

Be Strong in the Lord with Steadfast Faith

Realize your hope, your calling and why you are here

Fred R. Coulter—September 10, 2016

Tomorrow is 9/11. You'll probably hear all the commentators say, 'What have we learned from 9/11?' The real answer is: *Virtually nothing!*

It's a perfect example of the blindness that comes on the world. We know the Bible tells us:

1. Satan has deceived the whole world
2. it's in the power of the evil one
3. Satan blinds the minds of those who want to know about God, but are unwilling to obey Him

We just had an announcement to pray for a man because he fell and got four broken ribs.

- What were the consequences of that fall? *Broken ribs, pain, and all of this sort of thing!*
- Did God do it? *No, God didn't do it!*

However, someone is going to say, 'God gave the law of gravity, so therefore when he fell it's God's fault.' That's the way some people may reason.

That's just an example to show what happens when individuals, groups, and nations sin against God; *the consequences are automatic*. Look what we have with the last three generations that now they graduate from college with a ton of debt, and they know nothing, because they're not taught anything.

When these things automatically happen, prostituting the daughters over generations, look at what we have. What else do we have? What is the main cause of all the inner-city problems? *That one cause right there with 75% now born out of wedlock*. Look at the result of that.

The solution is, according to the government, have more government assistance. Are you going to have a government official standing next to every single individual to make sure that nothing happens? *Of course not!* Can't do that.

There are some people who know it's because we have forgotten God. Some of them are trying to get people to come back to God. Even some Assembly of God churches are beginning to officially keep the Sabbath.

If all the churches would do that, that would be a good start. Not knowing who we are, if you don't know who you are as a nation—because God has set up all the nations, determined their boundaries and their appointed times—even if we have the Bible, *if we don't use it*, it doesn't do us

any good. Look at all the confusion in 'religion.' No wonder people are mad at 'religion.' So how are you going to solve 9/11? *You're not, unless there is mass repentance!*

You might be able to fix it a little here, or fix it a little there, but the cure of the problem is for everyone to return to God. That will happen, but not right away; that will happen when Christ returns. If we're faithful we will be there to see it. That's why the Holy Days. Here's how it's going to take place. There's going to be a lot of death and destruction between now and then, because people won't listen.

Zechariah 14:1: "Behold, the Day of the LORD comes, and your spoil shall be divided in your midst, 'For I will gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem...'” (vs 1-2).

What is the hotbed and center of all the problems in the world? *Jerusalem and the Middle East!*

“...and the city shall be taken, and the houses plundered, and the women raped. And half of the city shall go into exile, and the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.’ And the LORD shall go out and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle” (vs 2-3). Yes, there's going to be a terrible war and terrible things are going to happen, all forewarned.

Verse 4: “And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives...” Where were they the last day He was on earth before His ascension? *The Mount of Olives!*

“...which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall split in two, from the east and to the west... [that's how much power He's going to have] ...and make a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. 'And you shall flee to the valley of My mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.'...” (vs 4-5).

The record of that in *Josephus* is the earth had a 4-foot wall, like a wave. You can imagine what that did!

“...And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with You” (v 5). *We will be there!* This is after the resurrection.

What is the world learning? *Nothing!* What are we learning? *How to solve the problem when*

the Kingdom of God comes to the earth, when Jesus returns!

If you're going to have a big project, like conquering the world, and God is very clever in the way that He does this. You have to have everyone trained. That's what we're in now; we're in training. We are learning and preparing. What are we going to teach the world? *The way of God!* That's when the lesson of 9/11 will be learned, but not until then.

Now for us today, as you can see, the people of God are exactly as described in 1-Cor. 1. All the important people of the world won't be interested in what God wants. They may, on occasion, have good intentions and even quote Scripture.

I watched Donald Trump last night in his speech to the 'faith group.' He had an association of faith group. Some of you may have seen that as well. He said that his favorite verse in the Scripture was 1-John 4 that God loved us, so we need to love one another. That's true! That's better than the other politicians. But how to bring that about takes the Kingdom of God.

1-Corinthians 1:23: "We proclaim Christ crucified. To *the Jews it is* a cause of offense, and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; but to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men..." (vs 23-25).

