

Second Corinthians II

Background/Review 1-Corinthians 8-15

Comfort of God (2-Cor. 1:1-11)

In times of trouble and despair, go to the Psalm and learn to trust God

Fred R. Coulter—December 9, 2017

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services!

Someone asked me what the pope said about the 23rd Psalm. When I first read it, I had some problems with it, too; but the not the same one.

Psalm 23:1: “The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” When I first read that I must have been about 15-16 and I thought: Why wouldn’t you want the Lord? It actually means, *I will not be in want!*

Verse 2: “He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...” (vs 2-4).

What you need to do is think of this as Christ’s prayer; “...I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over” (vs 2-5). Remember, He was anointed with oil twice: once on His head, once on His feet.

Verse 6: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” This is interesting, because in 2-Cor. we’re going to be talking a lot about it.

Matthew 6:6: “But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly.” In other words, this is how we know that God will answer our prayers.

Verse 7: “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*...” there are repetitions that are necessary:

- you need help every day
- you need food every day
- you need God intervention and protection every day
- you pray for people every day

Do they need your prayers every day? *Of course!* Vain repetitions are like ‘hail Mary, mother of God’

blah, *blah*, **blah** 200 times. Or you can go back to the days of Elijah (1-Kings 18) where the prophets of Baal were calling out all day long, cut themselves in the afternoon. Elijah came up and in an 18-second prayer got answered and God burned it all up.

“...for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard. Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him” (vs 7-8).

Not everything *that you think you need* do you really need. It’s what you actually need. Maybe some of the things that you actually need are different that what *you think* you need.

Verse 9: “Therefore, you are to pray after this manner... [this outline] ...‘Our Father, Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come...’” (vs 9-10).

Notice how he gives it at the end, v 33: “But *as for you*, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

What does this prayer do? *The same thing!* The first thing is that you acknowledge God in heaven, Who has created everything that there is, and that’s something when you stop and think about it. God’s faithfulness to everyone is known in the things that He’s created for us to have to eat for all human beings.

Every once in a while I get up at night and I have an apple, and I generally get Fuji apples. I sit there in the dark and I eat this apple and think about that little stem that was there, everything came down and made this apple. How did it do that? Then you take a bite of the apple and it has all the juice, taste and everything in it. You think: **God made every apple that way!** He’s got sweet apples, sour apples, red apples, green apples, striped apples, yellow apples, whatever; **God made them all!**

I think about that and think: Look at way God has done for all the people in the world. Look at all the food that is necessary to feed them every day.

“...Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven” (v 10). Where is the will of God on earth to start in your prayer? *With you!* What is the will of God? *That you love Him and keep His*

commandments!

Verse 11: “Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts... [your indebtedness because of sin; not money you owe on your credit card] ...as we also forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation...” (vs 11-13).

Now, the pope wants to change this to *don't let us fall into temptation*. That may be a secondary rendering; it's not necessarily wrong. But the question is: Does God lead us into temptation? Meaning a trial? *Yes, He does!*

Matthew 4:1: “Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit in order to be tempted by the devil.”

Temptations do come, but God doesn't lead us into all of them. Some temptations come because of:

- our ignorance
- our lust
- who we're with
- what we're watching

It's not necessarily totally wrong for the pope to say, 'do not let us fall into temptation.'

Now let's continue on with the background to 2-Corinthians. It's amazing that many people don't understand this. So, we're just summarizing on the background, and what we're looking at is a church full of problems: arguing, bickering, who to follow, carnal interpretations, self-vaulting, exaltation, gross sex sins, and so forth.

The solution for the world today is the same that Paul wrote to avoid sexual immorality: *let every man have his own wife, and every wife her own husband*. That ought to be written out and mailed to everyone in Congress.

1-Corinthians 8:1: “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”

I've heard this misquoted so many times! 'We don't need to have knowledge, we need to have love.' That's not what it says. Knowledge by itself puffs up; with love it edifies. Everything we do needs to be based on the love of God.

Verse 2—this is absolutely true of everything that there is in the world, and everything in the Bible. Stop and think about the Bible: We have the book that tells us:

- who God is
- why He created us
- where we're going

- the past history of the people that He has worked with

We see that it is written in such a way that those whom God has chosen, when they sin He punished them. It's not like a biography written by men about other great men. 'Oh, this person is perfect.' *NO!* the Bible also tells us about:

- who God is
- who Christ is
- what salvation is
- what we need to do to receive eternal life

This is the greatest book in the world!

