

## Elders' Conference: Last Day Vision for the Difficult Times

*You cannot get any greater assurance than the existence of God!*

Fred R. Coulter—May 5, 2018

I am quite taken aback how God has organized all the speaking. None of us communicated with each other about anything. Roy can attest to the sermon that I'm going to cover now was not the one I was on when he came to see me last night. Roger talked about how you keep joy in times of difficulty; so we'll continue right on with the answer.

Proverbs 29:18: "Where *there is* no vision, the people perish..."

- What is our vision?
- What is our purpose?
- What does God really show us?
- How is He personally involved in us and with us?

All of that goes back to the very promise given to Abraham after he offered his only begotten son Isaac, and God provided a substitutionary sacrifice of a ram. God said through the voice of the angel, *'By Myself, in blessing I will bless you. Your seed shall be as the stars of heaven—that's us—and as the sand that's on the seashore.'* That's all the children of Israel. *'In you—think about this in big terms—shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'* That statement has to go back to the beginning and clear to the end.

- What has God done?
- What is He doing?
- How does He provide us with His vision?  
*Through His Word!*

Let's, first of all, come to John 14, which I mentioned last year, the most important verses in John 14. Sometimes you get so close to a tree that you don't even see the forest! I'm sure you could do that with those big redwoods. You get up there and say, 'Look at that.' If you get any microscope and look at anything, there's more and more and more.

This is real important, John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments."

How are we to love God? *Everyone wants the love of God to them!* Does anyone want to say, 'I don't want the love of God'? *No*, but they want God's love, but **how are we to love God back?** *With all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, all our being!*

He says He's going to send the Holy Spirit. Think about how many people qualify for this verse. We did cover one session at the conference about the two negations of the Greek:

1. 'ouk' means *the absolute impossibility* of the reality of the thought taking place
2. 'me' is just *don't think it*

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, **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." *Then God's Spirit reveals it out of His Word!*

Verse: 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him... [if you've never heard anything like this before, picture it]: ...'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" How are you going to do that? *Jesus makes it very simple!*

Let's use an example. Everything that we're doing here today is subject to one thing that no one on earth could tell you exactly what it is: *electricity*. Are there things that take place that perhaps we don't fully understand how it works? *But we do know it works!* Turn on the switch, there's light! Turn off the switch, there's not light! There are many things that God has that He does, that He performs on an ordinary daily basis that we don't even comprehend.

How does God keep all the people on the earth? *Gravity!* How does gravity work? You can drop a pen; you can see it. Could you write down a description of it in a technical term that this is the composite, the action, and here is the mathematical formula that proves how gravity works? *Nobody can do that!*

God is going to do something with us that only those who experience it, **who are us**, and all that have been from the time of Christ, the patriarchs and so forth on down to our time. Jesus keeps it simple. If He were talking about gravity, He would say, 'If you walk upright and put one foot in front of the other, you won't fall down.'

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, **'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...'**" See how important that is? See how that ties in with *meditate on the Law day and night!* That's all the

Word of God. What does that mean? *That means that you think with the Word of God!* How can you think with the Word of God? We'll see in a minute here.

"...and My Father will love him..." (v 23). Don't feel deprived in anything at anytime. When all else fails—I think that's how I started out the *Love of God sermon series: When All Else Fails, Remember God Loves You.*

"...and **We**..." (v 23). This is the most phenomenal verse in the Bible, showing two aspects of the Holy Spirit of God:

1. the begetting by the Father to be a son or daughter of God
2. the Spirit of Christ to have the mind of Christ

We talked about all of this, too, in various ways during the conference.

"...and **We** will come to him..." (v 23). How? *You won't see Him. He might give you some words in your mind, but you won't hear Him!* It's not going to be interjected into you by some mechanical means.

"...and make **Our** abode with him" (v 23)—*dwelling place.* That's an amazing thing!