What does that mean? Does God have any foolishness? *No!* But viewed from a perspective of those wise, smart Greeks, calling people like us to rule the world doesn't seem like a very good idea, and he left them out. Isn't that interesting?

"...the foolishness of God is wiser than men..." (v 25). Because He wants those who will love Him, obey Him, and prepare to rule the world. That's why I've been doing the short series on TROL: ***Truth, repentance, obedience, love!*** That's how all of it is put together. You must start with Truth. "...the foolishness of God..." is to reveal His Truth to those that the world counts as nothing. That's why we're here and they are there.

Sidebar: God has done this down through the generations, so He's got His army sleeping. That's what death is called for the saints, *asleep in Christ!* When it's time for His army to be, He resurrects them all. Here you have a vast array of people ***who believe Truth, that have repented, that obeyed God, that love Him!*** They are now ready with a Spirit mind and a spirit body to help bring peace to the world. No man can do it, ***only Christ!***

So, He reaches down here "...and the weakness of God is stronger than men.... [I don't know of any weakness of God] ...For you see your calling, brethren..." (vs 25-26).

1-Cor. 1 is the beginning; Rev. 17 is the conclusion—Revelation 17:14: "These will make war with the Lamb... [the whole Babylonian system with their kings, and so forth] ...but the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who *are* with Him **called, and chosen, and faithful.**"

Let's look at our calling. 1-Corinthians 1:24: "But to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom."

Verse 26: "For you see your calling, brethren..." What is your responsibility with the calling? ***Jesus said, 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'*** Why? *Because the few that are chosen are those who have chosen to believe God!* The many who are called, they may get excited about hearing about Jesus and hearing about of God, but

- Do they want to obey Him?
- Do they want to love Him?
- Do they want to do what God wants?

It's like a man whose wife was being called and she was all excited about the Sabbath, and everything like that, and he was kind of huffy and puffy, and against it. When I went out to visit them, he wanted to know about the Sabbath. So I explained it to him and I said, 'You do this. You take the Sabbath test: Keep the Sabbath for a month, 4 or 5 Sabbaths, and study about the Sabbath. When I come back we'll see what you have learned.' So, I came back about 5 or 6 weeks later. He said, 'I understand the Sabbath.' Why was that the thing to do?

1. God honors anyone who will study His Word
2. especially if they begin to believe and obey it
3. if it continues, then God will motivate them to want to serve Him, because of God's Spirit

The long and short of the story is that they were both baptized.

Verse 26: "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are highborn *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise..." (vs 26-27).

How do you think it would turn out if someone who was a minister of God was able to get a hold of Obama, sit him down in a room, put a Bible in front of him. And say, 'President Obama, you have to repent of playing favorites with the Muslims. ***If*** you care for the country, ***If*** you love the country, ***If*** you love the people in the country, then here is what God says you need to do.' *I never learned that at Harvard.* Would he do it? *Chances*

are not! There was one ruler who learned the lesson for a short period of time.

“...*even* the things that are counted as nothing...” (v 28):

- How much money do you have?
- How many people do you have?
- Who are you?
- Where were you born?

“...in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence” (vs 28-29). No pride!

Sidebar: For the Feast of Tabernacles I did a sermon on why did Solomon go wrong? *He started out better than anybody else—wisest man in the world, richest man in the world, God’s blessing, God appeared to him twice, he built the temple of God—had all of those things.*

What was the number one thing as to why he failed? You’ll see it in Ecc. 2; *he got his mind on himself*, in that one chapter there are 45 **I**.’

As I read this, how many remember seeing the clip of President Obama with the ‘selfie-stick,’ taking pictures of himself? I want you to think of that when I read this:

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come... [Is that true? *Has happened!*] ...for **men will be lovers of self...**” (vs 1-2).

It says, v 4: “...rather than lovers of God.” Look at everything that leads to: lovers of money, braggarts, proud...

1-Corinthians 1:28: “...—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom...” (vs 28-30).

If you believe the Word of God, live by the Word of God, and know the Word of God, **you have the wisdom of God** that He has caused to be written down and sent to you. Isn’t that something?

“...Who was made to us wisdom from God, even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that, as it is written, ‘The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*’” (vs 30-31).

