

Be On Guard for Clever Philosophies

Three steps to receive God's grace: believe God, obey God and love God!
Fred R. Coulter—May 24, 2025

We're living in a time where there are a lot of different things going on, and all of them are going to be relating to the events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ.

The coming third temple in Jerusalem, we can know this for sure: ***When the foundation is laid we have a short time!*** That's the main one to watch right now, as far as something out there that's going to happen.

- that's what the whole war in Gaza is all about
- that's what the Abraham Accord is all about

because God is preparing through Donald Trump the things that need to be in order with the state of the nations so that all the prophecies can be fulfilled according to the Word of God!

However, there's another thing that transpires as well: Jesus asked the question in Luke 18:8: "...when the Son of man comes, shall He find the *true* faith on the earth?"

In the *Faithful Version*, we have put in italics the word true. Will He find the true faith? Because when it is 'the faith' in the Greek, that means the true faith! (Luke 18:8).

Now then, there's been quite a history with the Church, which is basically not known very well, and not taught at all in modern Christianity today. The reason that all of those things are all mixed up and have so many false doctrines is because of two factors.

There are a lot of false prophets, just like it says in Matt. 24; He says it three times there when you read the old chapter of Matt. 24.

Once we start, overcome, grow in grace and knowledge, live day-by-day, and then year-by-year. So, here we are. Some new like we have today and some older like Betty and me. I'm over 60 years in the faith, so is Betty. She's two years older than me, but she won't stand still so I can catch up with her.

Now, as we read last time with the Word of God, ***we are to diligently study to show ourselves approved unto God!***

One of the things that is *rarely, rarely*, and I check up on them quite regularly, ever taught on the regular religious channels ***is to really study the whole Bible and to understand what God is saying!***

One of the most important books that we have, which is difficult to understand, and everybody

thinks that they want to understand it. And a lot of ministers out there who are of the *worldly Christianity* have their interpretation of it.

How did people move from the Truth to paganism? There's a book out there called *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi. He details how that happened, and it centers around something very important. Basically, it gets down to this: ***men want to improve on God!***

The whole world in Paul's day and in the area where he was preaching was all Greek paganism and Greek philosophy. Just like today, there are people who believe in error that it is right and true, they had them back there that *their pagan religions* were right and true. Then they looked at the Jews—who were under correction from God because of their sins—and said, 'We don't want to have anything to do whatsoever with the Jews.' That fed right into the Roman thought of having nothing to do with the Jews.

When you look at the historical setting where they rebelled in 66_{A.D.} and finally the temple was destroyed in 70_{A.D.}. And then there was the Bar Kokhba Revolution in 135_{A.D.}, which ended in that great fortress—Masada—that they had.

The Jews keep saying, never again. Well, ***it's going to happen again!*** But what happened in the early Church?

We can go through different places. John said that there were many antichrists and they left. The first encounter that Stephen had when he went out to baptize in Samaria encountered a pagan religious high priest called Simon. And in Samaria, he bewitched them with sorcery, witchcraft, and false doctrine. He finagled to get himself baptized.

Now always remember this, ***Satan likes to get at the top***, because if he does, everything else below will follow in line. So, that's what it was with Simon who was called Simon Magus in history, and he was baptized. Well Stephen was doing all of the miracles and preaching and casting out demons and Simon wanted that power. But Stephen didn't lay hands on the ones he baptized, and when Jerusalem heard about it, they sent down Peter and Paul, who for the ones who were baptized, they laid hands on them (book of Acts).

Then Simon Magus said, 'Give me this power, I will give you a lot of money.' Peter said, 'You and your money—in modern vernacular: 'Go to hell!'—***you'll be destroyed!***

So, right there in the days of the apostles, here are the pagans coming to attack true Christianity. You had all of the things that took place in Jerusalem with the high priest arresting the apostles and they had to witness to them. They had that fight against it. Here you have a two front war.

When Paul first came to Athens, he was invited to speak to the philosophers who were the *religious leaders*. They had:

- Zeus
- Apollo
- Diana
- Athena
- and various gods

So you'll find in Acts 17 where Paul, when he was coming into Athens, said:

Now I came by all of these devotional places that you have to deities. And you had one there to the unknown God. This is the One I'm going to preach to you.

