

Second Corinthians III

How God Comforts Us (2-Corinthians 1-3)

Claim the promises of comfort, encouragement and competency of God

Fred R. Coulter—January 20, 2018

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. This is # ^[transcriber's correction] in the series in 2-Corinthians, and I think this is important with the things that we're going through today.

We covered about half of 2-Cor. 1, so we'll finish the other half of it, and we'll get in to chapter two. 2-Cor. is very important from the point of view that it records all the sufferings and difficulties that Paul went through.

Remember that when he was called he was told that 'you're going to have to suffer for Me.' He found that his comfort was with God.

2-CORINTHIANS 1:

2-Corinthians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and **the God of all comfort**... [which can also mean *encouragement*] ...Who comforts us in **all** our tribulation..." (vs 3-4)—not some, not part, *but all!* The thing that's also important is much of the comfort comes after we have gone through whatever trial there is.

I've told you quite a few times about this series: *Assaults Against the Church #s1-4*. I've been reading through it since I asked you to get it and go through it. I wondered what did I preach? because some of these were done a long time ago.

I tell you what, #14 (Dan/Rev Series) entitled, *Hurricane Against God's People (#3 in Assaults Against the Church)*, that's what everything looked like it was just spiraling out of control. So. I'm going to say, get this and go through it. Why do I say it? ***Because it's going to happen again!*** Remember that Satan is never done. As we found with the seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3, *Satan is there and comes back again and again*. What was it said of the temptation of Jesus after He succeeded that initial temptation? *'And the devil left Him for a season.'* So, Satan came back!

Think of all the viciousness that came with the Passover Day. That was especially powerful because the One Who was the Lord God of Old Testament became Jesus Christ, and He gave all the prophecies concerning what He would suffer through, and *He knew it*. That's why He prayed so fervently there in the Garden of Gethsemane.

John 16:33^[transcriber's correction]: "...In the world you shall have tribulation. But be courageous!

I have overcome the world." That's very important for us to always remember.

2-Corinthians 1:4: "...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.... [notice he's admitting all the suffering that he went through]: ... For to the degree *that* the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our comfort abounds through Christ" (vs 4-5).

Then he explains. They came to the point that they were distressed of even life. We'll see a little later how that came about.

Verse 13: "For we do not write *any* other things to you but what you have read and already acknowledge; and I hope that you will acknowledge *them* even to *the* end; according as you did also acknowledge us in part..." (vs 13-14).

What does he mean by that? *This is Paul's way of telling them that, yes, you did send me a little sustenance to help me along the way!* He said he had to 'take wages from other churches and rob them,' because he didn't collect any tithes or offerings from them.

Why? *Because there were so many false apostles coming in, and the people were welcoming them with open arms!* They were Israelites, Abrahamites, and they were probably the Jews coming out of Alexandria like Apollos. Whatever happened to Apollos, we don't know. He just drops out. We hope he was faithful.

Coming out of Alexandria, makes me raise a the question: What happened to him doctrinally later on? *We don't know!* But we do know that the New Testament out of Alexandria is filled with a lot of errors. So, if that's what he was using, that may be part of the reason why we know nothing about him.

"...that we are your boasting, even as you are also our *boasting* in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v 14).

Here's another thing to understand. The apostles were expecting Christ to return before they died. Then when you look at all of the events beginning in 62_{A.D.} beginning with the martyrdom of James, the brother of Jesus. Everything started to unfold.

They saw everything out of Matt.24, Luke 21 and Mark 13: *many coming in the name of Christ, wars and rumors of war, race against race!* Here

you were having the beginning of the rebellion of Jews against Rome.

They were saying, ‘If we get enough—especially for the last Passover they had there before they destroyed Jerusalem—the way that God is going to save us if we get as many Jews here as we can for the Passover.’ They had 2.5-million Jews there in the city, but that was their death warrant. They ran out of food from the time of Passover until the 9th and 10th of Ab. They actually had enough food normally to run in Jerusalem for 3 or 4 years, but there were so many they ate it all up. If you can read the account of *Josephus* about the fall of Jerusalem, it was horrible, terrible, cannibalism! *Amazing stuff!*

Verse 15: “And with this confidence I had previously planned to come to you so that you might have a second benefit... [from my visit]...and *after coming* by you, *I intended* to travel through to Macedonia, and to come again from Macedonia to you, and *then* be accompanied by you to Judea” (vs 15-16)—to take all the food that they had grown that year for famine relief for those down in the area of Judea.

Verse 17: “Now then, in planning this *journey*, was I light-minded? Or *are* the things *that* I resolve to do motivated by *the* flesh, that there should be with me *wavering between* yes and no?”

He had to change his schedule. They were saying, ‘Why don’t you come?’ So, he’s explaining to them, ‘I did intend...’

