

The Washing of the Water by the Word II

Fred Coulter—January 22, 2011

Greetings, everyone; welcome to Sabbath services! Let's see something very interesting here in Jeremiah 17. No one would want to be Jeremiah today, because he had to be one man against everybody. They were against him and they plotted to kill him and they plotted to take his life away and threaten him, and they did a lot of things to him. Jeremiah was a priest sent by God to warn Judah and Jerusalem, and also the children of Israel, of the impending destruction of Jerusalem.

Now, today we see some things very similar happening in many places of the world. I'm going to have to bring you an update on the city of Detroit, because I think that will be very astonishing to you to find out what is happening there. But the thing that is almost unreal is that the people didn't believe him. Everybody is used to everything the way that it is, and when people go their way, they're successful for a while. They get along for a while, but every activity of human life tends to sin. Every good thing that is started out ends up somehow in corruption. You can see that

- in religion
- in politics
- in education
- in people's lives

God made us so that we need to be redeemed. Part of the redemption comes

- by going to God
- by following His Word
- by living the way that He wants us to live

Then in the New Testament we find much more concerning *salvation and conversion and overcoming*. So we'll talk about some of those things today.

Jeremiah 17:13: "O LORD, the Hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be ashamed... [Always happens! Anyone who goes against the commandments of God, they pay the penalty or the price for sinning, and *sin is the transgression of the law*.] ...'Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth because they have forsaken the LORD, the Fountain of living waters.'" The *Fountain of living waters* is the source of the Holy Spirit.

We know in Rev. 22 that it shows that out from underneath the throne of God and the Lamb flows a *river crystal clear of living waters*. This shows that for all eternity we will be receiving the Holy Spirit.

Here's what the *living waters* are to do. Every experience in our life, especially the wrong

experiences, leaves an impact in our minds that affects our emotions. It affects us in many, many different ways. Some people go into mental disease because of it. Some of them never recover from the shock of what they went through. I know every time I watch a documentary on the veterans from WWII and Vietnam, and, of course, the Korean War. It's true in every war, when you see somebody next to you die, it makes a lasting impression upon you; you never, *never, never* forget it. And how about all of the survivors of the Holocaust that were rescued at the end of WWII, all that they went through.

The human mind is very strange. It doesn't want to believe that what they hear about evil that is coming or that may happen, they somehow give an exemption for themselves. A father or mother says to their son or daughter taking the car, 'Be careful, drive slowly.' *Yeah, mom!* 'Some people get killed if you're not watching what you're doing.' Then hours later they get a call from the police that your son or daughter has been killed in a car wreck. Somehow the human mind tricks itself. It's called the deceitfulness of the mind into believing that if you do something that is not right, it's not going to affect you. Somehow you'll be able to get around it. Somehow you won't be able to get caught.

Let's come back here to v 9 to show the source of what human nature is. Human nature is a combination of *good and evil*. Human nature also has within it *the law of sin and death*. It's just automatic. Here's the source of all it, v 9: "The heart... [the center of your thoughts and emotions] *...is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" In other words, no human being aside from the Word of God and aside from God can really understand what needs to be done to keep us going in the right direction, and how to overcome the sins and problems that are with us.

Let's examine a little bit more here, v 10: "I the LORD search the heart..." God knows every man, every woman in the world. He *searches the heart*, but He's given us free moral agency. He didn't make us automatons. He didn't make us so that we're just like a machine.

- He's given us minds to think.
- He's given us emotions.
- He's given us the capacity of love
- He's given us the capacity of reproduction

All of these things are very tremendous blessings that God has given. But every one of them can be used in a way that is evil.

“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” (v 10). Everyone’s life is going to be according to how you live it. This is why when we come to God—repent, are converted, receive the Holy Spirit—then our minds need to be converted and changed, and that is a process. That’s not something that just happens and it’s all over. *It’s a process!* There are times when we do better and there are times when we don’t do better.

