

Grow in Grace and Knowledge

Fred R. Coulter—July 11, 2015

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services!

That was quite an interesting little bit on the unseen world (referring to video shown). That's what man has been able to discover—some of the very smallest things. Think about what God has made. Think about what He's preparing for us.

In the midst of all the trouble and difficulties going on—and there's plenty of that—let's see why we need to grow in grace and knowledge. It's interesting that we understand these things that are going on. I think that after what we covered in the sermon *Prepare to Meet Your God, O Israel*, that with the Supreme Court ruling there is no check on lawlessness anywhere in the government and in the society.

So, yes, God does have a controversy with Israel. Here's why: We need to understand that these things are going to happen, but we need to be doing something else, because *we're preparing to take over the world*.

You can know and understand this: No politician is going to solve the problem, because the problem is not political, *the problem is spiritual!* Even the Supreme Court justices tell us there is no limit to correct the lawlessness that's in the court system or in the land. Like one man said, when you have no Christianity, you can't hire enough people to make the people do what they should do. This is exactly what God is saying here:

Hosea 4:1: "Hear the Word of the LORD, children of Israel, for the LORD *has* a controversy with the inhabitants of the land... [here's what God is looking to:] ...'There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.... [look what that is doing] ...By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and the committing of adultery they break out; and blood touches blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and everyone who dwells in it shall languish, with the beasts of the field and with the birds of the heavens. Yes, the fish of the sea shall also be taken away'" (vs 1-3).

Let's see what is promulgating a lot of this. We're going to see the fastest growing religion in the world is atheism. Well, I suppose that Islam is, but they kill so many people, I don't think they'll have too many adherents.

Psalms 14:1: "**The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God!**' They are corrupt; they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven..." (vs 1-

2). How does God look down from heaven? *The seven eyes of God* (Rev. 4; 5)! He knows what's going on. Think about all of the small, little, nano things that are going on in the world, and God is the one Who is directing that. He knows what's going on all the time.

"...to see if there were any who understand, who seek *after* God" (v 2). God is looking for those who are seeking Him. This is why Jesus said, 'Seek and you shall find.'

Verse 3: "They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not *even* one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, those who devour My people as men eat bread and do not call upon the LORD" (vs 3-4). God is going to take care of all of them.

Here's something very interesting, because this also affects the Churches of God (1-Cor. 15). This is what Paul said of the Church, especially to the Corinthians because they were the Greeks who prided themselves on knowledge and understanding. That's where philosophy comes from. 'Sophia' means *knowledge*.

1-Corinthians 15:34: "Awake to righteousness... [this is what we need to do] ...and do not sin, for some *of you* do not have the knowledge of God. I say *this* to your shame."

With all the time we have had with peace and security and Bibles and everything that we have to preach the Word of God and get it out to as many people as possible, we of all people need to have the knowledge of God. I think that God not only looks down on the world, but He more intently looks upon the Church. Wouldn't you suppose? *Yes, indeed!*

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death."

Verse 14: "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways, but a good man *shall be satisfied* with his own actions."

Think about that! How does God judge individuals? *By their works and by their thoughts!* Their works reflect their thoughts. If their works don't reflect their thoughts, then they are hypocritical. If they're religious, they're sanctimonious pretenders.

Prov. 2 tells us how we need to seek after the way of God, because this is really very important. God wants us to be seeking these things

His way. This is wisdom speaking and we are to be the sons of God. Let's keep this in mind with what God's wants us to do with the knowledge and study and how we are to grow in grace and knowledge.

Proverbs 2:1: "My son, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments **within you**... [the mind, the heart] ...so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding" (vs 1-2). This shows the spiritual work that needs to be done.

It's not true that at 25-years-old our minds quit growing. No, we keep thinking and doing things all of our lives. There was 105-year-old veteran, I think it was of WWI, I don't have it with me, but he wrote a letter to Obama and castigated him thoroughly. But here he is, 105; he can still think, he can still challenge. We are never too old to learn. As a matter of fact, we need to be learning every day. I know I do; I learn every day. Here's how we are to do it:

Verse 3: "Yea, **if** you cry after knowledge and lift up your voice for understanding." That obviously has to do with prayer; that has to do with your communications with God. Where is the greatest knowledge and understanding contained that we need? *From the Word of God!*

Verse 4: "**If** you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures." We're going to see the Word of God and the way of God compared to silver and gold. It's greater than that. However, Paul likened spiritual growth to gold, silver, precious stones (1-Cor. 3). Then there's the other half of it. You can look at that one Scripture: wood, hay and stubble, and then go to Matt. 5 and you have the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins. They build wood, hay and stubble. The wise built gold, silver and precious stones.

