher is Christ—isn’t it? So we have a long way to go.] ...For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land that is not inhabited.... [on the other hand, notice v 7:] ...Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD” (vs 5-7). Now, lo and behold, that’s New Testament doctrine—isn’t it? Now what do suppose New Testament doctrine is doing in the Old Testament? *It’s all the Word of God, that’s what it is.*

“For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters; *it* sends out its roots by the river, and *it* shall not fear when the heat comes, but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit.” Always growing, always bearing fruit.

Here’s the way every human heart is. And this is the point we all have to come to in repentance. And it’s a progressive thing. After we’re baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God, then we progressively see how despicable our own human nature truly is. And I say ‘ours,’ because I’m including mine. My human nature is no different than your human nature. And I have to war and struggle to overcome like you have to war and struggle and overcome. And Christ knows that. But His grace is sufficient to help us, to teach us, to lead us, to forgive us. And all of that’s part of the process of repentance.

“The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (vs 9-10). And so God is there.

So that’s all a part of repentance. And this you do to God personally. It’s not a public thing that you do. You do this personally. As Jesus said, you ‘go into your closet.’ That means a quiet, private place. I know when I first read that I went into my closet and about suffocated. I soon figured out that if I was in a quiet, private place I could kneel down and pray to God. This is between you and God. You’re not to confess your sins to any man. And besides, God knows this. That’s why He doesn’t require you to confess sins to a priest; that I doubt that there is anyone who confesses sins to the priest

that really tells all the truth! They want to admit only as much as they need to admit so they will feel good and then they can do their laps on the beads. But, when you come before God alone in repentance, it's between you and God. You can bear your soul to God. You can be truthful to Him. After all He knows—doesn't He? If He knows all the hair on your head then He knows every thought that you have. So that's why we need repentance.

Now, let's look and see what we are to do after—when we come to this point of repentance. Let's see who is responsible for that. Let's come to John, the sixth chapter. And this is what's so important. John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.... [So God the Father has to deal in your life to draw you. Now you stop and think about it for a minute: what a fantastic, absolute blessing that is, that God the Father, **Who is the Sovereign of heaven and earth** sends His Spirit to be with you to deal in your life, to draw Him to you. Now you have to be willing! And He brings you to Christ.] ... It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'.... [And that's what God is doing by leading you to repentance, He is teaching you. That's what God is doing when you study His Word, He's teaching you. And if you're reading the Bible now with **different** eyes than you had in the past, because God is opening your mind to understanding, it is God the Father Who is doing it.] ...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [and that also implies *responds*] ...from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me" (vs 44-45).

Now, John 14—Jesus makes another statement. Because now is not the time that God is saving the world. God is not using George W. Bush to save the world. He's going to use Christ. He is using Christ now for the firstfruits. John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the Truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.'" So both of Them agree. But what do They look for? *They look for someone who is willing to repent!* Now, you can seek after God. But you have to seek Him in 'spirit and in truth.' Which means: if you don't seek God in truth, you're not going to find the true God. That's why there are so many varieties of religions which God never originated.

Now, let's come to Romans, the second chapter, and let's see what else God does for us, So God the Father is the One Who intervenes in your life. He's intervened in all of our lives. I can look back and I can remember the time, you know, 'hindsight is better than foresight.' It's always 20/20. And I can remember when God began dealing with me and it had nothing to do with religion, but it had to do with a challenge of the professor who said, 'If

you believe the Bible and believe in God there's the door you can get out of this classroom.' And that just really upset me. Not that I was a church-goer or believer. I wasn't a non-believer, I wasn't a believer, but that really set me off and I can look back at that time. I also remember when God did lead me to repentance and I was driving down to Pasadena to be baptized. And I remember the exact place on Highway 99 that I was crying and weeping and repenting as I was driving. And so all of you can look back and see and remember that point.

Since it's God the Father that is dealing in your life—now this will help you understand here Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" So that's how we come to repentance. We see ourselves for what we are. We realize we're helpless. We realize that we need God's help. And of course, the truth is, we remain helpless, even after that, because now we are going to depend upon God.

Let's come to 1-John 1:7, and let's see the **process of repentance**. "However, if we walk in the light... [and Christ is the light, and He gives us that light] ...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.... [Now this is talking about those who have already repented and have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit of God—they need ongoing cleansing of sin every day. That's why the model prayer is: 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us.' And that's a daily prayer.] ...If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [Now notice, we confess them to Christ] ...**He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (vs 8-9). Now, that's the operation of grace continually in our lives. That's how we confess our sins in repentance.

Now there are other Scriptures that you can read in the *Beliefs* booklet that are there, but let's come to Acts 2:38 and we'll end this review of repentance and then we'll get into baptism because they go together just like a hand-in-glove and nut and bolt. That is why it is so deceitful of the religionists who say: 'Put your hand on the radio or television and receive the Lord.' Now, there are many sincere people who do that. Especially if they're convicted of sin, they do that. But you **must** be baptized, **by full water immersion** because it is a burial into the death of Christ.

Let's come here to Acts 2:36—here's the conclusion of the sermon: "Therefore, let all *the*

house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.'.... [This is the Scripture which tells us that we have had our part in crucifying Christ.] ...Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart... [Who led them to that repentance? *God the Father did!* On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was sent. And the Holy Spirit being the power of God worked in their lives.] ... and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (vs 36-38). Now when we get to the section on *justification* you will understand even a little more about that.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 2:4
- 2) Acts 2: 36-38
- 3) Acts 3:19
- 4) Psalm 103:1-3, 8-18
- 5) Romans 5:6-7, 9-10
- 6) 1 John 1:6-10
- 7) 1 John 2:1-2
- 8) Hebrews 4:12-13, 15-16
- 9) Jeremiah 17:5-10
- 10) John 6:44-45
- 11) John 14:6
- 12) Romans 2:4
- 13) 1 John 1:7-9
- 14) Acts 2:36-38

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Water Baptism

Fred R. Coulter—May 15, 1999

Now let me read the section on *Water Baptism: (Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God, pgs 15-16 throughout)*

Upon genuine, Godly repentance...

There is a sorrow of the world. And the sorrow of the world is not repentance to God. So that's why it's upon true, Godly repentance

...and acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior, the believer must be baptized by complete immersion in water for the remission of his or her sins. Water baptism symbolizes the death and burial of each repentant believer—[which is] a spiritual conjoining into the death of Jesus Christ....

And remember, the death of Jesus Christ was a covenant death. And when you are baptized and put into that watery grave, you have joined in the covenant death with Christ.

...Through this baptismal death, the believer becomes a partaker of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, and His blood is applied as full payment for his or her sins....

And then from that time forward is available through grace as a propitiation for our sins.

...Rising up out of the water is symbolic of being conjoined into the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the believer comes up out of the watery grave of baptism, he or she rises to [walk in] newness of life [which is the way of the Lord]. In order to become a new person, each baptized believer must be begotten with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The believer is then led by the Holy Spirit to walk in loving obedience to God the Father and faith in Jesus Christ

Now let's look at the meaning of baptism. Let's come to Colossians 2. This baptism does something for us, which is very powerful, which nothing else can do. Now it doesn't remove entirely the carnal nature that we have, but it does something to our minds. And this is by the operation of baptism.

Let's pick it up beginning in Colossians 2:10: "and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power in Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of

the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [and the circumcision of Christ is the receiving of the Holy Spirit. And the receiving of the Holy Spirit is the ***earnest or God's pledge*** or down-payment until the time of the purchase of the redemption which then is at the resurrection. So that is the circumcision of the heart.] ...Having been **buried with him in baptism**... [that's how it's accomplished] ...***by which you have also been raised with Him through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead For you, who were once dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has now made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses***" (vs 10-13).

Now, we have other sermons to get into the detail things of the technicalities of Colossians, the second chapter, which we won't get into today, because we're talking about "water baptism."

Now, let's come to Romans, the second chapter, please; and let's see what this circumcision is. Now, under the Old Covenant only the males were circumcised. In the New Covenant the circumcision of Christ, with the heart and the mind, is for both men and women. Now Paul explains that it has to be "in the Spirit."

Romans 2:28: "For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which is external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly ... [And of course, this refers to Jesus. Not that you become a Jew, as Jews are today. Because Christ is to dwell in you and Christ was a Jew, and so this has to refer to Christ in you.] ...and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit and not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God" (vs 28-29). And so this is what baptism does for you.

Now let's come to Romans 6:1, and we'll see the whole operation put together here. This is what becomes very important "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?" Now remember the quote that I put in *The Harmony of the Gospels* in the section on the Sermon on the Mount from Martin Luther? Who said, 'Though your sins be strong, let the grace be stronger. Though you murder a thousand times a day, or commit adultery a thousand times, God's grace is stronger.' That's a *false* grace, brethren. And unfortunately, that's one of the foundations of Protestantism. Paul says: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?.... [Because when

you are baptized, you die to sin.] ...Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him... [and the Greek means: *co-buried*; we are co-buried with Him] ...through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life.... [Meaning we don't walk as the world walks. We don't talk as the world talks.] ...For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His* resurrection..." (vs 1-5).

Now in reading that, how could anyone believe that people go to heaven when they die? And yet, you can go to funerals and hear ministers say, 'Well, you know, Aunt Mary's looking down on us right now from heaven.' And I remember the two Protestant ministers that were on Larry King Live after the 9/11 event, and Larry King said, 'Well, what about the young children that died in that?' The Protestant said, 'Instant heaven, instant heaven!' Well we know the Truth of what is called and shown in the book of Revelation, which is the second resurrection. ***It is the resurrection.*** Christ made it very clear: 'No one has ascended unto heaven except the Son of man who came down from heaven.' But when they reject the resurrection, they have to substitute going to heaven, which is a lie, in order to justify what they're teaching.

"...be *in the likeness of His* resurrection.... [That's a promise! That's our hope!] ...Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin **might be destroyed**... [showing that it's a process] ...so that we might no **longer be enslaved to sin**... [that means *to be the slave of sin*.] ...because the one who has died *to sin*... [through baptism] ...has been **justified from sin**" (vs 5-7). You are justified from sin. Being *freed* from sin gives the connotation that you shall never sin again after that—which is not true. You're *justified* from sins, being past sins.

"Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also... [which means: exactly in the same manner] ...you should indeed reckon... [this means: figure, calculate, base your life on this] ...yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body... [it's going to be there to pull you down. It's going to be there to tempt you because you still have human nature. But don't let it rule.

Don't let it reign.] ...by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead... [again, showing a process; showing time; showing overcoming; showing growing in grace and knowledge.] ...and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you..." (vs 8-14). That is if you have the Spirit of God, 'sin will not have dominion over you.'

Now, you can just give yourself over to it, that is true. And if you reject God and sin willfully, then you have allowed it to have dominion over you. But it will not have dominion over you if you continually yield to God. That's what it's talking about here. If you are yielding to God and striving for the righteousness; if you're going to God and drinking in of His Spirit, of His love, of His grace and all of those things, which build spiritual character, then sin will not have dominion over you. "...because you are not under law... [now, we'll talk about that a little bit later when we get to justification.] ...but under grace" (v 14). And that is true. You receive the Spirit of God, you are under His grace.

And as we saw, as we started out the chapter, what did it say? "What, shall we sin so that grace may abound?" ***NO!*** He explains the process here. We are under grace. Grace does not give license to sin.

- Grace gives us access to God.
- Grace gives us the Spirit of God as a gift.
- Grace gives salvation to us as a gift.
- Grace gives us repentance, which comes from God—which is a gift.
- And grace means *gift*.

So there we have it. We are under grace. Now, under the Old Covenant, when they sinned what did they have to do? *They had to offer an offering*—correct? They were under law. ***We are not under law.*** Though we don't reject the commandments and laws of God. Now that's the hardest ones for the Protestants to figure out.

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? ***MAY IT NEVER BE!***.... [He answers the question again. Then he explains it very clearly, and this is the whole process of growing and overcoming:] ...Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey" (vs 15-16). Now, the Greek there is 'doulos' which means *slave*. Ever have a bad habit you've had to overcoming. How about smoking? Chewing? Drinking? Gambling? Lottos? They can get a hold of people and just make them "slaves." They're slaves

to it. Well, *we're not be slaves to sin that we should obey it!*

Notice this: "...**you are servants of the one you obey**... [very interesting, isn't it?] ...whether it is of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?... [Now, if you obey sin unto death, who are you following? *Satan the devil!*] ...or of obedience unto righteousness?.... [Whom are you serving? *God the Father and Jesus Christ.*] ...But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed from *the* heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you; and having been delivered from sin... [or that is having been *justified* from sin] ...you became *the* servants of righteousness" (vs 16-18). And becoming the "servants of righteousness, your whole life then becomes one of:

- loving God
- serving God
- growing in grace and knowledge
- understanding His Word
- and living His way

That's why we are peculiar people on this earth. Those who don't like what God has, calls us "the followers of a cult." But the real truth is: *a cult is any substitution for God's way*. So what they label us, or others who keep the Sabbath, that's exactly what they are because they don't believe God! Now maybe you've never thought of it that way, but that's just the way it works out.

Now continuing, v 19: "I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh... [Sounds like it's a sickness, but it's really weakness of your flesh. You know, 'the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.'] ...for just as you *once* yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto sanctification. For when you were *the* servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed? For the end result of those things *is* death. But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and have become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end result *is* eternal life. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 19-23).

And that's the whole process. There it gives the whole meaning of repentance and baptism and the operation of the Holy Spirit of God in your life after baptism. And so, it's a completely different understanding than most people who profess Christianity in the world. When you truly understand the Scriptures, for what the Scriptures say, it gives

you a far different story than picking and choosing different Scriptures and giving personal interpretations upon it, and then claiming that Christ has done away with the law so you have liberty and grace to do anything you want to. So that's the meaning of baptism.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 2:10-13
- 2) Romans 2:28-29
- 3) Romans 6:1-23

Also referenced: Book:

- *The Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

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Justification

Fred R. Coulter

Now we've come to the section in the *Beliefs*' booklet on justification. Now, right next to the word 'justification' put an equal sign (=)—equals 'right standing with God through Jesus Christ.' Now, as the Bible defines it—now we need to understand this: 'Everyway of a man is right in his own eyes'—or *just* in his own eyes. Even some of the most despicable crimes committed, even the 9/11 crimes, were justified by what? *In the name of Allah*. Human beings cannot operate unless they "justify." And that's what the deceptiveness of human nature does. God also has a *justification* which is profound and very important, because it puts you in right standing with God. And notice the sequence of how these have come: you have *repentance*, *water baptism* and *justification*. Because those are the steps of the operation that God has. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 16).

Justification is freely granted to the called and repentant believer by God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Justification takes place when the believer's sins are removed by the blood of Jesus Christ and he or she is put into right standing with God the Father. In order to receive God's gift of justification, a person must repent toward God, believe in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and be baptized by [water] immersion. The believer is then cleansed from sin and is without condemnation, placing him or her in right standing with God the Father. This state of justification is called the 'gift of righteousness' because God the Father freely imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to the believer.

Now why is this so confusing in religious circles in the world?—*because it is!* They like to be justified for their past sins so they can continue in their sins. They don't exactly put it that way, but that's the sum of it. Let's look at a couple of Scriptures here and see if we can untangle it. And most of these will be in the book of Romans.

Romans 2:13: "Because the hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Showing that upon repentance you have to keep the laws and commandments of God. In other words, if a person is not willing to obey God, he is not going to be *justified*. It's that simple. Cannot be put in right standing with God. So the *doers of the law*.

Now, let's look at another Scripture which has thrown Protestantism into a complete utter disaster—and that's why it's going to die. You know Protestantism is dying, you know that don't you? Now, let's come to Romans, the ninth chapter. Then we will come to a very tricky verse, and I think we can unlock the trickiness of this verse.

Now, in one of my travels I turned on the TV and I saw Copeland's son preaching—first time I ever saw him preach. And he started right out there, Romans 10:4^[transcriber's correction]: "For Christ *is the end of works* of law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Bam! all the law of God is done away. Christ ended the law, there's nothing more to be kept. You think it's possible to take that one verse and throw out all the rest of the Bible. You think it's possible to *end* law. Try ending the law of gravity. Can't do it. Would Christ, Who is the Lawgiver, be the end of all law? That's what they assume. Now let's find out what it's talking about because this has great deal to do with *justification*.

Let's come back to Romans 9:30, because remember, men made the chapter breaks. It flows right through otherwise. "What then shall we say? That *the* Gentiles, who did not follow after righteousness, have attained righteousness, even *the* righteousness that *is* by faith."

- By believing in God
- By being baptized
- By receiving the Holy Spirit
- By walking in newness of life
- So forth.

"But Israel, although they followed after a law of righteousness, did not attain to a law of righteousness. Why?... [How did that happen? You know, just like the Pharisee and the publican.] ...Because *they did not seek it by faith, **by works of law***.... [In every case in the book of Romans, with the exception of Rom. 2:14, '**the** works of **the** law' should read: 'works of law.' Because in the Greek the definite article is not there, and with the definite article not being there it has a different meaning altogether. By works of law.] ...for they stumbled at the Stone of stumbling, exactly as it is written: 'Behold, I place in Sion a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense, but everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed'" (vs 30-33).

Romans 10:1: "Brethren, the earnest desire of my heart and my supplication to God for Israel is for salvation. For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God... [There are a lot of people that have zeal for God—a lot of people.] ...but **not according to**

knowledge.... [And that's why I recommended that you read the book, *The Code of Jewish Law*. If you haven't read *The Code of Jewish Law* you do not understand what he's talking about. The Jews have laws for everything to justify them to Judaism. **That does not justify them to God.** And they are all 'works of law.' So they have a 'zeal, but not according to knowledge.'] ...For they, being ignorant of the righteousness *that* comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (vs 1-3).

Now then, how do people today establish their own righteousness if you're not a Jew? Well, the Catholics have established theirs haven't they—eliminated the Sabbath and proclaimed Sunday as the day of worship. Confess your sins to the priest, partake of the seven sacraments, obey the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. That's their own righteousness. **It's not the righteousness of God.** Protestants, likewise following in their footsteps, do the same thing. They're not submitting to the righteousness of God. They have a zeal for God, but "not according to knowledge" And being ignorant of God's way they go about to establish their own righteousness. And whenever you find any time anyone does away with any of the laws and commandments of God, **which we are to keep**, they always come up with their own devices—which is their own righteousness. It always happens. Some people don't like the Sabbath so they keep Sunday. They don't like the Holy Days, so they have Christmas, Easter, New Years, etc. **That's their own righteousness.** Some people don't believe in tithes and offerings so they have pledges. Well, that's a substitute system. **That's their own righteousness.** God has the best way through tithes and offerings. Whatever it may be. Same way with clean and unclean foods. "Oh, well, that's not for us today." Listen, don't you think they could cook pork well done, way back when? **Yes!** The truth is you can cook pork well done and you look under a microscope and you still see the trichinosis in it. God had a reason for that. Now's not the time. When I get to the section *clean and unclean meats* I'll explain that the New Testament Church taught to eat clean foods.

Verse 3: "...have not submitted to the righteousness of God.... [What were they seeking? **Their own righteousness!** How were they doing it? **By works of law!** Now we can understand v 4 very clearly, because v 4 cannot be taken out of context with what is there.] ...For Christ *is the end of works* of law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (vs 3-4). Because it's talking about 'works' of law. It's not talking about **all** the laws of God. As Paul said, 'God forbid.' Shall you murder and say 'God, I

have license.' So you bow down to an idol and say, 'This is my god, like the Dalai Lama. I like to call him the 'deli-lama.' He points to this little statue in an interview and says, 'That's my boss.' No! Christ is 'the end of the works of law for righteousness to everyone that believes'—and that's the context. So that's what it means.

"For Moses wrote *concerning* the righteousness that *comes through* the law, 'The man who has practiced those things shall live by them'" (v 5). That is true, but there's another profound thing which you can read in the *Passover* book, that under Moses **they were justified in the flesh**, to the temple, because they did not have the Holy Spirit of God. God does not give salvation to some people one way and salvation to other people another way. **He gives it to all people the same way.** And that's why when you understand about the second resurrection those who have not been called now will have the second physical life for a first opportunity **because they never had it while they lived, because God didn't call them.** So, God is (how shall we say the modern word today) God is fair. You got to have fairness—God is fair. Better way of putting it: **God is righteous and God is just.**

Now, let's look at some other Scriptures concerning this. So, Rom. 10:4 has absolutely nothing to do with the termination of the laws and commandments of God. **It terminates the works of law of sacrifices and rituals**—that's what it terminates.

Now, let's come back to Romans 3 and let's look at another difficult verse—and this really blew me away when I first read it. And I couldn't understand it. This is where they get all confused. Let's see if we can eliminate some of that confusion today. Romans 3:20: "Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him.... [When I first read that I said, 'What am I doing keeping the commandments of God?' That was a stumper for me. Then I went on.] ...for through *the law is the* knowledge of sin.... [I understood that. 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' I understood that. This next verse I didn't understand either:] ...But now, *the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law... [And I thought, 'How can you have righteousness without the law?' Because you read that and you think that is the absence of law. Does it mean the absence of law? Or does the Greek mean something else? We'll answer the question here.] ...being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (vs 20-21).

Now, those two verses seem, in the *King James*, very contradictory and reasoning in a circle and hard to understand. Now however, if you understand concerning 'works of law'—now let me

read it to you the way it should be translated and the way that it will be translated in the coming New Testament, here—and this is directly from the Greek: “Therefore by works of law... [Ah-ha, that is the sacrifices and rituals] ...there shall no flesh be justified before Him... [Why? *Because there’s no repentance, there is no baptism.*] ...for through the law is the knowledge of sin.... [all the laws and commandments of God tell us what is righteous, and breaking that is sin. All of the rituals and animal sacrifices was a reminder of sin, year-by-year, as the Apostle Paul says.] ...But now, *the righteousness of God*... [which is right standing with God in heaven above—separate, not ‘without’; not the absence of] ...**that is separate** from the law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets” (vs 20-21). Now, how did the sacrifice of Christ come? By law or by grace? *By grace!* Is that separate from the law and the prophets? *Yes*, even though they witness to it. It is a separate operation. It is a special, separate, spiritual operation that God does.

For example: If a person commits murder and then escapes. You can probably see some of these documentaries on television. There was an account of one man, he escaped, wasn’t arrested. He went to Colorado and he lived an exemplary life. And lo and behold, twenty years later when they had the *Most Wanted* on television; had his picture, someone recognized him and turned him in. Now then, just suppose he came before the judge and said, “Judge, look, I want you to overlook this murder, because after all I’ve lived a good life for twenty years.” Did his living a good life for twenty years make right the murder that he committed? *NO!* The truth is, ***no law justifies you***, period. And in keeping the laws and commandments of God ***you are not seeking justification***. You are living in obedience. And that is a different operation.

Now that’s why it says, Romans 2:13: “Because the hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Because you can’t be living in a state of sin when you’re justified, ***you must repent and change your ways***, then you are not living in a state of sin. ***Then*** the blood of Christ is applied to your life and you are justified. Law cannot justify you.

Let’s use another example: Suppose you didn’t keep any day Holy or suppose you are a Sunday-keeper for years and years, and all of a sudden you find out about the Sabbath. So you start keeping the Sabbath. That’s a good step. Now suppose you never go any further, you never repent, you’re never baptized, you never follow through on it and it comes time of the resurrection and God says you’re still a sinner. But he says, ‘Well, I’ve been keeping the Sabbath. When I found out about it, I kept it.’ And God says, ‘All your Sabbath-keeping

previous when you were breaking it was required and all your Sabbath-keeping that you’ve been doing since then does not undo the sin which happened previously.’ So when people say that we are seeking to be justified by Sabbath-keeping, they are incorrect; because we are only justified by the sacrifice of Christ. ***And nothing, nothing, brethren, can replace the sacrifice of Christ to forgive your sins, period!*** No law! No person! No sacrifice! can do that whatsoever. And I mean ‘animal sacrifice.’

Now let’s read on, how is it done? Romans 3:22: “Even the righteousness... [which then is ‘justification’—*being put in right standing with God*] ...of God *that is* through the faith of Jesus Christ... [you believe what God has said. You believe in the sacrifice of Christ and you believe in the blood of Christ, and that justifies you. ***Nothing else does!***] ...toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference.” Because even to this day, the Jews say they have the corner on the God-market. ‘We’re the chosen people,’ they say. Well, if you’re the chosen people, thank you, I don’t want any of that because I don’t think you’re too chosen being over there in Israel, called today. Unless, you just think about it, all they’ve gone through, through the years, they are not the chosen people, because they rejected Christ, then God rejected them, and that’s just the long and the short of it—and they have to repent like everybody else; and they have to accept Jesus Christ.

Now notice verse 23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... [everyone has] ...*but* are being justified freely by His grace... [Not through law-keeping. Commandment and law-keeping is required. That’s why the ‘doers of the law’ shall be justified. The *hearers* won’t. But they do not have the blood of Jesus Christ applied to them because they’re not willing to quit sinning.] ...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus...[‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’] ...Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation... [which is continually atoning, cleansing sacrifice] ...through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God...” (vs 23-26).

Now, let me just clarify one thing here—we’re almost done—let me just clarify one thing: ***All sin is past sin!*** Now, what do I mean by that? Today, sitting here today, have you sinned tomorrow? No, because tomorrow hasn’t come, has it? How could you sin tomorrow, here today? It’s an incongruous statement. When you sin in a moment of time, as soon as you have sinned, it is past, is it not? *Yes!* So that’s why it is says ‘of past sins’—so

that you cannot have something like the Catholic Church has of selling indulgence for future sin. And that's in the very Bible they have, you know—which they read out of occasionally.

“...of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus. Therefore, where *is* boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The law of works*? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a **law of faith**.... [Now, how about that. There's law and faith put together. The 'law of faith,' which means: *this is the rule of belief in God and the law by which now through faith you have your sins forgiven through Christ, rather than works of law of ritual and sacrifices.*] ...Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith, separate from works of law.... [It's a separate operation. The way you can always remember it is this: ***Nothing can forgive your sins but the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ, period!***] ... *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of the Gentiles? YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles, since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law” (vs 25-31).

And how is that established? So that you may love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being, and that you do it from the heart and not do it exteriorly just because it is there in the letter. And that is how you are justified to God—put in right standing with Him, which is a great blessing and privilege that God has done because He's called you by grace. And the Great Sovereign of the universe has made you then—upon baptism and receipt of the Holy Spirit—one of His begotten children, and you await the resurrection and the return of Jesus Christ. That's how you're justified.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scripture References:

- 1) Romans 2:13
- 2) Romans 10:4
- 3) Romans 9:30-33
- 4) Romans 10:1-5
- 5) Romans 3:20-31

Also referenced:

- Books: *The Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried, Hyman Goldin

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Righteousness Righteousness of Law

Fred R. Coulter—June 19, 1999

Let's turn to the section righteousness and we will begin *The Righteousness of the Law*. And as we have in each section, when we come to it, what we will do we will read the belief: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 16-17).

God is both Creator and Lawgiver. When God created mankind, He also established righteous laws which govern man's relationship with Him and with his fellowman. The laws of God draw a clear line between actions that are good and righteous in God's eyes as opposed to acts that are evil and sinful. Without God's laws, there would be no sin. The Scriptures declare that "where there is no law there is no sin....for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The Biblical record of the sins of Adam and Eve, and the nations which descended from them, makes it clear that God's laws have been obligatory upon mankind from the beginning.

In Old Testament times, a man or woman who kept the commandments of God, fulfilling His requirements in the letter of the law, was counted as righteous before God. This type of righteousness, which was earned by doing the works of the law, brought many physical and material blessings from God—health and prosperity, deliverance from enemies, peace and long life. When God covenanted with Israel, He proclaimed through Moses that those who kept His laws and commandments "shall live in them" because they would be spared the punishment and curses that were appointed for lawbreakers—including death by capital punishment.

Although the righteousness of the law resulted in many blessings to the obedient, fulfilling the letter of the law did not and could not earn eternal salvation. The promise of salvation and eternal life is God's free and undeserved gift and is offered only through the righteousness of faith. It cannot be earned by fulfilling the letter of the law. The required righteousness of the letter of the law was a "schoolmaster" or tutor to reveal the sinfulness and weakness of human nature

and to point to the need for a better righteousness—the righteousness of faith.

Let's just begin with some of the Scriptural references right there—Genesis 3. Now remember, whatever God commands, going against that command is sin. And if we keep that in mind then we will understand even though we have the general summary of things here, concerning the creation and the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (which we have covered here in the recent past), there is still sin.

Genesis 3:11—after Adam said that he hid himself because he was naked: "And He [God] said, 'Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat.'" So, any command of God when broken or gone against is sin. Now we know from the things we covered before, that by one man sin entered into the world—now that is Adam—and by sin, death, and death passed to all. So this is sin.

Whenever there is sin, everyone looks for a way to blame someone else; and this is basic in human nature down to this day. "And the man said, 'The woman whom You gave *to be* with me.... [It's God's fault. It's God's fault because 'You gave me a woman.'] ...she gave me of the tree, and I ate.' And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What *is* this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate'" (vs 12-13). And so God does not take to palming the sin off to someone else. You're still held responsible for it.

Now, we won't go into all about Adam and Eve and everything that happened; but to show you that there is sin, let's come to Genesis 4:3 and the occasion of the giving the offering by Abel and Cain. "It came to pass that Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground." It's not wrong to bring an offering of the fruit of the ground, according to the commandments of God as He gave instruction. There are firstfruits which are to be brought. There is tithe which is to be brought. So apparently he did something other than what God commanded. Now, a fruit of the ground offering was never given to forgive sin; was never given as a special offering, like a burnt offering—it never had the weight of that kind of offering. So apparently Cain, in bringing this offering, was trying to put that kind of weight upon it, which was contrary to the way of God.

“And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock... [Now, just as aside here: Firstlings tell us that there was a law of the firstborn. And you can read that when we get into the book of Moses—we won’t during this series. But the firstborn were to be redeemed. And the firstborn was then, with the offering here, was to be brought where then it was to be offered to God.] (So he): “...brought the firstlings of his flock *and* of the fat of it. And the LORD had regard unto Abel and his offering, but He did not have regard unto Cain and his offering. And Cain was extremely angry!.... [and as Tyndale translates it: *glowered*] ... and his countenance fell. And the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well... [according to the letter of the law] ...shall you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. Its desire *is* for you, but you must rule over it!’” (vs 4-7)—that’s the way it should read—it is in the masculine tense there in the Hebrew, but it should read ‘it.’

So it shows that even God expects those without His Holy Spirit to do what is right according to the letter of the law. And in that he [Cain] would have been accepted for what he did. This is way before salvation being offered. So we’ll cover that a little bit later.

Now, let’s see what happens when sin grows. And as we’re living in the world today, and as Jesus said, ‘As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be in the days of the coming of [the] Son of man.’

Let’s turn to Genesis, the sixth chapter, please, and let’s see the account here. When the world ignores God and rejects God, or creates its own gods; and as we know from history and in the New Testament, that Cain’s way was called *the way of Cain*. So Cain invented his own religion, but because he killed Abel, he was exiled even further and cut off from God. So in creating his own religion, then he created something which was not related to God but it had all the trappings of things which were supposed to relate to God.

Now, if you’ve never heard of the book, or if you’ve never read the book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, let me recommend that you get it. And if you’re on the net, you can surf the net and there are several areas where you can get *The Two Babylons*—and that will show you the antiquity of all of the pagan religions going clear back to the time of Cain and coming up to the time of Noah before the Flood, and then the time of Noah right after the Flood. So it’s very significant when Jesus said that in the days of the coming of the Son of

man, that it will be the same as it was in the days of Noah.

Now let’s read it here, Genesis 6:5—and this is where we are headed in the world today: “And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.” Now, what you may want to do, you may want to look at the Ten Commandments of God; just make a listing of those, and when you sit down in front of your television, just run some little accounting tick marks, and just go right through wherever you see a commandment of God broken, just take your little sheet and tick right alongside there. You can start out with ‘no other gods before the true God.’ You’ll fill up the whole page. You might have to have a separate page for each one.

- you shall not make any graven image or bow down to it
- shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
- remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy
- honor your father and mother
- shall not commit murder
- shall not commit adultery

and all the rest, all the way down to the tenth one on coveting. And every time you see an ad, you can put one by the tenth commandment of coveting; because all of those are based upon covetousness.

But what you’re going to see is that today we have more forces coming in upon our minds to bring us to evil even in a greater way than it was here. We’ve got television; we have music; we have video games; we have literature; we have art; we have all of these things. So when you look at it, when God says that He shut the whole world up under sin—He literally has. And it’s going to multiply, and it’s going to increase just like this.

Now God was so sad at this point, “And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.’ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (vs 6-8). Now here is a great lesson for us. There are very few who really want to follow God. There are millions which say, ‘Oh yes, we want God—our way!’ ***But you can’t have God your way!*** You must have God His way, because He is God and you are not.

“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And these are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (vs 8-9).... (v 11): “And the earth

was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (vs 11-12). Now, that’s why Christ must come the second time! And He’s going to let this build up in the greatest crescendo that has ever been. We’ll save that for another time. We’re looking at the righteousness of the law.

Now, let’s come to Leviticus 18:15. God gave all the laws and commandments and statutes to Israel. And of course, most religions today reject the laws and commandments and statutes of God by saying, ‘Well, they all were done away in Christ.’ We’ll cover that a little bit later; we’ll see that, no, it was never done away in Christ. So you can count that as one of the lies of the evil imaginations of religious people.

Now let’s just begin, Leviticus 18:1: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, “I *am* the LORD your God. As they do in the land of Egypt where you dwelt, you shall not do. And you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Neither shall you walk in their ordinances.... [That is, all of their false religious gods and their system of religion that they had; because they did not worship God. All of their righteousness was, in fact, sin!]: ...You shall do My judgments and keep My ordinances, and walk in them. I *am* the LORD your God.”’” (vs 1-4).

Now, if you want a very interesting Bible study, do this: you might get a concordance. If you don’t have a concordance, you can get a *Strong’s Concordance* at any Bible bookstore, and you look up the phrase: ‘I am the Lord’ and see how many times, through the Bible, God says He is the Lord. And I think that will be very instructive for you to understand that God’s Word is Truth; God’s Word is righteous; and what God says He backs it up with His very being—‘I am the Lord your God.’

Now, v 5: “And you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live in them. I *am* the LORD.” So they were to do them. They were to live in them.

Now, let’s come to Deuteronomy 28 for just a minute. We’ll just touch on it here; just summarize it. Now you can write in for two more detailed sermons on *The Righteousness of the Law* and *The Righteousness of Faith*. Let’s go to Deuteronomy 28—showing the righteousness of the law. The blessings that would come for doing these physically; keeping them in the letter of the law.

Deuteronomy 28:1: “And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of

the LORD your God to observe *and* to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth.” Now we’re going to see how God deals with nations in just a bit. So this has to do with physical nations, physical people, keeping the commandments of God in the letter of the law—the righteousness of the law—which if a man do even he shall live in them.

“And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you if you will obey the voice of the LORD your God.... [Now, that’s another interesting study. Look up all the places where it talks about the ‘voice of the Lord, your God.’ And I think you’ll find out that what God says, He means.] ...Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the field. Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, the increase of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep. Blessed *shall be* your basket and your store.... [And this is what everyone wants— isn’t it? Doesn’t every nation want this? *Yes!*] ...Blessed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. The LORD shall cause your enemies that rise up against you to be stricken before your face. They shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon you in your storehouses, and all that you set your hand to. And He shall bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you” (vs 2-8).

“...establish you as a Holy people (v 9). You’ll “...abound in goods, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you” (v 11). Now then, He says, v 15: “And it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD your God to observe and to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.” And as I read some of these, notice that they are upon us as a nation now. Notice that they are upon the world today.

- “Cursed *shall* you *be* in the city,
- and cursed *shall* you *be* in the field
- Cursed *shall be* your basket and your store.
- Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body,
- and the fruit of your land,
- the increase of your livestock,
- and the flocks of your sheep
- Cursed *shall* you *be* when you come in,
- and cursed *shall* you *be* when you go out

The LORD shall send on you cursing, vexation, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do until you are destroyed, and until you perish quickly because

of the wickedness of your doings *by* which you have forsaken Me” (vs 16-20).

Then you read the rest of Deut. 28. And you need to know that that is coming upon this nation; and it’s also coming upon the world. That’s why God is calling you out of it, to repent of these things and come to Him.

Now, let’s come to Ezekiel, the twentieth chapter—and this becomes very important. Now, we’ve already covered concerning the Sabbath and Holy Days in this series, but let’s just re-emphasize it here in Ezek. 20. And this is showing where God corrected the children of Israel because they didn’t keep His Sabbaths; because they didn’t keep His Holy Days—and that’s very important. What we also need to understand is this: There is not one word in all of the Bible—Old Testament or New Testament—that shows God ever approved of, or sanctified Sunday as the day of worship—NOWHERE! So, if you’re a Protestant and you believe that you are correct, and you believe that you should keep Sunday, then you need to challenge yourself to prove, from the Scriptures, whether you should keep Sunday or the Sabbath as the day that God created and gave.

Now let’s pick it up here in Ezekiel 20:11—God said, “And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them.... [the letter of the law; righteousness of the law.] ...And also I gave them My Sabbaths [plural] to be a sign between Me and them, that *they* might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them” (vs 11-12). You can just take the opposite reasoning here, which is important to also consider. If you don’t keep the Sabbath, how can you know the Lord? And if you do keep Sunday—which is not the Sabbath—then the Lord that you know is not the Lord of the Bible. So you need to understand that.

Now notice, v 13: “But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes, and they despised My ordinances, which *if* a man does, he shall even live in them. And they greatly polluted My Sabbaths....” Well, you can read the rest of the account, what God did there in Ezek. 20.

Let’s come to Jeremiah 18, because this becomes very important. This tells us that God judges all nations. All wars, all famines, all floods, disasters do not come by accident or caprice. They come by the judgment of God. Notice what He says here:

Jeremiah 18:1—so we can get whole story flow: “The Word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘Arise and go down to the potter’s

house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.’ Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he was working at his wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you *even* as this potter?’ says the LORD. ‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hands, *so are* you in My hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy *it*’” (vs 1-7).

We’re going to see some examples here. Let’s go back to Genesis 15, for just a minute. When God gave the covenant to Abraham, He also told him why it was not going to come immediately; because there was something that had yet to happen, and it had to do with the behavior of the Canaanites.

Genesis 15:13: “And He said to Abram, ‘You must surely know that your seed shall be sojourners in a land *that is* not theirs, (and shall serve them and afflict them) four hundred years. And also I will judge that nation whom they shall serve. And afterward they shall come out with great substance. And you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full’” (vs 13-16). So God let’s the iniquity come to the full before He brings the final judgment.

Now back here to Jeremiah 18:8—and He did pull them down, He did pluck them down. Now, He’s talking to Israel, He’s talking to Judah—and let’s understand something here very clearly: ***The ten tribes of Israel were sent off into captivity because they didn’t repent. And the tribe of Judah—the Levites and the Benjamites with them—were sent off into captivity to Babylon because they didn’t repent.*** Jeremiah 18:8: “If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them.”

Go to the book of Jonah and let’s see an example. The book of Jonah, in the Minor Prophets (as they are called), is very instructive for us. Now, Jonah was a prophet that didn’t want to do what God wanted him to do. So he decided that he was going to get on a vessel and sail away. God caused a storm, also raised up a big, huge fish or whale or whatever it was, caused a tempest. Finally, the crew, understanding that this storm was from God, they confronted Jonah and he said, ‘Yes, I’m the reason. I’m running from God.’ So they said, ‘Throw him overboard.’ So they threw him overboard and the fish swallowed him up and he was in there three

days and three nights. And I've often wondered, I wonder what he was thinking when he was in there.

It also shows another lesson, too: It doesn't pay to argue with God. You may not land in the mouth of a big fish and be spared. So anyway, God told him 'prophesy to Nineveh.' Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. Now the Assyrians were Gentiles; they were not of Israel and Judah. And this is important to understand: that God judges all nations—Israel and Judah and also all the rest of the nations.

Now he says here, Jonah 3:4: "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried and said, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God. And they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them, for word came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne. And he laid aside his robe from him, and covered himself *with* sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his great ones, saying, 'Do not let man or beast, herd or flock taste anything; do not let them feed, nor drink water. But let man and animal be covered *with* sackcloth, and cry mightily to God. And let them each one turn from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. Who knows? God may repent, and He may have pity and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we do not perish.' And God saw their works... [in the letter of the law] ...that they turned from their evil way. And God repented of the evil that He had said He would do to them, and He did not do *it*" (vs 4-10).

And then Jonah was displeased with God. And the moral of the story is: 'Jonah, I will have you do what I want in spite of you; and I **will do** what I want also in spite of you.' So it was done. And it fulfills what He said here in Jeremiah.

Now, let's come back to Jeremiah 18:7-8: "If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy *it*; if that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them." Now, that's exactly what happened.

You can go back and see how it happened with the kings of Judah. When there was a righteous king who repented, then God restored the land, restored the people. When there was an evil king that came along, then they had wars and sickness and disease and all of those things.

Verse 9: "And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant *it*; if it does evil in My sight,

that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good" (vs 9-10). Then He says to the house of Judah there: 'Couldn't I do this with you?'

But the point I want to make is that **God judges all nations**. The things that happen in the world, it's all in the part of the scheme of God, **based upon the righteousness of the letter of the law**.

Now, let's understand why God did not require them to keep the **spirit of the law**. The reason is that God had not given the Holy Spirit to them. Let's see how the people of Israel did. Moses is reiterating what happened when the Ten Commandments were given, and here's what the people said to Moses:

Deuteronomy 5:27: "[Moses], You go near and hear all that the LORD our God shall say. And you speak to us all that the LORD our God shall speak to you, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.'.... [All people are well intentioned. They intend to do good, but they don't have the spiritual heart to truly do good.] ...And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, "I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken. 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!" (vs 27-29).

So the key is: Until Jesus Christ came to reveal the righteousness of faith, there was not the Holy Spirit given to the people in general in order to keep the commandments of God beyond just the letter. So that's why He required the letter of the law. BUT, they didn't even have the heart to keep the *letter of the law*; because they would get involved in other religions and they would modify it and adjust it to their liking.

Now, to show you that keeping in the letter of the law cannot earn salvation, let's come to the book of Job, please. Let's come to Job 34. You can read the first part, that Job was perfect and upright; sincere in the letter of the law. Job did all the law-keeping and all the good things that God required. There was nothing wrong with the things that he did. However, human nature in Job exalted itself and he thought that he was as good as God, or better than God.

Job 34:5: "For Job has said, 'I am righteous; but God has denied me justice.'.... [So that was quite a thing that he said there.] (v 35): ...'Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words *were*

without wisdom.' My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end... [which he was] ...because *his* answers *are* like those of wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps *his* hands among us, and multiplies his words against God'" (vs 5, 35-37).

Job 35:1: "And Elihu answered and said, 'Do you think this to *be* right, you *that* say, "My righteousness *is* more than God's"? For you say, "What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?" I will answer your words, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens...' " (vs 1-5). Then he gave quite a long dissertation and finally, Job got his wish. Elihu quit speaking, and Job 38:1: "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind..."

Now let's come to Job 40, because this is the most instructive that we need here, because this shows us that, even though in the letter of the law you do what is well, you are blessed of God, you receive the physical blessings—that you cannot earn salvation. That's important before we get into the *Righteousness of Faith*. **No man, by any work, anywhere, can earn salvation.** This is what God teaches here in Job 40. Let's read it. Let's see what you have to be able to do in order for you to earn salvation for yourself. And this is the thing that has stumped theologians and people alike, because they cannot understand the difference between the *righteousness of the law* and the *righteousness of faith*; the requirement of the *letter of the law*, for the physical blessings *vs* the requirement of the *spirit of the law and the Holy Spirit* to have righteousness of faith. And too many religions mix the two. And too many of them end up with a lot of dos and don'ts and things that you have to do—like penance and 'hail Marys' and 'our Fathers' and kinds of good works—so that you can earn forgiveness; so that you can earn salvation. All of that is contrary to God—not in the Bible, by the way, anywhere.