Come here to the book of Daniel, just before Ezra. Let’s think about this as we read it. Who was Nebuchadnezzar in the vision and dream in chapter two? *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon was the head of gold!* That whole system carried right down to the return of Christ, with the stone cut out without hands, smashed it on the feet. When we read the

book of Revelation of Babylon the Great, that is the whole world system structured after the Babylonian system.

Let’s read a little of Dan. 4. This becomes very important. Why is this here? *So every leader of the world would understand that they are not to get lifted up in their vanity, their pride, and their power because it all comes from God!*

Daniel 4:1: “Nebuchadnezzar the king... [who wrote this? *Nebuchadnezzar!*] ...to all people... [this is prophetic] ...nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: ‘Peace be multiplied to you. It seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great *are* His signs! And how mighty *are* His wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion *is* from generation to generation’” (vs 1-3).

Then he explained what happened. What was that? *He got lifted up in vanity and said, ‘Oh, look at this great Babylon, everything I have made!’* What did God do? Made him insane for seven years. Sent him out to dwell with the ox to eat grass like the oxen.

After that was all over, v 34: “And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him Who lives forever, for His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom *is* from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing; and He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay His hand, or say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’” (vs 34-35).

Isn’t that amazing? Nebuchadnezzar’s epistle to all the people of the world, right there. Is that a witness to everybody in the world? *Yes, indeed!*

Someone will say, ‘I never knew that was there.’ *Do you have a Bible?* ‘Oh, yeah, my aunt gave it to me years ago.’ *Where is it?* ‘I don’t know, somewhere in my bedroom or on the bookcase.’ *Did you ever read it?* ‘No.’ *But God sent it to him or her!*

- How many people have Bibles?
- How many congressman and senators have Bibles?

They even have prayer meetings, but for what? *To seek their own will, not the will of God!* So you see, the witness of God is out there for the whole world, in one form or another.

The reason that **you** have been chosen is because you and all the brethren of God have

repented and believed God. That's why. We are on a mission and a journey in our Christian life:

- to be faithful unto death
- to learn
- to change
- to grow
- to overcome

so that we, with Christ, can bring peace to this world. It isn't going to come any other way. You say of yourself, 'I am unworthy.' Of course you are! I'm unworthy. Of course I am! Any worthiness we have comes from Christ. Who made us?

Sidebar: As I've said recently, I do this almost every night, it's almost like clockwork. I generally go to bed around 10 to 10:30, somewhere around there. About 12:30 I wake up, and then I go to the refrigerator and I get an apple, nice cold crisp apple. I walk out to my chair and I sit down in my chair, no lights on, no television on.

It occurred to me when I was doing the work on the book, *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?*. I'm sitting there, eating this apple, really good apple. Got it at Costco. Where did that come from? That may have come from some farmer someplace, or whatever. You think about all the food you have in your refrigerator. How much of it did you grow in your back yard? *Very little!*

I'm eating this apple and it tastes really good. It's sweet, it's juicy, it's cold and crunchy. I'm sitting there thinking: God is so great. Look at everything, every human being, every plant—and my favorite seed, as you know, is the sequoia tree. Tallest tree in the world; oldest tree in the world and it comes from a little seed that's a little smaller than wheat seed. That whole tree is packed in there. I think about human life. All of us started so small. It took your mother and father.

Sidebar: What did God say to Adam and Eve? *He married them and He said, 'Man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they two shall become one flesh!'* The one flesh is every one of us, because we get half from mama and half from papa. We are *the one flesh* of our parents. Amazing! And we started so small that you couldn't even see us unless you had a specialized microscope.

We need to also understand that, because there is the spiritual parallel, how do we start out when we are baptized? *Very little! Amazing!*

Nebuchadnezzar learned that lesson. Very interesting. Sometimes you have to look at things in detail and sometimes you have to back off and look at it overall. When you look at the seven general epistles:

- first one is James, the brother of Jesus
- then Peter, who was the leader of the apostles at the beginning, not a pope
- John and Peter were the ones who went together at the Gate Beautiful, and healed a man
- Jude was one of the other brothers of Jesus

What do you have? *You have two brothers of Jesus, one to begin and one to end and you have the two leading apostles in between!* Isn't that an amazing thing?

