

What Is the Government of God? I

*The Father and Christ in you and Their love and Spirit
will lead you to rule yourself, not any man!*

Fred R. Coulter—September 5, 2020

➤ What is the Government of God in the Church?

➤ Is it the ministry?

If it is:

➤ What authority do they have?

If it's not:

➤ What authority do they not have?

➤ What is the relationship between the individual and God?

➤ What is the relationship between the brethren with one another?

We've all been through a church experience where there's been a hierarchical government from the top down. You've heard it said that ***'if there's any one thing that the Catholics have right it's church government from the top down.'***

Sidebar: Stanley R. Rader wrote in his book *Against the Gates of Hell* that Herbert Armstrong (HWA) was 'like a pope.' Not many people realize that!

HWA's son Richard—when they first began—was one of the most enthusiastic to say that 'if you don't obey' what HWA says that 'you're sinning against God.' And another famous evangelist who used to go around and 'water the churches' said that *'if Herbert Armstrong was 95% wrong and you were 95% correct, God would back up Herbert Armstrong.'* ***That's an utterly false statement!*** And that would mean that God ***would endorse a lie!***

Many brethren have been really oppressed! There's a Church of God called *The Philadelphia Church of God*, but it's anything but the Church of Brotherly Love, if you belong to that church you cannot even talk to your own parents, children or relatives if they're not the Church. Because of that oppression I know of a least three suicides. How is that for the love of God?

There's another Church that's supposed to be *The Restored Church of God for the 21st Century* and the minister claims that he is the apostle for the 21st century and that he will be over the two witnesses. If you want to join him you must sell everything you have and send the money to him.

Those are in the Churches of God! We're going to look at the Word of God and see what God doesn't like and what God wants! We're going to look at some very interesting things before we get into the New Testament, and this is why the Protestants have a hard time understanding the New

Testament, because they don't get into the Old Testament.

Ecclesiastes 8:9: "All this I have seen, and I gave my heart to every work that is done under the sun. **There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.**"

The ministers are not to rule! We will see that! That leads to oppression! Let's see what God says about oppression.

- Have you ever gone to church and felt *oppressed?*
- Have you ever gone to church and felt *depressed?*
- Have you ever gone to church and felt *unfulfilled?*

Proverbs 14:31: "He who oppresses the poor..." *Think about this*, aren't we the poor of the world? *We don't have any millionaires in here, maybe 500,000-aires because of the inflated real estate property!* **But notice what it does. How does God look at it when the brethren are oppressed?**

Verse 31: "He who oppresses the poor **reproaches his Maker...**"

- When we come to church what do we come for?
- Is it a social club so we can meet everybody?

NO! Church is to be taught what God wants us to do! It's that simple!

Think about Prov. 22:16 in relationship to what was done in the Church and all the money that was spent on everything that was *thought to be important...*

Proverbs 22:16: "He who oppresses the poor to multiply *riches* for himself, *and* he who gives to the rich, *only comes* to poverty." *You've heard and seen that, even in the Church!* God doesn't like that.

Sidebar on tithing: We have a whole series on tithing. God has set up the tithing system. However, 'beating the brethren over the head' with the pocketbook to get more money is not what God wants.

The truth is, if we're converted, we'll give tithes and offerings, and you don't have to be beaten over the head all the time so that more money comes in. the way we operate with Christian Biblical Church of God is this: *Whatever God*

sends that's our budget! We don't make up false budgets and then if God doesn't send what is needed, then we 'beat the brethren over the head' for more money, because it fulfills Prov. 22:16—**God does not like that!**

Let me suggest that if you want a very great Bible study sometime, take Psa. 119 and study the whole thing. The word **I** is used 135 times, and it's used in the right way, **because it's from the person to God and God back to the person!** So, that's entirely correct.

It's very interesting because there are some people who have just left a Church of God because one of the ministers was disfellowshipped for having a summer camp and the children—in the heat—didn't wear masks. Everything came out fine; they took their temperatures and they studied and went over Psa. 91, which says that **'the pestilence on your right hand or on your left hand will not come near you.'** Nobody got the Wuhan virus!