Job 40:1: "And the LORD answered Job and said, 'Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*? He who reproves God, let him answer it.'.... [He's saying to Job, *Come on, tell Me, answer it, Job.*] ...And Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.'.... [then he shut his mouth] ...And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind..." (vs 1-6).

Now notice God's mercy. He didn't exterminate Job. He could have destroyed him right on the spot, but He didn't do it. "...answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment? Will you

condemn Me so that you may be righteous?'" (vs 6-8).

Now this is the whole thing that every single religion does: when they come along and they say the commandments of God you don't have to keep; the judgments of God you don't have to keep. And what they do with that, they cut themselves off further from God.

"Will you even annul My judgment?.... [God is righteous in everything He does.] ...Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous? And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?... [Here's what you need to do in order to save yourself by your own works]: ...Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency..." (vs 8-10). Okay, Job, let's see you turn on your glory.

- Can you shine and have glory as the sun, 'like I am'? *No!*
- Can you? *No!*
- Can any man or woman? *No!*
- Can you save yourself? *No!*
- Can any work save you? *No!*

But you're required to keep the letter of the law.

"Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you." (vs 10-14)—or that is, your own righteousness can save you.

So Job repented. Then when Job repented he entered into the realm of the righteousness of faith; because he trusted God. I'll let you study the rest of the Scriptures there. One we need to come to, Romans, the third chapter, and this is one Scripture which has thrown religious people, theologians, students down through the ages because they did not understand what it really means.

Romans 3:20: "Therefore, by works of law... [Let's understand something from the Greek. There is no definite article in the Greek for *the law*. If there were the definite article, it would be 'ho nomos.' In this case it's just 'nomos'—meaning *works of law*. Not referring to the Ten Commandments necessarily, but any work of any law.] ...there shall no flesh be justified before Him... [WHY? *Because law does not serve to justify.*]: ...for through *the law is the knowledge of sin.*"

That's what the law does. There was never ever any law created, which if you did it, you could earn eternal life. Not one single law! For example, let's just use the example: You do something a thousand times—whatever it may be. Keep the Sabbath a thousand times in a row. That you always love your wife, ten years in a row without failing. That you always submit to your husband and never speak one word against him, ten years in a row. At the end of ten years you've got it made. So, lo and behold, you perform that 998 times, and you die. Then you're resurrected and brought up before the throne of God; you expect to be given eternal life. You know the old story, there's St. Peter standing there and he's got your list and the account of good deeds and bad deeds. And he looks at it and says, 'Lord, this person did pretty good. Got 998. But you decreed it must be a thousand, so therefore, You're word is true, so therefore, you must go into the hell-fire of ever-burning hell. You cannot come into the Kingdom of God because you were short two.' Now that would be total mercilessness, wouldn't it? Just an example. ***You cannot earn it, bit must be given.***

So the key is: "...for through *the* law *is* the knowledge of sin.... [As we've seen, law cannot save.] : ...But now, *the* righteousness of God... [which we will cover here, the righteousness of faith] ...*that is* separate from law..." (vs 20-21). And this is another world which has just thrown people for a loop, because they say you don't need any law, all you need is Christ. But the word here 'without' does not mean *the absence of*. It means *separate from*. And there's a distinct difference between the *absence of* and *separate from*.

"But now, *the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus" (vs 20-24).

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural references:

- 1) Genesis 3:11-13
- 2) Genesis 4:3-7
- 3) Genesis 6:5-9, 11-12
- 4) Leviticus 18:1-5
- 5) Deuteronomy 28:1-9, 11, 15-20
- 6) Ezekiel 20:11-13
- 7) Jeremiah 18:1-7
- 8) Genesis 15:13-16
- 9) Jeremiah 18:8

- 10) Jonah 3:4-10
- 11) Jeremiah 18:7-10
- 12) Deuteronomy 5:27-29
- 13) Job 34:5, 35-37
- 14) Job 35:1-5
- 15) Job 38:1
- 16) Job 40:1-14
- 17) Romans 3:20-24

Also referenced:

Books:

- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *Strong's Concordance*

Sermons:

- *The Righteousness of the Law*
- *The Righteousness of Faith.*

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Righteousness Righteousness of Faith

Fred R. Coulter—June 19,1999

Now, we will cover the **Righteousness of Faith**. So let's take the *Beliefs* booklet and let's follow along with the statement on *The Righteousness of Faith*. And the righteousness of faith is something you cannot earn. It is the gift of God. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 17-18).

The righteousness of faith is the gift of righteousness which the believer receives through the abundance of the Father's grace. It is called "the righteousness of faith" because only through faith in Jesus Christ is it possible to partake of this righteousness. When a believer is justified by faith in Jesus Christ and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as a begettal from God the Father, then the Father imputes to the believer the very righteousness of Jesus Christ, that "grace might reign through righteousness into eternal life, through Jesus Christ." This imputed righteousness is the gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by doing works of law. The righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to the believer by God the Father, far exceeds the righteousness required by the letter of the law. In His perfect righteousness, Jesus Christ not only observed the letter of the law but fulfilled every one of His Father's commandments in the full spirit of the law. His spiritual obedience was so perfect, pure and wholehearted that He always did those things which pleased God the Father. This perfect righteousness was accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, which He received without measure from the Father.

By His personal example and His teachings, Jesus magnified the laws and commandments of God and revealed the fullness of their intent and meaning. He showed that the spirit of the law does not nullify the letter of the law but requires a fuller, spiritual obedience. This spiritual obedience is beyond the capability of the natural mind and human will and can only be accomplished through Jesus Christ. The Scriptures reveal that when the believer is begotten with the Holy Spirit of God the Father, he or she begins to receive the very

mind of Christ. With Christ's mind, the believer is strengthened to live by every word of God in the full spirit of the law, not just in the letter. With "Christ in you, the hope of glory," the believer begins to have the laws and commandments of God written upon his or her mind. Thus the laws and commandments of God are established with their full, true spiritual meaning through grace and the gift of the righteousness of faith. This gift of spiritual righteousness which God grants to the believer gives him or her the power to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit unto eternal life. Through the righteousness of faith, the believer is truly fulfilling the Scripture, "The just shall live by faith."

Now let's look at some Scriptures here to understand this even more fully. Romans, the fifth chapter. This is where we find the righteousness of faith. Romans 5:17: "For if by the offense of one man... [Adam's offense] ...death reigned by the one... [And it has. All die. As in Adam, we all die.] ...how much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness... [That is imputed. That is given, because you believe.] ...reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ. So then, even as by the one transgression condemnation *came* unto all men, in the same way also, by the one act of righteousness *shall* justification of life *come* unto all men. For even as by the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, in the same way also, by the obedience of the one *Man* shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, so that transgression might abound; but where sin abounded, the grace *of God* did super-abound; so that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also might the grace *of God* reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs 17-21). So this is something that has to be given to you.

Now, let's look at the example of Abraham in Romans 4, because this is where he talks about Abraham and what he did, and so forth. Romans 4:1: "What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to *the* flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting, but not before God.... [Because as we saw in the book of Job, there is no way that all the good works of man can do to earn salvation.] ...For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness'" (vs 1-3).

Now, what does it mean *to believe*? That's the important thing. Believing is profound!

Let's come to John, the sixth chapter—and this is quite an instructive lesson here, because before anything can be done, the human mind must first believe. Everything that you do is based upon some kind of belief. Let's take the simple act of mailing a letter. You put a stamp on it and you drop it in the mailbox. You put it there because you believe that it is going to arrive to the addressee that you have on the front. And nearly 99.9-percent of time, it does. Once in a while it doesn't. They have a new machine that every once in a while malfunctions and it gobbles up the letters and then they put it in a plastic envelope and they mail it back to you, showing 'we made a mistake.' But there again, your belief is still rewarded because they send it back so you can redo it.

So everything you do is based upon some kind of belief. You turn the heat on when you're cold because your body says, 'I need to be warm,' and you move the thermostat because you believe—meaning also, you know—that the heat will come on. You get in your car and you pick up a map and you're going to drive somewhere and you follow the map because you believe that the map is correct and is going to lead you where you need to go.

So it's the same way with what we do. You **must believe** Christ and everything about Him. Not just believe He was a good man. Not just believe that He existed. Not just believe that He's the Son of God. But believe about everything that He was and stood for and preached and said. That's what you must believe.

Now here in John, the sixth chapter, it's quite an interesting account. Jesus fed the five thousand with the fishes and the loaves. And all of those who saw it, they said, 'Man, this is it! Free food!' John 6:13: "Then they gathered *them* together, filling twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten." Now just think of the money that you could make on this. I mean, just put this on Wall Street, to where you had ever-growing bread, to feed an ever-growing number of people and you ended up with more crumbs than what you started out with. And if we could just get our hands on this so we could make money. Man, we could sell stock to no end. All physical!

Verse 14: "Now when the men saw the miracle that Jesus had done, they said, 'Of a truth, this is the Prophet Who was to come into the world.' Because Jesus perceived that they were about to come and seize Him, so that they might make Him king... [kind of like a political convention. 'We're going to nominate this man for president; we're

going to draft him. Everybody agree. Yea, unanimous vote. Let's get him!'] ...He withdrew again to a mountain by Himself alone" (vs 14-15). Then He went across on the other side of the lake. They went looking for Him and couldn't find Him. They got in their boats and went on the other side of the lake. They said, 'Master, how'd you get here?'

Verse 26: "Jesus answered them and said, 'Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied.... [And how many people have that kind of religion that it's for their own personal gain.] ...Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed.' Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?'.... [In other words, they want to do a work of law. 'Tell us, Lord, give us the word.' That's what a lot of people want to know—right?] ...Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent'" (vs 26-29).

So it's not an exterior work that you can do, but it's an interior belief—from within—that begins the whole process of the righteousness by faith. **You must believe!** That is your part. Then repent and be baptized, as we have seen, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then God imputes to you the righteousness of faith.

Now, come back to Romans 4:3: "For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.... [the righteousness of faith] ...Now to the one who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace; rather, *it is reckoned* as a debt.... [You work for a man, agree for so much an hour. At the end of the period of time, pay-period, he owes you money—right? He is indebted to you and he has a debt to you to pay—correct? *Yes!* That's what it's talking about.] ...But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (vs 3-5). That's why belief is so important; because if you truly believe in Jesus Christ and everything that He stand for, and everything that He said, and your whole life is based upon that—**then you're starting to live the righteousness of faith.**

Verse 6: "Even as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness separate from works.... [Now, we're going to see that good works will flow from this righteousness—we'll see what that is.] ...'Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute *any* sin.'" (vs 6-7). Now,

let's understand something profound: There is a great struggle that takes place in the converted mind in overcoming sin; because the converted mind desires not to sin, and the Holy Spirit reveals sin in the mind and in action of the believer so that they may repent. And as long as you yield to the Spirit of God and repent, then God does not impute sin to you. Now that is hard for some people to grasp, because they say, 'Let's go sin the more then, so 'grace may abound' so we will not have sin imputed to us. And that's not the purpose of it. The righteousness of faith is not to do that! Then he shows that this comes upon those who are blessed with Christ, and those who are circumcised or uncircumcised.

Now, let's add a few things to this so we can see how this comes. Let's come to Galatians, the second chapter; because something has to happen to the inner ego—the self. And that is totally opposite of what is in the world today. And the world today, the greatest thing that they have is self-esteem. And self-esteem is *love yourself first*. Do everything you can to improve yourself and make yourself better. But that's starting with the wrong end. The Bible says you're to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your being'; because you believe. Then 'your neighbor as yourself'; because what happens when you have this self-love and this self-ego? *You love yourself, you are good to yourself*, but you end up hating and despising other people. Sooner or later it comes around to that. And that's why with this kind of teaching in the schools, we have the reaction of young people that we have today. It's all a part of that.

Now, let's come to Galatians 2:19: Paul says, "For I, through law... [law defines sin] ...died to law... [that means 'the wages of sin is death' and he died in baptism.] ...in order that I might live unto God.... [How is he going to 'live unto God'? *We'll see.*] ...I have been crucified with Christ... [the old self—ego—is crucified with Christ] ...yet, I live.... [same way with us, we're still living in the flesh] ...*Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me.... [In other words, Christ has to be in you; the Spirit of God has to be in you; the Spirit of God has to lead you; and ego—self, I—must not be the motivating factor, even though you're still living in the flesh.] ...Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith... [which is through the belief] ...that *very faith* of the Son of God..." (vs 19-20).

Now then, this is very interesting, because in the Greek it means that *you live by Christ's own faith in you*. So, it's not just your faith alone. Your faith alone may be weak. Like the father who

brought the demon-possessed son to the disciples and they couldn't cast them out. And when Christ came, He asked the father, 'Do you believe.' He says, 'Yes, I believe, but help my unbelief.' So it has to be Christ's faith in you. Belief, just carnally, is not enough to do it. Being convinced of it is not enough to do it. It has to be the faith of Christ in you.

"...Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *is* through *works of law*, then Christ died in vain" (vs 20-21). That means if the righteousness of faith came by law then Christ died in vain.

Now, let's see how we are to live with the law. Let's go back to Matthew 4:4, to show how we are to live in loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul and being. And this is not a religion. This then is a relationship. Matthew 4:3: "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered *and* said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God"' (vs 3-4). That is how we are to live. And you can't live that just by the righteousness of the law. You must live that by the righteousness of faith because Christ gives you the strength and power to do that—and imputes to you the righteousness.

Now, let's come here to Matthew 5:17: "Do not think... [that means, *don't let it enter into your mind.*] ...that I am come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." And most religionists and ministers when they say that, means that 'fulfill' means *to do away with*. But fulfill means to bring to its full. It's like this: You have a glass of water that is half full and you're going to fill it to the full. So that's exactly what Christ did. He came to fulfill and accomplish everything pertaining to Him—but to fill the law full with spiritual meaning and understanding on how it should be kept and observed. We'll see that in just minute.

"For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled" (v 18). Now, let's ask a question: Is heaven and earth still here? *Yes!* Has everything been fulfilled? *No!* Is everyone fulfilling the commandments of God? *No!*

Now then, v 19—pay special attention to this: "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say

to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 19-20). Now, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was very punctilious, according to the letter of the law. Not only God’s law, but all of their laws, which they added to it—hundreds and hundreds and thousands of their laws.

Now what you need to do: You need to find a source, and you can get it from the Hebrew Publishing in New York City—they’re probably online, you can look it up on the net if you desire—and order the book: *The Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin. This will give you an understanding of law-keeping in the letter. This will also show you why those laws can never save. So Christ, in saying here that “your righteousness has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.” So it’s going to take the *righteousness of faith* to do that.

Now then, He begins to explain about the *righteousness of faith* and the keeping of the commandments according to the spirit of the *righteousness of faith*. Let’s pick it up here in v 27. He expounds, He fulfills, He fills full this law. “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (vs 27-28). So now the *righteousness of faith* has to do with the changing of your heart and mind—not just the outward exterior point of it.

Now the righteousness of the law gets to the heart and core of where sin comes from. Let’s continue on and pick it up here in v 31: “It was also said *in ancient times*, ‘Whoever shall divorce his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.’ But I say to you, whoever shall divorce his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality... [which is, in the Greek: ‘porneia’ or *sexual immorality*.] ...causes her to commit adultery; and whoever shall marry her who has been divorced is committing adultery” (vs 31-32).

So in the world today, what do we have? In the letter of the law we have all kinds of law why people can divorce—for almost any reason they choose. And even if they have no reason to choose, they have no fault—no fault, default divorce. And all that is according to the letter of the law of the land; they think they’re doing right. But according to the letter of the law of God, they are sinning. But according to the spirit of the law, they are making absolutely no effort whatsoever to make the marriage work! All marriages are going to have

troubles and difficulties, and ups and downs; and when they do, you have to stick to it and ask God to help you repair it. That’s the only way it can be.

Now, let’s look at another one here—v 33: “Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the city of the great King*. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black. But let your word be *good*, your ‘Yes’ *be yes* and your ‘No’ *be no*; for anything that *is* added to these is from the evil one” (vs 33-37). In other words, He wants us, through the *righteousness of faith* and the Holy Spirit of God, to where that our ‘yes’ is true; our ‘no’ is true; and that we are not playing politics with language (as you know one President is very famous of doing that, depending on what ‘is’ is). That is not very righteous at all.

Moreover, let’s come over here and see what else we must do. And this is more difficult. Verse 43: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.... [and did not Christ do that during His ministry? *Absolutely!* That is hard to do. That is so contrary to human nature. But Christ did, didn’t He? Did not Christ die for us while we were still enemies? *Yes!* And yea, *us*, *before we were conceived!*] ...so that you yourselves may be *the children of your Father Who is in heaven*; for He causes His sun to rise on *the evil and on the good*, and sends rain on *the just and on the unjust*. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing?*” (vs 43-46). *Yes!* If you belong to a club and you love everyone in your club, and everyone that is not in your club or your gang you hate. That’s the whole basis of gangs in the cities today—right? *Yea!* And you shoot them down.

“And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is extraordinary?* Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing?* Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is in heaven* is perfect” (vs 47-48). Now, how can that be done? That is answered by the *righteousness of faith*. Now, take this verse, “...be perfect, even as your Father in heaven above is perfect” and compare this with v 20: “For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall

enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” v 48: “...be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” Now, how can you do that if you’re a human being with the ‘law of sin and death’ in you and ‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’? You can do that because God imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, if you believe and repent and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God, and are led of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let’s see how all of this works together. Let’s see what happens here. Let’s go to Colossians, the first chapter. First of all, it has to be Christ in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Colossians 1:12: “Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light.... [In other words, God is the one Who qualifies us. He made it possible for us.] ...Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [which He has, if you believe and repent and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God] ... and has transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins” (vs 12-14). And that’s the first step of the **righteousness of faith**—the forgiveness of sin.

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. By Him were all things created... [So now you’re in a relationship with your Creator.] ...the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things subsist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church; Who is *the* beginning, *the* firstborn from among the dead... [that’s what it means *firstborn of all creation, from the dead.*] ...so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in heaven. For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him; if indeed you continue in the faith... [believing] ...grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard...” (vs 15-23).

Now then, that’s all necessary so that you can understand v 27: “To whom God did will to make known... [by this process] ...what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Christ in

you! How does Christ come in you, and what does it do to you? Well, Christ *in you* is by the Holy Spirit.

Let’s go to Romans 8:9—Now, if you’ve repented, been baptized, received the Holy Spirit of God: “However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit... [as God views you. That’s something very important to understand.] ...if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you.... [Must be in you, Christ in you.] ...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.... [So there is an absolute demarcation, which is profound. You either have the Holy Spirit of God in you, or you don’t. And if it is in you, then you have the **righteousness of faith** imputed to you.]: ...But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness” (vs 9-10)—the imputed righteousness of faith]

“Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God” (vs 11-14). So you have to be led by the Spirit of God.

Now, what will the Spirit of God lead you to do? With the **righteousness of faith**? Let’s go to Hebrews, the tenth chapter. God will do something for you that is most profound. And this does not come by the righteousness of law. This comes by the **righteousness of faith**. And the **righteousness of faith** is by the covenant of belief.

Hebrews 10:16: “‘And this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,’ says the Lord. ‘I will put My laws into their hearts and in their minds I will write them.’” And they know that the human mind is capable of having things registered in it, much like it’s being inscribed or encrypted on the mind. So God will put His laws into your heart and mind. You have to study them. You have to know them. You have to seek God and all of these things; but that’s how the **righteousness of faith** will come. Then it will, last of all, give you the mind of Christ.

Let’s go to Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus.... [That means the mind, the attitude, the thoughts, the laws, all of that, spiritually.] ...Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a

servant; and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross” (vs 5-8).

Now here’s what this is to motivate us to do, v 12: “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed... [So with the ***righteousness of faith*** there is obedience, as we saw—***in the spirit.***] ... not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works ***in*** you... [Now God is working ***IN*** you by the ***righteousness of faith***, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, by His Word and His truth and His laws and His commandments.] ...both to will... [that means *giving you the desire to*] ...and to do according to *His* good pleasure” (vs 12-13).

And so, that’s the whole operation of the ***righteousness of faith***; and that is the difference between the righteousness of the law and righteousness of faith. Now there’s more that can be covered, so if you want those, you can write in for the sermon series on *The Two Righteousnesses*.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural references:

- 1) Romans 5:17-21
- 2) Romans 4:1-3
- 3) John 6:13-15, 26-29
- 4) Romans 4:3-8
- 5) Galatians 2:19-21
- 6) Matthew 4:3-4
- 7) Matthew 5:17-20, 27-28, 31-37, 43-48, 20, 48
- 8) Colossians 1:12-23, 27
- 9) Romans 8:9-14
- 10) Hebrews 10:16
- 11) Philippians 2:5-8, 12-13

Also referenced:

- Books: *The Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried & Hyman E. Goldin
- Sermon Series: *The Two Righteousnesses*.

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Sanctification

Fred R. Coulter—July 10, 1999

This is the series of the Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God. And let me just state here that what we have tried to do in all of these is not state a belief that ‘we believe’ as people, because we originate the thought in our minds. The reason being is that it’s of no consequence whatsoever what a person believes if they do not agree with the Word of God. So these are really the doctrines and beliefs, which you would find in the Holy Scriptures, which no church has a corner on. In other words, God is the one Who has all Truth. God is the one Who gives us the truth of His Scriptures, so therefore, if we put the Scriptures together and understand them in the sense that God wants us to understand them—which is the literal sense—what we will find, we’ll find that there can be unity and agreement on doctrinal beliefs because if you believe God and you believe the Bible, and put it together properly, then you will believe what is correct and what God wants you to believe.

Now, we’ve come so far. We just finished up the last one on the two righteousnesses—the *Righteousness of the Law* and the *Righteousness of Faith*. Now, let’s come to the next section here on sanctification. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 18)

Sanctification is the act of setting apart someone or something for a holy purpose and use. Christians are in a continuing state of sanctification after repentance, baptism by immersion, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit as a begetting from God the Father. In the Scriptures, Christians are referred to as saints, meaning those who have been made Holy by the sanctification of God the Father..

And that is because they have received the Holy Spirit.

Now let’s look at several Scriptures here. This one here is pretty much self-explanatory, so we’re not going to spend a lot of time going through a lot of in-depth Scriptural study on this. Let’s come to 1-Corinthians, the first chapter.

1-Corinthians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ... [or a *called apostle*. Now it says, ‘to be’ in the *King James*, but you’ll notice the ‘to be’—those two words—are printed in italic print. And always remember that *italic print* was added by the translators in hopes of clarifying something. But in some cases, it does not clarify it, but it gives a different sense to it if it’s not the correct insertion of words. Paul was not called *to be* an apostle, in the

sense that when he wrote this, he was a *called apostle*—already an apostle of Jesus Christ.] ...called by *the* will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, to the Church of God that is in Corinth, *the* called saints who have been sanctified... [Now notice, *sanctified, set apart*] ...in Christ... [That’s how you’re set apart and sanctified or made Holy.] ...in Christ Jesus, together with all those in every place who are calling on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours ” (vs 1-2).

That reflects a little bit of Catholic thinking, because ‘saints’ in the Catholic Church are those ‘good people’ who have done ‘good works’ and they have proved that they are worthy to go to heaven and make intercession for people on earth. But if you take out the two words ‘to be’—because ‘to be’ means a future sense—doesn’t it? You are ‘to be,’ according to the Catholics, in heaven and you are ‘to be’ a saint if you are beatified by the pope, to make intercession for people on earth. But this does not have that meaning in the original at all. The Greek means: *called saints*—currently, today. Anyone who has the Spirit of God *is a saint of God*. Why? *Because they have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God*, and ‘saint’ just refers back to one who has been sanctified.

So it has nothing to do with any of the religious connotations of Catholicism or Orthodoxy, where then, people go to heaven and become saints after they have been proclaimed so by the Pope. *Anyone who has the Holy Spirit now has been sanctified and is a saint!*

Now let’s come to the next Scripture reference here: Ephesians 5:25. This shows a continuing state of being sanctified; or in a continuous state of sanctification. “Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it*... [So also, sanctifying is part of the action that God does in cleansing] ...with the washing of water by *the* Word” (vs 25-26). That means the inner-action of God’s Holy Spirit. As you read and study the Word of God and come to understanding it, that that will, with the Word of God in you, increase your sanctification to God. But also, it will be used by you to cleanse you. It is the Word which Christ has spoken which cleanses you (John 15). He said to His apostles on the Passover night: ‘You are clean through the Word which I have spoken to you.’

So God’s Word is to constantly cleanse us; it is to constantly sanctify us; and that’s the operation

that God has chosen. For the purpose, v 27: “that He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame.” And that is the end result of sanctification, to be Holy and without blemish.

Let’s come to 2-Thessalonians, the second chapter, please. Let’s see the difference here. This is quite interesting if we look at the difference here; because we know this is coming very shortly. We know that this is coming, that the Beast will be here on earth. That he is going to come with all signs and lying wonders. 2-Thessalonians 2:8: “And then the lawless one... [wicked one] ...will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming); *even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved” (vs 8-10).

Now here’s a very important lesson for us to realize and understand: As we mentioned in the section concerning the love of God, you have to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being—and if you love God that way, ***then you will love the Truth***. If you don’t love the Truth, then you are going to be deceived. It’s that simple. Those that do not love the Truth—how do you know whether you love the Truth or not? The Truth being the Word of God? The way that you know that you love the Truth is that you agree and accept and believe and live by every Word of God. If you argue with God and say, ‘God, I like this and I don’t like that. God, I really think that You were really too hard with this law, I really think that no criminal should ever be put to death’—then you’re disagreeing with God. Whenever you disagree with God, then you are taking a step away from loving the Truth. If you don’t love the Truth, you won’t understand the Truth. And if you don’t understand the Truth, then you are obviously not God’s; you’re obviously not sanctified. So I’m showing the difference here between those who are sanctified and those who are not.

Verse 11: “And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the* lie.” So if you don’t love the Truth, then God will send you a delusion, which then you will think is a great new revelation; but it’s really a lie. So living in these end-times, as we see these things, we need to understand; we need to realize that the Word of God is a sharp sword that cuts and divides asunder. So if you don’t love the Truth then you’ll be given over to believe a lie. And you might

ask yourself, just often ask yourself this: How many lies have I believed in my lifetime? Starting with Santa Claus; and the Easter Bunny; and the wrong histories that you have read; the doctrines of the church that you have gone to—many of them are just out and out lies. You believe them. How many lies do you believe in your life? Well then, that means you don’t love the Truth and you’re not letting the Word of God cleanse you. That’s why sanctification has to be a continuous process—***to cleanse you of those things; to cleanse you of your hidden faults and mistakes***.

“So that all may be judged who did not believe the Truth, but who took pleasure in unrighteousness” (v 12). And anything that is not the Truth of God is unrighteousness—in God’s view—regardless of how righteous and Holy it may appear in man’s view.

Verse 13—now here’s the difference: “Now we are duty-bound to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, who are beloved by *the* Lord, because God from *the* beginning has called you unto salvation through sanctification of *the* Spirit and belief of *the* Truth.” So it’s impossible to be sanctified in God the Father and Jesus Christ if you do not believe and love the Truth. So you need to ask yourself that question. You need to examine what people traditionally call ‘your religious beliefs.’ Do they conform with the Word of God? And if they don’t conform with the Word of God, ***all the Word of God***, then you are believing that much unrighteousness. Because, you see, it is not just the exterior of a person being good and sincere. That’s how Satan deceives everyone, by saying, ‘Well, he’s a good and sincere person.’ That doesn’t mean they love the Truth. There are many good and sincere people in the world, but they’re not called to salvation. They are not sanctified.

Now, notice: “...through sanctification of *the* Spirit and belief of *the* Truth unto which He called you by our Gospel to *the* obtaining of *the* glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 13-14). So that shows how the operation of sanctification works.

Now, let’s come to Ephesians, the first chapter And we will see here again, the operation of being a saint and sanctified and what that means. Let’s also understand something here very, very important: ***Only God can make something Holy***. Why? *Because only God is Holy!* A man cannot make something Holy. No man can make anything Holy. The pope can’t. A minister can’t. No one can! ***Only God!*** And if God does not make it Holy, then it’s not Holy. It doesn’t matter what men think.

Ephesians 1:3: “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... [now this could read *heavenly things*. The literal of the Greek is: *has blessed us in the heavenlies*—meaning gifts or things.] ...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” (vs 3-4). So sanctification means *to be made Holy*. And the ultimate of the sanctification is, *is to be make Holy with a glorious immortal life and body living forever, like Jesus Christ*.

Now let's come to John, the seventeenth chapter, and we will see how Jesus described this. John 17 is a wonderful summary of the whole plan of God, if you want to look at it that way, because Jesus talks about all of the major elements of the plan of God in this prayer—which was really the final prayer that Jesus gave before He was arrested. And also, if you want to find out which one is the Lord's prayer, then you read all of John 17, because that is the Lord's prayer. What is called the Lord's Prayer, from Matthew, the sixth chapter, is not the Lord's prayer, but a prayer outline on how we should pray.

John 17:15: “I do not pray that You would take them out of the world... [and yet, there's some people that think God is going to take us away in UFOs (unidentified flying objects) and take us on up to Mars as a place of safety. Well, that's out of the world. God is not going to do that.] ...but that You would keep them from the evil one.... [keep you from Satan the devil.] ...They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world... [that is, make them Holy] ...Sanctify them in Your Truth.... [Now notice how all this ties in: *Truth, sanctification, Holiness*.] ...Your Word is the Truth” (vs 16-17). And in the Greek it is: *Your Word is THE Truth*. Because today we have a lot of people going around and saying, ‘Well, what's true to you may not necessarily be true to me. So you have *your* truth and I have *my* truth. And you live by *your* truth and you're okay. And I'll live by *my* truth and I'm okay.’ Well, *that's not what Jesus taught*.

Let's go to John 14—this is a very basic Scripture to remember. There is no such thing, in God's eyes, as more than one Truth. When it come to the words of eternal life, they come from Jesus Christ only. And when it comes to salvation, it comes only from God the Father, through Jesus Christ. ***There is no other way! There is no other truth!*** You can be sanctified in no other way, but by God's Spirit and His Truth.

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, **‘I am the way, and the Truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me!’**” That's very important to understand, with all the ecumenical

movement, the united religion movement that's coming in today. In order to do that, they must reject Christ the way that the Bible teaches Him. And if you except a Christ outside of what the Bible teaches, you have accepted a false Christ and you are on the broad road, which leads to destruction—because

- there is only one way, *that is Christ*
- there is only one Truth, *and that is the Word of God*
- there is only one eternal life, *and that is which God gives*

And that no one, NO ONE—regardless of how good intentioned you may be or sincere you may be—can come to the Father unless you go through Christ. And that is not the traditional message you will hear in various churches, because they are *using* the Bible; they are not teaching the Bible. They are trying to sanctify themselves with their own means, and not with the means and truth of God.

Now, let's come back here to John 17:17 and finish the section that we've been reading. “Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth. Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself... [Now how can He sanctify Himself? *He sanctified Himself* by going through the crucifixion and then the resurrection and then receiving the glory that He had with the Father before He came as a human being.] ...so that they also may be sanctified in *Your Truth*” (vs 17-19). He says it twice.

Please understand and remember this: Whenever God says something ***once***, He means it and that's quite sufficient. If He says it twice, it becomes most important. If, like in the cases (as we have studied on the weekly Sabbath and Holy Days) if He repeats it over and over and over and over again, then it is a central, main thing, which is absolutely important and essential for salvation. ***So we're sanctified through the Truth.***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:1-2
- 2) Ephesians 5:25-27
- 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:8-14
- 4) Ephesians 1:3-4
- 5) John 17:15-17
- 6) John 14:6
- 7) John 17:17-19

Scripture referenced, not quoted: John 15

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Baptism of the Spirit

Fred R. Coulter—July 10, 1999

Now let's continue on to the next section here: *The Baptism of the Spirit*. Now there are many people who believe that baptism of the Spirit is what is called 'a Pentecostal experience.' Where then, if you are baptized by the Spirit, you are baptized by fire! And we'll cover that later when we come to the 'unpardonable sin.' Please understand this: The baptism of the spirit has nothing whatsoever to do with any Pentecostal church or movement or speaking in tongues. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 18-19).

The baptism of the Spirit is the act of receiving the Holy Spirit as a begetting from God the Father. This spiritual begetting is granted to each believer through the laying on of hands after baptism by full immersion in water. Upon receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, the believer becomes a begotten child of God the Father. The baptism of the Holy Spirit places the believer into the spiritual church of God, the body of Jesus Christ, of which all begotten children of God are members.

So this is clearly saying, and as the Scriptures show, if you do not have the Spirit of Christ 'you are none of His.' Let's go to Romans 8:9, let's see that first, because there are a lot of people who have spirits, and in some cases, even demonic spirits—and those are spirits of the devil. Yet, they profess to be Christ's, and they are not. That kind of demonism, that kind of baptism of the spirit, is not from God—but from Satan the devil.

Here it defines it very clearly, Romans 8:9: "However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you.... [Now if you haven't gone through the section concerning the Spirit of God—that it is not a person, but it is the power of God—then you go back and go through that; we have that available on another tape. And if you want a real, in-depth study on the Holy Spirit, what you can do is see the instructions on how to receive that. You can write into us, or you can send an e-mail to us and we will send it to you.] ...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

Now, that is a profound Scripture, which also ties in with what we just covered on sanctification. If you don't have the Holy Spirit of God, you're not sanctified of God—it's that simple. So you need to ask yourself the question, and you need to check out the Word of God, and you need to understand that perhaps maybe you need to repent of

all the things that you thought in your own religious life were true and beneficial, but are not when you really begin comparing it with the Word of God.

Now, just to make the point clear let's go back to Matthew, the seventh chapter, because there are many, many people—many religious people—many who have done many things in the name of Christ, who think they belong to Christ, who think they are doing a work of God. But they're going to get a surprise at the resurrection. This is after talking about false prophets:

Matthew 7:13—so we get the full picture coming up to it. And you need to ask yourself the question: Am I entering in at the broad gate or the narrow gate? Am I trying to follow Christ, or am I trying to follow that which is pleasing and soft? "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it; for narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (vs 13-14).

So it's not the majority of people, and you need to understand that. If you believe the way the majority of the people of the world believe—I'm not talking about in an atheistic sense; I'm talking about in a religious sense, where you believe that you are Christ's; because you may not be where you think you're going to be, or you're not going where you think you may really end up.

Verse 15: "But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves.... [Now they can speak the Word of God; they can mouth the Word of God; they can appear very righteous—but how do you know whether they're from God or not? John 3:34 says that whom God sends 'speaks the words of God.' So you compare it by the words of God—ALL the words of God.] ...for within *they* are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they?.... [So it is the tree that has to be good, not what the fruit may appear to you on the outside.] ...In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit.... [WHY? Because it's planted in the good ground and Christ is the one Who's behind it. So it's from the inside, from the roots.] ...nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire.... [the Lake of Fire] ...Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits" (vs 17-20). Then He explains it

here very clearly.

- you need to examine your life
- you need to examine your church
- you need to examine those who teach you
- prove, by the Word of God, by everything that you do—just like the Bereans did
- check the Scriptures whether it is so

Because notice: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing... [King James says ‘doeth’ and that means *practicing*] ...the will of My Father Who *is* in heaven.... [So you have to begin to understand the will of God, the purpose of God, what God is doing; and you have to practice His will, not your will. What is the model prayer in Matt. 6 say? It says ‘Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ And ‘on earth’ means *in your life on the earth*. It doesn’t mean on the whole earth at the present time, because that won’t happen until Jesus returns.] ...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. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?....’” (vs 21-22).

So you can watch a religious channel and see how many are preaching in the name of Jesus Christ—

- Did He send them?
- Do they keep the laws and commandments of God?
- Do they obey the Truth of God?
- Do they have the Spirit of God?

Just prophesying or speaking in His name is not going to mean that you’re a Christian.

“...‘And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name?.... [Now, that’s quite a notable thing—isn’t it—to cast out a demon; commonly called *exorcism* in the world today. And people will view someone who does that as ‘Oh boy, they’ve got to be from God.’] ...And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’..... [Haven’t we built colleges and cathedrals and sent missionaries around the world? Have we not done all of these things?] (Notice Jesus answer): And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness’” (vs 22-23). Rather than practice the Truth.

So if you do not have the Spirit of God dwelling in you—let’s come back to Romans 8:9—it does not matter all of the exterior trappings that look sanctified or Holy; all the religious-sounding words that a person can preach; all of the blessings which a person may give—being a religious leader, etc.—

they are not from God! Romans 8:9: “...he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin.... [Because you repented, you’ve been baptized, and now you’re ready for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.] ...however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness” (vs 9-10).

Now let’s come to Matthew, the third chapter, and we will see where John the Baptist talked about the baptism. Here we have the baptism of water, which we have already covered. He shows the coming baptism of the Holy Spirit—which occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)—and then he also talks about the baptism of fire. So we’ll briefly touch on that.

Now notice, Matthew 3:7—very important for us to realize. I want you to understand some of the backdrop, which is in the Gospels here, to show how John the Baptist was operating. “But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism...” Now the Pharisees and Sadducees were the religious leaders of Jesus’ day. They were also the hypocrites (Matt. 23); they were also following their father, the devil (John 8); so when they came to the baptism of John, John was not there welcoming them in an ecumenical movement saying, ‘Oh, I’m so glad to see all of you wonderful people here.’ Oh, just think, all the religious people have come so that they can become better.

“He said to them, ‘*You* brood of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance.... [This means *answerable to an amendment of life*; or that is *answerable to repentance*. And that’s what we all need to do—repent!] ...and do not think to say within yourselves, “We have Abraham *for our father*”....’” (vs 7-9). So he’s saying here: ‘Look, because Abraham was righteous, we have it guaranteed.’ Don’t say to yourself, ‘Because my mother or father was a good this or that religious person—which ever denomination that they went to—therefore, I’m going to be just fine.’ Or don’t say to yourself, ‘Because I’ve been baptized in this church or that church or the other church that everything’s going to be fine.’ NO!

“...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (v 9). So what is he saying here? Unless there’s a change of heart and repentance, unless you’re willing to obey God and love Him and keep His commandments, then all of your religious trappings—even though you may be the world’s leading religious person on earth—***mean nothing!***

Verse 10: ““But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees...”—which we covered

already—didn't we? *The corrupt trees!* And you need to understand that that is a reference to Jerusalem. And Jerusalem and the religion of that time, from Jesus' day until the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the sending of the Jews into captivity, has got to be the prime, most important education for all of those who want to believe in God. That unless you believe in God's Truth and have the Spirit of God in you, everything else will be destroyed! And the world today needs to think of that in relationship to the coming tribulation, which is not too many years down the road—in which nearly everything in the world will be destroyed, not just the city of Jerusalem and the temple. So IF—here's another lesson—where God puts His name, where the temple is in Jerusalem, which He chose, IF there is not righteousness, God will destroy it. And that's exactly what John is talking about here.

“...striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the* fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who is coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire” (vs 10-11). Now, being baptized of the Holy Spirit means *to receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit* from God the Father. And, as we will see, with the laying on of. Baptized with fire is this: That means *to be cast into the Lake of Fire*. Because baptism means *to be fully immersed into*. So if you are cast into the Lake of Fire, the baptism of fire is like being thrown into the Kilo Wah volcano in Hawaii. You will be burned up! So you don't want the baptism of fire.

Now notice: “Whose winnowing shovel is in His hand... [because Christ is the One Who's doing the judging and that's what that refers to] ...and He will thoroughly purge His floor... [that is the earth] ...and will gather His wheat into the granary... [that is all of those who are of Christ] ...but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire” (v 12). And that means once it starts, no one's going to put it out. It's going to consume all. But the baptism of the Spirit is what you want.

Now let's come to 1-Peter, the first chapter, and let's see that is a begetting. Right now we are given the earnest of the Spirit. When we are resurrected, we will be fully immersed into the Spirit, as it were—because we will receive a body that is glorified; a mind that is glorified. Let's see how Peter wrote it:

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* according to *the* predetermined knowledge of God *the* Father, by sanctification

through *the* Spirit... [Now notice how these tie right in together with the section that we just previously covered on sanctification.] ...unto obedience... [not disobedience] ...and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has **begotten us again** unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead” (vs 1-3).

Now notice, it says, ‘begotten again.’ You were begotten once in the womb of your mother, and born into this world and have grown into an adult. Now then, you are ‘begotten again’ by the Holy Spirit of the Father. So to be baptized by the Holy Spirit means:

1. To receive the Holy Spirit from God right now as an earnest.
2. Just as you came out of the watery grave, to walk in newness of life, so **at the resurrection** you will be fully immersed—that is baptized of the Spirit; and you will be a spirit being as well as having the Spirit of God within you as an immortal and glorified son or daughter of God.

Now, let's come to 1-John 3:1, concerning the ultimate goal of being the sons or daughters of God, because then that comes right down into the understanding of the rest of 1-John 3. The *King James Version* of the Bible, when we get down into the areas where it says, ‘and he who is born again cannot sin.’ And there are many people who claim they are *born again* when they receive the Holy Spirit. But that is not true. When you are born again is when you are literally born again from the dead at the resurrection—or changed from flesh to spirit when Christ returns. If you want something on *What Do You Mean, ‘Born Again’?*; go ahead and write for it, because we'll go through that in a very detailed study and show you what it actually means. But **no one now is ‘born again.’** They **have been begotten** again, as we saw in 1-Peter, the first chapter—that you ‘have been begotten again unto a lively hope’—which means this: that your first begetting was when you were begotten as a human being. And then you were born of your mother, and that's what it means *to be born of the flesh or the water*. Because when anyone is born, you are born of the water. Now to be ‘born of the spirit’ means *to be born as a spirit being*; not just to receive the Holy Spirit. To receive the Holy Spirit is a begetting—it is not a birth. And that's something that really needs to be understood. So if you're going to read through the *King James Version* there, and see ‘he who has been born again cannot sin’—that is not the correct translation.

First of all, we are going start out in v 1 and we're going to see the goal of every Christian, and what every Christian should have as the goal for their being a Christian; because God has called them.

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him." Now, you need to stop and think here for a minute. If there are hundreds of millions of Christians who say they know Christ, then that is contrary to the Word of God. Jesus said that '*broad*' is the way that leads to destruction and *many* go therein there at. But straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and *few* be that find it.' That's why God has to call you. So if you're in some sort of professing-Christian church, and especially if you are keeping Sunday, you better start re-thinking all of your priorities. You'd better start getting back into the Word of God and to know and understand what it really is.

Now, I've written a book called *The Seven General Epistles*—which covers James, 1-2 Peter, 1-2-3 John and Jude. And it's a very in-depth study. So you can write in for that and we will send it to you. And then when you get it, you write back and we can begin sending you the sermons that we did—series-by-series—because we do things differently than any other church. We actually study the Bible. We actually go through it verse-by-verse, so that we can understand it. And in this book, I have my translation [*Faithful Version*] and the *King James* translation, side-by-side; and we also put in there the *Interlinear* by George Ricker Berry, so you can take a look at all three and do the comparing.

So 'the world does not know us because it did not know Him.' That's why if you're a Sabbath-keeper, when you talk to Sunday-keepers they say 'Huh?' Are you a Jew? *No! I'm a true Christian.* 'Well, only Jews keep the Sabbath.' *No! Christ kept the Sabbath. The Apostles kept the Sabbath. The New Testament Gentile Churches kept the Sabbath and the Passover and the Holy Days.* So you need to understand that maybe your version or knowledge of Christianity is not a true one. And your understanding has been distorted and twisted by ministers who don't know God; who don't know the Word of God.

