

Grace of God and the Father's Power

Fred R. Coulter—March 22, 2014

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services! Soon we are going to partake of the Passover. That is the key of our relationship with God. Everything in the Bible revolves around that. If you would take and study John 17, you would find that the whole plan of God from before the creation of the world is involved.

The book of Ephesians is one of the most inspiring books in the entire Bible. We're going to do some study in the book of Ephesians in preparation for the Passover, so that we know and understand that God the Father Himself is dealing with us *directly*. This is the important thing. Let's make a differentiation:

to be ***under grace*** means:

- you have been baptized
- you received the Holy Spirit
- you are loving God
- you are keeping His commandments
- His Spirit is leading you
- you have access to God 24 hours a day, all the time

to be ***under law*** means:

- you are under the judgment of God for two things:
 1. If you live a decent enough life, you'll be in the second resurrection
 2. If not, you will be in the second part of the second resurrection to the Lake of Fire

The only ones that are under the first resurrection are ***those that have been called, and chosen***—that's why we're called the elect—***and have the Spirit of God***. The Spirit of God, as I have brought out, there are two parts to it:

1. the begetting from the Father
2. the mind of Christ through the Spirit of Christ

All of that, with some background, as we start in the book of Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, **to the saints** who are in Ephesus **and to the faithful in Christ Jesus**." That last phrase applies through all ages. Remember, Jesus told the apostles that they were to be witnesses of His resurrection and message and Truth and everything unto the ends of the earth.

Obviously, they never got there, but their writings are getting there today. I can say, if we ever get an e-mail from Antarctica, we will know that our message has gotten at least that far. Today it is really

going out in many different ways. We'll be going to quite a few Scriptures as we go through this.

Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the* patience of the saints... [Jesus commended the Church at Philadelphia for patiently keeping His Word] ...here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Notice carefully that *commandment-keeping and having the faith of Jesus* go together.

Just like James said, you can't have faith without works. Your works are to be the good works. Everyone has works, but not everyone has faith. That's important to realize. There are some people who say it's faith alone, all you have to do is believe in Jesus and everything is just fine. ***No!*** Believing in Jesus is just a start.

Let's connect that with Rev. 12:17. Here's going to be a time that is going to affect the whole Church in a very profound way. This will signal the beginning of the Tribulation. Satan is cast down from heaven.

Revelation 12:17: "Then the dragon was furious with the woman..."—because God took part of the Church (I need to do an article or a booklet on the rapture hoax.) to be taken to a place of safety, but not all of those who claim to be Christian. So, you see why the Christianity of this world, claiming no works—really no faith—just profession, think what's going to happen to them when the rapture does not occur.

"...and went to make war with the rest of her seed..." (v 17). When that happens, we are going to need the strength of the Holy Spirit and Christ in us in a profound way. Notice how we are marked out, and this will be evident. By time all of this comes around, with all of the detection things they have today, *the mark of the beast*, and all of that, they will know who the Christians really are.

"...who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v 17). That testimony of Jesus Christ is His whole message, but also the testimony of Christ concerning the Passover.

Ephesians 1:1: "...to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus.... [Paul starts out every epistle this way]: ...Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 1-2).

The thing that I want to emphasize today is: ***God the Father is directly involved in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit***. That's something! When you put that together with all of

the religions of the world, with all of their control and everything that they have, this cuts people off from God. Christ is at the right hand of God.

Let's notice what God has blessed us with. I think that there is not enough emphasis put on the blessing of the Holy Spirit of God from the Father, and yet, everyone is looking toward the resurrection to be the sons and daughters of God. But the relationship that we have with God now is the all important thing up to that point.

Verse 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly *things* with Christ."

- Is it a blessing to have our sins forgiven? *Yes!*
- Is it a blessing to have the Holy Spirit of God? *Yes!*
- Is it a blessing to keep the Sabbath, Passover, and Holy Days? *Yes!*
- Is it a blessing to have the angels of God watching over us?
- Is it a blessing to have the Word of God, and for us today, all of the Word of God?

