

Epistle to the Philippians I

Chapter One

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If there's any one thing we need to do in growing in grace and knowledge and overcoming and understanding, 2-Peter 3 is very important for us to realize. Most of us have been in the Church for years and years, and what I'm going to bring to you as a combined study—with sermons and Bible studies done through the years—is to help fulfill this Scripture:

2-Peter 3:18: “Rather, **be growing in the grace and the knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” That's the whole purpose of why I am doing this. I know there are some that are saying—that are not familiar with what we are doing and what I've been preaching for years—‘who does Fred Coulter think he is rewriting the Bible?’ *No!*

What I'm trying to do is focus in and bring many of the Scriptures together included in the Amplified Translation of Philippians, Therefore, I have included in the booklet the Greek Interlinear so no one can say that I am trying to create something new, some new doctrine, or new thing. What I'm trying to do is create a way, a means, and an atmosphere and type of study so that we can all grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the most important thing we need to do. Please understand and realize, I'm not trying to set myself up as some great expert more than anyone else. What I'm trying to do is help us really get in and

- *study and know* the Word of God
- *to really live by* the Word of God
- *to be inspired by* the Word of God

I know that the more I study and translate and the more things that I do in getting into the Bible, I personally find the greater the Word of God is, the more fantastic it is. Understanding the Word of God—because of the mind of Christ and the Spirit of Christ—is really a tremendous and awesome thing. We need to be at the level so we can get deeper into God's Word, so we can really study it word-by-word and verse-by-verse, and bring in all the aspects of understanding, knowledge, and with study and the Spirit of God to really understand the Word of God.

In going through this series, what I hope that it will do is be helpful, enjoyable, inspirational and uplifting for you.

Let's begin with a little historical background of the book of Philippians. The Church

in Philippi—the name of the city—was established in 50_{A.D.} right after the conference in Jerusalem where we find that they discussed and went over the things that they wanted to cover for the different Gentiles coming into the Church.

Let's get a little bit of background concerning this book of Philippians. It's interesting to note that Paul was writing this book of Philippians in approximately 60-62_{A.D.} at a time when He was in prison. We'll see a little bit of that as we go.

Acts 16:8: “Now when they had passed by Mysia, they came to Troas”—the ancient city of Troy. If you look on a map that is right on the Bosphorus Dardanelle or right across from Greece, which is now modern Turkey. They could catch a boat and sail across over to northern Greece. That's what they did.

Verse 9: “And a vision appeared to Paul during the night. A certain man of Macedonia was standing, beseeching him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia *and* help us.’ And after he had seen the vision, we immediately sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel to them” (vs 9-10). Here they're coming into a brand new area that did not have the Word of God before, coming into a country wholly given over to paganism with a few of the Jewish synagogues being the exception.

You think about how you would begin preaching. Well, when God does things like this, He does it with a sign and a miracle to establish the power of God. That's exactly what He did to start the Church in Philippi.

Verse 11: “Therefore, after sailing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and on the next day to Neapolis; and from there *we went* to Philippi, which is *the* primary city in *that* part of Macedonia... [this was a large city] ...*and* a colony. And we stayed in this city *for* a number of days. Then on the [Sabbath] day of the weeks...” (vs 11-13). This is a very interesting word for Sabbath. In the Greek is ‘ton Sabbaton’ which is plural, meaning *on the first of the weeks*. It could very well be that this was on the Day of Pentecost. In this particular city there was no Jewish synagogue to go to. We find that there was in Thessalonica and there was in Berea, but not here in Philippi.

“...we went outside the city by a river, where *it* was customary *for* prayer to be *made*; and after sitting down, we spoke to the women who were

gathered together *there*. And a certain woman who worshiped God was listening; *she was* named Lydia *and was* a seller of purple from *the* city of Thyatira; whose heart the Lord opened to receive the things spoken by Paul” (vs 13-14). Here is also another verification that your understanding of the Scriptures has to be opened; that God has to call you and me—everyone. We can’t go to God and prove to God how good we are, because we’re not; ‘we’ve all sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ God worked in the mind of this woman to open her mind.

Verse 15: “And after she and her household were baptized...” We have here the same thing, starting right at the beginning:

- repentance
- baptism
- the laying on of hands
- the receiving of the Holy Spirit
- the establishing of the Church for the people that way

“...she and her household were baptized; she besought *us*, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house *and* lodge *there*.’ And she constrained us” (v 15). They stayed right there at her house for a period of time.