Then they were told that they had to wear a mask when you come to church and you can't take it off. How are you going to sing with a mask on? So, this minister objected and was disfellowshipped! They did him a favor!

Psalms 119:134: **"Deliver me from the oppression of man...** [that's quite a verse!] ...and I will keep Your commandments.... [this shows the whole thing of what God wants]: ...**Make Your face to shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes"** (vs 134-135). *That's what God thinks about that!*

Who is in charge of the Government of God? Let's see what happens when there is an oppressive hierarchical ridged authority in the Church! Here is a prophecy that declares it very clearly:

Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and **the government**... [that word is not used in the New Testament in this manner] ...shall be upon... [the ministry that He will raise up; *doesn't say that*] ...**His shoulders**; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Sidebar: When is Jesus going to be "...The Everlasting Father...?" *After He comes back to the earth and marries the Bride, **all of those who come into the Kingdom of God through the Bride and Christ, He will be the Father!** And God the Father will be the Grandfather! Just like I'm a father, and my son Jonathan is a father.*

Verse 7: "Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there shall be* no end..." *Then is says that*

He'll sit on the throne of David, and so forth, getting into the Millennium!

Now let's see what Jesus Himself said. In Matt. 16 we see a very key, important thing to understand.

Matthew 16:16: "Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, **for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father, Who is in heaven**'" (vs 16-17).

I want you to keep in mind the Father and the Son in heaven, because that has to do with how the Church is run.

Verse 18: "And I say also to you that you are Peter; but upon **this Rock**... [Christ; Himself] ...**I will build My Church**, and the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it."

That takes away any authority of the Catholics. Please understand that all Catholics are named 'Christian,' *but everything they do is pagan!* That's just the way it is! Protestants are another breed themselves!

You've heard of politics in the Church, that so-and-so was ordained because he was the son of so-and-so. Here's a little lesson in politics, here's **a giant lesson** about the Government of God and how it should run!

Matthew 20:20: "Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him."

A little help? *It's possible that the mother of the sons of Zebedee was a relation to Mary!* Can't prove it exactly, but it's possible.

Verse 21: "And He said to her, 'What do you desire?' She said to Him, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at Your left hand in Your Kingdom.'" *Nothing like going for the top!* That stirred up a real storm!

Verse 22: "But Jesus answered *and* said, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'" *They didn't have a clue what was going to happen!*

Verse 23: "And He said to them, 'You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*...'"

- What happened to James? *He was beheaded!*
- What happened to John? *He lived to a good old age but they threw him into boiling oil,*

but God rescued him from it!

“...but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father” (v 23). *This stirred up a storm among the other ten!*

Why? Don't you think that each one of them wanted to be on the right or left hand of Jesus?

Verse 24: “And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers. But Jesus called them to *Him* and said... [here's ***the lesson***; this is how ***not*** to have government in the Church]: ...‘You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship... [Greek: ‘katakuriō’—downward, a hierarchy] ...over them, and ***the great ones***... [the religious leaders; Simon Magus was called ‘a great one,’ the great power of God] ...***exercise authority over them***” (vs 24-25). *That's what NOT to do!*

Verse 26: “However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant... [in the Greek is ‘doulos’] ...and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave... [to serve the people; then the example] ...just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (vs 26-28).

That's what NOT to do, but the very thing that most churches actually do!

Let's put these two things together, and let's understand what it's telling us in Eph. 1, and also understand that ***no man*** is the head of the Church. There may be various leaders at different levels.

Ephesians 1:17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.” *That's what God wants to give to us!*

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling, and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according ***to the inner working of His mighty power***” (vs 18-19)—*in each one of us!* It is not the ministry *making* people do things!

Verse 20^[transcriber's correction]: “Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above every principality and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the Church” (vs 20-22) ***Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church!***

We will see that even Paul included himself with the brethren. He did not exalt himself; Jesus did not exalt Himself! That's very important to understand about the Government of God.

Let's look at it in our lives how it was when God called us. But first of all, what is the verse that shows how we're brought to God? *John 6:44! The Father draws us, and gives us the desire to:*

- to find God
- to want to know why we are here

Then Christ takes over from there and reveals the Father directly to us! They work together in conjunction!

