

Our Destiny and Giving Thanks to God

Learn to have the kind of thankfulness we need toward God

Fred R. Coulter—November 26, 2016

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services! This is the Sabbath after Thanksgiving, and I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. There's a lot for us to be very thankful for.

Even in the world, as we have seen, the amazing election of Donald Trump was not expected by very many people at all. It looks as though that God has given us a space of time and a space for doing things that we need to serve Him.

Let's analyze a little bit about what happened with Donald Trump. He is much like one of the judges or one of the rulers. He is not an elder or a minister, or even a member of the Church of God. However, through his life experiences he has learned and he has changed and all change toward the good or toward God can be considered repentance.

Let's look at something very interesting concerning this situation, because the statistics just came out that this year there are 20% less abortions than in 2013. Donald Trump has given the strongest—and he will act upon it—stance against abortion of any political leader in America.

He has also had with the Protestant ministers that were with him, and he has a council of ministers. Very interesting, isn't it? When he hit his lowest point in the election they all got together and prayed for Donald Trump and laid hands on him.

Even though they're Sunday-keepers, remember what God said of those false prophets (Jer. 23) that **if** they would teach the Word of God, He would honor it. There is some good things with the Protestants that we need to understand. *Not for salvation!* They don't have a clue concerning salvation. If it were not for the Protestants in America, we would not have very much of a civilized society. We would be more like Mexico. So, there is a great deal of good that they do in the land:

- by teaching to be good
- by teaching to keep some of the commandments of God
- by teaching to help the poor
- by working against abortion

When they came together and prayed for Donald Trump, I'm sure that God heard the prayer. Let's analyze some of these things this way: Will God hear the prayer of anyone, anywhere if they are really devoted and sincere? whether they have all the truth or not?

Look at the Church of Sardis. It said that they're 'works were not complete before God.' Most of those Churches of God keep the Sabbath and they keep the Passover. They don't keep the Holy Days, so they are doing the bare minimum, because Jesus said that if they strengthen the things that remain that He would not blot their name out of the Book of Life. So we have that example from the Churches of God and the words of Jesus Christ (Rev. 3).

Let's see what Jesus told the disciples on a particular occasion when they saw some other people casting out demons in Jesus' name.

Luke 9:49: "Then John answered *and* said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbid him because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not forbid *him*, because **everyone who is not against us is for us.**'" (vs 49-50).

A lot of the Protestants are *for* Jesus—for doing good, for doing right—but they're blinded because of Sunday and the holidays of this world. But nevertheless, if they weren't there upholding some of the laws of God, we would have a very wretched and terrible society, worse than what we have now.

On the other hand, there are those who are against Christ. These would be the ones who try and combine Islam and Christianity. Here's what Jesus said about others:

Matthew 12:30: "The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters."

Let's look at another place that explains it a little more. There is some good in society that the Protestants do, *but that is not a calling to salvation!* Even if they do wondrous works but are lawless, then they have a problem. Many of these ministers are not completely lawless, but they do serve a good function. **If**, because of their actions, and if, because of the people there has been a repentance and a 20% reduction of abortion, **God will honor that!**

If there is one man who seeks justice and truth, then God would pardon (Jer. 5). Do we have that point? *Could be! Very likely!* Let's see what Jesus said in the parallel account in Luke 9.

Mark 9:38: "Then John answered Him, saying, 'Master, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbid him because he does not follow us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him; for no one who does

a work of power in My name can easily speak evil of Me. And **the one who is not against you is for you**” (vs 38-40).

Let’s look at these Protestant ministers who are advising Donald Trump. Remember that Ben Carson is a Seventh Day Adventist. Very interesting indeed!

Let’s see what happens to those who are against Christ. What we find with many of the Protestant ministers, people, and leaders is that *they are partially blinded*. Let’s read what happens if they don’t repent.

Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to Me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven.”

Remember what Jesus said, ‘The words that I speak to you, I speak to you what the Father has commanded Me. What He has told Me to say, that’s what I speak.’ We have to be doing the will of the Father in heaven.

Every word that came from Jesus came from the Father first. Remember the *Truth of Scripture* in heaven: the *Scroll of the Book* describing about what Christ would do. The *Scroll of the Book* that Isaiah would eat, which had the words of God in it. Remember that everything in the Bible, in the original God has inspired. God works in the kingdoms of men as well, as we have seen in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, etc. God is over *all*.

Sidebar on Donald Trump: Doctor Keith Ablow, who is a psychiatrist, was asked during a newscast, ‘How would you summarize Hillary Clinton?’ He said, ‘Utterly corrupt and a liar.’ They asked, ‘What would you say about Donald Trump?’ He said, ‘A truth-seeker.’