Verse 18: “But God *is* faithful, so that our word to you was not yes and no. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached by us among you (by me and Silvanus and Timothy), was not *first* yes and *then* no, but in Him has *always* been yes. For whatever promises of God *there are*, in Him *is* the yes, and in Him the Amen, with glory to God by us” (vs 18-20).

In other words, whatever the will of God is, as we’re going along, that’s what we are going to be sufficiently satisfied with.

Verse 21 “**But He Who establishes us with you in Christ, and Who has anointed us, is God**” (v 21).

We’re going to talk about how God comforts us in just a bit. There’s a lot of comfort that He can give. We are going to need it in the days ahead. Think about all those people who went through the hurricanes, the cold, the winter blast back East. It was something!

Sidebar: Because of that, the homeless in the nation moved out to California, a good number of

them. California has 25% of the homeless in the United States.

One other thing, next time you go to bed and go to sleep, you’re in your comfortable house, you have your comfortable bed, you have your pillow just where you need it and you have your blankets just right. You have the thermostat just right. You prayed, you’re ready for bed. You get in bed and it’s nice and warm. You sleep really well. Just think about those who sleep on the street, who have very few things to go by.

Verse 22: “Who has also sealed us and has given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” Let’s look at how God does that, because this is very important. This has an awful lot to do with how we are comforted through Christ, even though there are difficulties we go through.

I can’t believe in reading #10, *Hurricane Against the Church*, what we were going through then. Everything was upside down. The worse kind of torment you go through is if you believe you know the Truth, and then you have that ripped away from you and told that’s wrong. That’s why we have to:

- prove the Truth
- understand the Truth
- always stick with the Truth

We can claim the promises from God in John 14. Jesus was telling them that He was going away, but He would come again. He said He was going to the Father:

John 14:12: “...I am going to the Father. And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (vs 12-13).

Sometimes you ask for things and it doesn’t come right away. Why? *Because God’s timing is different than ours!* Have you ever asked for something and you’ve been going along, and all of a sudden—I know this has happened to me in driving a car—DING! God answered that prayer, and I had prayed the prayer quite a long time before that.

Sometimes God doesn’t answer right away. What is the qualifying factor from Matt. 6 on prayer? ‘Oh, God, help me win the Lotto.’ *No!* We ask the first thing, *after we honor God*, ‘Your will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven’—referring to us, and then whatever else God is doing on the earth. *In our personal prayer that refers to us!* So, whatever we ask, according to the will of God, He will do it. That’s part of the comfort we are to have:

- faith
- knowledge

- hope
- comfort

altogether with the love of God! We will be comforted, even if there are things going around that are very difficult to handle outside of our own sphere.

Verse 14: “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

Notice another qualifier for answered prayer and for comfort. We’ve covered this many, many times, haven’t we?

Verse 15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter...” (vs 15-16). ***The Holy Spirit gives us the comfort in our mind***, provided that we pray and we do the things that God wants.

Let’s see what we need to hold on to as the foundation of this for the comfort that we need to have.

“...that it may be with you throughout the age: ***Even the Spirit of the Truth...***” (vs 16-17). That’s the most important thing! This helps us:

- overcome the deceitfulness of human nature
- to convict us in conscience
- to lead us in our thoughts

So we don’t become totally bottomed-out and think there’s no hope for anything!

Verse 17: “*Even the Spirit of the Truth*, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you.”

We read this every Passover and we cover it in sermons during the year. Why? *Because this is one of the most important, key foundational things that we have from God!* This is the earnest of the Spirit. The earnest is *the down payment for eternal life*.

Verse 18: “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet, a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also” (vs 18-19).

Remember when He suddenly appeared in the room when they were all there for fear of the Jews? They couldn’t believe it. But can you imagine the joy. It was forty days and forty nights that Jesus was with them, teaching them many things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

Verse 20: “In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father...”—because He came back from the dead.

Stop and think about what He endured with the scourging and everything, and how disfigured that He was when He died on that cross. Here He appears into the room. We covered that in the sermon, *News, Flesh & Bone, & New Testament Fraud*.

Verse 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me...”

Let’s look at Protestantism again: If you build something on a lie, how much truth can you put on a lie? Let’s look at it in building on the sand.

In Sand City it’s easy to build, nothing but sand. All you do is water down the sand, level off the dirt, and then you can dig out the foundation real easy, easy to pour, no problem at all. Let’s say you build in Sand City a wonderful house, has everything in it, everything modern. You walk up to the door, and you just say, ‘Door open,’ and it opens up. You have the best thing in the kitchen, the best bed, the best view, the best ultra high definition television. You have whatever you want, whatever you need.