Notice what happens when you do that, v 5: "**Then** you shall understand the fear of the LORD..." The fear of the Lord means to be in awe of God, understand:

- His love
- His grace
- His goodness

Think about how foolish it is to declare there is no God when they have crawling all over them all those little mites to help clean up their body—and they don't even know they're there! Amazing!

"...and find the knowledge of God" (v 5). The knowledge of God is the most important thing. We're going to see the steps that follow with knowledge. They're right here.

Verse 6: "For **the LORD gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and**

understanding." When you have knowledge and you put the knowledge together with different other facts, then you have understanding.

Verse 7: "He lays up sound wisdom..." Then you gain wisdom. Wisdom comes by doing. Wisdom comes by learning from your own mistakes.

I remember when I was oriented at Fort Ord, when I came to Fort Ord as a recruit in 1953. They had all of the new recruits there. We just had all of our heads shaved and we had on our fatigues, polished up our boots. We were to meet the commanding general.

He came out on the stage and he gave a speech. He said, 'A wise man learns from his mistakes.' That's true, and we need to learn from our mistakes. But he said, 'I want to tell you a secret. *A wiser man learns from the mistakes of others.*' So we don't need to make the same mistakes that other people have made. That's wisdom!

"...*He* is a shield to those who walk uprightly. He keeps the paths of *right* judgment and preserves the way of His saints" (vs 7-8). Look at all the blessings that come with that. That doesn't say that we're not going to have trials and difficulties and things come along. We'll have them. That's part of life. God wants to see what we're going to do.

Verse 9: "**Then** you shall understand righteousness and judgment and equity, every good path. Wisdom shall enter into your heart and knowledge will be pleasing to your soul" (vs 9-10).

What do we find in Matt. 25 with the parable of the ten virgins? *Five foolish, five wise*, because they didn't do what it says here in the first part of Prov. 2. Very interesting! The Proverbs are full of a lot of good things that we need to know and understand.

Proverbs 9:8: "Do not reprove a scorner, lest he hate you; give rebuke to a wise man, and he will love you"—because he will listen. *Yes, you are right!* Sometimes it doesn't come quite that easy. Sometimes it comes a little grudgingly. Then you have to admit, Dolores you were right.

Verse 9: "Give instruction to a wise one, and he will be still wiser... [it's constantly growing in grace in knowledge] ...teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning."

- this is why we study every day
- this is why we pray every day
- this is the key on how we can remain grounded with God and not be overwhelmed with the things transpiring in the world

You can't ignore them, but you can't be enveloped with them either.

What this leads to is, v 10: “The fear of the LORD... [the fear of the Lord (Prov. 2)] ...*is* the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy *is* understanding.” You’ve got to know the Word of God.

What did Paul call all of the wise and intelligent of the world? *They were fools!* Why? *They have no knowledge of the Word of God!*

Just like with this little video we watched, think how much more you appreciate the creative power of the God after seeing that. That teaches us to love and fear God even more because of what He has done. Then we can expand that out and think about since God is preparing New Jerusalem for the saints, for those in the first resurrection, I wonder what that is going to be like, even though it’s described in Rev. 21. What will that really be like? God is planning fantastic things for His saints:

- He loves us
- He wants us to study
- He wants us to pray
- He wants us to grow and overcome

He’s given His Spirit to us so we can accomplish it. That’s amazing.

Verse 11: “For by me your days shall be multiplied... [how about eternal] ...and the years of your life shall be increased. If you are wise, you shall be wise for yourself...” (vs 11-12).

We can share knowledge, we can share wisdom, but we can’t make anybody wise. They have to go through the learning and the process and the assimilation and using the Spirit of God. Then it says if you scorn, you’re in trouble.

Proverbs 10:14: “Wise ones store up knowledge... [called growing in grace and knowledge] ...but the mouth of the foolish *is* near ruin.”

Let’s see what God wants to do with us in our heart and in our mind. We are working at building the character, the knowledge, the understanding that is going to give us the beginning, when we’re resurrected, of eternal life. What’s missing in the world, with all the leaders and religious people, *is character*.

