

From Here to Kingdom Come (Go To Meeting)

Lyall Johnston—October 27, 2023

Greetings from a small group of your brothers and sisters down under in New Zealand, and we love the rest of the brethren around the world.

We know that we're heading into very difficult times, but we also know that we have a God in heaven above and His Son Jesus Christ *Who have all power to protect us, to guide us, and to direct us* into the path that They have chosen for us.

God is in control of that, and as long as we're close to Him, we have nothing to fear. The title today is *From Here to Kingdom Come*. It's a play on words from Matt. 6 where every day we pray to our Father saying, 'Your Kingdom come.'

Many of us can probably remember as children when we maybe had a test or a little bit of an argument with somebody, and we would say, 'I'd like to kick him from here to kingdom come.' That's not a very pleasant statement, but nevertheless, we want to address the subject, which many people are addressing.

You can go online and you can hear sermons from many different corners. You can hear all the prognosticators talking about what's happening in the world and what they think is going to happen in the final analysis.

Some are quite good, but what we really want to focus on today is the here now from the Biblical perspective as part one. And in the second part we want to know because of the day that we're living in, Jesus tells us we will hear of wars and a rumors of wars. Are we not seeing that? *Pestilence, disease, disasters, as it's mentioned in Mark 13, earthquakes!*

Well, in New Zealand, the whole length of the country is on the Pacific Ring of Fire. If that major earthquake was to erupt, this country would probably just submerge in a moment and no one would be saved like in the days of Noah.

But we don't worry about that, because we know that God is in heaven and if that would happen then we know that we're safely in His hands. Also, because of the times that we're living in, Peter asks a question and we'll look at that a little later, What kind of people should we be? *Nothing new in this topic, it's a repetition of the same Scriptures!*

- Why?
- Why can't we go to something different?
- Why can't we go to something more exciting?

- What could be more exciting than this?

The repetition of Scripture, both Paul and Peter say, 'Look, it doesn't trouble me, it's not bothering me that I'm repeating these things for you.' It's Peter who says, 'It's necessary for you that I repeat these things.' It doesn't matter whether we're elders we're all brethren together, and the elders are the ones who are here to serve anyway, as Jesus said.

Jesus was serving the disciples at the table; yet, He was their Master. That's how it is to serve the brethren, like they were the special guests at the feast. Where the elders, were bringing the food and feeding them with the spiritual delicacies that God has given to us, meaning His Word.

So, we want to go into that matter of what kind of people ought we to be in Peter's words. Let's turn to Matt. 24 and see these prophecies.

Today, what are we seeing? *We're seeing a lot of disruption!* I think it was about two nights ago, I just came across the interview that Fred had with the Two Mikes (podcast)—*powerful!*

He was being challenged quite directly by the Two Mikes, and I believe that caused a response that was just so powerful. Fred outlined those Scriptures and put it all in the context of what God is doing right down to the second resurrection. It was very powerful. A program that I believe really needs to be broadcast very widely. I saved it because I want to listen to it again.

Here we are in Matt. 24, we know what happened. The disciples came to Jesus, and they'd been in the temple. Jesus wrote the story, He said that not one stone is going to be left with this temple; and that is true. That is what happened in 70_{A.D.} when the temple was totally destroyed!

Verse 2: "But Jesus said to them, '...there shall not be left here even a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down.'"

We've heard the comment that those people who think today they know where the temple was are completely mistaken. We can say that at least on the basis of what Jesus said here.

Going on, Jesus came to the Mount of Olives, and as you can see in Mark's Gospel, He talks about James, Peter, John, and Andrew being with him and asking him these questions. This was on the Mount of Olives after they'd been in the

temple area. Because of the question that they asked Him:

Verse 3: “And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him alone, saying, ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming...[and here’s the context]: ...**and of the completion of the age?**’” *Wanting to know what is coming in the future. Don’t you and I? Absolutely!*

We’ve had it outlined for us. God has given us this incredible understanding of His mystery, which is at least twofold.