But a 200-foot wave from Monterey Bay hits your house. *It’s gone because there’s no foundation, there’s no rock!* That’s why we’re to build on ***the Rock!***

I’ve been watching on TBN and the different ministers. They have some lousy speakers. They have some very good speakers. Some of them give very great sermons *to a point*. ***But you can’t preach the Truth of God based on the lie of:***

- Sunday
- the immortality of the soul
- the holidays of this world

I do not care how much Scripture you read, you may understand it to a certain point, but you cannot have a lie and build an edifice that’s going to stand all the problems that come along.

Likewise financially: Our whole financial system is based upon a lie, which is debt. Debt is only accepted when people have confidence that it has value. So, when it has no value, the whole thing’s going to come tumbling down. What’s everybody going to do?

- you have all this prosperity
- you have all these things that you have
- you have all the things that you buy
- you work
- you build

The whole society is based upon it!

Speculation: I suspect that somewhere down the road during the tenure of Donald Trump, they're going to have to re-evaluate the dollar downward, because of all the debt. There are going to be a lot of people go completely bottom-up, lose everything, *because it's built on a lie!* This is why we're given the Spirit of Truth.

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me... [He said He was Lord of the Sabbath Day, so Sunday is of no account] ... and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." ***That is a great promise!***

If you get really discouraged, really down, things are really kind of all upset and you're just completely frustrated, turn to this section of the Bible, *and claim the promises here. Ask for the comfort of God!* You need it first *inwardly* with His Spirit, not just the physical circumstances around you.

Verse 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" That came four days later.

Tie in v 21, 23, 24; *these are the most important verses in our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father!* Most important!

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and **We** will come to him and make **Our** abode with him.'"

Most important thing in our lives is—with the earnest of the Spirit—that *we have the Spirit of Christ to develop the mind of Christ!* We have the begettal from the Father to be His future sons and daughters as spirit beings as Christ is a spirit being. ***We will see Him as He is, because we will be like Him!*** Keep that in mind, in the forefront of your mind when you're going through a difficulty that is hard to handle. Sometimes there are things that are hard, difficult to handle. That's how you do that. How precious is the Word of God? Remember, there are nearly 7-billion people on the earth.

Ephesians 1:9: "**Having made known to us the mystery...** [secret] **...of His own will...**" How important is the plan of God?

Protestants never get past forgiveness of sin. That is the ultimate because they have the false doctrine of when you die you go to heaven. If you say, 'Lord, I believe in You; forgive me for my

sins,' you're set for eternity. ***That's as anti-Scriptural as can be!***

Verse 9: "Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself."

Think about how much that God has given us to know and understand. That's something! That should encourage everyone in any predicament.

Verse 10: "That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance... [but you don't get it until you get there] ...having been predestinated according to His purpose..." (vs 10-11).

I've got another thing that I read, I might even put it on here. It talks about the human cell. If you think that's the smallest thing, and all the cells that compose our body, every one of those cells have structure, function and atoms. Did you know that our bodies have trillions of atoms? That's an amazing thing! When David writes, '*We are fearfully and awesomely made,*' that was quite a statement! Now we can understand it more than ever before. *Every cell is structured on the pattern of the universe!* Just like I read earlier, the more you get into the Word of God, the more profound it becomes.

"...Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will" (v 11).

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose"—because sometimes it's God's will that we suffer. ***Sometimes it's God's will that there is nothing to cling to except God, Who alone can give us the comfort we need!*** That's an amazing thing!

Ephesians 1:12: "That we might be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ."

How's that going to work? *When Christ returns and all the saints are resurrected, and we take over the government of the world!* That sure needs to be done everywhere in the world. Even here in the flunk-out of the United States Senate. What a stupid rule that you have to have 60 votes before you can even consider voting on something's that necessary, like the budget.

So, as you can see with that, that's not the best government in the world. The best government in the world is coming with Christ, when He returns, and ***we*** are the ones who are going to run it. It's not going to be run on compromise, it's going to be run on Truth. There's going to be no problem with the

budget. God is going to declare it. No excess taxes, *but you will tithe.*

- What's it going to be like, just in the human realm? *We don't know!*
- What is it going to be like in the spiritual realm?
- Did Christ have to suffer? *Yes, He did!*
- Was He comforted when He was resurrected? *Yes, He was!*

Likewise with us!

Verse 13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory*" (vs 13-14).

If you get down and discouraged, don't sit there and have a pity-party just for yourself. Get out the Bible and go to some of the Psalms. There are a lot of good Psalms there.

- the *comfort* is going to come from God
- the *courage* is going to come from God

so that we come to the converted point of view that nothing in this world is going to take us from God the Father and Jesus Christ. Satan has other thoughts and schemes.