If someone is a truth-seeker, when they find Truth they will change. A great deal of the life of Donald Trump has been when he has found truth he has changed. Yes, he has had many problems in his life, but he’s been very successful.

Think of this: I think he’s going to—probably on day one or day two—he’s going to announce his nomination for the justice replacing Antonin Scalia. He’s made many promises. Let’s see how many he will keep and keep partially. The Congress has to make laws and pass laws and provisions in order for some of those promises to take place.

Let’s see what Donald does on *day one*, because a truth-seeker will keep his word. Let’s see how much better he may be than all the other politicians, and even some of those around him.

Acts 17—we’ve been here before, but this is so true. We need to understand about how God works and what He does and even with the people in the world who are living in sin, who do not know God, who do not understand the Bible.

Listen, brethren, it’s a fantastic thing that we have the Bible. We have the Word of God. We have more understanding of it than perhaps any time in the history of the world. We should never, *never*, *never* lean back and say that we know it all, *because we don’t!* The Word of God is so fantastic; God has put so much in here. We won’t want to get sidetracked in describing the Bible, but it does describe what God does in the world, for people in the world and for those who He calls and puts in His Church.

This is after he says, ‘I’m going to tell you about the Unknown God whom you worship in ignorance’:

Acts 17:24: “He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands.”

There he was telling all of these philosophers at Mars Hill right in front of the Parthenon, that God doesn’t live in a temple made with hands.

Verse 25: “Nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for He gives to all life and breath and all things.*”

That’s every living thing in the world: birds, animals, crawling things, livestock, wild animals, human beings, everything in the sea. Those that don’t breathe in the sea like whales, He gives them oxygen through the ocean, through the waters.

Isn’t it interesting how that everything depends upon God. *Every human life in the world depends upon God!* Every human being has been given *the spirit of man* by God, made in the image of God, and even though they’re not called, God still deals with them faithfully in providing for them.

This is what we need to be thankful about as we kept Thanksgiving and relates to what we need to have our approach to God be.

Matthew 5:44: ““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...”” (vs 44-45).

In the account of Luke He says, ‘the children of the Highest.’ We’ll talk about that a little later.

“...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).

Sidebar on the rain: I said last week the seventh year of drought, well, it's not, it's five. There were two years of lighter rain but not light enough to consider being a drought. God provides and gives everything. He causes everything to grow, food to eat, all of this sort of thing. We eat and breathe and everything like this and all of this comes from God.

The calling that God has given us is far greater, far higher, goes beyond what people in the world have, and way beyond whatever any religion or Protestantism may think concerning salvation. That's why we have the book, *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?*

Deut. 8 is a very important part of the Bible, because this applies to us especially in the end-time. I want to ask you to do this: next time you go to the supermarket, ask yourself how much of what I'm buying here can I produce for myself? Let's rephrase it another way. If none of the food in the supermarkets were available to you, would you know how to grow your own food? preserve your own food? Would you be able to have the patience to wait for the seed to grow, mature and produce the fruit, whatever it may be?

Think about what we have here. Think about everything and all the conveniences that we have. It's quite a blessing, everything that we have, and a miracle of the understanding of using electricity of which this whole modern society is based upon. Electricity and mineral power—there's some wind power and solar power, etc.—but think what it would be if you had no electricity? and no natural gas? What would your life be like? I want you to think on that and ***be grateful and thankful for what we have!*** We are to thank God for all of these tremendous blessings.

Think about this. We've all had our troubles and trials and difficulties, but we've never had to walk through a desert. We've never had to live there for 40 years and eat manna and drink water out of a rock.

Just before they're going into the 'promised land,' Moses spoke the whole book of Deuteronomy to them and wrote it down. Here's what he says. Remember, here are all the armies of the children of Israel on the other side of the Jordan, ready to go across the Jordan and inherit the land.

I want you to think about the great land that God has given us here in America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and even in Europe. Although now they're being overrun by Syrians.

Think of how God has blessed the whole world and then think about us as those who have the Spirit of God, living in the land of Israel and how should our attitude be toward everything that God has done for us physically and spiritually. We still have to exist physically.

Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe...”

- not just halfhearted
- not just grudgingly
- not being bitter

but

- willingly
- diligently

“...and to do **that you may live** and multiply and go in and possess the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember...” (vs 1-2).