Let’s see what happens when they forsake God. Notice what happens when people dedicate themselves to evil. Now, the other day they had a big arrest in New York City. They arrested over 100 mob members. Here are people dedicated to crime, dedicated to doing evil. I was thinking, this is very similar to another organization located in Italy, too—isn’t it? The head of the Mafia is called what? *Godfather!* Sound familiar?

Here’s what happened to the children of Judah. Once people give themselves over to evil, look at how God describes it when it reaches its point of just unbelievable proportions, v 1: “The sin of Judah *is* engraved with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond; *it is* carved upon the tablet of their heart and upon the horns of your altars.” Right down into the very depths of your being. These things can be changed through repentance and the Spirit of God.

So let’s see what happens, v 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.’” You trust in a man. That can be yourself, it can be someone else, and God says because of human nature that’s going to resort in a curse.

“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.” Here’s the other side of the coin:

- This shows that there is hope.
- This shows that there is change.
- This shows that God will be with you if you turn to Him

Verse 7: “Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters... [that’s the *Fountain of living waters*] ...it send 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” (vs 7-8).

So notice all the way through, if you read through all of Jer. 17—and you’ll see this throughout the book of Jeremiah—he indicts them for sin, then holds out hope, shows them that they need to turn to God, shows them what’s going to happen if they continue in the way that they are going.

Let’s come back to Acts 2; let’s see the turning point in your life in turning to God. Everyone has to come to this point if they’re seeking God. And if they’re seeking God, they will come to this point. Here among the people that were gathered at the temple on that day of Pentecost, there were those who participated in the mob of crucifying Jesus Christ. And so they had blood on their hands.

Think of this: Is there any sin that could be worse than participating in killing Christ? Let’s think of this a little bit further. Did Jesus die for the sins of all mankind? *Yes!* So what does this mean? *Since ‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’—what does this mean?* This means even though we were never anywhere near, and even in that time period to participate in killing Christ, *we still have done so because of our sins.*

Acts 2:36—this is the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel to the world: “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.” So if He died for the sins of the whole world, that means since ‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,’ all have participated indirectly, but nevertheless, *spiritually directly* in crucifying Christ. So then here is the change and here is the moment. Here is the moment of awareness that we all have to come to. And of course, as we grow in grace and knowledge, the more that we will see the depths of our own human nature and the more that we will be repenting.

Verse 37: “Now after hearing *this*, they were 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 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). That is the missing ingredient that all human beings need to be complete. *We’re never complete unless we have the Holy Spirit of God!* Here, it shows how it comes.

We’re going to see also how then it works, and what is it that God is doing, how is He doing these things, and how do we yield to God and cooperate with God and work with the Spirit of God and let the washing of the water by the Word cleanse our hearts and our minds and our emotions.

Let’s come back where we started last week. Ephesians 5:25: “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..." (vs 25-26). Make it Holy. So the whole process of conversion is coming from the heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked

- to one that loved God
- to one that loves other people
- to one that obeys God
- to one that has Christ as their Head.

"...might sanctify it... [be changed from carnal to spiritual] ...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the Word*" (v 26). It's the whole Church. This applies to everyone. This is how God, with His Spirit, works with us, and works with us through prayer.

Everything that we are and everything that we think and every experience that we have gone through is registered in our minds. Some people say, 'Well, how can I forget?' Well, we'll discuss that, but the thing that causes people problems is this: *When they mentally and emotionally relive those bad experiences* and what they have done. Relive the sins. Or some problem or thought comes to the mind and you can't get rid of it. That's when you go to God in prayer and get on your knees and ask God, 'Please, cleanse my mind with *the washing of the water by the Word.*' That's God's Spirit. God wants to give us *His love, His Truth, written in our hearts and in our minds.* That's all part of the *washing of the water by the Word* to sanctify us and cleanse us.

Now here's what He wants. "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" (v 27). Now that's how we want to stand before God. What happens when you repent? What happens when you go to God and say, 'Oh, God, forgive me my sins.' Sometimes people say, 'Oh, I don't know if God can forgive my sins.'

