

Hope in Times of Trouble

Fred R. Coulter—October 24, 2015

How many watched the hearings this last week? It's absolutely amazing that this country is caught in a pall of lies that are just horrendous. Let's look at a couple of Proverbs that are very interesting.

Remember how many times we've covered that God judges the nations: lifts one up, takes another one down; blesses one, curses another. So, everyone is wondering: How can we get the country back on course.

Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalts a nation... [we are right in the midst of the opposite of that, which is lawlessness] ...but sin *is* a reproach to **any** people." God is no respecter of persons

Proverbs 28:15: "*Like* a roaring lion and a ranging bear, *so is* a wicked ruler over the helpless people. A ruler lacking understanding *is* also a great oppressor..." (vs 15-16). I think that tells us where we are.

Proverbs 29:12: "If a ruler hearkens to lies, all his servants *are* wicked." I think this tells us the atmosphere that this nation is under at the present time.

I don't know about you, but in watching the news this week, I tell you, when I got done with the news the other night, I was oppressed and depressed. One news channel exposes the truth and the lies and all the others say, 'Hillary-Billary won!' I was sitting there and Delores—and I have talked about this several times—and she has said, 'She'll [Hillary] probably get in.' Think of what that's going to be like with 'Uncle Willie' back in the White House. Who knows?

Let's see what is happening. I think these Psalms really describe what's happening in America and what's happening around the world. Jesus described it as lawlessness. Notice, He didn't say, 'increases.' He said, 'multiples.'

The other night, because there's so much killing, so much destruction, so many difficult things going on that I thought I'd channel surf. What did I find? *Intrigue, killings, lying, satanism!* I thought, 'Well, Delores has a good idea. When she gets tired of watching the TV and the news, she turns on the western channel.' At least you know what's right and wrong, good and evil, who the enemy is and who the good guys are. So, I walked in there after watching that, get a little something to eat and here's a western: a shoot 'em up, a beat 'em up, a knock 'em down.

I thought I'd see what I can find on the History Channel and it was the history of war. So, I thought I'd watch NatGeo, and NatGeo had *The*

Deadliest Animals, all fighting one another. I thought, 'I'll watch History 2.' I turned on History 2 and it's all about aliens coming to invade the Earth. So, I thought I'll watch American Heroes Channel.' All they had on there was about war. I turned it all off and before I went to bed, I said, 'I've got to read the Bible.'

Sabbath comes along and, really, the Word of God helps you and gives you comfort. The first place I turned to last night was Psa. 10. It sounded like a repeat of the television. I couldn't believe it. That's why it's good to have Bible study and reading.

I got an e-mail from a woman the other day and she said, 'I agree with you. I want to read the Bible in print.' After I mentioned that everybody better have a regular Bible because if we end up like Iraq, you may get two hours of electricity a day and the Internet may be censored, so you might not get anything. You better get your physical Bible, your physical CDs and physical DVDs if you want to make any progress.

Here's the world today. Psalm 10:1: "Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?" Why does God do that? *To see if people will seek Him! That's why!*

Verse 2: "The wicked in his pride pursues the poor; let them be taken in the schemes that they have imagined... [may they get caught] ...for the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and blesses the covetous but despises the LORD" (vs 2-3). I thought about all the corruption.

Oh, Planned Parenthood is going to win because now they won't accept any money for any of the body parts. However, since they are non-profit, they can donate to them and take it off their taxes.

Verse 5: "His ways prosper at all times. He is haughty, and Your judgments are far from him. As for all his enemies, he sneers at them. He has said in his heart, 'I shall not be moved; from generation to generation *I shall never be* in adversity.' His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity" (vs 5-7).

I thought about that when they showed this with the mother of one of the Benghazi men that were killed. I think her name was Smith. She was there and Megyn Kelly asked her about it, 'Did anybody get in touch with you?' *No!* 'Can you get in touch with anybody?' *No!* 'Did you try getting a hold of the V.A.?' *They said, 'You're not a close relative.'* Just was awful!

Verse 8: “He sits in the hiding places of the villages... [think of all the things that go on in the cities] ...in the secret places he murders the innocent. His eyes are on the watch for the helpless. He lies in wait secretly like a lion in his den. He lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags him off in his net. He crouches and bows down, and the hapless fall into his mighty grasp. He has said in his heart, ‘God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see!’...” (vs 8-11). I thought of two things when I read that:

1. all the crime that go on
2. all of the problems with the IRS, what they do and the other government agencies

Amazing!