Verse 2: "Beloved, now are we the children of God... [if you have the Spirit of God, as we will see] ...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested.... [And no human being can look upon the glorified Son of God and live. So this means]: ...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He

is..." (v 2). This means that those who are resurrected from the dead, truly born again will actually have a spirit body, a spirit mind and will be a spirit being. And that's the whole purpose that God made us, after the image of God, male and female. And too many people are going around trying to make God in their own image. When they do, and if you've done that you just need to understand that's idolatry—you have an idol in your mind if you believe in a long-haired Jesus who looks like a half a woman, you believe in a false Christ and you have an idol in your mind. That's why when we covered repentance here...*you need to repent of that.* And if God is calling you, that's what you need to understand.

Verse 3: "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." And that's the whole motivating factor for all of those who are true Christians.

- that they stay loyal
- they stay faithful
- they stay loving
- they love the Word of God
- they study the Word of God
- they live by the Word of God
- they let the Word of God purify them

Verse 4—now here's the contrast; and as we're going to see, there is a contrast all the way through the verses that we are going to cover. "Everyone who is practicing sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness." Now, the *King James* says: "Whosoever transgresses the law, sins; for sin is the transgression of the law." Either translation is correct, but the *FV* one is more correct because lawlessness covers many things. Lawlessness means *those who act as if there is no law at all*; completely *anti-law*. That's why *lawlessness* in the Greek is 'anomia'—which means *against law*—specifically the laws of God. Lawlessness also means *taking human tradition and substituting that for the laws of God*. So again, you come right back to idolatry.

"...for sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.... [in Christ.] ...Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin ... [now that's what it should read because v 4 clearly shows that whosoever is sinning, practicing sin, is practicing lawlessness. So that *practicing* comes all the way down through the rest of the verses. So it should be properly translated]: ...Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin"—because all men are sinners. But we don't live in sin and we don't practice sin. And when we sin, we repent.

"anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him" (v 6). Now let's just take a case

here: Suppose that you are a Sunday-keeper. Suppose that you are a Christmas-keeper. Suppose that you are an Easter-keeper. You are *practicing sin*, because those things are condemned in the Word of God. And if you are practicing sin, *you don't know Him*; because 1-John 2:4 says: 'Anyone who says "I know Him" and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar; and the Truth is not in him.' And anyone who is keeping His commandments 'in him verily is the love of God' being perfected. So if you have swallowed the notion that you can create your own laws, and call them God's laws—such as Sunday-keeping, Easter, Christmas, and a host of other laws and traditions that orthodox and fundamental Christianity has erected—you're going down the *broad* path; you're going down the *wrong* path. And the coming united world-religion is going to come and you're going to get sucked up in it and you're going to be found fighting Christ. So we need to understand that these things are very profound.

Verse 7: "Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you.... [And if you believe any of those things, you just have to say, 'Hey, I have been deceived.' And that's your first start of coming out of sin.] ...the one who is practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous... [because God imputes the righteousness of Christ to those who have the Holy Spirit.] ...The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil" (vs 7-8).

Now, here's the key verse we want to get to—the begettal of the Holy Spirit. Verse 9—this is the correct translation: "Everyone who has been begotten of God does not practice sin.... [that means *living in sin*] ...because His seed of *begettal* is dwelling within him... [that is the seed of begettal from the Father—and the Greek is 'sperma' which means *the seed of eternal life from God the Father*.] ...and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God." In other words, if you have the Spirit of God in you by begettal, the Spirit of God is going to prick your heart and conscience to reveal whatever sin that you may be doing, so that you won't be practicing it; so that you can repent of it and be restored to God. That's why anyone who truly has the Spirit of God *cannot practice sin*!

Now the *King James* says: "Whosoever is born of God cannot sin...." Now that is an incorrect translation. Especially in the way that most fundamentalist believe that if you receive the Holy Spirit you have been 'born again.'

I know a woman who was talking to a Baptist and arguing back and forth about this being

'born again'; and the woman who was a Baptist and claimed that she was 'born again,' she says, *I cannot sin*. So the woman said, 'Well, what do you mean, you cannot sin?' She said, *Nothing that I do can be sin. And when the rapture comes and Christ calls, I'll be spirited away, because I have been 'born again.'* So the woman said, 'Well, what if you're committing adultery and the rapture occurs? Will you be raptured away?' *But of course!*

So you see, that is *practicing sin*. But if you truly have the begettal of God's Spirit, God's Spirit is going to prick your conscience; and you will not be practicing sin "...because **His seed of begettal** is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God" (v 9). So that is the baptism of the Spirit; which is the earnest.

Verse 10: "By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother." So you have to take all ten verses to get the full picture. You can't go in and just take out v 9 and say 'I've been born again and I cannot sin'; because that is not true—because 'sin is the transgression of the law; sin is lawlessness.' And you can't be *practicing* sin.

So, let's go to Ephesians, the first chapter, and we'll end this section here; showing that the begettal of the Holy Spirit now is not the full portion of your blessing and inheritance that you get beginning with the begettal; because

- there is the coming return of Jesus Christ
- there is the resurrection from the dead
- there is the glorification of your body to be a spirit being—at the resurrection

And then, *at that point* you will not sin; because you will be a true, full-fledged spirit being; the son or daughter of God. But now in this age, that's not possible.

Ephesians 1:13: "In Whom [Christ] you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth...." So here it shows, Paul is showing, you have to act upon the Word of Truth, which is the Word of God. And please understand this: When you read the Bible, there are no real contradictions in it at all. Most of the contradictions come because of a faulty translation or a misinterpretation. The Word of God is true. The Word of God in the Greek and the original Hebrew is true and God has preserved it and God has brought it down here to us, to this day it is the Word of Truth, and in it there is no lie. And when God inspired the prophets, and God inspired the apostles—be it the Old Testament or New Testament—and they wrote the words of God, it was the Spirit of Truth, and they wrote the Word of

Truth. So you need to understand that. If people come along and tell you, ‘Well, we don’t know how we got this translation of the Bible. Well, we don’t know whether God’s Word is true or not.’ NO! *It is the* Word of Truth.

“...the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...” (v 13)—which is the begettal. Just exactly like when there is a human begettal, we know today that when the sperm from the father unites with the egg, penetrates the egg of the mother, the egg is sealed. This is exactly what he’s talking about. *Those who have the Spirit of God have been sealed*, so that nothing else can penetrate in there.

Now notice: “...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, **which is the earnest of our inheritance...**” (vs 13-14). Now an earnest is likened unto a down payment. In other words, God gives you the Holy Spirit by begettal as an earnest so that that you know that the final payment is coming at the resurrection. Just like if you buy a house, you have to put down earnest money, and that earnest money is a pledge, which you will forfeit if you don’t come up with the rest of the money. Well, you see, God will come up with the rest of it at the resurrection. Now if you don’t fulfill your part, then you will forfeit back to God the earnest that He’s given to you.

“...which is the earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession.... [which then is *you*—and the redemption of the purchased possession takes place at the resurrection when all the saints of God will be resurrected at the return of Christ.] ...to *the* praise of His glory” (v 14).

So that’s what it means the *Baptism of the Spirit*. And the ultimate baptism of the Spirit is to be resurrected from the dead and become a spirit being. Every cell of your being will now be composed of spirit, rather than flesh. So that’s what it means: *Baptism of the Spirit*.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 8:9
- 2) Matthew 7:13-23
- 3) Romans 8:9-10
- 4) Matthew 3:7-12
- 5) 1 Peter 1:1-3
- 6) 1 John 3:1-10
- 7) Ephesians 1:13-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 3:34

- Matthew 6
- Acts 2
- Matthew 23
- John 8
- 1 John 2:4

Also referenced: Books

- *What Do You Mean, ‘Born Again’?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry

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Faith

Fred R. Coulter—June 19, 1999

Now let's come to the next section: *Faith*. Let's understand something concerning faith. You can never base faith strictly on feelings, because that's how people are deceived. You must base faith, first of all, upon fact. Because what you believe that differs from the Word of God is a false belief and a false faith—and there are a lot of people who have false faith and false belief. And many of us are all going to learn that when the financial system eventually does collapse, because collapse it will. And they will have put all their faith in men; and all the faith in dollars; and all their faith in banks; and all their faith in whatever. And the book of Isaiah shows that even at the end-time, those who put their faith in gold and silver are going to cast it to the moles and to the bats; because that won't save them.

So the kind of faith we're talking about here is the faith that is generated

1. by the Word of God
2. by God calling you—sending His Spirit to be with you, to lead you
3. the kind of faith that you **believe** God, and you **believe** His Word

To believe is also to *faithize*—have faith toward, into. And that is *into Christ*. So let's read the section of faith here in the *Beliefs* booklet: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 19 throughout).

Faith is the knowledge of and active belief in the existence and power of the living God and His only begotten Son Jesus Christ.

Not enough just to believe that there is a God. Not enough to believe that there was a Christ. ***Faith is the knowledge and the active belief in the existence of God and the power of the living God and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.***

Faith is a gift from God and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit as a begetting from God the Father, true believers are granted the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ and the very faith of Jesus Christ. This faith is the actual spiritual substance of God's Holy Spirit... [Now, we'll talk about that when we get to it in Heb. 11] ...which gives the believer the assurance and the confidence that what God has promised, He will perform.

So remember that. ***Every promise of God is sure and is true***—and ***He will perform it***. You need to also understand this about the promises of God: Most people believe that the promises of God are just to fulfill your 'wish list' of good things—'God, give me this' which will be a blessing; 'God, give me that.' NO! You read the Bible and a lot of the promises of God promise

- curses for disobedience;
- punishment for sin;
- correction for wrong-doing.

So ALL His promises are good. That is, they will come to pass, they will not fail, whether they be the promises to bring blessings to you or to bring curses to you.

Maybe in your life, you've experienced a lot of curses and not too many blessings. Well, maybe God is trying to tell you a lesson with that, so that you can learn. That's why there's repentance, you see. Now let's continue here:

The true faith of Jesus Christ, that is imparted by God to each believer, will continually be manifested by the fruits of righteousness in the believer's life. Faith is made perfect by doing the good works that God the Father has ordained through Jesus Christ. This active and living faith is absolutely essential for salvation through grace. Without good works, faith is dead. Without faith, good works are of no value in God's sight.

You need to understand that. A lot of people can do good works, but unless it's based on the Spirit and faith of God, it does you absolutely no good. Now, you may temporarily feel good about it, but that gives you no standing with God the Father in heaven above; because God has created the good works. Those are the ones you are to walk in, in faith. These will produce good works. Why? ***Because the cleansing of the Holy Spirit and the leading of the Holy Spirit will lead you to do the good works which God has ordained.*** So that's why, without good works, faith is dead; without faith good works are of no value in God's sight.

Good works alone cannot bring salvation and eternal life. While true faith will produce good works in the believer's life, these good works do not earn salvation. The good works that are done through faith are not the cause but the result of God's gift of salvation to the believer.

Now let's go to Hebrews, the eleventh chapter. This is something that is very, very important. And it's so profound because it shows you the impossibility of pleasing God without faith. And I'm afraid that there's just hundreds of millions of people who claim that they believe. But when it comes down to really believing God, really believing Jesus Christ, Whom He has sent, then that's another entirely different story altogether.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is *the* substance... [and that really means *substance*, because it comes from God's Spirit. It's part of the substance of God's Spirit.] ...Now faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for... [should you believe God's Word, you hope in Christ—that's where your hope is.

- the hope of the *resurrection*
- the hope of *eternal life*—which is in Christ
- the *blessings* that God can give you when you pray
- the *correction* that God will give you when you need it

Those are the things hoped for. We all hope to be in the Kingdom of God. But, we also desire the correction and guidance from God. So even that is a thing hoped for, when you come to understand it.

"...For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God... [and you go back and read that in Genesis, where God spoke and it was created. Where God said, 'Let there be light'—there was light. All of that.] ...the worlds were created by *the* Word of God, so that the things that are seen... [everything that we can see; whether it be down through a microscope to the finest, smallest, little, itty-bitty things] ...were made from *things* that are invisible" (vs 1-2).

And, even man in his own scientific greatness today still do not understand what matter really is, and where it really came from. They thought they had it when they had the atoms and protons and neutrons. Now they find out that there are things smaller than that. And now they have found out that these smaller, little things—smaller than atoms, which they can barely, barely see with the greatest electronic microscope—that they do not adhere to the same laws which take place in the universe according to the law that Einstein supposedly discovered—the Law of Relativity. They do not act in accordance with that. So science, in their great discoveries, still do not know. Why is that? *Because God is greater than science.* And you're not going to find God in a test tube. And you're not going to find God in a microscope. You're going to find God on your knees, as you

repent and accept Christ as your personal Savior, and let the blood of Christ cover you, and then be baptized. Then you will begin to understand true faith.

Verse 4: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking. By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death..." (vs 4-5). Later on he died, because it says over here in v 13: "...these all died..." We don't know the full story back there in Gen. 5 where that occurred with Enoch, but Enoch was taken away because there were apparently gangs of evil men chasing him down, ready to kill him. So God just took him to another place. Later he lived out his life; because it says back there, 'and all the years of Enoch were so many years. So that shows that he died. "...and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God" (v 5).

Now v 6 is the key, and this is a profound verse I want you to learn and know and understand; because this is so fundamental. This is so lifelong lasting that you need to grasp it in its fullest intent. "Now without faith... [If you don't believe God, you don't believe in God, you don't believe Christ, you don't believe in His sacrifice.] ...***it is impossible to please God...*** [even though yea, you may be the most perfect person in the world.] ...***For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists....*** [That means this: In order for you to have faith, you are obligated by God to believe that He exists! Meaning that's the very, very first step. So you have to believe that He is. You have to believe that His Word is true.] ...and ***that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***" So this is the key verse. Absolutely the key verse in it.

Now, let's come to Galatians, and let's see what the Apostle Paul said concerning faith. And it's quite a profound way that it's expressed in the Greek; because here in Galatians 2:20, what he's doing, he is showing here what happens after the operation of baptism. So since we just covered baptism, this fits right in with it.

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ... [that is through the operation of baptism; because we're to crucify the old self.] ...yet I live... [because he was raised out of the watery grave just like everyone else who's been baptized. They live. That is living in the flesh.] ...*Indeed*, it is no longer I... [he's not living to serve himself; he's not living his life to please himself. He's not living his life the way that seems right to him; but, he's following

God.] ...*Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me.... [That's where you begin getting the real faith of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is living in him, and is living in everyone who has the Spirit of God. This is going to lead you to do righteousness, as we read in the previous section in 1-John 3.] ...For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God..." And that means by Christ's very own faith; because He gives it as a gift, He imputes it to you.

Now, let's come to Galatians 5:22, and let's see where that it is part of the fruits of the Holy Spirit—because the Holy Spirit is to impart to us many things. Faith being one of them; love; and we'll see all of it here—the very characteristics of God. Now all of these things that we find in Galatians 5:22 show you the character of God, and what God is doing with His Spirit, in those who receive it and those who have it, is that they are having Christ built into them by the very Word of God. That's why Paul says, 'The life that I now live' it is 'Christ **IN** me.' Therefore, then you can have the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**..."

- love God
- love your neighbor
- love the brethren
- love, yea, even your enemies as Christ has said—right? *Yes!*

"...**joy**..."

- You have the joy from God because He gives you peace of mind.
- Joy because you're happy that God has called you.
- Joy that you understand the Word of God.
- Joy that you realize that you have such a fantastic future to be born again into the Kingdom of God, by the power of the resurrection.

"...**peace**..."

- You have peace with God, first of all, because you're no longer an enemy of God. Because when God begins dealing with you first, you're still an enemy of God. And Christ died while we were still enemies of God. So in that sense, Christ prayed for His enemies, too—didn't He? And didn't He say, when He was on the cross, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' That was ***an act of faith***. That was an ***act of love***. That was an ***act of peace***.

"...**long-suffering**..."

- Now long-suffering means *to suffer things long*; or for *a great duration* if necessary—regardless of what the situation may be.

"...**kindness**..."

- That's self explanatory.

"...**goodness**..."

- Means you're only going to be seeking good.

"...**faith**..."

- Now notice where faith is here. We find in another part—in 1-Cor. 13—it says that these three abide: 'faith, hope and love.' In this case, faith then is going to be there, but all of these things combined.

"...**meekness**..." (v 23)

- Meekness is that you don't exalt yourself—how great you are and what you have done; because you realize that everything that you have has come from God; and everything you do is because God has given you the ability one way or the other to do it—whether physically or spiritually or mentally—all these things come from God. So you don't get all carried away with yourself—the big 'I' is no longer there. That's meekness and humility.

"...**self-control**..."

- That is self-control. But then, through the Spirit of God, you have the self-control that you are not going to go out and sin.
- You're not going to go out and deliberately do those things that are wrong.
- You control you emotions.
- You control your temper.
- You control your appetites—because you realize that your body is the 'temple of the Holy Spirit.' So you will have that self-control.

Now notice he says: ...against such things there is no law." Why? *Because all of these things are encompassed in keeping the commandments of God and loving Him.* That's why!

Verse 24: "But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh... [through baptism] ...with its passions and lusts.... [That's all part of growing and overcoming] ...If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit.... [notice the contrast, v 26]: ...We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another" (vs 24-26). So you see the contrast: When you have the true faith of God, by the Holy Spirit—which is the gift of God which He imparts to you.

Now, let's come here to Ephesians, the second chapter, and let's see something concerning

the faith; showing also God's calling and God's mercy and God's grace; and what it leads to by faith, and what kind of faith God wants us to have, which He gives to us.

Ephesians 2:1—and you has He *made alive* through baptism: ...Now you were dead in trespasses and sins." The truth is this: If you are just out there in the world, and you have not repented and have been baptized and quickened with the Holy Spirit of God, you are as good as dead, because you're living in sin and trespasses. And the New Testament teaches that the 'wages of sin is death.' If you are practicing sin, are you not as good as a dead man? *Yes, you are!* No doubt about it.

Verse 2: "In which you walked in times past... [and this is what you need to decide: will you repent; will you change; will you come to God; will your sins be in the time past. But notice, if it's current, notice who's leading your life]: ...according to the course of this world... [the way that the world goes; the way that this society is; the way that the majority of people go] ... according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan the devil], the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience." And it means that is *inner working*.

How can the devil inner-work in you? *There are some people who are demon possessed, directly.* There are other people who worship Satan openly. How can he work in just the average person?

- By getting you to break the commandments of God.
- By getting you to be all encompassed in your own life and your own self.
- He does it through radio, television, video, Internet—all of these things can be used as tools by Satan the devil, as well as be used as tools to preach righteousness.

So that's how he gets an entrance into your mind. So stop and ask yourself: Why do I believe what I believe? And where did I come to believe it? And how did I come to believe it? And maybe you're going to see that a lot of these things are just fulfilling your own sinful desires.

"...that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also... [so Paul included himself in this—didn't he?] ...we all... [all human beings in the world are under the power and sway of Satan the devil. Rev. 12:9 says that he's 'deceiving the whole world.' That's how he's deceiving it.] ...once had our conduct... [as it should read. *King James* reads 'conversation.'] ...in the lusts of our flesh... [so whatever appeals to the lust of the flesh. To feel good. To coddle yourself. To go against God to satisfy your fleshly lusts.] ...doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind" (1-3).

And all of these things of the mind and esteem of the self and to succeed in the world. They can take certain things and even some of the things that are done in the world to fulfill the lust of the mind become greater—the greatest manipulator in all of this, are all of Satan the devil—though they are couched in doing good; though they are couched in making you an improved person. You need to understand that. Unless you have the Spirit of God you can never really change the status of your life. You may make yourself more rich. You may be more successful in business. You may be a better person to other people in some ways. But you cannot change your sinful nature. So therefore, you are still a child of the devil.

"...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... [Because if God is calling you to know and to understand His Word, you need to understand He loves you. He's trying to help you understand the Word of God. And that's why Christ came: 'For God so loved the world, He have His only begotten Son, that whosoever shall believe on Him shall not perish by have everlasting life.' So it's a great love He had for us.] ...even when we were dead in *our* trespasses... [That's why I was saying that if you're living in sin, you're as good as dead.] ...has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)" (vs 3-5). So it's by God's mercy; by God's grace; by God's love—all combined together, you see.

"And He has raised *us* up together... [that is through the operation of baptism] ...and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places*... [now that should read 'things'] ...in Christ Jesus.... [And having the Holy Spirit now that you have a heavenly thing that came from God the Father in heaven above; the begetting of God's Holy Spirit, the seed which is in you.] ...so that in the ages that *are* coming... [now that's when the saints will sit on thrones and rule the world with Jesus Christ—in the coming age when Jesus returns.] ...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 therefore, that's why the Apostle Paul wrote there in Heb. 11:6: 'Without faith it's impossible to please God.' and without faith it's impossible to really understand the grace of God.] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves..." (vs 6-8).

And this is very interesting. The Greek means *not from within your being*. Doesn't come out from within you. So if you have the idea that your good thoughts; and your good works; and you'll just be a good person; you'll be sincere; you'll be honest;

you'll be kind; and all of those things without Christ is meaningless. Though those may be good works in the letter of the law; though those may be good works in the world; they are not salvational works, because the works that we are to do have been ordained of God that we should walk in them.

Now notice: "...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God.... [And if it is the gift of God **you cannot earn it!** The grace, the faith and the salvation are all gifts of God.] ...not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [and we read those good works back in Gal. 5:22-23—those are the good works of God that He wants you to do. In other words, now that if you do something good, it's because first of all you love God; and you love Christ; and you love the Truth; and you want to do those things that please God. So you do it, not thinking of the self or any reward to the self. You keep the laws of God. You keep the commandments of God, because those are good. Those are the good works that He gave us to walk in.] ...workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (vs 8-10).

Which then is the whole way of life; the whole Christian way of living as defined in the Bible—both the Old Testament and New Testament.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 11:1-6
- 2) Galatians 2:20
- 3) Galatians 5:22-26
- 4) Ephesians 2:1-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 11:13
- Genesis 5
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Revelation 12:9
- Hebrews 11:6

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Salvation

Fred R. Coulter—July 31, 1999

We just finished the section concerning faith, so let's come here to the section concerning salvation; and I think you will see as we have gone through this study, how important that it is concerning everything that we have laid out in a step-by-step way. And in defining these things, we are not defining beliefs which are found outside of the Scriptures. And the reason is this: A person can believe anything he or she wants to, but unless it conforms to the Truth of the Bible, that belief has no validity whatsoever. And as a matter of fact, anything that a person believes that is contrary to Scripture is an idol in their mind. And most people don't look at it that way, but that's very profound to understand; because beliefs, out of the Scriptures, really are not a matter of personal opinion or conjecture as related to things in politics, or arguments of theologians. What it is, it is a stating of the things which are in the Bible and which God wants us to believe from His Word so that we understand the Truth. So, let's come to the section on *salvation: (Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God, pg. 20).*

Salvation is the gift of God the Father by His grace and is granted to the believer through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation cannot be earned by [any] works of law...

And you might put in there: *any* law—any works of any law will not give you merit for salvation.

...but there are conditions which must be met in order to receive the gift of salvation. God requires that one repent of sin, which is the transgression of His laws and commandments, and believe on His Son Jesus Christ, Whose blood paid the penalty for the sins of all mankind. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Author and Finisher of eternal salvation for all who believe on Him. Through the blood of Jesus Christ and the acceptance of His sacrifice, the believer is reconciled to God the Father, having his or her sins completely forgiven and forgotten. By the grace of God, the believer is saved from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death, and is granted the gift of eternal life through the begetting of the Holy Spirit from God the Father.

Salvation begins when God the Father opens a person's mind to spiritual understanding, which leads to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. After being baptized by

full immersion in water, the believer is granted the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The believer then begins a new life of obedience to God through faith, working out his or her own salvation by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and in harmony with God's Word. It is a lifelong process of spiritual growth. The Scriptures reveal that there are three distinct stages in the process of salvation:

1. The believer has been saved from past sins and from Satan the devil (Eph. 2:1-10).
2. The believer is now being saved as he or she continues in the Word of God—the gospel—in loving obedience by faith (1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2).
3. The believer will ultimately be saved at the resurrection (Rom. 7:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:12-57; 1 Tim. 3:14-16).

The believer's salvation will not be completed until he or she is resurrected from the dead through the power of God and is born again as a spirit being into the Family of God. In God's time and plan, everyone will have an opportunity for salvation.

Now let's look at these three steps, first. This is the first part that we will go through.

I. The believer has been saved from past sins and from Satan the devil.

Let's go to Ephesians 2, because human beings are powerless to bring themselves out from sin. Now they may be able to reform their behavior, and modify it; but in many cases, they are changing one form of behavior for another form of behavior, which may or may not be in conformity with the truth of God's Word. For example:

Down in the building where we have our office, they have the AA meet on certain nights of the week—Alcoholics Anonymous. Now alcoholism is a very terrible situation in which to find yourselves locked into that kind of thing. They call it a disease in the world; but it is really not a disease per se, as a sickness or illness, it can be a weakness of the body or a weakness of character—either one. Later on then, it turns into other diseases, because of the deterioration of the body from alcoholism. But we noticed this: Nearly all of those who have given

up alcohol just changed from one addiction to another. They change from alcohol to cigarettes, or they change from alcohol to sugar, which creates alcohol in their system in the process of digesting.

So you see, there is no conversion. That's why, **first, you must be saved from your sins by God**—that's the first step. God has to intervene in your life; and as we saw concerning being called, God the Father is the one Who has to draw the one who's going to be the believer, so that they begin to see themselves for what they are. That is the first step.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins... [Now everyone who does not have the Holy Spirit of God is as good as dead; because 'the wages of sin is death.' And if you are living in your sins, you are dead in sins and trespasses.] ...in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world..." (vs 1-2). Now, everyone walks a certain way of life; and that's why God's way is a way of life in which you are to walk. The world has a **broad** way which Christ said, 'broad is the way and wide is the gate that leads to destruction; and many be that go in there at. But straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life; and FEW be that find it.' Why? *Because they are unwilling to come to God when He begins exposing their sins to them.* That's why the Scriptures say, 'many are called, but few are chosen'; because the ones who are chosen are those who repent.

Now, He's talking to those who have been chosen here, reminding them of what they were in past time. "...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" (v 2). Now, Satan is able to influence people today in many, many ways: Through all the means of technological media; through things like we have cassettes; we have CD's; we have movies; we have videos; we have the internet—in all of those things he's able to influence. Those things in and of themselves are not wrong, because God is letting everyone use them; so we do a lot of good by using exactly the same thing by preaching the Truth. But nevertheless, there is that control.

"...is now working within the children of disobedience; 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..." (vs 2-3). All of these seem quite natural; all of these seem quite good; and all of these are based upon how a person feels—and that's how Satan is able to control people by

their feelings; by their emotions. So when God begins to call someone, He brings the first, number one fact:

1. You are a sinner
2. He is God
3. Christ is your Savior

He brings that knowledge to you. So your calling is quite a marvelous thing because God has done this in such a way that it is an individual calling—and God has the power to do it.

And He says, continuing here: "...and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world.... [v 4 shows how salvation comes]: ...But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us" (vs 3-4). We need to understand how great this is. And if you don't have the series on *The Love of God*, you can write for the series going through the Bible, showing the love of God. And growing in the love of God is the most important thing that you can do once you have been called—and that is the whole, important thing. First of all, before getting involved emotionally with God, what He does, He establishes the fact the He IS God, **first**. Then, you can have relationship with God by fellowshiping with Him and loving Him—which we'll discuss at a later time.

"Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)" (v 5). Grace means that *it is a gift of God* (as we will see). God reaches down, calls the believer, leads them to repentance, forgives their sins—all of this is an operation of grace—**grace vs works**. In other words, there is no work that the person did.

- No confession to a priest
- No 'hail Marys' or 'our fathers'
- No rosaries
- No bowing down to idols
- No doing 'good works' toward other people

None of those lead to salvation; though in and of themselves some of them may not be wrong, while others of them may be very idolatrous; nevertheless, works cut you off from the grace of God if you believe that a work is going to save you.

"even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.) And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 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... [so the fullness (as we covered here) of the salvation of God will not be complete until the age,

which is coming when Christ returns and the resurrection takes place.] ...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..." (vs 5-7). And the Greek there in both cases—in vs 4 & 8—means *you have been saved*. Now that does not mean *once saved always saved*; because we will see it is a process, because it is possible for people to fall away once they have been saved from their sins and Satan the devil. And that's what this section of Scripture is talking about, in the sense that you have been saved—meaning that

- you have been saved from Satan the devil as the prince of the power of the air;
- and you have been saved from your past sins.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves... [There is nothing internally or inherent that any human being can do just of himself alone to bring about salvation whatsoever; it must come from God.] ...it is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast.... [Now let's finish right here in v 10, and then we'll go look at some others. Here's what happens to us once God has called us—and once God has given us the gift of salvation.] ...For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus..." (vs 8-10).

God made us in such a way that we are to be recreated spiritually, mentally and spiritually in the very image of Christ. That's why some of the Scriptures we have covered, such as: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' And God is actually recreating our character; because His Spirit unites with the spirit that we have and then we are to become converted—changed—by this salvation.

"...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works..." (v 10). So then after the salvation has been granted—by the forgiveness of your past sins and saving from Satan the devil; and you have been baptized, received the laying on of hands, and have had the Holy Spirit given to you—then you have good works based upon love and obedience to God. And those good works then come from the heart, because your heart has been changed. They come from the heart because you believe God and you love God.

"...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (v 10). And walking in that means *to be keeping His commandments*—to be keeping His Sabbath and Holy Days, as we have seen. And all of those are the good works:

- To love the brethren as Christ loved us
- To love our neighbors as our self
- And to love God with all our heart and mind and soul and being

Those are the *good works*.

II. The believer is now *being* saved as he or she continues in the Word of God—the Gospel—in loving obedience by faith.

Let's come to 1-Corinthians, the first chapter. And so, it is a continuous process. It is something that is constantly ongoing. And that is called in the Scriptures, 'growing in grace and knowledge.' And you can put in there also: growing in faith, growing in love, growing in understanding, growing in wisdom, growing in the mind of Christ. And God gave us the kind of mind that once we have the Holy Spirit we can continually grow in these things.

Let's go to 1-Corinthians 1:17—where Paul writes: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel—not with *the* wisdom of words... [That's why the true Gospel should not be intertwined with human philosophy. It should not be intertwined with Aristotle and Socrates or Plato or any other philosophy. You see, the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ is the Truth! And God doesn't want anything added to it in the way of philosophy; anything added to it in the way of man's ideas—because God is the greatest Being that there is; and so, His way is the best. What can man do to add to the perfection of God? *Nothing!*] ...did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel—not with *the* wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made void." And what he's saying here is this: If you do that, by adding human philosophy you will sooner or later make the Word of God of none effect. And I just draw your attention to all the religions of the world which have made the Word of God of none effect.

Verse 18: "For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is... [that is the wise ones of the Greeks] ...foolishness; but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." Now, what it means here, the Greek means; it is the present tense passive, meaning: *but unto us who are being saved*—showing that it is a process. If you have a Spanish Bible, that's what it says. We have a man who has a parallel English & Spanish Bible and confirms that's what the translation is in the Spanish—'are being saved.' This shows that it is a process. *Not* 'once saved always saved.'

And we'll prove this now by going to 1-Corinthians 15:1, and here we have the same translation as we have in the first chapter—but really means: *are being saved*. "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... [In other words, every bit of the Gospel is like standing under the umbrella of God. You're standing in the Gospel under that umbrella of God.] ...by which you are also being saved... [and should read *are being saved*.] (Now, notice the condition here. The salvation continues): ...if you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise you have believed in vain" (vs 1-2). And there are a lot of people who believe in vain; because they, for a temporary while, have a guilty conscience, and they feel sorry. But they are not willing to truly repent and come to God the way God wants them to, and to grow in grace and knowledge.

Now let's see that. Let's go to Matthew 13 here, for just a minute. And then we'll get to the third part of it. This is continuing on in the second part: *you are being saved*—and it takes time; and that if you do not continue in the Gospel, in the Word of God, then you are going to lose it. And if you lose it, then you will not have salvation; because *salvation is a one-time opportunity* that God gives.

Matthew 13:18—which gives the explanation of the Parable of the Sower: "Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart.... [So there are a lot of people, that they come along and they hear; 'Oh, joyful, that's wonderful.' But the first time they have to begin repenting, or the first time they have to start obeying God, then whoop! Satan comes along and says, 'Boy, well there's something over here more important for you to do.' And they just throw it away! Satan has taken it out.] ...This is the one who was sown by the way. Now the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; but *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure.... [So there will be those who will fall away. Here's what happens]: ...for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended" (vs 18-21).

Because, you see, by way of the Truth of God will offend people in the world. And what Christ preached and taught was so offensive that they crucified Him. And you read the way that Jesus answered a lot of them, you will see that He was very offensive to the religious leaders of His time. And if you read Matt. 23, you will find out how He was really exposing all their sins and all their duplicities and all of their corruption and all of their hypocrisies. So if you're offended when the going gets tough, then you may not be one who's going to endure until the final salvation.

Verse 22: "And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." Looking at the physical things around. Not trusting in God to provide.

Now just like one man here, who recently lost a lot of money in the stock market and went out and killed nine people and wounded thirteen others; so upset about it, rather than saying, 'Thank you, God. You let me learn a lesson from this. I'm sorry that everything is gone, but give us the strength and endurance to survive.' God would have heard him. It would have been done. Because one of the things in salvation that is important, that you need to understand, is that you have to forsake everything in this life. That's how important God is. You can't let anything interfere with how important God is.

"...choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands... [and as we saw from 1-Cor. 15, 'is standing in the Gospel and is being saved by it—if you continue in the faith.'] ...who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold *and* another thirtyfold" (v 22-23).

Now, let's go to Luke 14 and then we'll get back to the last section there. Here's what the commitment is, that we make to God. This is a commitment of salvation. It's more than just a commitment. It is a pledge of your life; because when you are baptized, you enter into a covenant relationship with God that is unto your death. You have two choices with baptism:

1. The death of baptism and to walk in newness of life.
 - Live by every Word of God
 - Stand in the Gospel of God
 - Continue faithfully in that
 - Then you receive eternal life and the death is the burial in the watery grave of baptism
2. If you are baptized and you reject the way of God and you reject salvation, then you have pledged your life to death in the lake of fire.

That's what a covenant pledge really is. That's why there are so few that find it; because they have not really understood; because

- baptism becomes a ritual for the church
- baptism is expected by [age] twelve
- baptism is a social thing because you want to marry a husband or wife

- baptism is done to please someone in the family
- baptism is done because everybody does it

Those baptisms are as worthless as standing in a shower—they do absolutely no good, because God is talking about eternal salvation and calling you to live forever in glory and with a spirit body and a spirit mind. So all of these things of the flesh you have to put aside, they do not count.

Luke 14:25: “And great multitudes were going with Him; and He turned *and* said to them... [Because they all wanted something from Christ. And Christ was not here to play social pity-patty with people; or religious patty-patty with people.] ... and He turned *and* said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother... [and it literally means that. That’s not to hate them with hatred; but that means that you *love God more* so that in some cases they may even accuse you of hating them—and I’ve known that to happen. But that’s not the case. *You love God more*. And to those people who are carnal then, it can be thought of as hate.] ...hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (vs 25-26). Meaning it’s an impossibility, it cannot be done.

So this is why this section of Scripture is called *counting the cost*. And anyone who is called to salvation has to *count the cost*. Whatever it takes to obey God, you count the cost and you do it. Now, v 27: “And whoever does not carry his cross... [meaning whatever difficulty or trial or trouble may come because of it. And you see, today we live in an age where they want to forget the Inquisition. Where they want to forget that there were people who counted the cost and were killed because they believed in Christ. Were killed for the witness of Christ. Burned at the stake; boiled in oil; impaled on stakes; heads chopped off; cooked slowly over a fire; thrown into boiling cauldrons of water. Now, if that makes you upset and makes your stomach a little squeamish, then ask yourself the question: What is that I put in front of God? Be it whatever it may be? Because we have to *count the cost*.] ...does not carry his cross and come after Me... [because we’re to follow Him in His footsteps] ...cannot be My disciple.” And that means the *impossibility* of it.

And then He says, “for which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost....whether he has *sufficient* for its completion; lest perhaps, after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war,

does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand?. But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace” (vs 28-32).

Now, v 33: “In the same way also... [in the same manner] ...each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple...” —meaning in the Greek: ‘*endunamai*’ —meaning *the impossibility of being His disciple*. So that’s why that in a lot of the literature that we write you see that we write about those who are ‘professing Christians’ of this world; because the truth is, they are not Christians in deed, according to the Word of God. So, that’s very important and profound to know.]

Now, let’s come back to number three, the third part of salvation, which is a process.

III. The believer will ultimately be saved at the resurrection

Romans 5:6: “For even when we were without strength... [That means *spiritual strength*; because no human being has the power to overcome Satan the devil of and by himself. Only God can give you that strength.] ...at the appointed time... [at the set time] ...Christ died for *the* ungodly.... [That’s how great the sacrifice of Christ is.] ...For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man.... [and there have been examples of that] ...But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (vs 6-8). Since we are helpless and can’t save ourselves; and since we can’t come out of the bondage of sin ourselves—as Paul said when we first started, that you were ‘dead in sins and trespasses.’

Therefore, God, He had to do it first by sending Christ, first. He had to prepare the way with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to open the way of salvation. So that’s why He came first. And it’s all based upon His love.

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we **shall be** saved... [and that ‘shall be saved’ is the resurrection.] ...from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we **shall be saved by His life**” (vs 9-10).

So, salvation has those three parts:

- I. You’re saved from your past sins and Satan the devil.

- II. You are not being saved as you continue to live in the Word of God and the Gospel of God, and loving obedience by faith.
- III. You will ultimately be saved at the resurrection when Christ returns.

Now let's see that, let's come to the book of Revelation 11, here. Now, as we have covered concerning 'born again'—***no one is born again until the resurrection. That is the true 'born again.'*** The misnomer of professing worldly Christianity of being *born again now* is a misnomer, as we have already covered.

Revelation 11:15—Here is when the salvation will be complete: "Then the seventh angel sounded *his* trumpet; and *there* were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign into the ages of eternity.' And the twenty-four elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, 'We give You thanks, O Lord God almighty, Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; for You have taken *to Yourself* Your great power, and have reigned. For the nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time for the dead to be judged, and to give reward to Your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to *all* those who fear Your name, the small and the great..." (vs 15-18). So there is the resurrection. That resurrection takes place when Christ returns.

And when that happens—let's come to 1-Corinthians 15—we will see the completion of the whole salvation process. Now, I encourage you to go ahead and study all the Scriptures we have there concerning it, which are listed below [in the *Beliefs* booklet]. Some of those we have already covered here—so that you have a full and complete understanding of salvation. This will give you a foundational start in it.

This shows you that we must be changed. This shows you that this body of flesh and our life in the flesh is temporary. And that's why, as He said earlier, 'As in Adam we all die.' 1-Corinthians 15:47: "The first man [Adam] *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *one*, so also *are all* those who are heavenly. And as we... [that is, those called to salvation and have the Spirit of God] ...have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *one*.... [which is telling us that God is guaranteeing that we will be like Him.] ...Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit

incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep... [that is, be dead in the grave] ...***but we shall all be changed.... [That is the resurrection.]*** ...in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.... [That's the finality of salvation.] ...For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. Now when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" (vs 47-54).

Now, let's go back to Revelation, the twenty-first chapter, and we'll finish this section with this one—to show the ultimate of God's work that He is doing. Revelation 21:6: "And He said to me, 'It is done.... [So there's coming a time in the future when the work of God is going to be done. The plan of salvation will be complete.] ...I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.... [Christ is the Beginner and Finisher of our faith.] ...To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son'" (vs 6-7). So that will be the finality of salvation.

So the three steps are:

1. ***have been saved*** from your sins and Satan the devil
2. ***are being saved***, as you continue in the Gospel and are faithful
3. ***shall be saved*** at the resurrection when Christ returns

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 2:1-10
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:17-18
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
- 4) Matthew 13:18-23
- 5) Luke 14:25-33
- 6) Romans 5:6-10
- 7) Revelation 11:15-18
- 8) 1-Corinthians 15:47-54
- 9) Revelation 21:6-7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 15:12-57
- Romans 7:24-25
- 1 Timothy 3:14-16
- Matthew 23

Also Referenced: Sermon series: *The Love of God*

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Laying on of Hands

Fred R. Coulter—July 31, 1999

Let's come to the next section *The Laying on of Hands*. Let's go ahead and read the definition here: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 21).

The laying on of hands is a special act performed by ordained elders in the churches of God while asking God the Father in prayer to confer a spiritual gift or blessing upon someone. The laying on of hands is required for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit following water baptism, for anointing the sick with oil for healing, for ordination of those selected for spiritual or physical service to the church, for blessing little children, for a special blessing during a marriage ceremony, and for other special blessings.

Now, I might mention that we have another full sermon on *The Laying on of Hands*, which covers this very thoroughly, covering all aspects of it. So if you want a more thorough study on it, you can be sure and send in for it, and we'll be sure and send it to you.

Let's look at some of the Scriptural references now, for *Laying on of Hands*. Let's come to Acts, the eighth chapter, showing that the laying on of hands is necessary for receiving of the Holy Spirit after baptism. Acts 8:15: "Who [Peter & John], after coming down to Samaria... [to those who had been baptized] ...prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 15-17). So that's necessary for baptism.

If you've been baptized in a church, and in particularly into a church which has not kept the commandments of God—meaning most importantly: the Sabbath and, in particularly, the Holy Days of God—then you probably need to be baptized again; because your baptism was only an entrance into that church organization. Because, as we covered 'by baptism' (when we covered that section) you are to be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit *in* the name of Jesus Christ. So you see, God is not going to give His Spirit to those who disobey Him.

And there was a recent survey in some of the Protestant churches, which forty-three percent of those attending Protestant churches do not believe that there is any such thing as the Holy Spirit. That's

why there has to be another baptism; because first, you have to repent, then you have to be baptized, and then you have to have hands laid on you for the receipt of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1: "Now it came to pass *that* while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the upper parts *and* came to Ephesus; and when he found certain disciples." Disciple means *a learner* or *a student*. And a lot of people have been learners. They've learned something of Christ. Maybe you've attended a church. Maybe you have even been baptized. But unless you have the Holy Spirit your baptism really doesn't make any difference to God—because if you don't have His Holy Spirit, you are none of His (as we studied when we covered the section on the Holy Spirit). So Paul found these disciples.

"He said to them, 'Did you receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?' And they said to him, 'We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit'" (vs 1-2). Now, in the *King James* it's 'Holy Ghost'; but it should really be *Holy Spirit*.

It's much the same thing with Protestants; Protestants today—43% of Protestants—do not believe that there is such a thing as the Holy Spirit; which shows then that they didn't receive the Holy Spirit. Chances are they weren't baptized properly. Catholics baptize infants by sprinkling and daubing. That is not a baptism. Baptism is for adults. Baptism is for those who

- know how to repent
- understand what sin is
- being called of God

Then they're baptized and receive the laying on of hands.