I think it's very interesting, when you go back and see just before God began to fulfill the promise to the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, just like God did with the children of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. He took them to Mt. Sinai and gave them His Word. Before God started blessing Ephraim and Manasseh with the rise of the British Empire and later the United States of America, He first raised up William Tyndale, so they could have the Word of God as the moral authority to do what God wanted them to do.

Yes, they failed in a lot of what they should have done; but nevertheless, God gave it. As I've mentioned before—and it's really something, because I think it's very evident that William Tyndale was from the tribe of Levi, probably of a priestly line in order to translate the whole Bible—he said that it was a thousand times easier to translate from Hebrew into English than from Greek into English, because he knew the native language of Wales; he was a Welshman. Gaelic is first cousin to Hebrew. That is an amazing statement by him.

Knowing who Ephraim and Manasseh are. Living in this nation, God has raised up America so that there could be freedom of speech, to preach the Gospel, to go around the world with the Word of God. All in the meantime, God was causing the Bible to be translated, to be put in every language possible, so that this can go out to the ends of the earth. All of these are spiritual blessings through Christ.

Verse 4: "According as He [the Father] has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world..." That's talking about His plan that He had formulated *before* the foundation of the world. So that everyone that He chooses even now, not that they were predestined to be called and others are predestined to be thrown away, but that in His plan He predestined them for Himself. We are the children of the Father.

"...before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love" (v 4). That is the key important thing. When you read 1-Cor. 13 about how important love is, it's greater than prophecy. It's greater than all things because that establishes your personal relationship with God. That's why the first commandment is *love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being!* And God loves us.

"...that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love" (v 4).

Speaking of Christ, Colossians 1:18: "And He is the Head of the Body, the Church..." Sorry about that, pope; you've got the wrong church, the wrong name. Christ in heaven is the Head of the Church.

"...Who is *the* beginning, *the* firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell" (vs 18-19).

Here is how we are redeemed, having to do with the Passover, v 20: "And, having made peace... [we are to have grace and peace] ...through the blood of His cross, by Himself to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in heaven. For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you... [notice how it's going to be at the resurrection] ...Holy... [means you're going to be composed of spirit] ...and unblamable... [no sin at all] ...and unimpeachable... [no one can bring an accusation against you] ...before Him; **if** indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that is under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant" (vs 20-23). It is literally going out to all creation, but the only ones to receive it are human beings.

Think of this: When you partake of the Passover, remember, **God the Father Himself has called you!** We're human, we're weak, but the calling of God has to do with calling those who don't think and who also know that they are not

anything. *He has personally chosen us for Himself*—that's something.

Ephesians 1:5: "Having predestinated us **for sonship** to Himself..." Want to emphasize that over and over again: How much is God involved in our lives? *The Father!* Let's look at the process of this. All of this is done spiritually by the power of God. Is this not one of the first verses you heard when you were being called? *Yes*, but how much more is there to it than we realize when we get into the rest of the Scriptures.

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father... [This is what Protestantism leaves out. They leave out the Father. It's all Jesus, *Jesus*, *Jesus*, and it is a *false* Jesus] ...Who sent Me, draws him..." What was the day that you began on your journey, which leads you to this point right now? I'm sure every one of you can remember an event—an occasion, a troubling, a problem in life, a collapse of your whole existence—and you cried out to God. You heard the only answer is *God* through Christ and you began to cry out to Him. Did God answer that prayer? *Yes, He did!* Do you have the Spirit of God? *Yes, you do! God gave it!*

"...Who sent Me, draws him... [He does that with the seven Spirits of God. When that is finished:] ...and I will raise him up at the last day" (v 44).

Let's just review and clarify something concerning the last day. That does not mean the Last Great Day after the Feast of Tabernacles. The Hebrew calendar starts with Trumpets. Then you go: Atonement, Tabernacles, Last Great Day, Passover, two Holy Days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

- What is the last Holy Day? *Pentecost!*
- When did the Church start? *On Pentecost!*
- When will the change for the Church of the resurrection take place? *On Pentecost!*

Verse 45: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be taught by God.'..." How do you understand what you understand? Let's reverse it all around this way. How many great, intelligent people study theology, learn the languages, and they don't understand God, and they don't know God. Why? *Because they were not taught by God, and there was no repentance, no love and no faith!*

They have had a *form* of some of those things. But look and understand, not just Sabbath, but all the commandments of God are test commandments—are they not? Which is the most important test commandment that men have produced so many variations and changes in? *The*

Passover! That's why it's important to keep it the way that the Bible teaches it.