Verse 12: “Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the humble.” That’s a key thing to remember: **God will not forget us! God will not leave us! Never, ever!**

Psalms 11:1: “In the LORD I have taken refuge; how *then* can you say to me, ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain’?” Many times you feel like going away some place.

Delores and Belinda Davis have known each other for years and years and they e-mail back and forth. Belinda said, ‘I’d like to get a little island some place away from it all.’ Delores e-mailed back, ‘God says they’re all going to sink.’

Verse 2: “For lo, the wicked bend their bow; they make ready their arrow on the string, so that they may secretly shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (vs 2-3).

- Isn’t that what they’re doing to the Word of God?
- Isn’t that what they’re doing to the Christianity of this world?

{note booklet, *Why “Christianity” Has Failed in America* by Philip Neal} America is going down faster than anyone ever imagined. The rise of satanism and atheism is coming up faster than ever imagined.

Psa. 12—sometimes this is a good way to pray. You feel as though everything is coming against you and the problems are difficult and you can’t handle it. Look at how David started this one out: ‘Doesn’t God promise to be our Helper? *Yes, He does!*

Psalms 12:1: “Help, O LORD, for the Godly man ceases; for the faithful disappear from among the children of men.”

Recently Marlin Fannin sent me three *Good News* magazines from WCG, 1970 and 71. Here was a picture on the front of one that showed the campus in Bricket Wood, England. On the front of another one was a nice picture of the campus of Ambassador College in Big Sandy. Then they showed the proposed model for Pasadena with the auditorium and everything there. I couldn’t help but just look at that and think: **How far we have fallen!** All of those things, all of the millions that went into that. Why was it taken away?

Verse 2: “They speak falsehood each one with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.... [that’s what happened to the Church] ...The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things” (vs 2-3). When you understand it, everything I just mentioned there is gone! That’s 44 years ago. From that, we all need to understand that when God says something, He means it!

Verse 4: “Who have said, ‘With our tongue we shall prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?’ ‘For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, I will now arise,’ says the LORD... [God will intervene for us, on our behalf] ...‘I will set him in safety from *him who puffs at him.*’ The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (vs 4-6). Always remember that Jesus said, ‘The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are Life.’ That’s why He has given us the Sabbath Day, for a blessing.

Think of it this way: Remember when God gave the manna, what did He say? He said that you gather it every day for six days. On the first five days, you gather just enough for each person and if you gather any more, it’s going to breed worms and stink. On the sixth day, you gather twice as much. Why? *So the Sabbath would be a blessing!* That can symbolize double portions, but that can also symbolize the physical and the spiritual need for the Sabbath. Of course, all the people obeyed. No, they didn’t listen! It’s like it is today.

Verse 8: “The wicked walk on every side when vilest is exalted among the sons of men.” You watch all the movie releases that are coming out now. There’s a new Star Wars one!

I’m going to take mom’s name in vain again, because she has said many times over and over again, ‘Satan tells us what he is going to do through the movies that are made.’ All of these are seeking more and more satanism and demonism. What is that going to do? *If we remember Zech. 13*, when Christ returns He’s going to take all the unclean spirits—the demons—out of the land. They’re going to be bound with Satan the devil.

- What happens when people want evil?

- What happens when people leave God and seek Satan?
- *You'll find him!*

At first he'll give you a benefit. You heard me say that many times. He doesn't tell you what the end result will be. That's why we have to believe the Word of God in faith.

Here is what's going to help us. We need to have this attitude because we will always be the few, the overlooked, the neglected and the misunderstood by the people in the world.

What do they amount to? Yes, there are some good people out there trying to seek good. However, are they not all caught up in the holidays of this world? In the ways of this world? *Yes, indeed!* They themselves don't understand that they have a veil over their eyes, though they're trying to do good. They do some good. Some do a lot more good. Sooner or later it's all just wiped away because they need the real God and they need the real Sabbath, so that they can have contact with God.

Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light..." Jesus Christ said, 'I am the Light of the world' (John 12) and 'The one who practices the Truth comes to the Light,' (John 3)—Who is Christ.

"...and my salvation; **whom shall I fear?**..." (v 1). *None!* When I read that I think about poor Jeremiah, 40 years preaching to Judah and Jerusalem. What would happen? *Forty years!* I estimate he was about 16 when he started so he was 56 when he finished. He and the king's daughters went down to Egypt and from there he took the king's daughters over to Ireland to heal the breach between Zarah and Pharez.

There he was. He even complained to God. He said, 'Oh, God! All these people are against me.' Especially when they threw him into the sewer. The sewer was real mucky, mucky in those days. God rescued him. So, we may have to go through some stinking times, but God will be with us.

