

## The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XII The Operation of God's Grace & The High Priesthood of Jesus Christ

(Chapters 4-5)  
Fred R. Coulter

We just finished a special study on Hebrews 4:9-10, and I just want to mention some things concerning the Sabbath and grace, and the Sabbath and faith. It's very important for us to understand. Protestants believe in a form of grace that leads to lawlessness. **God has a form of grace that leads to love and obedience!** There's a vast difference. You cannot love God if you don't keep His commandments. Therefore, what makes the Protestants think that you cannot have Sabbath-keeping and grace at the same time? The truth is, Sabbath-keeping and grace go hand-in-hand.

Here is something that we need to realize and emphasize in everything that we do, Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, **we are establishing the Law.**" Why do you establish law through grace? *Then you understand the full purpose of the Law!*

Let's use the example of the Sabbath. The command is 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy, for in six days the Lord made the heaven and earth and sea and all things that are therein, and He rested on the seventh day and blessed and sanctified the seventh day. Therefore, you shall rest and not do any work in it.'

Keeping the Sabbath from sundown to sundown is a physical aspect of the law of Sabbath-keeping. Resting on the Sabbath is a physical aspect of keeping the Sabbath. Everything else is an operation of grace. Why is that? What is grace? *Grace is the first expression of God's love toward us through the things that He has provided for us!* He gave the Sabbath Day as a gift, which means that a gift is grace. He made the operation of the Sabbath Day to be an *operation of grace*. The only operation of law is from sundown to sundown and to rest. The rest of it is the *operation of God's grace*.

We will see why it is an *operation of grace* and what it is that God has done, and what it is that He wants us to do today. Just like all the rest of creation that is enumerated there in Gen. 1 that God did—everything that He created on each different day was to be perpetuated in its kind, after its kind from that time down through however long it is until God completes His plan and New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven to the earth. All the animals

were to reproduce after their kind; all the birds after their kind; the fish after their kind; human beings after their kind—and human beings were made in the image of God!

The reason that God made us in His image is so that we can enter into His Family, as we know. I'm just summarizing some of these things right now. God wants to have a special day where He would put His presence. Originally, the presence of God with Adam and Eve was direct, together. You cannot say that they were not in the gracious presence of God. God made Himself in a form—not with His glory, not with His power, not with His splendor—which Adam and Eve could see Him and talk to Him and they did (Gen. 2-3); He especially created the Sabbath Day for that operation of grace, that God can fellowship with His creation, mainly man!

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." All the physical creation was done. By the way, they all operate by law—don't they? *Yes, they do!*

Verse 2: "And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day..." (vs 2-3).

This blessing was to be a continuous blessing through all time, just like the creation of everything that He did and He said, and He blessed them and told them to be fruitful and multiply, was to be for all time as long as the creation in this form existed. He blessed the seventh day and in blessing it and sanctifying it—that is making it Holy—He made it Holy with His bodily presence for Adam and Eve when He set aside the time that is Holy. In effect, created it! This then was for the act of grace that He could fellowship with mankind whom He had made.

"...and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (v 2). Does God need to rest in the sense that He's worn out from doing His work as compared to human beings? If you put in a heavy day's labor, you're tired; you're worn out. You want to rest; you want to sleep. **God never wears out! God is spiritual!** So, even though He rested, and even

though it said He was refreshed (in another place) *God created the Sabbath for man!* Jesus said, 'The Sabbath was made **for** man'—meaning *mankind* from that time all the way through—'and not man for the Sabbath.' Therefore, 'the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath Day.' Look at all the things that Jesus did on the Sabbath Day:

- to heal
- to teach
- to bring them the Word of God

All of these were an **act of grace** on the Sabbath Day:

- to bring them the Truth of God
- to bring them the love of God
- to heal them
- to forgive them their sins
- to show them God's way
- to bring salvation to them

All of that is an **act of grace!**

So, when we keep the Sabbath Day today, it is literally fulfilling the grace portion of the Sabbath. Remember, if anyone says that you keep the Sabbath because the Law says, in the fourth commandment: 'remember the Sabbath, to keep it Holy'; the function after the Sabbath, after it's defined as law is an *operation of grace!* You can apply the same thing to all the commandments of God. 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' And if you have no other gods before the true God then God's grace comes upon you. 'You shall not make any graven image of any likeness of any kind, of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath, and shall not bow down to worship them; because God is a jealous God.'

*If He's the Creator, then anything that He has created cannot represent God.* So then, there's a penalty that comes from breaking the Law, and you are *exiled from grace*, because God is a jealous God and brings a 'punishment to the third and fourth generation of those that hate Him. But unto thousands who love Me and keep My commandments.'