Let's come to Matthew 12, and let's see something that Jesus said concerning sins and forgiveness. A lot of people worry, 'Have I committed the unpardonable sin?' The answer to that is this: *If you have committed the unpardonable sin you wouldn't worry about it, because you wouldn't care.* Can God forgive your sins? *Yes, if you repent from the heart!*

Matthew 12:31: "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.... [We have a whole section there in the series on Hebrews about the unpardonable sin.] ...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*" (vs 31-32). So, yes, *God can forgive your sins.* Look at what the Apostle Paul was doing. Now there's a good example—correct? He was taking those Christians, arresting them, putting them in chains, even agreeing to the martyring of some of them, such as Stephen as we have in Acts 7, agreeing with it, yet God called him and he repented and those sins were forgiven. *So, yes, our sins can be forgiven!*

Let's come here to Psalm 86, because someone is going to say, 'I don't know how to pray.' The way you pray is get on your knees and go to God and talk to Him. He will hear you. He will answer you. Psa. 86 is a great Psalm so that we can understand something very important in how God deals with us when we repent, and how God looks upon us, and how willing that God is to help us. If you don't think that God can help you, then you're *accusing* God, contrary to His Word, that

1. He doesn't love you
2. He doesn't care for you
3. He won't give you the spirit of repentance

Notice how David prayed, Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You.... [notice the faith, notice the humility; all of this is part of it] ...Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long.... [So if you have some problem that has really got a hold of you, then you need to keep at it in prayer all day long]" (vs 1-3). That doesn't mean you have to be on your knees, but that means that you keep praying to God to help you to overcome it.

Verse 5: "**For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive...**" God is waiting for repentance. He is ready to forgive, and He will cancel out those sins and we will see how He does it. When you go back and you in your mind relive these things, because they're there somewhere in your mind, then you have to go to God and say, 'God, by the washing of the water by the Word, cleanse my mind and help me to forget.'

Now the one thing you remember is the lesson. But don't go back with guilt. A lot of people have guilt. They do something or they think of their children, or they think of their relatives or their husbands or their wives and then they get a 'guilt complex' and they worry and they can't sleep. As I talked to a woman the other day. She just somehow all of a sudden just had a lot of guilt. I was explaining to her about the two sermons that she was going to hear about *The Washing of the Water by the Word.* Don't let guilt control you. Do not let emotions *control* you. That's why we said you have to 'bring every thought into captivity to Christ.'

God is, v 5: “...good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You... [David did, and here’s how he did it]: ...Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble... [or a time of difficulty, or a stressful situation, or a flood of thoughts coming into your mind that you don’t want.] ...In the day of my trouble... [whatever your trouble is] ...I will call upon You, for You will answer me” (vs 5-7). Now that’s a promise.

Sometimes you need something to help build your faith while you’re praying. How do you do that? *You say, ‘Oh, God, You are true, You are Holy, You are the one Who answers prayer. You are the one Who loves me, You’re the one Who care for me, help me to really understand and help me to yield myself to You. Cleanse my mind, cleanse my heart.’*

I remember a man who was converted for 30 years and all of a sudden he started swearing in his mind, and he just couldn’t get it out. It was really just driving him to despair. So I told him, ‘What you need to do is,’ just what I said, ‘go to God. He’s ready to forgive. That’s part of your mind that needs to be cleansed, washed away, re-programmed with the Holy Spirit of God. Re-programmed with the Word of God written in your heart and written in your mind and that will change your thoughts.’ Well, he did that, took him about three weeks total. And he said, ‘Yup, that worked.’ But can you imagine, converted 30 years and then all of a sudden going back in his mind cursing and swearing. You talk about a loop—‘I thought I was converted.’

Verse 10: “For You are great and do wonderful things; You alone are God... [The key is *we are to be learning all our lives*]: ...**Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your Truth...** [walking in the way of the Lord] ...unite my heart to fear Your name” (vs 10-11). You could say: Unite my heart to

- love You
- have faith in You
- believe in You
- hope in You

—especially in times of difficulty.

“I will praise You, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forever, For great is Your mercy toward me... [I guess, David really needed that—didn’t he?] ...and You have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave” (vs 12-13). The ‘wages of sin is death’ and He has delivered us from that death.