So, he taught them about Christ, His death, His resurrection, and so forth. Well, some believed; others didn't.

Now just like today, there were a lot of things that were very attractive to their religion and they would like to blend them together. So, the early stages of this happened in the New Testament Church. Let's see what Paul was up against. Now in Col. 1 he told them that they were in Christ and Christ was in them and that's what God wanted. So, he said:

Colossians 2:1: "Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; **in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**" (vs 1-3)—*that is, for salvation!*

Actually everything to do about human life when you consider the whole Bible. That's why for brand new people that know nothing about the Bible, I recommend that they go through the book of Proverbs, because that helps them on a practical everyday level on what God wants. Then that helps them get into other things in the Bible.

Verse 4: "Now, this I say..."

See how close this comes to what Jesus said, 'there will arise many false prophets' and in the last days we know they're going to show great signs and wonders. Let's see what he says here.

Verse 4: "Now, this I say so that no one may

deceive you by persuasive speech.

They would say, 'Look, this is good. Well let's use this. Let's add this to it.'

Verse 5: "For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet, I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him" (vs 5-6).

- walking in the way of the Lord
- living by the Word of God
- praying
- studying

Verse 7: "Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

Now then he gives a warning; the same warning that Jesus gave:

Verse 8: "**Be on guard** so that no one takes you captive through philosophy..."—*pagan religion!*

What do we have today? There's one Californian who's a great philosopher and you see him on news quite often his name is Victor Davis Hansen. He is an expert in the ancient Greek culture. He can read the language. He can speak the language and knows about it. He sounds like he must have something to do with God. But I haven't figured that out and he hasn't told us. But he is noted to be 'the smartest man on television.' Now then, *philosophers*:

- they're intelligent
- they're wise
- they know how to argue
- they know how to present things
- they know how to bring both sides of the story

So, Paul says; v 8: "**Be on guard** so that no one takes you captive through **philosophy** and **vain deceit**, according to **the traditions of men**..."

That's what we have today in Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism; *traditions of men!* That's how we got Sunday because of Constantine at Constantinople, or when they had at Nice, when they had the council rejecting the Sabbath. Then he enforced Sunday-keeping and penalized Sabbath-keepers. Hadn't come to that, yet, here; but just think of how these things came in. Now I'm going through this so when we get to the book of Revelation we will see how that happened.

"...according to the elements of the world... [the way the world thinks] ...and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the

Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power” (vs 8-10). So, whenever people get into things of:

- the ideas of men
- philosophies of men
- religions of men
 - What are they getting into? *They're getting into the base elements of the world!*
 - What happens with that?

We will look at ***what we have to be on guard against!*** You can go on TBN or Daystar or go to a church and read out of the Bible. As a matter of fact, a Catholic told me that the Catholics read the Bible through in three years. well, my question is: ***IF*** they do, ***why don't they obey it?***

2-Corinthians 2:17—*Paul said:* “For we are not like the many... [that's why he said to them, ***be on guard***, there were a lot] ...***who for their own profit...***”

That reminds me of the man who said, ‘debt free.’ When he got done with his sermon, it was, ‘send the money to me.’

“...are corrupting the Word of God...” (v 17)—*that's an amazing thing:*

- corrupt it
- change it
- wrong interpretation

Look at it from the wrong point of view!

“...but we speak with sincerity, as from God and before God, and in Christ” (v 17).

In other words, they were teaching the Truth, the Truth.

What happens when you give attention to those things? *Then there's a certain blinding that takes place!*

It's a mental blinding and it first starts with the person who says, ‘I don't know if that is so or not,’ when they hear the Word of God . *That's blinding themselves*, like Jesus said, ‘They've closed their eyes and closed their ears.’ Let's see how that happens right here:

2-Corinthians 3:13: “For *we are* not like Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not gaze to the end upon the glory that is *now* being set aside. ***But their minds were blinded...***” (vs 13-14)

Even right there under the pillar of fire and the cloud ***the children of Israel still didn't believe***

God! What did he give them every day, six days a week? ***Manna!***

Sidebar, our discussion about the Passover and Joshua 5.