Verse 3: "Then he said to them, 'Unto what, then, were you baptized?' And they said, 'Unto the baptism of John.'" Well now, let me tell you something here: John's baptism was as close to the real thing as you could get—right? Wasn't he told to go baptize unto repentance; but to believe on Him Who was coming? Well, John's baptism was certainly much better than a Catholic baptism or an Orthodox baptism or a Hindu baptism, or whatever other brand of baptism there may be among the Protestants. Whether you're fully immersed or sprinkled or daubed, it doesn't make any difference if you haven't repented and you haven't been baptized and you haven't had the hand laid on you and prayed for the Holy Spirit, then you have not

received the Holy Spirit. And that's exactly why 43% of Protestants don't believe in any such thing as the Holy Spirit—which just tells you how far the Protestant religion has slipped down the tubes; that they're letting go of God and letting go of Christ, and they don't believe. In your own life, it's something you need to analyze and ask yourself the question: Do you have the Holy Spirit of God?

So let's see what Paul said, v 4: "And Paul said, 'John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.' And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (vs 4-5). In other words, how many times were they baptized? *Twice here*. Well, the truth of the matter is, there is only *one* valid baptism. So if your baptism is not valid—maybe you've been baptized into three or four different churches—it's still not valid unless you received the Holy Spirit. When you receive the Holy Spirit, not in every case will there be speaking in tongues, as we have here in the account in Acts 19.

Verse 6: "Now when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with *other* languages and prophesied.... [Now, that was a special sign to Paul that he was to stay there at Ephesus—which he did for three years. He continued two years in one place, but he was there practically a total of three years altogether.] ...And all the men were about twelve. Then he entered into the synagogue *and* spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God" (vs 6-8). And then it shows down in v 10 that he stayed there another two years beyond that. So it was at least approximately two and a half years.

Now let's continue on and let's see that laying on of hands is needed for anointing. Let's come to James, the fifth chapter. We have to put this together with two Scriptures, because the one says 'laying on of hands'; the other is anointing with oil. And of course, anointing implies the laying on of hands.

James 5:14: "Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.... [and we'll cover that on healing when we get to it—yes, God does heal today; yes, God does intervene and so forth. And this is one way: through anointing with oil and the laying on of hands, as we will see.] ...And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (vs 14-15).

Now, let's come back here to Mark 16, and we'll see where it talks about the laying on of hands. When you go through and you read the Gospel accounts, you will see that Jesus laid hands on them and healed them. And here in Mark 16, we find that the laying on of hands for healing; and then you put the two Scriptures together. Now this is something you need to understand concerning studying the Bible, which is this: Scriptures do not conflict one with another. And in too many churches today, what happens, the minister or the teacher will study the Bible by what I call 'the theory of subtraction'; where there is a Scripture which appears to contradict another Scripture, they do away with the Scripture. What you do is you study them and you put them together the way that the Bible has it, and that's what I call 'the theory of addition.'

So now we're taking the Scripture back in James 5—where it shows anointing with oil—and now we're coming here to Mark 16:17 and we will see how to put the Scriptures together. "And these signs shall follow those who believe: in My name they shall cast out demons; they shall speak with new languages... [speaking in tongues is another whole subject. We'll have one of those you can draw down on the web here in a short while. But speaking in tongues, as commonly known as Pentecostalism, has nothing to do with the speaking of tongues in the Bible; rather it is a satanic counterfeit, which is not of God.] ...they shall remove serpents..." (vs 17-18). That doesn't mean pick them up and hold them in your hands—that is another misnomer. It means they shall cast down serpents as in the case of the Apostle Paul when he was getting wood to throw on the fire, a serpent bit his hand and he just threw it down—it was a viper—and his hand didn't even swell and he didn't suffer any ill affects from it. That's what it means. It doesn't mean pick them up in your hands and have all kinds of gyrating music and Pentecostalism to go with it; and as some people do, kiss the heads of the snakes. God has nothing to do with that! This Scripture does not mean that at all.

"...and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them in any way; they shall **lay hands on the sick**, and they shall recover" (v 18). So here's the verse here, v 18: "...they shall lay hands on the sick..." Now, James 5: "...anointing them with oil..." Mark 16:18: "...and they shall recover" So you put the two together and that's how you have the laying on of hands for the healing of sickness.

Now, let's see that this also has to do with ordination—laying on of hands with ordination and the things that take place there. Let's come to Acts, the sixth chapter, where the apostles ordained deacons. Now deacons are those who are ordained to

serve and help and minister the physical necessities of the Church or the fellowship group or the congregation when it reaches the size that certain things need to be done. Then it's all to be done in decency and in order. So in Acts, the sixth chapter, we have the laying on of hands for ordination. Now, the first part of it shows that what they did, they selected out seven men of good report—and of course, we'll look at some of the qualifications of elders here in a little bit when we get to the section concerning elders.

Acts 6:6: “*And* they set them before the apostles; and after praying, they laid *their* hands on them.... [That's where you get the term 'ordination'—laying on of hands. Notice, it is not like a ceremony that so many churches have, where they have them shave their head, that they prostrate themselves before idols in their cathedrals, and take vows of celibacy and things like that. That has nothing to do with God. Those are just traditions of men who want to be religious. That is not of God! You can be guaranteed of that. God does things in decency and in order. And so, here it is, the laying on of hands.] ...And the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was multiplied exceedingly, and a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

Now, let's come to Acts 13 and let's see where we have the laying on of hands again for ordination—and in this case, we're dealing with the Apostle Paul and Barnabas. Acts 13:2—(v 1 lists all the ones who were there: the teachers and prophets, Barnabus and Simeon and so forth.) “And as they were ministering and fasting to the Lord... [notice, in case of ordination there's always fasting as well as laying on of hands.] ...the Holy Spirit said, ‘Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.’ And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them *and* sent *them* out” (vs 2-3). So laying on of hands is required for ordination.

So, it is necessary for:

- Receiving the Holy Spirit
- For anointing when sick
- And for ordinations

That's when laying on of hands is required of the Bible. You can write in for the sermon where I go into it in much more detail, showing where that actually began in the Old Testament, and it was carried on into the New Testament.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 8:15-17

- 2) Acts 19:1-8
- 3) James 5:14-15
- 4) Mark 16:17-18
- 5) Acts 6:6-7
- 6) Acts 13:2-3

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Acts 19:10

Also referenced: Sermon: *Laying on of Hands*

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Healing

Fred R. Coulter—July 31, 1999

Now, let's come to the next section, which is *Healing*. Now, today, many people have in mind, concerning healing, such as: healing campaigns, healing revivals—and you've seen the reports on television, how many of these have been exposed as frauds; where they have actually used high-tech microphones and ear-receptors so that different ones in the audience would communicate to the one preaching and it would seem that he diagnosed the disease of the person by name, as if it were by a miracle; but it was all a fraud. It was all fed into his ear by someone else in the back of the audience there, who was one of the greeters to find out what information they had. And they always had them fill out an information form; so they had everything right there. And it's not one of these where you get up and shout, yell and scream, and fall on your back, and you blither and blather and things like that.

Healing comes from God! Let's read about it here. Let's come to the section and we'll read the statement of belief on healing: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg. 21 throughout).

The Scriptures reveal that God sometimes allows sickness to come upon individuals for a special purpose. With this exception, the sickness that we suffer is the result of physical or spiritual sins.

Now, physical sin is where you break a physical law. Now if you fall you have broken the physical law of gravity and it's caught up with you, and maybe you fell and broke your arm or broke your leg or whatever. Now, God has put into the body of every individual the healing process for things like that; because God loves His creation, and God is no respecter of persons. He knows that things like that will happen with everyone.

Now today, when I'm bringing this study on healing: the other day I was using a razor knife to cut something and I cut my finger, so I've got a cut right on my finger. And thanks to God, the healing process is there and it's coming along fine. So, when you break a physical law, there will be a physical result that will happen; which is called sickness. Sometimes it is a spiritual sin. When your spiritual sins get so bad, then God will bring special curses upon people for their spiritual sins—and you can read that in Deut. 28:15-on—where God says that these are the curses that 'I will bring upon you for disobedience.'

Divine healing is God's forgiveness of those sins. God the Father personally

intervenes when He extends healing to those who call upon Him in times of sickness or injury. This Divine intervention can be directed toward anyone at any time, as God wills, because Jesus Christ paid the price for healing from every sickness with the stripes of scourging that He received before His crucifixion. When we are healed by God, our sins are forgiven through the stripes of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Miracles of healing are often granted.

And I know, I have seen miracles of healing. Now miracles do not take place all the time. But they do happen occasionally.

The Scriptures teach that one who desires to be healed by God should call for the elders of the Church to anoint him or her with oil in the name of Jesus Christ... [And, as we saw, the lay on hands] ...and to pray for God's healing and intervention. Trusting God in faith for healing is a personal matter between each individual and God.

Now let's look at the Scriptures concerning that. Let's come to Exodus 15—here we're going to see that one of the names of God—and you need to understand this: Whenever you read of the Lord God in the Old Testament, you are reading about the one Who became Jesus Christ. So all the covenant names of God in the Old Testament, refer to Jesus Christ. God the Father was not revealed until Jesus Christ came to reveal Him.

Exodus 15:23—we're going to see something here that's very important for us to understand. "And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah because it was bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?' And he cried to the LORD. And the LORD showed him a tree. And when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet..." (vs 23-25). So this shows that there are times when natural processes, which God has already created, God will certainly use and honor and bless. And He says in Psa. 103, that He made herbs for the service of man.

Today, we've gotten away from those things, which God has created, and have gotten into a lot of sophisticated medicines which they're finding are going to have long-term deleterious effects against people and build up immunities against bacteria.

Now we have incurable bacteria because the immune systems have been so destroyed by having so many drugs, which are based not upon the natural methods, but upon chemical methods.

So God here not only used the natural method, but gave His blessing upon it—didn't He? *Yes!* "...There He made a decree and a law for them, and there He proved them. And he said, 'If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in His sight... [now here are some of the conditions for healing]: ...and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His laws, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I *am* the LORD Who heals you'" (vs 25-26). Which means, *I am God, your Healer!*

So healing is a Divine intervention. Now, we can call upon the promises of God. Let's come to Psalm 103—God promises that He will heal. It is a matter of faith of the individual; and a matter of faith of the elder who anoints—both of them are involved. Now sometimes God will let us go through things because we do things which are detrimental to our bodies, not realizing it; and sometimes God will let us go through things as sort of a discipline for us so that we will understand that the body that we have is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

One thing we need to understand in the process of healing, which is this: God is determined that our physical life is limited. Some people live longer than others. Some people are more healthy than others. Sometimes it has to do with what you received as an inheritance from your parents—that has a lot to do with it. Sometimes it has to do with the food that you've eaten. And if you've grown up eating a lot of junk food and your health is not good, well then, God certainly would expect you to correct and remedy that; because He made the good and wholesome food; men have taken it and degenerated it. And so, we're creating degenerate human beings and sickly human beings—some of them cannot even fend off even a common cold anymore. And we have people whose immune systems that are now so bad that they get what are called 'environmental diseases' or 'environmental reactions' where they can't even live in their own homes because of all the chemicals in it; that their immune system is so low that they can't fight off the toxins leeching out from the chemicals in the home: out of the rug, out of the wall, out of everything. So, you have all of those factors which you need to consider.

But we still have these promises: Psalm 103:1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.... [Again, this ties right in with diligently seeking God and

listening to His voice, and doing the things that are right and pleasing to God.] ...Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases" (vs 1-3). So there we have a promise; but the promise is also based upon obedience. Like Jesus told the man whom He healed: 'Go and sin no more lest the worst thing come upon you.' So we have that altogether there. So He gives the promise of healing.

Matthew 8—and here it shows some of the healings that Jesus performed. Now let's understand this: Jesus didn't heal everyone. He healed all those that came to Him, but not everyone who came to Him. Jesus had the capacity to raise the dead; but He only raised three in His three-and-a-half year ministry. Matthew 8:1: "When He came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You will, You have the power to cleanse me.' Then Jesus stretched out *His* hand *and* touched him, saying, 'I will. Be cleansed.' And immediately *he* was cleansed *from* his leprosy" (vs 1-3). ***God healed.***

Verse 16: "Now when evening had come, they brought to Him many possessed with demons... [and there is casting out of demons; a proper way] ... and He cast out the spirits by *His* word, and healed all who were sick; so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*He* Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases.'" (vs 16-17). So Jesus carried those upon Himself.

Now, let's come to Matthew 9:27: "Now as Jesus was traveling from there, two blind *men* followed, crying and saying, 'Have pity on us, Son of David!' And after coming into the house, the blind *men* came to Him; and Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I have the power to do this?' They said to Him, 'Yes, Lord.' Then He touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith be it to you.' And their eyes were opened. And He sternly warned them, saying, 'See that you do not let anyone know *it*'" (vs 27-30). Well, with that kind of thing they were so excited they went out and told everybody. And I imagine everyone was wondering about that.

Now, we are healed through His stripes. Let's come to 1-Peter 2:24—this is one of the very reasons why Jesus went through the horrible crucifixion that He did. 'By His stripes you were healed.' And we will see here that Peter writes: 1-Peter 2:21: "for to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; *when* suffering, He threatened not, but committed *Himself* to Him Who judges righteously;

Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree... ['stauros'—*stake or cross*] ...so that we, being dead to sins, may live unto righteousness; **by Whose stripes you were healed**" (vs 21-24). So it is by the stripes of Jesus Christ.

Now we find that back here in the Isaiah 53—a whole chapter given to the crucifixion and suffering of Jesus Christ. We'll just cover the verses which then apply to the healing of sickness and disease. Isaiah 53:4: "Surely He has borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.... [Sorrows can also mean *pain*. Grief can mean *sickness*. He has borne our infirmities.] ...yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions; *He was* crushed for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and **with His stripes we ourselves are healed**" (vs 4-5). So that's what Peter is quoting there.

And another thing to understand concerning the Word of God, which is very important: You cannot separate the New Testament from the Old Testament. The Old Testament is in itself incomplete. The New Testament is in itself incomplete and built upon the foundation of the Old Testament. And the thing that is important to realize concerning the Old Testament is that ***the New Testament interprets the Old Testament***. Many people have it the other way around.

Now let's continue on here. We covered those things concerning laying on of hands, so let me just mention, we have two more in-depth tapes on healing, which you can write for. So, you can send in for those and that will cover many more Scriptures and give you a much more detailed instruction concerning healing and anointing, which then will add a little bit more concerning laying on of hands.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 15:23-26
- 2) Psalm 103:1-3
- 3) Matthew 8:1-3, 16-17
- 4) Matthew 9:27-30
- 5) 1 Peter 2:21-24
- 6) Isaiah 53:4-5

Scripture referenced, not quoted:
Deuteronomy 28:15-on

Also referenced: Sermon series: *Healing*

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The Church of God The Spiritual Body of Christ

Fred R. Coulter—February 5, 2000

This becomes very important, because almost every church says it is THE church. Most people think a church is a building, because the building in which they meet is called *the church*; or it's a cathedral. The Church is NOT the building. The Church in the New Testament comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which means *the assembly of the called out ones*. So it is an assembly. The Church of God is not restricted to a building or an organization. The Church of God is identified by those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ.

Let's begin by going to Revelation 14. They have the faith of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. So if you're looking for a **true** Church of God, you have to look for one which keeps the commandments of God—including the Sabbath and the Holy Days—and believes in ALL the words of God, the whole Bible: Old Testament and New Testament. And you can start eliminating churches very quickly.

First of all, you line up the Ten Commandments, and then you ask the question: Are they keeping the Ten Commandments? Now, we'll do that here in just a minute, and you will see how many churches you can eliminate very quickly. And I know that when I was being called of God, that's how I did it.

Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the* patience of the saints; here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." So you have to find that.

Let's go back to Exodus 20 where the Ten Commandments were given, and let's see how easily you can eliminate the vast majority of churches which are frauds in the first place and are not from God; and a good many of them—in fact, most of them are not from God but are of this world; meaning *they are of Satan the devil*. Now, that's going to make some people very angry. But, you can be angry all you want at God, it isn't going to hurt God. You can be angry at what I say; but if I say the Truth and your angry at the Truth, well then, you need re-examine your priorities. Maybe you're really not seeking God. Maybe you're seeking a religion. Maybe you're seeking a home—as they call a lot of churches—right? They call it a home, a church home.

Go to the church on your corner—that's what you are told. Well, if it doesn't have the Spirit of God, doesn't keep the commandments of God, you might as well go down and join the local bowling club, because it won't do you much more good than bowling. As a matter of fact, it might do you more harm because you go there and all you hear are a bunch of lies preached. And if you want to go to a church where they don't teach the Truth of God, **all the Truth of God**, you're going to go to a building filled with people after their own things, and they're not worshipping and serving God—though they think they are.

All right let's begin, Exodus 20:1: "And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me'" (vs 1-3). So, if they're not worshipping the true God of the Bible—God the Father and Jesus Christ; the two are one. And as we saw with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is NOT *a trinity*. So that's how you can already identify a **true** Church of God. If they believe in a trinity:

1. it's not of God
2. they're not worshipping the true God—it's not a Church of God
3. the second commandment: "You shall not make unto you any graven image of anything..."—in the likeness of anything!

Now what does that mean? What is 'anything'? Stop and think: 'anything' is what? *Anything!* Right? [now notice, it says, 'you shall not make.'

So it shouldn't be there in the first place—should it? If you go to a church with pictures of Jesus—that's not the Church of God. If you go to a church that has a cross or steeple—it is not a Church of God. As a matter of fact, you need to get the book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop and read where the cross came from. And read what it represents. It will absolutely dumbfound you, and for you to understand that you walked into that church feeling good, walking under that cross or viewing that cross up in the front of the so-called 'sanctuary' of the church or the chapel or the cathedral that you went to. Now if you go to a church that has graven images, you know that's not of God.

"You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or

that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me” (vs 4-5).

So, if you have idolatry, you hate God. You can bow down before the statue of the virgin Mary all you want and tell God how much you love Him, but He doesn’t hear your prayer at all because you hate Him; because He says, *don’t bow down*, let alone *make*. And you walk into any Catholic or Orthodox cathedral and you have idols everywhere. ***that is not a Church of God at all***—because they are transgressing the commandments of God. And the Catholics, by the way, take the second commandment and remove it from their shortened version of the commandments. Yet, in their *Douay Version* of the Bible they leave it in. So if you don’t believe me, go check it out.

So you have all these idols, all these statues, all these crucifixes, all those candles, all the beads, all the holy water—***that is not of God***. You need to understand that. So if you truly want God, you’re going to have to make some decisions. If you truly want to find the Church of God, you’re going to have to start searching, and you’re going to have to start eliminating all those churches which are breaking the commandments of God.

Now, let’s continue, v 6: “But showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments” Now, if you would just make a note and turn to John 14:15, that’s exactly what Jesus said. ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ So this is New Testament doctrine right here in the Ten Commandments. If you go to a church and the church says you don’t have to keep the commandments of God—NO! They are ***liars! They’re not of God!*** They may use the name of God; they may take the name of God; they may read from the Scriptures; but ***they are not from God***.

- Remember that Satan also quotes Scripture.
- Remember that Satan also ‘appears as an angel of light.’
- Remember that his ministers appear as ‘ministers of righteousness. *But they are not*.

Now, here’s the third commandment—v 7: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Anyone who says, ‘the Lord says’; and the Lord has not said, is taking the name of God in vain. This is not just referring to swearing and cursing. This has to do in the worship of God, where a man would dare to stand up in a

pulpit and say he’s from God and say that God did not mean that we should keep His commandments; that God says that Christ came to do away with the law; Christ came to do away with the commandments, Christ showed that this was only for the Jews. If you heard that in the church you’ve gone to, you’ve been lied to. But you see, too many people are not willing to admit that they’ve been lied to.

- Are you willing to admit that you’ve been lied to?
- Are you willing to admit that you followed men?
- Are you willing to admit that the church that you went to was wrong?
- Did not teach the commandments of God and did not have the faith of God?
- That every Sunday when they got up there and used the name of the Lord, they took His name in vain?

That’s something! You need to think on that!

Now the fourth commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep in Holy” (v 8). Now, we’ve covered that very thoroughly and we have a whole series on the Holy Sabbath—which you can write for—explaining why Sunday is not the Sabbath. Sunday never was the Sabbath. It’s the first day of the week; was never the seventh day of the week—the calendars out of Europe to the contrary. And you will find that what has happened is that men have devised Sunday and it was actually the Emperor Constantine who gave the edict of keeping Sunday. You need to realize that. Someone who was not even converted; someone who was not even converted to God, never knew God, never read the Scriptures—stood up and gave the edict that everybody ought to keep Sunday. Now if you don’t believe that, go ask your minister in the Sunday-keeping church. Ask him why he doesn’t keep the Sabbath? And then you come back and you write in for our tapes on—we’ll have a series of five or six tapes—the Holy Sabbath of God.

God says ‘remember the Sabbath’ and the first thing men want to do is forget it, reject it, throw it away, destroy it. So any church that does not keep the seventh-day Sabbath is not of God. And then when you come down to those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, then you have ask the question: Do they keep all the commandments of God? Because there are Seventh-day Adventists, and Seventh-day Adventists are just Saturday-keeping Protestants. That’s all they are. Now they won’t admit that, because they’re so hung-up on the Sabbath that they haven’t gone beyond to the rest of the commandments of God; and they believe in a

trinity; and they believe in swearing allegiance to the so-called 'Christian' flag with a cross on it. **That is idolatry!**

So you see, now you begin to understand why the **way of Truth** only few are going to find it; because they're not going to be very many who are willing to take the Ten Commandments, like we're doing here in this study, to find out where the Church of God is and find out if they believe in keeping the commandments of God.

"Remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.... [Now, I want you to notice that little 'of'—that denotes ownership. God owns the Sabbath. It's **not of the Jews. It is of GOD!** Who is the God of both Jews and Gentiles. You need to get the series on *The Sabbath*.] ...You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that's within you gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (vs 8-11). And *He didn't bless any other day*.

God NEVER blessed Sunday. The pope cannot bless Sunday and make it Holy, because **he is not GOD!** And He has no authority under which to do so from the Word of God. You need to understand that! You need to get away from following men—if you want to find the **true** Church of God—you need to really sit down and start going through the commandments of God and the Bible of God and understand where the Church of God is.

Now, just to say here—we'll read it next time; we'll get into it on the next tape—the Church of God is the spiritual body of Christ. It is the gathering together of the 'called out ones'

- who have been baptized
- who have the Spirit of God
- who keep the commandments of God
- who have the faith of Jesus Christ
- who keep the Sabbath of God
- who have no idols, no statues
- they don't take the name of God in vain

They believe in ALL the commandments of God and follow them and live by them as a way of life as shown by Jesus Christ.

This is going to be a very interesting section here. The word translated *church* in the New Testament comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia'—which means *the gathering together of the elect*. And we will see that the Church starts out with individual members that God the Father has drawn to Himself, and has brought through Jesus Christ. So let's read

what we have here; because many people are looking for a 'church home.' They want to find the church where the people are nice and friendly. They want to find a church that they can feel comfortable in. They want to find a church that is not too far from their home. They want to find a church where they have good teen activities and childcare, senior activities and all of these things. But, does that make it a church? Because it's a building on a corner, is it a church?—because it's called a church? Well, let's see what the Bible defines as the Church of God. Let's read it right here, *The Spiritual Body of Christ: (Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 22 throughout).

The Church of God is portrayed in the Bible as the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. God the Father has appointed Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church in all things.

Now, I might mention here that there's no such thing that God appointed the office of 'the vicar of Christ'—to be there in place of Christ—because that then is antichrist. So if you are in a church which has claims that their head-man is the 'vicar of Christ' you are NOT in the Church of God.

The true Church of God is made up of all who have been called by God the Father, who have accepted His Son Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who have repented of their sins, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have received the Holy Spirit of God as a begetting from God the Father. These individuals are spiritual brethren and members of one church—the spiritual body of Jesus Christ—although they may be widely scattered throughout the world. It is by one and the same Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God the Father—that each one has been baptized into the body of Jesus Christ. This spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father is the basis of all true Christian fellowship. Jesus described Himself to His disciples as "the true vine" and the Father as "the husbandman."

That is the one who takes care of the vine so it brings forth fruit.

All true Christians are branches of the true Vine and must remain attached to the Vine in order to grow spiritually.

Now, many people believe that if you are in a particular corporate organization, or if you attend a certain church building, or you're within the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church or a Protestant Church; or we could take it over to the Muslim and the Buddhist

and all of the other religions of the world—they all think they're all going to the same place; they're all going to heaven. But Christ said that He is '*the way and the truth and the life.*' And 'no one comes to the Father except through Him.'

While there is only one spiritual body of Christ, its members are scattered in numerous local fellowships and individual ministries around the world. Since all members of the Body of Christ have the Spirit of God, God does not limit Himself to work through any single organization.

And I might interject here. There is a woman in New Zealand that I visited on my trip down there, and she rents out rooms—she calls them 'flat-mates'—and she had one move out and she put an advertisement for a 'flat-mate'; and this person came having nothing whatsoever to do with any background of any of the organizations we know of. He kept the Sabbath, kept the Holy Days and kept the 14th Passover. Good example of someone in the *spiritual Body of Christ*. Because Christ is looking at His Church from His vantage point down on the earth—and that's what He sees.

Since all members of the Body of Christ have the Spirit of God, God does not limit Himself to work through any single organization... [regardless of *name*; regardless of *claim*—He will not do that]. ...Every group or ministry that is part of the body of Christ will manifest the fruit of God's Holy Spirit, bear the name of God, and be keeping His commandments as magnified by Jesus Christ. The primary function of the Church is to nurture the brethren of Jesus Christ with spiritual food from God's Word so that they may grow up into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. The Church also has a commission from God to preach repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ in all the world, and to preach the good news of the coming kingdom and government of God in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ to rule on the earth.

Now let's look at the Scriptural references here. But before we do, I just want to comment. I think it is fitting, and the way that God has designed it—and all in His plan—that Christ return not until mankind, under the direction of Satan the devil, has reached the highest pinnacle that men can reach. Where we live in this technological age, where men can go into outer-space, they can delve into the smallest parts of creation, and finally have come to the conclusion that they are so smart and so intelligent and so advanced that they don't need God—and that yea,

they themselves are God. That's why Christ is going to return from outer-space; because that's the only thing that men fear today— isn't it? So God is going to do it in a way, which will be a tremendous and fantastic witness to them.

Now, before He ascended to heaven—let's come to Matthew 28, and let's read what He gave as the overall purpose statement or mission as to what the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ were to do. Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority... [*all authority*—'exousia' in the Greek. He also has *all power* being 'dunamis'—that is the *strength and energy* of God] ...in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [This is why we are to have full faith and belief in God and Jesus Christ.] ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations... [So the Church is to *teach*] ...baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... [And if you want to know about baptism, just go ahead and refer to the section that we've already covered concerning *Water Baptism*—which is a covenant death in a watery grave.] ...**teaching them to observe all things...**" (vs 18-20)

You are to go out and *preach* and you are to *teach*. Teach them to observe ALL things. Not some of the things that you agree with; not some of the things that churches say, 'we'll take this because we agree with that and we think Christ is right here. But over here we don't think Christ is right, so therefore, we won't do it.' And that's what a lot of them do when it comes to taking the so-called, what they call 'communion' or 'Lord's supper'—which is not right. That's a counterfeit of the Christian Passover. If you don't have the book *The Christian Passover*, well you be sure and write in for it; or you can click over to York Publishing and you can buy it right on-line, right there, if you want to. But, I want to tell you something very clear, they reject foot-washing. Does your church believe in foot-washing? Does your church keep the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, according to the commandment of God. That's what Jesus taught, didn't He? So if you are in a church where they don't teach these things, you're not in the Church of God. God has nothing to do with that church that you may attend. Oh, you may have Bible study, you may read Scriptures, but how many times has the minister told you, 'Well, He didn't mean this. Christ didn't mean that. We don't do this today'—etc.

Now let's see here: "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age." (v 20).

Now, let's come here to Matthew 24:14—since we're right here in the book of Matthew.

Here's something else that the Church will be doing—*always be doing!* And it has happened in varying degrees, at varying times in history. And at the end it's going to be done in such a way that there will be absolutely no doubt that Christ is returning.

Matthew 24:12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied... [and we are living in that day right now. You look around you in your city, your town, your state, your country. Is not iniquity abounding?] ...the love of many shall grow cold... [or grow cold.] ...But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved.... [so there has to be endurance by those who have the Spirit of God.] ...And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in **all** the world... [whether people believe it or not; whether they accept it or not; it will be a witness.] ...and **then shall the end come**" (vs 12-14). *Not until then.*

Let's come here to Ephesians, the first chapter, and let's see where it talks about the Holy Spirit of God. And where, if you don't have the Holy Spirit of God that you are none of His. When you are baptized and have had the laying on of hands and receive the Holy Spirit of God, then you'll receive the begetting of the Spirit of God, which is the earnest of eternal life. Everyone who has the Spirit of God, with the earnest of eternal life, is in the Body of Christ, the *spiritual* Church of God.

Ephesians 1:13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory" (vs 13-14). And all of those who have the Spirit of God are waiting for the resurrection, when Christ returns.

Let's come down here to v 22 and let's see Who is the Head of the Church of God. We need to make it very clear: NO MAN anywhere on this earth is the head of the Church of God. Christ alone is the Head. And if that is not taught in the church that you attend, you're in the wrong church, v 22: "For He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the Church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all" (vs 22-23). So there we have it.

Now, let's come here to Acts, the second chapter, and let's see that God adds members. He adds them by *calling* them, by *bringing them to repentance*. Let's see how that is done. We had that with *Repentance* and *Baptism*, but let's just review that. In order for you to become a part of the Body of Christ—it's not a membership role; it's not some sort of initiation that you just do because it's

required; but—it is that you come to a point of complete repentance and understand that your sins have crucified Christ, and that His payment for your sins is *full* payment for all of the sins that you have committed. But, in order to have that sacrifice of Christ applied to you, you must repent. And something has to happen in your life, in a profound way—just like it did to those who heard Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost here in:

Acts 2:36—and he finished His sermon by saying, "Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart.... [That has to happen to everyone. You can't just go join the Church of God. You have to come to repentance. God has to lead you to it.] ...were cut to the heart... [because your heart is the deepest, innermost part of your mind. And that's what God wants.] ...and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (vs 36-38). And it's a gift that comes by grace. 'By grace have you been saved' as we have covered.

- you can't earn it
- you can't buy it
- you can't sign up for it
- you can't win it in the lottery

It comes because of God's direct intervention in your life.

Now, Peter continues: "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, as many as *the* Lord our God may call.'.... [So that's why the Church is the assembly of the *called out* ones. We have been called out of this world; though we live in it, we're not part of it.] ...And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'.... [And if there's ever a generation that is untoward, it is this one, now. Full of perversion and so evil that the book of Revelation calls it 'Sodom and Egypt.'] ...Then those who joyfully received his message... [so you have to do *it with your full being*—that's what it means] ...were baptized; and about three thousand souls were added that day" (vs 39-41).

Verse 47—and talking of all of those who believed, they were "Praising God and having favor with all the people; and the Lord added to the Church day by day those who were being saved."

So you see, it's not just running down to the corner and finding a little church building that looks

nice to you; and there are things there which please you; or they have a good song service; or they have a wonderful choir. All of those things are not necessarily wrong; but those things are secondary and tertiary at best; because unless you have the Spirit of God then you're 'none of His.' Let's see that now. Let's go to Romans, the eighth chapter and we'll see that.

Romans 8:9—he's speaking to those true Christians who have the Spirit of God: "However, you are not in *the* flesh... [that is as God views you. And as we covered in the section on the two righteousnesses, if you repent and are baptized and stand in the grace of God, God imputes to you the righteousness of Christ—meaning that God is viewing you as you are going to be ultimately in the resurrection. Though you walk in the flesh you don't live after the flesh. That's what it means: *you're not in the flesh*. Obviously, as long as we're still alive in this body, and we have flesh and blood, we're still in the flesh. But spiritually speaking, since we don't live after the flesh, but we live after the Spirit, we are not in the flesh as far as God is concerned.] ...**but in the Spirit**... [and here's the reason why]: ...if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you.... [Now, *if* you have the Spirit of God, you'll know that you have the Spirit of God. Sometimes people doubt and wonder about it because they've let it slide and everything slack along for so long that they drift away from God. But that can be re-kindled back. So that's a big IF.] ...But **if** anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

So there is that sharp dividing line. Notice: "But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, **he does not belong to Him**" (v 9). So you have to have the Spirit of Christ. Now if you are in the Body of Christ, which is the Church, then God has provided the teaching so that you are to grow in grace and knowledge and understanding of God's way.

Let's come here to Ephesians, the fourth chapter, and let's see that. The whole purpose of why there is a church.

- It's not to have a building—though buildings are not wrong.
- It's not to have a political movement. If you get all involved in the politics of this world, soon you're taken down again by Satan the devil.

We are not to be a part of this world!

Ephesians 4:4: "*There is one body*... [that is *spiritually speaking* of the Church of God] ...and one Spirit... [because that comes from God the Father, as we saw] ...even as you are called in one hope of your calling.... [which is the return of Jesus

Christ at the resurrection, at His return.] ...One Lord, one faith, one baptism... [not many different ways—ONE] ...one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all" (vs 4-6).

Now, let's come over here to v 11, to see why He gave those as teachers and leaders in the Church. Not as some great, high office; not to exalt themselves over the brethren, but to serve and to help and teach. "And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints... [that all can grow in grace and knowledge; all can develop to the fullest of their spiritual capacity] ...for *the work* of *the* ministry... [which means *the work of the service*] ...for *the edifying* of the Body of Christ.... [and 'edifying' means *to build up*—and the root word comes from the Greek which means *to build a building*. So it's to **up lift**, it is to **teach**.] ...until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [that means *a spiritually mature person*] ...unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ" (vs 11-13).

That is the whole purpose of any organization that is done in serving the people who are called the brethren of Christ, who are part of the Body of Christ. "so that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ.... [Now notice how the Bible defines the church]: ...from Whom all the body... [wherever those are who have the Spirit of God, they are part of the Body of Christ—and we'll see in 1-Cor. 12 (in just a minute) how it is defined there.] ...fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies.... [Everyone has a part.] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (vs 14-16).

That is the whole ultimate goal of what a church should be. So if you are in a church that is run by fear, or that is run by politics, or that is run by get along/go along, then you're not in the Church of God. You have to have the Spirit of God.

Now, let's come to 1-Corinthians 12, and let's see what it says about the Church—that it is a spiritual organism, with many different fellowship groups, many different congregations, and so forth. 1-Corinthians 12:4—it talks about the different ministries of Christ. "Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God

Who is working all things in all.... [So God is the one Who is doing it] ...But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all*" (vs 4-7)—‘with all’ means *those who are the members of the Body of Christ*.

- “For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit... [this means for those who are the leaders and teachers]
- ...and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;
- and to a different one, faith by the same Spirit,
- and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
- And to another, *the* working of miracles;
- and to another, prophecy;
- and to another, discerning of spirits;
- and to a different one, various languages;
- and to another, *the* interpretation of languages.

But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God Himself desires*" (vs 8-11).

“For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; **so also is Christ**... [So here is the *spiritual definition* of the church.] ...For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body *of Christ* is not one member, but many" (vs 12-14). Then it goes on to describe different functions that are there.

Let’s come to John, the fifteenth chapter, and here is where Christ defines the Church as the vine. He is the Head and everything comes from Christ. John 15:1:—Jesus said: “I am the true vine...” Wherever you see something like the ‘true vine’; ‘the true word’—that is contrasting it to what? *Something that is counterfeit and false*—right?

- Is there a false vine? *Yes!*
- Are there false ministers? *Yes!*
- Are there counterfeits? *Yes!*

There’s only one Christ, and He is 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... [So, if you have the Spirit of God and you’re in the Body of Christ, Paul says that we’ll have ‘many tribulations’; many trials. That’s because God is purging us.] ...order that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me, and I in you.... [Christ in you.] ...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me” (vs 1-4).

The question is: Are you in Christ? If you have the Spirit of God and are looking to Christ as your Head, and He is the one Who rules your life, then yes, you are in Him and He in you.

“I am the vine, *and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. 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.... [Now, that’s referring to the final day of judgment of the wicked.] ...If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you...” (vs 5-7).

You have to have all of it. Now notice, if you are in Christ, through the Spirit of God; and He is in you, because of the Spirit of God; and His words live in you—as Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’ So all of those have to be in you.

“...you shall ask whatever you desire, 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. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. 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 7-10).

So those who are Christ’s will be keeping the commandments of God. Let’s see that even in the end-time here. We’ll see that in just a minute. Let’s come to Revelation 12. Even right in the middle of the tribulation, right at the time of great duress against the Church, that is coming in the future (as prophesied here in Rev. 12), the people of God will still be keeping the commandments of God; because they will be still abiding in the vine of Christ.

Revelation 12:17: “Then the dragon [Satan the devil] was furious with the woman [the Church] and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Now, that’s a profound verse.

Let’s come over here to Revelation 14:12: “Here is *the* patience of the saints; here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”—meaning having His very own faith. Now that is a thumbnail sketch of what the Church of God is:

- Spiritual organism
- consisting of many different fellowship groups
- but all having the Spirit of God
- all keeping the commandments of God
- all in the Vine, Who is Christ

- and all loving God with all their heart, mind, soul and being

That is the true description of the Church of God.

Now from time-to-time there will be troubles which will come into the Church; because Satan is after the Church. So, as we find in Revelation 2 & 3, there are various false doctrines which will creep in to different organizations and fellowship groups. Even having to

- put up with false apostles
- having the doctrine of Baalim
- eating things sacrificed unto idols
- committing spiritual fornication with the churches of this world

—of which Christ corrects ALL of them for that and tells them to repent.

In this day and age we have what is called ‘the Laodiceans’ or the lukewarm ones; because they claim they are rich and increased with goods. And yet, God corrects them and calls them to repentance. And just because it is a spiritual organism, as God looks at the Church, does not mean as people who are weak and human that they will not also subsequently have some problems, too. But God expects all of the false doctrine to be purged out; all of the problems and difficulties to be repented of as we grow in grace and knowledge.

So, that’s the broad, overall scope of the Church of God. Notice, I didn’t say, ‘Come and join us.’ Notice I didn’t say, ‘Find the church of your choice.’ What I’m saying is: You find Christ and God the Father, and you *will* find the Church of God. However, to finish up this section, there are definite signs that you can look to as to where a Church of God is. Now, it’s not restricted to any one organization. There may be many different organizations, but here are the major beliefs that they will be believing that you can look to, to see if it is a Church of God:

1. **They will believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ.** They will not believe in a trinity, but they will believe in the Father and the Son. Now, those who believe in a trinity call those who believe in the Father and the Son only, they call them “cults.” But the truth of the matter is, all of those who believe in a trinity belong to a “cult.” It’s the opposite way around.
2. **Believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.**
3. **Christ only is our High Priest**—there is no intermediary on earth; such as: a man, a leading minister, or even a Pope or a Dalai Lama.

4. **Believe the Word of God**—that it is God inspired. We might add to that, that *you have the right Bible*, which is based upon the text, which was used for the *King James Version* of the Bible—for the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament is based upon the true Levitical Massoretic text, not the Rabbinic Massoretic text. And the New Testament should be based upon the Byzantine Greek. All other Bibles, such as *New International Version*, *The New American Standard Bible*, *The Revised Standard Version*, anything that comes from the Greek text of Wescott and Hort have been perverted and changed and they no longer are considered the Word of God. Now there is a book you can get called *New Age Bible Versions* by Gail Replinger, which you can get and read and you will be astonished as to what they have done to change the words in the Bible.
5. **Will be keeping the commandments of God.** That is, will be keeping ALL of the Ten Commandments.
6. **They will be observing the seventh day weekly Sabbath**, which is called Saturday today. They will be observing the Passover and the Holy Days. So you have Sabbath, Passover and Holy Days all included in there in number six.
7. **They will have the love and grace and of God.** They will understand that; because true commandment-keeping and true grace of God go hand-in-hand because Paul says that ‘through grace we establish law.’
8. **Will love the brethren**—that is, each other. There will be exemplified within the congregations of God, the same love that Jesus had for His disciples.
9. **They will observe the laws of clean and unclean meats**, because that is enforced in the New Testament (as we will see—we haven’t yet come to that one).
10. **Believe in tithing.**
11. **Believe in the coming Kingdom of God**, which Christ will be the King—which will be on the earth.
12. **Do not believe in the immortality of the soul.**
13. **Do not believe that people go to heaven when they die.**

And there are others that can be added on to it, but these are the basic signs that you will find if you are looking for a congregation, which would be the Church of God. The last one we could add to that, which is one I needed to put down there—let’s come

to John 17—this is very important for us to understand.

FRC:bo
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Now, in the Old Testament, God put His name upon Israel, and His name upon the city of Jerusalem. In the New Testament, with the death of Christ, now the physical temple no longer exists, but we—the collective Body of Christ—***are the temple of God***; and ***that's where He has placed His name***.

John 17:11—Christ was praying before He was arrested to be led off to be crucified: “And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*” So they will bear the name of God. So the Church will also have the name of God.

Now, just this morning driving up, I heard an announcement on the radio where a choir was going to sing at a designated place; and they said the choir was coming from the church, which is called The First Church of the Last Laugh. Well, you can know for sure that that is NOT Church of God—neither any other church called by any other name; because they don't have the name of the Father. And if they don't have the name of the Father, they are not of God. So that's how you find where a true Church of God is.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 14:12
- 2) Exodus 20:1-11
- 3) Matthew 28:18-20
- 4) Matthew 24:12-14
- 5) Ephesians 1:13-14, 22-23
- 6) Acts 2:36-41, 47
- 7) Romans 8:9
- 8) Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-16
- 9) 1-Corinthians 12:4-14
- 10) John 15:1-10
- 11) Revelation 12:17
- 12) Revelation 14:12
- 13) John 17:11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 14:15
- Revelation 2 & 3

Also referenced:

Sermon series: *The Holy Sabbath*

Books:

- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

The Church of God

The Ministry of the New Testament Church

Fred R. Coulter—February 5, 2000

Now we've come to the section in the *Beliefs* booklet, concerning the ministry of the Christian Biblical Church of God. And the ministry of the Christian Biblical Church of God is different than you would consider any ministry of any of other church—inasmuch as we are not hierarchical. And we'll see the reason why we are not hierarchical, but we can still perform the functions necessary and have the proper organization for doing the work of the ministry and serving the brethren that God has sent us.

Now let's begin the section here by reading in the *Beliefs* booklet, the explanation: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 23 throughout)

The Christian Biblical Church of God has a ministry patterned after the instructions of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament.

And also, as we'll see later, according to the instructions of the Apostle Paul.

Those who serve in this ministry do not exalt themselves over their brethren by exercising authority or rank, but strive to serve their brethren in humility and love. The ordained elders of the Christian Biblical Church of God understand that they have been called of God to spiritual service to fulfill the needs of their brethren. An elder may serve as a minister, teacher, pastor, evangelist, or in other needed capacities. The function that each elder fulfills varies according to the measure of the gift of Jesus Christ. The qualifications for elders are found in 1-Timothy 3 and Titus 1. That a man has been called by God into the ministry is evidenced by his love of the brethren and his love of God the Father and Jesus Christ. An ordained elder must maintain an attitude of true conversion and dedication to God the Father and Jesus Christ. He must have a deep desire to serve the brethren of God and must have the ability to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the ministry is to edify and build up the Body of Christ. It is the responsibility of the ministry to teach and preserve the true doctrines of the Bible, to serve the spiritual needs of their brethren,

and to provide leadership within their local congregations. Those who are ordained to evangelize also have a responsibility to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers, to teach all who will listen, and to baptize in all nations.

Let's first of all go to 2-Timothy 2:1, and see one of the very first qualifications for an elder. Now, this was before the Apostle Paul was going to die, and he knew that this was his last instruction that he was sending to Timothy; and he was turning things over to Timothy at that point: 2-Timothy 2:1: "Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also" (vs 1-2).