Let’s see how this takes place; let’s come to Psalm 103. Here we have some more promises from God. Never forget that. If you get really discouraged and you get down and you’re having trouble and

you’re fighting things in your mind, and troubles are at work, and troubles are at home, and troubles are with other people that you know, you just go someplace, get on your knees, open up the Bible to Psa. 103 and read it and *make it part of you*.

What the Psalms do: *They teach us how to pray*. That’s why sometimes, if you’re going along and you know you need to pray and you think, ‘Well, I don’t know what to pray about.’ There are lots to pray about all the time; there are never any shortages of things to pray about. But what you do is you get the Bible, you open it up, you get on your knees, you go like to Psa. 86 we just covered, you come here to Psa. 103, and let’s see what this Psalm teaches us.

Psalm 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.” Now this ties right in with what we are to do—right? How are we to love God? *With all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and all our strength!* And “...all that is within me...” That’s just another way of saying the same thing.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (v 2)—all of His blessings, because there are many. Now, don’t equate all blessings in the area of physical things, because the greatest blessing is

- repentance
- forgiveness
- the Holy Spirit
- growing in grace and knowledge
- understanding the Word of God

Those are great blessings and benefits—correct? *Yes, indeed!* Even if you had all the gold in the world, *it’s not to be compared to a Bible*. Gold cannot give you eternal life. Gold cannot instruct you in anything. It just sits there and you look at it, and you’re mesmerized by how it shines and sparkles and everything. It can’t do a single thing! So the question then is: What do you do with it? Well, since we all don’t have a big pile of gold, let’s ask the question, what do we do with our lives? *That’s what it is, because our lives are worth more than that gold.*

This ties in right with Matt. 12 that we read earlier, v 3: “Who forgives **all** your iniquities... [ALL, not some, but *all*. That’s why there’s the *washing of the water by the Word* to get rid of all the things that need to be gotten rid of.] ...Who heals all your diseases.”

Here’s something that’s interesting. This shows that there must be forgiveness of sin *before* there is healing. And they have found this. People that hold things in their minds: anger, resentment, bitterness, hatred, and all of these things, are the

ones who end up with some very serious diseases in their lives, because all of those toxic thoughts—that’s what they are—cause our brain to emit toxic hormones into our system. So it’s just like polluting your whole system. Because ‘as a man thinks in his heart, so he is.’ If you’re thinking good thoughts and have God’s Spirit, then you won’t have toxic thoughts. You’ll have *the washing of the water by the Word*. So if we could liken it this way: all sin and wrong thoughts cause uncleanness internally. That’s why it’s said of God that He is a heart knowing God who cleanses the heart.

Verse 4: “Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your desires with good things; your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (vs 4-5). So that’s something!

Just think about it now. You’re on your knees, you’re praying to God, you’re thinking of these things, and what comes into your mind? You start thinking of everything that God has done for you—correct? You start thinking about all the good things that He has done. And then you compare that with the difficulties and troubles you’re going through.

- Can He help you with that? *Of course, He can!*
- Can you overcome it? *Yes, you can!*
- Can you learn a lesson from it? *Yes, you can!*
- Should you remember it emotionally with a guilt complex? *No, you should not!*

That takes away from the forgiveness that God has given.

Verse 8: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever.... [There are times that we do things, God is angry at us, yes. God is angry at us. We need to repent of those things. He will turn His anger away.] ...He has not dealt with us according to our sins, 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 here is what God does with your sins]: ...As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 8-12). *Gone!*

If you’re on the earth, you keep going around the earth, going to the west, you’ll never come to the east. And if you’re on the earth, you’re going from east to west, you’ll never come to the west. *It’s been removed from you!* Sometimes people feel, ‘Well, God doesn’t understand me. He doesn’t understand what I’ve gone through.’ **Really?** Sometimes we think our problems are so great that even God can’t understand them.

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” (vs 13-14). Yes, and we get old and we pass away, and so forth.