Isn't it interesting, everything important has “...**you shall remember**...” What did God say concerning the Sabbath Day? ‘Remember the Sabbath Day to keep *it* Holy.’ Since you haven't wandered in the desert, remember how your life was before you were called. Remember all the trials and difficulties that you have overcome to be at the point that you are now.

Verse 2: “And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness in order to humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.”

Everything that we go through, all the trials and tests, are to try and prove our hearts. Do we love God

- Do we love God in the good times?
- Do we love God in the not so good times?
- Do we love God even in the bad and difficult times?
- Do we keep His commandments in the good times?
- Do we keep His commandments in the not so difficult times?
- Do we keep His commandments even in the very difficult times?

All of those we can ask ourselves. Here is why He did it:

Verse 3: “And He humbled you...” I tell you one way to overcome any smidgen of self-exaltation: ***look at the intricate design of everything that God has created just on the earth!*** Do some in-depth study on water, soil, rocks, plants, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. Look, the world is covered two-third with the oceans. Think about that. God made all of that and everything in it. That will humble you. Then

you look up into the heavens and you see the stars and everything that is there. And know that God has created all of that for a great purpose once we get into His Kingdom. Let's read Deut. 8 with these things in mind.

Verse 3: "And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live."

Every word! That's something! You think about that and you analyze it in your life. You go to God in prayer and thank Him for everything:

- the air you breathe
- the food you have
- the place you live
- the clothes you wear
- for the fact that there's still enough peace in the land that we are safe and secure

Amazing, isn't it? Think about all of those things. God has provided all of that.

Here's what we don't have, but here's what they did have, v 4: "Your clothing did not wear out on you, 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. And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him" (vs 4-6).

The greatest commandment is to **love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your being!**

As I read the rest of it here, as we go on, let's think about how much God has provided for us in the lands that we live in.

Verse 7: "For the LORD your God brings you into a good land..." Remember that Paul said that He has given the appointed times for the nations. So, wherever you live that's where God has placed you.

"...a land of brooks of water, of fountains 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).

Does not that describe how it is with us today? Think about all of the things you can get at the supermarket. We'll go back to where we started.

"...You shall not lack any *thing* in it. *It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills

you may dig copper" (v 9). Look at all the mining, look at all the coal, look at all the oil, look at all of those things. Those are all wealth. Has not God done that for us? *Yes, indeed!*

Notice what we are to do. That's why the unique observance of Thanksgiving in America is so important. Yes, a lot of them have lost the whole meaning of it. There are those who still thank God for:

- what He has done
- what He has provided
- what He has given

We are to do this, v 10: "**When** you have eaten and are full... [that happened Thursday] ...**then you shall bless the LORD your God** for the good land, which He has given you"—because all of these things are available to you. Plus with the trade that we have we can get almost anything in the world. Look at our malls, supermarkets; everything that God has given us.

At the end-time, there is going to be a great Laodicean attitude of everyone, everywhere because of the abundance of everything that we have. That's an amazing thing to realize and understand.

Verse 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."

Now He gives a warning, v 11: "Beware that you **do not forget the LORD your God...**" Why does that come after 'eating to your full' and everything like that, and having everything that you need physically? *Because then people forget God!* They get busy doing this, doing that. Then the next generation comes along and they are not as thankful as the generation before them. We've seen this deterioration in the country for about 60 years or more.

What happens? You have more atheism. We have more people who don't believe in God. We still have a great number who believe in God. Ninety percent of the people say they believe in God. The percentages shrink way down when they're asked:

- How do you worship your God?
- Do you go to church?
- Do you do the things in your life that are what you find that you need to do from God?

That becomes another problem.

So, He gives a warning, v 11: "Beware that you **do not forget the LORD your God** by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today."

Here is a direct reference to the Laodiceans (Rev. 3), v 12: “Lest **when** you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*, and **when** your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied...” (vs 12-13). I want you to think about that.

Here in America, those who live in poverty, the majority of them have a place to live, they have television, they have phone, and they have food to eat. Some of them have cars; some of them don't. There are those who are homeless and live on the street and we should not forget them, because they have no place to live.

Think about it in the cold climates. When you go to bed and you pull the covers over you, and you're lying there nice and warm, just remember that someone somewhere is cold, freezing, shivering and, yes, maybe wet because it's raining and doesn't know where the next meal is coming from and has no place to lay his head down. Think of that!

Here in Hollister we help out some of the homeless. Bonnie Infante does that for us. She knows a good number of them. We talk about it quite often. Think about it. What would your life be if you were on the streets?

Notice what happens *if you forget God and don't keep His commandments*, or you become slack in keeping His commandments:

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.”