Verse 2: “But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him” (vs 2-3).

So, if you love God, *God knows you!* He knows everything about you, because in Him you *live, move and have your being!* Think about all the genetics and God put that there. He knows exactly who you are, what you are greater than you have ever supposed.

1-Cor. 9 becomes a problem because people don't like to pay tithes and offerings, so they say that Paul didn't take tithes and offerings. That's not the statement you need to look at. If he didn't ask for them, the question is: Did Paul have the authority to receive them? *He answers that!*

1-Corinthians 9:6: “Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working?” He says later in 2-Cor. that he took wages from other churches. Why did he not take it from those in Corinth? *Because they were carnal and had so many problems and bickering.*

We'll find out in 2-Cor. they were probably giving to these false prophets whom they thought were better speakers than Paul. He said, 'All right, I'm not going to take anything from you because I want to see whether you will love God, love Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. They had a lot of problems.'

Verse 7: “Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense? Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it? Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock? Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.' Is it because God is concerned for oxen? Or does He not certainly say *this for our sakes?*.... [that is the apostles, because Paul mentions

Barnabas, Peter and the other apostles] ...For our sakes it was written... [How is that for an interpretation of Scriptures, which is true?] ...so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, **is it a great thing if we shall reap your physical things?**" (vs 7-11) **NO!**

Verse 12: "If **others** participate in this authority over you..." That shows that he had the authority, but he didn't use it. Why? *Because we find in Luke 11 that Jesus excoriated the scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the law for tithing every little tiny thing, but overlooking the weightier matters of judgment, love and faith!* Jesus said, 'Those things you should have done, **but not to leave the other undone.**'

So, in no way did Paul do away with tithing. He just wanted to prove whether they would really serve God, love God and be the people that he should serve, rather than the false apostles. Obviously, they did things a little differently then. So, you take the principle.

Since they were to give to those who were preaching the Gospel, and Paul said that he 'took wages,' that meant that he didn't take all the tithes of Corinth, getting them all for himself. What did they use it for? *For the others who were serving, the things for taking care of the widows, and for whatever was necessary for sending those out to preach the Gospel!* If you give them money to go preach the Gospel, that's not much different than giving money so that it can be recorded and sent out by the various means to do it. It's just how it's done, that's all. So, the authority is the thing that is there, **which God gave!**

"...much more surely *should* not we? Nevertheless, we have not used this authority; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ. Don't you know that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple..." (vs 12-13). Was the temple not up and operating then when this was written in 52_{A.D.}? **Yes!**

"...and those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar?... [Yes!] ...In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel" (vs 13-14).

Remember what they did in Acts 2-5; some even sold all that they had and brought it all. That's a little more than a tithe, wouldn't you think? So, there are different things that apply at different times. Yet, there is one who tells brethren, 'If you

want to join this church, sell all that you have and give it to me.' Well, we don't need that today.

Verse 15: "But I have not used any of these things. And I have not written these things in order that this might *now* be done to me. For *it would be* better for me to die rather than to have anyone make my boasting void. For though I preach the Gospel, there is no *reason* for me to boast because an obligation has been laid upon me. And woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel!" (vs 15-16). If he's willing he has a reward, if not, he's a steward.

1-Cor. 10:7-8—Paul warned them again about sexual immorality.

1-Corinthians 10:9: "Neither should we tempt Christ..." Here's the principle: Don't do the carnal things, you're tempting Christ.

"...as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents. Neither *should we* complain against *God*, as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them *as* examples, and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming" (vs 9-11). That's everyone from that time to this. How are we to be admonished?

- we're to be taught and learn the lesson of the commands
- what happened to them when they sinned
- what happened to them when they went against God

Verse 14: "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." So, they had idolatry there! Amazing!

We'll take a few more verses to show that you can't mesh together paganism and true Christianity! That's what this is talking about.

Verse 15: "I speak as to those who are wise; you judge what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not *the* fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not *the* fellowship of the Body of Christ? For we, being many, are one body *and* one bread, because we are all partakers of the bread. Consider Israel according to *the* flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What then am I saying? That an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to an idol is anything?" (vs 15-19). **NO! It's nothing!** But behind it there are evil things!