Verse 16: “Now, it came to pass that as we were going to prayer, a certain damsel who had a spirit of Python met us; *and* she brought her masters much gain by divining.” Foretelling the future, fortune telling, actually being able to read people’s minds and different things like that. We have the same kind of thing today.

Verse 17: “She followed Paul and us *and* cried out, saying, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, and are preaching to us *the* way of salvation.’” One thing we need to understand: Demons think that they can receive salvation by possessing a person. We have a situation that this did not occur. We’ll see what happened.

Verse 18: “Now she did this for many days. Then Paul, being grieved, turned to the spirit and said, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out the same hour.” I’ve been involved with casting out demons on several occasions, and one was a woman who was just totally, absolutely out of her mind. I remember the minister and I—I was an assistant, not yet ordained—laid hands on her and cast that demon out and in two days she was of her right mind, and it was really a tremendous and miraculous change that occurred to her.

There are also situations where demons are not cast out, because the people don’t want them cast out, because there are people who love demons; they

love these things; they love Satan’s way. These men who owned this girl who had the demon and spirit of divination loved Satan’s way; loved Satan’s ways.

Verse 19: “And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold of Paul and Silas *and* dragged *them* into the marketplace before the magistrates. And they brought them to the captains, saying, ‘These men, who are Jews, are greatly troubling our city...’” (vs 19-20).

They weren’t troubling the city at all. What they were doing was casting the demon out of this one woman who had the ‘spirit of divination’; they lost their game. So, they weren’t troubling the city, but you know there’s going to come a time when God is going to do this again. There’s going to come a time when we are going to face these exact same situations. Right now God is kind of hiding us and protecting us as a small group and we’re not too well known, and not too many people know about us. I’ve gotten hate mail concerning *The Christian Passover* book. I’ve gotten things from Jews saying that Jesus was never the Son of God. When they come to the chapter about the nature of the flesh of Jesus its causes a lot of people to be totally angry, because people *don’t love the Word of God!*

- Paul did!
- Paul loved God!
- Paul preached the love of God!

Paul was used of Jesus Christ to write 14 books of the New Testament. And Luke being with him recorded the part of the ministry of Christ as it follows along in the book of Acts. Then Luke also wrote the Gospel. So, we have a tremendous and powerful influence that the Apostle Paul had in finishing the New Testament; one of these being the Epistle to the Philippians, which is one of the most encouraging and one of the most loving, one of the most profitable books in the New Testament. There is no correction in it except one little hint of someone that he admonishes to have a right attitude with getting long with someone else. We’ll see that when we get to it.

Verse 22: “Then a multitude rose up against them...” People in multitudes want to be deceived; they want to hold on to what they have. Don’t believe it? *Just look at the election seasons!* This whole world is being setup for the great deception that is coming. It’s the same thing here. They stirred up the multitude.

“...the captains tore off their garments, *and* commanded *that they* be beaten with rods. And after laying many stripes on them, they cast *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them safely”

(vs 22-23). None of us have gone through anything like that.

- Have you ever been hauled to court for witnessing?
- Have you ever been hauled before someone and beaten on your back with stripes and then thrown into prison?

Verse 24: “After receiving this command, he threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet with stocks.” There they were in stocks—they put your wrists in stocks; sometimes they put your head and wrists in stocks; sometimes they put the feet, head and wrists in stocks. There’s nothing you can do!

Verse 25: “But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Most people today living in this society would probably curse God; would probably say, ‘You know, God, I never expected this!’ There are a lot of people who can’t even take it when the going gets just a little tough.

It’s one thing to *stand* for what is right doctrine. It’s one thing to *stand* for what the Truth is. It’s another thing to be persecuted and prosecuted and thrown into jail for it. None of us have gone through that, yet. I’m not asking that we do, but I’m just saying that lest we think we’ve had a hard time of it, look at what Paul went through. What was their reaction? *They prayed and sang praises to God!*

Notice what happened; this was quite a fantastic way to start a church. We’re going see that God did a couple of miracles here, v 26: “And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so *great* that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed.” Fantastic and tremendous miracle! There they are in the stocks and all of a sudden God sent the earthquake.

Verse 27: “When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew a sword and was about to kill himself, supposing *that* the prisoners had escaped, but Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.’” (vs 27-28).