"...The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I **be afraid?**" (vs 1). We don't have to worry about the things that are coming. They're going to come, and we're not going to stop them. The important thing is that ***we be strong in God!***

Verse 2: "When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. **Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid...** [this is what we need] **...though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident**" (vs 2-3). That confidence comes from God.

I know that in reading this last night, that helped me. That settled me down a great deal. I was really 'ainxed' watching all that. Just the bucket full of lies and bucket full of pride, vanity and haughtiness and the smug face, almost like a female Mussolini sitting there at the trial.

Verse 4: "One thing I have desired from the LORD, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life... [for us that's the *ages of eternity*] ...to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple." That's what we need to keep in mind. Right in the forefront of our thoughts:

- don't be afraid
- don't let doubts get you down
- don't let difficulties pull you down where you lose grip of things
- that's why the Sabbath
- that's why the Word of God

God has meant the Sabbath to be a double blessing. If we honor God and serve Him in prayers, studies, sermons and in understanding His Word, that will spiritually recharge us, because it is 'the Spirit that gives life and the flesh profits nothing.'

Verse 5: "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion... [the secret shadow of God that no one can see] ...in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me upon a rock.... [notice what happens when that occurs]: ...And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies round about me; therefore, I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy in His tabernacle...." (vs 5-6).

We can do that in thanksgiving and prayer. Our prayers go right up to God the Father; the greatest blessing in the world. It doesn't matter where you are. It doesn't matter what the circumstances are. You can pray in your mind immediately and that goes to God—direct access—and He says, 'The prayer of His saints are a delight.' When these things come along it presents opportunities. What will we do?

Verse 7: "Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice; and be gracious unto me and answer me. When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O LORD, will I seek'" (vs 7-8). What was one of the first things that Jesus taught? *Seek and you shall find! Ask and it shall be given! Knock and it shall be opened!* Whatever it is.

Verse 9: "Hide not Your face from me. Turn not Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."

Hebrews 13:5, Jesus promises "...In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake

you in any way.” One caveat in all of those things—if we are seeking Him!

2-Chronicles 15—always remember this: “And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him, ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. **The LORD is with you while you are with Him.** And **if you seek Him, He will be found by you.** But **if...** [1700 *IFs* in the Bible and most of them toward men] **...you forsake Him, He will forsake you.** And for a long time Israel *had been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. And when they turned in their trouble to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them” (vs 1-4). If they turned their back, there was no peace.

Psalm 27:10: “Though my father and my mother forsake me...” Isn’t that what Jesus said would happen? Are we not in counting the cost? *Counting the cost continues to go on*, not only just before baptism, but continues to go on! *People forsake you, leave you and fail you!*

“...the LORD will take me up. Teach me Your way, O LORD...” (vs 10-11). That’s what it’s all about. That’s what these things were going through are about. Everything we’re learning today is preparing us to rule with Christ to save the world; every single thing. That’s how ‘all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.’ We are to learn—

- the things we achieve
- the things we don’t achieve
- the things we are blessed with
- the things we are corrected for

—that all of those are the complete package of salvation for us.

Psalm 27:11: “Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a level path because of my enemies. Deliver me not over to the will of my enemies...” (vs 11-12). If you’re not seeking God, you can be. Isn’t that’s what’s happening in America today? *Yes, indeed!*

The enemies are the ones *within*. The enemies within are worse than the enemies without; at least we can see them and know them. But if they come to you in sheep’s clothing—manufactured in the liberal political and religious wing—telling you that:

- we’ll give you benefits
- oh don’t worry, you don’t have to work
- we’ll give you a benefit
- we’ll tax the rich so you can’t have a job

Sidebar: Remember in New York City they said,

‘We are for the people. We want these with the minimum wage jobs, we want all you employers to pay them \$15 an hour, and I Mayor de Blasio and the council order you to do so.’

What is McDonald’s doing? They’re saying, ‘Great, wonderful, wonderful! We’re just going to raise the price of our hamburgers. We want to go out of business because you make it impossible for us to keep in business so we thank you for putting us out of business.’ *NO!* They’re having little monitor screens. No more counter people. You come to the screen. What do you want? Just push it and the order goes back. So, you get rid of four clerks and you’re saving \$60 an hour. Just in one day that’s \$480. If you’re open 24 hours, that’s \$480 three times.

So, you see, ‘Every way of a man looks right in his own eyes but it’s the ways of death.’ Yet, they’re saying, ‘We are doing this for your benefit. We want you to have a *living wage*.’ How is \$0 for a living wage? Amazing, isn’t it?