I want you to think about this. That's why we have the book, *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?* What did we come from? *Something so small that you can only see it with a magnifying instrument!* Look at you now.

Maybe we could all be a little better off with a little less fat around us, and so forth, but think of that. Think of what we are now and being thankful we need to look forward to what we will be. Just as the children of Israel entered into the ‘promised land,’ we are to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Verse 15: “Who 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).

Very important! Every single trial and difficulty we go through is a proving ground of:

- whether we truly love God
- whether we will truly keep His commandments
- whether we will do so diligently

God doesn't want it halfhearted. God doesn't want it because you're compelled to do it, **but because you love God and want to do it!**

Verse 17: “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of *my* hand has gotten me this wealth.’”

Americans do that quite often. People do that quite often. What happens when they do? *Difficulties come!*

- you may have had to work, *but God did the blessing*
- you may have had to apply effort, *but God helped you in it*
- you may have had to make decisions, *but if God led you in the right decision, then don't forget God*

If you do something that is good and great, fine.

- Who gave you the power to do it?
- You?

or

- God?
- Who has given you life?
- You?

or

- God?
- How did these things come to be all around us?
- Through your effort?

or

- The efforts of others and not through the blessing of God first and then the effort of others?

It goes right back where we started in Acts 17, ***‘in God we live and move and have our being.’*** Remember the promise of the election:

- make America great again
- make America wealthy again
- make America rich again

Yes, ‘the Donald’ remembered God as much as he could. Many of the evangelicals remembered God that abortion is murder, so there would be a judge who would be a lawful judge, a law-abiding judge, a God-fearing judge who would sit on the Supreme Court and uphold the right to live for the most innocent.

If the economic plan is good and ***if*** we do start making more money, and ***if*** these things are successful:

Verse 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. And it shall be if you do at all forget the LORD your God and walk after other gods serving them and worshipping 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 18-20).

In this and it is true, the first thing that people do, whatever their church may be, or those who are in the Church of God, the first thing they always slack off on doing is **remembering God in tithes and offerings**. So, it’s going to be like it’s found in Mal. 3. What is this nation going to do with all of the money that it is going to have **if** these economic programs work?

- Will we remember God?
- Even to the degree that the nation does now?
- In the Church will we remember God the way we need to?

and the new ones coming into the Church:

- Will they remember God?
- Will they be diligent?
- Will they be zealous?
- Will they serve God?
- Will they keep His commandments?
- What will they do?
- How is it going to be?

This is not a sermon on tithes and offerings, but it comes up this way because if God blesses us because of the decisions that have been made, and because of the repentance to bringing down the abortions by 20%, and maybe bring it down even more if they get the right judge in there. That will give an opportunity for the whole land to prosper and do well and give an opportunity for the Churches of God to preach the Gospel and reach out to other people that God can call. So, we have our responsibility in this too. Let’s not forget God in that. **Let’s remember God in everything!**

(go to the next track)

Let’s see how being increased with goods and riches that it does affect the spiritual attitude:

- how much time you take for prayer
- how much time you take for study
- how you live your life

Everything about it!

We are going to see the society even increase with more things, with more goods. They now have a television screen that has a curve on it.

It’s supposed to have the ability for 1,000 different color combinations. It puts you like you’re almost right there.

Think about all the things concerning goods and services, things to eat, clothes to wear, gadgets and everything. Look at how spoiled that some children have become because the only thing they know how to do is to text and play video games and go to schools that teach them nothing. What are they going to be when they enter into adulthood? *You need to think about it!*

Let’s look at it this way. Let’s see how Jesus has given this warning and also how this really applies to the end-time, much more so than back there at Laodicea when John wrote the book of Revelation.

Revelation 3:14: “And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works...” (vs 14-15).

Let’s stop and think. God knows when a sparrow falls, and God has made everything with its own separate individual identity, even every single snowflake is different.

Sidebar on snowflakes: The snowflakes that fall from the clouds that God created are beautiful and spectacular and each one a little different. The snow that men make from snowmaking machines for those who want to ski when there’s no snow, they do not have that individual identification of a special flake different from every other flake, though to the naked eye they look the same.

Artificial snow is made from water that’s already here. Real snow comes out of the clouds and they have certain ingredients to their being made into snow that has minerals in it that help cause the crystals that are not in the water when they blow it out and make snow. So, they’re just plain snow. In the winter time those of you who live in the winter areas, you get so much of it, it’s incredible.