I want you to understand the attitude of this love. Here’s a man who is an enemy—right? Here’s a man that if he killed himself a lot of us may be inclined to say, ‘Good riddens!’ Paul said, ‘No, don’t do that.’

In Matthew 5 is something that is absolutely vitally important to do, to know, to realize and to understand; and we’re going to see that the Apostle Paul was practicing the very words of Jesus Christ.

Later on we will see when he wrote about Alexander the coppersmith who did him great harm. We will see that even though he prayed that God would bring upon Alexander the coppersmith the fruit of his own doings, Paul still did not hate him.

I’ve experienced it, that there are some people who still hate Herbert Armstrong so much, and there are people who hate the Worldwide Church of God so much that they are bitter and they can’t overcome their bitterness, because they don’t understand the love of God that He’s requiring. If you know anyone that way be sure to, by all means, point out to them what Paul did when he was in danger of losing his life. When he was in prison, the captain came down there with a sword either to kill himself or to kill them. He said, ‘No, “...Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.” We will see that Paul was practicing the very words of Jesus Christ:

Matthew 5:43^[transcriber’s correction]: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, **love your enemies...**” (vs 43-44). This, brethren, is the hardest, *hardest*, **hardest** kind of love for us to know, realize and also to express. I’ll be the first one to tell you that it is hard for me! But I know that’s what God says I need to do.

- We need to pray for our enemies!
- We need to pray that God will turn them from us!
- That God may even turn their hearts!

Jesus said, v 44: “But I say to you... [there’s not greater authority than Jesus Christ] ...love your enemies, **bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray** for those who despitefully use you and persecute you.” Was the Apostle Paul practicing this command of Jesus Christ? *Absolutely, yes, he was!*

Acts 16:28: “But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.’ And after asking for lights, he rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas” (vs 28-29).

- Can God turn the trick when you trust God?
- Can God change the circumstances when you trust Him?

I want you to think about all the different things in your life that God has done to give you grace and favor, turn back the hand of the enemy, spare you from things that come upon you, and do the same thing that Paul did here and rejoice before God.

Here is a man—a total enemy—coming and

falling down before his face, v 30: “And when he had brought them out, he said, ‘Sirs, what must I do, that I may be saved?’” A complete turnaround! Isn’t that something?

- Can God do miracles?
- Can God perform things in people’s lives?
- Does the Word of God work?
- *Yes, it does!*

When God says, ‘But I say to you, love your enemies, pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father’ that’s something!

When there’s danger we should not go running in; we need to be ‘wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove.’ But when it gets down to circumstances we cannot control, God alone can intervene! That’s what happened here.

Verse 31: “Then they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.’” That’s a good way to start believing—isn’t it? A great earthquake, loose all the prisoners. You talk about having grace and favor in the eyes of your enemies; you talk about being able to reach down change the circumstances; *God did!* This is the hand of God. Paul had nothing to do with it. In a sense, what could he do? He was all stocked up.

Verse 32: “And they spoke the Word of the Lord to him, and to all those in his house. And he took them in that hour of the night, and washed *their* wounds; and he and all his *household* were immediately baptized. Then he brought them into his house *and* laid out a table *for them*; and he rejoiced with all *his* household, who had believed in God” (vs 32-34). That is a tremendous sign! Look at the tremendous things that God did in Philippi to establish this church. Two miracles:

1. casting out the demons
2. opening up the prison

Verse 34: “Then he brought them into his house *and* laid out a table *for them*; and he rejoiced with all *his* household, who had believed in God. Now when day came, the captains sent the sergeants, saying, ‘Let those men go.’ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, ‘The captains have sent *word* to let you go. Now then, *you may* go out and depart in peace.’ But Paul said to them, ‘After publicly beating us, who are Romans, without condemnation, and casting *us* into prison, do they *think* now *to* secretly thrust us out?...’” (vs 34-37). So, Paul relied on his civil rights being a Roman citizen.

There may be times in the future down the

road when we have to rely on our civil rights. There are a lot of hate laws right now being constructed against Christians so that you can’t speak a word against a homosexual, a word against any religion, and you cannot preach the Truth of God. One man was even arrested for witnessing Christ and thrown into prison. They have already tried to register churches to tax them. That failed in Berkley.