*Who are we of all people on earth, and all the saints down through time, that we should have the Spirit of God the Father and Jesus Christ and for a great and wonderful purpose? Here's why the world cannot understand it, even with a close counterfeit:*

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me..." What did He say? How do you express your love? *The one who has the commandments and is keeping them!*

What does He say in 1-John 2-4? *The one who has My commandments and keeping them is the one who loves Me! And the one who says, 'I know the Lord,' and does not keep His commandments is a liar!* The world can't stand that term anymore, because they're all liars.

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words... [it's not important, it's been done away] ...and the word that you hear..."

Do we have the supreme authority in the universe? *Yes!* Think of that, to each one. You might say little ole me? Yes, little ole you, little ole me, which you could not earn, you could not deserve.

"...is not Mine, but the Father's Who sent Me" (v 24). That is quite a thing!

Eph. 1 is one of the most powerful, spiritual passages in the entire Bible. It explains those verses we just read in John 14. This is an amazing thing!

First of all, too many people miss the blessing that Paul gives to every epistle. Think about this. Remember what Jesus said, 'The words that you hear are not Mine, but the Father's.' I want you to just sit there and think: **God the Father, the great Sovereign of the universe**—through His great and marvelous grace, His Holy Spirit, and His Son Jesus Christ—*loves me, loves you.* Furthermore, even in this fight, as evil as this world is, He loves the whole world, but now is not their day; that will come later.

Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God..." Not *Paul's* will! What was Paul's will? *Go out and kill all those nasty little Christians!*

"...to the saints..." (v 1). **We are the saints!** That means to the *Holy ones; that's us!* How are we Holy? *By the Holy Spirit from God the Father and Jesus Christ!* All of it unseen by other people, but working with us because we know

"...who are in Ephesus... [this is a prophecy clear on down through time]: ...and **to the faithful in Christ Jesus**" (v 1). Remember: **called, chosen and faithful!**

Verse 2: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.... [a special message written; endorsed by them] ...Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ" (vs 2-3).

- Is it a blessing to have your sins forgiven?
- Is it a blessing to know the love and laws of God?
- Is it a blessing to understand the Word of God?
- Is it a blessing to know that God has called you to salvation?
- Is it a blessing for you to know that you're going to be like Jesus Christ at the resurrection?

**Every spiritual blessing, every spiritual thing with Christ!**

So, even if you get in terrible times, **this is how you have vision and this is how you keep your bearings!** We're going to face a lot of difficult times; you can be guaranteed that.

- How did *you* get here?
- Who acted in *your* life?

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..."

- How important are you to God?
- Did He call you?
- Did He draw you?
- Did He give you His Spirit?
- Did He give you understanding of His Word?
- *Yes!*

Verse 4: “According as **He has personally chosen us for Himself** before *the* foundation of the world...” *That was God’s plan!* Before God formed the earth and did everything for the earth for it, you think He would do it without a plan?

You think a contractor would build a house without a plan? Just try it one time, and the building inspector would come along and say, ‘Where’s your permit?’ *I don’t have one*, ‘Let me inspect it. Your foundation is wrong; your walls are crooked. How did you get these windows in so stupidly? I want to see the plans.’ *I don’t have any*. ‘What? How are you going to build a house without plans?’

**Same way with God!** How is He going to carry out a plan unless He has a plan? *All thought through and all worked out, with particular conditions here and there and everywhere along the way!* That doesn’t mean that He knew us before He even created us.

God said of Jeremiah, **‘I knew you before I formed you’** (Jer. 1). How could that be? Contribution of the father and the mother: *impregnation*. He knew Jeremiah before He formed him, because the formation of Jeremiah comes after the impregnation.

Likewise with us, He planned it and here is the goal: “...**in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love**” (v 4). That’s an amazing statement.

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us... [those whom He has called (Rom. 8)] ...**for sonship**...”—not adoption. Adoption is you take someone else’s child with someone else’s genes and chromosomes, and you give him a name. Sonship is that it is yours by begetting, by truth, and he belongs to you. Have you ever thought of it this way? We all know we have genes and chromosomes.