Now, if we look at the pattern of the Apostle Paul's ministry, and how he dealt with the local congregations, though he was the apostle he never exercised authority upon them downward in a way that most religious organizations are used to, and especially in the sense of the Catholic Church as we see it today. So it's very important to understand that ***a man must be called of God***. Let's see what Jesus told His apostles. He can't appoint himself. In a day where we're living in an age when we have so many, many as self-appointed ministers. Now, they need to be careful because they are bringing judgment to themselves in doing so.

John 15:16—Jesus told His apostles: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you.... [And then He gave another command concerning the elders]: ...These things I command you, that you love one another" (vs 16-17). So there has to be a love between elders as well. Not only for the brethren, but for each other; because how can you serve the brethren, collectively, unless you love God and love the brethren and love each other. Otherwise, there will be strife and competition which will take place among the elders, and power struggles and politics will ensue, which encompasses nearly every church that you can think of—whether it be a Church of God or whether it be a church of the world; Protestant or Catholic.

Now, let's go to the Epistle of James, chapter three, and let's see the warning that James gave; and this is very important to understand, the relationship to elders and teachers. James 3:1: "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers... [now the Greek there is 'didaskalos' which means then *teachers*.] ...knowing that we will receive more severe judgment.... [It says 'condemnation'—and if it is a negative judgment, then it is going to be *condemnation*—held more accountable.] ...because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body" (vs 1-2). Now, elders are not perfect. They're human beings. They have faults and mistakes like anybody else. And so, they need to watch over themselves.

But let's first of all see the attitude of the structure that Christ wants. Let's come to Matthew 20:17, and let's see what Jesus told His apostles—what they were to do; how they were to conduct their lives and their ministry. But I'm going to start here in v 17 because everything that is done by the ministry or elders is based upon the life of Christ and what He has done; because it is His Church and He is the Head of it.

Matthew 20:17: "And while they were going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside in the way and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death; and they shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles to mock *Him*, and to scourge *Him*, and to crucify *Him*; but He shall rise again the third day.'.... [Then notice what happened right after that. Here is Mrs. Zebedee waiting in the wings with her two sons: James and John.]: ...Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons... [Now her sons were with Him and they knew what she's going to ask. And I've often wondered, did they put her up to it? Because they wouldn't dare ask Jesus themselves, but maybe if mom asked, maybe He would be a little more kindly toward the request.] ...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, 'What do you desire?'...." (vs 17-21).

"She said to Him, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your* left *hand* in Your kingdom.'.... [And she probably added in, 'You know, Lord, they are good boys.' They were also known as sons of thunder, 'and Lord, you know how they can preach.' So we have a little bit of motherly politicking here. Now, Christ was very merciful to her, because notice how He handled it. He didn't talk to her, He talked right to the two boys, because they were the ones who were

responsible.]: ...But Jesus answered *and* said, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'" (vs 21-22).

Now, they really didn't know what they were asking for, but Jesus took them up on it, "And He said to them, 'You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give.... [now notice, even though this was as presumptuous as it was, Christ handled it in a very humble way—didn't He? And was exemplary of what He was about the teach them.] ...but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.' And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers" (vs 23-24). Because, I think it was, that none of the other ten got to Him first to ask the same thing. Even at the Passover—remember? They always had contention, who is going to be the greatest? When the Holy Spirit came that helped modify that carnality a great deal.

It's not a matter of who's going to be the greatest, because that isn't the way that God wants it. God does not look on the face of a person, or respect persons, in doing things in a political way that people do.

So Jesus had to settle an argument. So here are all the twelve apostles out there. Can you imagine Peter getting right up in John's face and say, 'Oh, the gall of you doing that. Why did you do that?' So Jesus called them all together, v 25: "But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, 'You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great ones exercise authority over them... [and that means 'dominion downward' as in a hierarchy, because the Greek here is 'katakuriueuo'—which means *authority downward*; to exercise *lordship* over them.] ...and the great ones exercise authority over them.'" And that is 'katakuriueuo'—which means *to exercise authority downward*. Now the rulers are the princes; the great ones are the religious leaders, as we talked about concerning Simon Magus. He was some 'great one' who was called 'the great power of God and deceived them in Samaria and bewitched them' with the demonic powers that he had, giving out that he was the great power of God. So he exercised dominion over the people there in Samaria.

Christ said, v 26: "However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, **let him be your servant**.... [one who serves.] ...and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave... [comes from the Greek

word ‘doulos’] ... just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (vs 26-28). So there is the whole attitude that Christ wants.

Now, the ministers are to understand, always, that Christ is the Head and He has the authority. Let’s go to Matthew 28. In exercising the authority that Christ has given, you have the authority to teach, the authority to preach, the authority to correct; but not the authority to lord over. Too many times, ministers are all involved into solving other people’s problems, they do not then have the time to teach them how solve their own problems. The main thing is for anyone who is an elder or teacher is to teach them how to solve their own problems and have a relationship with Christ. Then he can give himself to the Word of God and study as he needs to.

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority... [which in the Greek is ‘exousia’] ...in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [And that means *within the Church*—Eph. 1: Christ is the Head of the Church. He is the Head of the Body. Here is the responsibility for teaching and evangelizing]; ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father... [because He is the one Who does the calling and the drawing and gives the Holy Spirit.] ...and of the Son... [because it’s through His sacrifice, through His life, through His resurrection, through His atonement and His justification for us that we have forgiveness of sins.] ...and of the Holy Spirit” (vs 18-19). Because the Holy Spirit is the power that comes from God to lead us in the way that we need to go.

Now here’s what they are to do: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.... [not to leave out anything. Not to come along and say, ‘Well, God didn’t mean this, and Christ didn’t mean that, and this isn’t in the Bible, and that’s not in the Bible like the *New Age Bible Versions*; the *New International Version* of the Bible takes so much out of it. How can you teach all that Christ said when you leave it out? It’s almost unreal.] (now notice—anyone who is an elder or a teacher or a minister can have full confidence): ...And lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the completion of the age [or the world]. Amen” (v 20). He’s not going to give up on them. He’s not going to leave them alone—either the elders or the brethren. Christ said that He came to ‘do the will of the Father.’ And all those that the Father ‘have given’ Him, He wouldn’t ‘lose one.’

Now let’s go to Titus, the first chapter, and see some of the qualifications that Paul gave for those who should be elders. We have a series on *pastoral epistles* [*Seven General Epistles*] of 1-2 Timothy; Titus and Philemon. I’m just about done with 1-Timothy and about ready to get into 2-Timothy and there’s an awful lot that we can learn out of it. So we’ll just review a little bit of it here as we’re going through.

Titus 1:5: “For this cause I left you in Crete, so that you might set in order the things that needed to be done, and might ordain elders in every city, as I commanded you.” So there was an overseership, by Paul, over the elders that were with him; to instruct them and to do what they should do. But we don’t find a ridged hierarchy anywhere in the Bible where that it is likened unto the Catholic Church. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church is that kind of hierarchy that is needed to keep the people in line, *in fear!* Because it is not of God, and as a matter of fact, it is of Satan the devil and the only way you can keep people in line with Satan the devil is to let them have their indulgences and to keep them in fear and control. Jesus said, *‘That shall not be so among you.’*

So, here are the qualifications: “If any man be blameless... [and is living a good and a decent life. And ‘blameless’ then has to be according to the commandments of God.] ...*the* husband of one wife, having faithful children...” (v 6)—and ‘faithful children’ indicates here that younger men can be selected as elders. What happens when your children grow up and then leave the home and they become unfaithful? Should that disqualify from being an elder because of the choices of their own offspring? *No!* That would have disqualified Samuel, wouldn’t it? Because Samuel’s sons turned aside and took bribes, but God did not remove Samuel from judgeship because His sons became corrupt—did he? *No!* It’s the same way with Moses. Now it’s hidden, but in the book of Judges it says the son of Manasseh, Gershom; but that should be Gershom, the son of Moses, led off people into idolatry. Did God remove Moses because of what Gershom did? *No!* So this is showing that they can be younger men, they can have children, but they are to be faithful children as long as they’re living under his roof. Obviously, because you cannot hold someone else, who is fully accountable adult, hold their mother and father responsible for them at that date.

“...not accused of debauchery or rebellion. For it is obligatory that as God’s steward an overseer... [now this is an unfortunate translation in the *King James Version* and reflects some of the prejudice of the translators—still not too far removed from Catholicism. It should be *overseer*.

That means that an overseer is to oversee the affairs of the congregation, to make sure that everything is done in decency and in order. That does not mean he's an overlord. He's more like a coach on the sidelines, getting everyone involved in doing what needs to be done, but especially in their relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...an overseer be blameless..." (vs 6-7). Now, a steward is one who takes care of someone else's property. In today's parlance, it's called someone with a fiduciary responsibility; meaning that *you have a responsibility to care for someone else's property according to their instructions.*

All the brethren belong to God, and it is the fiduciary responsibility of all elders to understand that they are to act and conduct their lives and their ministry in serving the brethren; knowing that everyone that has been called has been called of God the Father. None of those who are baptized members belong to any man; they belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ. They're not the vassals, they are not the servants, they are not to lord it over the brethren as stewards of God. So he's to be blameless in that. He's to be blameless first in the world, in his conduct in the world—in the first case (v 6). Then he is to be blameless as a steward over the things that belong to God.

Continuing now: "...not self-willed... [because whose will is he to execute? *The will of God*, not his own.] ...not quick-tempered... [doesn't mean he can't get angry. You can have righteous indignation, but not someone who just continually flies off the handle at the least little thing.] ...not given to wine... [doesn't say he can't drink it; but not given to it. Even Jesus was called a 'wine-bibber'; so that meant He drank a considerable amount of wine.] ...not given to wine... [that is *addicted* to it—and of course, this then would be leading toward alcoholism.] ...no a bully... [that is, in Australia they call it 'buckup'—when they have a fist-i-cuff it's called a 'buckup'—so we can say here: not a buckuper, no striker.] ... not greedy for material gain" (v 7)—because he has to handle the money and the funds of God with the tithes and offerings. And if he's covetous of money then he's given to 'filthy lucre' and take that for his own use. And we've seen many examples of that.

"But **hospitable**, a lover of **good**... [not just good men, but a lover of good] ...sound-minded... [serious-minded, not some jokester. Remember, we had an evangelist that every time he got up in the pulpit it was almost a semi-pornographical exposé of different things in the Old Testament in such a hilarious way that everyone was rolling in the aisles—and sooner or later he was no longer an evangelist.] ...**sound-minded, just**... [means he's

not to be intolerant—he's to be just, to be fair.] ...**Holy**... [that is having a conduct which is worthy of the Holy Spirit] ...**self-controlled**... [having self-control] ...**holding steadfastly** to the faithful Word" (vs 8-9). Not only is he to hold fast in it, but he's also to grow in grace and knowledge of it.

As we found out, as Paul was talking to the Jews and instructing them in Rom. 2, he said, 'You that teach the law, do you not also teach your own self?' So the ministers and elders are to constantly be studying and growing in grace and knowledge and learning and letting the Holy Spirit of God to lead them, to teach them. Then they can teach the brethren.

"...the faithful Word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*... [which means *out of the Scriptures*.] ...so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine... [this means he must *know the doctrines*; he must *understand the Truth*; he must *be able to teach and explain it*.] ...and to convict... [encourage and uplift] ...those who are gainsayers.... [Now, here's his authority within the congregation]: ...For there are many rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from *the circumcision party*, whose mouths must be stopped; who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain" (vs 9-11). They are to preserve the doctrine, preserve the teachings within the Church.

Now, let's see the parallel account back here in 1-Timothy, the third chapter—it explains a little more about that. There's some very good admonitions which are added to this. We will see their similarities, but there are also differences.

1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.'.... [It's not wrong to desire it. But what is the motive of the man involved in desiring it?

- Is it to be important? *Forget it!*
- Is it to be able to control people? *Forget it!*
- Is it to be able to make money? *Forget it!*

None of those!] ... he desires a good work.' Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant... [that means *watching over himself*] ...serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching; not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler... [you don't want someone out from the World Wrestling Federation to be...he'll take the brethren, if they don't do right, he'll throw them down on the mat in the ring. God doesn't want that kind of thing, that kind of attitude.] ... not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect" (vs 1-4). Of course, if

your children have grown up and gone away from home, then they're not at home.

“(for if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he take care of *the* Church of God?). Not a novice... [that means *someone newly come to the faith*] ...lest he become conceited and fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil... [because the devil is right there to take advantage of pride. Wherever there's pride Satan is there: 'Yea, go get it!'] ...It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are* outside *the Church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the* snare of the devil” (vs 5-7).

So, it also shows this: That the devil is going to be there to take advantage of every elder or overseer or minister who does not conduct his life in a right way and live by every Word of God, and do the things that God wants. He's going to be there to trip you up and cause you problems.

Now let's come to 1-Peter, the fifth chapter. Let's see what Peter also taught; how he admonished much the same thing. And he also gives a warning concerning that Satan is right there to take advantage. Now the way the churches are taken down is that you have ministers or elders or people who are in position—which we have all seen in our church experience—haven't we?—that then fall into a habit and practice of sin. Then it becomes unrepented of and then there's an entrance of Satan the devil into the situation to take it down. Now notice what Peter wrote here:

1-Peter 5:1: “*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an *eyewitness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed.... [He saw Christ transfigured on the Mt. of Transfiguration—didn't he? He also saw Him after He was resurrected—didn't he? *Yes!* And we'll see Christ's instruction to Peter in just a bit.] ...**Feed the flock of God**... [that's why he is to be a steward, because the flock belongs to God; and of course, Christ is the true Shepherd.] ...*that is* among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions...” (vs 1-3). Again, **not to lord it over!** Did Peter learn the lesson? *Yes, he did!*

“...but by being examples to the flock of God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory. In the same manner, *you* younger men... [younger elders] ...be subject to *the* older men and all of *you* be subject to one another... [That's why we saw back there in John 15:17: 'love one another.'

So there has to be that love among the brethren; the love among the elders.] (now notice): ...being clothed with humility... [much more so for anyone who is serving in any capacity—elder or deacon, doesn't make any difference.] ...being clothed with humility, because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble” (vs 4-5).

Now just the opposite of human nature. I mean, go back and look at the example of Nebuchadnezzar, and he was warned! And one day he was out looking at great Babylon and he said, 'Look at what I have done. Look at what I have accomplished. I have built this great Babylon myself.' BANG! Now, he was not a minister; he was not an elder; but he exalted himself in pride—didn't he? Did God humble him? *Instantly!* He went out of his mind for seven years and ended up eating grass like the cattle. That ought to be a lesson to anyone who's a leader. He was a leader, but he wasn't an elder.

“Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time” (v 6). Don't be striving politically to gain, to get up the ladder. And we've seen that, too—haven't we? What did we have? *We had local elder; next rank was preaching elder*; oh, we had one below that, that was local, local elder—that's what it was. And then local elder; and then preaching elder; and then pastor and evangelist and then apostle. And there was all the political climbing. And everyone wanting to exalt himself.

Verse 7: “Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.... [He's talking to the elders.] ...Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world” (vs 7-9). So the vigilance of an elder is very profound. One of the chief requirements.

Now, let's come to John 21, and let's see the lesson that Jesus taught Peter—and he learned this lesson. Very last chapter of the Gospel of John. This is after Christ was resurrected. John 21:15: “Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter... [This is a formal title.] ...‘Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?’” So this ought to keep politics out of the whole thing, because there were the other apostles that were there with him. If you love God, if you love Christ, then you're not going to be involved in politics.

“And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’... [Now, in the first case, Jesus asked it of the *agape* love, the Divine love; and Peter

answered Him with the *phileo* love, meaning the *friendship love*. ‘You know I love You.’] ... He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’... [again, *agape* or *agapo*] ...And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’... [Again, *phileo*] ...He said to him, ‘Shepherd My sheep.’.... [Now, I want you to notice the impact of this]: ...He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’...’ (vs 16-17). Now, why do you suppose He asked him three times? *Because on the night of the crucifixion, Peter denied Christ three times*. So He wanted to make sure that he wasn’t going to deny Him. And the way you do that is with the love of God.

“...Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’.... And then Peter turned right around and became political. After he received the Holy Spirit, he learned the lesson, as we saw there in 1-Peter 5.] (But notice what happened): ...‘Truly, truly I say to you, since you were young, you have dressed yourself and walked wherever you have desired; but when you are old, you shall stretch out your hands, and another shall dress you and bring *you* where you do not desire *to go*.’ Now He said this to signify by what death he would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’.... [Which means follow Me to what? *Unto your death!*] ...But when Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following... [turned around and looked at John] ...who also had sat at the supper and *leaned* on His chest, and had said, ‘Lord, who is it that is betraying You?’ Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, what *shall happen* to this one?’.... [little comparison here] ...Jesus said to him, ‘If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is it* to you? You follow Me!’” (vs 17-22).

What is the whole lesson here, for any elder? You’re to love God totally, in everything that you do; and you’re to follow Christ in everything that you do. That’s the whole lesson, and that’s the whole thing of which the ministry of which the Christian Biblical Church is based upon.

Now, we’ll come to one other Scripture and I’ll let you go through all the rest of it yourself. There are many other things that can be added to it that we’ve covered in the pastoral series. Let’s come to Ephesians, the fourth chapter, and again, we will see how profound it is in Paul’s writings. And I’ll tell you one thing that’s very important, which one minister told me one time, and I took it very serious, which is this: If you want to know how to conduct your ministry, study and know 1 & 2 Timothy and

Titus. And know the Epistles of Paul and pattern what you do after Paul, the way that he did it. And I’ll never forget that. Now here’s what Paul says:

Ephesians 4:11—this is after He ascended to heaven: “And He [Christ] gave some as apostles... [not all, some] ...and some prophets... [and the prophets are those who would be inspired speaking as well as foretelling.] ...some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.” You see, all of the above are functions. They are not offices into which a person is ordained, which he perpetually is there. All ordinations make those who are ordained as elders.

- some elders are overseers
- some elders are teachers
- some elders, as Peter said—who was an apostle—‘who am an elder, too.’ He was an apostle

So these are the functions of what they do in their eldership. But here’s the whole purpose of everything that is done. And the reason and the heart and core for the ministry of any church—but in particularly the Christian Biblical Church of God:

“**For the perfecting of the saints...** [Now that’s quite a responsibility, isn’t it? To help all the brethren, feed the flock and perfect them.] ...or *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all... [now notice Paul includes himself] ...until we all come into the unity of the faith... [So you grow in that] ...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [and that means *unto a full, mature, spiritual Christian*.] (Now notice the standard): ...**unto the measure of the stature of fullness of Christ**” (vs 12-13). Now that’s where we are to all attain.

And I tell you, brethren, God is really, really got some fantastic thing in His plan for everyone that He calls.

“So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine... [especially anyone who is an elder.] ...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the body [the Church], fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love” (vs 14-16).

So that gives you a brief overview of the ministry of the Christian Biblical Church of God. Obviously, there’s a whole lot more to it, but you can get the tapes on the Pastoral Epistles and go to it more in-depth.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Timothy 2:1-2
- 2) John 15:16-17
- 3) James 3:1-2
- 4) Matthew 20:17-28
- 5) Matthew 28:18-20
- 6) Titus 1:5-11
- 7) 1-Timothy 3:1-7
- 8) 1-Peter 5:1-9
- 9) John 21:15-22
- 10) Ephesians 4:11-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Timothy 3
- Titus 1
- Ephesians 1
- Judges
- Romans 2

Also referenced: Sermon Series:
Seven General Epistles

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Christian Financial Responsibility I

Fred R. Coulter—December 23, 2000

This is going to be entitled Christian Financial Responsibility. I promised that once a year I will always do a sermon on financial responsibility and tithing and things like this, because like anything else, it's very interesting, when you don't practice something, or you don't use something, or you're not aware of it, you forget it—don't you? Now last night we were taping the video and Belinda mentioned (because she runs the camera) 'It's an amazing thing'—because since we hadn't done a video in three months she didn't remember all the little buttons to push to make it fade and to zoom and all this sort of thing. So it is true, if you don't use it, you lose it.

And that's exactly what happens concerning financial responsibility. And I've also seen, through the years, that there are people who gradually just somehow get away from that. And the reason they do is that they don't keep it in the forefront of their minds, and they do not understand that tithing and offerings and financial responsibility as a Christian is also as much a part of the covenant and partnership with God as anything else. And there is also something that comes with it that is very important to realize. Let's look at that first. Let's come to the book of Malachi and let's understand something here. God gives you a challenge. Now, you have to do it: with a willing heart, not grudgingly; not to see if you give money just to be blessed. But it comes as a part of your living your Christian life and part of your worship of God.

Let's begin in Malachi 3:7—and we'll probably come back here again because we need to understand something that's important; and that is, with this challenge, God shows you how you return to God—not only with your whole heart. There has to be repentance in a relationship with God. What did God say? 'Turn you, turn you, O Israel. Why will you die!' And God said through Ezekiel that He does not 'delight in the death of the wicked, but that they turn from their sins.' Now, when they turn from their sins, not only are they, and we, supposed to yield to God and ask for forgiveness through repentance, but then we have to do what is called, in the modern terminology today, 'put your money where your mouth is.' And that's what God is saying, right here in:

Malachi 3:7: "From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. 'But you say. "In what way shall we return?"' So God says, in so many words, *put your money where your mouth is*.

'If you're going to return to Me, it's not just a feeling in the heart. It's not just sorrow for sin.' It is obeying God and keeping His commandments. Part of His commandments have to do with financial responsibility.

Verse 8: "Will a man rob God?... [How are you going to rob God? [Are] you going to get in a rocket-plane, go up to heaven and stage a hijack or a holdup at the throne of God and take away His gold and silver from up there in heaven? *No, of course not!*] ...Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, "How have we robbed You?"... [notice the answer]: ...In tithes and offerings." Why? *Because tithes and offerings are the command of God.* That's why! Remember what James said—what did he say? 'If you keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, you have broken all the law.' So when you return, you have to completely return to God. "...in tithes and in offerings."

Now what happens when you do not *put your money where your mouth is* as it were? "You are cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, even this whole nation" (v 9). Have we robbed God? And look how they make most income for families, and how most families—in departing from God—are cursed. They are so overloaded with debt that in many cases they just barely make it—in the best of times—from payday to payday. And if they would lose their jobs, or if the curse upon the nation became so great that there were large numbers of unemployed, then they would understand that the curse occurs over a period of time. And part of the curse is, they did not take God at His word; and they did not make a partnership with Him concerning their financial resources, because, as we will see, all wealth comes from God.

Now notice what He says: "Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove Me.... [Of course, you have to do it with a right heart and a right attitude. You're not going to do like Job. Remember, Job said, 'Oh, I just wish God would come down and talk to me.' Well, He did, because God had to prove a point to Job. Job did not prove a point to God.] (But in this, God says): ...prove Me... [Now that means *you have to take Him up on His promise*—in belief and in faith; because you're not going to buy God! You're not going procure favor from God because of money. But, it's because of the heart as well as the money.] ...Prove Me now with this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing

for you, until *there is not enough room to receive it*” (v 10).

Now stop and think for a minute: What insurance policy could you ever buy where you could have the guarantee of blessings. Of course, that has to be combined with faith. Let’s look at it the other way. Take those people who do not honor God at all. What are their lives like? They’re ‘cursed with a curse.’ So people complain about tithing and giving offerings. Okay, what is eternal life worth? Not that you’re going to buy it with tithes and offerings, but tithes and offerings then are a part of it—are they not? Because God says don’t come and ‘appear before Me empty.’ He says, ‘Prove Me.’ He wants you to prove He’s going to give you a blessing.

Now notice v 11: “‘And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...’” [Today, we have many devourers—don’t we? We have spiritual devourers; Satan going around ‘seeking who he may devour.’ And they’re taken at his will. He’ll rebuke that! How many times—because you’ve been faithful and loving to God and you’ve been honest and forthright in taking care of your financial responsibilities with God—has He rebuked the devourer; kept away Satan the devil; kept away demons.

So that’s the first one, the spiritual devourer. The second one is the physical devourer. Now, that has to do with plants and crops and things like this. But there’s also another physical devourer that takes place because of the mismanagement of money—and that is called *interest, usury*. Because people who do not take care of their financial responsibility toward God, the way that they should, generally end up in debt. And how much of their income goes to interest? Does that not devour what you receive?

Now, I’ve said for quite a few years, one of the things we all need to do—which I’ve been doing, and I hope you have been doing—is to ***get out of debt!*** Set yourself a goal to be financially responsible and ***get yourself out of debt!*** Now, because of the way that we live in the world today, it may not be possible for you to pay off your home in say, five years; however, aside from the debt that you may have with your home, get out of debt. And you will be surprised how far your money will go, because it’s not being devoured with interest. One of the worst things to do is live on credit cards and make the minimum payment—because the bank is happy with that as a devourer of your money by taking payment and your minimum payment barely covers a little more than the interest. And you never get your head above water. And it’s kind of like being in the water with the water kind of right up to your neck, right below your chin. And as long as the

water is smooth, you can make it. But when it’s ‘tempest tossed’ you can’t keep your head above water and you sink.

Now look at this whole nation and all the prosperity we have today. And please understand, it is a false prosperity. We have more bankruptcies than ever before. Are they cursed with a curse? Is the whole nation cursed with a curse? *Yes!* Have they forgotten God? *Yes!* When they remembered God they saved money. When they remembered God they gave to God—even though their understanding of God was not as correct as it should be. And because of that, did God bless this nation? *No question about it!* We were the largest creditor nation in the world. We supported the world! And now, because we’ve forgotten God—we have kicked Him out of our schools, we have kicked Him out of our courts, we have kicked Him out of the communities, we have kicked Him out of our lives as a general population—we are cursed with a curse of all kinds, aren’t we? Not only financial, but mental, physical, spiritual.

Because of loving and obey God, and keeping His commandments, you have peace with God and peace every physician understands: peace of mind is the greatest key to health—is it not? *Yes!* And if you have that kind of relationship with God, you also have what? *You have the blessing of better health—do you not? You sure do!* How much of wealth is spent by people who accumulate wealth and end up just like the man in the parable in Luke 12, where he said, ‘Boy, look at all I got, I’m going to build me more barns and I’m going to say to my soul, *soul, take it easy, relax, retire, enjoy it.*’ And God said, ‘Your soul is required tonight.’

How many people in similar circumstances have what? *Ended up spending their life savings, and in addition, going into debt* to try and keep themselves from dying from cursed diseases—which if you read Deut. 28, you’ll understand those come from God because of disobedience to all of His commandments and also this extra little one here concerning tithes and offerings that God has given.

So, I’m not bringing this to bring fear to you, and saying, ‘You better tithe or you’re going to die.’ Don’t think that for a minute. I’m bringing this for you to consider. I’m bringing this for you to think about your life and think about your financial responsibilities before God in the way that you ought to.

Now notice, let’s review again—v 11: “‘I will rebuke the devourer for your sake... [so that’s spiritual, financial and health.] ...and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,’ says the

LORD of hosts. ‘And all nations shall call you blessed....’” (vs 11-12). And the ultimate thing is this: at the resurrection, will not all nations call us blessed?

- Are we not blessed and beloved of the Lord? *No doubt about it!*
- And will we not be a nation of kings and priests? *Yes, indeed!*
- Now as in the world, have not all nations said that we are blessed?
- They all want to be like America—don’t they? *Yes, they do!*
- They all want to come here and live—don’t they? *No doubt about it!*

But we can’t contain them all. And that’s because of the blessing that God gave to Joseph, and to his two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh. And the reason that we still have some blessings is because, in America today is the only place in the world that the Gospel is being preached—whether in truth, near truth, partial truth, half truth, or in contention. So there’s that blessing.

“...for you shall be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.... [And weren’t we? *Still is to a great extent*—isn’t it? *Yes!*] ...‘Your words have been all too strong against Me,’ says the Lord, ‘yet, you say, “What have we spoken *so strongly* against You?”’” (vs 12-13). Now how is it that that has been? *Well, the lawlessness of Protestantism and Catholicism.* You go back and go through the series, *The Mystery of Lawlessness.* Are those not ‘stout words’ against the Lord? And you look at Protestantism, and Protestantism—though they would like to preach tithing, they don’t. But what happens when you get rid of the righteousness of God, be it Sabbath-keeping vs Sunday-keeping, or holiday-keeping vs Holy Day-keeping—when you get rid of God’s way, what do you do? *You have to substitute it with your own way—don’t you?*

So what have churches done to substitute for God’s way of tithes and offerings from the heart? *They merchandise them.* They sell things. They have pledges. Are those not substitute laws for the laws of God. If you put something in place of the law of God, have you not created your own law, which you consider as better than God’s? Now the Mormons believe in tithing, and I tell you what, they believe in it so staunch that every year they have a reconciliation with the Bishop. And if you think you’ve ever had a hard time in your past religious experience in a Church of God about how tough they were on tithing, they were pikers considered to the Mormons, because in your annual reconciliation with the Bishop you bring your income tax form and you sit down and you justify. And if there’s a shortfall, you pay! They’ve taken a form of tithing

and they have added to it their own laws—to what?—*get more money!* And so, all of this ends up to be merchandizing. If you don’t follow God’s way, you’re merchandizing.

Turn on any religious channel and you will see they’re merchandizing—aren’t they? ‘We don’t believe in the law of tithing. We don’t believe in Sabbath-keeping. We don’t believe that Jesus could be the Christ, because God can’t be a man.’ Well, the bottom line is: If you don’t believe God it doesn’t matter what you believe, because it’s not right.

Verse 14: “You have said, ‘*It is vain to serve God....* [I’ve done this all these years. And trust me, when the *World-Scripture Bible* gets out, there are going to be a lot of people look at that and say, ‘Man, it has been vain to serve God.’] ...and, what profit *is it* that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?... [And that’s what they did in Worldwide Church of God—didn’t they? *They sure did!* They went to the Protestants of the world and said, ‘Look, all this Sabbath-keeping and things has been in vain, now tell us how you do with your Christ.’ They looked at them and said]: ... And now we *are* calling the arrogant blessed. Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered” (vs 14-15). *It’s been vain to serve God.*

Now, is this not an attitude that so many people have had? *Yes!* So, what does God say here? Verse 16: “Then those fearing the LORD... [with everything that He has commanded—right? Not only concerning the commandments of God, being the Ten Commandments, but the commandments of Jesus Christ, the things that were taught in the New Testament—and all of that—as well as tithes and offerings included, because it’s in the context of it—correct? *Yes!*] ...spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. ‘And they shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels....’” (vs 16-17).

Now here’s another devourer that will miss you: “...And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous... [who love God and obeyed Him] ...and the wicked... [who rejected Him and did not do His will] ... between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him” (vs 17-18). And that day is going to come. As a matter of fact, it’s already here and has been here for a long time—if we have eyes to see and ears to hear. So we need to realize that.

Now then, let's go ahead and we'll follow along here in the *Beliefs* booklet under Christian Financial Responsibility. Some of these Scriptures we will go through, some of them we will not go through, but [they will] be there so you can go ahead and study them on your own. Now you see, the *Beliefs* booklet, with these Scriptural references, are so that you will take these Scriptural references and you'll look them up and you will study yourself. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 23-24 throughout):

Responsibility to Family

The Scriptures teach that Christians should be diligent to provide for their families. Any Christian who is able to work but makes no effort to support his or her family is worse than an infidel. Jesus Christ Himself taught that a Christian should first provide for his or her family before using personal income for other purposes, including offerings to God.

He doesn't expect you to give what you do not have. But whatever you have—as the little widow who put in the two mites—you should still give an offering to God out of it.

Jesus condemned the Jews who gave offerings, or “corban,” to the temple treasury while neglecting their needy parents. God does not want Christians to neglect the basic needs of their families in order to give tithes and offerings.

And a lot of that results, because in some cases you have so much debt you can't survive, or you have too many children before you're able to have the money to support them. And it does make it difficult. But you have to work it out.

Those Christians who have a limited income... [such as: retirees] ...and are able only to meet their basic needs have no actual increase from which to tithe.

But they can still give offerings be it miniscule as the two mites by the widow. Now, we have quite a few widows who give \$5 and \$10 whenever they can. That's acceptable to God. Now the reason is:

God desires mercy and not sacrifice.

But I will guarantee you this: That if you have the right attitude and you love God, He will provide the means so even if you have limited income, you will be able to fulfill your responsibilities to your family and will be able to give offerings to God—even though you may be retired and, say, live on a pension or social security.

Now the next responsibility is *Responsibility to the Needy*. When I come up here to Fairfield, and I stay down at the Hampton Inn right on the corner there of the overpass going by 80, there are generally those who say, 'Unemployed, family has need' and there's a very sad-looking woman with her children there; and you think by looking at that, boy, they're really suffering. Well, someone wanted to find out, were they really suffering? And they saw that they went down behind the Denny's restaurant into the parking lot down there, and lo and behold, there is this big motor home. And guess what? Three or four families live in there while they panhandle on the corner under the guise of being needy. So we can put in here: Responsibility to the **Truly** Needy—those that really have need.

Responsibility to the Needy

Christians are commanded by Jesus Christ to support the poor and needy among them with compassion and understanding.... [and we should do that] ...A Christian attitude of true love and service should be the basis for all giving. God desires each one whom He has prospered to give cheerfully and willingly from the heart as he or she is able. Those who have an abundance but do not give because of a selfish attitude are guilty of covetousness and are sinning before God.

And you have seen this time and again. Those who pursue after wealth for the sake of wealth impale themselves with many hurtful and painful lusts. And if you have been in the NASDAQ or the stock market recently, and you have believed the stupid euphoria that it's always going to go up, you are now suffering. One of the partners where I do my water-therapy, he has bragged in the past how good he's done in the stock market; and now he got out and got back in again too soon and went into the NASDAQ and he's going in the tank. And the other day, the NASDAQ was 2700, and he was saying, 'Well, I took a hit. I went in at 3000.' And he says, 'I hope it doesn't go down any more.' And I just made the comment, 'Try 1900 for size.' And it went down to 2100. And he said, 'Well, my son will miss his first year in college, then.'

If you have a covetous attitude it's going to come back on you, and you are going to pay more than you could have ever tithed or given—no question about it!

Responsibility to the Church

I'll let you go ahead and study through the Scriptures and look it up in your own Bibles.

In today's world, there is no question that it requires money to fulfill the commands of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel, to feed the flock of God and to care for the needs of the Church.

And please understand that New Testament times were also a very commercial time; and they used money and they used funds. It was not all from agriculture. And it was not all from animals. And please understand this (we'll cover it in just a minute: if you believe that the only ones in Israel whoever tithed were the farmers or the ranchers, you don't have a clue and understanding about God's method of calculating wealth—or Who gives it. We'll see that in a minute.

Therefore, Christians are directed by the Lord Jesus Christ to share their financial resources with those who serve them in the ministry of God. Paul wrote, "Do you not know...

Now here's the key—1-Cor. 9:13-14. We'll go to 1-Cor. and go through it a little bit later, but I just want to emphasize it here, since it's here:

...that they which minister about the Holy things, live of the things of the temple?

Now, what was brought to the temple that we just read (Mal. 3)? *Tithes and offerings*—correct? *Yes!*

And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so also [Greek 'houtoos'—*likewise, in the same manner*] the Lord did order...

Greek 'diatassoo'—*to order, to direct, to command*. So, when people say there is not a command in the New Testament to tithe, they don't know their Scriptures, because Paul wrote here that the Lord commanded:

...that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1-Cor. 9:13-14).

So, we'll cover that a little bit later, too, in Heb. 7.

Those who receive support from their brethren are accountable to God and to the brethren as to how these tithes and offerings are used.

Of which we report every year—a detailed report.

Any minister who merchandises the brethren by using intimidation, compulsion or fear in order to extract tithes and offerings from them will receive stern judgment from God.

Has that stern judgment fallen? Did we not see it fall? Let me just tell you something here. I was sent an e-mail about what has happening down in Pasadena. Remember, that was where the worldwide headquarters was for the Worldwide Church of God—'God's Church on earth.' And it was also the main campus for Ambassador College. Now it's been sold. Everything that was built there, with the exception of the auditorium, is going to be razed to the ground—because God is doing to the Church, in His stern judgment, because they merchandized the brethren with letters every month saying, 'send, send, send; give all that you can; if you don't have enough, go borrow and give.' There's not going to be even an inkling of the name Worldwide Church of God, nor Ambassador College, anywhere to be found. So we have the example right before our eyes—don't we?

God warns His servants against exploiting the poor of His flock and taking from the meager provisions of the needy. However, God honors and blesses the poor who give as they are able, no matter how small the amount, even as Jesus commended the poor and needy widow who gave her mite.

So you can look up all the references there. Let's just look up one—Matthew 6—here's what's important to understand. When you obey God and do so in love and faith, knowing that He will take care of you—He will take care of you. And you will receive blessings that you never understood were there. And only after you look back; because remember, 20/20 vision is called 'hindsight'; you look back and see later, because if you could see ahead, then it wouldn't be by faith.

Now then, here's what God says, Matthew 6:24—and this is true; and this is for all of those who have just enough religion that they can run to God (they think) and get along in the world—think on this: "No man is able to serve two masters... [It's an impossibility!] ...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Because of this I say to you... [as the basis of faith in Christ] ...'do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?'" (vs 24-25).

In other words, if you love God, trust God, do what He says, keep His commandments, will He not take care of you? *Yes!* This doesn't mean that you don't have to work and apply yourself. This means that you have to work and apply yourself. But you do it because you love God. You don't do it because you're seeking a physical thing.

Now notice, v 26: “Observe the birds of heaven: they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into granaries; and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?... [But of course!] ...But who among you, by taking careful thought, is able to add one cubit to his stature?.... [a lot of people like to do that] ...And why are you anxious about clothing?.... [God will take care of you.] ...Observe the lilies of the field, how they grow: they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these” (vs 26-29).

And did not Solomon get 666 talents of gold, as tribute, every single year? And did not Solomon drink out of pure gold vessels, because nothing else would satisfy. Even a lily is arrayed greater than he is. I mean, think on that! God views things far differently than we do. Just imagine how you would feel—and I’m sure that the hearts of some people would beat hard if they had a pure gold goblet, that was so heavy they had to use both hands to drink the wine out of it. Wouldn’t that be something! During Solomon’s day they had so much gold that silver was counted as gravel in the streets. Now that’s to show how God will take care of you. Here’s the conclusion:

“Now if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall* He not much rather clothe you, O *you* of little faith?.... [We can apply that to tithes and offerings—can’t we? *No question about it!*] ... Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ [that is be anxious and fearful and overly concerned about] ...or ‘With what shall we be clothed?’ For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things” (vs 30-32).

Now, let’s go back and look at this verse here. Let’s go back to v 8, because this starts the whole flow of thought here: “Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.” So God will provide. God *will* provide! Now, He’s not going to have the Brinks truck run up to your front door and just, like a dump truck, open up the back door and dump it all out on your front porch. You’ve got to work. You’ve got to do the things that are right. You have to do the proper planning with what you have; yet, at the same time in faith, asking God to provide for you and help you to use what you have in a way that will be right and fitting before God.

Now, back to v 33—here is the whole key in everything that you do: “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Now, let’s understand something here: That God will do it in His time and in His way; because God is not going to give you things if you’re going to be lifted up in your vanity and end up like Nebuchadnezzar. You know when he finally got done building the city and he saw the hanging gardens and everything, he said, ‘Oh, look at this great city that I have built.’ So “when,” as it says in other Scriptures, when riches increase, don’t set your heart on them.

“But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow... [that means *don’t worried or concerned.*] ...for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself. Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of that *day*” (vs 33-34). You’ve got enough problems just overcoming day-by-day as you go along.

Now, let’s look at something concerning wealth and tithing. Let’s come back to Beliefs booklet here:

The Scriptural Principle of Tithing

God created the earth and all the resources of the earth from which physical wealth is derived.

And wealth, and increase of wealth we might add, comes from all different sources.

Although God owns all the resources of land and sea, He has given all these things to mankind to work with, to use and to enjoy their benefits. By using what God has created, mankind is able to grow food, raise animals, harvest the forests, mine the earth and fish the seas. Because God has given all these things to mankind, He requires that men acknowledge Him as the Almighty Provider and Sustainer.

Now, let’s come to the book of Haggai 2 for just a minute. We’re going to look at something very interesting here. We’ll look at two principles here:

1. The building of the temple: Haggai 1:5: “...‘Consider your ways.’.... [because they weren’t doing what they should do] (v 7): ...Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Consider your ways.... [Stop and think about what you’re doing, where you’re headed, what has happened.] ...Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build this house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified,’ says the LORD.” *The same spiritual principle as seeking the Kingdom of God.* First, they had to do the work of re-building the temple.

2. Now here's what happens if you don't: "'You looked for much, and behold, it came to little! And when you brought *it* home, then I blew on it. Why?' says the LORD of hosts. 'Because of My house that is waste, and you, *each* man runs to his own house.... [taking care of your things first, rather than the things of God.] ...Therefore the heavens above you have held back the dew, and the earth has held back its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon livestock, and upon all the labor of your hands'" (vs 9-11). You know what we call that today? *Inflation!*

Let's go back and look at v 6: "'You have sown much, but bring in little; *you* eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you dress, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.'" And that's what we have happening right before us today in this nation—don't we? If you don't believe me, wait till you get your next PG&E bill. You shall understand.

Now then, let's come over here to Haggai 2:8: "'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts." God also says in another place: 'The heavens are Mine and the earth is Mine.' So all wealth ultimately goes back to God, regardless of the source of it, be it things grown out of the ground, or be it things mined out of the ground, or be it whatever you make out of it. Let's come back to the *Beliefs* booklet here:

The Scriptures reveal that God instituted the principle of tithing in addition to freewill offerings as a perpetual way for mankind to honor Him. The Old Testament declares that tithes and offerings belong to God and are "Holy unto the Lord.".... [because God has a claim on it] ...Jesus reaffirmed this truth when He said, "Render...unto God the things that are God's."

And He also said, 'Render unto Caesar the things that Caesar's.'

The account of Abel's offering in the book of Genesis makes it clear that this practice existed from the beginning of mankind and was not restricted to God's covenant with Israel at Sinai.

Before the establishment of the Old Covenant, tithes and offerings to God were given to Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God. The book of Genesis

records that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek.

And, of course, those who are Christians and baptized in Christ are the true seed of Abraham. So if you're going to do as Abraham did, then you will do as he did.

Isaac and Jacob undoubtedly gave tithes and offering to Melchizedek as well.

Because Jacob said, after he had the vision of the ladder ascending into heaven, when he had his head on the pillar stone, he gave a promise to God that ***all the tenth he would give to Him***. And some people say, 'Well, that means that tithing is optional, and he vowed to give it to God.' That is NOT true! Where was Jacob to that time? He was with Isaac—correct? *Yes!* Who did the tithing for the family? *Isaac did!* Otherwise, how would he know about the tenth. Now when he was out on his own and he was going to get himself a wife, and he would be on his own, then he said, "I will give the tenth to God!" Because now then, after he left his father's household, he would have to be responsible for his own income. Up to that time, everything he did was part of his father's income—correct? So that's why he said that.

When God established His covenant with Israel, the tithes and offerings were transferred to the Levitical priesthood. God said, "And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel."

Now, this tells us something—doesn't it? This tells us that the tithe is owned by God. Just like all silver and gold is owned by God—but He gives us the use of it.

Under the Old Covenant, God required that His people give Him the firstfruits of their harvest and the firstborn of their livestock, as well as a tenth of the increase they derived from the crops and livestock.