Verse 15: “I know your works... [God knows everyone of our works that we do all the time] ...that you are neither cold nor hot...” That’s why it says continuously in the commandment keeping of God to **be diligent to keep them, be zealous for God**. He wants you to be.

“...I would *that* you be *either* cold or not” (v 15). Then God can deal with you in whatever way He will deal with you.

Verse 16: “So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.” That’s quite a thing! I think that has already happened, but it will continue to

happen because God wants us perfected through His Spirit.

- we have to provide the willingness
- we have to provide the zeal
- we have to provide the energy

to do the works!

God gives us the energy through the food, but we have to make the choices to do it. Always keep in mind that we have to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul and all our being. If that is not a perfect description of being zealous, I don't know what is. But that's what God wants from us.

What God is going to give us is so great and marvelous. We will be the children of the Highest: *God the Father*. Think on that! Keep your mind on that whenever you start getting lazy and whenever you start doing things and avoiding God and not doing what you need to do. Now here's the reason, the only Church to talk back to God; 'I have my answer, Lord':

Verse 17 "For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'..." 'I've got everything at my fingertips.' Never, *never, never* has there been a society this side of the Flood that those words can apply more directly to than any other time in history than the time we are living in now.

"...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.... [so, God says this]: ...I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire..." (vs 17-18)—that makes it even better. Paul writes of this in 1-Cor. 3, so, let's see what Paul says about how we conduct our lives.

This is important for us to know. The next time you have things that are so convenient, thank God, appreciate it. Don't take it all for granted. Just think how many stores you can go into and the doors open and close automatically. Just think, when you're cold, you can move a little switch on the thermostat and make it warm. If you're too hot, you can move a little switch on the thermostat and you can cool down. If you want to go someplace, if you don't have a car, you have public transportation. It gets dark, you turn on a switch, you have light. Open up your closet and see how many clothes you have and how many shoes you have. You know the old saying: open up the closet and you say, 'I don't have a thing to wear.' *Think about all of those things!*

This is why you need to teach your children to be thankful and discipline them as well because they can get spoiled and sassy and nasty and downright evil because of the abundance of things that they have.

1-Cor. 3:11 tells us that the only foundation on which we are building all of these things is Jesus Christ. That goes back to Matt. 7 about building on *the Rock* and *that Rock is Christ*, and how we build. Let's ask ourselves: How am I building spiritually?

- through study
- through prayer
- through love
- through obedience
- through remembering God with tithes and offerings
- helping those who need help
- praying for those who need prayers

Taking the Bible as the greatest gift that God has given us so we can learn spiritually the things that are hidden in here. They are spiritually discerned and the foundation is Christ. **How are you building on Christ?** Let's see what Paul says here:

1-Corinthians 3:12: "Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold..."—what Jesus told the Laodiceans to strive for: gold purified by fire, absolutely pure, perfected. In other words, God is telling us here at the end-time we need to strive for the purest perfection possible, because He's provided all of these things for us.

Not for us to say, 'Look, we have this, isn't that a wonderful blessing. Oh, my, look at that.' *No!*

- we're to be thankful
- we're to be zealous
- we're to be constantly coming to God, thanking God

Not just on Thanksgiving, *but every day*, praising God. Not just when He does something for us, but for everything that He gives us.

Verse 12: "Now if anyone builds upon this foundation **gold, silver, precious stones...** [all of those things, especially gold and precious stones are found in New Jerusalem, streets of gold] ...**wood, hay or stubble**" (v 12)—those are the fruits of lukewarmness.

- What is your house like?
- What are you building it on?
- How serious are you in building character?
- How serious are you in developing the mind of Christ?

Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble. **What are you building?** Be sure, because Christ said, 'I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire.'

Verse 13: "The work of each one shall be manifested..." Manifested to God. You can't hide anything from God. Remember the whole lesson of the book of Job and everything that he went through.

What was Job's final conclusion in repentance? He said, 'I spoke of things I did not understand. *Now I know* that You know all my thoughts. Wherefore, I repent in dust and ashes.' What did Jesus say to the Laodiceans? *Repent!* You don't have to do it in dust and ashes like Job did. But we need to get on our knees and cry out to God to:

- help us
- forgive us
- lead us
- direct us
- inspire us
- uplift us
- give us Your Spirit to go forward

Notice what will happen, be manifested. "...for the day of *trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work **each one's** is" (v 13) That's why we have to grow in grace and knowledge ourselves.

In order to learn the Bible we have to personally study. What someone else does to study does not count for us. That counts for them. We need to be in a situation that we do not compare ourselves one with another, because Paul says that's not wise.