They had manna because they weren't able to eat the grain yet because the Passover was the day before the waving of the offerings

That's a good example that we need to understand exactly what the Bible says!

Verse 14: “But their minds were blinded; for to the present hour the same veil *has not been* removed, *but* remains at the reading of the Old Covenant; which *veil* is removed in Christ.”

In other words, when God gives us his Spirit, that blindness is lifted. We can read the things in the book of Moses and we can understand the first thing we need to realize is that *all those Laws are the very Laws that would help the nations* run themselves in a way that they would not have all the crime and difficulty and things that they have today, ***but they reject it!***

Even the Jews *prefer their own traditions* over the Laws of God. The Catholics, they have all of their philosophies and *their own pagan religion, renamed Jesus and Christ* and so forth. Then you have the Protestants who just say, ‘the Old Testament's all done away and that's for the Jews.’ ***Blindness!***

1. you blind yourself
2. you stay blinded when you hear the Word of God , especially Moses; starting with the Ten Commandments

Verse 15: “For to this day, when Moses is read, *the veil* lies upon their hearts. But ***when their hearts turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away***” (vs 15-16). ***That's conversion!*** It lifts the deception of the human mind.

You read something to someone or you hear someone who hears something of the Bible say, ‘I don't believe that! you know that men wrote that.’ ***All kinds of excuses!***

That ties in with the philosophies that we have that we'll cover a little bit more here in Col. 2.

Verse 18: “But we all, with uncovered faces beholding the glory of *the* Lord as in a mirror, are being transformed *into* the same image from glory to glory, even as by *the* Spirit of *the* Lord.”

That's why the Spirit of God is necessary to take away the blindness and understand the purpose of life!

2-Corinthians 4:1: “Therefore, having this ministry...”

Remember this: What did Christ say that all those who were to be teachers and ministers should do?

- they were not to lord it over
- they were not to be dictators
- they were not to preach themselves
- they were to serve, not to be served

That’s what Paul is talking about here with the ministry.

Verse 1: “Therefore, having this ministry, according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted. For we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain...” (vs 1-2). *That’s the operation of repentance!*

You can see how the world is, everything out there is get/give, and if you just turn off the sound on the television, you will see how absolutely stupid most of these commercials are, but they go into people’s minds and they believe them.

“...not walking in *cunning* craftiness, **nor handling the Word of God deceitfully**...” (v 2).

The great lesson right here with this: Truth **agrees** with Truth; error **does not agree** with Truth!

I had a Catholic write me and say, ‘You said that Jesus said to *call no man your father*. Well, Paul said in 1-Cor. 4 that he was ‘a father’ to the Corinthians.’ *He did say that!* That was a metaphor that he was the first one to bring them the Gospel. He never told him ‘now you call me *father*.’ But the Catholics, deceitfully handling the Word of God, look at that and say that ‘Paul said *he was a father*, so therefore, all the priests are fathers.’

Well, you also have that all wrong because the New Testament doesn’t have any priests. There’s one: Christ!

“...but by manifestation of the Truth... [that’s everything that we do **the truth**] ...we are commending ourselves to every man’s conscience before God. But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing; in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe...” (vs 2-4). So you see the blinding **starts with the self**:

- then with wrong understanding of the Bible
- then deceitfully handling the Word of God
- then believing the deceit

Then Satan enters in, and what’s the final analysis of Satan’s activity:

Revelation 12:9. “...**He’s deceiving the whole world**...”

And Jesus said when He comes ‘will He find the true faith?’

So, you tie the two together and you see how difficult it is to really be a true Christian.

2-Corinthians 4:4: “...blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the Light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is *the* image of God, should shine unto them. **For we do not preach our own selves**” (vs 4-5).

Now, that’s an interesting statement. Now the next time you go on or watch it check them out. *Every single preacher ends up talking about himself! Every single one!*

You watch it; doesn’t matter who it is. Ken Copeland is the richest one, the most corrupt one. He reads the Scripture, he reads so far *and then he talks about himself*—always!