"...they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me" (v 45).

How important are you to God the Father? Christ will eventually become a Father, as we know by the prophecies in Isa. 9, but that won't happen until the Millennium.

Think about this, John 16:26: "In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, for the Father **Himself** loves you..." (vs 26-27). Is that not one of the spiritual blessings in the heavenly things? You can't get anything more heavenly than the Father loving you—can you? *Himself loves you!*

"...because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father" (vs 27-28).

John 17:6: "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of this world.... [the name is the Father] ...They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word."

Remember what Jesus said. What words did He speak? *Everything the Father told Him to speak!* When we reject the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are rejecting the teachings of the Father. "They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word."

Let's see how tremendous that just this opening is, Ephesians 1:5: "...according to the good pleasure of His own will." Think about that!

- God is love
- God loves us
- God has called us
- He wants us to be His sons and daughters
- He is dwelling in us now

How great is that? How magnificent then is it with the Passover?

Verse 6: "To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace... [You can't have that access to God without grace. There can be no greater grace than that.] ...wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (vs 6-7). Let's count it:

- v 2—grace
- v 6—grace (twice)
- v 7—grace

Isn't that amazing? Notice the rest, this is something! The world, in pursuing what it's doing now, is thinking that it's going to make a super race. They're going to do it Satan's way, with technology with genetics, with implants, with the *mark of the beast*. God is going to do it through the resurrection.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence." We're not to be hillbilly nincompoops. We may start out that way, but if you know the Word of God, you know the Truth of God, you have it written in your heart and in your mind, you are wiser than all the wise men in the world who profess themselves to be wise; and as Paul wrote, they were the foolish ones. In their wisdom they rejected God. In our stupidity, we accepted God, because He called us, and He is going to make us wise.

Verse 9: "Having made known to us the mystery [secret] of His own will..." Think of the responsibility of being given that secret of God. The world doesn't know it. They are blinded to it.

"...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself. That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the times*..." (vs 9-10). This tells us God's plan is laid out by the *appointed times*. They will be fulfilled over and over again.

...He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth" (v 10).

Let's see the comparison. God has caused the foolishness of the world that in time He can save them. Think about what's going to happen when they are raised in the second resurrection and then they are given some understanding as to what God did through bringing all of those in the first resurrection. That's going to blow their minds.

Notice what God says, 1-Corinthians 1:19: "For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will nullify the understanding of those who understand.'" Doesn't God's relationship with us, through His Spirit, nullify all of that? Listen, when *the mark of the beast* comes in, people are going to think, 'Oh, this is great. This is wonderful. Look at what technology has done.' That's kindergarten, grade school stuff. God has done it with His Spirit; with us, *now*.

Verse 20: "Where *is the wise*? Where *is the scribe*? Where *is the disputer* of this age? Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through *its own* wisdom did not know God..." (vs 20-21). They said, 'Though we don't want to know anything about you, God, we'll figure it out ourselves.' God said, 'All right, go.' They didn't realize that they

automatically had blinders put on them. So they didn't know God, so here is what He did.

"...it pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching. For *the Jews* require a sign, and *the Greeks* seek after wisdom; but we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the Jews it is* a cause of offense, and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; but to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are highborn *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things" (vs 21-27).

Isn't that something? God does it totally different, because His Spirit is able to give us the knowledge through His Word, the strength and the understanding and by the resurrection to change us from flesh to spirit. What technology in the world can even come close to that?

Verse 28: "And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence" (28-29).

But notice what Christ does for us—selected—this is God's plan, v 30: "But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*'" (vs 30-31).

That's where we start from; we are to continue to grow in grace and knowledge. And I always remember what Paul wrote in Rom. 2, when he was excoriating the Jews for their prideful arrogance and how much they knew, he said, 'You that teach others, *don't you teach yourself*?' We are to constantly learn from the Word of God.