The mystery, of course, as Paul told the Gentiles, is ***the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory!*** *That’s a glory, and that’s a hope!* That’s forward-looking that we look forward to every day when we pray, ‘*Father, Your Kingdom come.*’

But right now, we’re in the now; we’re in the here and now. We have to get from here to the Kingdom, and beyond the Kingdom, of course, we know is eternity in absolute glory and bliss in the presence of God our Father and Jesus Christ, and with each one of us; those who endure to the end.

Verse 4: “Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘**Be on guard...**’” *Primary!* It goes throughout Matt. 24! *Watch!* ‘Don’t believe these things,’ as He says later, as recorded in this chapter.

“...‘Be on guard, so that no one deceives you’” (v 2).

What does that mean? *Don’t let anyone deceive you!* That means that we must trust in the inspired Word of God as recorded for us in the Scriptures—both the Old and New Testaments. We are so privileged to have a Bible that is as accurate as any Bible or any translation from the original texts that has ever been written.

Remember the days of our former fellowship where they said that we could never produce a translation of the Scriptures. Well, it’s been done, beautifully done. Of course, now we have the Interlinear, with the *Faithful Version* now with the Greek text underneath, just packed full of information.

We’ve been blessed over and over again! I don’t want to be critical, but when I listen to—I’ve listen probably to two or three dozen—sermons from Churches of God, ***I come away feeling there’s something, I’m not being fed here!*** Good messages, sound teaching, but it’s just something that I can’t equate with, or I just feel I go away like I’ve lived halfway through a meal.

“...**Be on guard, so that no one deceives you**” (v 4)—*because today we would have so much*

deception on the Internet. We have so many *false* preachers, all with their own particular type of doctrines, meaning of which a contrary to the written Word, as it was given to us in the Old Testament and the New Testament, from the prophets and apostles of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 5: “**For many...**” What does that mean? *Almost everyone!*

So, you and I have the responsibility to check these things up for ourselves so that we can have the certainty from what God is telling us through the Scriptures.

Those of us who are elders are obligated to make sure the words that we preach—though imperfectly—inasmuch as God has given and taught us His Truth and will continue to feed on us so that we can feed you. But it’s your responsibility, it’s my responsibility to check with the Scriptures as the Bereans did to ensure that you don’t just believe what is said—what we say, or some other online preacher says—*because they can lead us astray!*

As Jesus said, v 5: “For many shall come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ’; and they shall deceive many.”

Yes, outside of the Church, but also within the Church if that’s possible. In other words, ***if*** we’re not being diligent in studying the Word of God and ensuring that the Word of Christ is...

Colossians 3:16: “**Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...**”—*that our mind is filled with the Word of God!*

We’ve read it over and over again that these words keep coming into our mind, they keep bouncing to the front of our mind when we run into a problem or difficulty. How does that happen? *It’s God’s Spirit that’s operating within our heart and mind because:*

- we have loaded our minds
- we’ve read
- we’ve studied
- we’ve done the work that God wants us to do

then:

- God gives us the rewards
- God gives us the answers
- God leads us and guides us through His Word

Not the words of men, ***but the words that come out of the mouths of men that are directly in line with the Scriptures!***

What a joy it is to know that Jesus Christ and the Father dwell within us! Jesus promised that if we do certain things, the Father and He will come and take up Their abode, Their dwelling within us.

We think about that; that's something we can contemplate daily, and:

- the more we do it
- the more we think about it
- the more we meditate about it
- the more we meditate on God's Word *that becomes more and more a reality day-by-day!*
- that gives us the confidence
- that gives us the hope
- that gives us the faith in God's Word

so that we know; we don't just believe!

We know that we know that God has planted His seed, the Holy Spirit, which is His, and the mind of Jesus Christ in a small portion, and we are the ones that are to make that grow.

Matthew 24:5: "For many shall come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ'..."