Verse 5: “For we do not preach our own selves, but Christ Jesus *the* Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake, because *it is* God Who commanded *the* Light to shine out of darkness, Who shined into our hearts *the* Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in *the* face of Jesus Christ. Now, we have this treasure in earthen vessels in order that the supremacy of the power may be of God, and not from us” (vs 5-7).

That’s the whole thing **Christ in us the hope of glory!**

We see what happens when philosophy gets involved! It can lead to deception!

Colossians 2:8: “**Be on guard** so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (vs 8-9). *We have that with the full Word of God!*

Verse 10: “And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power... [God is all things to everything] ...in Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands...” (vs 10-11).

This is an interesting saying, because when you are baptized receive the Holy Spirit that doesn’t take all the evil out of your mind. *It’s a circumcision that takes away the deceitfulness that is there so you can grow and overcome!* That’s why it’s called **circumcision of the heart!**

“...in putting off the body of the sins... [all your past sins] ...of the flesh by the circumcision of

Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, by which you have also been raised with Him through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead” (vs 11-12).

Then Paul begins to get into something that is very important and this is a central place for all of those who deceitfully interpret the Bible come to, *to say you don't have to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days!* They always come here to do it. But those are the things like in the book we have—*God's Plan Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days*—that's an amazing book! It's a thick book, a thousand pages of messages and CDs to go with it.

Some of those on Caravan to Midnight who get it one man got it and said 'this blew my mind.' Why? Because he was all centered in on Sunday and the holidays of this world—*all of them lies!*

- Who blinds him to it? *Satan!*
- Who makes them think that they those are the things they should do? *Satan!*
- What does he do? *He gives him benefits!*

God gives blessings/Satan gives benefits! Keep that in mind!

Verse 12: “Having been buried with Him in baptism, by which you have also been raised with Him through the inner working of God...”

God is going to be interworking in our minds constantly the rest of our lives, but we need that constant contact with God.

“...who raised him from the dead for you who were once dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh. He has now made alive with him having forgiven all your trespasses having blotted out. The note of debt...” (vs 12-14)—*that's what it should read not blotting out the Commandments as the KJV translates it!*

See that's how the King James translated. That's one of the reason we have *A Faithful Version*, too many mistranslation too many things that are wrong.

The note of debt is a listing of our sins. Where is that note of debt? Right up here in your mind, *and God knows it!*

Verse 14: “He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with the decrees of our sins...*” *The word in the Greek means 'decrees' not commandments!*

They read this: 'having blotted out **the note of the commandments.**'

How does the world look today that doesn't keep the Commandments of God. Let's look at America. We look at the news and all you're looking

at is *Commandment broken, Commandment broken, Commandment broken every one of them!*

The Protestants come along and say that's 'the harsh Law.' ***NO!*** The harshness is when *you reject it there's a penalty!* I mean, here's another saying you can remember: ***It has to be right!*** You can apply that to everything:

- if you're making something
- if you're cooking something
- if you're driving a car
- if you're repairing the car

You have to make it right!

There was this woman who was making a chocolate cake and she forgot to put in the baking powder. So, it came out flat! It wasn't a cake. So, she had the brilliant idea: these are brownies. Whatever it is has to be right:

- your clothes have to fit you
- your shoes have to fit you
- food has to be cooked a certain way
- you have to breathe
- you have to sleep

If you sleep in the wrong position, you get a backache! That's all you see on television. You would think that most Americans spend all their time in bed. They have so many ad for beds. ***You have to make it right!***

If you buy a pair of shoes it's got to be the right size. if you wear glasses, they have to be adjusted for you your individual sight. ***It has to be right!***

Same thing with God! Everything has to be right! How is it right?

- ***believe God***
- ***obey God***
- ***love God***

That's how your relationship with God is made right! Not with a decrease of men. So. when they came and translated this, 'the note of the commandments' that saying getting rid of all the Laws of God and you do anything you want to do, ***and is a complete absolute mistranslation!***

“...which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross” (v 14).