What we need to do is look at the Word of God and compare our lives and our thoughts and our actions *by what God says*. If they're not up to the standard of God, then we need to repent. This is why the model prayer is, 'Forgive us our sins,' *daily*. God wants the outward appearance fine, **but He is working on the inward of the mind; that's where conversion takes place!**

Verse 14: "If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire" (vs 14-15).

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter. Why is God concerned so much with us in our thoughts, hearts, and minds? *Because He's given the Spirit of God into us, the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Jesus Christ* (John 14).

Verse 16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?"

Think about that. That's why Christ is so powerful against the Laodiceans and their attitudes and their lack of real deep appreciation and gratitude for the magnitude of our calling. For the greatness of what God is going to do for us.

Verse 17: "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of

God is Holy, which temple you are. Let no one deceive himself..." (vs 17-18)—forgetting, deceiving, saying, 'I have done this.' {Note Deut. 8}

"...If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God's sight*" (v 18).

We may find a category of those who are of the Protestants who are *for* Jesus, *not against* Him, but they are really lukewarm.

Revelation 3:17: "...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich... [spiritually rich] ...and white garments..." (vs 17-18)—be clothed with Christ. Rev. 19 shows that *the white linen garments are the righteousness of the saints*. Notice they're not plaid, nor purple, but *white*.

"...and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed..." (v 18). Isn't that interesting? Let's see what happens every time we come before God. The thing we need to understand is that, especially if we have a Laodicean attitude, we need to really overcome that; because when we come before God, this is how it is:

Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." The books of the Bible, the words, the teachings, they're all spiritual. They have meaning and it is the only book in the world that cuts to the heart, that cuts into the guilty conscience. Here's why:

"...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" (v 12).

We deceive ourselves and put on a good face in order for people to think we're something that we're not. That's called hypocrisy, *but God knows!* The thoughts of men are vain.

Notice how great the creation of God is, which means us, too, because all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.

Verse 13: "And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight... [He knows everything] ...but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account." We all have to come before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for what we have done.

What do we do? Fall away in fear? '*Oh, how can we ever do it?*' No, we're not to be like the children of Israel when they said, 'Oh, who's going

to help us?' God gave them manna and food. If they hadn't rebelled they would have only have to been in the wilderness for a year and a half. Look at the consequences of their rebellion.

So, here's what we need to do, understand that that is true. Understand that the heart is deceitful above all things. What happens in becoming lukewarm, you deceive yourself to a point that you're satisfied with what you have and you think you need no more.

Verse 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*.... [holding fast is being zealous, firm, strong] ...For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize with our weaknesses..." (vs 14-15).

- Doesn't He know? *Yes!*
- Can He give us of His Spirit to overcome? *Yes!*
- Can He give us of His grace and mercy to forgive us? *Yes!*
- Can He empower us with His Spirit to be zealous and really get busy and do the works that God wants us to do? *Yes!*

"...but *One Who* was tempted in all things..." (v 15)—every human temptation. That's why we keep the Passover every year so we understand that God in the person of Christ was manifested in the flesh so that He would suffer everything that we as human beings—made in His image, that He created—suffer; that He understands us so He can be gracious to us when we repent.

"...according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet, *He was* without sin" (v 15). Think about that the next time you're working on a problem to overcome. Here's what we should do. Is this not being zealous?

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."

Fantastic, isn't it? When do we need this? *All the time!* Why don't you try this: make sure you pray every morning and pray every evening and see how your life will change. Let that be the motto of repentance: ***prayer and study, love and obedience!***

He tells us this is what we are to do. This is how we buy from Him. How do we buy it?

- with repentance *and He gives His mercy and forgiveness*
- with zeal and work *and He gives us the strength*

- with loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being *and He gives us the blessings of spiritual blessing that are greater than any of the physical blessings*

Revelation 3:18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, **so that you may see.**"

You do that by studying the Word of God. What is the eye salve? *That's the grace that comes from God!* Listen, brethren, even though the things that I have done with translating, studying, writing and speaking, there's so much here in the Bible that I'm still learning. That's how awesome the Bible is. There is so much more for you to learn if you can study and grow and overcome. It is marvelous! We are working toward eternity, *living forever!* Think about that. Keep that in the focus of your mind.

Verse 19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent."

God always honors repentance! Never forget that. If you're in such a state that it's even difficult for you to repent, that's when you go get on your knees and you pray to God, 'O God, it's so difficult for me to repent of this that I haven't done as I should have been doing. Now I've got these spiritual calluses on my heart and mind that I have become very complacent and lukewarm. Forgive me, help me, peel back the blindness that I have. Open my eyes that I may see.'