Verse 17: “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting... [That’s further away than from the east is from the west—right?] ...everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him... [Of course, that is the fear where you love God.] ...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 17-18). So that’s quite a thing—isn’t it?

This is how then, *through the washing of the water by the Word*—it takes the Word of God. It takes the Spirit of God and it takes our repentance and yielding to God in order for this to be accomplished in our lives.

(go to the next track)

What if you have a problem that is so overwhelming? What do you do when you have a problem that is so overwhelming you kind of feel like you’re down in a well? Like you say, ‘Hello’—and your voice comes back to you. Well, David felt this way. Regardless of how low you are, regardless of how you feel

- God will hear you
- God will help you
- God will answer for you

Always remember that. Never get so discouraged that you think, ‘God doesn’t love me, God doesn’t want me.’ Regardless of your trials and difficulties.

David felt that way, he says, Psalm 130:1: “Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD.... [he was feeling really overwhelmed] ...LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?.... [Of course, no one would.] ...But there is forgiveness with You...” (vs 1-4).

Remember, He is ready to forgive. And forgiveness is the first step and then being able to have *the washing of the water by the Word*, the Holy Spirit, in your mind, to help you to change the way that you’re thinking.

“...But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope” (v 5). Now you see, how that ties together—*washing of the water by the Word*.

Let’s see again how this is likened unto cleansing, because Christ wants to present the Church Holy and unblameable for Him. John starts

out and he shows that the whole focus of this is to keep your mind on God the Father and Jesus Christ. And that with the Spirit of God and doing so and going through the things that we have covered here, that you have a fellowship or relationship with God. The relationship with God is always maintained by

- prayer
- love
- obedience
- yielding to God
- repenting when you sin

That's how it's maintained.

1-John 1:6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness... [the way of the world, the way of Satan, and so forth] ...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth." Here is the way that human beings deceive themselves. Remember where we started. 'The heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things.' And so we lie to ourselves to try and make ourselves think that it's not as bad as it may appear.

"...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth" (v 6). So in practicing the Truth, what is the Truth?

- *Your Word* is the Truth
- *Your commandments* are the Truth
- *Your precepts* are the Truth
- *Your way* is the Truth from everlasting

When we come to repentance, when we change, when we are going the way that we need to go, now then, we come into a different situation and relationship with God.

Verse 7: "However, if we walk in the light, as He is the light... [And He's the light of the world. The Word is light, the commandments are a lamp to my feet, etc.] ...then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from **all sin**."

These things can be forgiven and this is how then we change and grow and overcome. We're to be cleansed from the inside out, not the outside in. You know what Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees. He said, 'Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! All you cleanse the pots and pans and wash yourself outside, but within you're full of dead men's bones and all kinds of uncleanness.' And He said, 'Cleanse the *inside first* and all things will be well for you.' So this is what he's talking about, cleansing inside, because all sin begins in the mind. All sin then leads us in the way that we don't want to go, so that's why we repent of it.

"If we say that we do not have sin..." (v 8). That's what people say today. Some of the greatest

ones around say, 'Appeal to your better self.' Well, there is a better self, but your better self cannot bring you eternal life—because it's what? *Still you!* What you need is God and His Spirit. Now can you change your circumstances somewhat if you appeal to your better self to do better? *Of course you can!* Will that change the heart? Will that wash away all of the problems of the past? *No, it won't!*

"If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.... [Notice how that is very close to v 6.] ...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). So that's where we always come back to. Doesn't that tie right in with the Old Testament that we read that He is ready to forgive? That He forgives our sins and heals our diseases and removes them as far as the east is from the west? The Bible agrees Old Testament and New Testament together.

"...and to cleanse us..." (v 9). That's what it said back there in Eph. 5, ***to cleanse us with the washing of the water by the Word***. So, this is why when there is repentance and forgiveness, then what do you do? *You replace the way that you have been thinking with the right way to think from the Bible!* "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (v 10).