And, as we will see, from any other source which uses natural resources of the land. Were crops considered wealth? We're livestock considered wealth? *Yes, indeed!* Is money considered wealth? *Yes!* Can you get an increase in money? *Yes!* Do you receive an increase for your labor? *Yes!* There is no difference in principle in working at a job and being paid for your labor as an increase for your labor, than in owning land and planting crops and you get an increase from the crop. The only difference is, if you live in a society where you're paid by the week or bi-weekly or monthly, you get your increase a little bit sooner than if you had to go through the whole crop cycle of the year—and plant it and wait for it to grow and then harvest it. Or breed the animals and wait for

them to bear, then you'd have wealth from the animals. But the principle is the same. You use what God has given you to create an increase—whether by labor, to be paid for because the laborer is worth his hire; or whether you actually work with the actual things and create the wealth yourself. Now, we'll see that.

God said through the prophet Malachi that the priests were violating God's commands by offering polluted offerings and were robbing God.

That is using the wrong thing. Maybe we'll look at that a little later.

Likewise, those who did not give the tithes and offerings to the Levites as God had commanded were robbing God.

And today we saw in 1-Cor. 9 that God has transferred that to the ministry. So therefore, if you don't give what God says is His, you're robbing God. Now, if it's not used correctly, then the Levites, or the ministry, are robbing God because they're using it improperly. And when that happened, did not God take it away? *Yes! No question about it!* Now in the Worldwide Church of God, the peak income they had for one year was around \$200 million or more. Now they are down to, I think from what I understand, about \$70,000 a day. So did God 'blow on it'? *Yes, He did!* Did God take it? *Yes, He did!* Did He reject them because they abused it? *Yes, He did!* So the same thing applies.

Under the New Covenant, the Levitical priesthood has been replaced by the priesthood of Melchizedek, and the Scriptural authority to receive the tithes and offerings of God has been transferred back to the order of Melchizedek... [who was Jesus Christ, Who then transferred that to the ministry] ...Jesus Christ, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, now holds the eternal office of High Priest of the order of Melchizedek. Christians today give their tithes and freewill offerings to support the work of Jesus Christ through His church.

Well, there it is expressed just a little differently there.

In following the Scriptural principle of tithing, each Christian is individually responsible for determining his or her true increase. Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," showing that all taxes which are paid to "Caesar" (civil governments today) are excluded in determining one's increase.

Now they say what? *Today the average person works four months of the year to pay their taxes—getting up to five.* That is increase to Caesar. You have worked for Caesar. You don't tithe on that which goes to Caesar. What is left then is what you tithe upon, because you've 'rendered to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.'

Also excluded are expenses related to one's business or employment, which reduce actual net income. Christians whose incomes are so limited that their entire net income is required to meet basic living expenses have no true increase in God's eyes on which to tithe.

But it does not mean they should not give offerings on it. However, I have seen this—let me just add this right here—that those on their meager incomes started to tithe and adjusted their spending and their income, God soon blessed that they would not be in this particular category—because they did not want to remain there because their income was low. So they took on the challenge that God gave to 'prove Him herewith' and to go ahead and tithe even though, in some cases, it was difficult to do so. So you have to make the judgment on that.

The giving of money is not required for salvation.

In as much that you cannot buy salvation. However, if you are robbing God, are you sinning? And if you're living in a continual state of sin, do you receive eternal life? Well, you'll have to make that judgment before God—but I do believe, if you read the Scriptures carefully, no sinner's going to enter into the Kingdom of God. Now this is not to put it on the level of the loss of salvation. It may come under the category of that you're building wood, hay and stubble and there's going to be some of your works that you are doing be burned up. In that case it may very well fall into that category rather than the situation of the Ten Commandments. However, if it gets to the point that you're robbing God, then you are violating the commandment: 'you shall not steal'—is that not correct? *Yes!*

However, if a Christian has been financially blessed by God, he or she should give willingly as led by the Holy Spirit. Each Christian should give from the heart in a willing attitude of love and service, according to the blessings which God has bestowed—both spiritually and physically.

Now, I've already mentioned concerning Jacob, but let's go there and look there—but first let's begin with Abraham. Let's go to Genesis 26:5. Now we know in Gen. 14 that even in the exceptional case of

spoil from battle, Abraham tithed. And a lot of people say, 'Well, that's the only time that it's recorded in the Old Testament that Abraham tithed.' Now the reason that that is recorded is because giving the tenth or tithing was a thing which was automatically required. But to give of the battle then was above and beyond. So that's why he did it.

Let's read what God told Isaac, beginning in Genesis 26:2: "And the LORD appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because**...' " (vs 2-5). Now how powerful then was the relationship between God and Abraham. And how great was that covenant that God made with Abraham. Everything from the time of Abraham, on down through to the return of Christ and beyond, is based upon that covenant.

Now, let's understand something concerning covenants, as we have in the series that we have on covenants, and also covenant law. All covenants have commandments, statutes, ordinances and judgments. Those are part of covenants. Now notice, because of the covenant that God made with Abraham, now look at his behavior in relationship to God.

"...because Abraham obeyed My voice..." (v 5). Now what did we just read concerning the voice of God? In Mal. 3: 'Prove Me now herewith and bring all the tithes into the storehouse...'—right? Is that the voice of God? You can summarize everything in the Bible by those three words: **Obey My voice!** Wherever there is sin, it's because they did not obey God. Read the book of Jeremiah, you'll find out. They 'obeyed NOT My voice'; 'obeyed NOT My voice'; 'obeyed NOT My voice.' You read the covenant that God established with Israel, and the first thing that He told them before He gave the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai, He said, '**If you will** obey My voice and keep My commandments, I will be your God and you shall be My people.' So here it is, 'obey My voice.'

Now notice, 5: "...and kept My charge... [and a charge is whatever God says.] ...My commandments, My statutes and My laws.'" And surely someone is going to say, 'Ha! Doesn't tell us which ones—does it?' I answer you this way: '**Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.**' The same laws that God gave to Israel were the same laws that Abraham obeyed, and that goes all the way

back to Abel because he brought of the firstlings of the flock which you find the command of it where? *In the laws given to Israel.*

You can go back and you can study the first part of the Bible, and you can find—because of sin and other things—you can determine the commandments of God. You can find false gods, idolatry, taking God's name in vain, breaking the Sabbath always. That's one of the reasons why there was the Flood, because all humanity had corrupted God's way. And you just carry it all on down. If God is ever-living; if God is always true—which He is; and if God is Lawgiver—which He is; will He not give exactly the same laws consistently to all of those He enters into covenant with? *Yes!*

When you come to the New Covenant, what did Jesus do? He gave the spiritual application of the same laws that He gave to Adam and Eve, and Abel and Cain, and all the civilization before the Flood, that He gave to Abraham; that He gave to Isaac; that He gave to Jacob; that He gave to the children of Israel—all the same law. Now there is a reward for keeping it. "...obeyed My voice, kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws" (v 5).

Now, let's come to Genesis 28:1—to prove a point that I made a little bit earlier, that now Jacob was going on his own. Now he had to be financially responsible before God, with what God would bless him with. Genesis 28:1: "Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and commanded him. And he said to him, 'You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. And take a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. And may God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, so that you may be a multitude of people. And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, so that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.'" (vs 1-4). That's when he left his father's home.

Then he had the vision: He saw the ladder reaching up to heaven, and we come here to v 19: "And he called the name of that place The House of God... [that is after he had the pillar stone, he anointed it with oil, and so forth] ... But the name of that city *was* Luz at first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'Since God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on... [Now, doesn't that sound a little like Matt. 6 (that we just read)? 'bread and raiment'? *Yes!* Look, brethren, the more you study the Bible, the more you go through it, the

more you see the consistency of it. This thing of fighting Old Testament/New Testament while there are some valid things concerning the priesthood laws and the temple laws and the washings and oblations that have been completed and no longer are required, the rest of it just follows right along just one after the other in the same way as we see here.] ...and I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the LORD be my God. And this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house. And of all that You shall give me, I will surely give the tenth to You.'" (vs 19-22).

Now, 'tenth of all' (KJV)—does that include more than just animals? *But of course!* So that's when he vowed a vow to give the tithe to God. Now notice, it is the tenth. It belongs to God. Remember, God said, 'All silver is Mine? All gold is Mine.'

Now, let's come to Numbers 18 and let's see when God established His covenant with Israel and raised up the Levites. Then He, Who owns the tithes and offerings, gave them to the Levites. Now first of all, the first part of it here, He gave the special blessing—which you could say is the tithe of the tithe and the first of everything to the priesthood.

Now let's look at Numbers 18:20: "And the LORD said to Aaron, 'You shall have no inheritance in their land... [Now, today when we buy a home or something, we're very much like the Levites were. The Levites did not have a geographical area of land called *the state of Levi*. They owned cities within all the 12 tribes of Israel, and they could buy and sell their houses within those cities. Very similar to what we have today in relationship to all of us concerning the house that we live in—whether we buy or whether we rent.] ...neither shall you have any part among them. I *am* your part and your inheritance among the children of Israel.'"

Interesting, isn't it? Let's tie this in with 'part or lot'—remember what we covered concerning when Peter told Simon Magus, 'You have no part or lot...' Whenever you are called of God, you have part with God. Just like today, we're not looking for an inheritance of a physical kingdom upon this earth. We're looking for the Kingdom of God to come, which will establish it for us. And Christ is our part, and He is our lot. I'll just finish this by saying that we are co-heirs with Christ—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 21: "'And behold, I have given the sons of Levi all the tithe in Israel..." Now, that's interesting— isn't it? God owns the tenth. That's why if you don't pay the tenth, you're robbing God—that's what He said. If He didn't own it; if He didn't require it; you would not be robbing God—would you? I mean, you think on that for a minute. If something is stolen out of your house, they've

stolen your goods—correct? *Yes!* But if you don't have the goods in your house, no one can steal it—correct? *Yes!* No one can steal your car if you don't have a car—right? So it's the same way here. How can you rob God if you're not taking something that belongs to God? That's why God *gave* it to the Levi. Do you give something you do not have? *No, you can't give something you do not have or own.* Would you walk into your neighbor's house and pick out the choicest, most expensive thing in his house—pick it up in your arms, and as he's yelling and screaming at you as you walk out the door, saying, 'What are you doing with this?' *Well, I'm going to give this to my best friend.* But that belongs to me.' You can't give something that is not yours to give.

So, in God doing this, He's giving what belonged to Him. Now we'll see a little later that when the Levitical priesthood was brought to an end, then he changed again the law of where He gave the tenth, which is His. We'll see that clearly.

"And behold, I have given the sons of Levi all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel come near the tabernacle of the congregation from this time forward, lest they bear sin and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity, *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel... [that's not restricting it to animal products, agricultural products. We will see next time concerning wealth, that God created the earth for you to get wealth out of it—which includes any productive labor which produces an increase. Whether you produce a product or whether you are paid for your labor, which then produces a product for your boss who then sells it at a profit. It's the same thing.] ...the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer *as* a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit. Therefore I have said to them, "Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."'" (vs 21-24).

Now then, they were to give a tithe of that to the priesthood. Was the tithe of the Levites and increase to them? *Yes!* Were they required to tithe of the increase that came to them? *Yes!*

"And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'And you shall speak to the Levites, and you shall say to them, "When you take tithes from the children of Israel, which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it for the LORD, *even* a tenth of the tithe.... [So there we have it.] ...And your heave offering shall

be credited to you... [So here's a comparative with agricultural things, when they are not agricultural things. That's what it's talking about here.] ...as grain of the threshing-floor and as the fullness of the winepress.... [Wine is then what? A *manufactured product*—is it not? Especially for those of you who live in wine country, you understand that.] ...So you also shall offer a heave offering to the LORD of all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel. And you shall give from these the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts you shall offer every heave offering of the LORD of all the best of them, the Holy part out of it.'"" (vs 25-29).

The best of everything. Should you not give of your best to the Lord? Do we not have hymn, what does that hymn say? 'Give of your best to the Master...' So even in a hymn we have the same principle—don't we? Now since the Aaronic priesthood was the priesthood that God established there, the best went unto them. Now then, in the New Testament, Who's our High Priest? *Christ is!* Since we cannot send the tithe up to Him, He's given it to the ministry; but we then, in turn, of our character and spiritual gifts, give of the best to our High Priest Jesus Christ. So there you have the spiritual application of it.

Verse 30: "And you shall say to them, "When you have lifted up the best of it, then it shall be credited to the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress. And you shall eat it in every place, you and your households. For it *is* your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. And you shall bear no sin because of it when you have offered up the best of it. Neither shall you profane the Holy things of the children of Israel, lest you die"" (vs 30-32). Not one word to distinguish between increase of wealth which is monetary or agricultural.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Malachi 3:7-18
- 2) Matthew 6:24-32, 8, 33-34
- 3) Haggai 1:5, 7-11, 6
- 4) Haggai 2:8
- 5) Genesis 26:2-5
- 6) Genesis 28:1-4, 19-22
- 7) Numbers 18:20-32

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James
- Luke 12
- Deuteronomy 28
- 1 Corinthians 9:13-14
- Hebrews 7

- Genesis 14

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *The Mystery of Lawlessness*

- Covenants

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Christian Financial Responsibility II

Fred R. Coulter—January 6, 2001

This is the second one we're going to do, as I promised every year, I would go through concerning financial responsibility for a Christian. And also, we're doing double duty with these two tapes, because it will also go in the *Beliefs* booklet series. This way then, we can cover everything we need to cover.

Now, let's again go to Haggai, the second chapter, and let's approach this from God's perspective. And let's understand that God is loving and kind and merciful and long-suffering, even though He has His laws and His commandments and things that He gives, He expects people to keep. Now God is still fully in charge even though people do not keep the laws and commandments of God. How is God fully in charge? ***He's in charge of everything***—isn't He? Let's read here, He says that He owns the heavens, He owns the earth, He created them, they are His. Everything that there is belongs to God. Now how is that God controls everything, even though people do not do the commandments of God? How is He still in charge? *Because He is!*

Now, because God has given free moral agency, a lot of people do not believe that God is in charge, because God is not coming down and imposing, in a dictatorial way, His will upon people to force them to do His way. So therefore, they do not comprehend that God is still in charge. Now let's see what God says here:

Haggai 2:8: "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," says the LORD of hosts." The earth is His, the heaven is His, all people on earth belong to Him—don't they? He's made them. He's created them through the process of pro-creation—has He not? *Absolutely, no question about it!* So how is it then that we use silver and we use gold and we have monetary values, and we use the things of creation, and even God says that He sends the rain on the just and on the unjust. So how is that God is in charge?

God is in charge and His will is being done. Remember the model prayer. What are we to pray? 'Your will be done as in heaven, so upon the earth.' Well, don't you think that in heaven God is totally in charge of everything? *Hey, no doubt about that!* Lucifer found out about that when he tried to ignore that God was God and claimed that he was God. Well, he was cast down and Jesus said, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' And he drew a third part of angels with him. So let's read how God is in charge, whether people are aware of God or not; and that His will is being done—one way or the other.

Deuteronomy 30:15—this applies to the whole world, as well as to God's people, as well as to God's Church. "Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil... [That's a fact of human existence—whether you believe God or not; whether you have ever heard His Word or not; whether you are converted or not—you have set before you 'life and good, death and evil.' Is this not what happened right back at the beginning with Adam and Eve? *Yes, it is!*] ...in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God... [And that's what God is interested in, that you love him. Now the world has the emotional, fuzzy love that if you have an emotional feeling toward God, then anything you do is approved of God. Which, as we have found in the past, is the reasoning of lawlessness and is not true. He wants you to love Him.] (Now notice what else in addition to it): ...to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live..." (vs 15-16).

Now, what is one of the commandments that gives long life, with a promise? *Honor your father and your mother that your days on the earth may be long.* Now let's just use that example: Why are there so many teenage deaths? Pregnancies? Drugs? Emotional depressions? Accidents among teenagers? *Because they do not honor their father and their mother.* Is there any father and mother that desires that happens to any of their teenagers? *Of course not!* Not even among the worst of them who have experienced terrible things in their lives. When they become adults and they have children, they don't want things like that to happen to them—do they? So why do these things happen to them? *Because they don't honor their father and their mother.* Therefore, God is in charge and His laws are active and moving, because they apply to everybody automatically. So therefore, the penalty that comes upon them for sinning, whether they know it's sin or not, still applies—does it not? *Yes!* And you can see in societies, even very pagan societies, that if they honor father and mother they generally live very long lives. So that's just one example. We could look at other examples. "...His statutes and His judgments that you may live..." (v 16).

Let's go to John 14, because this is very important in understanding how Jesus Christ and God the Father work. We've gone over this many, many times. But since back here in the Deut. 30 it talks about the love of God in conjunction with keeping His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, therefore, let's look in the New

Testament and see that's exactly the same thing the New Testament requires.

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the Truth, and the life...'" One thing we need to always understand concerning true Christianity and the way of God: *it is one way, there is no other way*, it is THE way, THE truth and THE life. And when you come to believe that, and choose that, instead of your own ways and your own emotions and your own thoughts and your own opinions, then you will be able to understand about Jesus Christ and God the Father. And you will receive blessings far beyond just the physical things that are in this world. Because, you see, there is no amount of money that you can use to buy the Truth of God. There is no amount of money which can give you understanding of His Word, which God gives freely. But it has to be through Jesus Christ. There are not many ways to, as the world says, go to heaven. There are not many truths: one truth for me, a different truth for you and a different truth for someone else; so that if you believe these different truths, you'll all, sooner or later, be led to God. ***That is not so!***

Christ is "...**the way, the Truth and the life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me." Now, let's come over here to v 15: If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments." Now doesn't that sound an awful lot like Deut. 30:15? One of the things that's so very important is this: ***Love requires responsibility and accountability***—does it not? *Yes, it does!* You're to act upon that. So if you love Jesus Christ you will keep His commandments.

Now let's see what else He says here. Let's come down here to v 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." And the way that God manifests Himself to you, if you love Him, is that He opens your mind to understand His Word; He grants you, upon repentance, His Holy Spirit—which is greater than anything that you can have in this life, because that's going to lead to eternal life.

Now, let's come down here to v 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word....'" Now, this excludes picking and choosing. Now, what do I mean by that? I mean, you cannot go into the New Testament or the Old Testament and pick out the things that you think are nice and good, and then you will do those things. Because you see, Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word... [That means, ALL of them! That's very important to understand.] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

The one who does not love Me does not keep My words.... [So therefore, if you reject any of the commandments of God, you're not loving Him in that degree.] ...and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me'" (vs 23-24).

So what you're really up against, if you reject the Word of God, is this: *You have rejected the words of the Sovereign of the Universe—God the Father*. Now, He enforces His Word everywhere, upon everything, at all times. That is the will of God. But, because He set before us choices, sometimes we don't think that God is in charge, and sometimes we don't think that God knows.

Deuteronomy 30:16: "...that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away..." (vs 16-17). And that's the first thing that happens— isn't it? *Yes!* Now we can plug in several Scriptures we need to have memorized:

- "There is a way that seems right unto a man; the ends thereof are the ways of death."
- "The carnal mind is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

So it begins in the heart, by choosing, first of all, your own way over God's way—***and that's precisely what Satan wants***. Satan doesn't have to be around for you to make that decision. You can make that decision entirely on your own. And today, since we live in an age where your opinion is just as good as anyone else's opinion; so therefore, what you think is good to you, and what someone else thinks is good to them, is good to them. But, if it is not in accord with the Word of God, then you are going to not receive the blessings. You're going to receive the cursings.

"But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away..." (v 17) That's when Satan comes in. He waits for the individual to refuse to hear the Word of God—for whatever reason! Now, a lot of people blame mother and father, because they were religious and try and impose these things upon them, and 'I'm not going to do as my mother and father. For I've seen what all these religions have done, and all these religions are death, hell and war.' True statement! However, that's not the way of God. So if you feel that way about it, what you need to do is get your nose in the Bible and find the **true** God, because, even though those statements are true on the surface, what you are doing is looking at the curses that have been brought upon people because they have used the name of God and have rejected the Word of God.

“...drawn away and worship other gods and serve them.... [So you see the process. First your heart turns away, then you refuse to listen, then Satan enters in and draws you away and you end up worshipping other gods—and that’s why we have all the religions of the world.] (God says): I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you...” (vs 17-18).

Now, is heaven and earth still here? *Yes!* Are the words of God living and true? *Yes!* What did Jesus say in Matt. 5? ***“Do not think I’ve come to abolish the law or the prophets. I’ve come to fulfill. For one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled”***—and heaven and earth shall pass away.’ And heaven and earth shall not pass away, nor one jot or tittle pass away until all be fulfilled. Jesus said of His words, in Matt. 24, ‘heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.’ So we have the same thing here.

“...I call heaven and earth to record this day against you... [so we’re on the earth—aren’t we? The heaven is still there—isn’t it? We still have life and breath and health—don’t we? *Yes!*] ...*that* I have set before you life and death... [So that’s how God controls everything.] ...blessing and cursing...” (v 19). Is God still in charge if there’s a curse? *Of course!* Read the book of Job. Was God still in charge though all those things came upon Job? *Absolutely!*

And here is the thing concerning the human mind. The human mind says to itself: ‘Self, (you’ve all had talk with yourself—haven’t you?). I’m going to do what I want, and I want all the good things.’ I don’t think you could talk to one human being on earth that could tell you, ‘I want evil, I want death.’ Now if you find some that way, then they’re totally dedicated to Satan the devil and would be in such a small minority that it would be hard to find. There’s not one person...you know, if you had a tape recorder and went down to your local shopping mall and you stop and you say, ‘I’m running a survey. Could you tell me what you want out of your life?’ They would want all the good things—wouldn’t they? *Yes!* But the good things do not come unless you do it God’s way. Now you may get them temporarily. But they will be gone.

We’ll talk about the stock market this past year. Did not everyone think it’s going to go on forever? *Yes, indeed!* Were there not instant millionaires with stock options and things like this, a year ago? Saying all the good things they were going to do and have and how they’re going to spend the

money once it got to the point that they could be free to sell their stock options. *Yes!* Now many of them are looking for work, and their stock options are just so much worthless paper. Yet, they intended to do good—didn’t they? *Yes!* Did it turn out to be a curse? *Yes!* Because there are living laws, even in finances that have happened, that God takes care of it—one way or the other. And just know this if you’re involved in stocks and bonds: Whenever the value reaches so high in relationship to income and dividends, ***know*** there is a law set in motion that it is going to collapse because greed has entered in. And the penalty or the curse for greed is the removal of financial assets. It’s that simple.

Did not God remove Israel from their land—not just talking about the Jews, but the ten northern tribes of Israel, as well—because they rejected God’s way? *Yes!* We’ll talk about finances here in just a little bit. You see, what I’m trying to do is give you a broad, overall picture so that you can see how the financial responsibility toward God fits in with the overall things that God has commanded.

Now here’s what God wants: “...I have set before you life and death... [now remember, in the front of this heaven and this earth, which is still here] ...blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live... [But God leaves the choice to the individual] ...that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice...” (vs 19-20). And didn’t Jesus say, ‘the one who hears these words of Mine and doesn’t do them are likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the floods came and the rains came and wind beat upon it, and the house collapsed’—because it was not built upon a Rock. But the one who builds upon a Rock—which is Jesus Christ—the floods will come, the rain will come, the wind beat upon it, but it will stand because it was built upon a Rock. So we have the same thing here.

“...obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them” (v 20).

So wherever you are on the earth, you’re there because that’s the inheritance that God gave to your forefathers. And here in what is called Western Europe, America and Britain, the whole world is wanting to have the same thing that we have. And they look upon us as evil and corrupt. And they’re right in their judgment. And why did we receive these things, all this wealth and everything? After all, their behavior is not as good as it should be. They’re corrupt, they ought to lose it. It’s right there: ***because of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*** A lot of

things that we have, that God has given, is not because of us, but because of what God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Now then, let's go to Deuteronomy, the eighth chapter, and let's look at some things here which are very important. Now, as I pointed out last time, the tithe is ten percent, and the tithe God gave to the Levites—for their work of their service, which they did—we will see that this time God transferred that authority from the Levites unto the ministry, under Jesus Christ, Who is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. What I want to do is, in this, let us understand that since the world belongs to God, and everything that therein is, and that He will tell us here—

Deuteronomy 8:18: "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He Who gives you power to get wealth..." That's the whole basis of everything. And if He gives you the power to get wealth, then He requires the tithe, because it's His. It's that simple! That's why, as we read last time, that there comes a point when people do not do the commandments of God. And I've heard how many people tell me in the New Testament there's no such thing as tithing? How many people tell me, 'Well, what you do in the New Testament, you give offerings from the heart.' Well, doesn't everything you do has to be from the heart. *No question about it!*

But what has happened in the churches that call themselves Christians who say, 'Okay, we don't have any tithing laws at all.' And everyone says, 'Well, that sounds good. That's Old Testament and, boy, you know this God, He really required a lot.' So what do they do? *They substitute God's law with their own law.* And their own law comes in what? *In the form of yearly pledges, minimum amount per month.* Now why do they have to do that? *Because when it comes to financial things, God has to give the command.* And when God gives the command, we are to obey. Those who don't obey, they have to set up their own laws, and their own way, and their own method—and then they have to try and use their own enforcement.

Now, as I mentioned with one denomination, what they do, they believe in tithing, but they have a year-end reconciliation with the so-called bishop. And you bring in your income taxes, and if you have not paid your fair share to the church, you then are obligated to do it. Now, that's another law that they have set up to go above and beyond God's way so that they can extract the utter most out of the people. God gives us a choice to choose whether we will obey Him or not. God is perfectly able to take care of those who disobey Him, because these are living laws set in motion.

Deuteronomy 8:1, so we get the whole set that we have here: "All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and* to do that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers." Now this was just before they were ready to cross the river Jordan to go into the promised land. They were ready to conquer the...maybe perhaps even had some of it conquered on the east side of the Jordan, and there were there pretty well ready to go in.

Verse 2—so Moses is giving them a lesson: "And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness..." Now let's understand: Every life is going to have its ups and downs. All Christians will have their ups and downs and their trials and their difficulties. But God says He will 'save us out of them all.' So you need to realize that, too.

Now, they had it pretty tough there in the wilderness—didn't they? They had manna morning, noon and night. They boiled it, they fried it, they ate it raw. They didn't have any bread. They had meat once in while. They couldn't kill their herds because the herds in the desert do not multiply and bring forth that many offspring, because there's not enough nutrition so the mothers can give birth. So I'm sure they had just a little more than they needed for the daily sacrifices, which were ongoing at the tabernacle all during the forty years. They had no bread, they had no pastry—oh, man, can you imagine a nice juicy, hot cinnamon roll and a cup of coffee. Now what if you had been forty-years not having any of the nice things. So forty-years of this! Not only that, all of those over twenty perished, except Joshua and Caleb. So they really had it rigorous—didn't they?

Now Moses said, 'I want you to remember that.' And so likewise with us; when the good times come, remember the bad times, lest you deceive yourself. Here's why He did it, v 2: "...in order to humble you... [and God will do that to you] ...to prove you... [and God will do that in your life] ...to know what is in your heart... [That's what God wants to know, what is really in your heart] ...whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know... [that is you didn't even understand what it was] ...neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know... [here's the whole lesson of everything; not only just in financial responsibility, but in everything that you do.] ...that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live" (vs 2-3).

Now, that in a summary is the way of the Lord. And you can summarize that in three words: **‘Obey My voice.’** And everything you have here in the Bible—Old Testament and New Testament—is taken from the voice of God and written down. So you don’t have to ask the question: ‘Well, if God would come down and tell me, I surely would do it.’ You’ve got it right here. Just read it.

Now notice, even in extreme circumstances is God able to bless you to make things prosper for you? *Yes!* Verse 4: “Your clothing did not wear out on you... [40-year-old clothes that are new] ...nor did your foot swell these forty years. And you shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.... [So therefore, we’re going to receive correction. And don’t look upon correction from God as an evil thing. It is good if you yield to it, and the ‘peaceable fruits of righteousness’ will come.] ...And you shall... [since you are ready to come out from underneath this terrible thing in the desert—which was a curse—was it not? But even in that, God still preserved them.] ...And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him” (vs 4-6).

What I want mention here is: This is *the way of the Lord*. It’s not an opinion. It’s not a religion. It is the *way of the Lord*. There is the way of the world, there is the way of man; this is *the way of the Lord*.

“For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains... [God prepared it for 470 years so that it would be this way.] ...and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness....” (vs 7-9). And this is why we need to rehearse this every year concerning our financial responsibility to God, because I don’t think there is one of us that goes to bed hungry. As a matter of fact, we have a bigger problem. We probably go to bed too full.

“...You shall not lack any *thing* in it.... [Now remember that statement the next time you go to the supermarket, because you can get anything there from any place in the world. And if you can’t get it there, you have a computer, you can go online and you can shop anywhere in the world and get whatever you want and FedEx will deliver it to your home front door. Do we lack anything? Open your closet. Just count the number of pairs of shoes that you have; or dresses, or coats, or trousers, or shirts. You don’t lack anything—do you? How many slept last night under a freeway bridge? Now there are some who have had to, unfortunately. That’s a terrible situation. But look at this whole land.

“...*It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper” (v 9)—and you can add to that: gold, silver, precious stones. Did God create all of those? *Yes, He did!* Are those not wealth? *Yes, they are!* Do you think that God is going to require one-tenth from all of the farmers and ranchers and cattlemen and sheepherders and goat herders and fowlers? And those who reproduce things and make things and create wealth out of that? That they are not obligated to tithe before God? *Of course not!* That’s why God said, ‘the tenth he gives to the Levites.’

When we get to Heb. 7, we will see the tenth that used to go to the Levites, He gave, by command, to the ministry of which Jesus Christ is the Head. This is why we have to review this every year, and especially for us, 10: “When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”

That’s why, in this age (as I’ve mentioned many, many times) always remember *you have nothing you didn’t receive!*—physically or spiritually, you received it. Now, you may have had to work for it, but you still received it. Because here’s what happens: “**Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God....**” (v 11). Has this nation done it? *Yes, indeed!* That’s how we come full circle back to Mal. 3; we’ll just read that again. That’s how you come full circle back to here; because, you see, if God did not require it and commanded it, then you could not steal from Him.

Malachi 3:7: “From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. ‘But you say. “In what way shall we return?”.... [So we are the ones that have to make the move first.] ...Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me. But you say, “How have we robbed You?”.... [Now, God, how can we rob You? I haven’t gone up to heaven to take anything out from Your temple. I haven’t gone to Your temple on earth and taken any gold or silver out of it. I haven’t held up any of the priests or Levites walking along. I haven’t committed robbery against any of the ministers of Jesus Christ. No!] ...In tithes and offerings! You *are* cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation”’ (vs 7-9).

Now, the whole world’s in total debt. Now some things you can’t buy [with] cash. That’s understandable. But look at what we have in this nation—just in America—the government debt. That’s part of the curse. So God says:

“‘Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove

Me now with this' ... [So God says He's going to prove you. Now God says you can prove Him.] ...says the LORD of hosts, 'to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is* not enough *room to receive it*' (v 10). Now, we covered that last time.

Let's come back here to Deuteronomy 8:10 again—because especially in these times "...When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments... [And that's the first thing that people do when they are filled and they are comfortable and they are complacent and they feel very satisfied; then they have no need to do something.] ...not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today, lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*... [that's what we have today—don't we? *Yes, indeed!*] ...And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied" (vs 11-13). Then what happens? *You say, 'Look what my hand has done.'* My! My! My! Why don't you do this: one Sunday morning when they run all these info[mercials]—it's about success—turn them on and watch them. Look at them. Listen to what they say. Listen to their philosophy. It'll work for a while because they are using certain principles, which are correct; but **God has been forgotten!** So when all is multiplied, and you forget God, then something happens!

Verse 14: "Then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage." Isn't that what people do? *Yes, it is!* And our experience has been this—hasn't it?—when we saw the church that was rich and increased with goods and had everything and had need of nothing—did they forget God? *Yes, they did!* Where are they? *I don't know.* God knows! They may think that they can avoid God, but no one can avoid God because, as we've seen, He is continually in control of everything. So sooner or later they're going to have to be confronted with this. And when they are, I hope they repent. And sooner or later the whole world is going to be confronted with Jesus Christ, in person, directly from heaven at His second coming, and there are going to be some changes—aren't there? *No question about it!*

So don't forget, history is for us to learn. The examples that happened to Israel, Paul wrote in 1-Cor. 10, are examples that we don't do the same things that they did. And they forgot God!

"Who [the One Who became Christ] led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, so that He might humble you and that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end" (vs 15-16).

So everything that you do, as Paul wrote in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose."

God wants, Deuteronomy 8:16: "...to do you good in your latter end. Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of *my* hand has gotten me this wealth.'" (vs 16-17). Wealth of what? *Gold, silver, all that you have is multiplied, goodly houses, herds, flocks, whatever.* God has given it to you. But people say, 'My, look at what I have done.'

Now, I know a man who was involved in the setting up companies and had them listed on the NASDAQ and did IPOs and got millions of dollars, and had stock options and everything like this, and was running high and mighty and boy, he was bragging what he was doing. And BAM! He has virtually nothing now. I mean, you can watch it on television, if you watch some of these financial reports, because that's what happens. Their hearts got 'lifted up' and they said, 'Look what I've done. Aren't I clever? I made the right decision. I did this. I did that. I did the other thing.' And whenever it comes down to that, watch out! The more *is* the closer you are to a trial. It's automatic.

That's why, when all of these things have increased and multiplied and you have them and you use them, remember, v 18: "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He Who gives you power to get wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant which He has sworn to your fathers as it is this *very* day."

So there we have it. That's why God requires ten percent, a tithe. And He does it for the very simple reason:

1. That you're going to honor Him.
2. In giving tithes and offerings—and you do that first—you honor God first, and He will bless what you have left in many, many different ways.

And that's the partnership that you set up with God.

Verse 19: "And it shall be if you do at all forget the LORD your God and walk after other gods serving them and worshiping them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish—yes,

perish. As the nations whom the LORD destroys before your face, so you shall perish because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God” (vs 19-20).

Now, let’s come to Hebrews, the seventh chapter. Let’s understand something very important as we go here: That God is the one Who has caused all of these things to be. Let’s understand what we have here.

Under the Old Covenant God gave authority to priests and Levites, who served at the altar to collect tithes and offerings from the children of Israel Under the New Covenant there is no priesthood of men, but only one High Priest, Jesus Christ, Who is a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The Apostle Paul explains that the Melchizedek was priest of God at Jerusalem in the days of Abraham, long before the Old Covenant was established. In describing how Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, Paul reveals that He was the one Who later came to the earth as Jesus Christ. (Fred Coulter commentary)

That’s what we have there in the first part of Hebrews, the seventh chapter, where it says of Melchizedek:

Hebrews 7:2: “To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all... [Now that’s interesting—isn’t it?] ...on the one hand, being interpreted King of Righteousness; and on the other hand, King of Salem, which is King of Peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but having been made like the Son of God, remains a Priest forever” (vs 2-3). So that’s only describing Jesus Christ.

You show me one man on earth who came here without father or mother and has no genealogy. There isn’t any. You know how you can tell? Just have each person do a belly-button inspection, and if you have one, you came from your mom—it’s just that simple. No doubt about it.

Now then, he talks about, v 4: “But consider how great this one *was* to Whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. For on the one hand, those from among the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood are commanded by the law to collect tithes from the people—that is, *from* their brethren—even though they are *all* descended from Abraham; but on the other hand, He Who... [Jesus Christ, Who is Melchizedek of the Old Testament] ...was not descended from them received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises. Now it is beyond all doubt... [there’s no question on

this] ...*that* the inferior *one* is blessed by the superior *One* [Who became Jesus Christ]. And in the first case, men who die receive tithes; but in the other case, *He received tithes of Whom it is* witnessed that He lives *forever*. And in one sense, Levi, who receives tithes, also gave tithes through Abraham; for he was still in his forefather’s loins when Melchisedec met him” (vs 4-10).

“Therefore, if perfection was indeed *possible* through the Levitical priesthood... [and consider that the law of tithing was given to them to collect it] ...—for *the law that* the people had received was *based* on it—what further need *was there for* another priest to arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and not to be named after the order of Aaron? For since the priesthood has changed, it is obligatory *that* a change of *the law*... [now that is for the priesthood and the receiving of tithes and offerings because that’s what we are talking about] ...also take place; because the One of Whom these things are said belongs to another tribe... [that is Christ, Who was of the tribe of Judah] ...from which no one was appointed to serve at the altar” (vs 11-13).

Now, a lot of people read that and say, ‘Well, the law was changed and therefore that did away with all laws.’ And that’s what Protestants believe. Now then, what do they have to do to come back and have their own laws in place of God’s laws? All kind of them, don’t they? What happens is this:

Paul has shown that the entire Levitical priesthood has been superceded by one immortal High Priest, Jesus Christ, Who is of the order of Melchizedek. There is no longer a priesthood on earth, ministering at an altar in the temple of God at Jerusalem. However, there is still a need to teach the true worship of God and the Word of God must go forth as a witness to the world.

Those who repent and believe the Gospel must be taught the way of eternal life that Jesus Christ taught. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ chose His disciples and sent them forth to preach the Gospel. And it is for this reason that he raised up His Church. Within the Church, He has provided a ministry that is able to teach the Word of God and preach the Gospel to the world. Moreover, He also provided a way to support the work of preaching the Gospel and teaching the brethren of Jesus Christ. Instead of the priests and Levites at the temple collecting tithes and offerings, the authority to receive tithes and offerings has been transferred to the ministry of

Jesus Christ by the command of the Lord.
The Apostle Paul makes this very clear.
(Fred Coulter Commentary)

Now, let's go read that in 1-Corinthians, the ninth chapter. Many people misunderstand what Paul did. They say, 'Well, Paul never collected tithes and offerings from those in Corinth.' *True!* Why did he do it? *Because if you read 1 & 2 Cor. very carefully you will see that there were false apostles and others who were using this authority.* So what he wanted to do was to show them that he was preaching the Word of God 'in deed and in truth' and so that they could not accuse him of taking tithes and offerings from them. He did not take it from the Church at Corinth. But, he took it from other churches, and even said that he *robbed* other churches because they didn't do what they were supposed to do. And Paul's whole motive in doing that was this: That if you teach the Truth and if you finally become converted and pricked in heart you will respond and do what God commands. That's the whole long and short of what Paul did. And many people make the mistake by saying that Paul did not collect tithes and offerings from anybody. Now, that is not true.

1-Corinthians 9:1: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in *the* Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, without a doubt I am to you. For you are the certification of my apostleship in *the* Lord. My defense to those who are examining me is this... [They came along and said, 'Well, now if Paul is really an apostle of God, why doesn't he collect tithes and offerings?' That's what they were saying.] (So he answers): ...Do we not have **a right** to eat and drink?... [that means *authority*.] ...Do we not have a right to take with us a sister, a wife, as also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working?" (vs 1-6).

So people come along and say, 'Well, the Apostle Paul made tents to support himself.' True. But that was before there were enough brethren who could then support him in turn. So you have to get all the facts straight when you start arguing. Get all the facts. So then he gives some examples. The reason that he gives these examples is to show that those in Corinth did not even respond to his plan, which was this: I won't take any tithes and offerings from you, but I will teach you; and by example, I hope you will respond and do what you need to do.

Let's come to 2-Corinthians 12, because we will see that Paul repented of that, and apologized of it, and actually it is recorded that this was an error in Paul's judgment. Now if it weren't an error in his judgment, he wouldn't have to apologize—would

he? 2-Corinthians 12:10 [transcriber's correction]: "For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.... [That is if he is weak in the flesh, then he's strong in the Lord.] ...I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing.... [now those are the hotshot false apostles of 2-Cor. 11. This has nothing to do with Peter here, because Peter was never the chief apostle—the pope notwithstanding.] ...Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what way was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you?.... ['burden' here means *that he did not take of them tithes and offerings.*] ...**Forgive me this wrong**" (vs 10-13).

Now then, if any man comes along and says, 'Well Paul didn't collect tithes and offerings, therefore, you shouldn't,' then you need to go to 2-Cor. 12:13 where he repented of doing this wrong.

"Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you.... [He says, 'I'm still not going to, in hopes that you will be converted.'] ...for I do not seek what is yours... [Because that's what they would say—right? 'Oh, you want my things.'] ...but you; for the children are not obligated to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. Now I will most happily spend, and am willing to be totally spent, for your souls; although the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. Yet even so.... [All parents experience that—correct? *Yes!*] ...I did not burden you; but being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I make a gain of you by any of those whom I sent to you?" (vs 14-17). No, they walked the same way.

So, when we come back here to 1-Corinthians 9, we will understand the rest of what he's saying here concerning the authority to take of their physical things. 1-Corinthians 9:6: "Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working?" Of course! The apostles in Acts 6 said the same thing. 'It's not reasonable that we should wait on tables. But we should give ourselves to the Word of the Lord and preaching.' So likewise with Paul. He only worked with his hands temporarily until he could be preaching and teaching. And I know what that's like. I've had to work and earn my way for years and years and years. And it's difficult to really devote yourself to the Word of God and to write and to study and to preach and do all these things while you're holding down a full-time employment—

howbeit it was self-employment. So, I know what it's like.

Verse 7: "Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense?...." You go down and you enlist in the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, and you will never find a recruiting officer say, 'Go home, get your uniform, get your rifle, get your guns, get your ammunition and come back and then you can join. And by the way, bring your own food. Have your folks send a care package every day from home.' NO! You enlist in the armed forces, they give you all the clothing, all the food, all the ammunition, all the things that you need and spending money beyond that. Is that not true? *Yes!*

"...Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it?.... [And even Noah, when it finally grew up and he was so glad to be on the other side on dry land, the first crop that came up he made the wine, and whoopee! he drank it while it was still too new and it 'laid him waste'—he got drunk!] ...Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock? Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.'" (vs 7-9). Now, that's something— isn't it? He's saying, 'You didn't even to do the least.' The least you can do is feed the oxen that are treading out the corn. 'I'm treading out to you the Word of God. You didn't even give me even the least.'

I read an account in India where they had these hump-backed cattle that they have, where they were grinding out the corn and so forth, and they had to muzzle; they didn't feed them. And one man read in the Bible that 'you shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn' and lo and behold, the oxen worked better, worked longer and were able to do more because they fed them. And that's what he's saying here: 'I'll be able to do more for you if you just take care of me like an ox.'

"Is it because God is concerned for oxen?.... [You talk about an interpretation of Scripture very broadly applied, look at this one.] ...Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes? For our sakes it was written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things? If others participate in this authority over you, much more surely *should* not we?.... [And the implication is more entitled to it than they?] ...Nevertheless, we have not used this authority; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ" (vs 9-12), And he found out in the long run it hindered the

Gospel of Christ, so he said, 'Forgive me of this wrong.'

"Don't you know... [that means *understand*] ...that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple?.... [We saw what that was—didn't we? (Num. 18)—for the priesthood and the Levites as well. The priesthood received the tenth part of the tenth that the Levites received.] ...*and* those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar?.... [Now v 14 is the key one here.]: ...In the same way also... [and that means in the Greek: *exactly in the same way*] ...**the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel**" (vs 13-14). Now the word 'ordained' is a very interesting word. And that should be translated *commanded* or *charged*. Now let me read my translation of it:

Do you not understand that those who are laboring in the sacred things of the temple, live of the things of the temple? And those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? In exactly the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live from the Gospel. (Fred Coulter Commentary).

And we saw how that Paul wrote that there was a change in the law to whom the tithes and offerings should go, that it should go to the ministry of those who are preaching the Word of God.

Now then, let's cover a couple of things which are important concerning it. Now some people will say on the other hand, 'Oh boy, then I'm going to do, I'm going to be so diligent in tithing that I'm just going to make God give me a blessing.' Well, a lot of people did for no other reason than that. Were they prospered in doing it? *Some of them were*. Why? Because in everything that you do *it has to be from the heart*, that's why. It can't be because you're constrained to. Let's go to 2-Corinthians 9—let's see that. And think of it in the long-term. And besides, what are you giving to God? *What He's already given to you!* Correct? *Yes!* So you are giving that to Him which He has commanded.