When in this lifetime, even if we could study 24 hours a day, seven days a week and never sleep—which we can't in the flesh, so we have to dismiss that—but with God's Spirit, when we understand the things of God, we understand more than all the most intelligent, highest paid, highest honored people in the world. One day, at the resurrection, we will be over them. They'll look and say, 'Where did you come from?'

Let's see what God does to make that possible, 1-Corinthians 2:9: "But according as it is written, 'The eye has not seen, nor *the ear* heard,

neither have entered into *the* heart of man, *the* things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” Notice, all of it is based upon the love of God.

- God's love for us
- Our love back to Him

That is the highest standard of our behavior.

Verse 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us... [that's how we learn; the world can't understand it] ...by His Spirit...” Everything God does is with His Spirit. How many have seen pictures of the *northern lights* or the *southern lights*? They have it at both ends, because magnetism is coming from the sun to the top of the earth and to the bottom of the earth. They can only see it when the sun is low. That's the only time they can see the waves of magnetic particles coming from the sun. What does that do? That keeps the earth spinning, energized. God does that for the earth.

Think of what He does with us, with His Spirit, so that we can learn. Yes, we have to fight human nature. That's what Passover and Unleavened Bread is all about! But Paul told us because we are under grace, sin will not *rule* over you. Doesn't say you won't sin. Those in the world can't get rid of sin. They may change from one sin to another. Alcoholics may change from alcohol to candy, whatever. You may be able to discipline yourself to do various things, but does that change the mind? Does that convert your heart and mind? *No!*

Verse 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.” This is where we want to be. Remember what happened with the Church of Thyatira when they allowed Jezebel the prophetess to come and preach to them. That's the Catholic Church interfering with the Church of God. He said, ‘*Those who have not known the depths of Satan...*’ That's what it means to commit the unpardonable sin—the *depths of Satan*. We are to know the deep things of *God*—His Word; His Truth—and it's multi-layered: *word upon word, line upon line, precept upon precept*; all throughout the Bible.

I've got some pictures here; looks like a white whale, but that is an iceberg with frozen algae. Now you figure that! Just think when we're resurrected and are spirit beings, *we'll be ready to really learn*. Think about what we're learning now in the Word of God. We can go so far. You take a baby just born into the world, doesn't know anything. You can talk all day long about how great it is, how wonderful it's going to be, what he/she is going to become, how he/she is going to look, and all of this sort of thing, and he'll just smile or cry. Or if you are a father doing it, the worst thing that

fathers have to tend with their babies is when the babies go, and they have to clean up the mess.

When we are born into the Kingdom of God for the resurrection of the dead, think of what we are going to learn. If you think we are learning things now, think in great amazement what that is going to be.

Verse 11: “For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world...” (vs 11-12).

- Who is the prince of the power of the air?
- Who is the spirit of the world?
- Who is the spirit unto fear?

“...but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God” (v 12)—God the Father in our lives.

(go to the next track)

Let's see how much is here. What we are studying and reading here are some of the deep things of God.

Ephesians 1:10: “That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfillment of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him... [referring to Christ] ...in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose [the Father] Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will” (vs 10-11).

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, **according to the good pleasure of His own will.**” Here it is according to the counsel of His own will. Think about that.

Too many people want to come to God doing *their* will. That is manifest by all the different things concerning the perversion of the New Testament Passover: the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, with water and bread, with grape juice and bread, every hour in the Catholic Church on so-called ‘high’ Sundays. Seventh Day Adventists take it first Sabbath of every quarter. The Jehovah Witnesses are all in confusion. They were in pretty good shape until they passed 144,000 members, because they said only the 144,000 can take the memorial of the Lord's Supper. They do it on the right night, but for the wrong purpose. So, they bring things and set it in there and the way they have it is, if you think you're one of the 144,000 you can come forward and partake of it.

The confusion with the Passover illustrates the great sin of mankind wanting to tell God what to do! Wanting to go to God and be accepted *their* way. That goes all the way back to Cain—does it not? *Yes, it does!*

Verse 12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory...” All the rest of the angels are going to praise God because we are the spirit sons and daughters of God.