Paul says, “...No, indeed, but let them come in person *and* bring us out.’ Then the sergeants reported these words to the captains. And when they heard *that* they were Romans, they were afraid” (vs 37-38). They were using the civil law properly, so Paul did vote. There’s a combination of everything—*wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove!*

- using the law of the land
- using the power of God
- preaching the Word of God
- using the Spirit of God
- letting God open the opportunity to establish what God wanted

All together right here in the establishing of this church.

Verse 39: “And they came *and* entreated them; and after bringing *them* out, they asked *them* to depart from the city. Now after leaving the prison, they came to Lydia... [that was the one at Thyatira] ...and when they had seen the brethren, and had exhorted them, they departed” (vs 39-40).

Acts 17:1: “And after journeying through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where *there* was a synagogue of the Jews.” He goes now from Gentiles to Jews. Then they got all upset, kicked him out; they didn’t like him and they delivered him up to the magistrates. The Jews try and use civil rights for their side, so they left there.

Verse 10: “Then the brethren immediately sent away by night to Berea both Paul and Silas, who, when they arrived, went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now, these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *for* they received the Word with all readiness of mind *and* **examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so**” (vs 10-11).

We won’t get into all the things concerning the Scriptures, but I’ll just have to tell you that they were searching what we call the Old Testament. That was ten years before anything was written in the New Testament. Paul told Timothy that you ‘can be wise unto salvation’ by the Scriptures *through Jesus Christ*. There are just all too many people today who are willing today to just throw out as much of the Word of God that they can, as much of the Scriptures of the Old Testament as these can

under the guise of being Christian.

But here's what we need to do with readiness of mind; being able to prove from the Scriptures whether the things are so or not.

Let's go to Philippians, and what I've done in this *Expanded Amplified Translation* is to expand the meaning of the meaning of the words, to bring in the meaning of other Scriptures to give us full well-rounded and, hopefully, inspiring and understandable translation of Philippians.

Philippians 1:1 "Paul and Timothy servants (bondsmen, even slaves)..." The Greek word for *servant* is 'doulos'—meaning *a slave*. At that time they had slaves. They didn't have mechanical appliances like we have. They had literal people who were slaves. When they said that they were 'servants' of Jesus Christ, they viewed themselves as the *bondslaves* of Christ.

"...of Jesus Christ, to all the saints..." (v 1). Saints are not those little statues on top of St. Peter's Basilica or some little trinket that you put around your neck or on the dashboard of your car for superstitious good luck.

You are a saint, I am a saint, because saint comes from the Greek that means *Holy*—'hagiois.' We are Holy; we are consecrated to God; we are special to God because He has called us and has given us His Spirit and has begotten our minds with His very Spirit that we can be, at the resurrection, the very sons of God.

That's why we are the saints "... (the ones who are consecrated to God as Holy)... [that's what it really means, the full thing] ...in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with *the overseers*... (who are to oversee the congregations and are guardians of the faith)..." (v 1)—that's what minister should be:

- not an overlord
- one who administers and helps
- one to lead and to serve

"...and deacons (who are serving and helping)" (v 1). That's what deacon means: *one who helps; one who serves*. Even Paul called himself in one place a servant of God—not the word 'doulos' but 'diakonos'—meaning *one who is serving*; whatever needs to be done for the Church and the brethren.

That's really the office of a deacon. It is not a merit badge because you're bigger and stronger and now we have our own private police standing at the door to keep people out. It's not one who is politically in with the ministry who is a deacon. He is one who really helps and serves the brethren and

serves the Church.

Verse 2: "Grace..." Grace is the absolute most important thing in our relationship with God, because grace is that which puts us in good standing with God continually. "Grace, (God's gracious blessing, Divine favor and generous gift) be to you..." That's a tremendous salutation from Paul. He's wishing the very best for each one of us. These words are recorded for us so that we can understand that and realize that.

"...and peace, harmony and tranquility from God our Father and *the* Lord and Master Jesus Christ" (v 2). We used to be enemies of God, but now we have peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. We used to have carnal minds that are 'enmity against God and not subject to the Law of God,' but now we have made peace with God through Jesus Christ.

That brings us into harmony with God, tranquility with God. I realize that the world is going to come against us in everything that is out there to try and upset that and disturb that, but nevertheless, we need to understand and realize that that's what God has done, and live in His grace.