**Love and commandment-keeping are also an extension of grace!**

- Can you keep the commandments of God through the grace of God? *Yes, you can!*

You can keep them in a way that is spiritual. You can keep them in a way that is with understanding.

- Are you not blessed for honoring father and mother, as He says, 'that your days may be long on the earth'?

- Is that not a blessing?
- If it is a blessing, is it not grace from God?
- *No question about it!*
- How about 'you shall not commit murder'?
- Is that not a blessing and grace to the society?
- *Look at the societies where they have nothing but murder!*

Chicago, Illinois, had the highest rate of murder of any city in the United States; that's a hodge-podge of Babylon and predominately Catholic, by the way. It's also the home of Louis Farrakhan and the Islamic nation. It was also the place where they had the Parliament of the World's Religions. It's also heavily laced with a lot of Mafia. Because they have more murders, is Chicago a gracious place to live in? *NO!* Certain sections you wouldn't even want to venture into. You can apply that to any city, anywhere, any society, any people, anytime in history down through time.

You can go right on with the rest of the commandments and you come to the tenth commandment: 'You shall not covet.' When there is not covetousness, then you have honesty and truth, respect of private property, which then is a gracious blessing from God. When God said in Deut. 28 that if you will '*listen to keep all My commandments you will be blessed*':

- *a blessing comes* from the grace of God
- *a cursing comes* because we do not keep the commandments of God

Let's apply this to the Sabbath Day.

Let's see the real reason why God, now today, wants us to keep the Sabbath with the operation of grace, through His Spirit. To worship Him **in Spirit and in Truth** is an *operation of grace*. We need to understand that. It's interesting how John starts 1-John, and this is really profound for us to understand.

1-John 1:1: "That which was from *the* beginning..." There are three places where it talks about the beginning of the creation: Genesis, Gospel of John and 1-John; then Mark talks about the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"...that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves..." (v 1)—seeing Him. Of course, John was one of the three that saw Him in the transfiguration on the mount.

"...and our own hands handled... [after He

was resurrected] ...concerning the Word of Life; (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ” (vs 1-3).

Fellowship becomes *an operation of grace*. The only problem is, too many churches turn it into an operation of socializing. If you put getting together with people, your friends and those that you know, before worshipping God and serving God and keeping the Sabbath and doing it in grace, then your fellowship can become in vain because the true fellowship doesn't come just with each other. The true fellowship comes first from God the Father and Jesus Christ and then each other.

“...indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ” (v 3). So, when you keep the Sabbath as an operation of grace, because God has put His presence in it with His Spirit, that's why it becomes very important that on the Sabbath Day that you *pray*, that you *study*, that you use this day as a *day of*:

- grace
- forgiveness
- thanksgiving
- drawing close to God

That's why God gave the Sabbath Day. Also, you can apply it to the Holy Days, because *the Holy Days show the operation of God* beginning with the Church and clear on into the salvation of the whole world as you come clear on down to the Last Great Day. It's really quite a thing that you understand it.

Let's remember what it says: 'If you're Christ's then you're Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.' When God called Abraham out of the land of Ur and told him to go into the land where he would go, and God blessed him and 'in you shall all the nations of the world be blessed. Those that bless you I will bless and those that curse you I will curse.' God gave grace to Abraham to begin with.

We know that Abraham obeyed God. We know that he kept His commandments, His statutes, His laws. He obeyed His voice and His charge. Grace does not in any way imply a lawlessness. It implies a complete *spiritual* understanding of the laws of God. You *establish the Law* because you desire to do it rather than the children of Israel who were disobedient and gainsaying or contradicting.

That's exactly what Israel does to this very day. They read the Scriptures and they contradict God.

Let's see about Abraham, Romans 4:1: “What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to *the* flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting, but not before God” (vs 1-2). Please understand this, it's very important to realize: ***Justification only comes by believing in Christ and believing God!***

When it says there in Gen. 15 that Abraham believed God and it was counted as righteousness for him, that does not mean it's a substitute for keeping the commandments of God. That righteousness is the right standing of God, which is called *justification*. If you don't keep the Sabbath *spiritually* from the point of view of grace, as we're covering today, then all your Sabbath-keeping can be in vain, because you're missing the purpose of Sabbath-keeping. If you don't believe that just get the *Code of Jewish Law* and read all of their laws concerning *their* laws for Sabbath-keeping.

Verse 3: “For what does the Scripture say? ‘And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.’ Now, to the one who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace; rather, *it is reckoned* as a debt” (vs 3-4).