Yes, there's many out there saying, 'Yeah, Christ was the Christ.' There are many also saying that they indeed in the flesh, that they're the Christ today; that they're Christ walking in the flesh again.

Of course, I don't believe any of us would be deceived by that; certainly, we hope that that would be the case.

"...and they shall deceive **many**" (v 5).

We just have to look at the various churches and the doctrines that they have, and because we have been exposed at a very deep level to the doctrines of the Scriptures, it's actually for most people who have been in the Church, even for a little while, ***to recognize the errors, to recognize the deception!***

Once we start obeying God's Word, the Holy Spirit is there and it will warn us. It'll trigger off a little thought, a little idea, which is saying:

- be careful
- watch out
- don't be deceived
- check this out
- go to these Scriptures and check this out

Verse 6: "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars...."

We're hearing about that now. In reading this, it was just like this is within the context. It's like Jesus, and if He were here today, running a video or a movie in front of us showing us all these things that are about to happen.

- wars and rumors of wars
- pestilence
- famine

- diseases
- earthquakes
- disasters

Those things are going to happen, and as he says:

"...See that you do not let these things disturb you..." (v 6).

This is important! This is the context! This is what he is telling us within the context of all these events.

- don't let anyone deceive you
- do not let these things disturb you

"...For it is necessary that all these things take place..." (v 6).

This is why we know we can have certain ideas or certain things about what is taking place in the Middle East right now, in Judea, between the Jews and the Hamas.

He says, "...but the end is not yet" (v 6).

We know from prophecy that certain things have to take place. The Jews have to be in Judea. Why? *Because when the man of sin comes and sets himself up in the temple and calls himself God*" (2-Thess. 2).

So those things have to happen. The Jews have to be in the land. For example: if Iran were to come in and wipe out the Jews, It's not going to happen because ***God is going to see that they are there, because those prophecies will be fulfilled!***

So that's the reason why Jesus said, 'Don't be disturbed about these things, prophecy is going to happen.' ***It's going to happen right on time, because God is in charge! God is in control!***

Verse 7: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in *different* places. Now, all these things are the beginning of sorrows. **Then shall they deliver you...**" (vs 7-9).

In reading Matt. 24, it's always good to read the parallel text in Mark 3 where some of the gaps are filled in and we put the two accounts together and you get a broader picture of everything that Jesus was saying and it narrows down some aspects.

Verse 9: "Then shall they deliver you up to affliction, and shall kill you...." *Yes, that's coming!*

Some of us, we may not be around for that, ***but:***

- we have to be prepared
- we have to be so filled with the mind of Jesus Christ

- we have to be so led by God's Spirit

*that even when they lead us up, if that happens to be you or me, **that we will not let that trouble us!** Why? Because:*

- God is going to be there for us
- God is going to be there with us, and Jesus Christ, both through the Holy Spirit
- They are going to put words into our mouths before we lose our heads

Then, the next thing we know, we rise up in the resurrection; the Kingdom has come!

- then we'll be in the Family of God
- then we'll be in the Kingdom

There's going to be 'a mother of all wars' like never has been before!

As Pilate asked Jesus, 'Are You a king?' ***Yes, I am!*** Jesus said, ***'For this purpose I came. My Kingdom is not of this world.'***

- everything that we see
- everything that we have a part of
 - ✓ the governmental structures
 - ✓ the military
 - ✓ the armies fighting against each other
 - ✓ the educational systems
 - ✓ the financial systems
 - ✓ you name it

are not a part of God's Kingdom! It's all a part of this world, which we are to come out of!

Yes, we have to live in this world, but we live in this world as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, living by the laws and commandments of God to the end that all nations, Jesus tells us, are going to hate us!

We can see that now, even those who are called Christians. Of course, we know there are in some countries like in the United States where there is a deliberate attempt by 'the powers that be' to work and fight against Christians. We know we have a new Speaker of the House right now and perhaps that will slow things down a little.