“...who first trusted in the Christ; in Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**” (vs 12-13). That's the key thing: *the Spirit of God makes the absolute Divine dividing line!*

There may be a lot of people out there who are searching and doing things, but they haven't answered the call of God yet, so God's Spirit may be with them through the seven spirits. But here we're talking about only those who have the Spirit of God by begetting in the mind. That's where all righteousness needs to come.

That's why we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because human nature puffs up; sin puffs up. Everything in our mind is what makes us do what we do or we put it in there and that's how we do it. This is why *conversion is of the mind*. We are to have the transformation of our mind. That's why 'religion' is so much of a low-grade substitute for the way of God. ***God wants you to keep the commandments because you believe them and obey them and it comes from your heart and from your mind.*** God wants you to love Him from your heart and from your mind, not just look to God as your so-called sugar daddy and expect things to happen in a good way.

Verse 14: “Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory.” There's a lot with that verse.

Here's how we have that relationship with God and have our sins forgiven. This is why when we first come to the knowledge of the Truth we start beginning to stop certain actions, which we find out are sin. That's a good start, but God wants the conviction of mind through repentance that we do the will of God *His way*.

Here is the only way that we stay in right standing with God and that is through Jesus Christ, Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are being justified freely **by His grace...**”

- we are the object of His grace
- the result of His grace

- we are living under grace
- we have that connection with God the Father and Jesus Christ

“...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood...” (vs 24-25). There can be no forgiveness without the shed blood. That's why Jesus tells us to drink this wine, which He said is symbolic of His blood.

“...in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past” (v 25). We are then justified to God. *We are redeemed!*

Rom. 7 is where we were before that. Here is a key to conversion: ***the identifying of how sinful human nature is and how deceitful that the mind really is***, especially when it comes to things that you can do that will bring you a benefit. Then we justify it as 'good.'

Romans 7:14: “For we know that the Law is spiritual... [everything that God does is spiritual] ...but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin.” Then he shows the battle of overcoming. We can overcome. We are out of that.

There are some things in 'religion' that come along—'religion' is a philosophy—that I want to point out is why we do the things that we do. After he shows that the mystery of God is *Christ in us*:

Colossians 2:1: “Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches... [this is what God is working to give us] ...of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; in Whom... [both of Them] ...are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (vs 1-3). Then he gives a warning. All the way through the Bible it's down to a simple thing:

- God's way *or* human way
- God's way *or* Satan's way
- God's wisdom *or* the wisdom of the world

So, he gives a warning, v 4: “Now, this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech.” Stop and think how many people have been deceived with persuasive speech. Those who don't know better, when it's brought up about the Sabbath and the Holy Days and the laws of God—*oh, well, that's the old Law*. What is the new law? *Just believe and you are saved!*

Verse 5: "For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet, I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him" (vs 5-6). Going *the way* of Jesus Christ. Remember what He said on the Passover night? ***I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life!*** Walking in Him.

Verse 7: "Being rooted and built up in Him... [because we are still growing in grace and knowledge; God is building His character within us] ...and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught..."

- Who does the teaching? *God the Father!*
- How? *Through His Spirit and His inspired Word!*

All the Word of God is God-Spirited or God-breathed.

"...abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy..." (vs 7-8) Philosophy is a *love of wisdom*. Philosophy is a worship of the human brain inspired by Satan the devil.

"...and vain deceit according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ" (v 8).

Today we have the whole Bible. It should be really, really hard to deceive people today if they are studying. But, yet, it's going to be the time of Satan's greatest deception. Why? *Because people don't study it!* People don't believe it.

Here's the warning, because when we get back to Eph. 1 it is a magnificent thing that God is going to do. This is what we need to keep in mind. Yes, you hear so many sermons:

- You've got to get sin out of your life. *True!*
- You've got to quit living in the world. *True!*

But you can't make everybody obey with a whip! God gives us inspiration through His Spirit. When you desire to do something with the inspiration of God, you're going to do it. You don't have to have someone tell you what to do. That's what God wants.

Verse 8: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ."