2-Corinthians 1:22: "Who has also sealed us and has given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. But I call upon God to bear witness of my intentions, that in order to spare you I did not yet come to Corinth" (vs 22-23).

We'll see why when at the end. Sometimes it's good to look at the end. Sometimes when you get a book, you read the conclusion first.

2-Corinthians 13:1: "This *is the* third time that I am coming to you. In *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every matter shall be established." They were fighting and warring among each other: I said, you said, they said.

Verse 2: "I have previously told *you*, and I am telling you in advance the second time, as though I were present; but since I am absent now, I am writing to those who have continued to sin until now—and to all the rest—that if I come again, I will not spare."

He's telling them up front, 'Really I don't want to have to come and go through this with you guys.' When he gets to the end, he sees he's going to have to.

Verse 3: "Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking through me (Who is not weak toward you,

but is powerful in you." Paul is weak, but we have the Spirit and it is powerful in you.

Verse 4: "For although He was crucified in weakness, yet, He lives by God's power; and we are indeed weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by God's power toward you), examine yourselves *to see* whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves...." (vs 4-5).

Paul was dealing with a lot of unconverted people. I think there are a lot of unconverted people within the Church. There were in the past, where did they go? As soon as the opportunity came for them to go back into the world, they went back into the world.

"...Don't you *of* your own selves know that Jesus Christ is in you? Otherwise, you are reprobates. But I hope that you will recognize that we are not reprobates" (vs 5-6).

2-Corinthians 1:23: "But I call upon God to bear witness of my intentions, that in order to spare you I did not yet come to Corinth; not that we exercise lordship over your faith, but because we are working with you *to increase* your joy. For you stand by faith" (vs 23-24).

That's the whole purpose of all the correction here that we get in 2-Cor. that

- they stand by faith, and not by sight
- that they exercise the things with spiritual knowledge, not with carnal fleshly knowledge

Not arguing back and forth among each other!

(go to the next track)

Before we get into chapter two, there are just a couple of things that we need to cover here to finish off *the joy, the overcoming, the comforting* and so forth.

If you want a really, really good study, take the time and study through the entire Psalm 119. When you're done with it, see if you think that:

1. These are the inspired ways that Christ looked at the laws and commandments of God.

When you get done with it, ask:

2. Why would anyone in his/her right mind want to abolish the laws, commandments, statutes, judgments, and precepts of God?

Each one of these sections is based upon one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This was to be sung by memory by the Levite singers at the temple. Each section contains 8 verses.

Psalm 119:49: “Remember the Word to Your servant upon which **You have caused me to hope.**”

Joy and hope go together. When you're in trouble and difficulty and affliction, *you hope* for God to intervene. *You hope* that things will get better. *God will, and can!*

Verse 50: “This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your Word has given me life.” Remember what Jesus said, *‘The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are Life!’*

There's something that happens with God's Spirit within us, when we study the Word of God, and we get the spiritual meaning out of it that can :

- give us comfort
- give us hope
- can help us come out of depression
- can help us come out of tailspin of despair

That's why it is so great!

Verse 51: “The proud have utterly scorned me, yet, I do not turn aside from Your Law. I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD, and **have comforted myself**” (vs 51-52).

Think about that. With the Spirit of God, with the Word of God, you can come to have comfort through the Word of God and His Spirit, though there may be a lot of difficulties still going on out around you.

Verse 73: “**Your hands have made me and formed me...**” Back to conception! Conception is because of genes and chromosomes from father and mother, which come from their father and mother, all the way back to Adam and Eve.

Did He form them with His hands? *Yes, He did!* He put the genes and chromosomes in there, so it's the same way. God put it into the genes and chromosomes to form us, the same way, beginning with conception, that He formed Adam and Eve. Only they were full grown adults with a working language and everything.

“...give me understanding so that I may learn Your commandments” (v 73).

Stop and think about this: the commandments of God, like everything else, are layered and layered with many different meanings. So, we learn as we study and restudy. I find that when I go back and study something and go over things that I haven't gone over in a long time, I learn a lot.

Just like going through this #10 in the *Assaults Against the Church*. I didn't remember that I preached all of that, because there was so much

going on, it was like the tail end of a storm coming in and keeping it all upset and upside down.

Verse 74: “Those who fear You will be glad when they see me because I have hoped in Your Word... [a prophecy of Christ] ...I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that You have afflicted me in faithfulness” (vs 74-75).

We do have troubles and afflictions that come for our good.

Verse 76: “I beseech You, let Your steadfast love comfort me... [tie that in with John 14 about the Comforter] ...according to Your promise to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me so that I may live, for Your Law is my delight” (vs 76-77).

We're going to cover a couple of things where Paul said we want to be helpers of your joy. With that he is saying we do not rule you with an iron fist.