It's quite amazing how that came about, makes you wonder, is this God putting this man—whose name is Michael Johnson—to maybe help those who they call *the patriots* and the good guys just to slow things down? *We don't know!*

Like the war in the Middle East, the Jews vs Hamas, we'll just have to wait and see how it all works out. But the focus that God wants us to be aware, ***do not be disturbed by all these things you see!***

Just in listening to some of you online, it comes across loud and clear that you are strong in the faith, and it's very evident that you're not going to be, allow these things to trouble you, which shows that you are on God's side.

I don't like that statement, 'Oh, God's on our side.' ***No! We better make sure we're on God's side! We better make sure we're walking in the Truth of God and the knowledge of God, seeking His wisdom, asking him daily!***

Father, I need Your wisdom. I lack wisdom. I need Your knowledge. I need Your understanding. I need Your Truth. As I read Your Word, please lock it into my mind. Hide it away there so that when I need it, it will come powerfully to the front of my mind. I will have the faith! I will have the conviction! I'll have the hope that no matter what happens to me, that I'm going to be with You and Christ and all Your Family for the rest of eternity.

It's so hard to move fast through the Scriptures. There's just so much here that God has for it. Again, as you know, every time we go over it and read it, God just lightens it up for us as His Spirit communicates with the spirit within us and the Word is transferred into our minds and into our hearts, which helps us to walk in the path set by Jesus Christ and by the Word of God.

We get down to what's happening even now within society:

Verse 10: ***"And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."***

We saw examples of that in the lifetime of at least some of us who are older in Nazi Germany, and many other places in the communist countries where family were spying on family.

As a result, causing family members to be put to death, taken away and imprisoned and finally put to death.

Verse 11: ***"And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many."***

We can avoid being the many by filling our minds with the Word of God and praying to God the Father and Jesus Christ and fasting as we have the opportunity to draw closer to God so that we will not be deceived.

The Word of God will be so strong and so powerful within us that it has become a part of us. It's how we live. We live by that Word.

As Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God**’

- Isn’t that a fantastic prophecy?
- Isn’t that a fantastic teaching?

To know that!

Living by the Word of God. Why are we able to do that? It’s because God called you and me, who are not the highly mighty in this world, we’re the lowly of this world that God called us, and hopefully, like Josiah, the king, with the tender heart, so that God can work with us. So that we’ve got nothing within us that is a stronghold resisting the Word of God.

That daily we’re striving to bring every thought into the captivity of Christ and that’s part of the message.

“And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.” Why does Jesus keep repeating this? He doesn’t just stop there, He continues in the remainder of the chapter. Same warnings!

Verse 12: “And because lawlessness shall be multiplied...”

It is being multiplied, and it’s only going to grow worse! A little bit of a hiatus at the moment, but that will soon pass, and:

“...**the love of many shall grow cold**” (v 12).

That’s why in our prayers, as we had already today, and in our thoughts for one another, we must be so bound together:

- by the Word of God
- by the Spirit of God
- by the love of God

That there is not one iota of negative attitudes toward each other, and that’s something we do have to work on constantly to love the brethren.

As we have all those, right now, the suffering or the sicknesses and diseases; God wants us to be filled with ‘bowels of mercy.’ When we hear somebody who’s sick or dying, it affects our guts, it affects our bowels. You know, sometimes we see these images, even on video, with somebody jumping off this building or a cliff or something from a height, or climbing up these high buildings or poles, it affects our stomach, even just watching something on video that affects us to the very center of our being, our gut, our bowels, and it affects our minds and our thinking. **God wants us to have that toward each other!**

This is why these prayer requests for each other are so important. There are so many of them, but we can cover them, and we continue to pray for those brethren, even the ones that we don’t know. Most of those names that are coming, we don’t know those people, but they have asked for us to pray for them.

Yes, it says in James that if any of you are sick, call the elders of the church, and the elders will anoint you with oil, they’ll lay hands on you, and by the prayer of faith, the sick shall be made well.’