Verse 20: "But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God... [ultimately that's to Satan] ...and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. **You cannot...**" (vs 20-21). Strong in the Greek: 'ook'—*the*

impossibility! Take this one verse and think about it.

Verse 21: “**You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons.** Now do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” (vs 21-22). He’s saying, ‘*Look, you’re tempting God!*’.

1-Cor. 11 has to do with hair length for men and women; that God created man, and woman was created from man, etc.

1-Cor. 12—concerning spiritual gifts; not everyone has the same spiritual gifts; 1-Corinthians 12:2: You know that you were Gentiles, *and* were carried away with dumb idols, as you yourselves were led away again and again.... [that’s pretty strong] ...Therefore, I am letting you know that no one speaking by *the* Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed; and no one can say *that* Jesus is Lord, except by *the* Holy Spirit” (vs 2-3). That means to *truly mean it!*

Verse 4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.... [Rev. 2 & 3, the seven churches] ...And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the* benefit of *all*. For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit; and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; and to a different one, faith by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another, *the* working of miracles; and to another, prophecy... [foretelling the Truth, more than prophesying events] ...and to another, discerning of spirits; and to a different one, various languages; and to another, *the* interpretation of languages” (vs 4-10).

Everyone wanted to have a gift. There are those who wanted to:

- have healing
- speak in tongues
- be important
- have more knowledge than others

That’s why Paul said, ‘You don’t know what you need to know, the way you need to know it. Even if you have it and you *think* you know it.’ Especially with the Bible, because the Word of God is layered and layered. It has so many fulfillments it’s incredible.

1-Cor. 13—love chapter

1-Corinthians 14:1: “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual *gifts*, but especially that

you may **prophesy**”—foretell the Scriptures in truth!

Then we have all about speaking in tongues. Today, that problem is mostly solved. We don’t need it.

1-Cor. 15—a great dissertation of the resurrection of the dead. Just to show you how bad things were in Corinth... If you’ve been in a church that has gone through the throws of doctrinal problems and people leaving and false preachers, think of this:

1-Corinthians 15:12: “But if Christ is being preached, that He rose from *the* dead, how *is it that* some among you are saying that there is no resurrection of *the* dead?” Add all of these problems together. Can you imagine what it was like coming together on the Sabbath? You had:

- the resurrection group over here
- the no resurrection group over there
- tongue speaking over here
- no tongue speaking over there
- ones who had knowledge and great interpretation over here
- ones who had healing over there
- ones who had knowledge over here

Paul gets up and they say, ‘Look at how ugly he is with his countenance, and that he is not a good speaker at all. Think about all the false prophets that come in. Why, they’re wonderful.’ What a congregation!

1-Cor. 16—closing comments.

Now, with that background you can see, as we get into 2-Cor. there are a lot of difficulties involved.

2-CORINTHIANS:

We’ll start out by reading 2-Cor. 1:1-11_[transcriber’s correction], and then go back and look at the verses and other Scriptures that apply to them.

2-Corinthians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God...” Remember, that’s how he opens nearly every epistle. So, these constitute the greatest authority of these writings:

- that they came from God
- it’s the will of God
- all Scripture is God-breathed
- Holy men of old were moved by the Holy Spirit
- the Holy apostles were moved by the Holy Spirit

“...and Timothy *our* brother, to the Church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in the entire region of Achaia: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and *the* **God of all comfort**” (vs 1-3)—this becomes important. We’re going to have to think about the days that we’re living in.

Verse 4: “Who comforts us in all our tribulation... [we’re going to see that we had a lot of that] ...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial...” As we read these things and you go through your difficulties, always remember:

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” *All things!*

Even all the disasters! Why? Because you cry out to God! You ask God for help! What happens when you’ve had troubles and difficulties and you pray in your earnest? Does God comfort your mind and you have peace of mind? You may need peace of mind by the next day, because of what happens later on today. So, “...the God of all comfort...”; He continuously gives it!

1-Corinthians 1:4: “...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial...” You can say to someone who’s going through a trial, ‘You know, I had a problem like that hand here’s what happened...’ Don’t worry.