This is very easy to understand, very simple. If you are hired by someone to work and they say, ‘If you work for me I will pay you \$10/hr. Fair enough?’ *Fair enough*. ‘You work 8-5 with an hour off for lunch.’ *Fair enough*. Then at the end of the week he owes you, as a debt, \$400 for your work. Now, if he doesn't pay you, you can take him to court and get your \$400, provided he doesn't declare bankruptcy between now and then.

When you have belief in God... Notice it said that ***he believed God!*** There's a vast difference in believing that there is a God—because even the demons do and tremble—and believing God! If you believe God you're going to do what God says! It was counted to him for righteousness. In other words, by believing God, you're put in right standing with Him, and this applies to the sacrifice of Christ. You believe that your sins are forgiven upon repentance and the application of the blood of Christ for the remission of your sins. You believe that! ***That is an operation of grace***, because it is the work of the Spirit by repentance. It's the work of belief by the heart and mind, and you are justified by that.

Verse 6 also shows repentance: “Even as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness **separate from**

works...[‘without’ in the *King James* and is a very improper translation] ...‘Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute *any* sin’” (vs 6-8).

This shows the operation of grace and forgiveness, and then in believing God a desire to love and serve God and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. All of that is *an operation of grace*, and that’s what God wants the Sabbath to be.

So, all of those that say that if you keep the Sabbath you have fallen from grace, that is a false statement! If you keep the Sabbath and worship God in Spirit and Truth and believe God and are justified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Sabbath Day—through the Spirit of God and the Word of God—becomes an *operation of grace!*

- God created the day for that!
- He fellowships with us on that day!
- He puts His presence in that day!
- He gives us understanding of His Word on that day!

In many cases we learn more on the Sabbath than we do studying the Bible during the week. That comes about because of God’s presence and God’s Spirit because He’s fellowshipping with us. If we approach the Sabbath from that point of view:

- the whole keeping of the Sabbath
- the whole benefit of the Sabbath
- the whole understanding of the Sabbath

becomes so much greater.

Let’s see it shows something very important. Here, in describing on how to keep the Sabbath, God is really describing the operation of keeping the Sabbath as an *operation of grace*. There are a few things we need to do: Keep it from sundown to sundown and rest. There are other things we need to do to keep the Sabbath Holy:

Isaiah 58:13: “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath... [from trampling on it. In other words, using it for your own means] ...*from* doing your own desires on My Holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires... [business—after all, the Sabbath should be a pleasure] ...nor speaking *your own* words”—meaning:

- you speak the words of Christ
- you encourage and fellowship with each other in the Word of God
- talk about how your days in the week have gone and how God has helped you

- encourage one another to love God
- be loving and forgiving

All of these things are very important in Sabbath-keeping.

Here’s the key. When you do that and keep the Sabbath as an *operation of grace*, remember as we started, ***grace establishes the Law!***

Verse 14: “Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.”

In other words, you will have your inheritance with God and with Christ. That’s what it’s talking about—Sunday-keeping {note sermon series: *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* and *Holy Sabbath*}. Since we’re here in Hebrews and we’re just about concluded with *Sabbath-keeping for the people of God* we want to finish it up with the *operation of the Sabbath*, which is really an *operation of grace*.

God promises that He will bring you into that inheritance. Let’s look at another thing that happens when you worship God in *Spirit and in Truth* on the Sabbath Day. Let’s see what happens. I tell you what, I’ve experienced this over and over again through the years, and especially on the Sabbath Day. There are many times when I have sermon prepared and I’ve spent a lot of time doing it, that I would come to Sabbath services and something will come up, then God will inspire me to speak on something entirely different, I have not even prepared. Also, give us an understanding of things that we have never understood before.

I remember in particularly the series on Daniel/Revelation where I did the chart. The first time I did the chart I just did it on a blackboard at services. It didn’t dawn on me until the Sabbath Day driving to services. Here is what God will do. Here’s the important thing that is a function of the Sabbath. This functions all the time, but on the Sabbath particularly so, because God puts His presence in the Sabbath and His Spirit in the Sabbath, so then on the Sabbath Day we get the teaching and the inspiration and the edification that God wants us to have.

1-Corinthians 2:7: “Rather, we speak *the* wisdom of God in a mystery... [which the world can’t understand] ...*even* the hidden *wisdom* that God foreordained before the ages unto our glory, which not one of the rulers of this world has known (for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory); 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” (vs 7-9).

Loving God truly and keeping His commandments is also an *operation of grace*.