That can happen as you are being anointed or in the Plan of God that healing may occur in the resurrection, **but that is God’s choice!** For us, it’s having that faith. Now, if you are able to, if you are sick, to call on an elder, it’s essential that we do because that way you see we’re obeying God, and then we know that it’s in God’s hands, and we can have that confidence that whatever happens, **that is God’s will for me.**

Whatever God has in mind for me, whatever God’s Plan is for me, I am happy with that, because it’s His decision, and therefore it carries His blessing; it carries His will. **That is putting our lives into the control of God the Father!**

He’s in control anyway, but He wants us to learn to walk by being self-controlled *walking in*:

- all His laws
- all His commandments
- all His statutes
- all His judgments
- all His precepts

because those all are part of His mind! They are how God thinks, and they are the things that God does! **It’s all a blessing for us, His sons and daughters!**

Verse 13: “But the one who endures to the end, **that one shall be saved.**”

Now, that can mean several things. It can mean if we endure to the end of this life, if we die before Christ returns, then if we endure to the end and are faithful, it says, “...that one shall be saved.”

It may be that we are brought up before the councils and condemned to death, but we endure. Jesus promised, “...**that one shall be saved.**” It’s going to happen to many who are martyred who remain faithful to God the Father.

We don’t let that worry us, as Jesus said, because that’s our entrance ticket in one sense, as our entrance ticket to the Kingdom of God as a martyr for Jesus Christ.

What have we done? *By not turning against the Father, the Son, or any brother or sister, we actually have glorified God and Christ!*

God is going to put glory back on us when we have accomplished what we can accomplish in this life and when we are there in His Family. He'll give us the glory we need to accomplish the work that He has ahead for each one of us.

Verse 14: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall **be proclaimed** in all the world..."

Yes, something needs preached. Over in Mark it says, *published*. If you heard Fred's message when he talked about the amount of literature that we have available to send out to he who writes in asks for it, as part of the work that God has given to us: the Bibles and the books and the literature, just great volumes of it, just an amazing amount, and all the transcripts.

Of course, there was his urge to make sure that we got all that in stock, because when there's a famine and the hearing of the Word, when we can't get onto the Internet, we're going to want that literature.

Verse 14: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall **be proclaimed** in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come."

Now some say that this only refers to the two witnesses, but that's incorrect. There are Scriptures that will show why that is. So, it's incorrect to say that this applies only to the two witnesses.

If you read Rev.10 carefully, what do we find the angel telling John? The angel had this little book and John wanted it, he wanted to devour it and eat it, which he did.

Revelation 10:10: "Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it; and it was sweet as honey in my mouth; but after I ate it, my belly was bitter. And he said to me, 'You must again prophesy against many people, and nations, and languages and kings'" (vs 10-11).

Now if we go back to Mark, let's see what we have there. We have the parallel Scripture in

Mark 13:10_[transcriber's correction]: "And the Gospel must first **be published** among all nations."

In Matthew it says, 'Proclaimed in all the world.' I can imagine there's a young man in the city that we used to live close by. A certain time of the day there would be these little paper boys standing out on the corner of the street and they'd be crying out, 'Paper, come and get it!' Sells for daily news, pay it.

Of course, people would come and buy the word that had been published. But one thing we don't forget about the two witnesses, there's never any mention of the fact that they will be publishing the Gospel and sending it out to all nations. So, just by those two Scriptures alone, we can see *it's incorrect to say* this applies only to the two witnesses.

Let's look at the Scripture in 2-Peter. We just drop a lot of notes saying, you know, we have notes, but we just wait to see how God is going to lead as we talk. What comes out of our mouths, we just have that faith that God is going to lead us in direct us.

2-Peter 3:1: "Now, beloved, I am writing this second epistle to you; in *both*... [the previous epistle and this one] ... **I am stirring up your pure minds by causing you to remember.**"

That's why it's important for all of us that we have these Scriptures repeated over and over again until they become a part of us. Until everything that's a part of this world is chipped away. All that people can see is within us, we've become, virtually, the living, walking words of God.