Part of the New Age religion is this: There's no right, there's no wrong, there's no sin. You are the truth, the truth is in you, and all you have to do is discover the truth in you and you'll be just fine. Now that's just a sanitized version of the Hindu philosophy that you are god within. So if you discover yourself, you'll discover God. And as Deepak Chopra has said, 'You look in the mirror and you're god.'

I remember the first time I saw one of his books, it was entitled *How to Know God*. I was on the plane flying up to Seattle and so here's a woman reading that. I just couldn't resist it. Sometimes you just can't resist it! I glanced over and I was reading part of it, and so forth, and she was going along. After she put the book down, while the plane was landing, I said, 'I notice you're reading this book, *How to Know God*.' I said, 'I can guarantee you one thing, this man does not know God.'

How do we know God? *With His Spirit!* But notice what it says, 1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him... [What is that standard?] ...if we keep His commandments." There you go. Some people keep some of them. Some people keep more of them than others. Some people don't keep any of them. But if you're Christ's then you know by this standard you know Him. Everyone who says, 'I know the Lord' and is

going to church on Sunday, doesn't know Him because that's not the Lord's day. Now they may know a lord, but that is not the Lord of the Bible.

John doesn't mince any words, v 4: "The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him." Well, now that's not being very nice to call someone a liar to his face. Remember what we've gone through here recently, 'We all must have civility in our political conversation.' Yes, we're going to make all of those who are conservatives be kind and gentle. And all of those who are not conservatives and who are liberals on the other side, we'll continue bashing you and attacking you because we're right. 'We're better than you are, we know more than you are and you're just nothing but a bunch of hay-seed hicks over here who know nothing.' *Not what it says!*

"The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (v 4). That's how you judge everything, as you would say in the world, 'religious.' Is there another power in the world? *Yes, there is!* Another god in the world? *Yes, there is!* He's called Satan the devil and he comes as an 'angel of light.' Notice the obligation and notice how this ties right in with what Paul wrote about the washing of the water by the Word that He might sanctify us so that we would be holy and blameless.

Notice v 5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word... [Now that's a very interesting statement because *Word* here in this case could also mean His whole message, everything that Jesus has taught.] ...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected..." And that agrees with Eph.5:25, *the washing of the water by the Word*. Perfection comes bit-by-bit, day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year.

I think the older you get, the more you realize how weak you are and how you're depended upon God for

- everything physical
- every breath of air
- every drop of water
- every morsel of food, etc.

How then when you look and analyze your life, especially if you're sick, when you're sick, you've been down, and you're feeling really miserable. Yes, you know you need God—right?

"...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him" (v 5).

- We understand it.
- We know Christ.
- We know God the Father.

How?

- through our relationship with Him
 - through the Holy Spirit
 - through the commandments of God
 - through the Word of God
- and all of those things combined.

Now here's the challenge to those who make religious claims, v 6: "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him..." Now notice what he is bound to do.

- Anyone says, 'Well, I'm a Christian.' *Okay, fine!*
- Anyone says, 'I love the Lord.' *Okay, fine!*
- Anyone says, 'I love God.' *Okay, fine!*

What is the requirement? *Anybody can say it!* "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself... [You put your foot in your mouth and now you gotta eat it.] ...obligating himself also to walk... [a way of life] ...even as He Himself walked" (v 6).

In other words, Christ is the goal. Christ is the model. That's the one that we are to shoot for. Now let's see how this is accomplished.

- How does God affect this?
- What is called *conversion*?

He affects it through His Spirit, *through the washing of the water by the Word*.

- What does it do for us?
- How are we to respond?
- What does this do for our lives?

Colossians 1:9: "For this cause we also, from the that we heard *of it*... [that they were believing in Christ] ...do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." How do we be filled with knowledge of His will? *By studying His Word in all wisdom!* It gives us wisdom and spiritual understanding. We see things as they actually are, because the deceitfulness of our human nature has been overwhelmed with the Spirit of God. It is still there as long as we're in the flesh. It's still there, but it's not guiding and directing and controlling us and gripping us.