What God is doing is He’s giving us an opportunity to grow in grace and knowledge and build character so that when He gives us our duties and assignments in the Kingdom of God, we will have the character to do it right, and the character, not only to do it right, but to be trusted that that will be so all the time.

Hebrews 10:14: “For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are

sanctified.... [perfection is a process. We are being perfected (Eph. 4)] ...And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said” (vs 14-15).

I want you to think about v 16; we’ve gone over this many times in the past, but I want you to really think about the covenant. The covenant that we have is the covenant of baptism where we are conjoined to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He died for us, but we join His death in baptism so that He can give us the power to overcome sin.

Verse 16: ““This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says the Lord, ‘I will give...’” This comes from God. We have it written down in the Bible and to get it into our minds, since God has given the Bible:

- we have to do the study
- we have to apply ourselves
- we have to search, we have to put it together

“...I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.” I want you to think about that.

Let’s apply Psa. 19 in a spiritual way, and see how that Psa. 19 requires God’s Spirit. This is really quite a Psalm when you look at it. Sometimes we read things and read right over it and we miss a lot because we read too fast. That’s why we have to stop and think about it. Every once in a while in the Psalms it says Selah. That means to stop and think and meditate on what you just read.

Psalms 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God...” What did God tell the children of Israel and us when He began dealing with them? ***‘I set before you life and death, good and evil; therefore, choose life and love the Lord that you may live!’*** Then He says, ***‘I call heaven and earth against you!’*** So, the heavens out there are declaring all the time the glory of God.

“...and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night they reveal knowledge” (vs 1-2).

Stop and think about this for a minute: Think of the Word of God as a hand coming directly from God. The Calculated Hebrew Calendar, based on the heavens and the movements of everything there, is the glove. The glove gives the superstructure to the Word of God. *The Sabbath and Holy Days are the keys that keep us in an attitude of understanding*, if we keep them right, coupled with prayer and study.

I remember talking with a person one time who said, ‘I can’t understand the Bible.’ I said,

‘There’s a little secret to understanding the Bible.’ He said, ‘What is that?’ I said, ‘It is obedience. *If you don’t obey, you cannot understand.*’ It says of those, ‘A good understanding have all those who keep His commandments.’ *Well, I don’t understand that.* I said, ‘That’s the problem. **You have to set your mind that you’re going to obey God!**’ He said, ‘Well, what if I don’t agree with it?’ I said, ‘Then you’re in trouble.’

Now Alan Dershowitz, he was discussing the Ten Commandments one time on an interview. He said, ‘The commandments are outmoded, especially the one on adultery. As a matter of fact, so is the tenth commandment: You shall not covet. Wall Street is based on that.’

This is how people look at things. How educated is Alan Dershowitz? *He’s a famous attorney, very educated!*

- Does he know God? *No!*
- Can he understand the Word of God? *No!*

But the Word of God is greater than all the knowledge that he has, because that is all knowledge without God. You may mention God once in a while, but that’s not quite as good as the demons. The demons know that there is a God, and they fear and tremble, because they know their judgment’s coming. But ignorant man does not. This goes to everybody in the world.

We don’t know what kind of sounds are coming from out there in space that we don’t understand, but there are a lot of them they can pick up. I never did find out where it was, so if anyone can help me on a Google-search I’d appreciate that.

I was driving along and I was hearing this interview. This man was saying that the body sings. He said, ‘How?’ He said, ‘When you get the rhythm of the heart and then you get the pulse, then the kidneys make noise, the liver makes noise, and all of that. I want you to listen to this tune that was comprised of the sounds of the organs of the body.’

I never could get a follow-up on that, but it was interesting. It was a nice little song. That’s probably when you’re in a good attitude. If you’re not in a good attitude, it’s probably a different song.

Verse 4: “Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man *set* to run a race, its going forth is from one end of heaven, and its circuit is to the other end. And there is nothing hidden from its heat” (vs 4-6).

He transits to the Law of God. What did Jesus say about the Law and the Prophets? *He did*

not come to abolish, but fulfill! Having the Spirit of God fulfills the laws and gives us understanding. Let’s read it from the perspective of Heb. 10. Of course, God is perfect, so His Law is perfect.

Verse 7: “The Law of the LORD is perfect...” Imperfect man or woman cannot improve upon the Law of God.