Verse 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit...” This is what God's Spirit does:

- when we study God's Word on the Sabbath
- when we come together and ask for God's blessing
- when we ask God to open our minds
- when we come together and ask God to give us understanding of ‘Your Word’

Like David said in Psalm 119:18: “Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.”

God reveals them in particular on the Sabbath Day, and He reveals them to those who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth on any day of the week; at any time.

1-Corinthians 2:10: “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.” That's what God wants us to be perfected in today; the deeper things of God, to understand the things of God.

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, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God” (vs 11-12)—which is clearly this:

If you have the spirit of the world you cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, because they're contrary one to another. But if you have the Spirit of God *you can understand*. And here's the reason: ***that we might know the things that are given freely to us of God!*** Everything that is given freely is an ***operation of grace!*** The understanding of God's Word is ***an operation of grace***, not an operation of intellect. We read in Rom. 1, the *wise* say, ‘we know better, there is no God, so they become fools!’ It's not an operation of philosophy or logic; it's an *operation of conversion* of the heart and the Spirit of God. Then God's Spirit teaching you through the grace of God that you can grow in it.

Verse 13: “Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the Holy Spirit in order* to communicate

spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand *them* because **they are spiritually discerned**” (vs 13-14).

That's how you understand the Scriptures and how I understand the Scriptures: ***by the Spirit of God and not by the self; not by the wisdom and the intellect.***

Let's see some very important things and why we come to the point that we do, and why these things are given this way. Let's review:

Hebrews 4:9: “There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God. For the one who has entered into His rest...” (vs 9-10)—the *rest of God*—‘katapausis’ is the Sabbath. You have not yet entered into the Kingdom of God, yet, because that hasn't come. And you don't enter into any ethereal spiritual rest where you have nothing to do because Christ did it for you. *That is a satanic, lawless lie!*

You “...enter into His rest, he also has ceased from his works... [Gen. 2—and that was on the seventh day] ...just as God *did* from His own *works*. We should be diligent therefore to enter into that rest...” (vs 10-11). This applies two ways:

1. we need to be diligent to enter into the rest of the weekly Sabbath as it comes to us
2. we need to be diligent to keep our eyes on the goal of the Kingdom of God so that we can enter into the Kingdom of God

“...lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience” (v 11). Disobedience and disbelief go hand-in-hand. If you don't believe God you won't obey God; it's that simple!

Verse 12: “For the Word of God ***is living***... [it's the only kind of word in the world] ...and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, 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.... [that's why people don't like it] ...And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things ***are naked and laid bare*** before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account” (vs 12-13).

Those two verses are very powerful, and it's very interesting that it follows in sequence right after the Sabbath Day. You go back and read: “...the Word of God *is* living and powerful...” for those who refuse to keep the Sabbath when God gave it to Israel. *Oh, absolutely!* Sent them into captivity.

There is something else important concerning the Word of God that is *living and powerful!* God has inspired that it be written down so that we will know. And there are a lot of people who have Bibles in their homes, which they never, never read but it is there. I call your attention to a witness that Jeremiah gave. He gave it, wrote it down, and he sent a messenger to Babylon and he was told when he gets to Babylon to 'read the message, put a rock around it and throw it in the river of Babylon.' Just stop and think, from a practical point of view: How many people in Babylon really heard that? Was the whole population of the city of Babylon standing there watching him while he gave that witness? *No!* But everything that God said in that witness to Babylon took place.

Let's apply the same thing to those who have Bibles at home that never read them. You have a witness sent from God right in your own home. If you don't read it—if you don't find out about it—you are ignoring the witness of God and you are liable! Granted, as it says in another place, 'he that knew to do his Lord's will would be beaten with many stripes, and he who knew not to do his lord's will, will be beaten with few stripes.' So therefore, it is still a witness! It is living!

Now, let's understand something concerning *living and powerful*. Even for those who don't know the Word of God, or have ignored it, thrown it out, discounted it or rejected it, the laws contained in the Word of God, ***the operation in the Word of God is living and powerful and works in their lives.*** Let's take for example: All of those who have a 'religion'—which is a rejection of God's Truth—have another god before the true God.

- Do they have understanding and love that comes from the Word of God? *No!*
- Do they have penalties that come upon them?
- What about these societies that are so led by demons?