What’s it going to be like to have spiritual genes and chromosomes? What is that going to be like? *There are just so many things we don’t know!*

We are not to have one foot in the world, one foot in the Church, we’re accepted in the world, we’re accepted in the Church, and everything is hunky-dory and we have a big banner right across our foreheads: *Laodicean Incorporated*.

2-Corinthians 6:15: “And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial?... [no, His union is with us] ...Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols?...” (vs 15-16).

We’re a temple of God! Think of that! They’re dwelling **in** us. If They’re dwelling in us, is that not *Their dwelling place* or temple? Think of that! That’s more important. Remember what God said in Isa. 66?

- Where is the temple or house you’re going to build for Me?
- *Everything used to touch your hands to build a house for Me, My hands have made!*
- What are you going to do for Me?
- He says, **‘To this one will I look, the one who is of a humble spirit and a broken heart and trembles at My Word!’**

Notice how that fits in:

“...For **you are a temple of the living God**, exactly as God said...” (v 16). Did He not say back in John 14, ‘I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be My people’? *The people of God; the children of God!* ‘We will see Him because we will be exactly as He is’ (1-John 3).

Verse 17: “‘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 17-18).

That’s pretty powerful! When He says we have been predestinated unto sonship, that means **after the God-kind!** That’s the ending! What is the beginning? ‘Let Us make man in Our own image, male and female, after Our image and after Our likeness.’ The rest of the Bible tells us how it’s going to be after His kind. *That’s amazing!*

The most amazing book in the world is the Bible. There are more things here in the Bible and you can read it and read it, go over it again and again and you still learn something new every time. I do, you do.

Ephesians 1:4: “...might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us for sonship **to Himself**...” (vs 4-5).

Remember where we started? God said to Abraham through the angel, ‘By Myself...’ **You cannot get any greater assurance than the existence of God!** That’s some promise that God has given it on Himself. That’s amazing!

“...through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will” (v 5). Think about that for just a minute—*the good pleasure of His own will!* That’s His plan for it.

One of the questions that we’ll probably ask Christ at the resurrection, maybe even the Father when we see Him face-to-face: Lord, I know you chose me, but why me? Little ole me? **‘Because I love you and because you wanted Me, because you love Me and were willing to obey Me.’** Not many people in the world in that category.

Notice how great this is going to be. We don’t know what it’s going to be like at the resurrection, but listen to:

Verse 6: “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace... [His plan is so great and we’re part of it; its going to be a great praise of glory to Him] ...wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved Son; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of **His grace**” (vs 6-7).

Note three sermon series on grace:

1. *Grace of God*
2. *God’s Grace and Commandment Keeping*
3. *Grace Upon Grace*

When you get done going through *Grace Upon Grace*, you’re going to fall on your knees and thank God what a fantastic thing.

Verse 8: “Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom...” He wants us to be wise. How do we be wise? ***Through the Word of God and through the Spirit of God!***

“...and intelligence” (v 8). Not a bunch of stupid snake-handlers.

Wouldn’t you say that the mind of Christ is the greatest intelligent mind? *That’s what He wants to give us!* When we have the vision we need to go through the difficult times don’t think big; ***think huge!*** Don’t think selfishly; ***think awesomely!***

Verse 9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will...” *As much as we could handle!* We couldn’t handle it all. Notice why He let us in on knowing the secret of His will, the mystery of the secret! That God exists! That He has a Son that He begat, the only Begotten Son Who gave His life that we could have our sins forgiven: past, present and in the future upon repentance. *Quite a thing!*

His own will! We are going to be His very sons and daughters and we are going to shine as the stars of heaven. We are going to look like God. We are going to talk to Him and say, ‘Father...’

“...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in **Himself**” (v 9). There’s that word again! We need to grasp that God Himself is involved in our lives and Christ Himself is involved in our lives. This way then ***we don’t have any time:***

- to be lazy
- to be indolent
- to forget

***Because the goal is so great and the plan is so awesome, that with all our heart and all our mind, all our soul, and being we love God and want to be there!***

- it doesn’t matter what the trial is
- it doesn’t matter what the difficulty may be
- it doesn’t matter how old you are
- it doesn’t matter how weak you are

None of those things count, *because we’re going to live forever!* We’ll be just like a seed planted in the ground. When the resurrection comes, what a time that’s going to be.