Here’s what it does: “...restoring the soul...” (v 7). It gives peace and tranquility to your body and your mind, which then is a health and life-giving thing that you need.

“...the testimony of the LORD is sure... [whatever God says, it’s going to happen] ...making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the LORD are pure, enlightening the eyes” (vs 7-8). Gives us understanding; helps us in our thoughts.

Verse 9: “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever... [keeps you out of trouble] ...the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”

If you want a separate, little Bible study you go through the various statutes and ordinances in Exo. 21-23. Those were the laws to govern the civil society.

There are some people who do not agree with the death penalty for various sins, including sex sins. However, with what has just happened recently in America with the Supreme Court judgment, is not the whole nation punished by their activities, because they taught it, allowed it and sanctioned it. They forgot the lesson of Sodom and Gomorrah. *Yes, indeed, righteous altogether!*

Verse 10: “More to be desired than gold, yea, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”

Psa. 119:121—see that little Hebrew letter above it: AYIN; that means that every verse from 121-128 begins with that letter.

Psalms 119:121: “I have done justice and righteousness; leave me not to those who oppress me. Be surety for Your servant for good; let not the proud oppress me. My eyes fail for Your salvation and for the word of Your righteousness.... [notice the enthusiasm for God’s way] ...Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statutes. I am Your servant; give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies. It is time for the LORD to work, for they have made void Your Law” (vs 121-126).

Notice, right in the atmosphere of what we have today this is it: they’ve made void the Law of God. What are we to do?

Verse 127: “Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold.” Notice how many times in the Word of God that it’s compared to great riches. Why? *Because it leads to eternal life!* You go clear to the end of the Bible to Rev. 22:14, who are the ones who have the right to the Tree of Life? *Those who have kept the commandments of God!*

Verse 128: “Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way.” That’s quite a statement!

Let’s see what the laws of God *spiritually written in our hearts and in our minds* will do for us.

Psalm 19:11: “Moreover by them Your servant is warned...” Have you ever gone along and thinking something and you said, ‘Oh, oh, no, no, not that.’ That’s because God’s Law and Spirit in you is causing you to think in right terms with the commandments, laws and statutes of God, the teachings of Christ, etc.

“...in keeping them there is great reward” (v 11). Everybody wants that, but no one wants to do what they need to do to get it.

Here’s another good one, v 12: “Who can understand his errors?...” That’s the hardest thing to admit. It helps you to understand your errors in what you do if it’s not right.

“...Oh, cleanse me from *my* secret faults” (v 12). All those things buried in your mind from a life living in the world in sin need to be cleansed.

Verse 13: “And keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins...” Think about it for a minute. Think about those whom you used to know who attended church and they gave up on the Sabbath. This was the first step to giving up on many other things.

Then come back and visit them 15 years later. Some have done that and said they are surprised. It’s like there’s just something missing and you can tell it in their eyes. Quite an amazing thing!

The Sabbath and Holy Days—the hand and the glove—make it complete. But the Sabbath is also an *appointed* Feast of God, *every week!* Why do you suppose God did that?

- Is God perfect? *Yes!*
- Does God have all wisdom? *Yes!*
- Does He have all understanding? *Yes!*
- What does He know about us as human beings?

because He made us! That we need to learn every Sabbath, not only the rest, not only away from our business, but God wants to know:

- Do you love Me?
- Do you fear Me?
- Do you honor Me?
- *I have given you life and now I want to give you eternal life and give you wisdom and understanding along the way!*

That’s a fantastic thing.

So, when you look out at the world and you can see all the things that are going wrong, don’t get discouraged. The world looks at them and maybe can figure some things are wrong, but they don’t understand what is happening, because *they don’t keep the commandments of God and love Him!* That’s why growing in grace and knowledge becomes very important.

(go to the next track)

Verse 13: “And keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins...” That’s interesting! What happens if you have a presumptuous sin? That’s why we need to stay close to God.

Let’s see a presumptuous sin that David did. It’s interesting that the one who tried to hold him back from this was Joab. Joab was the king’s leading general. He was the one who sent Uriah the Hittite into battle, because he got the message from the king to do it so Uriah would die. Joab saw the sinful side of David more than anyone else.

1-Chronicles 21:1: “And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.... [presumptuous sin] ...And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, ‘Go number Israel from Beersheba to Dan. And bring the number of them to me so that I may know.’... [Joab knew better] ...And Joab answered, ‘May the LORD add to His people a hundred times, but my lord the king, *are they not all my lord’s servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?’*” (vs 1-3). This must have been a time when David was not staying close to God.