Psalm 28:6: “Blessed is the LORD because He has heard the voice of my supplications.” We are called to live in a most impossible time in the world, that is going to lead to the greatest calamities in the world and we are called upon to be strong through God and He will hear our prayers.

Verse 7: “The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and **I am helped**.... [just like He promised] ...Therefore, my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him. The LORD is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His anointed. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever” (vs 7-9).

That applies to the whole Church. The Church is made up of individuals and the combination of all the individuals is the body of Christ. Today, because the world is in the way that it is in, *Church at Home* {churchathome.org} is going to be far, far more important as we go down the road. There are more and more parents teaching their children at home, home schooling. You can go from kindergarten all the way to a PhD right in front of your television screen. That’s why we advertise in home school publications. We get a lot of responses from them.

Psalm 30:10: “Hear, O LORD, and be gracious unto me; **LORD, be my helper**.” You ever ask God that way? How will He do that? *He’s got angels to help carry that out!* Things will work out. Some door will open. Something will happen that you never expected to happen. Something will turn around. *God will be there! He will do it!*

Verse 11: “You have turned my mourning into dancing; You have torn off my sackcloth and

have clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever” (vs 11-12).

If you get down in, what I think they call it today, a ‘funk,’ you’re just in a fog and you’re kind of oppressed. You’re just kind of stumbling along and you feel bad. Then you watch other things that happen that are bad and you feel worse:

- get out the Psalms
- read those
- study those
- claim the promises

That’s why it’s there! Think of all the experiences that God put King David through for our benefit so we could learn to have the kind of faith that he had.

Psalms 31:19: “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You...” Always thinking of the goal. One of the most important things is Prov. 28, ‘Where there is no vision the people perish.’ So, where there is vision, the people receive light. They receive strength.

There’s a new book coming out called *Extreme Ownership* by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. I don’t know if you’ve seen any advertisements on television concerning that. There are two navy seals and if you look at them they look like they were created by God for the very job they were doing: they are strong and disciplined. They said the key of life in anything that you do—fighting is particularly important—is that when you make a mistake, you learn from your mistake, *you admit it and you own it*, so you can change.

That’s very Scriptural in itself because that describes how you need to repent. I’ve ordered a copy of that. I’m always reading something. I ordered a copy of *Trump: The Art of the Deal* by Donald J. Trump. He’s in a little bit of trouble in Iowa now. We’ll see how, ‘the art of the deal’ works there. I ordered another book called *The Future of Violence* by Benjamin Wittes and Gabriella Blum. How’s that going to work out? You may hear me giving some sermons from some of those books.

I was absolutely ‘blown away.’ I’ve seen them advertise the book *Extreme Ownership* on about three different programs on Fox News. Every time I see them, their big broad skulls, their chins sticking out there: *strong, determined, disciplined*. I thought what would it be like if *the whole Church, spiritually, could be that way?*

Think about it! What do we have? *We have the lukewarm pansies of Laodiceans!* ‘We’re rich and increased with goods. Really, we know everything about the Word of God. We’ve learned as much as we can now. So, let’s just concentrate on loving each other

and getting along. Won’t that be nice?’ *God’s going to have a thing or two to say about that!*

“...which You have prepared for those who take refuge in You before the sons of men! You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence... [with God’s Spirit] ...from the plottings of man; You shall hide them in a shelter away from the strife of tongues. Blessed is the LORD, for He has shown His wondrous loving kindness in a besieged city... [that’s really good] ...For I said in my haste, ‘I am cut off from before Your eyes’; nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You. O love the LORD, all you His saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, and fully repays the proud doer. **Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD**” (vs 19-24).

(go to the next track)

Psalms 146:1: “O praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.” Praising God helps you come out of a lot of negative thoughts and down feelings, as well as thanking God. Just take part of your prayer and everything you can think of, thank God for it. In Him we ‘live and move and have our being.’ Everything that we have comes from Him.

Verse 2: “While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.... [that’s encompassing your whole life] ...Do not put your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no salvation. His breath goes forth; he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. **Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help...** [tie *help* and *hope* together] ...**whose hope is in the LORD his God**, Who made the heavens and earth, the sea and all that is in them; **Who keeps Truth forever**; Who carries out justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD lets the prisoners loose... [this has to do with the Gospels] ...The LORD opens the eyes of the blind... [physically, spiritually.] ...the LORD raises up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous; the LORD preserves the strangers; He sustains the fatherless and widow, but the way of the wicked He turns upside down. The LORD shall reign forever, even your God, O Zion, to all generations. O praise the LORD!” (vs 2-10).