I want to tell you one other thing that's very important. I want to be sure and really mention it and emphasize it so you will know and understand why this grace is so important. In Romans 8 we find something that we need to understand concerning the grace of God.

- this is why we are not to frustrate the grace of God
- this is why we're not to grieve the Spirit of God
- this is why grace has not been designed to give us lawlessness

God is going above and beyond in this grace. God is giving us something special that we need to really understand and realize.

Do you and I know that **down deep inside that we are sinful people of and by our own selves?** *Yes, we do!* That's the whole struggle that we have. We know that is because within us, inherent in our very being, is the '*law of sin and death.*' Yet, the Spirit of God and the grace of God does this for us.

Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation..." God does not condemn you; God does not criticize you when you are yielding yourself to Him. If you deliberately go out and sin, that's another story; God is going to correct you because He deals with you as sons.

"...to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are

not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit” (v 1).

- *Seeking first* the Kingdom of God!
- *Seeking first* God the Father and Jesus Christ!
- *Seeking first* the salvation that God has given!

There is no condemnation because of that!

Verse 2: “Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death.” Before God you are free from that law, and that is done by *the grace of God!* Not free to go break law, but this is to be free from the *law of sin and death* in your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

That is something we need to understand and fully realize. God’s grace does that for us! We need to add just one other thing. Paul said, ‘What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? *God forbid!* How are we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?’

That’s why this salutation of grace and the understanding that is so important for us to realize.

(go to the next track)

Philippians 1:3: “I am thanking my God over every remembrance and **recollection of you.**” I guess so! Here he is in prison again. Started out in Philippi in prison, now he’s writing them a letter from prison, only this time in Rome instead of Philippi. He’s thanking God continuously for them, and we’ll see why. This is the only church that really supported Paul. Amazing, isn’t it?

The others, you’ll see if you read 2-Timothy, that every one in Asia left Paul. They all deserted him. Some might say that if he’s ‘really the minister of God why would they leave him?’ That’s a long historical thing to get into, but it was because that people wanted to *their own version* of Christianity, which later became the Orthodox and Catholic Church. That’s the long and short of it.

Verse 4: “Always in every one of my supplications and petitions for all of you (that is, on your behalf); this I am doing with happiness and joy. For your fellowship, participation and partnership in **the good news of the Gospel, from the first day until the present time**” (vs 4-5). Partnership means *sharing and doing the work in whatever way was necessary*; whether financially or whether in things of a gift of food or clothing or whatever it may be.

Verse 6—this is a key important verse and we’ll spend some time here: “**Being fully persuaded, totally convinced and completely**

confident of this very thing... [Do you have this same kind of confidence?] ...that He who has begun a good and beautiful work in you will complete, **finish and perfect it, until the Day of Jesus Christ.**”

God is going to finish what He has started in you! That’s what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about, when we’re going to be living with God! When we are going to be dwelling in the tabernacle of God.

- Do you not think that God wants you there?
- Why did God call you in the first place if He doesn’t want you there?

We need to respond back to God with

- the same kind of confidence
- the same kind of faith
- the same kind of love

that God has shown toward us! Be confident that God is going to finish it, that when the last comes for you and me, or anyone who is a Christian, that they are going to be *absolutely sure* that they have attained to the resurrection, so that when Christ returns they will be resurrected to be the very sons of God in splendor and glory and brilliance!

God is going to finish that work! The Feast of Tabernacles pictures when that work is finished, when that work is done. Then we have the *new work* of being kings and priests with Christ to rule this whole world. God is going to finish it!

- it doesn’t matter about the aches and pains
- it doesn’t matter about the problems of old age
- it doesn’t matter about the difficulties that are involved
- it doesn’t matter about any of those things

It cannot and will not count against you; **God is going to finish what He has started!**

- Is God able?
- Is God capable?
- Does He have the power? *Absolutely!*
- Is God going to do it? *Without a single doubt at all!*
 - ✓ Paul had none!
 - ✓ I have none!
 - ✓ You should have none!

Let’s see what kind of persuasion that Abraham had; what kind of faith that we need to have; what kind of trust that we can have. Brethren, we need to have the *greatest confidence* in the world; the *greatest love* for God in the world, and

love for each other. God isn't going to come down upon us and condemn us and find every little thing to keep us out of the Kingdom of God. He's going to find every way to make it possible to be in the Kingdom of God.