Verse 4: “But the king’s word prevailed against Joab. And Joab departed...” I wonder what he was thinking, and saying to himself, *‘This will never work!’*

“...And Joab departed and went up and down all Israel, and came again to Jerusalem. And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. And in all Israel there were one million and a hundred thousand men who drew the sword. And in Judah *were* four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. But Levi and Benjamin he did not count among them, for the king’s word was

abominable to Joab. And God was displeased with this thing...” (vs 4-7). Notice what happens if you don’t listen to good advice, and if you persist in doing something very presumptuous God may not be pleased with you.

“...therefore He struck Israel” (v 7). I don’t know how He did it. I don’t know how God did the selecting on whom to strike, but notice what happened:

Verse 8: “And David said to God, ‘I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing. But now, I beseech You, remove the iniquity of Your servant for I have done very foolishly.’ And the LORD spoke to Gad, David’s seer, saying, ‘Go and tell David, saying, “Thus says the LORD: ‘I offer you three *things*. Choose one of them so that I may do it to you.’”’ And Gad came to David and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Choose for yourself: Either three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you...”’” (vs 8-12). Notice how God can control things.

- Does it please God that we are making America a fortress against ISIS?
- Are we succeeding?
- Can we stop it?
- *God’s Word says two of you shall chase ten thousand!*
- Have we not seen that? *Yes, indeed!*

They should be returning to God, rather than figuring out how to have stricter security. Stricter security is not going to secure you. Just like this thing was against God that David did. He was told by Joab, but refused his counsel.

“...or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even the plague in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the border of Israel.’ And now say what word I shall bring again to Him Who sent me” (v 12). David had to make the decision.

Verse 13: “And David said to Gad, ‘I am in great distress. Let me fall now into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man.’ So, the LORD sent a plague upon Israel. And there fell seventy thousand men of Israel” (vs 13-14). Imagine that—70,000—*presumptuous sin!*

Then to make a long story short, David went out and was right where the threshing floor of Ornan was and God stopped the plague. That’s where the temple was built. David bought the land from Ornan. So, God showed his mercy. ***Behold the severity and the mercy of God!*** There it is.

But look at what happens when people make disastrous, presumptuous decisions. Is that not what

the Supreme Court did two weeks ago? *Yes, indeed!* There is no justification for it in the Constitution, nor in any statutes or judgments of the land, nor from the Word of God. In reading some of the excerpts of those judgments, ***God is not even mentioned!***

Think about how God viewed that thing and think about what the results are going to be if we compare that to what David did in numbering Israel. God knows! It’s going to lead to *horrible* things. David should have remembered Psa. 19. See what happens when *vanity and presumptuousness* gets the best of you?

Psalm 19:13: “And keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins... [God’s answer was, ‘I had Joab tell you for Me, but you didn’t listen’] ...do not let them rule over me... [but it did] ...then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.” That was a pretty big transgression.

You go back and look at what happened with Bathsheba. That changed the complexion of the whole kingdom for the rest of David’s reign, because of his sin.

Sidebar: Now you know why God wants to develop in us, for the resurrection, the character and righteousness that comes from

- God’s Spirit
- His laws
- His judgments
- His Word

Think of how important that is. Look at it this way: *We are in training to rule the world!* The biggest problem in the world is there is *no God* and there is *no character* in the rulers or in the people.

This is why the Sabbath is so important for us. *God is teaching us!* We come to Sabbath services and we study the Word of God. I preach the Word of God. Others preach the Word of God. ***We are instructing the brethren to prepare, because that day will come!***

We can’t say, ‘Oh, it’s way down the road.’ Your road may be very short, even though it may be way down the road. So, you better prepare for your short road. The older we get, the shorter that road is.

Verse 14: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.” He recovered from that mistake.

Psa. 64 is how we should pray today with all the difficulties and problems going on, because they are going to become much more intense:

Psalm 64:1: “Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked...” (vs 1-2). I wonder what they are planning now that they have same-sex marriage.

Dolores was watching an interview of one of those who were rejoicing in same-sex marriages, and the commentator said, ‘What’s next? You want to shut down all churches, don’t you?’ Not a word, because that is on their agenda.