What God has for us began with Abraham. God has given His Word and His promises. There’s always one sure way to help you have more confidence: *claim the promises of God!* When you do, remind Him. When you do, tell yourself and understand this: *when God says something, it will be! God cannot lie!* Having faith and hope in God, there’s no way that that can go against you.

Hebrews 6:11: “But we earnestly desire that every one of you be demonstrating the same diligence, unto the full assurance of the hope **until**

the end... [Jesus said, ‘He endures unto the end, the same shall be saved.’] ...so that you do not become lazy, but *that you be* imitators of those who through faith and steadfast endurance inherit the promises” (vs 11-12).

If you want a very interesting study, go back and study the life of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Look at all the difficulties that they went through, especially Jacob. When he came into Egypt, after it was revealed to him that Joseph was still alive and second in charge of Egypt, he was brought before the Pharaoh. Remember, Jacob is going to be in the Kingdom of God. Pharaoh asked him, ‘How old are you?’ *He says, ‘One hundred and forty-seven years, and it’s been much bitterness and anguish.’* Nevertheless, he’s going to be in the Kingdom of God.

Now you know why he gave to Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, the blessing given to them above all the rest of his sons. Why? What did they do to Joseph? *Some wanted to kill him!* How’s that for brotherly love? Judah said, ‘No, don’t kill him. We’ll sell him.’ They came home and brought the tunic that he was wearing, covered with goat’s blood, and said, ‘Look, we found this; the animals have eaten him.’ They perpetrated that lie for **17 years**; that was something!

All of the patriarchs and all the leaders of the twelve tribes, are going to be in the Kingdom of God. How merciful, kind, good and forgiving is God? God used that dirty, nasty, rotten, horrible, unbelievable trick on Jacob to save all of them from death. So, when you read it, think of this: ***‘All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.’***

The blessing began with Abraham. So, he says, Hebrews 6:12: “So that you do not become lazy, but *that you be* imitators of those who through faith and steadfast endurance **inherit the promises. For God, after promising Abraham, swore by Himself, since He could swear by none greater, saying, ‘Surely in blessing I will bless you...’**” (vs 12-14).

How far out does that blessing go? I wonder how much of that Abraham really understood, because God told him, ‘Your seed is going to be like the sand of the seashore and like the stars of heaven.’ The stars of heaven in their glory is a type of all the spiritual seed, those resurrected. Abraham died and he saw the Kingdom afar off, but he died in faith. It’s going to be well over 4000 years before he will see it, but he *will* see it.

“...and in multiplying I will multiply you” (v 14). Imagine what it’s going to be when God tells Abraham at the resurrection, ‘Look at all of these here on the Sea of Glass. This is because you

believed Me and obeyed My voice.’ I think He’s going to take Abraham over to the edge of the Sea of Glass and say, ‘I want you to look down here. Here are some of your end-time descendents still in captivity. We’re going to release them. I want you to see the other hand of your inheritance, Ishmael and Esau. Because of their circumstances, this is going to be a bloody, bloody fight. There are going to be millions killed, but your blessing does not stop here. Your blessing does not stop with those that I promised to you in the first place. It carries on through a thousand years and at the end of the thousand years, I am going to resurrect all the descendants of Ishmael and Esau and give them a change of nature and heart.’

How great is that? Think of that! All to Abraham!

Verse 15: “Now, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise”—of the son. But remember, the son could reproduce and his son would reproduce.

Verse 16: “For indeed, men swear by the greater, and confirmation by an oath *puts* an end to all disputes between them. **In this way God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed it by an oath...** [on His own being] ...so that by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on **the hope that has been set before us...** [eternal life] ...**which hope** we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil” (vs 16-19).

That is our whole spiritual life between God and us! There’s nothing between it!

Verse 20: “Where Jesus has entered for us as a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.”

Then he says that this resurrection is a superior resurrection. Because God is true—God does not lie, and God will not lie—we have the promise secure not only for us but also for the whole world to come. Remember, there are three things that endure:

- **faith:** belief in God, which comes from God and having God’s own faith in us through the power of the Holy Spirit
- **hope:** what we are looking at now
- **love:** what we’re developing through all of these circumstances

We don’t know how some of these miserable circumstances are going to turn out. That’s why God called Saul (Paul). Look at what happened.

He was the chief man for the high priest at Jerusalem, getting orders, subpoenas and authorization for persecution, ‘enjoinment’ and death. *The archenemy of the Church!* What did God do to him? *Here’s Saul, marching down the road with all of those with him, having in his hand all of those orders to arrest!* You’d think that if you were God that you would call someone a whole lot better. Call the enemy? What did He do? *ZAP! Knocked him on the ground and a bright light shined around!* Saul’s attitude changed instantly. He said, ‘Lord, what would you have me do?’ Jesus answered, ‘It’s hard for you to kick against the pricks—isn’t it?’ Remember those vines that have the long thorns? That’s what He’s talking about. Think of that barefooted.