Romans 4:17 is talking about Abraham, and Abraham had every single odd against him—didn't he? His wife couldn't have any children. He was 100-years-old and she was 90-years-old. You know the account when God came and said, 'Next year at this time you're going to have a child.' And she laughed! The Lord asked, 'Why are you laughing.' She said, 'Lord, I'm not laughing.' And the Lord answered back and said, 'Yes, you laughed, but nevertheless, next year at this time you're going to have a child.'

If there's anyone out there that is 90-years-old and if there's any man out there that's 100-years-old, if someone came to you and said that you're going to conceive and have a child, you're going to have to be powerfully convinced—right? Well, Abraham was! This is the kind of conviction and persuasion that we need to have that God is going to have us in His kingdom.

Romans 4:17: "(exactly as it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.') before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and **calls the things that are not as though they are.**" This is why we can say that

- if you have the Spirit of God today—which you do
- if you love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being—which you do
- if you are believing in the promises and hope of God—which you do

is God going to have you in His kingdom? *Yes!* What does He also call us? *Behold what glorious love that the Father has toward us that we should be called the children of God (1-John 3). Although it doesn't appear what we shall be, be we know that when we see Him, 'we shall see Him as He is, for we shall be like Him.'*

That's something we need to be fully persuaded and convinced of, to the very depth of our being, just as Abraham was. When God said something, even though it wasn't, it would be! What kind of hope did he have to have? *He had to have what this world would call 'foolish hope.'* But there's no such thing as 'foolish hope' toward God.

- ***If God has said it, He will do it!***
- If God has promised it, it is there for you to come and ask God—if it be His will-to fulfill His promise to you. If it is, *He will!*
- His will is that you the Kingdom of God.

Is God going to fulfill that exactly in the same way He fulfilled this promise to Abraham?

Verse 18: "*And who against hope **believed in hope...** [That's something!] ...in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, '**So shall your seed be.**'"*

The Lord took Abraham out one night and said, 'Look up into the heavens, and if you can number all these stars, I'm telling you so shall your seed be.' When Abraham is resurrected, can you imagine what it's going to be when God says, 'Abraham, these are all your children. All those in the first resurrection are here because of you and Jesus Christ, and all these people on the earth are yours because of the progeny and My promise that I said that you will be 'the father of many nations. Just wait until the end of this thousand year millennium when we resurrect all of the rest of the dead, you're going to be absolutely amazed how many children you actually have, *because I said so!*' Abraham is going to say, 'Thank you, Lord! Yes, God, that is true'; *and so should we!*

Verse 19: "And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah's womb; and he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; **rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God**" (vs 19-20). And that's why Paul said that God is going to finish the work that He started. God didn't call you in vain! God didn't call anybody in vain! He called you to be His son, to be in His kingdom.

Verse 21: "For he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able to do." Let's notice what this does, because ***to believe in Christ, to believe God and to believe what He says is the most difficult and hard thing for the human mind to really do.*** When you do, God blesses you just as He did Abraham.

Are you fully persuaded that what God has promised He is able to do? You may have a little lack of faith, like Sarah in laughing; a little lack of confidence because your circumstances right now may be a little difficult. ***Be fully persuaded that what God has promised He is fully able to do!***

Let's go to Isaiah 41 and let's see what we need to do when we're really down and out and really kind of feeling miserable. When we get to the point that we feel that little eensy-teensy thing that we're less than nothing, a we're like a worm, or we're a miserable person, or the circumstances have been bad:

Isaiah 41:10: “Do not fear; **for I am with you...**” Is God with us? *Yes!* Do you have the Holy Spirit of God? *God is with you!*

“...be not dismayed... [don’t be discouraged; don’t be down] ...for **I am your God...**” (v 10). *God is God!* The Apostle Paul said, ‘If God be for you, what can be against you?’ *Nothing!*

“...**I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you** with the right hand of My righteousness” (v 10). We need to do like the Apostle Paul. If things get difficult, go ahead and pray, open up the Scripture right here to Isa. 41:10 and claim that promise!

- God will help you!
- God will strengthen you!
- God will lift you up!
- God will see you through!
- Christ is there to intercede as our High Priest to make intercession for you!

He’s been tempted in every way, as every human being. That’s a tremendous thing, brethren, for us to understand.