Let's just take a real base society, the basest in the whole world—New Guinea. God put them there and, unfortunately, they have gone after demons. Granted, missionaries have gone in there to try and convert them. Only some of the missionaries have had their heads become 'brain soup.' But you watch on the documentaries that you see, maybe on Discovery Channel or something like that, and you see those societies, how wretched and how evil that they are because they do not have the blessing of the laws of God. But, nevertheless ***the laws of God still***

***work!***

- If they murder and commit cannibalism, do they not have brain disease and die? *Yes!*
- If they follow demons and superstitions and idols, do they not have their mentality demented and are superstitious? *Yes!*
- If they constantly war and fight, do they constantly have a diminishing of the population by their own hand? *Yes!*

So, whether anyone knows it or not, it's still operates in their lives. For example: How about all of the young people that dishonor their fathers and mothers and die because they don't obey their fathers and mothers when they say: 'If you take the car don't speed and don't drink.' They disobey and what happens? *You can read about it many times:* a whole carload of teenagers die because they dishonored father and mother. Is the Word of God living and powerful and dividing asunder? Even of people in the world? ***Absolutely! No question about it!***

Let's understand the Word of God and how powerful it is.

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; 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..." (vs 1-3). The whole universe stays together because of the Word of the power of God! That's quite something!

I find it very profound; false doctrines come in cycles. There's another false doctrine of the oneness of God, which is there is only one God—period! Christ was not God, and that the first verses in the Gospel of John are a personification of the Word. Well, they're not a personification of the Word in the exact inspired account of the Word of God. Remember, it says, 'Christ upholds all things by the Word of His power. He has the power, and upholds the universe and everything that there is!

This also shows the Word of God. This is not a personification such as in Prov. 8 where it says, 'I wisdom am like.' That is a personification. This is a statement of fact that John wrote, and in all probability—when you examine the way that the Gospel of John is written; the first part and the last part—that when they did the final canonization of the New Testament, or maybe even before that, this was added to the beginning of it because of the problems we have in 1-John 4, that anyone who says

that Christ did not come in the flesh is an antichrist. This is an answer to it.

John 1:1 "In *the* beginning **was** the Word..." That is not a personification; that's a statement of fact. 'en'—which means, can actually have the connotation *before the beginning* of what we see as the creation.

"...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (v 1). Granted, there is no definite article in the Greek before *God*, where it says "was God." That is also very profound.

It reads this way in the Greek: 'Theos en ho logos.' Why does it not have any definite article before 'Theos'? *It is showing that the Word was God*, and without the definite article it means **everything that God is the Word was**.

Verse 2: "He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him... [Did He create Himself? *Of course not!*] ...In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men" (vs 2-4). That's how **powerful and living** the Word of God is!

Verse 10 also becomes very profound; this shows the absolute rejection of God by His creation. Yet, He is there as the Savior

Verse 10: "He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him..." How can you get around that? *In order to have the world made by Him, He had to have existed before the world existed!*

"...but the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (vs 10-11). *They rejected Him!* 'Receive' here means to *welcome* like you would bring someone into a bosom hug.

Verse 12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority... [power] ... to become *the* children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name; who were not begotten by bloodlines, nor by *the* will of *the* flesh, nor by *the* will of man, but by *the* will of God" (vs 12-13). So, God is the One who does the calling so there are no mistakes.

Verse 14: "And the Word... [Who was God, and God is spirit] ...became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth."

When we talk about the Word of God is *living and powerful*, and we talk about that in

relationship to Jesus Christ, there is no question whatsoever that He *was* God—before He became a human being. Please understand that **nothing is impossible for God!** The Jews say that Christ could not have been God and to become a human being, because 'we don't believe that.' You need to *listen* to that statement, because just because they don't believe it doesn't make their disbelief correct—does it? **Nothing is impossible for God!**

- He was the incarnate of the Word of God
- He spoke the Word of God
- He brought the living Truth of God

And it exists always, at all times, everywhere in the universe, and there is no variance to that whatsoever!

Psalm 138:2—let's see how powerful that God places His Word: "I will worship toward Your Holy temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness, and for Your Truth; for You have magnified above all, Your name *and* Your Word." Let's understand something about the Word of God:

- why it's living
- why it's powerful
- why it's sharper than any two-edged sword

Whatever God says is Truth! God cannot lie! It exists everywhere at all times and is so powerful. This is why people do not like the Bible.

Hebrews 4:12: "For **the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, 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.**" No other book does that, only the Word of God!

Let's look at some of the things that people do not like; they don't like to hear it, but this is the way that life is with human beings:

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death." They don't like to be told that. That's repeated in Prov. 16:25.

Jer. 17—this is what people really don't like, especially for those people who consider themselves good, honest, sincere and upstanding, so much so that they don't even need God. Remember that any moral standard that someone has, that they believe—which is good and they follow—though they reject God, it still comes back to the Word of God. If they would say:

- *I would never commit adultery.* Where did they get that from?