Someone wrote an e-mail to Bill O'Reilly about his book, *Killing Jesus*. He said, 'No one killed Jesus; He laid down His life.' That's really not a completely true statement. *Our sins killed Christ!* O'Reilly discounted it. Then there was another comment, 'Why do you have the cross the way that

you do on the front of your book?' If you've seen the front of the book, it's tied with rope, which is contradictory to the explanation that he has in the book. He said, 'That's what it really looked like; our research is good; our facts are rock-solid.' *That's what happens when you take some of the Truth and mix it with philosophy, vain deceit, and the traditions of men!* Nothing could explain Catholicism any better than that.

"...according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power" (vs 8-10). Does that not answer the question: What happened to all those people who used to be in the Church of God?

Ephesians 1:15: "For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (vs 15-16).

Notice what he prays for. This needs to be our prayer for all the brethren in all the Churches, everywhere, v 17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you... [it's from the Father Himself] ...*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.*" That is a tremendous thing— isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

The ultimate result of that is going to be, after the resurrection and in New Jerusalem when we can see God the Father face-to-face. What a time that is going to be!

Here is what he prays for, and this is what we need to focus on when we are looking at what God wants us to do: to understand what we are doing, why we are doing it, what the Father is doing, what Christ is doing—all together:

Verse 18: "*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened..." That's really an interesting statement. How many times you've been reading the Bible and BING! like a light goes off. What's happening? *The eyes of your mind are being enlightened!* How many times have you read a Scripture and then you're reading something else and BING! you put it together.

"...in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling... [that's something] ...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (v 18).

What is that inheritance going to be? *It's going to be in New Jerusalem!* What did Jesus say on the Passover night? '*You believe in God, believe also in Me. I am going to prepare a place for you, so that you may be where I am.*' That is amazing!

Verse 19: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power..." Stop and think for a minute! Remember when Jesus came back to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and they were all amazed at what He was saying. They said, 'Who is this? Is this not the Son of Joseph and His mother Mary and His brothers are here with us and His sisters. Who is He?'

- What were they doing? *They were limiting the power of God!*
- What did it say of what Jesus did? *He could do no mighty works there and He laid His hands on a few sick folks, and they were healed!*
- Do we do that with the power of God in our lives? *That's why we need to grow in grace and knowledge and understanding!*

Verse 19: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power." The inner working of the Spirit of God

- to change our minds
- to give us the love of God
- to write the laws and commandments of God in our heart and mind
- to develop the character of God

that He wants us to have!

Let's see the things that we are to be doing as emphasized by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We're to put out leaven, which is to:

- get rid of sin
- repent of it
- grow
- change
- overcome

We are to put in unleavened bread, which then is symbolic of:

- the righteousness of God
- the Word of God
- the Truth of God
- the love of God

Peter writes almost the same thing, 2-Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained *the* same precious faith as ours... [same faith as the apostles] ...by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord? (vs 1-2). Notice how we are to really grow, change and overcome.

Listen to this; this is absolutely marvelous, v 3: "According as His Divine power has given to us

all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness..." What we have with the Word of God. What we are learning, what we are growing in grace and knowledge in is to be growing in this.

"...through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these..." (vs 3-4). We've already covered some of them in Eph. 1. But through these, what happens?

"...that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in *the* world through lust... [we overcome] ...And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith..." (vs 4-5). He lists the ten things to grow in. Take these verses and use them during the Feast of Unleavened Bread so that you can grow in these things yourself. We won't expound them here, but we will read them.

"...add to your faith, virtue... [good behavior] ...and to virtue, knowledge... [correct knowledge] ...and to knowledge, self-control..." (vs 5-6). Self-control is important because if we are led by the Spirit of God, it is the rule of Christ in our lives that we control ourselves.

"...and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love *of God*" (vs 6-7).

Here's an absolute promise that we have, v 8: "For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause *you to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he says if you don't have those, you're blind.

Ephesians 1:19: "...according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead..." (vs 19-20). I don't know what the apostles experienced once they understood that it really was Christ. Think about that. Look at how He was beaten. Look at how He was scourged. Look at all that He went through. It wasn't, 'I'm going to sleep, everybody,' and wake up three days later and say, 'I'm raised from the dead.'