"...be filled with the knowledge of His will... [that's why we study the Word of God] ...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That you may walk worthily... [Notice how that ties in with 1-John 2. We're to walk as He walked.] ...that you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God" (vs 9-10). That's the most important thing. We can have a lot of knowledge concerning a lot of other things. Those who design buildings, make rockets that go clear out into the universe, they've got a lot of knowledge. We're

sending things out there into God's realm—aren't they? But do they have the knowledge of God? *Most of them believe in evolution.*

Here is how this is to be with *the washing of the water by the Word*, v 11: "Being strengthened with all power... [And that is through His Spirit.] ...according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy." In other words, there is nothing in this life that we have to face that we cannot face with

- the Spirit of God
- the Word of God
- the Truth of God
- and loving Him
- and loving each other

—that we cannot face, that we cannot overcome. That's all a part of conversion.

Verse 12: "Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light." Remember the end result of this is eternal life. It's not just to make you a better person. It's not just to cleanse your mind from sin. ***It's to cleanse your mind from sin to develop and have the mind of Christ***—to walk in His way, to think as He thinks, to do things as He does.

This is what calling of God is all about. Because we know that Satan the devil is the 'prince of the power of the air.' Notice where we are when we receive the Spirit of God, v 13: "Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [That's Satan the devil. The Greek there is *rescued*. The Greek there *personally* is very interesting, because that is what is called a middle-voice verb. We don't quite have the same kind of thing in English, but that means that *you are the subject and you are also the object*. That is personally rescued us Himself *for* Himself.] ...from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love." In other words, *Christ in us*, the mind of Christ in us—that's the hope of glory.

Verse 14: "In Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins." What we're talking about is something that the world does not know. Now the world is out there trying to solve its problems, trying to understand good from evil, right from wrong. They have some things right, they have some things that are not right, but they don't understand the power of it that comes from Satan the devil and they don't understand what is necessary for there to be the conversion and the changing of our minds *through the washing of the water by the Word*.

Verse 26: "*Even* the mystery..." That means secret. So if you ran a survey; you're from New York and say you go down to Times Square and say:

- Can you tell me the purpose in life?
- Can you tell me what God is doing?
- Can you tell me how that affects you?
- Have you ever had an understanding of God?
- What do you believe concerning God?
- Have you ever read the Bible?
- Have you ever thought that the Bible contains in it everything you need for salvation?

I doubt if you'd get one right answer. Most people say, 'Ah, man, don't bother me.'

"*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations... [It wasn't made known until Christ came, in its fullness, except to the few that God called in the Old Testament.] ...but has now been revealed to His saints. To whom God did will... [It's *God's will* that you know.] ...to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery... [*Salvation!* You become a spirit immortal being, a son or daughter of God, to live forever. That's God's plan. Most people think it's a soul that wafts off to heaven. *No, it isn't!*] ...what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (vs 26-27). The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, in our minds and hearts

- to *lead* us
- to *guide* us
- to *convert* us

—by *the washing of the water by the Word*.

Verse 28: "Whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." That's what God wants. We come from being sinful and imperfect to being righteous and perfect and that perfection then takes place at the resurrection.

Now as I've done many times, I said, 'Okay, take a pen and just put a mark on a piece of paper.' That's what you were, that's the size you were when you were conceived. Now here we are all grown up. We look at that and think, 'Oh, my, look at that.' {We've got online with Church at Home, *Why Were You Born?: From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God*. We have the first five up there now.}

Today, because of the pictures from space, we can say, 'All right, let's go out and look at the world from up in space.' You can't see any human beings there. We're all still full grown a speck of dust. And just like the speck of dust that we were when we were conceived and now we're full grown, in a comparable sense that's going to be the difference between what we are now and what we will be at the resurrection.

This is why God wants us to be perfected. "...make known what *is* the riches of the glory of

this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (v 27). Let’s look at some other Scriptures here to show how we accomplish this. It’s to make everyone perfect in Christ. And the whole reason we have Sabbath services and Holy Days and study the Bible is for this right here:

Ephesians 4:12: “For the perfecting of the saints... [That’s accomplished by *the washing of the water by the Word.*] ...for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (vs 12-13). Now, you talk about a goal for life—isn’t that something? *That’s really something!* That’s what God wants us to be.