- *I would never steal.* Where did they get that from?
- *I always take care of my neighbor in need.* Where did that come from?

Even if they have all of this—*all of this*—they still have a heart described here in Jer. 17. There's a book out and I talked to Wayne Stenhouse and he said they're using it for Bible study on Friday night up there in Canada—*The Lies We Believe*. If we do not live in a lying, deceptive society today, where everything is an elusion and delusion and just the reality of things are not what you really see, and it's because of this. Why do people believe it? The same reason that people taunt.

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

There's no other book on the face of the earth that really tells you that. When people read that and think that they're really good, honest, upright and they're moral, they don't like to hear that they're deceptive. But they all like to have their 'little' lies.

Verse 10: "I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." That's just the way that life is.

Job 42—this will be very instructive for us. Remember, Job, in the letter of the Law, was a perfect man. God said to Satan, 'Behold Job My servant, no man like him; perfect and upright.' Let's notice what he said after he went through everything and he figured that he was so righteous that he had a righteousness that he could match up to God, where he could say, 'God, You come down here and look at my righteousness and I will hold it up to You and You will have to declare that, yes, I am righteous.' So, when God finally revealed Himself, He said, 'Job, I want to speak to you.' Job said, 'Oop! I'll put my hand on my mouth.' God said, 'Will you disannul My judgment that you may be righteous.'

Part of the judgment of God is the heart of man that He's given man because of sin. It goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. We are born with human nature, with 'a heart that is deceitful above all things'; whether we consider ourselves righteous or whether we know that we are wicked and evil. The heart is still 'deceitful above all things.' After God got done with Job, here's what Job said:

Job 42:1: "And Job answered the LORD and said, 'I know that You can do all things, and **that no thought can be withheld from You**'" (vs 1-2). No other book has the power of judging the thoughts

except the Word of God. No other book has the power—with the Holy Spirit of God—to convict people of sin and lead them to repentance than the words of God.

Verse 3: "*You asked*, 'Who *is* he who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have spoken that which I did not understand; *things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know."

That's another part of human nature—'vanity of vanities, all is vanity' says the preacher. And 'man at his very best states is altogether vanity.' Now Job begins repenting:

Verse 4: "Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said*, "I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me." I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes" (vs 4-6).

That's why the Word of God is *living and powerful* and cuts to the dividing asunder.' So that men and women will repent! So that they will come to God! And also for us to know that there is **nothing** that is not open to God.

**God's Word convicts that way!** Let me just add that when you have the Holy Spirit of God and you begin fighting sin in your mind, it is God's Spirit revealing the sin to you in your mind, because that's where sin begins and God reveals it to you so you can repent, which is a tremendous *operation of the grace of God*:

- to help cleanse your mind
- to help purge your mind
- to grow in grace and knowledge
- to bring every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ

Hebrews 4:13: "And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account."

Psalms 139:1—here David shows this very profoundly: "O LORD, You have searched me and have known me." **God knows!** How much does God know? If God's Spirit is in you and Christ is in you all these things take place. If you are the temple of the Holy Spirit—which you are—and Christ is in you, then everything you do Christ does with you. That's why you only receive a portion of the Spirit of God, a begettal, because you have to wait for the resurrection in order to receive the full measure of the Holy Spirit of God. That's why the Holy Spirit of God within you convicts you of sin in your mind; that you can repent!

Verse 2: "You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off. You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways" (vs 2-3). Of course! God made every human being. He knows how human beings are going to act. *Yes, He does!*

"...For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have enclosed me behind and in front, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (vs 4-6).

It shows the silliness of men when they say, 'Where is God?' It shows the foolishness of atheist that say 'there is no God.'

Verse 7: "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I go up into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the farthest parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me shall be night'" (vs 7-11).

That reminds me of a little boy or girl when they got caught doing something and mommy said to them, 'God sees everything.' *How can God see, there's a ceiling up there? How can God see? God can know everything!*

Verse 12: "Even the darkness does not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; as is the darkness, so is the light to You, for You have possessed my reins; You have knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for **I am awesomely and wonderfully made**; Your works are marvelous and my soul knows it very well. My substance was not hidden from You..." (vs 12-15).

That's what they call a newly begotten life within the mother's womb—*substance*—until it forms an embryo. So, this is very scientific and up-to-date.

"...when I was made in secret and intricately formed in the lowest parts of the earth.... [that's talking about the womb] ...Your eyes did see my substance, yet, being unformed; and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet, there were none of them" (v 16).