Our lives are so filled with the knowledge and the wisdom and in the practice and what we do. There's a Scripture with Paul to Timothy says, 'To the pure, all things are pure.'

- Does that mean all things are pure?
- Does that mean Paul is saying that evil is pure? *No!*

What Paul is saying is that to the pure, all things are pure. Not all things that are pure to the wicked and to the evil, they're not pure. They violate them. They're anathema. They're an abomination to the wicked.

But to us, like the Word of God, it's pure. We can trust it. It's Holy, and it's put into our minds by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes it and writes it. In fact, inscribes it, like you heard that word, it inscribes it into our mind and heart. Don't we all want to become the living Word of God so that when we come up in the resurrection, God's words are going to be ringing in our ears, 'Well done, you good and faithful servant.'

That's the challenge! But that is also the promise! What a promise to look forward to.

Verse 10—Peter goes through and shows all the calamities that are going to come. You know, the heavens and the earth, everything is going to be burned up by this incredible furnace, such as we cannot even imagine.

Verse 10: “However, the Day of *the* Lord shall come as a thief in *the* night...”

There are parables on this. Are we ready as the thief comes? In other words, if Christ were to return at a time when we’re not expecting it, then mainly that would occur because we’re not daily watching and preparing.

“...in which the heaven itself shall disappear with a mighty roar, and *the* elements shall pass away, burning with intense heat, and *the* earth and the works in it shall be burned up” (v 10).

That is the destiny that God has planned for planet earth and even the heavens.

Verse 11: “Since all these things are going to be destroyed... [the cities, the tombs, the villages, the armies, the wicked are going to be destroyed] ...**what kind of persons ought you to be in Holy conduct and Godliness?**”

Each one of us takes this personally. Why is Peter saying this?

Verse 1: “...I am writing this second epistle to you... [the first epistle—1-Peter—and here’s 2-Peter] ...in *both*, I am stirring up your pure minds...”

Keep your mind, keep your thoughts on that word *pure* because that is a challenge for us.

“...by causing *you* to remember” (v 1).

Then as he says, v 11: “...what kind of *persons* ought you to be in Holy conduct and Godliness?”

Let’s look at some Scriptures that we’ve covered before, but very important ones.

Heb. 5 is just a warning to each one of us. It’s not a warning, it’s teaching, it’s instruction in righteousness. It’s teaching in purity.

God wants us to be pure, because in our human state, we know that we have that sin dwelling within us. We know that if we let loose, that our thoughts are only continuously evil. If we walk according to our own thinking, then we become desperately wicked. We think of the hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women, young people that were once our brothers and sisters, people that we’d known for decades. When deception came because they had not studied the Word... One of the top men confessed on a video, which I have a copy of, that they discarded all the teachings and doctrines because they never took the time to study them.

They’d been through Imperial Schools, they’d been through Ambassador College, they’d also been through the seminaries and got themselves

PhDs; so they had a lot of garbage piled high and deeper up here which pushed the Word of God aside to the point where they neglected it.

Then they rejected it! Where are they today? *It’s so sad!* Hopefully they had not committed the unpardonable sin. Hopefully, like the man in 1-Cor. that had to be put out of the Church because he was having a sexual relationship with his stepmother, was able to repent. In there Paul says that putting him out of the Church, that in the time, and what he was saying, when Christ returns, maybe there’ll be an opportunity for his salvation.

So for me, I have that hope that we, ensuring that we continue to the end, we can be there, and with the ones that come up in the second resurrection, we will be there to help them and to restore them to the faith so that they will also be able to join us in the Family of God and His Kingdom.

What I want to do, I’m just going to quickly go over Heb. 5 and in vs 10-14 we find the brethren had been in the Church a long time, but they were not going. Paul tells them they’re not maturing because they’re still struggling around with the basic, beginning doctrines, which he outlines in Heb. 6.