Verse 3: “Who sharpen their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.” Is that not what happened with that decision? *Yes, indeed!* There are no grounds for it at all anywhere.

Verse 4: “So that they may shoot at the blameless from concealment—suddenly they shoot at him, and fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil plan; they talk of laying snares secretly; they say, ‘Who shall see them?’ They plot injustices, saying, ‘We have made a perfect plan.’ For the inward thought and heart of man is cunning. But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they shall be wounded” (vs 4-7). That’s when Christ returns. This shows how we should pray when these things begin to come upon us.

The decision from the Supreme Court was 5-4, and it split the Court irreparably. There are some trying to do good, but *you can’t do good unless you give God credit for the good!* Is that not the lesson of Job? *Yes, indeed!*

It’s just like there may be some ‘good things’ in some of the plans that politicians want to do to correct things. But unless they turn the people back to God it will only go so far. This is why we need to study and go through the Word of God and preach, and all that sort of thing.

Proverbs 12:1: “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.” Of course, then God’s Word corrects us.

I wonder what those five would do if you went up and said, ‘You’re all wrong before God. You’re all condemned.’ They would get all mad--wouldn’t they? God says, ‘They’re stupid.’ If something is not right, should it not be corrected? Try that on your income tax. Send a completely false and felonious statement. They would come and take everything you have. What is God going to do to this nation? *He’s going to come and take everything we have and give it to the enemies, because they defied God.*

Verse 2: “The good man receives grace from the LORD, but He will condemn a man of wicked devices. A man shall not be established by wickedness...” (vs 2-3). Think of all of these things. When you read these Proverbs, they are so good in

giving us an understanding: right and wrong, good and evil, wickedness and righteousness, and so forth.

“...but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.... [if you are anchored into that Rock] ...A woman of virtue *is* a crown to her husband, but she who causes shame *is* like rottenness in his bones” (vs 3-4). I’ll let you read some more of these over here.

Verse 22: “**Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD...**” Stop right here and *think!* I’ll give you a little preview of next week’s sermon. Who are the ones who are primarily responsible for the condition of the land and that unrighteous judgment of the Supreme Court? *The Protestants and their preachers!* “**Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD...**” Their biggest lie is Sunday; it cuts them off from God. What does God say about that? *and* What does God say about the holidays that they follow? *They are abominations to God and He hates them!*

What is God going to do? I’ll give you another little preview. In Oklahoma, the most Bible belted Bible-belt state in America, even more so that Texas, put up a chiseled-out granite of the Ten Commandments exactly like the one that was approved by the Supreme Court in Texas. They put that up; that’s been there for more than a couple of years. I think it was a year or two ago when the Church of Satan put up a statue of the goat-god of Satan right across the way from where the Ten Commandments is.

They interviewed him and said, ‘What do you believe?’ He said, ‘We follow Satan because we want to get away from the tyranny of the society and the tyranny of Christianity.’ That gives you just a little insight into Satan’s thinking, *yes, indeed!*

- God’s way is a way of freedom
- Satan’s way is a way of tyranny

But here it sits right there, right in the Bible-belt capital of Oklahoma and they took them to court over the Ten Commandments. The Supreme Court of Oklahoma voted 7-2 to take down the Ten Commandments. Why? *Because every vestige of what they claim to be Christian is going to be stripped systematically from them until they repent of their lying lips of Sunday and holiday-keeping!* That’s just a little preview.

Verse 22: “...but those who deal truly *are* His delight. A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools pours out foolishness. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the lazy shall be under tribute” (vs 22-24).

Proverbs 13:14: “The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life... [God is the One Who is the most

alive] ...to depart from the snares of death. Good understanding gives favor, but the way of transgressors *is* hard. Every prudent *man* deals with knowledge... [you know what you are doing] ...but a fool lays open *his* folly” (vs 14-16).

I hope this provokes a little more Proverbs study on your part. But when you go through and read them, think of the spiritual applications of all of these things.

Proverbs 14:18: “The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.” What do they say about knowledge? *Knowledge is power!* Not power to rule over others improperly, but power of understanding right and wrong, good and evil, and what needs to be done in building the character of God.

Let’s see what God knows here about everyone. This is why we need to apply Psa. 19 in the way that we need to. We’ll go to the New Testament here in just a bit.

Psalms 139:1: “O LORD, You have searched me and have known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off” (vs 1-2).