First Peter tells us what we do when we start. When we receive the Spirit of God, it is a begettal, just like when you were conceived in your mother's womb. That is a start.

1-Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to *the* elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *who have been chosen* according to *the* predetermined knowledge of God *the* Father..." (vs 1-2).

The predetermined knowledge was that God had His plan from the beginning. Christ was slain from the foundation of the earth. That means the whole plan was worked out for Him to die. *That was all predetermined!* God calls those who repent and respond. He's determined that He would. If they repent and are baptized, God has predetermined that you would receive the Holy Spirit of God. If you are faithful to the end, God has predetermined that you'll be in the resurrection. That's what it means: predetermined knowledge of God the Father.

"...by sanctification through *the* Spirit, unto obedience... [remember TROL: **truth, repentance, obedience, love**] ...and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again..." (vs 2-3).

The misunderstanding of that, which is a perversion of Scripture, is that 'if you believe in Jesus, you're born again.' **No, you're not!** Jesus said in John 3, those who are born again are like the wind. They can come and go; you can't see them. If you stand up in church and say you believe in Jesus, can everybody still see you? *Yes!* You haven't been born again. If you've really been truly born again, walk through a wall. That's always a good test.

Someone says they are born again, say, 'The Bible says those who are born again come and go like the wind. How about if you do like Jesus after He was resurrected and He appeared right in the middle of the room. He walked either through a wall or through a door that was closed. Here's a door over here, you try it. If you can't do it, you're not born again.'

“...begotten us again unto a living hope... [this is something that can't be taken away] ...through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead... [and your coming resurrection] ...Unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us” (vs 3-4)—which He will bring with Him when He comes.

Don't you think God is planning something awesome and fantastic for those who will be in the first resurrection? Think about it.

Yesterday I blessed Lola's great-granddaughter just born, two weeks old, beautiful little girl. I thought, look at how God does this. What is He going to do for us at the resurrection? Did that little two-week old have any clue as to what she's going to be when she's a full-grown woman? *No!*

Likewise, what does God have for us that is so great? *We're a little more fortunate than the two-week old child*, God has revealed some of those things in His Word that we're going to be composed of Spirit. We will have glory; we will live forever. Not like this old flesh that is decaying and corrupting, and so forth.

Verse 5: “Who *are* being safeguarded by the power of God through faith for salvation *that* is ready to be revealed in *the* last time.”

When Peter was writing this, he was probably thinking, yes, it's going to happen just a few years down the road. But you see, Jesus was wise. God was wise in not telling the apostles, ‘It's going to be over 2,000 years.’

We're living in a time when it should be and what is the biggest problem living in the time when it's going to be? *Satan the devil ruling the world, self-centeredness, every convenience at our hand and fingertip that you would ever, ever want in this physical life!* That's why we're the few, because too many people are all wrapped up in those physical things.

Sidebar: If you're Satan the devil, what would you like to do to keep people distracted from God? *Give them lots of things to keep their minds occupied on other things!* That has happened.

Verse 6: “In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials.”

We're all going to have trials. You have yours; I have mine. They come; they go. They increase; they decrease. Some remain longer than others, but we all have trials. Why? *Because God wants to know:*

- Do you really, really believe?

- Do you really, really want God's way more than anything else?

That's what baptism is all about, because you're conjoined to the death of Jesus Christ.

Verse 7: “In order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Let's look at something that happened realistically in our day. Through the Internet there is a lot there about Herbert W. Armstrong. There are a lot of people who follow him. There are a lot of people who have made an idol out of him.

- Who would have thought that in Pasadena, at the ‘hey day’ of the Worldwide Church of God—beautiful campus, the auditorium, the college, everything that was there—it would be all taken away because of sin?
- Who would have thought?
- Was that a trial? *Yes, very much so!*

Especially when you see wickedness in high places and corruption where it shouldn't be, and here you are. Now, all of a sudden, how many felt they were standing alone? *Every one of you!*

- you didn't know what to do
- you didn't know what to think
- you didn't know where to go

If you remained faithful to God, He brought you through it! That is a good example of an extended fiery trial. But what is the good that's coming out of that?

- instead of one main church, there are 1500
- instead of having one television program, there's the Internet with hundreds

We need to look at the end result and realize that God is going to accomplish *His* will *His* way, and we're a part of it.