2-Thessalonians 3—here again, we see the encouragement that the Apostle Paul gives, and we need to follow, understand and apply and use in our very lives. 2-Thessalonians 3:1: “As for the rest, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly...” Be free, have free course. In other words, look at the difficulties that Paul had being thrown into prison and the persecution of the Jews and Gentiles against him. He’s saying, ‘Pray that the Word of God would have free course.

“...and may be glorified, in the same way that *it has been* with you; and that we may be delivered from perverse and wicked men, for all *are* not of the faith” (vs 1-2). Brethren, if there’s anything that we need to pray about today, those days are coming! You need to be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men. I need to be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men. Hopefully we’re not going to be out there sinning so that we have our own sins involved and that becomes even worse.

“...for all *are* not of the faith. But **the Lord is faithful**, Who will establish you and keep you from the evil one” (vs 2-3). Remember the prayer that Jesus prayed? *Father, I pray that you keep them from the evil one!* That is *protect them!* God will do that! This is tremendous to really understand and be fully persuaded as the Apostle Paul was.

Here’s something we need to understand, brethren. Here’s something we need to realize, because God wants to dwell with His people. In

keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, not only are we picturing that, we are living that and Christ is doing that.

Matthew 28:20: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.” Isn’t that a tremendous promise?

Philippians 1:6: “Being fully persuaded, totally convinced and completely confident of this very thing... [because God is with you] ...that He who has begun a good and beautiful work in you will complete, **finish and perfect it**, until the Day of Jesus Christ.”

Let’s add Ephesians 2 because we need to let the Spirit of God work in us! Maybe what we ought to do is each one of us take a little personal challenge to ourselves—we have to be honest with ourselves, because God knows anyway. We try and sugarcoat everything and look at it try and put it in the best light even though we know it’s just plain wrong—and I’m trying to do this myself:

Take one thing that you know is a real weakness and say that with God’s help work in overcoming this. *It has to be with God’s help!* Human nature cannot overcome human nature. The Spirit of God can overcome human nature, and the work that God has begun in you He’s going to finish!

Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves...[originating from your own being] ...*it is* the gift of God.” ***The faith, grace and salvation is all the gift of God!***

Verse 9: “Not of works, so that no one may boast.” Talking about self-motivated works of which then Buddhism would be a perfect example; that you can be anything that you think you can be, and since God is in everything and is everywhere, and God is in you; you are God. Therefore you can become anything you want to be and work up the level of spiritual attainment, then you will enter into nirvana.

That, brethren, is salvation by works! Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism—whatever. Protestants do understand considerably more about the grace of God than do the Catholics.

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship...” God is working in us! God is working in you! We are **His** workmanship! *God is forming that in you!*

“...created in Christ Jesus...” (v 10). God is creating in you that very character, spirit, image of Christ in you through the begetting of His Holy Spirit. That’s the work that God the Father is doing!

“...unto *the* good works...” (v 10). Don’t let anyone say that there aren’t works that we have to do. There are *good works*. That is the best kind of works possible. The kind of works that are motivated by the Spirit of God to do what God wants. That’s what it is; any other work is *your own work*.

But in Christ we are *His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works* “...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10)—*it is a way of life!*

Philippians 1:7: “Even as it is righteous, proper and just for me to think this of all of you, because you have me in your hearts, even while I am in my bonds and imprisonment: also in the staunch defense and the confirmation and firm **establishment of the good news of the Gospel, you are** all, everyone of you, joint-partakers and fellow recipients of my grace... [the preaching of His grace] ...(God’s gracious blessing, divine favor and generous gift).

Notice what Paul was doing. *The staunch defense!* Do you think the Apostle Paul was mealy-mouthed and would back down when people were coming and attacking the Truth? *No way!* Were there people attacking the Truth? *Absolutely there were!* Did he have a lot of fights concerning that? *Yes, he did!* How about those riots that happened in the synagogue whenever Paul preached in the synagogue defending the Truth? He had to be of firm mind. There are times when it has to be that. There are times when it has to be done with vigor and with power! Even Christ healed one time in anger. There are times when it has to be, and that’s what we’re going to do, brethren. I hope to follow this example of the Apostle Paul. “...in the staunch defense and the confirmation and firm **establishment of the good news of the Gospel...**”

Verse 8: “Now then, God is my witness, how I ardently yearn for you in the tender affections of Jesus Christ from my innermost being, (even from the depths of my heart).” I know that we’ve experienced and have gone through and crushed down into one small, little group and some of us even scattered out of that little group, and **God brought us back together!** I can say the same thing here that I wished that I could be right there with you; and that in the tender affections of my heart, mind and being for the things that you have done to help me and my family in our own situation. We love you for it and thank you for it from the very bottom of our hearts; just as Paul is doing here.