Now, let's talk about giving. Here's the whole principle involved in everything that you do. This then, in principle—not just in the way of giving, though we apply it here, and the Apostle Paul did in the way of giving, that is true. But if you do everything you do in life from this point of view—in loving God and keeping His commandments, and always thinking on His ways, living His ways, keeping His commandments, honoring God in all that you do; then you will have the blessing that will come. And the blessings come over time. They are not instant. Yes, you're going to

have trials—just like He told the children of Israel. That God brought them through the wilderness forty-years, ‘to test you, to try you, to prove you.’ So likewise with us. Now, since we’re not in the wilderness, I don’t think it’s going to be forty-years long. But God will bless us.

Stop and think. Is there anyone here that you can say that God has not blessed you? *No, indeed, you’ve all been blessed*—tremendously so. And most of them, the most important ones, cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents—can they? *No!* Because you’re sowing unto eternal life. Now, that’s the whole thing that God wants us to do.

2-Corinthians 9:6: “But this *I say*: the one who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly.... [Now, even the world understands this—don’t they? What is the name for that, even in the world? *Scrooge!*] ...and the one who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.... [A living principle. But there’s one thing important in it.] ...Each one as he purposes in his heart, *so let him give*.... [He’s talking here of an offering of foodstuffs that would go to Jerusalem. So they literally had to go out—and this took place over a period of a year—where they would sow the seed in the ground, they would reap it—whether it be of grain or whether it be of grapes for raisins and wine, or whether it be of other food stocks that they would send—so they had to go out and go above and beyond and do it abundantly. So here is the whole principle involved.] ...Each one as he purposes in his heart, *so let him give*, but not grudgingly... [now this was difficult for some of those Greeks—don’t you suppose? Who didn’t care for Jews in Jerusalem? *Yeah, it may have been.*] ...or by compulsion... [because Paul said so] ...for God loves a cheerful giver” (vs 6-7). And that’s how we need to do it in all.

So going through and rehearsing this, year by year, please understand that I’m trying to follow what is there in Deut. 8, ‘lest that when we have eaten and are full, and we dwell in goodly houses, that we forget the Lord, our God.’ And the first thing that people forget is to honor God with the blessings and the substance that God has given them. That’s why

- it’s not to get from you
- it is not to merchandize you
- it is not to put a guilt trip upon you
- it is not to extract from you

Because I’m sure there will be those who will accuse me of doing that.

- **But it is to lay before you the Truth of God**
- **it is a choice that you have to do**

And that’s wherein it lies. That you have faith before God.

“...God loves a cheerful giver. For God *is* able... [Now that comes from the Greek, ‘*dunamis*’ meaning, *God has the power*] ...to make all grace abound toward you so that in every way you may always have sufficiency in all *things*, *and* may abound unto every good work” (vs 7-8). And God is going to make it work, just like He did with the manna and the clothes.

- Can you imagine clothes staying new for forty years?
- Can you imagine walking on that rough terrain and your feet didn’t even swell?

I guarantee you that if you and I started down that trail, we wouldn’t be out there more than four or five or six hours and it would be for us to walk and our feet would be swelling, and hot and sweaty and we’d have to sit down and try and find some shade—but there’s no shade—and take off our shoes and socks and cool off our feet; and lo, and behold, when we went to put them back on our feet would be so swollen we could hardly get them on. So you scrunch your shoes back on and you keep them unlaced so you have a little relief. And for forty-years they didn’t—their feet didn’t swell. And that was in the most penurious circumstances.

Verse 9: “According as it is written: ‘He has scattered abroad, *and* he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever.’ Now may He Who supplies seed to the sower, and bread to eat, supply *your seed* and multiply your sowing; and may He increase the fruits of your righteousness... [So God is able to do it physically and spiritually.] ...*so that you may* in every way be enriched unto all bountifulness, which causes thanksgiving to God through us. For the administration of this service.... [He’s going to take this down to Jerusalem—they made a special trip, hired a ship to take it on down. They had to get the money and funds to do that. So this was a big, huge, time project.] ...For the administration of this service is not only filling to overflowing the deficiencies of the saints, but *is* also abounding by the giving of many thanks to God” (vs 9-12). So that God is able to bless you even more.

“Through the performance of this service, *they* are glorifying God for your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ.... [in other words, he’s saying ‘you’re doing this from the heart, and when I get there to Jerusalem and give this to them, that’s what I’m going to tell them.’] ...and *for the liberality* of the distribution toward them and toward all *the saints*; and in their supplications for you, *there is* a longing on your behalf, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Now thanks

be to God for His indescribable free gift” (vs 13-15). So then this was to grow and extend into the things concerning the blessings from God, because they did the physical things which were necessary. And that’s the whole basis of our financial responsibility to God. Not to give to a church to make it rich. Not to take from you so that you become poor, but for the proper use and administration of serving the brethren, of preaching the Word of God and reaching out to help the brethren and to serve the world and to provide the things that are necessary to help lead them to Christ.

Now the comment was made that: Was it not true that Paul was admitting he was wrong in not doing that; and why was it preserved in Scripture for us? *So that ministers and teachers subsequent to him would not make the same mistake.* But how many make the same mistake? Then they also end up in a situation where they bring things upon themselves and also upon the brethren.

Now concerning Israel and the curses and everything, here’s what He said. Here are the curses that refer back to Mal. 3, which would come upon them because they robbed God.

Amos 4:6 [transcriber’s correction]: “And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities... [Sooner or later there’s going to be the curse and no food.] ...and lack of bread in all your places, yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD.” So even the curse is designed to bring them back to God. And that’s why he [Malachi] said, ‘Wherein shall we return?’ They need to repent.

“And I have also withheld the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest. And I caused rain to fall on one city and caused it not to rain on another city.... [sounds like today’s weather report—doesn’t it?] ...one field was rained on, and the field on which it did not rain dried up. So two *or* three cities wandered to one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD” (vs 7-8). So God does all these things so we’ll return to Him.

Now today, men think they can belay this, so they build big dams. They have water stored up for two or three years, and then lo and behold, guess what happens? Along comes a time when there will be four years of drought and the water’s going to be all gone, and their dams are going to be empty. Now we saw this nearly happen, what? about six or seven years ago? *Yes!* That you go up and look at Lake Shasta and you look hundreds of feet down there to find a puddle of water. Where as before, you stand on top of the dam and you could see water as far as the eye could see. But sooner or later, you’re not going to get around God’s curses.

Verse 9: “I have stricken you with blasting and mildew... [that is wind and rain—so, you have wind and rain and drought] ...When your gardens and your vineyards, and your fig trees, and your olive trees increased, the creeping locust devoured them.... [is that not part of the curse? *No doubt about it!*] ...yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD. “I have sent the plague among you after the manner of Egypt....” (vs 9-10). And do we not have that? How many people spend so much money on medical things that they do not have anything else. Some of them have to end up selling their homes and everything that they own. Is that part of a curse that comes from God? *Yes!*

1. Because they won’t take care of their health
2. And they don’t believe God concerning the laws of clean and unclean meats.

So those things come.

Now you can read the rest of it here.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Haggai 2:8
- 2) Deuteronomy 30:15-16
- 3) John 14:6, 15, 21, 23-24
- 4) Deuteronomy 30:16-20
- 5) Deuteronomy 8:18, 1-11
- 6) Malachi 3:7-10
- 7) Deuteronomy 8:10-16
- 8) Romans 8:28
- 9) Deuteronomy 8:16-20
- 10) Hebrews 7:2-13
- 11) 1 Corinthians 9:1-6
- 12) 2 Corinthians 12:10-17
- 13) 1 Corinthians 9:6-14
- 14) 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
- 15) Amos 4:6-10

Scriptures reference, not quoted:

- Matthew 5, 24
- 1 Corinthians 10
- 2 Corinthians 11
- 2 Corinthians 2:13
- Acts 6
- Numbers 18

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The Gospel

Fred R. Coulter—January 12, 2002

We come to the section: *The Gospel*. And as we've done in all of it, we'll go ahead and read through the statement, then we'll study the Scriptures concerning *The Gospel*. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 26-27).

The word gospel means "good news." The Gospel is the wonderful message of God's plan of salvation for all mankind through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. The New Testament calls this message the Gospel of grace. The Gospel of grace is the good news that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and that through His blood all who repent and believe in Him may have their sins forgiven and may enter into the Family of God. The Gospel is also a message about the coming Kingdom of God on earth. It is the good news that when Jesus Christ returns to the earth, He will set up the Kingdom of God and the Government of God. He will rule all nations as King of kings and Lord of lords. The saints who are given immortality at the first resurrection will inherit the Kingdom with Jesus Christ and will rule and reign with Him as kings and priests. The Gospel must be preached to all nations as a witness before Jesus Christ returns to set up His Kingdom. Through the preaching of the Gospel, God is preparing saints for His Kingdom by calling those whom He chooses to repentance and conversion.

Let's go through and look at some things here; come to Matthew 24, concerning the preaching of the Gospel—and not only does it mean, in the prophetic sense of Matt. 24, but it also in an ongoing sense.

Matthew 24:14: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come." Now, since this was given before the fall of Jerusalem, this means from that time forward until the time Christ returns, the Gospel is going to be preached.

Let's look at another aspect of preaching the Gospel, let's come to Mark 13 and let's see the parallel account there, and let's see what this says, because God has virtually accomplished this in a great and a profound way. Mark 13:10: "And the Gospel must first be published among all nations." And God has certainly fulfilled His Word in that,

because the Bible has been the *best seller* down through time, if you want to put it that way. And there have been more copies of the Bible produced; and today the Bible is in over 400 languages—the complete Bible; and the New Testament in about 22-hundred languages. So God has fulfilled His promise that it would be preached; that it would be published.

Now also, let's come here to Matthew 28 and we will also see that it is to go out continuously, whoever has the knowledge of the Truth—and we'll see in just a minute, some people preach it out of contention; some out of sincerity. But nevertheless, it is preached.

Now, let's begin here in Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [So with this authority He commanded the apostles and disciples]: ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.'" (vs 18-20)—that is this present evil age in which we are living.

Now, let's come to Acts, the first chapter, and let's see how far that Christ said that it was to be preached. And there have been many people who have gone out there and preached it; and they have given their lives in missionary service and work to carry the Bible, to preach to people—whether in full truth or partial truth—they still got it there. And regardless of what has happened—whether they were Sabbath-keepers or Sunday-keepers, even where Sunday-keepers went and brought the Word of God and preached part of it—out of that, those people in those areas God also raised up those then who would be Sabbath and Holy Day-keepers, and you can witness the things that occurred in, for example, the continent of Africa.

Now let's come to Acts 1 and see how far that it was to be given, how far they were to go into the world and, of course, with today's communication and electronics, it's going to be all that much faster, and it's going to go everywhere. Today, virtually by satellite, you could send it down to the people who were down in Antarctica—which is one of the most remote, uninhabited places of the world, but it could still go there today by that.

Acts 1:4: "And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He [Christ] commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to 'await the promise of

the Father, which,' *He said*, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.' So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority; but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth'" (vs 4-8). So that's where the Gospel was to be preached. And it is today.

Let's come to Philippians, the first chapter, and let's read that there are, for the sake of purity of faith, there will always be separations from those who preach heresy or have their own doctrines or strive for control, and all of that sort of thing. That's the way that God has made it to keep the body of His true believers pure from the deceptions of Satan the devil. Now there is, as you probably know, a Christianity of this world which is not of God. They may use the name of Christ; preach a certain form of Christ; understand certain things of the Bible; live sincere and decent, and in many cases, upright lives; but that does not necessarily mean that they have been called to salvation.

So you need to go back and review the sections concerning baptism and salvation to understand that fully; because God is the one Who calls them.

Now, let's come to Philippians 1:12—this is when Paul was in prison. We don't know exactly where he was in prison—whether it was in Caesarea or whether it was Rome—but nevertheless, he was in prison. It was probably...it could be Caesarea or Rome, because in both cases he was in a palace of the Roman Empire.

Philippians 1:12: "Brethren, I want you to know that the things befalling me have turned out rather unto *the* advancement of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ have become manifest in the whole palace, and to all others; and most of the brethren, trusting in *the* Lord, have been emboldened by my bonds to speak the Word more abundantly without fear" (vs 12-14). So here we have brethren speaking; in other words, *witnessing*.

"Indeed, some are proclaiming Christ out of envy and strife, but some with good intentions.... [So we look out in the world today and that's still the thing that's going on. You can have those categories of preaching Christ. But you have to discern the true Christ, the true preaching, the true Word of God from all of those things which are false

out there—and that's the responsibility God has given to each one of us to do: 'to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.'] ...On the one hand, those who are preaching out of a contentious *spirit*, and not purely, are thinking to add grief to my bonds. But on the other hand, those *who are preaching* out of love know that I am set for the defense of the Gospel.... [Now Paul says]: ...What then *shall I say*?.... [Because I'm sure he didn't understand at that time what was going to happen with the *great deception* coming in. He says]: ...What then *shall I say*? Nevertheless, in every way, whether in pretext or in Truth, Christ is being proclaimed?.... [And that is still true to this day—'whether in pretense or whether sincerely, Christ is preached.'] ... and I rejoice in this, yes, and will also *continue to rejoice*" (vs 15-18).

So we have that kind of preaching. However, we know in Galatians that there were people who were leaving the true Gospel and following a mixture of truth and error—which this preaching in contention eventually led to.

Now let's come to Acts, the twentieth chapter, and here we see the Bible definition of the Kingdom of God relating to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and to the Gospel of Grace tied together. The Greek is strange. If you wrote out Greek or translated it directly the way it is all in one run-on sentence and handed it to your English teacher, you'd probably get a poor grade for having run-on, long, extended sentences and too many subjects within one sentence. But nevertheless, this is all one thought that works out.

Acts 20:17: "Now from Miletus, he [Paul] sent to Ephesus *and* called for the elders of the Church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, '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.... [So he had to really watch out for his life.] ...*and* how I did not keep back anything that was profitable, *but* preached to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house... [that means privately from house-to-house. This does not mean, as some people who believe in Jehovah Witnesses, and that you're to go house-to-house and bang on the door like 'trick or treaters' on Halloween.] ...earnestly testifying, both to *the* Jews and *the* Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 17-21)—which is the end of that.

"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” (vs 22-24). And that’s what the Gospel is—***the Gospel of the Grace of God.***

Now notice how that ties in with the next verse, v 25, which ties it in with the preaching of the Kingdom of God: “And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, ... [So there it is: Gospel of Grace and Kingdom of God] ...will see my face no more.”

So this is important and it ties right into the next section that we have in the *Beliefs* booklet. So I’ll leave it up to you to go through and to look up all the rest of the Scriptures and the Scriptural reference under the belief section entitled *The Gospel*.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 24:14
- 2) Mark 13:10
- 3) Matthew 28:18-20
- 4) Acts 1:4-8
- 5) Philippians 1:12-18
- 6) Acts 20:17-25

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The Kingdom of God

Fred R. Coulter—January 12, 2002

This leads right on from where we just finished in Acts 20. Let's take the *Beliefs* booklet and let's read the statement of belief here, (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg. 27)

The Kingdom of God is the government of the Family of God. The Kingdom of God currently rules the universe. Although the Kingdom of God is not now ruling the earth, all those who have the Spirit of God are under the rule of God the Father through the lordship of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God will be re-instituted on the earth at the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. At that time, the Millennium will begin and the immortal saints, as the sons of God, will rule as kings and priests with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. After God the Father brings the New Jerusalem from heaven to the new earth, the Kingdom of God will rule the entire universe from the New Jerusalem for all eternity.

Now, let's look at some the Scriptural references here. Let's come to Mark, the first chapter, and we will see that is exactly what Jesus preached from the very time that He began preaching: The Kingdom of God, which is the rule of God, the reign of God.

Mark 1:1: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ... [which is: the Gospel of Grace/the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.] ...the Son of God.... [v 14]: ...Now after the imprisonment of John, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God... [So, you see that's why we have the Gospel followed by the Kingdom of God in the *Belief's* booklet, because they're tied right together.] ...and saying, 'The time has been fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is near at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel'" (vs 1, 14-15). So that's why they're tied so closely together.

Now let's come to Colossians, the first chapter. When a person is called, repents and is baptized, and receives the Holy Spirit of God, they come out from underneath the dominion of the kingdom of this world, which is the kingdom of Satan the devil; and come under the dominion of the Kingdom of God. That does not mean the Kingdom of God dwells in their hearts. The Spirit of God dwells in their hearts. But that means they are under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of God and they will follow the laws and commandments of God unto death; because the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ and God the Father are their first loyalty.

Colossians 1:12: "Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light... [and that inheritance is to share the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ] ...Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [which is the power of Satan the devil] ...and has transferred *us* unto... [not *into*; because we can't go *into* the Kingdom of God, since it's not yet here on the earth, but we've been] ...transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love..." (vs 12-13). Meaning now that our lives are ruled by Christ.

Let's come to Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly..." (vs 15-16). So that shows how we're under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of God.

- we receive the Spirit of God
- we keep the laws and commandments of God
- we love God the Father and Jesus Christ
- we love the saints, being the brethren

And that puts us into the jurisdiction—or under the authority of—the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said, in another place, He said, 'My Kingdom is not of this world!' Let's look at that. John 18:33—this is when Pilate was questioning Jesus. "Then Pilate returned to the judgment hall and called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Do you ask this of yourself, or did others say *it* to you concerning Me?' Pilate answered Him, 'Am I a Jew? The chief priests and your own nation have delivered You up to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, so that I might not be delivered up to the Jews. However, My kingdom is not of this world'" (vs 33-36). And it will not be of this world until Jesus Christ returns. So if there's any church or any group saying that they are the Kingdom of God, or that they have a vicar or pope who is in charge of that kingdom and he is in place of Christ, that is not a true statement because they have usurped the power of Jesus Christ and the authority of God.

Now notice, He said (just as a sidelight), "...If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight..." (v 36). So that's why Christians are not to be involved in wars and battles and things like that, because God has left the

authorities that be bear the sword of the 'administration of death' in this world—not those who are in the Church of God and have the Spirit of God.

- 5) Revelation 2:26-29
- 6) Revelation 3:12
- 7) Revelation 20:6
- 8) Revelation 21:1-2

Now let's continue on concerning the Kingdom of God and when it will come on the earth and how it will come. Let's look at some of the promises that were given to the saints concerning the kingdom. Let's come to Revelation 2:26: "And to the one who overcomes, and keeps My works unto *the* end, I will give authority over the nations; and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (vs 26-29)—showing that the true saints of God will rule and reign with Christ and have authority over the nations.

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Revelation 3:12: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name." And this also shows the coming of the Kingdom of God and New Jerusalem together.

Now, let's look at just a couple of other Scriptures here in the book of Revelation. I will leave the rest of the study of this section to you, to look up the rest of these Scriptures in your Bible.

Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and Holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Then Revelation 21, we see that New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from the Father. Let's read just a few verses here of Revelation 21:1: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the Holy City, *the* New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (vs 1-2). And then the saints will live in New Jerusalem and we will reign from there and we will rule in all of the universe.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 1:1, 14-15
- 2) Colossians 1:12-13
- 3) Colossians 3:15-16
- 4) John 18:33-36

Resurrections

Fred R. Coulter—January 12, 2002

Now let's come to the next section concerning the *resurrections*: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 27-29 throughout).

The Bible reveals two distinct types of resurrection from the dead:

- 1) restoration to physical life as a fleshly human being, and
- 2) transformation to eternal life as an immortal spirit being.

The Scriptures record the resurrection of individual persons to physical life at various times by the will of God. In Old Testament times, a widow's son was restored to life through the prayer of Elijah the prophet. Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead is a well-known example from New Testament times.

And we might also add there, in Matthew 27 the saints that came back to life after was Jesus was resurrected to appear to many in the city of Jerusalem.

These were special acts of mercy by God which extended the physical life of the individuals. Those whom God has resurrected in this manner were not given immortality, and all again died.

Jesus Christ was the first to be resurrected to immortality by the power of God the Father. To become a human being, Jesus had divested Himself of His glory and power as the Lord God of the Old Testament. When He was resurrected, He was restored to His full glory, power and honor as God. Jesus Christ is called the Firstborn from among the dead because He is the first of multiple millions who will be resurrected to immortality. When Jesus Christ returns to the earth, all true Christians who have died...

And 'true Christians' means that they died in the faith.

...will be raised to eternal life as immortal spirit beings. Those Christians who are alive at the return of Jesus Christ will be changed instantaneously from flesh to spirit. This transformation to spirit is the new birth, when the saints of God—both dead and living—are truly "born again" into the Family of God. All the saints will be

composed of spirit, as God is composed of spirit, and will be full members of God's Divine Family. They will rule with Jesus Christ as kings and priests on the earth. This resurrection is described in the Bible as the first resurrection.

After the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and His saints, there will be a resurrection to physical life of all who have died without having received the opportunity for salvation. During this second physical life, each person will have his or her first and only opportunity for salvation through Jesus Christ.

And I might just add: There is no such thing as a *second chance*.

Those who fully accept the salvation of God will enter into the Family of God as spirit beings. Those who reject salvation through Jesus Christ will be condemned to eternal death. They will be joined by all the incorrigible wicked who have died throughout history, who will be resurrected to physical life. All who have refused to accept salvation, and have knowingly and willfully committed the unpardonable sin—blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God the Father—will be resurrected to receive the final judgment of God. Their sentence will be to die in the lake of fire. This death is the second and final death, from which there is no resurrection.

Now, I'll just reference you to some of the references we have here:

- 1 Kings 17:17-24—shows the resurrection of the son by Elijah
- John 11—which shows the resurrection of Lazarus.

We will look at those people who were resurrected back to a *physical* life, but they would all have to die in the faith. Now, Lazarus was raised back to physical life, because he had not had an opportunity for salvation because Jesus had not yet died and ascended to heaven to send the Holy Spirit so that he could have that opportunity for salvation. So his death and his resurrection is the key to understanding that all of those who never had an opportunity for salvation, will be raised back to physical life to receive an opportunity for salvation.

Now, I just might interject here, since this is just an overview, please write for the sermons that we have concerning the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, because those two days are devoted to detailed study about the people who have never received salvation, that they will receive it just like Lazarus did in this particular case. And of course, the disciples and Mary and Martha (his sisters) were concerned that Lazarus was dead and did not have an opportunity to receive salvation.

Now let's pick up the story here where Martha goes out to meet Jesus—John 11:20: “And when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she *went and* met Him. But Mary was sitting in the house. And Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother shall rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’.... [So she didn't understand that it was going to happen now.] ...Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he die, shall live *again*.... [and of course, Lazarus did believe in Him—didn't he? *Yes!*] ...and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall not die forever....’” (vs 20-26). And that actually means *shall not see death forever*. That's quite different than never dying.

Now, let's see where He raised him from the dead, v 39—they came to the tomb, after all the weeping and wailing, and even Jesus wept, it says. “Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of him who had died, said to Him, ‘Lord, he already stinks, for it has been four days.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not say to you that if you will believe, you shall see the glory of God?’ Then they removed the stone *from the tomb* where the dead man had been laid. And Jesus lifted *His* eyes upward and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always; but because of the people who stand around I say *this*, so that they may believe that You did send Me.’ And after He had spoken these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ And he who had been dead came forth...” (vs 39-44). So Lazarus was resurrected.

Now, let's look another case of physical resurrection, or resurrection back to physical life. Let's come back to Matthew 27—and I've always wondered what sort of reaction would I have had if one of my dead relatives came back from the dead and knocked on my door. Well, I'm sure—speaking of Lazarus—that he was converted, received the Holy Spirit and died in the faith, and will be resurrected to eternal life when Christ returns.

Matthew 27:50: “And after crying out again with a loud voice, Jesus yielded up *His* spirit. And suddenly the veil of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened... [would be a better translation, rather than ‘rent’; because that sounds like they're trying to lease a building or something.] ... and many bodies of the saints who had died arose. And after His resurrection, they came out of the tombs *and* entered into the Holy city, and appeared to many” (vs 50-53).

So there is a *resurrection from the dead back to a physical life*. That is **one type** of resurrection. The other type of resurrection is *being raised from the dead to be a spirit being*.

1-Thessalonians 4:13: “But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep.... [When people die in the faith, God looks upon it as a sleep. Because their next memory, their next thought, would be the instant they are resurrected, and it will be just like coming out of a sleep—a deep sleep, howbeit.] ...that you be not grieved, even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord*...” (vs 13-15).

Now, let's just interject right here: **Nowhere** in the Bible does it say that when you die your immortal soul goes to heaven. That is a false, pagan doctrine, taught by worldly ‘Christian’ churches, which have rejected the truth of the resurrection in the Bible. Now, if you don't believe that, check out the Bible a little more and see that that is true.

Verse 14: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him... [which is His authority] ...For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord*, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep, because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout of command... [same thing He did when He resurrected Lazarus—correct? *Yes!*] ...with *the* voice of an archangel and with *the* trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in *the* clouds for *the* meeting with the Lord in *the* air; and so shall we always be with *the* Lord” (vs 14-17).

Now then, let's go to Revelation 19, to show that we come back to the earth. When we meet Him in the air, the resurrection. Now you can write in for our sermons on *The First Resurrection* and *The Sea*

of Glass. I won't get into all the details with it, but we will meet Christ in the air on the Sea of Glass; and after the pouring out of the seven last plagues, then all the saints will come back with Christ to the earth—and as we saw earlier—to rule and reign with Him.

Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; *and* He had a name written that no one knows except Him. And *He* was clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is The Word of God.... [and that goes right back to John 1:1-3] ...And the armies in heaven were following Him on white horses... [that army is the saints of God who then will fight with Christ. Now remember, we saw that since the Kingdom of God is not on the earth, His servants do not fight today. But at this time, when the saints return with Christ, they will fight.] ...following Him on white horses; *and* they were clothed in fine linen, white and pure” (vs 11-14). And as we saw, Rev. 20:6, we are on the earth and we will rule and reign with Christ a thousand years.

Now, let's come back to the Old Testament—Zechariah 14:4. This talks about the return of Christ. “And His [Jesus Christ] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall split in two, from the east and to the west, and make a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ‘And you shall flee to the valley of My mountains... [now, we're talking about the fulfillment of what we just read there in Rev. 19] ... for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.” And the LORD my God shall come, and **all the saints with You**” (vs 4-5). So we will reign on the earth! Not in heaven!

Let's continue on here, let's come to v 8: “And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them shall go toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea. In summer and in winter it shall be. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name shall be one” (vs 8-9). ***That is the first resurrection.***

The issue of life and death is very important, and all religions have some sort of explanation as to what happens to the body and what happens to the soul, so we'll just briefly touch on it here. So if you

need to have a more in-depth explanation, write in for a sermon entitled: *The Spirit in Man*.

Let's, first of all, see that the Bible says that ‘souls’ are not immortal. Let's come to Ezekiel 18. And most of the religions of the world believe in an immortal soul—which either goes to heaven or goes to hell; goes to heaven if you're good, goes to hell and burn forever if you're bad. Or they believe in reincarnation—that you have a soul that transmigrates from one species to another until you are perfected and hence then, you can eventually end up in nirvana. Now those teachings are not in the Bible. Those are teachings of other religions, which anyone can teach anything that they desire. However, if you want the Truth, then you need to stick with the Word of God.

Ezekiel 18:4—here's what God says, the Creator of heaven and earth and all human beings: “Behold, all souls *are* Mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they *are* Mine. **The soul that sins, it shall die!**” And we know the New Testament teaches: ‘The wages of sin is death.’ And ‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ The soul, in the Bible, really is the chemical life of the body, having nothing to do with immortality—and ***the soul is mortal!*** There is a section, there is a part of the human being which is called ‘the spirit in man.’

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.’” Every human being has within his brain or connected with his brain what is called ‘the spirit of man’—which is the spirit which God gives, which makes you different from all of the animals of the world. This spirit cannot function without a body.

Let's go to James, the second chapter, and we will see. This, the body, cannot function without the ‘spirit’; and the ‘spirit’ cannot function without the body. It's very much like the cassette recording that you are listening to right now. You can hold it in your hand, you have another thing that is there, but you don't know what is in it because you don't have a machine to play it. So you can liken a body and mind to the cassette player and the cassette itself, the cassette tape, liken unto the ‘spirit of man’ which has your intelligence, which has your memory, which has everything that you are as a person. Now, James, the second chapter makes it very clear.

James 2:26: “For as the body without *the* spirit is dead...” So there's a spirit that gives life. We know from modern technology today that a person can be technically called, what in modern

medical parlance is this: a person can be brain-dead, but they can sustain the physical life by keeping the blood moving through oxygenization and the heart continuing to pump. The spirit has left the brain. The soul—being the physical body—is still functioning by artificial means, because that is the physical, chemical part of your being. If they stop the respirator on a brain-dead person, they die instantly. So we have it very clear. The ‘spirit of man,’ which is in him, must be in a physical body in order to function.

Now then, this helps us answer the question: What happens to that ‘spirit in man’ when a person dies? *It’s not the soul that goes to God. It is the spirit!* And remember, just like a cassette tape, contains everything on there that you are through your whole life, but it must have a body and it must have a brain in order to function.

Now, let’s come to Hebrews, the twelfth chapter, and let’s see what happens to the ‘spirit in man.’ Now when Jesus died—we read it—when He died, He said, “Into Your hands Father, I commend My spirit.” So when Jesus was resurrected, the spirit that He commended to the Father came back into His physical body and He was resurrected an immortal, spirit being, receiving again the immortal spirit life that He had before He gave it up to become a human being. So when all human beings die, in order for a resurrection to occur, there has to be a record of that individual kept somewhere—and God is the one Who does it. And that spirit that goes back to man is probably very similar to what we understand is the physical DNA and RNA of a human being. Because they know, through the process of physical cloning, that they can take the DNA and they clone an exact replica from that. So this gives you an idea of what God is going to do at the resurrection.

Hebrews 12:22: “But you are come to Mt. Zion... [in heaven above] ...and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels.... [read Rev. 4 & 5 about the angels and so forth that are around God’s throne.] ...and to God, the Judge of all.... [Now, we’re going to get into the next section, when we finish this on the resurrection, concerning judgment.] ...and to the spirits of the just who have been perfected” (vs 22-23). So what appears and dies, the spirit goes back to God. Then when they are resurrected as a spirit being, they are given a spiritual body. When they are resurrected back to a physical life, they are given a physical body again, according to the pattern that is there in the ‘spirit of man.’

So we need to understand that the Bible nowhere teaches the immortality of the soul, or a

spirit wandering off in ‘nether, nether’ land. **God controls everything!**

Now, let’s come here to 1-John, the third chapter, and let’s see what John wrote about what we will be like when we are resurrected, at the return of Christ. 1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be **called the children of God!**.... [this comes from the noun ‘teknois’] ...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2). And that is, we will be a spirit being.

Now, let’s come to Philippians, the third chapter, and let’s see this, again, by the Apostle Paul. So all the apostles knew and understood this. Philippians 3:20: “But for us, the commonwealth of God... [and the Greek there is ‘politeia’ which means *our governmental allegiance*] ...exists in the heavens... [because we’re not part of this world, as Christ was not part of this world. Obviously, we do not carry on conversations from heaven to each other—it’s directly to each other. So this is ‘politeia.’] ...from where also we are waiting for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (vs 20-21).

So the first resurrection will be through spirit. The ‘spirit in man’ will then be put into the spirit body and there we are as spirit beings—the sons of God.

Now let’s look a little bit more concerning the physical resurrection of people who never had an opportunity for salvation, because they were not called of God. Most people are under the mistaken impression that those in the Old Testament received salvation just like those in the New Testament—who are called of God; baptized and receive the Holy Spirit; and endure unto the end—will receive salvation. Such is not true! The covenant that God gave to Israel was a covenant for physical blessings, for obedience to the commandments of God in the letter of the law, and they were never promised eternal salvation. They were promised a physical land, blessings of physical life and God to fight their battles for them. They were never promised eternal life. Therefore, most of Israel—with the exception of the kings and the prophets—did not receive salvation. They all died, are in their graves and they will have an opportunity for salvation after the Millennium when the second resurrection takes place.

(Now again, write for day seven and eight concerning the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.)

Here we have the valley of dry bones, where Ezekiel was told to prophesy that they these bones would live—and they did. Let's understand as we analyze this: If you have bones what do you have? *You have the remains of human bodies*—correct? If you have the remains of human bodies, what does this tell you? *They lived once*—correct? So then this is going to be a second physical life, as we will see. Now some people, especially religionists—who believe that you either are saved now and go to heaven because you're saved, or go to hell and burn because you're not saved—greatly resent the mercy and grace of God; that He is going to resurrect all those that He never called to salvation back to a second physical life so they can have an opportunity for salvation. Now why would anyone resent that? Why would anyone be mad at God for giving His gracious mercy and loving kindness, to give them an opportunity for salvation.

Ezekiel 37:7: “So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise. And behold, a shaking! And the bones came together, a bone to its bone. And as I watched, behold the sinews and the flesh came upon them... [now this is not a resurrection to immortality—is it? *No!* To a second physical existence.] ...and the skin covered them above. But *there was* no breath in them. And He said to me, ‘Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain that they may live.’”’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army” (vs 7-10). Now who are these people?

“And He said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, “Our bones *are* dried and our hope is lost; we ourselves are completely cut off.”.... [That is leading sinful lives and not called to salvation.] ...Therefore prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, O My people, I will open your graves... [meaning *they died*] ...and cause you to come up out of your graves... [meaning *they'll be resurrected to a physical life* (as we just saw)]. ...and will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD... [which they did not before, even though He was their God] ...when I have opened your graves, O My people, and have brought you up out of your graves. And I shall put My Spirit in you... [that is *for conversion*] ...and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. And you shall know that I the LORD have

spoken it and have done it,” says the Lord” (vs 11-14).

Now then, let's come to Matthew, the twelfth chapter, because we see that not only is it going to happen to Israel, but it's going to happen to all the Gentile nations—and then we will see the fulfillment of this in Rev. 20.

Matthew 12:41: “*The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment...* [Now, we'll get to the next section on judgment in just a minute] ...with this generation.... [So this shows Nineveh being a Gentile nation shall be raised with the same generation of the Jews during Jesus' time, that did not accept salvation] ...and shall condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah *is* here. *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation...* [showing the second resurrection] ...and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here” (vs 41-42). So ***all those people will be raised to a second physical life in the second resurrection at the end of the one-thousand-year period***, as we see in the book of Revelation.

Now, let's go there and see that. Let's come to Revelation 20:4—this is talking about the saints who are raised to immortality when Christ returns; then it talks about the ‘rest of the dead.’

Revelation 20:4: “And I saw thrones; and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and those who did not worship the beast, or his image, and did not receive the mark in their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” These are the ones, as it says in 1-Cor. 15, that when Christ returns, those who are Christ's will be raised to immortal life.

Now then, what about the rest of the dead? Verse 5: “(But the rest of the dead... [who did not receive salvation in this life] ... did not live again until the thousand years were completed.)....” Now the first resurrection is when Christ returns. The second resurrection is at the end of the thousand years.

Now, let's come to v 11—this is called ‘The Great White Throne Judgment’—v 12: “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and *the books were opened*; and another book was opened, which is *the book of Life*.... [Now, we saw in Ezek. 37 that they already died once, so for whatever sins and the way that they lived their lives at that time, it is clear that they have not committed

the unpardonable sin. So therefore, they are given an opportunity for salvation and they are] ...And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books..." Here's an opportunity for salvation. Let's read it again:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and *the* books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of Life*.... [showing an opportunity for salvation. Those who are Christians today have their names already written in the book of Life. So these are people who have not had the opportunity for salvation, so their names are not written in the book of Life for salvation.] ...and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works" (vs 12-13). Meaning that they have a new life in which to live; to have faith; to have works; to be given the opportunity for salvation.

Now again, I encourage you to write for those two tapes that I mentioned, because it will talk much more about some of the other details, such as: how long they lived and so forth.

Now there is one more part to 'the rest of the dead.' The rest of the dead are those who have committed the unpardonable sin—and we cover that in detail on those other two tapes. But, suffice to show here, let's come to v 14—so there are, as we could say, two parts to the second resurrection. The first part is those who were not given salvation, but have not committed the unpardonable sin. They are raised to a physical life, to receive an opportunity for salvation. The second part of the 'rest of the dead'—or the second resurrection—is those who have committed the unpardonable sin, who will be cast into the lake of fire.

We'll read that in v 14: "And death and *the* grave were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (vs 14-15).

Now, let's come over here to Revelation 21:8—and this gives us a little more breakdown on the category of incorrigible wicked. "But *the* cowardly... [because they didn't trust God] ...and unbelieving... [because they didn't believe God] ...and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is *the* second death." That is the judgment that God has upon the incorrigibly wicked, and from this death there is no resurrection—nor torture, nor suffering forever.

Let's come back here to Malachi, just the last chapter in the Old Testament before the book of Matthew. Malachi 4 1: "For behold, the day is

coming, burning like a consuming oven; and all the proud, and every doer of wickedness, shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and will leave them neither root nor branch.... [meaning *no life!*] ...But unto you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and healing will be in His wings. And you shall go out and grow up like calves of the stall. And you shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I *am* preparing,' says the LORD of hosts" (vs 1-3).

So the incorrigibly wicked will not suffer forever. They will not be tormented forever. That is only reserved to Satan and his demons—not human beings.

Again, I encourage you to go through and look up all the Scriptural references that we have concerning the resurrections. Now, you see how these flow together.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 11:20-26, 39-44
- 2) Matthew 27:50-53
- 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 4) Revelation 19:11-14
- 5) Zechariah 14:4-5, 8-9
- 6) Ezekiel 18:4
- 7) Zechariah 12:1
- 8) James 2:26
- 9) Hebrews 12:22-23
- 10) 1 John 3:1-2
- 11) Philippians 3:20-21
- 12) Ezekiel 37:7-14
- 13) Matthew 12:41-42
- 14) Revelation 20:4-5, 11-15
- 15) Revelation 21:8
- 16) Malachi 4:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Kings 17:17-24
- John 11
- John 1:1-3
- Revelation 20:6
- Revelation 4 & 5
- 1 Corinthians 15

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- on last day of Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day
- *First Resurrection*
- *The Sea of Glass*
- *The Spirit in Man*

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Eternal Judgment

Fred R. Coulter—January 12, 2002

From the resurrections we come to the next section which is called *Eternal Judgment*. You will see how they tie together, and in fact, some of it will be repeated here: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 29-30).

God is now judging every believer who has been called at this time. God's judgment of each individual begins when God opens his or her mind to understand God's way of life. With His love, grace and mercy, God gives each one who yields to His Holy Spirit the strength and the power to grow in love, faith and grace and to overcome human nature, the world and Satan the devil. God the Father holds each believer personally responsible to grow in the knowledge of His Word and in the spiritual stature and fullness of His Son Jesus Christ. As the believer loves God with all the heart and is living in faithful obedience to His Word, he or she has the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to him or her as the gift of God. The believer is then judged as wholly righteous and blameless before God the Father. All who remain in this imputed righteousness of faith will be in the first resurrection and will receive eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ.

Those individuals through the ages who have had no opportunity for salvation during their lifetime will be restored to physical life in the second resurrection, which will take place after the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and the saints. Everyone who is raised in the second resurrection will have the same opportunity for salvation as those who were in the first resurrection. Each one will be taught the way of salvation and will have the opportunity to repent and to accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the remission of his or her sins. Each will be granted the same period of time to choose God's way of salvation. This period, called the Great White Throne Judgment... [which we just read of previously] ...will apparently last for 100 years. During this time, all who learn to live in accordance with God's will, growing in grace and in the knowledge and character of Jesus Christ, will receive eternal life.

By the end of this period of judgment, all those who have chosen salvation will have entered into the Kingdom of God as spirit sons of God. At that time, all who have rejected their opportunity for salvation will be sentenced to the second death-their eternal judgment. All the incorrigible wicked from past ages who have committed the unpardonable sin, and have willfully rejected the salvation of God, will be resurrected to physical life to join the living wicked in receiving the sentence of the second death as their eternal judgment. God will destroy all the incorrigible wicked at the same time in the lake of fire. This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection.

Now, I've covered virtually most of it already, so I'll just refer you to the Scripture sections and you go through and study them. And this ties in to the section called *The Baptism of Fire*.

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The Baptism of Fire

Fred R. Coulter—January 12, 2002

Now, in the world today, there are many Pentecostal people who believe that the ‘baptism of fire’ is the receiving of the ‘Holy Ghost’ by speaking in tongues and running around shouting and jumping and yelling and screaming in great confusion. Now we know that God is not the author of confusion, so this is not from God. And the truth about the ‘baptism of fire’ ties in with the second death. So let’s read that. Now no one who is a true believer wants the ‘baptism of fire’ because then you’re desiring the Lake of Fire, which is the second death. And that Lake of Fire is going to consume the whole earth—as Peter says. It’s going to melt all the elements on the earth. So you don’t want that.

If you think you want a ‘baptism of fire,’ think about the Lake of Fire by looking at any documentary on volcanoes and ask: Do you want to be thrown into that liquid lava and be burned up? Okay, let’s read the section on *Baptism of Fire*: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pg 30).

The baptism of fire is not a baptism to be sought by spiritually begotten believers, as some teach, but a baptism that is reserved for the incorrigible wicked. The Scriptures reveal that the baptism of fire is the eternal destruction of the wicked by immersion... [that means *complete submersion*] ...into the lake of fire and brimstone. Those who are cast into the lake of fire will not be tormented forever but will be burned up. This is the second and permanent death and God’s final judgment for the unrepentant, incorrigible wicked who have committed the unpardonable sin and have willfully rejected His way of salvation through Jesus Christ. All who have hardened their hearts in their iniquities and their rebellion against God and who have committed the unpardonable sin by knowingly resisting and blaspheming the Holy Spirit, making it impossible for them to be led to repentance, are incorrigibly wicked and will be destroyed together in the Lake of Fire.

Now let’s look at just a couple of Scriptures here concerning that. Let’s come to Matthew, the third chapter, because this is where it is first brought to light, when John the Baptist was preaching repentance. Matthew 3:10—he’s talking to those who were onlookers walking by, yet wanting the blessing: “But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not

producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the* fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire; whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather His wheat into the granary... [that is those who receive salvation into His garner] ... but the chaff He will burn up [incorrigible wicked] ...with unquenchable fire” (vs 10-12).

Now, let’s look at another Scripture here in Matthew 25. We have those who are the sheep—who enter in to receive eternal life because they followed Christ and they took care of even the least of the brethren. Now let’s come to Matthew 25:41—Then those that did not do it; those who did not live God’s way, who then are going to be separated: “Then shall He also say to those on *the* left, ‘Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Now, the Bible shows that the devil and his angels will be tormented forever, because they are spirit beings.

Now, let’s come to Hebrews, the tenth chapter. Now, whoever commits the unpardonable sin will have it so hard there will be no remorse; there will be no concern about repentance; there will be absolutely nothing but hateful feelings toward God and His way, because they have rejected God; rejected His Spirit; have hardened their hearts; and there is no salvation for them.

Let’s pick it up Hebrews 10:26: “For if we willfully go on sinning... [that means with premeditated determination. Not because of weakness, not because of temptation, but with planned determination to *willfully* sin—reject the Holy Spirit of God.] ...after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries of God. Consider *this*: anyone who rejects *the* law of Moses dies without mercy under *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, *as* an unholy thing, and has scorned the Spirit of grace? For we know Him Who has said, “‘Vengeance *belongs* to Me. I will recompense!’” says *the* Lord.’ And again, ‘*The* Lord will judge His people.’ *It is* a fearful thing to fall into *the* hands of *the* living God” (vs 26-31).