Since God is the One Who started it, Who do we all belong to? *God the Father!* It's not an organization where you can have authority and do things. You've heard a lot about ‘loyalty.’ God does not want *loyalty*, ***He wants faithfulness!*** What is the difference? *If you're loyal, you're loyal to that person! If you're faithful—and Christ is in you—you a loyal and faithful to God!*

Now let's see where we all began, because we're out here in the world, and this is certainly true today. It's more satanic and evil than ever before. You can't even watch some ordinary ad without some sort of seductive thing, or satanic or occult thing coming into it! You have dogs talking, birds talking...

Here's the way we were spiritual speaking; Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience” (vs 1-2).

Satan has spiritual power that he can send out. Demons have spiritual powers that they can send out, as well, and we are all subject to that. That's not demon possession; this has nothing to do with demon possession, that's another whole thing. This has to do with the way that the society is.

Verse 3: “Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world.” *That's where we began! God called us!*

Verse 4: “But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us.” *This is based upon the love of God! God's love to us, but God wants us to love Him back!*

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith... [through grace] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; ***it is the gift of God.***”

Think about that everything we have comes from God. ***But conversion is a gift of God through His love and grace!***

Verse 9: “Not of works, so that no one may boast.” *Don’t boast about anything!*

How big was WCG at one time? *120,000 people attended the Feast, and they had hundreds of millions of dollars!* They boasted ***how great we are:***

- we’ve got these buildings
- we’ve got this auditorium
- we’ve got this college
- we have one in Big Sandy and Bricketwood, England

Aren’t we great?

- Who made it possible for all of that? *God did!*
- How much of it was mixed in with what men wanted?

Because they bragged about and depended upon it, they became corrupt, deceitful, lying and having a dictatorial government of church ministers ruling over people.

- What did God do to it?
- Did He expand it to the whole world? *No!*

He destroyed it and split the Church! He took away all the property! You ought to see the property in Pasadena now; *it’s a sight to behold!* Great expensive condominiums built right on the property, and you know that Herbert Armstrong always wanted to be with the rich. Well, he got his wish, it’s given to the rich!

It all comes from God! Here’s the key; here’s the whole purpose of why we are in the Church of God, the whole purpose of why God has called us, because He has a great thing that He’s doing with us. ***The ministers are to be helpers of what God is doing! Not overlords to make them do the will of the ministry!***

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship... [God the Father workmanship] ...***being created...***”

Conversion is a spiritual creation and you cannot run that by physical means and control like you do a physical organization.

“...***in Christ Jesus*** unto the good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). *That’s the way we are to walk!* That is to live!

What did Jesus say in the first temptation with Satan the devil? *It’s written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!* Think about that, ***every word!***

This is how conversion comes about! It’s doesn’t come about by command and control, because you control a group and everyone has their little box that they are in. there used to be a joke that some of the Churches had going around: *When you come to church you check your brain at the door! ***God doesn’t want that!**** Then Paul tells them that they were without Christ in the past.

Verse 18: “For through Him we both... [Jew and Gentile] ...have *direct access* by one Spirit to the Father.” ***That is the key! That is the rule of God!***

His Spirit, direct access to the Father; that’s quite a thing! That’s why when we pray, we pray to the Father and in Jesus’ name.

Verse 19: “So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God. You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone” (vs 19-20).

The apostles and prophets are their writings, which we have today! But it’s built on Jesus Christ. We have God the Father, Jesus Christ and the writings of God.

Verse 21: “In Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being built together for ***a habitation of God in the Spirit***” (vs 21-22).

In light of that, let’s see what a minister is to be. 1-Tim. 3 is read every time there’s an ordination. If you have a *King James Version* that says ‘bishop’ that is a total mistranslation.

1-Timothy 3:1: “Faithful *is* the saying, ‘If any man aspires to *be* an overseer...’”—*an elder!*

What did we learn from Matt. 20? *You’re not to be an overlord—downward!* You’re not to be a ‘religious leader’ who oppresses people.