“...through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For to the degree that **the sufferings of Christ abound in us**... [that’s quite a thing] ...so also our comfort abounds through Christ. And if we are in distress...” (vs 4-6). How many of you have not had any oppression or distress this week?

“...*it is* for your comfort and salvation, which is being worked out by *your* enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer; *and* if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation (and our hope *is* steadfast for you); knowing that **as you are partners in the sufferings, you are also partners in the comfort**. For we do not want you to be ignorant of our tribulations, brethren, *even the trials* that befell us...” (vs 6-8). Maybe you have experienced v 8 yourself.

“...in Asia; **we were exceedingly burdened beyond our own strength**, so much so that we even despaired of living” (v 8). The Apostle Paul!

That’s something! Remember what we covered in part one of this series, of the things that

he was going to suffer for Christ.

Verse 9: “For we had the sentence of death within ourselves... [look at all that he went through] ...so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God, Who raises the dead.”

This tells us that it doesn’t matter what happens, as long as you are faithful you’re going to be in the resurrection and be a spirit being, a son/daughter of God. It’s going to be the most fantastic, awesome thing that has ever, *ever, ever* been!

Verse 10: “Who delivered us from so great a death, and continues to deliver; in Whom we have hope that He will even yet deliver”—showing that these things, trials and difficulties, come like waves of the sea. Little ones you can handle, bigger ones get more difficult. Every once in a while here comes a 200-foot wave! **God will help us in every one!**

Verse 11: “While you also are laboring together for us by supplication *to God*, that the gift to us from many persons might be *the* cause of thanksgiving by many for us.” There were some who sent some money, and goods, to Paul.

He couches this in 2-Cor. very carefully. When we get to 2-Cor. 13, Paul says, ‘I was wrong! Forgive me, but I’m still not going to do it because I said I’m not.’

Now let’s look at a lot of Scriptures concerning difficulties and problems. After the disciples understood little bit about that Christ was going to die and be raised from the dead:

John 16:31: “Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? Listen, the time is coming, and has already come... [it was going to be in a couple of hours] ...that you shall be scattered each to his own, and you shall leave Me alone; and *yet*, I am not alone because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**... [which comes with comfort] ...**In the world you shall have tribulation. But be courageous! I have overcome the world**’” (vs 31-33).

I think of the movie with Mel Gibson—Passion of the Christ—it was very enlightening the way that he showed the scourging. That’s how it happened! That’s why Steve Green^[transcriber’s correction]—his family owns of Hobby Lobby—was the one who dedicated tens of millions of dollars for the Bible Museum in Washington, D.C. Of course, here comes a good Catholic who says, ‘Why don’t you have a picture of Jesus?’ This was on Fox News, and he gave a very good answer: *Because there are so many different pictures of Jesus, we really don’t know*

what He looks like. This was a nice way of saying, 'I'm keeping the second commandment and not making any images.'

(go to the next track)

Comfort in times of trouble, even when you come to the point of despair! Why would God want us to come to that? *So that we learn to trust in Him!*

We need to take a little different view of problems and distress and things like that than maybe we have in the past. Never, at any time, is it pleasant going through a difficulty; that's understood. But *what is the spiritual value* is the most important. If it were not of spiritual value, God would not have you go through it! So, we need to look at it from God's point of view, and not necessarily from our point of view and have a big pity-party over it, and becomes so desperate that we get mad at God.

1-Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to *the elect* strangers..."—*selected by God!* Think about that in relationship to your life.

- Why are you here?
- Why are you with God?
- Because you were so great and found out about it? *No!*
- *It's because God selected you!*
- How did He select you? *With His Spirit:*
 - ✓ to draw you
 - ✓ to give you strength
 - ✓ to give you understanding

"...scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *who have been chosen according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father...*" (vs 1-2).

Now, think about that! God's plan was already set before He ever created Adam. He had predetermined, knowing what would happen. He knew that Adam would sin; it wasn't any surprise. He didn't make Adam sin; He gave him free choice. Adam didn't have to sin. It could have been that he could have chosen to go God's way. But he didn't!

Sidebar: Last night when I was eating my apple, I took a bite of it and thought: I wonder how the 'forbidden fruit' tasted? It always pictures an apple. I just happened to think of it at that point. It didn't say that Eve took a bite; it says that she *ate!* So, I'm sitting there eating the apple and thinking: I wonder how that was? And she gave it—she must have had more than one; it doesn't say she just took one—and gave it to Adam. I imagine that when she was eating that Adam was sitting there, 'What's going to happen to her? God said that we shouldn't

eat of this.'