Verse 10: “That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times...” Do you realize we’re part of the Divine plan and the fulfilling of the times of God’s plan, which He planned **before the foundation of the world?** *That’s awesome!*

“...He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will” (vs 10-11).

Think of that when you pray and say, ‘Oh, Lord, Your will be done.’ That’s what it’s all about. We don’t know God’s will for what we’re doing in reaching out to the world and serving the brethren, but it is producing fruit. If it’s producing fruit, then who is the One Who is sowing the seed? ***God is!*** Our job is to get everything prepared.

A lot of us here are going to be gone in a few years and there’s another generation coming. They need to know the Truth of God. They need to have all these things that we have done available to them. With that, maybe, they will do 10-15 times more than we’ve ever thought that we could do. We don’t know.

Verse 11: “**Yes, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will;** that we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; in Whom you

also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (vs 11-13).

Sidebar: That’s why none of you are going to be in the 144,000, because ***you are already sealed!*** Simple answer. Those of Rev. 7 will be sealed during the Tribulation. *We are before!*

Verse 14: “Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession... [we have been bought back from Satan the devil] ...to *the* praise of His glory. For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints” (vs 14-15).

Can we not say that here? This has been a tremendous conference and the tremendous meeting here today with all of us together. Not one fight, not one quarrel, not one false doctrine, no one serving themselves. That’s the way God wants it.

Verse 16: “Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.”

I know a lot of you come up and tell me, ‘I’ve been praying for you.’ I thank you for it. I need it every day. I’ve been praying for all the people of God every day, even if I don’t know them, even if you’re far around the world. ***God’s not limited! Prayers are not limited!***

This is why I want you to never, *never*, ***never*** be satisfied with anything that you have done! That does not mean to be down on yourself and condemn yourself, because if you’re doing a good job, that’s fine, but never be satisfied with it that that’s all you do. Reach out and do more; always keep growing in grace and knowledge. Never settle back and say, ‘I’ve got it made.’

Remember what happened when one self-proclaimed apostle said, ‘I’ve been faithful for so long that Satan has no interest in me.’ We had a little ‘Job session’ there, didn’t we? ***Yes, indeed!*** Here’s why we are never to be satisfied with what we have done up to any point—***period!***

Verse 17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you...”

- this is what God wants to give you
- this is why we study
- this is why we pray
- this is why we do what we do

“...*the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him” (v 17)—*to know more and more about God!* That’s an amazing thing.

I sit back and think about that and I think about every time I see a picture of the universe and the beauty of the stars, the colors of all of that, and realize that after they get this new telescope up there, it’s going to reach out so far in space. They are going to see things that are so utterly astounding! God is giving us a part of the inheritance of that. That is truly amazing.

- there’s no room for vanity
- there’s no room for self
- ***we grow in grace and knowledge***

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind... [how you think and see in your mind] ...be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling... [He wants you to know] ...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” When will some of that be revealed? *At the resurrection!*

Verse 19: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power.”

Paul could not have written anything more powerfully spiritual than this. This had to be absolutely inspired by the Spirit of God. Where was Paul when this took place? *In prison with chains!* That’s quite a thing to contemplate.

Verse 20: “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*, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 20-23). That’s why no man is head of the Church.

I’ll have to admit I do go to chapter three quite a bit, but this is so fantastic, when you understand it. Paul is talking about the revelation that God gave to him and all the apostles at the same time.

Ephesians 3:6: “That the Gentiles might be joint heirs...” God is not forgetting other nations or other people. They’re all going to have their time.

“...and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power. To me...” (vs 6-8).