Remember what it was that God used to judge all the people before the Flood? *Their thoughts, their imaginations!* Yes, God is interested in your exterior behavior, **but He’s more interested in what’s in your mind!** He’s not converting what you’re doing out here, **He’s converting your mind and your heart**, with His Spirit with the love of God.

I’m amazed how much I have been referring back to these things again in just the things that I study and prepare for sermons, and examining my own heart and mind. We all have to grow and overcome. Remember what it was when you first came in the Church. You thought the ministers were perfect. That’s not so! We have to overcome; we have to change as well as all the brethren.

2-Corinthians 10:1: “Now, I Paul am personally exhorting you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ... [you get a warning first and that’s what he’s doing] ...On the one hand, when present with you I *am* base; but on the other hand, when absent I am bold toward you. But I am beseeching *you* so that, when I am present, I may not have to be bold with the confidence with which I intend to show boldness toward some, who think that we are **walking according to the flesh**” (vs 1-2)—walking according to the way of carnal mindedness and thinking.

What was the problem with the Church of Pergamos? *Pergamos was the capital of Satan the devil, where his throne was!* They began adopting

some of the practices that the pagans had in Satan’s service, because they had structure, they had order, they had all of this. So, they were going to do that, that’s the Nicolaitans. Then they wanted to improve on the Passover, so they had things sacrificed to idols, which is the Eucharist.

What did God say to Pergamos? ‘*You repent, or I’m going to come with you with the sword of My mouth and fight against you!*’ Think about that! How important is righteousness in the Church of God? *So important that if you start doing things the way the world does, God is going to be against you!* Think of that!

This is what Paul was up against. They said, ‘He’s just like everybody else, doing everything for his own benefit the way he wants to.’

Verse 3: “For although we walk in *the* flesh... [we’re still in the flesh] ...we do not war according to *the* flesh.” That war is to overcome sin. We don’t fight Satan the devil and overcome sin by fleshly means. That will never work.

Verse 4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds.” *That is by the power of the Spirit of God!*

Here’s what we do with our minds. Here’s how we grow in grace and in knowledge. It is an internal battle that is going on.

James 1:12: “Blessed *is the* man who **endures trials...**” We’re going to have trials. How does God know what you’re going to do, unless you have something to test you? *He doesn’t!*

“...because, after he has been proved, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God’...” (vs 12-13). No! God sets before us life and death, good and evil; *we choose!* The whole process of 2-Cor. 10 is choosing, making the right choice.

“...because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away...” (vs 13-14).

If a temptation comes along, using the warfare of 2-Cor. 10, what you do is stop it right there in middle of the sentence. When one is tempted—a thought comes in your mind—you *begin rejecting that*. That is the spiritual warfare. *You stop it before it leads to lust*, because temptation joins lust. But if you can stop it before your lust gets involved, you won’t sin. You stop it, whether it is

- verbal
- thought
- visual and thought

You stop it when the temptation comes!

Who is the prince of the power of the air sending out a lot of wonderful temptations, which will bring benefits, because ‘if you sin, I’ll give you a benefit’? He doesn’t tell you that the end of it is going to be death. So you stop it right there!

Verse 14: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and is enticed by his own lust. And after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death” (vs 14-15). David in numbering Israel (1-Chr. 21). The death of how many? *Seventy thousand people!*

2-Corinthians 10:4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds.” ***The strongholds are in the mind:*** the memories that are there, the thoughts that are there. ***Those are what have to be overcome!*** Not just Sabbath-keeping, Holy Day-keeping, commandment-keeping, being nice, and all of this sort of thing. God wants you to be connected with Him with His Spirit in your mind, so that you use the Holy Spirit to overcome all those temptations.

It’s just like if you have a doubt. Don’t say, ‘I shouldn’t doubt.’ No, you reach out and grab a hold of that doubt, set it right down in front of you and then examine it with the Word of God and get rid of it. Otherwise, if you ignore it, it’ll be there and continue to haunt you. ***This is conversion!***

Verse 5: “Casting down *vain* imaginations... [that’s what all those thoughts are] ...and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.” ***That is a full-time, minute-by-minute, everyday thing that needs to go on in our mind!*** That is deep and true and profound conversion. That’s what God wants.

Here is what God is doing. This is why when you study, when you pray, when you have your mind on the Word of God, then you’re going to be able to have the strength and the power to do it.