- Who was nailed to the cross? ***Christ was, and He was the sin offering for the whole world!***
- How's He going to be the sin offering for the whole world?
 - look at all of those in the past that never knew about Him

- look at all of those in the Flood
- What happened to them?
 - look at all of the people who were good, decent people in the society

They lived and died or they were cut short by an accident or like this recent plane accident with a helicopter; 77 people died BANG! Just like that, it's over.

- What about them?
- What was their great sin?

I'll give you a little projection of it. That's why you need to get the book. There's one sentence: this will show you how powerful one sentence is—a parenthetical statement:

Revelation 20:5: (But the rest of the dead...)”

What is John comparing that to? He's comparing that *to those who were raised in the first resurrection!* So, you need to understand that *there's a first resurrection!*

And very few answered the call; ‘many are called fewer chosen.’ And they are in the first resurrection. That's what it says up there in verse 4.

Verse 5: “(But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were completed). ... [that's compared to the first resurrection] ... This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and Holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (vs 5-6).

What the world is going to have when Christ returns is:

- peace
- love
- joy

all the things of God!

All of those in the first resurrection are going to be kings and priests and administrators, and so forth, running the Kingdom of God with people so that they can attain salvation and enter into the Kingdom of God. Even though their life was cut short. ***God is Going to bring them back!***

I haven't yet heard a single Sunday-keeping preacher say anything like that, but that's what the Bible says! There it is. *The rest of the dead live again!* Think about that:

- all the babies
- all the children

- all those who live long lives, but weren't converted

Back here to Col. 2:15, because what Paul is doing is showing that those of us who know the Truth always have to stick to the Truth, and in sticking to the Truth and in understanding the Truth *you build an automatic understanding to reject all of these clever sounding arguments!*

Because some of them sound so good; ‘Oh say this little prayer,’ says Franklin Graham, ‘and all your sins are forgiven.’ *Well, there's more to it than that!*

Colossians 2:15: “After stripping the principalities and the powers, He made a public spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it”—*Christ's crucifixion as the sacrifice for sin!*

Now what he's saying see everything from verse 1 down to v 15 is saying:

- stick to the Truth
- don't be caught off guard by
 - ✓ clever arguments
 - ✓ philosophy
 - ✓ any other thing

Verse 16: Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you...”

If someone judges you and they look at you and say, ‘Why are you doing that? *You shouldn't be doing that!*’ That means you're doing something ***they don't want you to do!***

They read this is judging *to do away with the Sabbath to do away with the Holy Days!* But it doesn't.

Verse 16: “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon... [referring to the Calculated Hebrew Calendar] ...or *the Sabbaths*.”

Verse 17 gets a little tricky, and here's where the bad interpretation comes.

Verse 17: “Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming...”—*that is the correct translation!*

Wherever there is a shadow there's the reality. Larry put in a lot of telephone poles; every telephone pole has a shadow. If you're standing out here and you see the shadow of that telephone pole, that's reflective of the actual pole, because there would be no shadow without the pole.

If you want to know where the pole is you follow the shadow until you get to it. That's what it's talking about here. The Holy Days of God, the

Sabbaths of God *are foreshadows!* In other words, they are *projections of Truth now and for the ultimate fulfillment when Christ returns!*

Verse 16: "Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a Festival, or new moon, or *the Sabbaths*, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the Body of Christ" (vs 16-17).

In other words the Body of Christ contained in the Word of God, the Body of Christ being *the Church of God* has the understanding of these things.

Now we're going to see a little later. I don't know if we have time today, that some of the Churches of God have gotten subverted. Why? *Because they didn't stay on guard and they didn't rightly divide the Word of God!* Those are important.

Verse 18: "Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize by doing his will..."

What is the prize? *Eternal life given to us by God the Father and Jesus Christ!*

"...by doing his will..."

What was the will? You have to go back to the verse which says 'philosophies'; they come along with the philosophy. Now sometimes it may be in accord with things that are in the Bible *but the conclusion comes to something different than that!*

"...by doing his will in self-abasement..." (v 18).