- What is an overseer? *One who makes sure that everything is run properly!*
- What is proper? *The love and Truth of God!*
- What is the goal? *Conversion of every one of us on an ongoing basis!*

The ministers are not in an exalted position that think that they are better than anyone else, because Jesus said that ‘you’re underneath!’ When all ministers and elders are ordained, that’s not a promotion, that’s a ***demotion!*** Now you have to put the needs of all the brethren first according to the Word of God! ***That is not an overlording dictatorship!***

“...he desires a good work.’ Now then, it is

obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching; not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect” (vs 1-4).

Now you are to have rulership in your home. Why? *Because those are your offspring! They are from the one flesh that came from the two of you—husband and wife!*

Verse 5: “(For if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he **take care**... [not rule] ...**of the Church of God?**) Not a novice, lest he become conceited *and* fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil. It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are* outside *the Church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the* snare of the devil” (vs 5-7).

This tells you that every minister needs to say close to God at all times, because they’re a #1 target of Satan the devil. He’s not going to come and give you something evil to do; he’s going to give you something that looks good, sounds good and you think is good, but it’s contrary to the Word of God!

It looks and sounds good that you have to have order in the Church, so you need to have command and authority to do so. ***That’s not of God!***

Let’s see what Paul thought about himself. He did say, ‘I am an apostle, teacher,’ etc., and he brings out what needs to be for all of us.

1-Corinthians 3:1: “And, I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual, but as to those who are carnal—even as to babes in Christ.”

Don’t you think it’s the goal of the ministry and God that we don’t stay babes, that we grow up in Christ. That’s what God wants, and we’ll how to do that.

Verse 2: “I gave you milk to drink, and not meat; for you were not yet able *to receive spiritual meat*; and neither are you able now, for you are still carnal. For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal?...” (vs 2-3). *If that is in a church, what does it say? They’re carnal!*

“...And *are you not* walking according to human *ways*?... [yes, indeed] ...When someone says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another one *says*, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal? Who then is Paul? And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one” (vs 3-5).

He ***didn’t*** say, ‘Don’t you know that I’m an

apostle and you better bow down before me?’ NO! He said, “...Who then is Paul?...” *He knew what he came from!* Every minister needs to keep in mind where he came from lest he gets lifted up.

Verse 6: “I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase”—*which means that all elders are to be teaching to uplift the people so there can be spiritual growth in grace and knowledge!*

Verse 8: “Now, he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; *and* you are God’s husbandry, *even* God’s building. As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*” (vs 8-10).

What does he do? *The responsibility for spiritual growth **IF the elders and ministers are doing their job lies with each one!** Remember that **they were bought and paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! They do not belong to any man!***

Verse 11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble” (vs 11-12).

This shows that there is going to varying degrees of how people respond:

1. with things that endure through temptations and fires
2. the other will be burned up

1-Corinthians 4:1: “So then, let *every* man regard us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Beyond that, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful” (vs 1-2).

- What is a steward?
- Remember the Parable of the Pounds and the Parable of the Talents?
- What did God do? *He gave pounds and talents and told them to go ‘occupy’!*

Whatever is given to you, you are a steward of God’s Spirit. Whatever is given to the elders in teaching the Word of God, they are stewards of that to make sure that it rightly divided, rightly taught and always *the Truth, the Truth, the Truth* and not be lifted up in vanity and thinking how good that we may be, ***but giving God all of the credit!***

As I’ve covered many times, what did Paul write about every human being? ***That in God we live, move, and have our being!*** Everything about us physically He made and created.

Spiritually speaking think about how much more important that it is for all the brethren and the elders. It's quite a thing!

(break)

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It's not that you have people rule over you.

- Who is to rule over you? *God the Father and Jesus Christ!*
- How should that be done?

Here's a most important thing, and something that in many of the Churches of God is basically not taught, but it is something that should not only be taught, but this is how we are to live. If you have this then you do not need anyone to rule over you, because God will lead you to rule yourself!

Mark 12:28: "And one of the scribes who had come up to Him, after hearing them reasoning together and perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?'.... [this is what people want to know, what's the most important] ...Then Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel...."' (vs 28-29)—*put your name there*; whoever you are you are to hear what God says!