Notice how humble Paul became. The great knowledge of the plan of God made Paul absolutely humble. When he started out, he said, 'I've got all these orders to kill all these Christians and put them in prison. I'm high and mighty and going up through the ranks of Judaism.' Then God knocked him on the ground. 'What do you want, Lord?' Notice the humility he came to. *All of this gives us greater humility!*

Verse 8: "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints... [think of that] ...was this grace given, that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—even the unsearchable riches of Christ; and that I might enlighten all *as to what is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ" (vs 8-9).

Think about this. How many people have lived and died and have never even known a single thing about why they're here and what God has given to us and to the saints. Brethren:

- love God
- love His Word
- cherish Him
- stay close to God in prayer and study
  - ✓ He will bless you
  - ✓ He will help you
  - ✓ He will be with you

Verse 10: "So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, according to *His* eternal purpose..." (vs 10-11).

Where did we start? *God had a plan and it had a beginning and it has an ending, and we're part of that right now!*

"...which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very own faith*" (vs 11-12).

Think of that, brethren! Your prayers, because you're the saints of God, are on the priority, receiving of prayers in heaven above, right at the golden altar. ***We can come to God!*** Like Jesus said, 'when you pray, say,

- Our Father Who is in heaven
- hallowed be Your name
- Your kingdom come
- Your will be done

Isn't that all about the plan of God? *Yes, daily!* This is why we live and move and have our being.

Verse 13: "So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for* your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 13-14).

Think of this: Paul is in prison, chains on his wrist and probably on his feet. I don't know how cold it was, but Tyndale wrote when he was in Vilvorde Prison and had a little candle, he said, 'It's so cold in here, please send me my cap and my leggings, because I'm cold.' What was he doing? *Translating the Old Testament!* He was martyred on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles in 1536. ***That's faithful unto death!***

Verse 14: "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Getting on the stone floor of that prison with those cold chains and bracelets around his legs and wrists.

Verse 15: "Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named... [that's why we talk about the Family of God] ...that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory..." (vs 15-16). *Here's what God wants!* He doesn't want us to be weak, ineffectual, half-hearted Christians.

"...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love..." (vs 16-18). *That's the whole thing that everything is, based on the love of God:*

- His love to us
- our love to Him

"...you may be fully able to comprehend..." (v 18). *If you're not rooted and grounded in love, you don't really comprehend!*

"...with all the saints..." (v 18). Here's what God wants for us. ***This is how we have the vision! This is how we stay faithful!***

"...what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you..." (vs 18-19)—*each and every one!*

Who did Paul write this to? *The saints who are in Ephesus and to the faithful on down through time, in Christ Jesus!*

"...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (v 19).

- Did not Daniel say we're going to shine like the stars of heaven?
- Didn't Jesus say that the saints in the Kingdom of God are going to shine like the sun? *Yes!*

- Didn't Paul say that we're all going to receive glory? *Yes!*

“...**be filled with all the fullness of God**” (v 19). *That's at the resurrection!* We've got Pentecost coming up, and that's what the resurrection is all about. If this sounds so fantastic:

Verse 20: “Now, to Him Who is able... [has the power] ... to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us. To Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 20-21).

*This is amazing!* So, brethren, *this is why God the Father and Jesus Christ have chosen to make Their dwelling place with us!* That's why we are to be

- **the called**
- **the chosen**
- **the faithful**
- **be in the first resurrection**

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 29:18
- 2) John 14:15, 21-24
- 3) Ephesians 1:1-3
- 4) John 6:44
- 5) Ephesians 1:4-5
- 6) 2-Corinthians 6:15-18
- 7) Ephesians 1:4-23
- 8) Ephesians 3:6-21

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-John 2, 3, 4
- Jeremiah 1
- Romans 8
- Isaiah 66
- 1-John 3
- Revelation 7

#### Also referenced:

Sermon: *When All Else Fails, Remember God Loves You* (#1 *Love of God* series)

#### Sermon Series:

- *Love of God*
- *Grace of God*
- *God's Grace and Commandment Keeping*
- *Grace Upon Grace*

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