We don't know how many people that there are who are keeping the Sabbath today. But for those who love God, God's presence is there because God is doing a greater work. That's why we don't need to look to numbers. We don't need to look to dollars. ***We need to look to God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the things that He has put in His Word that we love Him and obey Him and are faithful!***

(go to the next track)

The reason we have the proving of our faith, v 7: “...may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ; whom, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and*

rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory” (vs 7-8).

That’s why He’s given us the Holy Spirit and why we have the Word of God. Always look at it this way: Someone might say, ‘I’ll believe God if He would come down here and talk to me.’ He already did. It was so great that He had it written down so you would know what He has said at any time you desire. That’s quite a thing. That’s why we have the Bible.

Verse 9: “*And are* receiving the end of your faith—even *the* salvation of *your* lives.” Understand this and think of this. We don’t know how close we are to the end, but we’re sure a whole lot closer than at any other time in history. Think of all the blessings that God has given us so we can know Him through His Word, through recording audio and video, through the Internet. You talk about a witness to all nations, that’s fantastic.

Verse 10: “Concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired, searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow” (vs 10-11). They didn’t understand it.

You go to Isa. 9 and the Jews since they reject the New Testament don’t understand it. It says: *For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God!* How can a man become God? If you don’t have the New Testament, you will never know. That’s why you need the whole Bible. So to this day, they don’t know.

Verse 12: “To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by *the* Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels desire to look.” That’s an amazing thing.

Because of all of this, we have a responsibility. God made us in such a way, and giving us independent free moral agency (IFMA):

- we have to choose
- we have to think
- we have to exercise the Word of God in our lives with the Spirit of God
- we have to know right from wrong
- we have to know good from evil
- we have to understand the Word of God

—all of that in one huge package.

Verse 13: “For this reason, be prepared in your minds, be self-controlled, *and* be fully hoping

in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ.” Note the sermon series:

- *Grace of God and Commandment Keeping*
- *Grace of God*
- *Grace Upon Grace*

The final grace is going to be the resurrection. Isn’t that going to be something?

Verse 14: “As obedient children... [not rebellious like the world] ...do not conform yourselves to the former lusts, *as you did* in *your* ignorance.” You need the Word of God

- to teach you
 - to correct you
- the Spirit of God*
- to lead you
 - to guide you.

Verse 15: “But according as He Who has called you *is* Holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all *your* conduct; for it is written, ‘You be Holy because I am Holy’” (vs 15-16).

That’s amazing! That’s why with the book, *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?*, we will be the literal sons and daughters of God the Father. That’s an amazing thought. This is why we need the Sabbath, every week:

- we’re to grow
- we’re to develop
- we’re to have the mind of Christ

All of these things take time and that’s what God has given us.

Verse 17: “And if you call upon the Father, Who judges according to each man’s work without respect of persons, pass the time of your *life’s* journey in *the* fear of God; knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by* tradition from *your* forefathers” (vs 17-18).

Remember this, a simple thing: ***all traditions of all religions take away from the Word of God!*** Very few conform to the Word of God. They are generally the ideas of men.

Sidebar: Today there are an increasing number of Messianic Jews. Messianic Jews go to Rom. 3 and say, ‘What advantage—reading Paul—does the Jew have?’ Much in every way, because to them were committed the oracles of God.’ That was only good until the New Testament was finished. Today they have no advantage.

Just like the Catholics, they are so overloaded with tradition that it’s impossible to really find the Truth of God. Most devout Jewish women shave their heads and wear a wig. When

Paul wrote—now I know why he wrote it—that long hair is given to a woman for her glory; to be shaven or shorn is a shame.

Then he also said, ‘When a man prays, he’s not to have his head covered. But the Jews put a covering on their heads. Yet, they think they’re serving God and people believe that they’re right. This is why God sent His Word and you must have the whole thing, the Old and the New Testament together.

Verse 19: “But by *the* precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before *the* foundation of *the* world... [like it says there in Rev. 13:8] ...but was manifested in *these* last times for your sakes; *even for you* who through Him do believe in God, Who raised Him from *the* dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God” (vs 19-21).