Sidebar: Jesus said in John 10 that He is the **true Shepherd, and the true sheep will not follow hirelings!** When the wolves come the sheep will flee. But the true Shepherd loves the sheep and teaches them and lays down His life for the sheep. *Think about that!*

Now, here is how we are to respond back to God: it's not that you come to church on the Sabbath and then the next Sabbath you come to church. That's not the question. The question is: What do you do from Sabbath to Sabbath? How do you live? Here's the answer:

"... 'Hear, O Israel.... [put your name there] ...Our one God is the Lord, the Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God... [this is a fulltime way of life] **with all your heart, and with all your soul...**

[you whole being] ...**and with all your mind, and with all your strength.**' This is the first commandment" (vs 29-30). *That's how God wants it!* It's not once on Sabbath or once on Sunday as the Protestants have it.

Verse 31: "And the second is like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

- What is the third commandment? *We are to love each other as Christ has loved us!*
- What's the fourth commandment? *We are to love our enemies!*
 - love God
 - love your neighbor
 - love the brethren as Christ has loved us
 - love your enemy

There are some good examples of people who follow that. I recall the example of a woman... A rapist came in and was going to rape her and she persuaded him to sit down and talk for a while. They did, and she being a Protestant told him about God, and told him about mercy and forgiveness. He didn't rape her, and no crime was committed, no charges were filed.

Take that with the Church: if there's strife and contention within the Church, what does that amount to? *Carnality and vanity!* There it is! That's the whole basis and foundation of what God wants us to do.

Now let's see something for the ministers. This is directed toward Peter. Why? *Because he and John were to be the leaders!* Remember that when Jesus said that He's going to go up to Jerusalem and they're going to kill Him—they're going to spit upon Him and do things to Him—Peter came to Him and said, 'No, Lord, that will never happen; that won't happen to You.' What did Jesus say to him? **Get behind Me, Satan!** That was a move by Satan through Peter!

On the Passover night two things happened with Peter:

1. Jesus said, 'Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you, to sift you as wheat. But I prayed for you that your faith fail not'

Then Jesus told them that He was going to go out and be crucified

2. Peter said, 'I will go with you to death and into prison.' *That's carnal! Well intentioned, good thing!* But what did Jesus say? *I tell you, before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times!*

Peter said, 'No, I'll never do that! What happened? *Peter denied Him three times!* The last time, because

he was able to get into the high priest's courtyard where the trial was going on, and the third time that Peter denied Him, Jesus look right at him. What did Peter do? *He went out and wept bitterly in repentance!*

Peter was also political, more than the others. One thing in the Church, it doesn't need politics. You need love, service, etc.

John 21:15—*Jesus did not do this to say of the other disciples, only to Peter:* “Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?’.... [that's got to be getting rid of politicians; and this is ‘agape’ love—*Godly love*] ...*And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’*.... [‘phileo’—*friendship love*] ...He said to him, **‘Feed My lambs.’**”

When you feed lambs they are to grow. What are we to do? *Grow in grace and knowledge, grow in the stature and measure of Christ!*

Verse 16: He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?’.... [‘agape’ love] ...*And he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’*.... [‘phileo’—*friendship*] ...He said to him, **‘Shepherd My sheep.’**”

The sheep are those who are fully mature; shepherd them! In other words, *pastor!*

Verse 17: “He said to him the third time...” *Because he denied Jesus three times, this was done three times!*

“...‘Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?’.... [He came down to Peter's level] ...Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, **‘Feed My sheep’**” (v 17). *That is what the ministry is to do, feed the sheep! That means:*

- teach them the Word of God
- teach them the Truth
- teach them how God wants us to live
- teach them, most of all, to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

That has to happen every day of the week! This is how we grow in grace and knowledge.

Let's see how Peter took this; v 18: “‘Truly, truly I say to you, since you were young, you have dressed yourself and walked wherever you have desired; but when you are old, you shall stretch out your hands, and another shall dress you and bring you where you do not desire to go.’ Now, He said this to signify by what death he would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, **‘Follow Me’**”

(vs 18-19).

Look, three tests on loving God, followed up with “...Follow Me.” Now notice what Peter did. We will see later on that he learned the lesson.

Verse 20: “But when Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had sat at the supper and *leaned* on His chest, and had said, ‘Lord, who is it that is betraying You?’ Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, what *shall happen* to this one?’” (vs 20-21).