He was a fault because he knew better. So, she came over and said, 'Look, this is really good! Try it; you'll like it!' So, what did he do? *He ate! Not a bite! He ate!*

"...by sanctification through *the Spirit, unto obedience...*" (v 2)—*obey My voice*; found in the Bible, written. You don't have to wonder what God said, or someone transmitting it to you verbally that here's a message from God, and you miss a word.

"...and sprinkling of *the blood of Jesus Christ...* [because you're here through His sacrifice] ...Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again..." (vs 2-3).

{Note book: *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God*; with audio and video}

"...unto a living hope through *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*" (v 3). All the officials, all the soldiers, every one of the Jewish authorities were looking everywhere, all over the landscape: Where did they bury the body of Christ? *They couldn't find it!*

Notice what is ahead, v 4: "Unto an inheritance incorruptible..." You can read about how New Jerusalem looks, and that's kind of just like a little speck of dust of what it's going to be like.

"...and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us, who are being safeguarded by the power of God through faith for salvation that is ready to be revealed in *the last time*" (vs 4-5). That salvation is the resurrection. There are three steps to salvation:

1. you *are saved* from your sins when you repent and are baptized
2. you *are being saved* through the Gospel; a process
3. you *shall be saved* at the resurrection when you are a spirit being

That's salvation!

Verse 6: "In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary..." How about living in this age. You can just go to the grocery store and you can end up in distress.

Sidebar: I went to Knob Hill the other night, and I had to get in and out of there real quick. Guess what happened? *Everyone*—all the clerks, all the customers—*was in distress and frustrated* because

the computer went down and none of the cash registers were working. They all had their cards. There was one open if you had cash and knew the price; she could ring it up. So, I got through that because I knew the price and I had cash! Everyone with their cards was in flat out distress and it took two hours to get it resolved. You just come to the grocery store for five minutes to get something. That's nothing spiritual. Think about all the problems of life that come along.

"...you are in distress for a little while by various trials; in order that the proving of your faith..." (vs 6-7). That's what it's for: In all those circumstances: Are you going to trust God?

"...which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire..." (v 7)—*fiery trial!*

Let's see what Christ says about that. This is for the Church of Laodicea at the end-time. We do have a lot of difficulties, don't we? *Yes!* All the problems that we saw in 1-Cor. we've all experienced with the Church, plus all the problems we will see in 2-Cor.

Revelation 3:15: "I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot."

Verse 17: "For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'..."—that's why God took it all away.

Did you see that Terrace Villa—Delores stayed there for two or three years—sold for \$4.5-million. It's in escrow. All the buildings, all the grounds, everything are all gone! {in reference to the former Ambassador College and headquarters of the former WCG}

Why? *Because people trusted in the physical things!* 'Look, God's blessing is here; it's nice and wonderful and beautiful, like a little part of the Millennium.' Didn't we hear those things? *Yes, indeed!* What happened? *Instead of thanking God and giving Him glory and credit for everything and being humble, everybody got:*

- lifted up in pride
- lifted up in wealth
- lifted up in importance

Know for sure: God's judgment is going to come! Living in a Laodicean era, you're going to have troubles almost everywhere. Driving home you may have some troubles. These freeways are designed so that all the cars can go at 65mph, well they go at 5mph because of all the cars; there are too

many cars.

"...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire..." (vs 17-18). What did we read in the highest standard of building on the foundation of Christ (1-Cor. 3)? *Gold!*

"...so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent" (vs 18-19).

So, a lot of the things that we go through are because of this. God wants us to overcome. God wants us to grow. He wants us to trust in Him in every way.

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door..." This tells us there are a good number of people in the Church at the end-time who are marginally, if any, converted. If Christ is in you, you don't have open the door and let Him in; He's already there!

"...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne..." (vs 20-21)—*and judge!*

1-Peter 1:7: "In order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ." That is when He returns.

That's going to be an event! You hear all about the aliens from outer space; it's going to be that, but it's not going to be like the Protestants think, not going to be like the Catholics think; it's going to be a fantastic event!

Verse 8: "Whom, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory."