Quite a thing! They call that today, with all of our scientific knowledge and everything, *the human genome*. In other words, from the time of conception you are who you are, and you develop in your mother's womb according to the things that

God has put in, by number—the DNA and RNA—so that when it comes time for you to be born, voila! there you are! God knows all of it. God is so great that no two human beings—not even identical twins—are the same. That's something!

Verse 17: "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!.... [that's why God's Word is *living and powerful*, always working] ...If I should count them, they are more than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You" (vs 17-18). That's quite a thing! That's how powerful it is! That is why there is not a created thing that is not laid bare before God. God knows everything.

That's why we are to confess our sins to God; *to no man!* I remember watching something on TV and it had to do with a Catholic priest. The first thing they ask you, if you go to confession, is when was your last confession. That already puts you under fear. When people confess to a man they really don't tell the truth. That's why when God says, 'When you pray, go to a private place and pray to your Father, which is in secret.'

We'll see how we are to pray to God. That's directly between you and God. What we are going to see is that we have the greatest and most fantastic High Priest that could ever, ever be. No system of 'religion' on earth can substitute for the High Priesthood of God, being Jesus Christ. That's why there is not to be a priesthood over the people of God. Why does there have to be a priesthood when Christ is the High Priest over all? *There doesn't need to be one!* God never intended it to be! The whole thing of the Catholic Church with its priesthood is antichrist, using the name of Christ in the place of Christ.

Here's why, and this is put here deliberately, because when we go through everything that is stated up to this point—Heb. 4:13—there's a reason why we come to the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, and that He—and He alone—qualifies. This is going to be quite a thing, and this also sets the stage for all the rest of the book of Hebrews.

### The High Priesthood of Christ:

Let's take the next section: Hebrews 4:14: "Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a High Priest *Who* cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet, *He was* without sin. Therefore, we

should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (vs 14-16).

Hebrews 5:1: "For every high priest, being taken from among men to act in behalf of men, is appointed to serve in *the* things pertaining to God in order that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."

This is talking about the Levitical priesthood or Aaronic priesthood, and then we begin to compare that with the Priesthood of Christ.

Verse 2: "And he is able to deal gently with those who sin in ignorance and those who have been led astray, since he himself is also encumbered with many weaknesses. And because of these *weaknesses*, he is obligated also to offer *sacrifices* for his own sins, exactly as *he does* for the people. Now, no man takes the honor *of the high priesthood* upon himself, but *only* he who is called by God, in the same way as Aaron also was *called*. In this same manner also, Christ did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but He Who said to Him, '**You are My Son; today I have begotten You.**' Even as He also says in another *place*, '**You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec**'; Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because *He feared God*. Although He was a Son, *yet*, He learned obedience from the things that He suffered; and having been perfected, He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him, after He had been designated by God *as* High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec" (vs 2-10).

Let's go back and we'll begin going through verse-by-verse. He interjects right here that we have such a High Priest as Christ, but let's review the buildup to that point. All of this is laying the groundwork for the greatest High Priesthood, the superior covenant of the New Covenant with Jesus Christ Who is superior to the angels (Heb. 1:1-9). Who also came in the flesh (Heb. 2). This is important for us to understand why Jesus Christ is High Priest, and why God has given all those that He calls direct access to God the Father through Him. That's why it's so important, brethren, that we understand this. Let's also realize, too, that just as Paul was writing the book of Hebrews to prepare the people for the troubled times ahead. Actually, the troubles had already begun.

The troubles where we see that they were on the verge of committing the unpardonable sin was

because they began to refocus on the priesthood of Aaron and the physical priests. They began to focus on the physical things that they could do. They began to focus in on the Pascal lamb and the sacrifice of Judaism, rather than the Lamb of God being Jesus Christ.

They were on the verge, because Christ did not return in the time that they figured, of going right back into Judaism and rejecting the priesthood of Christ for the physical priesthood of men that they could see. Paul was preparing them for the destruction of that priesthood. He is building this up to show the greatness of Christ and His priesthood. Compared to the priesthood of Aaron—which was the old priesthood—to the priesthood of Christ, no priest of Aaron could have done what Jesus did. Jesus was God before He became human and then He suffered these things for the very purpose of making Him the kind of High Priest that we need to have.

Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering **the death**... [the very death for all the sins of all mankind] ...in order that by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone; because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (vs 9-10).

Even God in the flesh—Jesus Christ—was perfected by the things that He suffered. That's quite a thing to understand, brethren. No priesthood of the order of Aaron could ever have done this!