Verse 9: “And this end I am praying that your love (the Godly, Divine love) may yet be increasing and growing to a greater extent and to a higher degree in knowledge and understanding,

and spiritual perception and discernment in every life experience.” Brethren, that’s the whole dedication of what the ministry of Jesus Christ should be, to help every one of the brethren of God be able to do this.

Verse 10: “(Growing unto the level of spiritual understanding) **for you to be able to try, prove and discern the things that** are more excellent...” That’s what we need to do with the Word of God.

What does it say in Psa. 34? *Oh taste and see that the Lord is good!* That’s what we need to be doing, that you can really know and understand. One of the goals that I have is to help you and teach you to attain to that, so that you can be in the Kingdom of God. If you make it, hopefully I’ll make it!

“...in order that you may be pure and clean... [that is before God and without blemish, without spot] ...(having that complete sincerity and unblemished character), that you may even be spotless, free from any offence, and wholly blameless until the Day of Christ” (v 10). Notice how he was focusing in on the Day of Christ, the return of Christ.

We’re going to see through the book of Philippians that Paul was expecting Christ to return in the not to far distant future. That’s what he’s emphasizing here.

Verse 11: “Being filled with the spiritual fruits of righteousness, (that Christian character and spiritual maturity) with the actions and conduct of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, to God’s own magnificent praise, honor and glory.” That’s the way our whole lives have to be.

Let’s look at a couple of Scriptures that will amplify that for us. Let’s see how this dedication, this kind of living needs to be and how we need to view our life even as the Apostle Paul viewed his life in Christ.

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ...”—and so do you; you’ve been crucified with Christ through the operation of baptism, and that’s what *crucified with Christ* means. Not that Paul was nailed to the cross; not that you were nailed to the cross; but in a sense *your sins* were nailed to that cross, because Christ died for your sins and my sins, so in a sense you were crucified with Christ, and that through the operation of baptism you buried the old dead self.

“...yet, I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I... [‘ego’—not for myself. I’m living not for myself] ...but Christ lives **in** me....” That’s how He does the workmanship. That’s how He does what He is

doing.

“...For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (v 20). What then is that to produce in our lives? *It is to produce character! It is to produce fruit!* Christ is working *in us* to accomplish that.

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love... [Wherever we go throughout everything that the Apostle Paul preached, love is the basis of it—love, grace, faith and hope.] ...joy, peace, long-suffering...” We have opportunities to apply these things in our lives.

I know there are some of suffering long with the physical ailments that you have, and it has not been easy; it has been very difficult. If God has called you to that then we just have to buck-up and go on from there. That’s the way that it is. Ask God for help, strength and understanding that through the suffering that you may be going through, that you also *may be conformed to the suffering of Christ*. That you may understand that and that your suffering maybe there is a little bit of something that God is going to teach you of what it was that Christ went through to save you. That’s why it’s *long suffering*; it needs to suffer long.

“...kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts” (vs 22-24). That’s why the Apostle Paul said that he was ‘crucified with Christ.’

Verse 25: “If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit.” That’s what the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles is: ***When we are actually spirit beings living in the tabernacle of God, walking as spirit sons of God!***

Scriptures in Philippians from *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, An Inspirational Bible Study; A New Expanded Amplified Translation* by Fred R. Coulter

All other Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Peter 3:18
- 2) Acts 16:8-20, 22-28
- 3) Matthew 5:43-44
- 4) Acts 16:28-40
- 5) Acts 17:1, 10-11
- 6) Philippians 1:1-2
- 7) Romans 8:1-2
- 8) Philippians 1:3-6
- 9) Romans 4:17-21
- 10) Isaiah 41:10

- 11) 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3
- 12) Matthew 28:20
- 13) Philippians 1:6
- 14) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 15) Philippians 1:7-11
- 16) Galatians 2:20
- 17) Galatians 5:22-25

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2 Timothy
- 1 John 3
- Psalm 34

Also referenced: Book:

The Christian Passover by Fred R. Coulter

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