This is how we need to handle all of the situations that we need to go through. Now let's see some of the things that we go through are corrections from God because He loves us. Either way, He still loves us because of everything.

Heb. 11, last part, goes through a lot of things that everyone listed there went through. Some of them very difficult problems. Look at it this way: Perhaps the more difficult the problem that you have or are going through, if you were successful in it, the

greater your reward. Who knows what that will be?

Here's part of the mindset that we need to have with the trials and difficulties so that we receive the comfort of God.

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore... [considering all the witnesses in Heb. 11] ...*since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps us..."—and it does!

Have you seen this special shrimp that's on the bottom of the ocean that has a real powerful knockout punch? He goes along and BOOM! cracks the shell of a crab and eats it up. It's very small and it's the strangest funniest thing. It has eyes on pedestals and look around back and forth. God made it! What a fantastic creation God has made! Here's this little thing and it has more punch than a jackhammer. That's how sin traps us! It comes along and you did it. You didn't mean to do it, but you did it! *I'm sorry, and go repent!*

"...and let us run the race set before us with endurance" (v 1). We will see that trials and tribulations bring endurance. Here's how you endure:

Verse 2: "Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God." *Look what Christ went through for the salvation of all mankind!*

Verse 3: "Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds." That's why we go through these things, to have strength of mind spiritually.

You need to have your mind strengthened like iron pillars and a brazen wall, like Jeremiah. Yet, let your heart be tender within. And as Jesus Who said that He set His mind like flint. Have to, to endure all the things that He went through by the very people who should have known. Isn't that amazing?

Verse 4: "You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin." I've never had an anointing for a wound because someone was resisting against sin.

Now then, here's part of why we go through what we go through: *It's for correction to help us!*

Verse 5: "And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him; **for**

whom *the* Lord loves He chastens...'" (vs 5-6).

Keep that in mind. If you're going through something real deeply, get on your knees and know that God loves you, **He loves you!** Get the strength that comes from Christ to help you through what you're going through.

"...and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as *a Father* with *His* sons. For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons" (vs 6-8). That's a pretty strong statement!

The ultimate peace and the ultimate glory for us is coming at the resurrection. That's why Paul says to keep your eyes 'fixed on Christ.' Yes, the problem is there. How do you handle it? *Do the best you can! Pray about it!* You can even pray, 'O God, help me right here.'

Verse 11: "Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it. Therefore, lift up the hands that are hanging down, and *revive* the weakened knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which *is* lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed. Pursue peace with everyone..." (vs 11-14).

Those are the words we need to strengthen us, especially when we look at things. Stop and think about all the difficult things that are happening just in California: seven major fires! Think of the trauma those are going to go through when they come back to their home and it's a pile of ashes, and the chimney standing where the house used to be! Everything is gone! That's very difficult.

This is why at baptism we count the cost, that we are not going to let anything come between us and God, regardless of what the trial may be.

Let's see how this works. The Apostle Paul wrote all of these things, and he was the one who suffered more than any other apostle did, because of what he did to the Church. Remember what we read in part one of this series about God calling him, because he persecuted the Church? *God said that he was to the Gentiles and 'you are going to suffer things for Me.'* So, Paul knows. If there is anything about troubles and tribulations, *Paul knows!*

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have **access by faith into this grace...**" (vs 1-2).

Never forget that you have direct access to

God the Father and Jesus Christ. How close is God to you? *As close as your knees are to the floor!*

“...in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God” (v 2). God is going to do it!

What’s it going to be like for all of us standing on the Sea of Glass and here’s the big ceremony going on. God says to all of those who are standing there, ***‘Well done faithful servants!’*** Here’s your new name, your new clothes, your assignment, your white horse, and an angel will instruct you on how to ride it.

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...” I haven’t yet quite come to that; count it all joy when you fall into tribulation. I haven’t quite done that, yet. Not once! I’m not going to say that I’ll ‘work toward it’ and then I get a lot more.

“...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance... [and resolve] ...and endurance *brings forth* character...” (vs 3-4). How does all of that bring forth character. Because you see that you need to have God. You understand that you need the:

- Spirit of God
- words of God
- forgiveness of God
- strength of God
- power of God

All of those things draw you closer to God. What if you have long-standing difficulties? *Ask God to give you greater strength!* All of us have some sort of long-standing difficulty.