Jesus gave a really great answer, and all the brethren in the first 1st century totally misconstrued it. That's why the apostasy set in so fast after John died.

Verse 22: Jesus said to him, ‘If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is it* to you? You follow Me.’” *That's what it has to be!*

Every elder *must* love God and follow Christ! We will see some other things that are necessary.

Verse 23: “Then this saying went out among the brethren, that that disciple would not die....”—*until Christ returned!* Symbolically, that happened.

- To whom was the book of Revelation given? *John!*
- What did it contain? *Everything from that time until the return of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God and New Jerusalem!*

John did see it, but he wasn't in it!

Let's see that Peter final learned his lesson. This is also another example. Jesus does not call us because we're perfect. He'll take care of the perfection at the resurrection. He calls us to do what He wants us to do. So, Peter learned that lesson.

1-Peter 5:1: “*The elders who are among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder... [if Peter were the first pope, he had no clue] ...and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed*”—*because Peter, James and John went up on the Mount of Transfiguration and saw Christ in His glorified form!* What did we just read in John 21?

Verse 2: “**‘Feed the flock of God** that is among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, **but willingly**; not in fondness of dishonest gain, **but with an eager attitude**; not as exercising lordship over your possessions... [interesting statement] ...**but by being examples to the flock of God.** And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory” (vs 2-4). *So, Peter did learn that lesson!*

Let's go to a Scripture that's been read over

and over again to affirm the great apostleship and authority of the ministers in the Church! Let's read with some more Scriptures to see what it is exactly saying.

Ephesians 4:11: "And He gave some as **apostles...**" *If you look at it carefully, **this is the order** of how they came into the Church!*

First, apostles! What was the qualification of an apostle? *He had to have seen Christ!* To replace Judas, he chose Mathis by the drawing of lots, because he was one of the disciples that was with Jesus all the time.

"...and some **prophets...**" (v 11)—*the ones who give inspired speaking and also prophesying!* Today we don't have the need of prophets in the same way that was necessary back then. But we still have those who prophesy.

"...and some **evangelists...**" (v 11)—*those who reach out to the public!*

"...and some **pastors...** [*shepherds*] ...and **teachers**" (v 11).

Notice what for; not for a government structure, but for a spiritual work. Each has something to give:

Verse 12: "**For the perfecting of the saints...**" *All of this is to give to the saints!* This is not from the top down, but from the bottom up!

"...**for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ**" (v 12). What is *edifying? Building up!*

When I first came into the ministry, Roderick Meredith told all the ministers that once every couple of years they needed to get up in the pulpit and lambaste every sin in the congregation; *an attack sermon!* When I was in Salt Lake City, second year in the ministry, I did that. I learned that was wrong! It took me two years to overcome all the damage that I did! The truth is you can't 'beat out' by harsh words sin from people.

They must choose to repent! You can 'beat them over the head' all you want, but unless they choose to repent, all you have done is degraded them. You are to up-build that we be edified and built up. That's what it's for! God's Spirit—the Father and Christ in you—don't you think that They are able to convict you in your own mind of sin so that you can repent? Besides, how can a minister know the sins of everybody in the congregation? *There's no way!*

Verse 13: "Until **we...**" *Paul is saying here that he is learning!*

All of us as elders must be learning, too, all the time. I am learning; *I'm seeing more and more*

and you will, too—everyone, all the brethren, all the elders—*that that Word of God is layered with meaning, because it's inspired by the mind of God!* There is so much in there that we can't grasp it all in a whole lifetime of diligent study, because it's greater than us. But we can learn what's necessary and grow in that and in the character of God so we can be in the first resurrection. That's what God wants.

Verse 13: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man**, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ"—*that comes at the resurrection!*

Verse 14: "So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error"—*and that's what happened with the apostasy!*

Verse 15: "But holding the Truth in love..." *That's what needs to be!* The brethren need to be taught the love of God. All the elders need to learn the love of God. We have the tools here; write/call for these studies. This will help you:

- *The Grace of God*
- *The Love of God*

We have more things available {truthofGod.org}!