Then he says, while we’re still here living on the earth, v 14: “So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness... [Because all of these different ones out there, they know Jesus, they know Christ, they have this way, they have that way, and ‘here’s how we can help you,’ and all of that sort of thing, but unless it’s according to the Word of God, there may be some good things in it, but it’s not going to amount to anything spiritually forever.] ...in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error.”

When Paul wrote this, there were false apostles and false prophets out there bringing another version of Jesus, bringing other ways, so called—which there’s only way and that’s Christ—of salvation. Now we look and we look at organized Christianity, have they systematized the error? *Yes!* How have they done that? *By tradition!* So much so that they have the audacity to say that we don’t need the Bible any longer, when God says it is the Word of God.

But here’s what we are to do, v 15: “But holding the Truth in love... [There it is again, the love of God, the perfection of God.] ...may in all things grow up into Him Who is the head, *even* Christ.” As God looks at the Church, He tells what He is doing. God is working a work among His people wherever they are. And remember Jesus said, ‘Wherever two or three are gathered, there I am in the midst of you.’ So it’s not about numbers. The first thing we need to learn about numbers is the lesson of Gideon. God said, ‘Gideon, raise up an army. I want you to go against the Midianites.’ So he sent the word out, 32,000 men came. God said, ‘That’s too many.’ And here they were all anxious to go. I’m sure they had their bows, their arrows, their spears, their swords, their bludgeoning things. Boy, you get hit with some of those.

You watch on the History Channel some of the wars that they had in ancient Rome. I know Dolores and I were watching one where in one day 90,000 men were killed! Without an atomic bomb! Spears and swords—and I’ll tell you something: You get a sword going through the middle of you and that’s it. You get one coming across the back of your neck or the front of your throat, it’s over with. It was interesting to see how men would go out and do those things. I tell you, God is doing something better. God is doing something greater. So wherever the people of God are on the earth, we’re few indeed, because Jesus said we would be.

But here is the thing that’s important, v 16: “...fitly framed and compacted together by *that* which every joint supplies... [We won’t recognize what God is doing till the resurrection. When that happens, we’ll know. We’ll see the finished product, because we’ll all be there.] ...according to *its* inner working... [The inner working, that is of God’s Spirit.] ...in the measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Then it goes on and he says: Don’t do as the world. Don’t go out there and live like the world and act like the world and do like the world. No, he says, v 22: “That concerning your former conduct... [This is what it’s going to result in. Our conduct *will be changed* by the Spirit of God *through the washing of the water by the Word.*] ...concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man... [You keep working against the sin, against the lust, against those things that come against you.] ...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (vs 22-23).

And that’s what God is doing. That is the work that is being accomplished in you. Now God has given us free moral agency. What we need to do is always choose

- to love God
- to serve Him
- to build our relationship with Him, through
 - ✓ study
 - ✓ prayer
 - ✓ the way we live

—all of these things, all put together.

- that’s why we need *Sabbath services*
- that’s why we need *the Word of God*
- that’s why we need *each other*
- that’s why we need *the love of God*

That’s what God is accomplishing now through the *washing of the water by the Word*, so that you can overcome everything that is there. **Let the Word of God**

- *cleanse your heart*
- *cleanse your mind*

- *lead you and guide you in everything that you do*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Jeremiah 17:13, 9-10, 1, 5-8
- 2) Acts 2:36-38
- 3) Ephesians 5:25-27
- 4) Matthew 12:31-32
- 5) Psalm 86:1-3, 5-7, 10-13
- 6) Psalm 103:1-5, 8-14, 17-18
- 7) Psalm 130:1-5
- 8) 1-John 1:6-10
- 9) 1-John 2:3-6
- 10) Colossians 1:9-14, 26-28, 27
- 11) Ephesians 4:12-16, 22-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 22
- Acts 7

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

- *Hebrews*
- *Why Were You Born* (churchathome.com)

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Transcribed: 2-1-11
Formatted: bo—2-2-11