“...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (vs 4-5).

That’s the whole operation of what it is when we have a trial and difficult come upon us. Here’s what you do. Don’t get in a corner and have a pity-party with yourself and sit and cry and feel sorry for yourself, and how bad it is for you, and you can’t handle it any longer.

Psalm 11:1: “In the LORD I have taken refuge; how *then* can you say to me, ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain’? 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” (vs 1-2)—*planned evil!* Some people experience that against them, deliberate!

Verse 3: “If the foundations are destroyed,

what can the righteous do?... [here’s the consolation; what to know]: ...The LORD is in His Holy temple; the LORD’S throne is in heaven... [you have direct access to it; that is *grace upon grace*] ...His eyes behold; His searching gaze tests the children of men. **The LORD tries the righteous**... [so, you have to leave that in there about temptation] ...but His soul hates the wicked...” (vs 3-5).

- Why do they prosper?
- Who is ‘the god of this world’?
- Does he control everything?
- Who are the rich people in the world?
- *Satan the devil!*
- Didn’t he promise to give that to Christ?

“...and the one who loves violence. Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone...” (vs 5-6). Isn’t that going to happen at Christ’s return? *Yes, indeed!*

“...and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup... [sounds like the Lake of Fire] ...for the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face” (vs 6-7).

Think about that! Here in this one Psalm is a summary and capsulation of growing and overcoming, and receiving eternal life and entering the Kingdom of God. Where did we start? *Your Kingdom come! Your will be done!* Unity of the Scriptures.

This is a wonderful Psalm; here’s how to pray; Psalm 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy.” When you’re troubled and distressed, aren’t you “...poor and needy...”? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 2: “Preserve my soul, for I am Holy...” You can say:

- God, You have called me
- God, You have blessed me
- God, You have given me of your Holy Spirit
- hear my prayer
- help me
- these circumstances I don’t understand
- I don’t know what to do
- I don’t know how to handle it
- please help me
- I need Your guidance
- I need Your wisdom
- I need Your Spirit

God will give it! Not all at once, but maybe you’ll be walking along and BING! God gives you the

answer, like a light going on in your brain: *Yes, that's what to do!*

“...O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant... [that is comfort] ...for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You” (vs 2-5). A promise!

- Will there come a time when you may kind of doubt that promise?
- What do you do?
- *You claim the promise, because God is behind that promise! He will help you!*

Verse 6: “Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. **In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me**” (vs 6-7). That’s quite a thing!

Verse 10: “For You are great and do wonderful things; You alone are God. **Teach me Your way, O LORD...**” (vs 10-11). That’s the whole purpose of what all of it is; this is for eternal life and there’s so much to it that it is incredible.

You go along and after years of study and all the things—I’ve been a minister for how long, and I’ve done whatever I’ve done—I think: *I’m just beginning to learn!* There’s so much to learn!

“...I will walk in Your Truth; unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise You, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore, for great is Your mercy toward me and You have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave” (vs 11-13). *That’s something!*

Verse 15: “But You, O LORD, are a God full of compassion...”—remind God of that:

- God, You’re a God of love
- You love me
- You’re a God of compassion
- You have mercy
- You have understanding
- all hope and faith comes from You

“...and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and Truth. Oh, turn to me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength to Your servant and save the son of Your handmaid. Show me a token for good, so that they who hate me may see and be ashamed because You, LORD, **have helped me and comforted me**” (vs 15-17). There it is, right there!

I remember a young man who because he

kept the Sabbath lost his job. He ended up with a better job. He was all depressed when he lost his job: ‘What am I going to do?’ I said, ‘Look to God! Remember that God is there! He’ll help you; ask Him and He’ll provide for you. But if you just sit around and do nothing... Yes, it’s a disaster that you lost your job, but if you turn to God, something good will happen.’ What happened? *He got a better job!*

Psalms 31:9: “Be gracious unto me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is consumed with grief, yea, *even* my soul and my body; for my life is spent with grief and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones have wasted away. Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, but especially among my neighbors, and a dread to my friends; those from outside who saw me fled from me” (vs 9-11). I wonder how sick David was at that time.

Psalms 30:10: “Hear, O LORD, and be gracious unto me; LORD, be my helper.” That’s what Chris has promised (Heb. 13).