"...may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the Body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its inner working...*" (vs 15-16)—*of the Spirit of God; that's the Government of God*, because the Government is on Christ's shoulders and He is the Head!

"...**in the measure of each individual part**, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (v 16).

Colossians 1:20: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross... [that means we have peace with God, and that becomes the important thing] ...by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in heaven. For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him" (vs 20-22).

That's what the ministry is to do in teaching the brethren. Then Christ works through the brethren, through the elders. This is how it all works. Not run by carnal things of organization and government from the top down.

Verse 23: "If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved

away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that *is* under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant. Now, I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you..." (vs 23-24)—*writing from jail!*

This shows that we will have things to suffer. Look at the way the world is going, not too far around the corner!

"...and I am filling up in my flesh that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church; of which I became a servant, according to the administration of God that *was given to me for you in order to complete the Word of God*" (vs 24-25).

That's what the apostles did, they completed the Word of God with the New Testament.

Verse 26: "*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints."

Why did God do this to us? Think of all the people out there in the world.

Sidebar: I was carrying stuff out and here's the man who takes care of the building and there was another man standing there and he didn't have a mask on. I said, 'Congratulations, you've got your mask off. I didn't have mind on. He said, 'What do you do?' I said, 'We have church business upstairs.' We got to talking a little bit.

He sees all the things that are going on, and I said, 'You know what's wrong with the world? It's that they've gone away from God, and that they don't keep the commandments of God, and they don't anything about God.'

He says, 'Yeah that's right and what they're missing is you have to be born again.'

I told him that's not right! He started to talk back and I said, 'Just a minute! Jesus Christ was the Firstborn of Mary—right?' *Yes!* 'And He was Firstborn from among the dead—right? What is that? Two births! One with water and one with spirit.' *I went and got in my car!*

Verse 27: "To whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**; Whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, **so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**" (vs 27-28).

Let's see the "...**inner working**..." (v 16).

John 14—I cover this quite often because it's so important. As a matter fact, the most important Scriptures in the whole Bible relating to

us and conversion and:

- what we do
- where we're going
- how we're going to do it

We're going to concentrate on the love of God and how important that is, and that if there's

- the love of God
- with the faith of God
- the Truth of God
- loving each other
- How much control needs to be exercised over people like that? *None!*
- Why? ***Because they are led by the Spirit of God!***

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even **the Spirit of the Truth**...*" (vs 15-17).

That's what God has given; think about how important that is when the whole world is deceived by Satan the devil!

"...which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it, **but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you**" (v 17).

These next few verses are the key important thing that has to be with everyone who has the Spirit of God.

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them... [present tense plural] ...**that is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father**, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." *Think about that!*

Every elder needs to remember that God loves everyone whom He's called. Yes, we all—including us elders—have our problems and difficulties to overcome, too! So, we need to be teaching the Word of God so that can happen.

Verse 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to him... [he didn't know how that was going to happen] ...'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'"

How does God do that? *Right back where we first started in John 6:44!*

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, **If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...** [His whole message] ...and **My Father will love him**, and **We**... [this is the most important sentence in the whole Bible] ...**will come to him and make**

Our abode... [dwelling place] ...**with him.**” *That’s quite a thing!*

- you have **the Spirit of the Father** for begetting to become a son or daughter of God
- you have **the Spirit of Christ** to develop the mind of Christ

Both of those work with love from God to you to help you grow, change and overcome! That is what God is doing!

Verse 24—*complete separation*: “The one who does not love Me does not keep My words, and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.”

Think about what a fantastic blessing and what a wonderful thing it is that **we have the Word of God and it’s from God the Father!** The Father and Christ are dwelling in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. **They are to rule in you!** That’s what’s important! You don’t need the rulership of men over you in the sense of a hierarchy! Let’s see it:

Colossians 3:12: “Put on then, as **the elect** of God... [*selected*; think about that. Everyone who has the Spirit of God, God the Father has selected] ...Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another...” (vs 12-13).

If someone does something kind of ‘kooky’ don’t get derailed; forbear and pray about it. You’ll be surprised what will happen.

“...and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even **as Christ forgave you, so also you should forgive.** And above all these things **put on love, which is the bond of perfection**” (vs 13-14).