Psalms 119:18: "Open my eyes so that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law." We have the complete law magnified by Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock...." Some of the Laodiceans, this may include some Sunday-keepers as some Sunday-keeping churches are now coming to understand about Sabbath, Christ is on the outside looking in. He wants to be on the inside, motivating and guiding us with His Spirit and the Spirit of the Father.

"...I stand at the door and knock... [the door of the mind] ...**If anyone hears My voice...**" (v 20). Don't resist it! Don't turn it off! Don't say, 'I'm tired of hearing sermons about Laodiceans.' Does that tell us something or not?

You go back to the very beginning of the Gospel of Mark in the first chapter and He says, 'Repent and believe the Gospel; for the Kingdom of God is at hand.' He was speaking of Himself. Now, with His second coming not too far down the road, *the Kingdom of God is at hand.* If we have a time of prosperity and we have a time to get out and really

do the things we need to do and to multiply what we do, then we need to be doing that. Take advantage of the time, like He says here.

“...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door... [through repentance and the Spirit of God come in] ...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” (v 20).

Then you have the fellowship, which John talks about. Let’s read that and let’s focus in on that and why we need to be thankful for what we’re doing.

These are some powerful words, because here we are, born on a certain day, live to whatever age we are, and here we are, we’re in the Church, whatever that may be, and think about this, and ***we are part of something that goes back clear before the foundation of the earth!***

1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning... [How much greater do you want it?] ...that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, 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)” (vs 1-2).

Now the Word of God is written down. What a contract. Just like you see this Liberty ad that talks about crashing a new car and they’re only going to pay you three-quarters of what it’s worth, because you drove it for 5,000 miles. The insured person says, ‘What are we supposed to do, drive three-quarters of a car?’

Think of what God has done for us. He’s giving us things way beyond this human life, *great promises that extend into eternity.*

Verse 3: “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... [the primary fellowship is] ...indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ.”

Let me just be very straightforward. There are many brethren who go to churches because they have fellowship with the brethren—well and good—***but you can’t have the fellowship that you need with the brethren unless you first have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.*** It is because of the Spirit that They have given to you and that you know and you study the Word of God. You live by every Word of God. You love God with all your heart, mind, soul and all your being. That’s the true fellowship.

If you are not growing in grace and knowledge, ***if*** you’re group that you attend has just become kind of a social club and ‘if you don’t please me, I’m going to leave,’ kind of thing. Think about it. We’re dealing with spiritual and eternal things. If that’s the case, like I just described, you have a good case of Laodiceanism and you don’t really know it.

Let’s look at some of the Psalms and the kind of thanksgiving and thankfulness we need to have with God.

Let’s understand how great our calling is, how fantastic it is to have the Spirit of God, what an absolute incredible blessing to have the Word of God and have it in so many forms and to be of those who live in the end-time where we are composing the group that Daniel says, ***The wise shall understand.*** Couple that with the fellowship we read in 1-John and let’s read it here:

Psalms 50:1: “The mighty God, God, the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty...” (vs 1-2)—true Holy Zion is New Jerusalem. What has God called us to? ***To perfection!***

“...God has shined forth. Our God shall come, and He shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him” (vs 2-3). Read Rev. 7, 8, 11 and 16. Fantastic!

When Christ comes, literally the whole world is going to believe that we’re being invaded from outer space. In that they will be correct: *by God, Jesus Christ, the angels, the resurrected saints.* We are all aliens to this earth. With the power of Christ, He’s going to take it over and we’re going to help Him straighten it out.

Verse 4: “He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, so that He may judge His people: ‘Gather My saints unto Me... [resurrection] ...those who have a covenant with Me by sacrifice” (vs 4-5). That sacrifice is:

1. the sacrifice of Christ
2. your baptism, being baptized into His death

Verse 6: “And the heavens shall declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. Selah. ‘Hear, My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, even your God” (vs 6-7). That’s what Christ said back there to the Laodiceans.

Verse 14: “Offer to God thanksgiving; and pay your vows to the Most High.” You do what you know God says you need to do. Those are the works of Christ that you are walking in, not your own.

Verse 15: “And call upon Me in the day of trouble...” I tell you what, the day of trouble is not when everything is going wrong around you. The day of trouble is when you get so complacent and self-satisfied and say, ‘By *my* might; by *my* power that I’ve grown rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.’ That is a worse day of trouble than having a trial. It is self-deceiving because there is no anguish in it. It is complacency and satisfaction, very deceiving.