- you've got to do this ritual
- you've got to do this thing
- you have to have so many laps around the beads

"...and the worship of demonic angels..." (v 18). *Now, that's an interesting statement isn't it?*

Why? *Well, that's not the righteous angels!*

We find in Rev. 19 and Rev. 22 when John saw some of the visions that he was given and he went to bow down to worship the angel of God. The angel said, 'Don't worship me; I'm a fellow servant and brethren don't worship me. Worship God!'

This is referring to *demonic angels*, which in the next version of the Bible coming out we have inserted that in italics, because that's true.

So you walk into St. Peter's Basilica. What do you have a feeling of awe and reverence and magnificence and that's all demonic. All of it see there are demons who want to be religious and good.

Just like there are people who want to be religious and good and there are people who want to

be perverted and criminal. Yeah, and there are demons that want to be perverted and criminal:

"...intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind" (v 18).

Article: A third of Americans consult turret cards and fortune tellers or witches

And people go there and there are demons there and they can do miraculous and semi-miraculous things and they can tell their fortune.

What happens? The demons associated with the one who's doing the reading and the cards will follow the person along and make it happen. The followers will say, 'Oh look! Look at this! The fortune teller was right. I'm going to go back again.'

While roughly 30% of Americans say they consult astrology, tarot cards, or fortune tellers at least once a year, a smaller percentage, about 1%, say they rely heavily on these practices when making major life decisions, according to Pew Research Center.

Recent surveys indicate that approximately 27% of U.S. adults believe that the positions of stars and planets can influence people's lives.

They're not, they are demons; worship of angels! That's what happens when they bow down to the idols. Doesn't matter the religion:

- can be Catholic
- can be Buddhist
- the Muslims say 'we don't commit idolatry'

Why do you bow five times to Mecca? And in there they have this big thing where there's an asteroid that's supposed to be sacred and they all go around that counterclockwise. *That's idolatry!*

An idol is *anything that you have in your mind anything that you ascribe power to!*

"...intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind and not holding fast to the Head [Christ] from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God" (vs 18-19)

- the increase of God's Spirit
- the increase of our love
- the increase of our obedience
- the increase of understanding the Word of God

Verse 20: "Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the

world...”—*that’s what baptism is all about!*

Paul said ‘I died’ while he was still alive. How did he die? ***In the watery grave of baptism! Same thing for all of us were baptized! We die! In other words, now Christ is going to live in us and prepare us for eternal life!***

“...why are you subjecting yourselves to the decrees of men as if you were living in the world?” (v 20).

Did you know that if you’re a so-called ‘good Catholic’ you can go to the St. Peter’s Basilica and you can do certain things and they will give you indulgences; *that is forgiveness of sin ahead of time.* How convenient. That’s an amazing thing. ***But it’s not true!***

Verse 21: “*They say, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’* The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (vs 21-22).

That’s what happens with it. That’s why we’re told ***to be on guard!***

Verse 23: “Which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom in voluntary worship of angels, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of the body, not in any respect to the satisfying of the needs of the flesh.”

Then he goes on in Col. 3 to showing how we grow and overcome in the Spirit of God. ***Now that’s totally different than what the world teaches!*** They use the Bible to their advantage. God wants us to use His words to ***our advantage*** and ***our relationship with God!*** That’s what God wants.

Let’s see how Paul explains it and what is actually occurring.

Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins... [that’s what we are in the world when God begins to deal with us] ...in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...” (vs 1-2).

Who’s the prince of the power of the air? ***Satan the devil!***

“...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience” (v 2).

Look at all of those riots going on. Who’s stirring all of that up? Who’s fomenting all the killing? ***Amazing!*** Actually America has been spared ***and it is so corrupt!*** Like it says in Isa. 1 from the top of the head to the sole of the feet it is so corrupt.!

Everything in it is upside down and backward and given over to sin, perversion, violence, hatred and

lawlessness! ***But God is merciful!*** One of the reasons is the prophecies must be fulfilled. Another major reason is only in America through the Churches of God go some have their problems, are the only ones preaching the Truth? Who else is?

I mean, look at what happens when just in the carnal world Donald Trump brings out the truth of what’s going on, and they want to kill him; they want to jail him.

- Is that not the power of the enemy?
- Is that not the prince of the power stirring all of those things up? ***Yes indeed!***

In other countries, it’s even worse.