Matt. 20 is quite a chapter, because we have some very important things going on. This tells us not to get politics within the Church.

Matthew 20:18: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death; and they shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles to mock *Him*, and to scourge *Him*, and to crucify *Him*; but He shall rise again the third day” (vs 18-19). That sailed over their head. They didn't understand it until it occurred.

Verse 20: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee...”—James and John. It's possible that she was the sister of Mary. A little political inside job here?

You know what they have in business? You need a pusher and a puller. The way you advance is you push important people up by flattering them and then they pull you up to their level, because they like you. This is what we have going on here. This is what happened in the Church of God that caused its downfall, because they went against exactly what Jesus taught.

Verse 20: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshiping Him... [you can almost picture this] ...and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you desire?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your kingdom” (vs 20-21).

They couldn't go and ask Jesus for that themselves. We don't know what on earth kind of conversation was between mother and James and

John as they were discussing this. But here we have some vanity that ‘we’re important.’

It was true that James and John, along with Peter, were the ones to go see the vision of Transfiguration.

Verse 22: “But Jesus answered *and* said, ‘You do not know what you are asking...’” I don’t know if she had one son on one side and one on the other, but then Jesus talks to James and John.

“...Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?’.... [that’s His own blood] ...They said to Him, ‘We are able’” (v 22). They didn’t have a clue as what they were saying.

As it turned out, James was beheaded in about 44_{A.D.} Also, they were of the high priest family as well. This is kind of—‘well, genetically, we’re important, Lord, just think what we can do for You, one at your right hand and one at your left hand.’

Verse 23: “And He said to them, ‘You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*...’”

How was John martyred? It didn’t afflict him, but he was cast into boiling oil. How’s that for a baptism? Didn’t hurt him! He came out, then was given the book of Revelation.

“...but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.’ And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers” (v 24).

‘How dare they go in there and try politicking and try to get the best position, leaving us all alone, hanging out here. We’re important too.’ Jesus had to settle the argument:

Verse 25: “But Jesus called them to *Him and* said...” Very important thing: ***Ministers do not rule over the faith of the brethren!*** We are to help them come to God all the time *with His Word and with His Truth!*

“...‘You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship... [‘katakuriuo,’ *downward authority from a hierarchy*; that’s the rulers of the nations] ...and the great ones exercise authority over them’” (v 25)—‘katexousiazō.’

- Who are the great ones?
- Is there someone in Acts 8 called a great one? *Simon Magus, the religious leader of Samaria!*
- Do we have his successor in Rome today, who is a great one? *Yes, indeed!*

- Does he sit at the top of a hierarchy? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 26: “However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant, and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life *as* a ransom for many (vs 26-28).

Peter said the same thing; don’t treat the brethren as your personal possessions with lordship over them, but be examples, help them, teach them. (1-Peter 5).

We remember some of the stern correction we got down in Pasadena years ago. Yes, indeed! All of that stern correction was when trouble came and they didn’t want to admit the truth. They wanted to lie and say none of these things occurred. Instead of admitting and saying, ‘Yes, there are great problems here and, brethren, we need your help and prayers. We’ve got to solve these things. We can’t let these continue this way.’ If they would have done that, would have been a different story. Maybe the colleges would still be there. That would have been a great thing.

We’re going to learn another principle—the principle of forgiveness. That has to be upon sincere and deep repentance, because it involves the one who in 1-Cor. 5 was the one who was committing incest with his stepmother. That’s a pretty grievous sin. Apparently he really repented.

2-CORINTHIANS 2:

2-Corinthians 2:1: “Now I am resolved within myself not to come to you again in sorrow. if I make you sorrowful, who is it that makes me glad ... [What do you do? *You point out the hope!*] ...if it is not the one who has been made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this same *thing* to you, lest when I come, I might have sorrow from *those* in whom I ought to rejoice; *for* I have confidence in all of you, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. For out of much distress and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears—not that you might be sorrowful, but that you might know the overflowing love, which I have for you” (vs 1-4).

Any correction that he wrote and said, ‘Remove this one, and you do it.’ When it involves people in the congregation or the people in the congregation to participate in what is necessary for the correction and removal.

How many times had it happened in the Church? Someone the hierarchy didn’t like, disfellowshipped, labeled and discredited? *Many*

times! That's not the way it's to be done. Is there any question then why God had to do what He did with the Church? Had to happen!

Verse 5: "But if anyone has caused sorrow, he has not grieved me, but you all, *at least* in part (in order that I may not overcharge *him*). To such a one this punishment, which *was inflicted* by the majority of you, is sufficient; so that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and encourage *him*... [comfort] ...lest such a one be swallowed up with overwhelming sorrow" (vs 5-7).