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).

When you have troubles and difficulties, get out the Psalms! Go through them; start your prayers with reading some Psalms, and then let your own words come from that. Here’s what we do:

Psalms 54:1: “Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your might. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth” (vs 1-2). Yes, God loves you. His Spirit is in you and He wants you. He wants you to overcome.

Verse 3: “For strangers have risen up against me, and violent men seek after my soul; they have not set God before them. Selah.” This could be a prayer of Christ just before He was arrested.

Verse 4: “Behold, God is my helper... [claim that promise] ...the LORD is with those who uphold my soul. He shall reward evil to my enemies. Destroy them in Your faithfulness” (vs 4-5).

It looks like a lot of people have been praying about that for the Democrat Party. We’ll have to see what happens. Who would have ever guessed that all of this corruption would have come out? There has to be something that God is doing to expose it and give a little peace and prosperity for a while. There is more that has to be done to preach the Gospel.

You've heard the things that I've said about those who are sending out the Bible translated verbally for those who do not have a written language. They're sending it to them with a player and a little solar panel so they can charge the battery. They can have it anywhere. They don't need a plug, electricity, phone, etc. It's right there. They don't know how to read, it can be there: repent and be baptized.

Think about what it says about 'to the ends of the earth.' Remember, the apostles never got there. But is it going to get there today? *Yes, indeed!* And those of you have your digital phones, you've got it in your hand; what a cheap way to get the Bible to everyone? How much does it cost you to download the Bible? *Zero!* Preaching the Gospel everywhere! Where is the Gospel? *In the Bible!* If you've got the Bible, and it you have it and it has reached you, it has been preached and written, and you live at the end of the earth, ***you have the Truth of God as a witness!***

Whether they read it, or listen, that's their choice, but God has done it so that no one can ever say, 'God, You never let me know.'

There's this company that's paying to have all the satellites to have Wi-Fi free around the world. That's not so that they can play games. ***That's so that the Gospel can be preached and given around the world to every single human being!***

So, preaching the Gospel to the whole world as a witness is a fantastic job, and God is the One Who is making all of that possible. No church can say that they're preaching the Gospel to the world. We need to change that. We will preach to the world as much as we can with what You give us to do with it in the way that You want, and may the Churches of God do it.

Then just suppose what's going to happen when the two witnesses get here. So, there are a lot of things that are going to take place.

Psalm 20:1: "**May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble**, the name of the God of Jacob set you on high, **may He send you help from the sanctuary...**" (vs 1-2)—directly from God. If He sends an angel, that is directly from God.

Verse 3: **May He remember all your offerings** and accept your burnt sacrifice. Selah." All of the good things that you have done. Remember, He says that He will forget all your sins.

Verse 4: "**May He grant you according to your own heart and fulfill all your plans**. We will shout for joy in your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up banners. **May the LORD fulfill**

all your prayers" (vs 4-5).

That is the comfort that we get from God in our tribulations!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 23:1-6
- 2) Matthew 6:6-10, 33, 10-13
- 3) Matthew 4:1
- 4) 1 Corinthians 8:1-3
- 5) 1 Corinthians 9:6:16
- 6) 1 Corinthians 10:9-11, 14-22
- 7) 1 Corinthians 12:2-10
- 8) 1 Corinthians 14:1
- 9) 1 Corinthians 15:12
- 10) 2 Corinthians 1:1-4
- 11) Romans 8:28
- 12) 2 Corinthians 1:4-11
- 13) John 16:31-33
- 14) 1 Peter 1:1-7
- 15) Revelation 3:15, 18-21
- 16) 1 Peter 1:7-8
- 17) Hebrews 12:1-8, 11-14
- 18) Romans 5:1-5
- 19) Psalm 11:1-7
- 20) Psalm 86:1-7, 10-13, 15-17
- 21) Psalm 31:9-11
- 22) Psalm 30:10-12
- 23) Psalm 54:1-5
- 24) Psalm 20:1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Kings 18
- Luke 11
- Acts 2-5
- 1 Corinthians 10:7-8; 11
- Revelation 2; 3
- 1 Corinthians 13; 16; 13; 3
- Hebrews 11; 13

Also referenced: Book: *From a Speck of Dust to a Son of God* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC: bo
Transcribed: 12/17/17

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