You can’t ever succeed in going against God! That was the lesson, thinking he’s doing the work of God from the one that God put into position as High Priest. You can’t get it any more authentic on a human level—can you? *Think of that!*

He says, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ Think on that. ***You persecute against Christians, you’re persecuting against Christ!*** Why? *Because His Spirit is in every one, that’s why!* When Paul writes these things, that’s why he wrote so much and worked so hard. I imagine there were many, many nights that he would be trying to go to sleep and couldn’t go to sleep and think about all those he’d led to the slaughter and threw in jail. I imagine that through his lifetime, he was constantly repenting. You read Rom. 7, he understood. He said that ‘in my flesh, in my very being, dwells no good thing.’ *That’s what conversion is to do!*

Some people worry when they are trying to overcome and they have these thoughts come in their mind that they are not good. In fact, some of them are even very evil. Why is that? Does that show you’re not converted? *No! That shows that God’s Spirit is revealing these things to you, because they’re in there and only with His Spirit can it be erased!* There are some things that are really locked in there very tightly. We’re soon going to have to fight against it; they’re called, Christmas carols.

If you go in the store pretty soon what are you going to hear? I know if you heard the music, you still got all those words in there. Want to try one that’s not against God, but really one to capture you into Satan’s way? *Jingle Bells!* Think of what Paul had lodged in his mind! That’s why we have ‘the washing of the water by the Word’ (Eph. 5:26). That’s an amazing thing!

Proverbs 11:25: “The soul who gives generously shall be made prosperous...” Everyone who’s a curmudgeon against giving money to a church because you’ve had a bad experience with

men in the church and how they spent the money, *you need to think about this verse.* That is also part of it, but the second half is more important.

“...and he who waters shall also be watered himself” (v 25). That’s interesting. What did Paul say? ‘*I planted, Apollos watered*’ (1-Cor. 3). So, this is a type of preaching the Word of God with the Spirit of God. When you come to Eph. 5, it is that you have your mind cleansed through the ***washing of the water***—that’s the Spirit of God in your mind—***by the Word***. That’s why it’s important to have the Word of God in your mind. *Then the Spirit of God will wash those things away!* Isn’t that something how you can take a verse from the Old Testament and it couples together with something in the New Testament? *Yes, indeed!*

Here is why we are never to get exalted into who we are and what we are. This is important, because anyone who is a minister, teacher or elder, you are to serve, not rule over. *You are to teach them* to let Christ rule in their lives. That’s what it has to be. Do you think as a minister that you can, by ruling over people, force them into the Kingdom of God? *No way!*

- you must inspire and teach them
- you must feed them
- you must water them

To tie in with “...he who waters shall also be watered himself,” notice how this fits in:

Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and are persuaded ***that you yourself*** are a guide of *the blind*, a light for those in darkness... [yes, ‘we’re important’ people] ...an instructor of *the foolish*, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the law. **You, then who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?...**” (vs 17-21). Isn’t that what is has to be?

Listen, brethren, we’re all to be learning all the time. God is to teach us. I learn all the time; that comes from:

- studying and reading
- praying, studying and reading
- working with God’s Word
- teaching in all of those things

This is the way, if you do it according to God’s way, that you don’t get yourself in a hypocritical position. It’s enough to try and overcome your own sins as you go along, let alone be a full fledged hypocrite. *Yes, Indeed!*

Verse 21: **“You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?** You who preach, “Do not steal,” are you stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law?” (vs 21-23)... because you take privilege you should not take.

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God.” God will lead you! His Spirit will put thoughts into your mind! Will you heed them? Thoughts of: I shouldn’t be thinking on this. *Then repent of it!* Thoughts of: I need to do this. *Well, follow through and do it!*

Verse 15: “Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but **you have received the Spirit of sonship**... [that’s the whole key for why you were born: the sonship of God] ...whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying that we are the children of God. Now if we are children, we are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...*” (vs 15-17).

Remember what Jesus inherited: the universe, which He holds up with the Word of His power. The things that God has planned for us, even the greatest description of words here in the Scriptures or in our mind as we are reading and studying it, cannot be compared to what God is going to give.

I thought about that in writing the book *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?* That little speck of new creation of life within its mother has no thought of what it’s going to be like when it’s born, grows up and then is an adult. Think about that! ***What is it going to be like to be born again into the Family of God*** and be the *literal sons and daughters of God the Father?* Only those in the first resurrection will be in that category.