That’s why the true government of God... by the way we’ve improved the booklet that we had, *Is the Ministry God’s Government*, and we added to it the article by J. H. Allen, who wrote *Judah’s Sceptre and Joseph’s Birthright*. The article he wrote was about the Nicolaitans and the hierarchy and things like this.

Put it together and now we have a complete booklet on the truth concerning the hierarchy. Harry Curley did a couple of diagrams showing hierarchies from the top down and God’s government is from the bottom up. Everyone who serves is beneath all of those he is serving, not over. We need to understand that.

“...that your faith and hope might be in God” (v 21). We’re all to believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and all of that.

Verse 22: “Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit...” This is what is covered in 1-John, to love one another.

God has given us the challenge, because today we come from so many different backgrounds and different areas, and things like this. It’s not like we’re all related genetically or whatever. We’re all different. We have to learn to love one another as Christ has loved us. That’s quite a great thing. The more we do that, the more we will understand the Word of God.

Verse 23: “*For* you have been begotten again, not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible *seed*, by *the* living Word of God, *which* remains forever. For all flesh *is* like grass, and all *the* glory of man *is* like *the* flower of *the* field; the grass has withered, and its flower has fallen away. But the

Word of *the* Lord endures forever; and this is the message that was preached to you through the Gospel” (vs 23-25).

That’s what God wants for us. Let’s look at a couple of other things here concerning some of the things that we will be tested concerning. We know in the end-times Revelation tells us that Satan is going to be angry at the people of God. As long as we have peace, and as long as we can really study the Word of God and grow in grace and knowledge, we need to really be busy doing that every single day.

The time will come... Look at what’s happening with these terrorist things. Look at the Middle East. It’s totally on fire: fighting, killing, warring, hatefulness. Who do they hate more than anything else? *America!* What’s in America? ***The only place left on earth where the Gospel can be preached to the world!*** Think of that!

It’s not coming out of England. It’s not coming out of France. Maybe there’s a little smidgen out of Holland. It’s not coming out of China. It’s not coming out of South America. We need God’s protection and help.

We are going to have difficulties come along and try and test us. God is going to call people out of this world that have had terrible problems with Satan and demons. Remember, Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out of her. How do we handle that?

1-Peter 5:6: “Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you” (vs 6-7).

That’s why you need to pray every day. You need to study every day. You need to understand that through Him you ‘live and move and have your being.’ Cast your cares upon Him. We all have difficulties and problems that come upon us. Cast it upon Him. Didn’t Jesus say that His burden was light? *Yes, He did!* This is quite a thing.

This is why we have the Sabbath Day so when we study the Word of God:

- we learn
- we reinforce
- we verify
- we’re inspired
- we’re uplifted with of God

It’s a spiritual thing!

Remember Jesus said, ‘The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are life. Which means when we come together on the Sabbath, or you keep the Sabbath at home, doesn’t make any

difference, God's Spirit is there with you. God's Spirit is in you. You study His Word and we're able to send out the messages every week. We have so many online now that you could spend all the day portion of the Sabbath watching churchathome.org or watching cbcg.org/video

Here's Jesus prayer, Matthew 11:25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes.'" Hopefully growing in grace, knowledge and understanding and developing in the way that God wants us.

Verse 26: "Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do* this.... [think how special you are to God to fit into this verse]: ...All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*" (vs 26-27).

Think on that! God the Father Himself! That's the whole purpose of grace upon grace; you have direct relationship with God the Father in heaven above. God has performed a miracle in each one of our lives by revealing the Father. That is astounding.

Verse 28: "Come to Me... [that's why we have Sabbath services] ...all you who labor and are *overly* burdened..." If you get all emotionally wrapped up in your problems and difficulties, instead of casting them upon Christ and upon the Father, you'll never get them solved.

That's why we have the Sabbath. Here comes the Sabbath and everything stops; we fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and with each other when we get together. We study His Word, we pray to God. That's the greatest thing, brethren! What you're doing on the Sabbath is a spiritual work, which is greater than any work you can do during the week. Not that you shouldn't study and pray every day.

Verse 28: "**Come to Me**, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened, and **I will give you rest.**"

- comfort
- help
- intervention
- understanding

Verse 29: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me..." That's why our whole lives it is a process of learning. I am still learning things from the Bible, because it's the Word of God, from the mind of God, which has Spirit and Truth behind it.