Here’s the promise: Peter’s the one who said to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But notice how Peter starts it out in 2-Pet. 1, because this is really powerful. This is what we need to be doing. Notice the humility of Peter here.

It wasn’t like when Jesus was telling him, ‘I’m going up to Jerusalem and they’re going to kill Me.’ Peter takes Him aside and says, ‘Lord, they’ll never do that to You. I’ll make sure of that.’ What did Jesus tell him? *‘Get you behind me, Satan!’*

When it was on the Passover night and Peter said, ‘We’ll go with You to jail and to death.’ All the others echoed back, ‘Yea!’ What did Jesus say to

Peter? ‘I tell you today, in this very night, you’re going to deny Me three times.’ Oh, no, I’ll never do that. What happened?

Notice his humility. ***He does not start out,*** ‘This is the first pope at Rome, informing all of you people of my new encyclical and you better obey it.’

2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained the same precious faith as ours... [quite a change of tune] ...by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: **Grace and peace by multiplied to you...**” Think about the age we’re living in. What is multiplied today? *Lawlessness!* He wants grace and peace multiplied to you:

“...**in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,** according as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue” (vs 2-3).

Stop and think how important you are to God. You’re not here because of your own efforts. I am not here because of my own efforts. We all have to have our own efforts. We are here because of God’s calling—to a mighty calling. We can’t even understand what that’s going to be like, to be a spirit being, and then to assist Christ in bringing conversion to the whole world. There can’t be any greater calling.

Verse 4: “Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become **partakers of the Divine nature...**” No more human nature; we will see God as He is because we will be like Him.

“...having escaped the corruption *that is in the* world through lust. And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence...” (vs 4-5). We’ve got to be diligent in what we do. Never rely tomorrow on what you did yesterday. Don’t say, ‘Yesterday I studied a really long time, so I don’t need to study today.’ That was yesterday, so that gives you zero for today. ‘I prayed especially long yesterday, so I’m in good shape to go out on my own today. I don’t have time to pray.’ That gives you zero. Every day is a new day.

What does it say there in Psa. 4? ‘Today **if you will hear His voice...**’ That’s through the power of God’s Spirit and the power of God’s Word. So today; yesterday is gone; tomorrow is not here, yet. So, *today*.

“...having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith... [here’s what we are to add; every one of these could be a sermon]: ...virtue; and to virtue, **knowledge...** [what we’ve been covering today] ...and to knowledge, self-control...” (vs 5-6).

Hello, David! That's what he should have had. He should have said, 'Yeah, Joab, thank you.' No, he said, 'I'm the king, I'm going to do whatever I want. Go do it.'

"...and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, Godliness... [all of these are steps in building Godly character] ...and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love of God" (vs 6-7). The true, devoted, unilateral love of God from you to Him, and Him to you. That's what God wants. This is why, living in the days we're living in

- we need the Sabbath
- we need the Word of God
- we need to apply ourselves

—like he said.

He says concerning this, v 8: "For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause you *to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he gives a warning, if it's not, you've forgotten.

That's where we are today. I hope this helps us understand ***how important that God's calling and how important that it is to use God's Spirit to grow and change and overcome. God's blessing will be with us in every way!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hosea 4:1-3
- 2) Psalm 14:1-4
- 3) 1-Corinthians 15:34
- 4) Proverbs 14:12, 14
- 5) Proverbs 2:1-10
- 6) Proverbs 9:8-12
- 7) Proverbs 10:14
- 8) Hebrews 10:14-16
- 9) Psalm 19:1-10
- 10) Psalm 119:121-128
- 11) Psalm 19:11-13
- 12) 1-Chronicles 21:1-14
- 13) Psalm 19:13-14
- 14) Psalm 64:1-7
- 15) Proverbs 12:1-4, 22-24
- 16) Proverbs 13:14-16
- 17) Proverbs 14:18
- 18) Psalm 139:1-2
- 19) 2-Corinthians 10:1-4
- 20) James 1:12-15
- 21) 2-Corinthians 10:4-5
- 22) 2-Peter 1:1-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 4; 5
- 1-Corinthians 3

- Matthew 25
- Revelation 21
- Ephesians 4
- Exodus 21-23
- Revelation 22:14
- Psalm 4

Also referenced: Sermon: *Prepare to Meet Your God, O Israel*

FRC:lp
Transcribed: 8-1-15
Formatted: 8/3/15

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