“...if indeed we suffer together with Him... [there are things we’re going to have to go through] ...so that we may also be glorified together with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (vs 17-18).

I guess the older you get the more you think about it. How many times do we look in the mirror? *At least once a day when you get up!* You look at this flesh, and it’s getting older. When you’re 15 you never think about what it’s going to be like when you’re 80; you don’t have a clue. When you’re 80 you look back and wonder, ‘Wow! Look what it was like when I was 15.

I’ll have to tell one on Jonathan. A couple of years ago he gave me a Father’s Day card. Here’s a

father and son sitting on the bench and the son says to the father, ‘Hey, dad, you’re losing your hearing.’ Dad said, ‘Ahh, that’s ridiculous! I still have a full head of hair.’

All of those things you never think of when you’re young. You don’t think of them because God doesn’t want you to think of them. That comes when you get older. *All of that is going to be exchanged for glory unspeakable!* That’s why He talks about life as a flower: beautiful flowers get old, shrivel up and die; in there are some seeds. In those seeds, you don’t know it, but there’s life. That life needs water and soil. That life and that seed will stay there for thousands of years if necessary. They know this because they’ve taken some of the wheat that has been put in the pyramids in Egypt that they know is 4000-years-old. They’ve put it in the ground, give it some water and it grows. The flower looks old and wrinkled, no beauty left in it at all and all that’s left is some paltry little seeds. Maybe if it’s a good flower it’s got 20 or 30 seeds. Who knows? You start thinking about seeds and your mind just goes wild with it.

Sidebar: We were fixing a little salad of cottage cheese, tomatoes and avocados. This avocado: you open it up and it’s got a seed the size of small lemon. You slice a tomato and it’s got 100s of little seeds, teeny, eeny, weenie, bitty things, but every one of them have life in it and when you put it in the soil it’ll grow.

So will be the resurrection! Just like the seed doesn’t have a clue what its going to be when it sprouts and grows; likewise, with us. We have some thoughts and some ideas, and God gives us some description, and we can see those and relate to those. But what is it actually going to be like?

That’s why he says, v 18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of **the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God**” (vs 18-19). God has a great job for us, a fantastic job for us:

- save the world
- rebuild the world
- bring millions and maybe billions into the Kingdom of God

What is it going to be like when all those God never called and never gave an opportunity for salvation are all resurrected in the second resurrection? *We’re going to be doing it, helping them!* Think of what it’s going to be like! It’s going to be something!

Verse 20: “Because the creation was subjected to vanity... [that’s why, ‘vanity of vanities, all is vanity’] ...not willingly...” Didn’t ask

for it. You're in you mother's womb, there you are. You didn't say, 'Hey mom, make me a vain ass.' That comes later!

"...but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope... [***we are the hope of the world***] ...in order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (vs 20-21) That's why don't ever let different things oppress you and get you down. If you do:

- put it all away
- go get your Bible
- start reading
- start praying
- go to the Psalms
- let those encourage you and help you

Go to what Paul has written: All the fantastic revelation of what it's going to be like to be in the Kingdom of God. Remember, other than maybe a whole lot of hints in the Old Testament, ***no one had that knowledge!***

After Adam and Eve sinned, what was the first promise? *A Savior to come for forgiveness of sin!* The knowledge of why man was created by God was deferred until Christ came and completed His ministry so that there would be the Holy Spirit available, because the Tree of Life was cut off from Adam and Eve and they couldn't receive it. They couldn't comprehend or be able to handle the knowledge of why you were born. Paul gives us a great description of it here.

Verse 22: "For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now." That's sure true. You look out at this whole world and you think about what's going on in the Middle East. That's going to lay the groundwork for the things at the end. *What a thing that is!*

Verse 23: "And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, **awaiting the sonship**—the redemption of our bodies." We're *waiting* for it. We don't have it, yet. That's why, 'Oh, when I die I go to heaven.' That's such a dastardly counterfeit.

Verse 24: "For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience. Now in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly **helping our weaknesses because we do not fully understand what we should pray for**, according as it is necessary, but **the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning that cannot be expressed by us**" (vs 24-26).

How does that work? *What we pray for in our minds, I'm convinced, the Holy Spirit filters out*

all of those stupid thoughts that race into your prayer! I'm also convinced that our prayer, when it goes before God, is recorded in the language that God wants it to be, combined with all of our feelings and emotions, which then, is an automatic translation. That way it doesn't matter what your language is, your prayer gets to God the way that He wants it to be. That's what it says here, 'the Spirit makes intercession for us.'