When we come to Heb. 6 we find out what happens once we’ve got all the basic doctrines settled and we’ve been drilled in them. We’ve got to go onto becoming pure, to purifying our lives and to perfection. That’s the challenge!

That’s what God is looking for within us. That’s why He’s given us all His laws and commandments, His Sabbath Days, His Holy Days, and we’re heading now towards Passover.

We’ve got several months now to be preparing for this most important of Festivals of God, the Passover, the Christian Passover that Christ initiated—roughly, approximately—2,000 years ago.

Preparing for that; checking to make sure that we believe that Christ is the Savior of mankind, to know that daily we are repenting of our sins and putting them aside and striving every day.

Once we confess our sins and the fact of the sin within us, we have that confidence that God has purified us, that we’re under the umbrella of the blood of Christ, the precious blood of Christ, that we can continue walking day-by-day.

Yes, we get spots and stains as we walk through the day, but tomorrow’s another day. We can begin again by Christ cleansing us and purging the sin from us, washing us clean with the water of His Word. In confidence here we are.

Christ was crucified, and through the veil of His Body, we have access to the Throne of God every moment, every second, every particle of time, of every day.

Once a year only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies; in other words, the place that represented the very Throne of God. You and I can go into God's presence anytime of the day, anywhere, into the presence of God the Father Who controls the entire universe and ask Him to wash us clean, because we confess our sins; *the things that we don't want to do!*

But God never says *no*, unless, of course, we're not genuine, we're not honest. We can read that of the people of ancient Israel, as well as both houses of Israel and Judah. They were hypocrites, just like when Christ was being examined by Pilate. They wouldn't come into this one building because they would become unclean for the Passover. *The intake of hypocritical nonsense!*

So we also have to be sure that we don't follow in that example.

Heb. 6—I find encouraging such a powerful testimony from the Apostle Paul. Here the brethren were immature and not growing, so he gives them the answer.

If any of us feel like we're not where we should be, and we all go through that from time-to-time, and it's perhaps a little bit of a kick in the backside to motivate us on.

Because you are immature and we can't give you solid food, you've still got to be on this *milk* of the Word, here's what God wants from you:

Hebrews 6:1: **“Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ...”**

Here he outlines them, the beginning principles of the doctrine of Christ,

“...we should go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation... [or the beginning principles] ...of repentance...” (v 1).

Yes, we repent daily, but we've gone beyond the principles, we understand it, we know it. It's a part of us. So, we don't have to go back and look at it all over again.

“...not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works, and *of* faith in God, of *the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of *the* resurrection of *the* dead, and of eternal judgment” (vs 1-2).

Verse 1—*Paul says*: “Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, **we should go on to perfection...**”

- purity of mind
- purity of heart

How does that occur? *Gal. 5 lists the fruits of the Spirit*:

- read them
- study them
- think on them
- pray about them
- ask God to plant them deeply into our hearts
 - ✓ by His love
 - ✓ by His power

The power of the Holy Spirit available to us to do this is what the power of the Holy Spirit is for, ***to develop within you and me the perfection that was in Jesus Christ!***

Isn't that interesting? The perfection here has to do with our moral and spiritual perfection. Of course, there are physical things that we want to improve on, but mainly this is how we think and what we do.

Being guided and directed by the Word of God and by that incredible, unimaginable power that God makes for us to have each of those fruits, the love, the peace and the joy. We have an absolute abundance of God's Spirit available to develop those fruits.

Then we can go to 2-Peter 1, and you'll find Peter's. It's good to study these, because these tell us how God wants us to be working toward perfection of mind and heart. Oh yes, we can study the teachings of the doctrines and the prophecies and they're all important. But ***IF*** we are not working on the perfection, which comes through having the fruits of the Spirit, ***THEN*** it all becomes null and void!

I'd already mentioned 2-Cor. 10 about the fact that we ought to be putting on the mind of Christ, but we're in a warfare and we're not fighting with physical weapons like they're fighting in the Middle East right now. ***Our weapons are very strong and very powerful.*** They happen to be, just over here listed in Eph. 6: weapons of defense and weapons of offense.