Verse 15: “And call upon Me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver you, and you shall honor Me.”

Psalm 69:29: “But I am poor and sorrowful; let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song and will magnify Him with thanksgiving” (vs 29-30).

Verse 32: “The humble shall see and be glad; and your heart shall live, you who seek God, for the LORD hears the needy and does not despise His prisoners. Let the heavens and earth praise Him, the seas, and everything that moves in them” (vs 32-34). Isn’t that a marvelous and wonderful thing that God is going to do? *Yes, indeed!*

Jesus did a special thing with Peter, James and John. He took them up on a high mountain and appeared in a vision in His glorious form. This was to give them the same credibility that God gave to Moses when Moses saw God.

In this vision, they saw Him in His glorified form. Why this? To give us the inspiration and understanding of what John wrote in 1-John 3, ‘Behold, what glorious love that the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God. It’s not yet manifested what we shall be, but we know that when we see Him, we shall see Him as He is, *because we will be like Him.*’

Let that be the motivating power and factor to help us go forward with strength and with zeal and determination.

Luke 9:29: “And it came to pass *that* as He prayed, the appearance of His face was changed, and His clothing *became* radiantly white. And suddenly two men *appeared*, talking with Him; they were Moses and Elijah” (vs 29-30).

Not that they were in heaven, but this is a vision and that’s probably where they will be with Christ, at the right hand and at the left hand.

Verse 31: “Who appeared in glory *and* spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.” Think of it, *shine like the sun.* Great, wonderful, marvelous appearance. How great that is!

This becomes very important for us to understand. As you find in the book, *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?*, God revealed in a progressive way His plan and His purpose for mankind. Paul writes of it here when he was in prison. You would think those would be terrible circumstances, ‘Oh, God, why am I in prison?’ What did Paul do? *He prayed to God!* God gave to him, and all of the apostles and prophets, the same understanding.

Ephesians 3:1: “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), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men...” (vs1-5).

You talk about a special blessing, brethren. It wasn’t made known. Down through the history of mankind, it wasn’t until the translation of the Bible in various languages that it became to be known. It takes the Spirit of God to know it. That’s what’s important to understand.

“...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” (vs 5-6).

What does it mean to be a joint heir of Christ? What is an heir? You want to be an heir. Let’s see what God is holding out for us.

Hebrews 1:1: “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 ages” (vs 1-2).

Notice, we’re going to like Him, as John says, v 3: “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, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high.”

We’re going to inherit the universe with Christ. Think of that. You look out there and see the pitiful little pictures that men have. What is it actually like if you could get out there to see it close up? Think of that!

You, with God’s plan and destiny, have been called to be the very children of the Highest, God the Father. To be in the first resurrection and to be in that close knit family with God the Father for all eternity. To live and dwell in New Jerusalem! You go back and read that.

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God. Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship... [the very children of God] ...whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and **joint heirs with Christ...**” (vs 14-17).

That is fantastic, brethren. Now then, he says we may have to suffer:

- don’t worry about it
- don’t worry about anything because God is in charge
- Christ and the Father are in us
- His Word is true
- He will
 - ✓ lead us
 - ✓ guide us
 - ✓ bless us
 - ✓ forgive us
 - ✓ draw us to Himself

At the resurrection He will change our bodies from flesh to spirit.

- ***that’s why we need to be thankful***
- ***that’s why we need to be zealous***
- ***this is how we can change and overcome***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 9:49-50
- 2) Matthew 12:30
- 3) Mark 9:38-40
- 4) Matthew 7:21
- 5) Acts 17:24-25
- 6) Matthew 5:44-45
- 7) Deuteronomy 8:1-20
- 8) Revelation 3:14-18
- 9) 1-Corinthians 3:12-18
- 10) Revelation 3:17-18
- 11) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 12) Revelation 3:18-19
- 13) Psalm 119:18
- 14) Revelation 3:20
- 15) 1-John 1:1-3
- 16) Psalm 50:1-7, 14-15
- 17) Psalm 69:29-30, 32-34
- 18) Luke 9:29-31
- 19) Ephesians 3:1-6
- 20) Hebrews 1:1-3
- 21) Romans 8:14-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Jeremiah 23; 5
- 1 Corinthians 3:11

- Malachi 3
- John 14
- Revelation 19
- Mark 1
- Revelation 7, 8, 11, 16
- 1-John 3

Also referenced: Book:

From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born? by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:lp
Transcribed: 12-13-16
Formatted: bo—12/17/16

Copyright 2016—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.