There have been things so bad with hierarchies, I know of at least three suicides. The correction wasn't given to encourage them to overcome a sin, it was given to destroy the person. *God doesn't want that!* If there's something that needs to be corrected, *help with the encouragement* when you can.

Verse 8: "For this reason, I exhort you to confirm *your* love toward him. Now, for this *cause* I wrote to you, that I might know by testing you whether you are obedient in everything. But to whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; and if I also have forgiven anything, to whomever I have forgiven it, for your sakes *I forgave it in the person of Christ*... [Why?] ...**so that we may not be outwitted by Satan**, for we are not ignorant of his schemes" (vs 8-11).

Very interesting in the Greek; it means his thoughts. So that's why we need to know the enemy. We'll cover that a little more when we get to 2-Cor. 4. ***Satan always comes along to give a benefit!*** That benefit is a reassuring lie, rather than a inconvenient truth.

Verse 12: "Now when I came to Troas to preach the Gospel of Christ, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit because I was not able to find Titus, my brother; then I left them and went into Macedonia" (vs 12-13).

Think about this: No phones, slow mail, no communication back and forth. So, he leaves from over there in Troas, which is on the northern part of what is Turkey today, the northern western part. And you go to Macedonia, going to look for Titus. He had to have God's help to do it.

Verse 14: "But thanks *be* to God, Who always leads us triumphant in Christ, and manifests the fragrance of His knowledge through us in every place.... [he found him] ...For we are Christ's sweet perfume to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing... [those who don't like us, those who are not in the Church] ...to those *who are perishing, we are* a stench of death unto death..." (vs 14-16).

A little example happened to me. I hadn't had my teeth cleaned in a long time, so I called the dentist, and I said, 'If you have a cancellation, I'll come in.' She said, 'We have one tomorrow at 11:30.' Here's this nice gal and she does a real good job in cleaning teeth. Here you are, leaning back, and now they have you put on sunglasses so you don't get any water or broken teeth in your eyeballs and stuff like that.

She's saying, 'How did your Christmas go?' I said, 'As well as could be expected.' I could have said, 'You rotten pagan. You're misled in your belief.' Here this sweet little gal. She says, 'Easter's coming up. What are you going to do?' I said, 'I don't know, yet.'

Then I had another one: the doorbell rings and so I go down there and here are two men standing there. 'We're following up on your request.' I said, 'Oh, really, what was that?' One said, 'We're from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, and we have come to explain about Mormonism.'

So I reached back and got my blowtorch and burned them up. ***No!*** I said, 'I don't know anything about it, but I'm a minister myself, and I used to pastor in Salt Lake City, and I know all about Mormonism. I'm sure that you can help someone else. Thank you for stopping by.' Dolores would be proud that I said that.

Remember years ago, little kids would come up to the house with the parents on Halloween. I would say, 'Don't you know this is pagan?' So, I guess I learn a little.

"...but to those *who are being saved, we are* a fragrance of life unto life. And who *is* qualified for such things?" (v 16).

In other words, the only one who qualifies us for anything is Christ. It's not by who you are, who your parents were, who your aunt and uncle were, who your friends are, it's what Christ makes us qualified.

Verse 17: "For we are not like the many, who for *their own* profit are corrupting the Word of God... [we'll tie that in with the schemes of Satan in 2-Cor. 4] ...but we speak with sincerity, as from God, and before God, and in Christ."

This tells us why, like we just had, we had covered, *God the Father Was Not the God of the Old Testament*. Was it the Father? Or was it the one Who became Jesus Christ? *Wasn't the Father*. As we saw, the Father is referred to, but not revealed. The Most High. But it doesn't tell us anything except there is one above the Lord God of the Old Testament—the Most High.

2-CORINTHIANS 3:

Luke 16 is very instructive. Jesus said, ‘The Law and the Prophets were till John, and from John the Kingdom of God is preached.’ The Protestants go there and say, ‘See, when John came, the Law and the Prophets were done away.’ **No!** because a little later Jesus said, ‘Not one jot or tittle shall depart from the law until everything is fulfilled.’ That includes the prophets.

So when you read all of Luke 16 you get the correct understanding. That’s why you come in and pick a verse out and you clip the top off and you clip the bottom off and take the verse, you’re going to come up with something that’s not actually true. Is the qualification for the Kingdom of God greater than the things of the Old Testament? *Yes, indeed, because they’re in the Spirit!* We will see there are two kinds of blindness.

1. 2-Cor. 4 talks about *the blindness by Satan the devil*
2. 2-cor. 3 talks about *the blindness that happens to Israel* is a partial blinding

This is what it’s talking about, the partial blinding.

2-Corinthians 3:1: “Do we again begin to commend ourselves?...”

If you go to TBN, you’ll see how they commend themselves and how great they are and how great the other person is. It’s a self-righteous love feast and everything is just hunky-dory and great. This alludes somewhat to that.