There are layers and layers of meaning to much of the Bible that applies in so many different ways.

I will give you peace, "...for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy, and My burden is light" (vs 29-30). Quite an amazing thing!

This is what we need to do living in the world that we are in. We're assaulted from every side with so many things.

1-Peter 5:7: "Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you."

- He has called you
- He has given you His Spirit
- He loves you
- He wants you in His Kingdom
- He wants all the brethren that *you know* in the Kingdom and all the brethren *you don't know*

We don't know how many there are on the earth. You think about everything that God has created on the earth. That's hard to do. Every once in a while I look at the globe that we have in the meeting room in Hollister. I look down where there's a little speck where Hollister is supposed to be. It's so small you won't see it on the globe. Then you look at the globe and here is all the land mass and all the oceans. God has made everything that's in them. Everything! Down to the smallest microscopic little thing.

- He loves *you!*
- He has called *you!*
- He wants *you* in His Kingdom!

Satan doesn't want that. So, there are going to be times when we will have trials that will be initiated by him.

Verse 8: "Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour."

Remember that next time you watch NatGeo and the lions are chasing to get some food. Who do they always get? *The weak!* That's why we are to be strong in the Lord.

Verse 9: "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith..." How do you handle that? Some people have been confronted with visions. Some people have been confronted with demons. Some have even been demon possessed. When the demons are cast out, and they receive the Spirit of God, how do you fight against that if it starts to occur again? You rebuke it in the name of Jesus Christ. Whatever it is must absolutely go! ***It's the power of Christ!*** Living in this world, the power of Satan is everywhere.

Verse 9: “Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world.” At that time there was a growing persecution against Christians. *It’s going to come again!*

What are they doing in the Middle East to those who are professed Christians? but don’t have the Word of God, but have traditions of men? have idols? but, yet, they believe in the name of Jesus? *They’ll be remembered by God and they will be in the second resurrection!*

Revelation 17:6: “And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus....” Two categories of those who die:

1. the saints are those who have the Spirit of God
2. the martyrs of Jesus are those who die for the name of Jesus and that’s about all that they knew

In the Middle East they’ve been killed, crucified, beheaded, burned, drowned. What do you think is going to happen here in America when it really hits? *It’s going to be awful!* That’s why we need to ***be strong in the Lord!***

You will see in the books of 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, Jude and James, but in more particularly 1st and 2nd Peter, talking about the persecution that was coming and that they were experiencing. But this is also prophetic for our times, as well.

1-Peter 5:8: “Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world. Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while, **Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**” (vs 8-10).

That’s how we get our lives orientated back to God. So, whatever the difficulties that come along, cast them upon Christ. Take them to Him.

- only He can work it out
- only He can change other people’s minds
- only He can open doors and close doors

Verse 11: “To Him *be* the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

Read the whole book of 1-Peter. Do that as a study project for this coming week. See how many of these Scriptures apply to us today. It’s really quite an amazing thing when you do that. ***Realize:***

- **your hope**

- **your calling**
 - **why you are here**
 - **why you have the Word of God**
- and take full advantage of it in every way that you can!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Zechariah 14:1-5
- 2) 1-Corinthians 1:23-26
- 3) Revelation 17:14
- 4) 1-Corinthians 1:24, 26-29
- 5) 2-Timothy 3:1-2, 4
- 6) 1-Corinthians 1:28-31
- 7) Daniel 4:1-3, 34-35
- 8) 1-Peter 1:1-25
- 9) 1-Peter 5:6-7
- 10) Matthew 11:25-30
- 11) 1-Peter 5:7-9
- 12) Revelation 17:6
- 13) 1-Peter 5:8-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-John 4
- Ecclesiastes 2
- John 3
- Isaiah 9
- Romans 3
- Revelation 13:8

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Josephus*
- *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Judah’s Sceptre and Joseph’s Birthright* by J. H. Allen

Sermon Series:

- *Grace of God and Commandment Keeping*
- *Grace of God*
- *Grace Upon Grace*

Booklet: *Is the Ministry God’s Government* (including *The Nicolaitans*) by J. H. Allen

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