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord, and in the might of His strength**”—*encouragement!*

That's what we ought to be doing, “**...to be strong in the Lord and in the might of His strength.**”

As we've mentioned, the amount of power and strength that God's Spirit is available to us is much more than we can believe or imagine. It's all there for us. God wants you and me in His Kingdom, in His Family. ***God is taking us from here to the Kingdom and this is how He's doing it:***

Verse 11: "Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Don't we get hit by those day-by-day as Satan attacks us!

Verse 12: "Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood... [we need to remember that it's not human beings we're fighting against] ...**but against principalities and against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual power of wickedness in high places.**"

That is in the heavenly realm who affect those people that we have intercourse with day-by-day. That's why we have problems with other people in this world. ***Satan is trying to get at the saints of God!*** That's you, that's me.

Here's our defense; here's how we grow because we protect our lives with the armor of God:

Verse 13: "Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand."

In other words, as we read in Matt. 24 to endure, *to stand*, so that we can be accounted worthy. Many people today are going through a very hard times. We may be 'slain' because there are so many problems, ***but that's the time when we have to stir ourselves up because we can become lax if we are not working hard on these areas!***

Verse 14: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness."

We need to stop and think, take time to think on these, to meditate on these, and pray about them before God the Father, our Father in heaven.

Verse 15: "And having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

Do you have peace of mind? Because if we have that faith in the Gospel of Christ, it doesn't matter what happens to us. We are promised that we will have peace. We can go through 'hell and high water' and still have peace of mind! That peace of mind comes from God the Father, knowing that we're obeying Him, keeping His commandments, and we have His protection even if we lose our heads. ***His protection is the resurrection!***

Verse 16: "Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and put on the helmet of salvation..." (vs 16-17).

Don't allow Satan to get his thoughts in there, questions about the veracity of the Truth of God's Word. Shun them! Cast them out! Make sure you've got that ***helmet of faith*** fitting tightly on your head, protecting you from such things and all the deceptions as we read of earlier.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (v 17). *The Word of God is Jesus Christ, all His words!*

Colossians 3:16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly..." *That is your spiritual sword to fight the enemy.* The clincher is:

- we cement all these
- we establish them
- we substantiate them

Ephesians 6:18: "Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

In closing, I would like to turn to Num. 6, because there's a question: ***Is there a blessing to the spiritual children of God today?***

Numbers 6:22: "And the LORD... [the One Who became Jesus Christ] ...spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to Aaron and to his sons saying, "In this way you shall bless the children of Israel, saying to them"' (vs 22-23).

I'm going to read these words, and let us contemplate that this is Jesus Christ and God the Father with a blessing for you and for me, ***for all those who are the faithful members of spiritual Israel!*** So, let's take this personally; these are the words from Jesus Christ.

Yes, this was physical Israel, but now the Church is *spiritual* Israel. It doesn't replace physical Israel, but there is the blessing there; this was written for us:

Verse 24: "May the LORD bless you and keep you. May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the LORD lift up His face to you and give you peace.' **And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel. And I will bless them**" (vs 24-27).

Brothers and sisters in Christ, **may God bless you as you go from now and from here towards God's Kingdom!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 24:1-5
- 2) Colossians 3:16
- 3) Matthew 24:5-14
- 4) Revelation 10:10-11
- 5) Mark 13:10
- 6) 2 Peter 3:1, 10-11, 1, 11
- 7) Hebrews 6:1-2
- 8) Ephesians 6:10-17
- 9) Colossians 3:16
- 10) Ephesians 6:18
- 11) Numbers 6:22-27

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6
- 2-Thessalonians 2
- Mark 3
- Hebrews 5:10-14
- Galatians 5
- 2 Peter 1
- 2 Corinthians 10

LJ:bo
Transcribed: 11/13/23

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