“...Or do we, as some, need epistles of commendation to you, or *epistles* of commendation from you?” (v 1).

Because these false prophets would come along and they would listen to them, and say, ‘Oh, that’s wonderful.’ He probably would say, ‘Would you write a commendation for me, because I’ve got to go here, and also speak to these people.’ ‘*Oh, yeah, we’ll do that. This man was a wonderful preacher, really taught us some good things.*’

Verse 2: “You are our epistle, and are inscribed in our hearts, being known and read by all men.” In other words, their converted conduct was a testimony of who they are and what they’re doing.

Verse 3: “*For* it is manifest that you are Christ’s epistle, ministered by us; you were not inscribed with *pen and ink*, but with *the Spirit of the living God*; not on tablets of stone, but on fleshly tablets of *the heart.*”

What was on the tablets of stone? *The Ten Commandments!* The first one: God made the tablets and wrote on them. But when Israel sinned, and

Moses came down off the mountain, he was so angry he threw them on the ground and broke them. So, God told Moses when he came up there the second time, ‘You get yourself tablets of stones, like you had the first time, and I will write on them’—wrote the Ten Commandments.

Verse 4: “Now we have this confidence through Christ toward God; not that we are competent of ourselves...” (vs 4-5). See how that ties in with Matt. 20, not because of who we are, not because of what we are.

“...or credit anything to our own *abilities*: rather, our competency *is* from God” (v 5). That’s why we need to:

- continually study
- continually pray
- continually grow and overcome
- use the experiences and things that we have to grow in grace and knowledge

Over the long haul:

- whatever we learn
- whatever we do
- how we teach
- how we conduct our lives

it all comes from God!

Verse 6: “Who also made us competent *as* ministers of *the* New Covenant...”

Look at what Paul had to do, coming from the hierarchy of Judaism, knocked to the ground, blind for three days and three nights, baptized, received his vision, told how much he’s going to suffer. Then he had to escape to go to Arabia and there for three years Christ taught him personally and in vision. *Paul’s competency for the New Covenant did not come from Judaism*, which he was thoroughly grounded in. ***It came from Christ, and he had to reject and renounce Judaism as a religion of men!***

“...not of *the* letter...” (v 6). You want to know how the letter of the rule works. I don’t know if you watched the Senate last night. I shouldn’t have stayed up, but I did. I stayed up long enough, I wanted to see if they would pass it or not. The rule is you must have 60 votes. That’s *the letter of the rule*. What happened? 50-49, they didn’t have 60 votes. ***That’s why it has to be of the Spirit!***

What is the real purpose behind the Law? *Not just what the letters say!* That’s why, just take the one: You shall not murder. That is in the letter. But in the Spirit, what did Jesus say? ‘*You shall not hate your brother in your heart.*’ Why? *Because it gets to the root cause of murder, which is hate!* This is what he’s bringing out here.

“...but of *the Spirit*; for the letter kills, **but the Spirit gives life**” (v 6):

- repentance
- mercy
- forgiveness
- Holy Spirit of God
- growing in grace and knowledge

All of those give life! The end result is *eternal life!*

Verse 7: “Now if the ministry of death... [that’s how the Old Covenant was carried out—to the letter and death] ...which was engraved in stones, came into being with glory...”

- they heard the voice of God
- they saw the glory
- they heard the trumpet
- they heard the whirlwind

“...so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon Moses’ face...” (v 7)—because the second time Moses went up there for forty days and forty nights he came back and his face was radiant with glory, as proof that he was with God.

Remember the first time they went up there they said, ‘Oh, this Moses, we don’t know what’s happened to him. Besides it’s a volcano up there and maybe he slipped and fell. Maybe he’s all burned up.’ I’m just filling in a little exaggeration there. They came to Aaron and said, ‘Aaron, make us gods.’ So, he made a golden calf.

This time, no doubt, Moses was with God, “...because of the glory of his face, which *glory* is being set aside” (v 7). The Old Covenant *was being prepared to be set aside*. I think in the *King James* it is translated *done away*, abolished.

Verse 8: “Shall not the ministry of the Spirit be far more glorious? For if *there was* glory in the ministry of condemnation, to a much greater degree the ministry of righteousness overflows with glory” (vs 8-9).

As evidenced by the one who committed this sin (1-Cor. 5) and now forgiven (2-Cor.2). Isn’t that better than stoning? *Yes!*

Verse 10: “And even *the ministry of condemnation*, which had glory, was not glorious in this respect, because of the surpassing glory *of the ministry of life*.”

It’s so much greater. The end result is not just blessing in the physical realm, in the physical life, but ultimately to be spirit beings, sons and daughters of God.