Verse 27: "**And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit are because it makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**" The Spirit of God, Christ our Intercessor and Christ has said that He is that Spirit (2-Cor. 3), *making intercession, helping us, strengthening us!*

Verse 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.**"

A question comes up because of 'the washing of the water by the Word.' What if we still remember and those things come back in our minds? *That is the weakness of the physical brain!* When God forgives them they're gone, but these things remain there. I think that is for the purpose of giving us the impetus to continue to grow and overcome. With that, when that comes back again and we have thoughts come back in, then we ask God to once again:

- wash it away
- clear our minds out
- help us to forget it

There are some things that are so deeply in there that they're not all going to be gone, because we can't be perfected in the flesh. The thing is this: You continue to repent and that's good. That's what you might call, 'a thorn in the flesh' so that you won't get lifted up in vanity and think, 'Oh, well, I'm perfect.' We're never going to be perfect in the flesh.

The downfall of one man, who was supposed to be an apostle, was something! He bragged that he'd been so right with God for so long that Satan had no more interested in him, and BANG! It hit! I'm sure he repented later.

There are a lot of things that only God can help us with. That's why the Spirit of God is there to help us. We need help in those things when those thoughts come back again. Don't think, 'I'm not forgiven.' Yes, you're forgiven, but it's kind of like a 'thorn in the flesh' to give you impetus to really seek God, and ask God again to help cleanse it. How many times do some things need to be washed? *That depends on how much grime is there!* If there is a lot of grime, maybe it needs to be washed and rewashed. Who knows? *Perhaps!* That doesn't mean

you're not forgiven. It's a reminder of what you have been forgiven.

This is why it's so important. Because Satan goes around and he wants to get everybody depressed and down. That's why we are not to let any of these things affect us. The only way we can do that is **actively fight against it! Actively repent about it!**

Here's Paul finishing off this letter. Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you now with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope *and* in the power of the Holy Spirit." Yes, when you exercise your thoughts to help put those things away, God's Spirit is helping you to do that as well.

It's very interesting. He's got three 'Amens' in: Romans 16:20: "But the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly..." **We** are going to have part in putting away Satan and destroying all that he has done.

"...The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. ^[#1]Amen. Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius, my host, and *that* of the whole church, salutes you. Erastus, the steward of the city, and Quartus, a brother, salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with all of you. ^[#2]Amen. Now to Him who has the power to establish you..." (vs 20-25). That's what we are talking about in growing and overcoming these thoughts.

"...according to my Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that in past ages has been kept secret; but now *is* made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures...[of the Old and New Testament] ...according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations unto the obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. ^[#3]Amen" (vs 25-27).

Remember that Paul said in Rom. 7, that 'within him—in himself—dwelt no good thing,' of and just by the flesh. He had been an apostle well over 20 years by the time he wrote the book of Romans.

The way that I handle things like that is just like you, and I have thoughts just like you. Those you and God alone know. It helps you understand, also, that you need to keep growing and overcoming lest these things come back upon you and you get drawn away. I'm sure that that's why you still have them there. You are forgiven those; God forgave them! But this is just a reminder to not get caught up in any of those things again.

If there's a particular weakness, maybe it is there to remind you that you've got to grow and overcome and ask God for the strength to put those things away. Keep asking God. What does He say? **Ask and keep on asking! He will help us!**

This is how you fight the 'funk' of the world, the depression and blahs of the things going on, and keep your course straight the way it needs to go!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 14:34
- 2) Proverbs 28:15-16
- 3) Proverbs 29:12
- 4) Psalm 10:1-3, 5-12
- 5) Psalm 11:1-3
- 6) Psalm 12:1-6, 8
- 7) Psalm 27:1-9
- 8) Hebrews 13:5
- 9) 2-Chronicles 15:1-4
- 10) Psalm 27:10-11
- 11) Psalm 27:11-12
- 12) Psalm 28:6-9
- 13) Psalm 30:10-12
- 14) Psalm 31:19-24
- 15) Psalm 146:1-10
- 16) Hebrews 6:11-20
- 17) Proverbs 11:25
- 18) Romans 2:17-23
- 19) Romans 8:14-28
- 20) Romans 15:13
- 21) Romans 16:20-27

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- Proverbs 28
- Romans 7
- Ephesians 5:26
- 1-Corinthians 3
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- 2-Corinthians 3

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- *Why "Christianity" Has Failed in America* by Philip Neal
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- *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God: Why Were You Born?* By Fred R. Coulter

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