So quite a thing, isn't it? That's really something!

Let's come to Hebrews 12:29: "For our God *is* indeed a consuming fire." And that is to those who go against God's way.

I encourage you to go through and study those things, and write in for any other tapes that you would like to have concerning that, and we'll be happy to send them to you.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 3:10-12
- 2) Matthew 25:41
- 3) Hebrews 10:26-31
- 4) Hebrews 12:29

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Clean and Unclean Meats

Fred R. Coulter—January 26, 2002

Well, this is our final one going through the *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, going through the *Beliefs* booklet, (pgs. 30-31).

So as we've done with all of them, we'll just read through the statement that we have, and then we'll go through the Scriptures. And I'm going to expand this one out to also show clean and unclean spirituality; because it's not just clean and unclean meats.

As Creator, God has provided not only plants but also animals to be food for mankind. However, God did not create all animal flesh to be eaten by human beings. Because God desires mankind to sustain good health, He has revealed to mankind which animal flesh He specifically created to be eaten. This knowledge was made known from creation, as shown in the account of Noah and the Flood. In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, God clearly specifies which meats are fit for human consumption and which are not. The classification of clean or unclean is easily identifiable by the characteristics that God created in the animals. Any warm-blooded mammal which has split hooves and which chews the cud is clean to eat. All other warm-blooded animals are unclean. Of the creatures that live in the waters, only the fish with fins and scales are clean to eat; all others are unclean. Of the fowls, God forbids eating the flesh of fowls which are scavengers. All reptiles are unclean, as are all insects except locusts, grasshoppers and certain beetles.

Contrary to the belief of many professing Christians, the New Testament does not nullify God's laws of clean and unclean meats. The dispute between Jesus Christ and the Pharisees in Mark 7 did not involve the eating of clean or unclean meats. Rather, it concerned His disciples eating food with unwashed hands. As clearly interpreted in Acts 10, the vision that Peter saw was given to reveal that no human is to be called "common or unclean" and is not a Divine authorization to change God's laws of clean and unclean meats.

The Apostle Paul upheld the laws of clean and unclean meats as a requirement for Christians. He described the meats that

Christians are permitted to eat as those "meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe [have faith in] and know the Truth [the Word of God is Truth (John 17:17)]" (1-Tim. 4:3). Paul was clearly showing that some meats were created to be eaten and others were not created to be eaten. Paul continued, "For every creature of God... [and we'll explain this thoroughly when we come to it] ... (which was created to be eaten) is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified [set apart] by the Word of God [as revealed in the Scriptures] and prayer" (v 4).

Now, we'll come back and do a more in-depth study of 1-Timothy 4 in just little bit. First of all, let's go to Leviticus 11 and let's read what God has said concerning the things to eat. And as we're turning there, let's understand something: God does not forbid anything that is good for us—you need to understand that. Most people have the idea that God is forbidding it because it's good. You know, like the old saying, 'This tastes so good it ought to be sin.' Well, that's a carnal attitude; that's a carnal-minded way of looking at things. God wants you to be in health. God wants you to be as healthy as possible.

Now, let's just say this: Even though you eat correct all your life, the human body has enough weaknesses and problems that there are going to be difficulties with health and with growing old. And of course, growing old is not the problem, it's the rusting out that goes with it. And that catches up with everyone sooner or later. When you're young and strong and tough, you don't even think about it.

Leviticus 11—clean and unclean meats—and I want you to understand that, for example: We've gone through the Holy Days and holidays—haven't we? But isn't it interesting that on the holidays of the world—those religious days that they have—they specialize in featuring unclean meats, such as ham for Easter.

Leviticus 11:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "These *are* the animals which you shall eat among all the animals that are in the earth. Whatever divides the hoof and is cloven-footed, *chewing* the cud, among the animals, that you shall eat. Only, you shall not eat these among those that *chew* the cud, or of those that divide the

hoof: the camel, for he *chews* the cud but does not divide the hoof... [He has a hoof that flanges out when it's put down on the sand, to give him stability. And so, in between the toes it's filled with a fat and fiber so that he has a firm base. Now, elephants have feet just like that, too. They have feet when they put them down they spread out because they have to carry all the weight of the elephant—so the camel.] ...he is unclean unto you" (vs 1-4).

"And the rock badger, because it *chews* the cud... [a coney's like a carpy-bear. And down in South America, they are the swamp rats, only they have short tails—they get up to be 100 lbs; a 120 lbs.; and the pythons love them, if you watch Discovery Channel.] ...but does not divide the hoof, it *is* unclean to you. And the hare [rabbit] because it *chews* the cud but does not divide *the* hoof, it *is* unclean to you" (vs 5-6). And also rabbits they know are very susceptible to fevers and parasites, and if you eat rabbit and they are in that time of year you can very well come down with some of those things. I know a person who died from eating rabbit.

Verse 7: "And the swine, though it divides the hoof and is cloven-footed, yet it does not *chew* the cud; it *is* unclean to you.... [Now, these are very clear instructions—aren't they? *Yes!*] ...You shall not eat of their flesh, and you shall not touch their dead body. They *are* unclean to you" (vs 7-8).

And what happens when you eat those? I know of a case up in Idaho. These men went out on a bear hunt, the killed a bear and they said, boy, we're going to have bear-paw—because that's a great Chinese delight, bear-paw—and we're going to have some bear meat. Well, three of the four died from trichinosis. Now the same way with pork. You cannot ever kill, with cooking, the trichinosis or other parasites in pork. And pigs feet have got to be the most dirty, unclean thing to possibly eat, because God created the pigs with a puss-tube coming down on the inside of their front legs to drain the toxins out of their bodies. Pigs are designed to eat garbage. And when you eat pigs, you are eating garbage. And you have to be very careful of gelatin. By the way, they do have kosher gelatin available. You can find it online. So just go online and you can order whatever you want, if you want it. But anyway, the pig is really something that people just delight in. And they are getting so they are eating pork more and more rare. And so, they will have different sicknesses and diseases.

Now please understand that [the] trichinosis parasite can imitate over a hundred different diseases. It will cause arthritis; it will cause mental problems; it will lodge into the lungs, into the heart, into the liver—because those parasites are unclean and the food is not fit to eat.

Now, if we use pigs for what God created them for, we wouldn't have any recycle problems at all. We wouldn't have any toxic dump problems at all. Pigs would be able to take care of it.

Question comes up: What about the leather from pigs, being pigskin? Well, after it is cured, the pigskin, as a leather, would be okay. After the leather is cured I'm sure it's okay because there are no living bacteria to be passed on. But even when you cook it, these things can pass on, like the rindskins that a lot of people eat. They eat them like potato ships—and that's just pigskin rinds. Yes, to show that the unclean animals for clothing is okay after it's all processed, we have John the Baptist, who was one of the most righteous men on earth, and the greatest prophet that ever was, as Jesus said, and he wore camel skin. So that shows that it's okay to wear it as articles of clothing. You're not eating it—it's not going in you, it's on the outside.

The reason you don't touch a dead carcass is because when something dies there are germs and bacteria that you could pick up very readily and you could come down with diseases. And I think that's probably—in Africa—the case of Ebola. It's a combination of all the unclean foods that they eat there. You see, some of the documentaries of what they eat. They eat monkeys, they eat chimpanzees, they eat anything that comes along; and that's why there's so much sickness and disease and mental problems among people who eat that way. It's just part of the way that it is. And also, as a remark was made, this also ties into the sanitation/sewer system, too.

Okay, let's go on, let's continue, v 9: "These you shall eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, those you shall eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing that *is* in the waters, they shall be an abomination to you.... [Not only are they unclean, they're an abomination.] ...They shall even be an abomination to you. You shall not eat of their flesh, but you shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatever has no fins nor scales in the waters *shall be* an abomination to you" (vs 9-12). Now, this means that calamari should not be eaten; octopus, shrimp, lobsters, crab, squid, turtles, frogs, lizards—all of those things.

Though people eat them and though they do not get sick immediately; now, sometimes they do. I read of several cases—I watch this on Discovery Channel so you know which channel I watch most of the time anyway—where people went and ate raw oysters. Now, raw oysters is a thing they really do at

carnivals and Mardi Gras and things like that; half-oyster on a shell—isn't that what they call it? And the raw oysters, well, I saw a special on that where several people came down with a flesh-eating bacteria that there is no cure. They had to have their limbs amputated to save their lives. It showed one woman where her arm was eaten out and they could look down and see the bone—that's how bad it was—and it came from raw oysters. So that includes clams and muscles and sea urchins. And you need to be careful of sushi. Even though you have clean fish, because it's raw.

God created all these animals to keep the waters clean. They're not to be eaten. You can get parasites from shrimp, from lobsters, and any of those things. Now also there's a problem with a lot of shipping today, because the ships have to take in water for ballast, and ballast is to put weight to the ship so that when they get out at sea then they won't be tossed over if they get into rough seas. And they're required to let the ballast out a mile outside the shoreline before they come in, but a lot of them haven't done it, and up here in San Francisco we have some sort of crab from China that is just taking over everything up in the San Francisco Bay. So God says not to eat them.

Swordfish does not have fins and scales. It has fins, but not scales. Catfish has skin and fins, not scales. They are unclean.

Now, let's go to v 13: "And you shall have these in abomination among the fowls. They shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, and the black vulture, and the bearded vulture, and the kite, and the falcon, according to its kind; every raven according to its kind; and the ostrich, and the great owl, and the gull, and small hawks, according to its kind, and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the horned owl; and the barn owl, and the pelican, and the owl vulture; and the stork, the heron according to its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. Every flying creature that swarms, going on all four legs, *is* an abomination to you" (vs 13-20). Now, I don't know exactly what that verse means there' this would have to be something like the bat. There are many varieties of bats, so this has to include those, because v 20 comes right after the bat, so it has to be whatever kind or similar to the bat.

Verse 21: "Yet you may eat these of any flying, swarming thing that goes on *all* four, those which have jointed legs above their feet, with which to leap upon the earth.... [so that excludes kangaroo because it has two feet, two hands and it doesn't go on all four, although it leaps.] ...You may eat these of them... [now here's some insects you can eat]: ...the locust after its kind, and the bald locust after its kind, and the long horned locust after its kind...

[that would be much like a cricket] ...and the short horned grasshopper after its kind" (vs 21-22). Now, I've never eaten any of those. That is a Middle East specialty.

Verse 23: "But every *other* flying, swarming thing which *has* four feet shall be an abomination to you. And you shall be unclean for these. Whoever touches their dead body shall be unclean until sunset.... [Now that was for two reasons: 1) ceremonially unclean; 2) that if you touch some of these animals—now for example: they know that if you play around with lizards as pets that you can get salmonella. So that means that you are in a contagious state until you wash and then he says here]: ...until sunset. And whoever carries the carcass of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the sunset. Even every living thing which divides the hoof, and is not cloven-footed, nor *chews* the cud, they *are* unclean to you. Everyone that touches them shall be unclean" (vs 23-26). So that also shows then it's going to come up: what about horses? You going to ride horses. Well, you're need to wash yourself. What about petting a dog? Well, a lot of people come down with diseases and parasites from their famous pet dogs. So you have to be careful there, too.

Whenever I see people let dogs lick them on the mouth, I think, utt-oh, you're risking getting parasites, because dogs have parasites. Cats have parasites. So, though those are unclean animals, and we have them for pets, you need to realize that they are unclean and you need to be careful with them. That doesn't mean you can't pet them. That doesn't mean you can't play with them or anything like that. It just means that before you go eat, before you go do anything and put your hands in your mouth, it would be best to wash. That's part of just being clean.

Verse 27: "And whatever goes on its paws, among all the living things that go on *all* four, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches their dead body shall be unclean until the sunset." And of course, lots of times these animals have what? Like rats, they have fleas, and the fleas can carry bubonic plague. So the reason that you need to be careful in handling the carcasses—or the dead bodies—of these animals is because they carry disease.

"And he that carries their dead bodies shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the sunset. They *are* unclean to you. These also *shall be* unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the earth: the weasel, and the mouse, and the great lizard after its kind; and the gecko, and the monitor, and the lizard, and the sand lizard, and chameleon.... [Now, escargot is a famous French dish—but they're eating snails. Now I liken oysters and snails to hard

snot. And anybody who eats those are just eating hard snot—that's all. Watch the trail of the snail, it's got snot stringing behind it—doesn't it? *Yes!* And yet, the French cook them and eat them and slurp all the juice out of the shell; I guess other people do, too. God says you shall not eat them.] ...These *are* unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the sunset. And anything that shall fall on *any* of them when they are dead *shall be* unclean.... [What if you opened a cupboard and there's a dead mouse up there and it falls down and it lands in your sugar bowl? Well, you better throw out the sugar, you better throw out the mouse.] ...*whether* any vessel of wood, or clothing, or skin, or sack; whatever vessel in which work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean to the sunset. So it shall be cleaned. And every earthen vessel in which *any* of them falls, whatever *is* in it shall be unclean. And you shall break it..." (vs 28-33).

Those you can't clean so you break them. In other words, if it's made out of, if you have a pot made out of clay and a mouse dies in it, or a rat dies in it, or a snake dies in it, well then you just throw it away. You break it and throw it away. The reason he wants you to break it is so no one else will come along and get it and get sick. So all of these things are very important for us to understand.

"Of all food which may be eaten, *that* on which such water comes shall be unclean.... [that is if it falls on it, it shall be unclean. You wash it.] ...And all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean" (vs 34). And we know that now—don't we?—with water; we sanitize the water, we don't let the germs in it. And this is God's way of telling them, at that time, this is how you keep from getting sick and getting the germs which cause sickness.

Now, we've had salmonella that has come through juice, through meat; e-coli; chloroform; listeria. Now, when they process vegetables they wash them and check them for these things and they even test them, and if they have a high bacteria count they do not ship them out. So even the modern food-processing factories today are following the laws which make for clean things. That's why they have the inspectors go in, like in the chicken-processing plants and in the beef-processing plants and so forth, so they can see how things are being done, and make sure that it's clean, that there's no bacteria, that there is no blood. And of course the drinking of blood is also unclean and an abomination.

That's why in these processing plants, whether they're vegetable or meat, they have to

clean them, they have to sanitize them, they have inspectors there, they have men there counting the bacteria count to make sure nothing comes along to contaminate the food. So, though it is not readily seen today, because people do not have to process their own food, it is a living reality, even in a modern world that they have follow very stringent cleanliness rules to give us a good, clean food supply; so that none of these thing will come upon us from and unclean basis. So that's an important thing to understand.

Just a couple comments were made, which are very important: Today, a lot of people have snakes as pets and lizards as pets in their houses, and you can get salmonella very easy from that. And people have even died, especially children, because they pet the lizard and then put their hands in their mouth. That's why God said you shall not touch them, and you're unclean till even and you have to wash. That's why. It's a very plain, simple rule.

In many places in the world they have cockroaches like there's no tomorrow. Cockroaches are very unclean; they carry lots of disease; although I have heard, I do not know, but I have heard that there is a special, electronic sound wavelength that will drive cockroaches out of houses. Now, if that's so, and you have a problem with them, by all means check in to see how you can get rid of them. But, cockroaches will come anyplace. You can be clean as you can on the surface, but they'll come to other places behind the surface and they will live there, they will eat coverings off electric wiring, they will. I tell you, cockroaches are a big problem. So if that's a problem for you, it is a health problem. Yes, they like moisture. Speaking of cockroaches, again, it's perfectly all right to put out your cockroach hotel, poison trap and get rid of them. But then you have to be careful that you don't contaminate your house with poisons.

There is, put out by Victor, and it's in a yellow spray can, that is a non-poisonous ant and roach spray that is made out of mint, mineral oil and water—which is non toxic; it works! Brand name is Victor. Comes in a tall yellow can. Comment was made—we have a food processing expert here in our midst, and he said that years ago people used to process and can their own food and they understood what they needed to do to keep from getting botulism and salmonella. Today, people don't understand that at all and a lot of sickness and disease comes through because people are uneducated and they don't have the need to do it. But you need to understand that you get a lot of these foods that you take and you put in, pop in, your microwave, you're creating a lot of non-food food for you; because microwaves—while they're

good for heating coffee—might not necessarily be good for the food that you're putting in there to eat. So that's another thing, since we're talking about food and eating, we might as well cover the whole gamut here.

Now let's go on, let's come to Mark, the seventh chapter, because this is where people turn to show that Jesus declared all meats clean. Now, we're going to see some very important things here in Mark 7, and then we'll go the Acts, the tenth chapter. Now here's a good case of following the rules of Bible study—if you don't have the booklet *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study* by all means request it—where you read the verses before and the verses after.

Mark 7:19—let's begin here because this is the conclusion of the matter where the *NIV* and the *New American Standard Bible* say that Jesus declared all meats clean. Mark 7:19 “For it does not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food.” So they completely mistranslate that and say, ‘Thus Jesus declared all meats clean.’ Now that is a political, lying translation, because that is not what it means. ‘Draught’ means *the sewer*. Or as they have it in Korea, *the honey-bucket*. Or, before the advent of flush toilets, that was the pot under the bed. And by the way, a lot of people got sick because bacteria float in the air because of that kind of thing, too.

Now, question: Is He talking about clean and unclean foods? Or clean and unclean meats? Now please understand, that the only ones that ate unclean meat in the area of Palestine during the days of Jesus were the Romans. That's why you find this herd of swine, which the demons went into, because those were swine being raised to be sold to the Romans. In Jerusalem, in the area where the Roman soldiers were at Fort Antonio, they had their eating of their pork and everything in there. Just down from there was the temple. Of course, the priests and the scribes and the Pharisees abhorred the Romans and their practices of eating, too. And they hated them because they were their conquerors and their masters.

When we come to Mark, the seventh chapter, we have something entirely different. Let's read Mark 7:1 and let's go through the whole thing. “Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him.” Question: Did the scribes or Pharisees eat unclean food? *No!* No they didn't. They were very punctilious about eating clean foods.

Verse 2: “When that they saw His disciples eat bread with defiles—that is to say, unwashed hands—they found fault.” So the real question here

is: To wash or not wash hands? Not to eat clean or unclean foods. Because what they were eating—and remember, who was one of the disciples of Jesus? *Peter*. Now we will see later in Acts, the tenth chapter, Peter said, ‘I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’ So you cannot say that the disciples were eating unclean foods. They were eating with unwashed hands.

Now here's the reason and the practice, the tradition of the Jews—v 3: “For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly.... [and that means *quite diligently*] ...Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables” (vs 3-4). So they carried their washing and cleanings to an extreme! And that was the problem. And every meal that they had they had a ritual hand-washing. Well, the disciples didn't.

Let's put it in today's vernacular. How many of you carry a lunch with you to work. You have sandwiches and other food. And when it comes time for you to eat, if you're out working—outside especially—you don't have a chance to go wash your hands. You sit down, you open up your sandwiches. You probably hold it with a wax paper or the plastic that is on it so you won't get whatever's on your hands into it—and you eat it. You didn't wash your hands—did you? Well, this is exactly what is being talked about here.

Verse 5: “For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, ‘Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’” Now, let's understand something: Do you not suppose there would be a great furor here if they saw the disciples eating pork and shrimp and lobsters? They would have said, instead of saying, ‘Why don't your disciples walk according to the traditions of the elders, that eat bread with unwashed hands’; they would say, ‘Look! They're eating swine! They're eating shrimp! They're eating the abomination!’ Does it say that? *No!*

Verse 6: “And He answered *and* said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men”’” (vs 6-7). Now, let's understand something: *To eat unclean meat is a doctrine of men*. And if you say that comes from God, and you supposedly worship God; or if you go to your church on Sunday and come

home and have a ham meal; or you have bacon and ham before you go to church on Sunday; you are following the commandments of men and you are going against the teachings of God? Or whatever other occasion may be.

“For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.’.... [As a matter of fact, they had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of laws of washing and cleaning. Absolutely unreal.] ...Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition’” (vs 8-9). And that’s the whole lesson. Any tradition of any religion or any church that goes against the teachings that are in the Bible, you are rejecting the commandment of God to keep your tradition. And your tradition before God is as worthless as declared here in Mark 7.

Now, we need to understand something concerning the tradition. There is a book put out by the Hebrew Publishing Company called *The Code of Jewish Law*. Now if you’ve never heard of it, you’ve never read it, then you do not understand the problems of tradition that the Jews had in substituting for the commandments of God. I think it’s in Rockaway, New York—The Hebrew Pub. Co.—but if not, you can by it at any Jewish bookstore. Just called *The Code of Jewish Law*. When you get it then you will understand what Jesus was talking about. They have thousands and thousands of laws in there. And they reject the commandments of God, that they may keep their own tradition.

Verse 10: “But you say, ‘If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, “Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is* corban” (that is, *set aside as a gift to God*)... [and that means *dedicated to the temple*] ...he is not obligated to help his parents.’ And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother.... [So you do not allow him, or you suffer him no more to do anything for his father and his mother.] ...nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition which you have passed down...” (vs 10-13). And that’s precisely what they do with this translation in v 19. The very chapter that condemns what they are doing, they do. And you will find that this is true. The very verses that they go to, to prove what they have to say, actually teaches just the opposite, when you understand it thoroughly. Now we’ll see that when we come to 1-Tim. 4.

Now continuing, v 14: “And after calling all the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, ‘Hear Me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing that enters

into a man from outside which is able to defile him; but the things that come out from *within* him, those are the things which defile a man... [that is in the case of unwashed hands] ...If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.’ Now when He went into a house away from the multitude, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. And He said to them, ‘Are you likewise without understanding? Don’t you perceive that anything that enters into a man from outside is not able to defile him? For it does not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food?” (vs 14-19). In other words, the process of elimination is what He’s talking about. Or today you would translate that: goes out into the sewer—purging all foods.

Now, if you eat a carrot and there’s a little piece of dirt on it, is it going to go through your system and not hurt you? *Yes, it’ll go through and purge it out.* Obviously if you eat with hands that are contaminated with bacteria and you eat, certainly you can get sick, and that’ll certainly defile the body that way. But in this case, there is no such thing as eating of unclean meats here. They were only eating clean things. The only problem was, they did not wash their hands. That was the only problem. And it’s absolutely a lying, incorrect translation to say, ‘Thus He declared all meats to be clean.’

Now, v 20—here’s the things that defile; He’s talking about the *spiritual* things: “And He said, ‘That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man’” (vs 20-23). ***So He went from the physical to give a spiritual lesson.***

So the Pharisees, what did they do? They washed the outside and made it all clean—didn’t they? *Yes, they did!* But what came out of their mouths? Verse 21, 22, 23—that came out of their mouths.

Now, let’s come to Acts 10—this is another one. They stand up in the pulpits on Sunday morning and declare with great pomp and ceremony, that now you can eat unclean foods. Not so! Let’s understand what’s going on here in Acts 10. Now, first of all, you need to understand something concerning Jewish law. Again, we’ll come to the conclusion and go back and read the context.

Acts 10:28: “And he said to them... [Peter talking to Cornelius, who was an Italian—an uncircumcised Italian] ‘You know that it is unlawful

for a man who is a Jew... [that is one who observes Judaism] ...to associate with or come near to anyone of another race...." They were forbidden to go in their houses. They were forbidden to keep company with them. They could not shake hands with them. They could not eat with them. Because they considered the uncircumcised Gentile as unclean, and view all other races in the world as gonium or animals or cattle. And as a matter of fact, the most prejudicial people in the world are those who practice Orthodox Judaism. They are prejudicial toward all other people and hateful toward them, look down upon them, will not keep company with them, will not associate with them, and hold them in contempt and will use them and will rob and cheat and steal from them—because, after all, they are only animals and, therefore, you are not sinning. That is another tradition of the Jews.

Now, he said, 'You should not call any man common or unclean.' What is a 'common man' according to Judaism? *A common man is a Gentile who has been circumcised and allowed to come into the synagogue.* He's still at a lower status. He's not unclean. But he's common. Now they also had the same thing with food.

Now they also had this re-classification of even clean food, where it would be common or unclean—and that is if you had a Gentile working in your house and you supervised them preparing your food and making the bread, and a Jew supervised them, then the bread would be common; they could eat it any day of the week, but not on the Sabbath. If a Jew was not supervising them, it would be unclean. Now there's no such thing as unclean bread. Bread is bread. But that's how they would classify it, ritualistically—which is another one of their traditions which rejects the commandments of God. Now, also if you want to know more about how the Jews viewed their proselytes and the Gentiles, write in for our series on the *Circumcision Wars*; because there's very good information in there which shows about common or unclean as it applies to people.

So Cornelius was an unclean, uncircumcised Gentile, according to Judaism. Now God had to reveal to Peter, by this thing, exactly what God was going to do with the people. I reference you to Rom. 4, because we have something very similar here—don't we? About Abraham—Abraham received the promise and the blessing when he was uncircumcised. And by Judaism, Abraham and his uncircumcision would have been considered unclean. But because he believed God, righteousness was imputed to him. So we have a very similar thing happening here with Cornelius now, who was a Gentile.

Acts 10:1: "Now *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion of a band that is called *the Italian band*, a devout man who also feared God with all his house, both in giving many alms to the people and *in* beseeching God continually *in prayer*. He clearly saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, 'Cornelius'" (vs 1-3). This is profound! Because the Jews thought themselves as the only ones in the world that God would deal with. This is a profound chapter! And a profound blessing! And what we see is that God is dealing with this man, separate from a Rabbi, separate from a synagogue, separate from Christ and the apostles until Peter is sent. So this is really quite a lesson here!

And this proves, as Peter said, 'God is no respecter of persons.' Verse 4: "But as he fixed his eyes on him, he became afraid *and* said, 'What is it, Lord?' And he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter. He is lodging with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by *the* sea. He shall tell you what you must do.'.... [Now, this means *obligated to do*.] ...And when the angel who had spoken to him departed, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who continually waited on him; and after relating everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. And on the next day, about the sixth hour, as these were journeying and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they were preparing *the meal*, a trance fell upon him; and he saw the heaven opened; and a certain vessel descended upon him, like a great sheet, bound by *the* four corners and let down upon the earth; in which were all the four-footed beasts of the earth, including the wild beasts, and the creeping things and the birds of heaven" (vs 4-12).

Now the reason that this done is because Judaism viewed the different nations as animals. And, as a matter of fact, even God viewed that, as we find prophetically back in the book of Daniel.

"Then a voice came to him, *saying*, 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'In no way, Lord; for I have never eaten anything *that is* common or unclean.'.... [he didn't eat. If it was to show it's okay to eat, then he would have been given permission to eat, symbolically, in this vision. But he didn't.] ...And a voice *came* again the second time to him, *saying*, 'What God has cleansed, you are not to call common'" (vs 13-15). Now, notice, it doesn't say *unclean*, just common.

"Now this took place three times, and the

vessel was taken up again into heaven.... [Now, why was it done three times? *Because three men were sent by Cornelius.*] ...And as Peter was questioning within himself what the vision that he saw might mean.... [And of course, he would. Is God throwing out all these laws?] ...the men who were sent from Cornelius, having inquired for the house of Simon, immediately stood at the porch; and they called out, asking if Simon who *was* surnamed Peter was lodging there. Then, as Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are seeking you.... [There it is. Came down three times and there are three men.] ...Now arise *and* go down, and go forth with them, doubting nothing, because I have sent them.' And Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius *and* said, 'Look, I am the one you are seeking. For what purpose have you come?'" (vs 16-21). So they told him the cause.

Verse 22: "And they said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and one who fears God, and who has a good report by the whole nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a Holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house, and to listen to words from you.' Then he called them in to lodge *there*. And on the next day Peter went with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the next day, they came to Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them *and* had called together his kinsmen and *his* intimate friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshipping *him*" (vs 22-25).

So Peter said, 'Thank you, I'm glad that you recognize that I am the first pope. Kiss my ring.' I say that facetiously and cynically to prove a point. Peter didn't say that—did he? Nor was he ever the first pope.

"But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Stand up, for I myself am also a man.' And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them, 'You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race. But God has shown me *that* no man should be called common or unclean'" (vs 26-28). Having nothing to do with eating unclean meats, whatsoever.

The lesson that Peter is being taught here, is this: Is that God is going to deal with anybody, wherever He's going to deal with them, whether they're in the group or in the nation or not. When God decides He's going to do it, He's going to do it! And no one is going to turn God back! Therefore, you probably would find today, if we knew that there were literally millions of people keeping the Sabbath around the world, of course, this is not

reported on CNN, so people never know, you see. And probably millions of people—who understand a good deal about the Bible, trying to learn from the Bible, trying to live by God's way—just like Cornelius was here. So we need to understand that. There's no such thing as one exclusive, corporate organization. There is one Church of God and that consists of all who have the Spirit of God, regardless of what physical organization they may fellowship with.

Now let's continue on, v 28: "...*that* no man should be called common or unclean. For this reason, I also came without objection... [now, if it would have been a man who brought the message, he probably would have gain-said. But here he didn't, because it was an angel from God.] ...when I was sent for. I ask therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?' And Cornelius said, 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and *at* the ninth hour I was praying in my house; and suddenly a man stood before me in bright apparel'" (vs 28-30). Now, let's understand this is another very important thing: 'in his house.' Where was his house?

Hold your place here and come to John 4—here we have a fulfillment of John, the fourth chapter. Now this is the account of Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well outside of Samaria. John 4:19: "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem'" (vs 19-20). Now, where was Cornelius worshipping? *In his own house!* Where was his house? *Caesarea!* Very important point. Because the Jews said, 'Oh, the only place to really worship is come to Jerusalem.' Well, now here is God dealing with a man, unilaterally, separate from the apostles. He has to bring the apostles over there—doesn't He? Not in Jerusalem, but in Caesarea. Not a Jew, but an Italian.

Now let's finish a few more verses here, v 21: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.... [Referring that it would come from Jesus, Who came from Judea—obviously.] ...But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.... [Is that not what Cornelius was doing? *Yes, he was!* And this was before he was baptized.] ...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth'" (vs 21-24). So here we have the whole operation taking place.

Let's come back to Acts, the tenth chapter, now. This is exactly what Cornelius was doing. Here's the very fulfillment of John 4—and it's continually fulfilled wherever people try to serve and worship God.

Acts 10:30, again: "And Cornelius said, 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and *at* the ninth hour I was praying in my house; and suddenly a man stood before me in bright apparel, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Now then, send to Joppa and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter; he is lodging by *the* sea in *the* house of Simon, a tanner. When he comes, he will speak to you.' Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present before God... [notice how he understood God. God was present. He was telling Peter.] ...to hear all things that have been commanded you by God'" (vs 30-33).

Here is the key verse, v 34: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, '**Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him** [Now, righteousness is what? *Commandment-keeping!*] ...The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed'" (vs 34-37). So he knew all about Christ. This thing, as Paul said later on, he said to Agrippa, 'This was not done in a corner. This was well known.'

Verse 38: "'Concerning Jesus, Who was from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the* things that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging *Him* on a tree. *But* God raised Him up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen before by God, to *those of us* who did eat and drink with Him after He had risen from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God to be Judge of *the* living and *the* dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins through His name'" (vs 38-43).

Now then, God had to perform a miracle so that Peter would know. Now remember, this is very

important that Peter was the one who went there; because he was the apostle, one of the apostles, to the circumcision. So this means this was a double witness: to take the apostle of the circumcision and bring him down to an uncircumcised man and then see what happens here for the rest of it—this is important! So that Peter and the rest of the Jews would know that you cannot put other people of other nations into a lesser category because they don't happen to be Jews. Very important!

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message.... [So, all of this is what? *The hand of God to show how He's going to work with all people.*] ...And the believers from the circumcision were astonished.... [because they still had this Jewish way of thinking—Judaism—that 'we are the chosen people,' and all of these others are gonium. So God had to do this in such a way that He meant business; to show that, though they had been called of God to do certain things, they are not above anybody else. And always remember this: ***Those who are in covenant with God, when they sin, get punished first and quicker;*** because they know better!] ...believers from the circumcision were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles..." (vs 44-45).

Remember, a Centurion who was a Roman and Italian, and they were what? *The masters of the Jews!* The Jews were enslaved to the Roman Empire—right? And God gave the Holy Spirit on those Gentiles who were the oppressors of the Jews. Now, you think on that! That's quite an astonishing thing to take place! Because that "...that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out; for they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God" (vs 45-46).

Now, when did that happen? *Acts 2*—remember? They spoke with other languages. Now, what languages do you suppose that they spoke there? Since they all spoke Greek, they probably spoke Hebrew, Aramaic—now, I don't know if there was another one of another nation there, but they didn't know Hebrew or Aramaic. Now, why would they do this? *To show those Jews that God was dealing with them*, to give the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to all of those on the day of Pentecost in 30^{A.D.}

"...they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God.... [Now this means, obviously, intelligent language, because how can they understand it's *magnifying God* unless it's a language that they understood.] ...Then Peter responded by saying, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?' And he commanded

them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days” (vs 46-48). So he stayed.

Now then, we have a political uproar about ready to happen here. That means they were given the Holy Spirit before they were baptized, because God wanted to show that He was going to give the Holy Spirit—and it was just before they were baptized. So it’s not a long duration. They received the Holy Spirit, went out and were immediately baptized. Because Peter said, ‘How can they forbid to be baptized.’ But God had to do it before. Now, this is an exception. The exception is never to be made into a rule. So we find no other case such as this—except when we come to Acts 19 with the twelve who were baptized under the baptism of John and hadn’t received the Holy Spirit. But then they were baptized and had hands laid on them. So this is a, what the Greek is, a ‘hapax legomenon’—a one time occurrence. Nowhere does it show it occurred that way again. So, the truth is, God was showing Peter that He was going to work it out His way—and Peter better follow God!

This created a political storm back in Jerusalem! Because remember, a lot of those who believed in Christ, in Jerusalem, still followed a lot of Judaism. Only they just added Christ to Judaism.

Acts 11:1: “Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God; and when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision disputed with him... [So they were still clinging to the old Judaism ways] ...saying, ‘You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them” (vs 1-3). Now, I just call your attention to Galatians 2, because later Peter had a ‘backslide’ and he separated and didn’t eat with the Gentiles. So, he had hypocritical egg all over his face, because he not only ate with them, he went and stayed with them. Now, please understand, that one of the problems in the New Testament Church was: at Jerusalem there was the ‘circumcision party.’

Verse 4: “But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them.... [and then he gave the whole thing here] (v 15): ...‘And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as *it* also came upon us in *the* beginning. Then I remembered the Word of *the* Lord, how He had said, “John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit.” Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to dissent*? Do I have the power to forbid God?” And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed

granted repentance unto life” (vs 4, 15-18).

So it’s not talking about to eat clean or unclean meats at all. It’s talking about how God deals with people. And it’s talking about a problem of Judaism and their traditions, just like it was in Mark 7. So if you do not understand Judaism, and if you do not understand the problems of Judaism and coming out of that in relationship to the setting and the times of the apostles, then you have no understanding of the Scriptures at all, and you are just relying on interpretations and teachings of men, which justify eating unclean foods, because that’s what they want to do. That is their goal in the first place.

Now let’s come to 1-Timothy, the fourth chapter, and let’s see how they twist and turn the Scriptures here, and make them say the exact opposite of what it really says. And again, we’re going to read the problem verses first, then we’ll go back and analyze it and show what it really says.

1-Timothy 4:4: “For every creature of God *designated for human consumption* is good, and nothing to be refused, *if* it is received with thanksgiving.” So, therefore, Lord, bless these ham-hocks, bless this hog rib-eye, pork-chops, bless this lobster, calamari, shrimp, octopus.’ It does say ‘every creature of God is good, nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving’—right? So therefore, all you have to do is pray and the unclean becomes clean—right?

Let’s go back to v 1 and let’s read it, and let’s understand something. Now, doesn’t that interpretation of v 4 go contrary to what we read in Lev. 11?—which, by the way, is also in Deut. 14. *Yes!* So let’s read the context.

1-Timothy 4:1: “Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.... [that is, taking them away from the Truth] ...speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*; forbidding to marry... [and that’s a problem with all of celibate churches, whether they be Catholic or whether they be Buddhist, or whether they be Orthodox—Orthodox are allowed to marry, that’s right. And there is now, on trial in Boston, a priest who has 130 counts of pedophile against him, and he practiced for decades! The Bible says ‘to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband.’ That’s the Bible solution. Not forbidding to marry.] ...*and commanding* to abstain from meats...” (vs 1-3).

In other words, vegetarianism—and Ellen G. White had it wrong. She said we should become vegetarians because all the meat in the end-time is

going to become polluted. Well, a good deal of it is. But she missed the other part of the vision, which is what? That men will also genetically engineer all the vegetables that the vegetarians are going to eat. So the likely nutritional value is going to be minimal for those folks.

“...and commanding to abstain from meats **which God created** to be received with thanksgiving...” (v 3). Did God create ALL animals and their meat to be received with thanksgiving? *No!*

Now hold your place here, we’ll come back, because we’re going to talk about vegetarianism; and let’s come to Genesis, the first chapter. I had a man tell me, he says, ‘Well, if I just read Genesis, the first chapter, we all ought to be vegetarians.’ And I said to him, ‘Well, seems to me there’s more of the Bible than that.’ Now, Genesis 1:29: “And God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree upon which *is the* fruit of a tree bearing seed—to you they shall be for food. And to every animal of the earth and to every fowl of heaven and to all the living creatures that crawl upon the earth, every green plant *is given* for food.’.... [So, therefore, we should all be vegetarians.] ...And to every animal of the earth and to every fowl of heaven and to all the living creatures that crawl upon the earth, every green plant *is given* for food.’ And it was so” (vs 29-30).

Now then, we have a distinct problem. Come to Genesis 4:4: “And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock *and* of the fat of it...” If you have a system of offerings, which you can read about the same system that God gave to Israel, you had to use clean animals—right? And when they brought the firstlings of the flock, such as this, it was probably for what we would call today a festival occasion, and Abel would participate in eating of the sacrifice. Now some will say that’s a leap, Fred, you’re going too far.

Come over here to Genesis, the sixth chapter, and we’ll see the instruction that God gave concerning the bringing of the animals into the Ark. Genesis 6:18, when God says He’s going to destroy the earth with the water. “‘But I will establish My covenant with you. And you shall come into the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And you shall bring into the ark two of every *kind*, of every living thing of all flesh, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.... [Sorry about the gay agenda. They didn’t have it there.] ...Two of every kind shall come to you to keep *them* alive—of fowls after their kind, and of animals after their kind, of every crawling thing of the earth after its kind... [He didn’t have to round them up, God sent them.]

...And take for yourself all that is eaten *as* food, and you shall gather *it* for yourself; and it shall be for food, for you and for them.’ Noah did so, according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (vs 18-22).

Now come down here to Genesis 7:1: “And the LORD said to Noah, ‘You and all your house shall come into the ark; for you, I have seen righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you every clean animal by sevens, the male and female. And take two of the animals that *are* not clean, the male and female. Also take of the fowls of the air by sevens, the male and the female, to keep *their* kind alive upon the face of all the earth; for in seven more days, I will cause it to rain upon the earth...’” and so forth (vs 1-4). So Noah did, they all went in, they were all saved.

Now, come to Genesis 8:20—after Noah got out of the Ark, he built an altar: “And Noah built an altar to the LORD, and he took of every clean animal, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”

So there we have the law of clean and unclean concerning animals from creation. When? Now, let’s come back here to 1-Timothy, the fourth chapter, again. When was the designation of clean and unclean made? Only to Israel (Lev. 11)? Or was the designation made at creation? They are created clean or unclean, because God created them that way. Now let’s read it again here:

1-Timothy 4:3: “Forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving... [so you pray and ask God’s blessing on it] ...by the faithful, even *by* those who know the Truth.”

- What is Truth? John 17:17—Jesus said, “Your Word is Truth.”
- Is Leviticus 11 part of God’s Word?
- Is Deuteronomy 14 part of God’s Word?
- Does He say which ones to eat and which ones not to eat?
- *Yes!*

Now another thing that’s important here in v 3 is: We have forbidding to marry and vegetarianism—no meat. Not even of those God created to be received with thanksgiving. Which also tells us then, there are certain ones that God did not create to be received with thanksgiving—correct? And He tells us that. He says they’re unclean or an abomination, either one. So you have to believe and know the Truth.

Now a lot of people who eat all these unclean foods, they claim to believe the Bible, but they don’t. And they don’t know the Truth because

they have a religion. And their religion is a religion, which allows them to do whatever they want and claim the name of God. But that's not from God.

Now here's the tricky verse, v 4: "For every creature of God *designated for human consumption* is good, and nothing to be refused, *if* it is received with thanksgiving.... [Which creature? *Every creature that God created to be received with thanksgiving.* Not any creature that God created.] ...because it [the creature] is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." Now notice, it has to be first of all sanctified by the Word of God. That means set apart. Didn't we start out and read Lev. 11: 'These are the beast of the earth which you shall eat.' Then He lists all of them. They're sanctified by the Word of God. 'These are the beasts of the earth you shall not eat'—they are not sanctified by the Word of God.

So the key important thing here is this: ***It must first be sanctified by the Word of God, before you offer prayer.*** God is not going to bless something that He has not sanctified. You can pray all day long over this big ole swine, or this little ole piglet, or the rabbit, or the snake, or the lizard, or the calamari, or all of the snot-products of the deep; or the clams or the lobsters or all of that sort of thing. It's not sanctified by the Word of God. It's distinctly unsanctified—isn't it? It is rejected!

Now, hold your place and let's go back to Lev. 11 for just a minute again. Let's review that, because this becomes very instructive. You can't separate Lev. 11 from 1-Tim. 4.

Leviticus 11:2: "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These *are* the animals which you shall eat among all the animals that are in the earth. Whatever divides the hoof and is cloven-footed, *chewing* the cud, among the animals, that you shall eat'" (vs 2-3). Then He says you're NOT to eat the camel, the coney, the hair or the swine. You're not to eat their flesh. So these are definitely unclean and unsanctified.

Verse 9: "These you shall eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, those you shall eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing that *is* in the waters, they shall be an abomination to you" (vs 9-11).

Then of the fowl, He talks about the ones that are abominations; you're not to eat those—and you can go through read all the rest of it there. So you can review it. So we have very clearly...

Let's come back to 1-Timothy, the fourth chapter, please. We have here very clearly that ***it***

must, first of all, be sanctified by the Word of God. And the only two places that you have the Word of God sanctifying it is Lev. 11 and Deut. 14. We also have the account of Noah—of the clean and unclean beasts—showing that it was before the Flood. So what this is actually doing, this is upholding Lev. 11 and Deut. 14—because of the phrase 'every creature of God' has to reflect back to the part in v 3, that 'God has created to be received with thanksgiving.' If God did not create it to be received with thanksgiving, then it is not a creature to be eaten.

So the designation of clean and unclean goes all the way back to creation. So this takes care of vegetarianism; this takes care of clean and unclean meats; and so, we find the Apostles Paul absolutely, enviably, upholding the eating of clean meats of the animals that God created to be received with thanksgiving.

So this completes all that we have done on the *Beliefs* booklet.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 11:1-34
- 2) Mark 7:19, 1-23
- 3) Acts 10:28, 1-30
- 4) John 4:19-24
- 5) Acts 10:30-48
- 6) Acts 11: 1-4, 15-18
- 7) 1 Timothy 4:4, 1-3
- 8) Genesis 1:29-30
- 9) Genesis 4:4
- 10) Genesis 6:18-22
- 11) Genesis 7:1-4
- 12) Genesis 8:20
- 13) 1 Timothy 4:3-4
- 14) Leviticus 11:2-3, 9-11

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 4
- Acts 19
- Galatians 2
- Deuteronomy 14

Also referenced:

- Booklet: *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*
- Book: *The Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried & Hyman E. Goldin
- Sermon series: *Circumcision Wars*

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