What is that going to do? *Tie that together with John 14!*

Verse 15: “And let the peace of God **rule...**” *The rule coming from God, and you have peace with God because:*

- you’ve repented
- you love God
- you keep His commandments

“...in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (vs 15-16). *Wonderful, indeed!*

What is all of this going to do for us? 2-Cor. 5:18 ties in with John 14 about the Father and Christ

both dwelling in us through the power of the Spirit:

2-Corinthians 5:18: “And all things *are* from God, **Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...**”

You are reconciled to God the Father, the great Sovereign of the whole universe! That’s why you don’t need the control of men to lead your life. You need to yield to God! Use His Spirit and grow in grace and knowledge.

“...and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (v 18). *The ministers are to teach that kind of reconciliation to God!*

Let’s show that we are not to get carried away with things in the world:

2-Corinthians 6:14: “**Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.** For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a Temple of God and idols? **For you are a temple of the living God...** [tie in John 14:23] ...exactly as God said: **‘I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord, ‘and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (vs 14-18).

What a tremendous promise that is; *tremendous indeed!* Let’s see some important things that we can learn in 1-John.

1-John 4:6: “We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.” *We are to have our senses exercised spiritually to know!*

It was said by one minister about the Government of God in a hierarchical church that when you are baptized and the minister lays hands on you, ‘you are submitting to the Government of God.’ **That is a lie!** The laying on of hands is to receive the Holy Spirit of God. You are not submitting to any man, but to God! The minister is only the facilitator.

Verse 7: “Beloved, **we should love one another because love is from God...** [this is what God wants] ...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love” (vs 7-8).

Think about how that destroyed a lot of

people in the Church, *because the love of God was not taught!*

Verse 9: “In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is **the love**... [the very love of God] ...not that we loved God; rather, that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another” (vs 9-11).

- ***That’s what God wants!***
- ***That is how God wants it to be done!***
 - ✓ everyone working together
 - ✓ everyone loving each other
 - ✓ every elder/minister dedicated to teaching and serving the brethren

So that they all grow in grace and knowledge all through the week!

Verse 12: “No one has seen God at any time. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us.” *That’s important and the lesson!*

Verse 13: “By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us.” *Just like it was in John 14!*

Verse 14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God” (vs 14-15). *With all the other Scriptures attached to, not just that one simple thing!*

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love...” *Yes, we need the love of God, but what does God want back from us? Our loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being!*

If all the people of God do this, think about what a wonderful situation it is when we come together. Think about that God will give us the strength for whatever difficulty or trial comes along, ***He will see us through it!***

Verse 17: “...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God...” (vs 17-18). ***You can’t run the Church of God with fear! Can’t be done!***

“...rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this

is the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs 18-21).

This is what God wants done in the Church: ***love God, love each other as Christ loved us!*** How much supervision needs to be done? *Very little!* Whenever we have activities to go on, it needs to be done in an orderly way. *That’s about all that needs to be done!*

What is the Government of God? ***God the Father and Jesus Christ in you! That is the Government of God, not the ministry!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ecclesiastes 8:9
- 2) Proverbs 14:31
- 3) Proverbs 22:16
- 4) Psalm 119:134-135
- 5) Isaiah 9:6-7
- 6) Matthew 16:16-18
- 7) Matthew 20:20-29
- 8) Ephesians 1:17-22
- 9) Ephesians 2:1-4, 8-10, 18-22
- 10) 1 Timothy 3:1-7
- 11) 1 Corinthians 3:1-6, 8-12
- 12) 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- 13) Mark 12:28-31
- 14) John 21:15-23
- 15) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 16) Ephesians 4:11-16
- 17) Colossians 1:20-28
- 18) John 14:15-18, 21-24
- 19) Colossians 3:12-16
- 20) 1 Corinthians 5:18
- 21) 1 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 22) 1 John 4:6-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 91
- John 6:44; 10
- Colossians 3:1

Also referenced: Transcript Books w/CD:

- *Wealth & Income: The Biblical Truth About Tithes & Offerings*
- *Grace of God*
- *Grace Upon Grace God’s Grace and Commandment-Keeping*
- *Grace Upon Grace*
- *Love of God*

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