No! He poured out every drop of blood. Did He not? He was:

- beaten and scourged
- nailed to the cross
- hung there, and died there in agony

Then, here they are, they are all afraid of the Jews, because they come and get them and do the same thing to them that they did to Christ. So, there they

are in this room and all of a sudden Jesus appeared in the midst of them.

I've often wondered at that instant, what did they believe, what did they think. Old smart-aleck Thomas. The other apostles told him they saw Him. He said, 'I won't believe until I can see the holes in His hand and the wound in His side.' So, eight days later Jesus came and appeared again. 'Thomas, come here'. He repented! Think about what God is going to do for us raising us from the dead. Look what they can do with a little itty-bit of bodily fluid or hair or dandruff or fingernail. They can identify you; they now have a way.

I saw this on a forensic show. They now have a way that they can identify what type of person you are, not just male and female. They were looking for the killer of this woman and they applied this new DNA, and he was white, blonde, blue eyes! Just from a little bit of his blood. Guess who was watching that report on television when it first came out? *The killer*, who was white, blonde and blue eyed. Guess what he did? *He went down to the police department and surrendered and confessed!*

I bring that out from this point of view: that for us to understand how easy it is for God to have a resurrection. All He needs is the *spirit of man* and He can re-create you in the flesh or in the spirit. What were you when you began? *A speck!* How much did they need to identify this man? *A speck!*

Isaiah 26:17: "As a woman with child draws near to bear, she is in pain *and* cries out in her pangs; so have we been in Your sight, O LORD. We conceived; we have been in pain, we gave birth to wind. We have not brought about any salvation in the earth; nor have the people of the world come to life. Your dead ones shall live, *together with* my dead body they shall arise.... [resurrection] ...Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew *is as* the dew of lights, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter into your rooms... [New Jerusalem] ...and shut your doors around you..." (vs 17-20).

Verse 21: "For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the people of the earth for their iniquity..." The return of Jesus Christ!

The resurrection is going to be really quite an absolutely amazing thing. That's why I've said, when Christ first shows Himself as the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then it comes to the earth, and there's the great Sea of Glass, the earth is going to be prepared for aliens. Then all of a sudden—and I think they're going to see it—the resurrection of the saints from the dead.

Ephesians 1:21, concerning Christ: "Far above every principality and authority and power

and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come. For He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the *Church*, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all" (vs 21-23). That's quite a thing.

Eph. 2 & 3 are the most inspiring in the entire Bible, because we know that the Father is dealing with us, Christ is dealing with us.

Ephesians 3:14: "For this cause... [it's about preaching the mystery of God, made known even more] ...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named... [not yet finished, but named] ...that He [the Father] may grant you, according to the riches of His glory..." (vs 14-16). This is what we need when we take the Passover and go through the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

"...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man." That there may come about a greater degree of conversion in our lives, in our thoughts, in our actions, in everything that we do.

Verse 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love... [the love of God; our love for God and His love for us] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height" (vs 17-18). We won't understand that until the resurrection, but God can help us to understand as much as we can now as we yield to Him.

Verse 19: "And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." That is the end result of what God wants. If we keep our hearts and minds focused on that, what is that going to be like to be filled with all the fullness of God? ***The only way we're going to find out is to make sure we are there!***

Notice the promise here, v 20: "Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 20-21).

This is the end result that starts with the Passover! Have a good Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 1:1
- 2) Revelation 14:12
- 3) Revelation 12:17

- 4) Ephesians 1:1-4
- 5) Colossians 1:18-23
- 6) Ephesians 1:5
- 7) John 6:44-45
- 8) John 16:26-28
- 9) John 17:6
- 10) Ephesians 1:5-10
- 11) 1-Corinthians 1:19-31
- 12) 1-Corinthians 2:9-12
- 13) Ephesians 1:10-11, 5, 12-14
- 14) Romans 3:23-25
- 15) Romans 7:14
- 16) Colossians 2:1-10
- 17) Ephesians 1:15-19
- 18) 2-Peter 1:1-8
- 19) Ephesians 1:19-20
- 20) Isaiah 26:17-21
- 21) Ephesians 1:21-23
- 22) Ephesians 3:14-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-Corinthians 13
- Isaiah 9
- Romans 2

Also referenced: Book: *Killing Jesus* by Bill O'Reilly

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