Verse 14: "Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same, in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil; and *that* He might deliver those who were subject to bondage all through their lives by *their* fear of death. For surely... [see how Paul is building up here to where we come to Heb. 4:14] ...He is not taking upon Himself to help *the* angels; but He is taking upon Himself to help *the* seed of Abraham. For this reason, it was obligatory for *Him* to be made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in* things pertaining to God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered, having been tempted *in like manner*, He is able to help those who are being tempted" (vs 14-18).

Then Paul goes one step further, Heb. 3, he

compares Christ to Moses. Then he builds all the way through Heb. 4:14, 'having a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens.'

Hebrews 4:15: "For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize... [this actually means *to share in compassionate feeling*] ...with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet, *He* was without sin."

What we need to understand is this: I've read where some men say that Jesus had to sin in order that He could understand. But it says here that 'He was without sin.' That's a contradiction. How is it that Jesus understands:

1. He was made flesh
2. He took on human nature

It says there in Hebrews that it was *obligatory, mandatory*, that He be made like His brethren. He partook of flesh and blood. That means He took on all the humanness that all human beings have. In other words, He took on human nature. This is a very profound thought:

God is Creator; He created all things through Jesus Christ. Because of sin, man was given the *law of sin and death*. Who sentenced man to that but God. We're going to see that Christ took that same nature upon Himself. That's how He knows what it's like to be tempted. If He didn't have that same nature, yet being filled with the Spirit of God to give Him the power to not sin, Satan the devil's temptations would have been nothing.

Let me give you an example: Suppose that you were behind a clear, visible barrier, but it was absolutely impenetrable to any weapon whatsoever that man could devise. Someone came up with whatever kind of weapon you want to say—machine guns, howitzers, recoilers, rifles, atomic bombs, whatever—and you could sit back there behind this visible barrier and nothing would touch you.

- Would you be fearful?
- Would you worry about whether you could be touched by any of these things or not?
- *No!*

So likewise, if Christ did not take on human nature the way we have human nature, He could not be tempted in the same way that we are.

- How could it be the same temptation as we have if He did not have complete human nature as we do? *Could not have been!*

Read that section in *The Christian Passover—The Nature of Man* and *The Nature of God*.

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus; Who, although He existed in *the* form of God... [existing as God] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but **emptied Himself...**" (vs 5-7)—divested Himself of being a spirit being, God. Can God do that? *Yes, He can! Nothing is impossible for God!*

"...and was made in *the* likeness of men, and took the form of a servant" (v 7). Quite a profound thing! How did God make us? *God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,'* for the very purpose that Christ could do this.

"...and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (v 8). If He did not have the law of death in Him, He could not have died.

Verse 9: "Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father" (vs 9-11).

Let's see what kind of flesh He came in. It was in the likeness of human flesh. Some people say His flesh was not like our flesh. Even the Catholics have the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary, so she would not have the stain on her soul of Adam's sin. So therefore, Christ could be born without the stain of human nature upon His soul. Well, that's not what the Bible says!

After Paul talks about the *law of sin and death* within our members, Romans 8:3: "For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in ***the* likeness of sinful flesh...**" That means in the exact, complete sameness.

That's why He could be tempted. He had all of these pulls. That's why He's able to help us in our temptations and can have sympathetic compassion, because He partook in the same temptations.

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

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 3:31
- 2) Genesis 2:1-2
- 3) 1 John 1:1-3
- 4) Romans 4:1-4, 6-8

- 5) Isaiah 58:13-14
- 6) 1 Corinthians 2:7-10
- 7) Psalm 119:18
- 8) 1 Corinthians 2:10-14
- 9) Hebrews 4:9-13
- 10) Hebrews 1:1-3
- 11) John 1:1-4, 10-14
- 12) Psalm 138:2
- 13) Hebrews 4:12
- 14) Proverbs 14:12
- 15) Jeremiah 17:9-10
- 16) Job 42:1-6
- 17) Hebrews 4:13
- 18) Psalm 139:1-18
- 19) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 20) Hebrews 5:1-10
- 21) Hebrews 2:9-10, 14-18
- 22) Hebrews 4:15
- 23) Philippians 2:5-11
- 24) Romans 8:3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 1, 3
- Deuteronomy 28
- Genesis 15
- Romans 1
- Proverbs 8
- 1 John 4
- Proverbs 16:25
- Hebrews 1:1-9; 3

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- *Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried & Hyman Goldin
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- *The Lies We Believe* by Dr. Chris Thurman
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Sermon Series:

- *Refuting Sunday Keeping*
- *The Holy Sabbath*
- *Daniel/Revelation*

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