“...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest of the world” (vs 2-3).

Verse 4—*something happened. What is that?*: “But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, has made us alive together with Christ. (For you have been saved by grace.)” (vs 4-5).

- you don’t need any ritual
- you don’t need any worship of angels
- you don’t need any idols or statues

It’s by God’s grace and the grace is to bring you to Him! That’s what it’s all about.

Verse 6: “And He has raised us up together...”

Now this one we come out of the watery grave were to walk in newness of life. That’s what it means here, and also a projection forward of the coming first resurrection. An amazing thing!

“...and has caused us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (v 6).

Well, not yet! That’s when Christ returns! But God makes statements as if they’re in the present tense, ***but they are present tense projections of the fulfillment to come.*** He explains it right here:

Verse 7: “So that in the ages that are coming... [that just what I explained] ... He might show the exceeding riches of His grace...”

- How good is God?
- How loving is God?
- How righteous is God?

Think about that one day we're going to see Him face-to-face. That's amazing!

"...in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith..." (vs 7-8).

- *you believe God*
- *you obey God*
- *you love God*

Those are the three things constantly in our lives.

"...and this *especially* is not of your own selves... [you don't have it within you to do it; but with God's Spirit you do] ... *it is* the gift of God, not of works..." (vs 8-9)—*our own works!*

- Have you ever heard of works of faith?
- What are works of faith? ***Works of faith are obeying God.***

But people like to say if you have faith, you don't need any works. Why does it talk about the works of faith? ***That's because they don't read the Bible!*** They claim to. They make you think they are, but they're not.

Verse 9: "Not of works, so that no one may boast."

If you think you can boast, go read the book of Job word for word. I guarantee you the first time you read it... Like I did the first time, I thought God was wrong, because Job was so righteous. But then he turned all that righteousness ***into himself and didn't accredit anything to God and claimed that he was as good as God!*** He needed a judge to come to settle the score between him and God.

Well, as it ended up, after God got done talking with him ***and Job repented*** he said, 'I abhor myself in ashes and sackcloth. I know that You, God, no thought can be withheld from You. ***Think about that.***

Verse 9: "Not of works, so that no one may boast. For we..." (vs 9-10).

This is the whole key of being a Christian. This is the whole key of

- loving God
- keeping His Commandments
- doing what is right
- following what He wants
- living by every Word of God

Here's the whole key:

Verse 10: "For we are His workmanship **being created...**"

It's an active process in our daily lives and everything that we do.

"...**being created in Christ Jesus** unto *the* good works..." (v 10).

There it is! So, the next time you hear any of these religions say 'you don't do it by works.' Well, that's true, **not your own.** But **you do the works of God!**

What are the works of God? *He's defined them!* We have the three steps:

- ***believe God***
- ***obey God***
- ***love God***

"...*the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (v 10)—***as a way of life!***

What is your path of life? A lot of people like to talk about that. That's also one of the things with the Passover. When you have the foot washing, that's humility, ***and then telling God that you're going to walk in His way!*** Amazing thing!

So, the Bible is truly amazing in everything that is there and why we have it. We're thankful that God has made it possible for us to do the things that we have done. This is not for us. This is for all people. We're doing the best we can to do what we need to do. Remember this: ***We are his creation now. Being created by conversion!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 18:8
- 2) Colossians 2:1-10
- 3) 2-Corinthians 2:17
- 4) 2-Corinthians 3:13-16, 18
- 5) 2-Corinthians 4:1-4
- 6) Revelation 12:9
- 7) 2-Corinthians 4:4-7
- 8) Colossians 2:8-14
- 9) Revelation 20:5-6
- 10) Colossians 2:15-23
- 11) Ephesians 2:1-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 17
- Matthew 24
- Colossians 1
- Joshua 5
- Revelation 19; 22
- Colossians 3
- Isaiah 1

Also referenced:

Book (secular): *From Sabbath to Sunday*
by Samuele Bacchiocchi

Book: {**truthofGod.org**} *God's Plan Revealed by
His Sabbath and Holy Days*

FRC:bo/po
Transcribed: 5/28/24

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