Verse 11: “For if that which is being set aside *came into being* through glory, to a much

greater degree that which remains *is* glorious. Now then, because we have such hope, we use great plainness *of speech*; for *we are* not like Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not gaze to the end upon *the glory* that is *now* being set aside. **But their minds were blinded...**” (vs 11-14).

Partial blinding has happened to Israel (Rom. 11). Let’s see what brought that blinding about.

A lot of people believe that under the Old Covenant, they had salvation by works. There was no salvation given. There was no Holy Spirit given. God blessed the nation and could bless the people within the nation, physically, for the things that He promised. There’s nothing there that says they were going to receive eternal life.

After giving the reiteration of the Ten Commandments; Deuteronomy 5:22: “The LORD spoke these words to all your assembly in the mountain out of the midst of the fire of the cloud and of the thick darkness with a great voice. And He added no more....”—to the Ten Commandments, but He had Moses add the details in the Book of the Law as to how to administer it.

“...And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and delivered them to me. And it came to pass when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, for the mountain burned with fire, you came near me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders, and you said, “Behold, the LORD our God has revealed His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire. We have seen today that God talks with man yet he *still* lives. Now, therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die” (vs 22-25). *Not so! He didn’t intend to continue speaking to them!*

Verse 26: ““For who of all flesh has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as *we have*, and lived? You [Moses] go near and hear all that the LORD our God shall say. And you speak to us all that the LORD our God shall speak to you, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.’ And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken”

They were well intentioned. Are human beings always well intended? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 29: “Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always so that it might be well with

them and with their children forever!” They had no spiritual heart.

- Could they keep the things in the letter of the Law? *Yes!*
- Did that result in a lot of physical blessings? *Yes!*
- Did it result in eternal life? *No!*
- How do we know that?
- What chapter in the Bible lets us know? *Ezek. 37!*

Where God told Ezekiel, *all of these*—bones and everything back to a second physical life—are the *whole house of Israel!*

If they received salvation in the Old Covenant, why would you need Ezek. 37 to explain that they would receive salvation in a second physical life? *Because they didn't have the heart to believe and God didn't call them!* God didn't give His Spirit to them, so therefore there is no eternal life in the covenant that was written on the stones.

2-Corinthians 3:14: “But their minds were blinded; for to the present hour the same veil *has not been removed, but remains* at the reading of the Old Covenant...”—or Moses.

Isn't that what has happened to the Protestants? *Yes!* “...which *veil* is removed in Christ” (v 14). So, if they're truly converted, what would the Protestants be doing? *Keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days!*

That blindness would have been removed. Israel has always been willing to be partial with God, as evidence by her history. You can go back and you can read and study Psa. 119, and understand about all the laws and commandments, everything about God's way, *in the Spirit!*

Verse 15: “For to this day, when Moses is read, *the veil* lies upon their hearts. But when *their hearts* turn to *the Lord*... [in repentance and baptism] ...the veil is taken away. Now, the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of *the Lord is*, there *is freedom*.... [from human nature and overcoming it] ...But we all, with uncovered faces beholding the glory of *the Lord* as in a mirror, are being transformed... [the whole thing of conversion] ... *into* the same image from glory to glory, even as by *the Spirit of the Lord*” (vs 15-18).

There we've made some pretty good progress in the 2-Cor. *We're going to see about the wiles and schemes and craftiness and thoughts of Satan the devil in 2-Cor. 4.*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 1:3-4
- 2) John 16:33
- 3) 2-Corinthians 1:4-5, 13-22
- 4) John 14:12-23
- 5) Ephesians 1:9-11
- 6) Romans 8:28
- 7) Ephesians 1:12
- 8) 2-Corinthians 1:22-23
- 9) 2-Corinthians 13:1-6
- 10) 2-Corinthians 1:23
- 11) Psalm 119:49-52, 73-77
- 12) Matthew 20:18-28
- 13) 2-Corinthians 2:1-17
- 14) 2-Corinthians 3:1-14
- 15) Deuteronomy 5:22-29
- 16) 2-Corinthians 3:14-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 2; 3
- Matthew 24
- Luke 21
- Mark 13
- Matthew 6
- John 14:24
- 1-Peter 5
- 1-Corinthians 5; 4
- Luke 16
- Romans 11
- Ezekiel 37
- 2-Corinthians 4

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Assaults Against the Church #s 1-4* (#s 14-17 Daniel/Revelation series)

Book: *Josephus*

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- *Hurricane Against God's People* (#3 *Assaults Against the Church*; #16 *Dan/Rev.* series)
- *News, Flesh & Bone, & New Testament Fraud*
- *God the Father Was Not the God of the Old Testament*

FRC:lp

Transcribed: 1-24-18

Formatted: bo—1/25/18

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