

Preparing Us for the Coming Age

Chauncey Normandin—December 30, 2023

We've titled this message *Preparing Us For the Coming Age*, which is our most important job ever. We, as God called, are the ones He wants to help Him administer His coming Kingdom.

This is our time for learning and preparing. All that we do now is to better prepare us to perform those tasks then. We, above all people, have to pay attention now.

We know that as we obey the commandments of God and keep His Sabbaths and Holy Days as He laid out, we become a focused target of Satan.

As long as we stay true to God and do not fall into the present age of sin and cultural paganism, we will continue to be in Satan's sights.

It's interesting when we see all of the different Christian groups and denominations and churches there are some 37,000 by one count. Most worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, celebrate Christmas, Easter, and Halloween.

The mainstream churches say these don't apply because they are not Jewish days. This is the basis for their change in the 4th century. They did not want to Judaize the Sabbath and the Holy Days, a lame excuse by a politically motivated dictator.

Let's see Whose days they really are. In Lev. 23, here we find the weekly Sabbaths and Holy Days set out in one area.

Leviticus 23:1: And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them...'" (vs 1-2).

He told Moses to speak to all of the twelve tribes, not just Judah.

"...Concerning the appointed **Feasts of the LORD**, which you shall proclaim *to be* Holy convocations, even these are **My appointed Feasts**" (v 2).

Twice God states they are His Feasts. He states this five times in this chapter alone. He also states four times they are to be kept **forever throughout your generations**. The rest of the 44 verses list the weekly Sabbaths and the Holy Days of God, their times, specifics on how we would honor God in them.

We can also find them referenced in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, as well as individually in various parts of the Old and New Testaments, as the New Testament Church we know, which we are part of, kept all of God's Holy Days.

Not only is the weekly Sabbath found in Leviticus, it's also found, first mentioned in Genesis, as we noted, it is listed as the 4th commandment spoken by God to the children of Israel in Exo. 20:8-11.

The true Churches of God honor the Sabbaths and Holy Days as God set them forth, and do not honor or participate in the Satan-inspired pagan holidays, most of which date back to Babylon.

1-Corinthians 1:9: "God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called into *the* fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Think of how blessed we are that we've been called into God's Family. As it states, **God is faithful, and because He is, we know we can depend upon His Word.**

One of the things that's hard for me to wrap my head around is how these Sunday churches say that the Law is done away with. They claim to read and know the Bible, but by their actions they deny it.

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away..." (vs 17-18).

This present heaven and earth haven't passed away, yet. We're still here, we can still see it.

"...one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled. Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (vs 18-19).

How does a stated Bible-believing church read this and then actually try to justify what they do? It would seem they take each verse of the Bible they agree with and try to make doctrine from it, excluding all others that may tend to clarify or explain it more fully.

By not following the entire Bible and using the Bible to interpret the Bible and putting their emphasis on the New Testament, they completely dismiss many things. By dismissing or minimizing the Old Testament, they miss important instruction.

Ezekiel 20:18: "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I *am* the LORD your God. Walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances,

and do them, and keep My Sabbaths Holy; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God” (vs 18-20).

Be a sign. Pretty interesting they missed that. To make sure that we’re prepared for what God is preparing for us, we cannot be that narrow-minded.

We know how to properly study and apply these true principles of study, and we must be doing it. We’ve all gone through our own life experiences, good times, struggles, trials, blessings.

We also have this in common: we have been brought to this place at this time by the Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ the Head of the Church.

Luke 10:21: “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You did hide these things from *the* wise and intelligent, and did reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do so*.’”

Verse 22: “Then He turned to the disciples *and* said, ‘All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows Who the Son is, except the Father; and Who the Father is, except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*’”—*That’s us, brethren!*

He’s revealing Him each time we get together on a Sabbath, and there in the presence of God we’re being taught by God. He’s revealing the Father to us.

Verse 23: “And He turned to His disciples *and* said privately, ‘Blessed *are* the eyes that have seen the things that you see. For I tell you, many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard *them*’”(vs 23-24).

Not only have we been blessed in seeing and hearing these things, but He’s also given us the understanding and a heightened ability to discern His Truth. The more we commit to God, the greater our understanding. God is continually building and refining His Church.

These fellowships groups in the greater Churches of God are founded on the same cornerstone and foundation that the Old Testament prophesied. Let’s start in the Old Testament with:

Isaiah 28:16: “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I place in Zion a Stone for a foundation, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation; he who believes shall not be ashamed.’”

Here is a prophecy of Jesus as the cornerstone and foundation of the Church. Let’s see more on this tried stone.

Psalm 118:22: “The Stone, which the builders rejected, has become the Head Stone of the corner.”

Because we have the whole Bible, we know this cornerstone is Jesus and that it’s clarified in the New Testament.

Matthew 21:42: “Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures, “*The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the Head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes*”?’”

We’ll find the foundation we have to build upon; Ephesians 2:19: “...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).

We have been given a tremendous gift, brethren, but it also comes with great responsibility. Not just on the elders and teachers, but on each of us as members of this body. We’re being supplied with the proper building blocks to continue building this foundation.

It’s up to us to continue building with the proper materials, everything based on the Word of God. If we introduce anything contrary, it will not stand.

In Matt. 7, Jesus tells a story about two men, one wise and one foolish, who each decided to build a house.

Matthew 7:24: “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the Rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the Rock” (vs 24-25).

Built on the Word of God, the proper building materials.

Verse 26: “And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand.”

Improper or counterfeit building materials are lies of man and man’s traditions.

Verse 27: “And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

The wise man took more time and care in building his house. He built it on a stone foundation, the Rock, so it would be able to withstand what the world threw at it, so to speak.

He's been guiding us in building on that solid foundation, too. Each week he replenishes our stock with the right materials. How are we to know they're right? *We are guided by what the Apostle Paul has told us in:*

1-Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things. Hold fast to *that which* is good."

I think this Scripture here is probably lost on some of these mainstream churches and secular groups. They don't understand that. They don't understand that we have to prove all things.

When we first started getting together, I told people, 'I don't want you to believe anything that I tell you. I want you to use it as a guide to prove it for yourself.'

That's what we need to do, "Prove all things. Hold fast to *that which* is good."

Each week we go over studies, listen to sermons, and hear a lot of information. We must be able to discern man's version of Truth from God's real Truth. The more we're in God's Word, and the more we lessen the chances of being deceived, this is becoming more important each day, as each day goes by.

Wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, volcanoes, violent weather events, civil unrest, and probably worst of all, morally bankrupt government leaders who will do anything to further their agenda of controlling corruption to the detriment of all of us. And that's not restricted just to the United States.

We look at the things that are brought out each week on the live stream.

Europe is falling apart, Australia and China is falling apart, their economies are going in the toilet. The whole world is just coming apart.

Jesus warned us of this in Matt. 24 when asked by His disciples to clarify when some events He had spoken of would occur. The first thing he told them was:

Matthew 24:3: "And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him alone, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming, and of the completion of the age?' Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, 'Be on guard, so that no one deceives you. For many shall come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ"; and they shall deceive many. And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See *that* you do not let *these things* disturb

you. For it is necessary *that* all *these* things take place, but the end is not yet'" (v 3-6).

Verse 24: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect." *That's us, brethren!*

Three times in this chapter we are cautioned about being deceived. Do you think God feels that's important for us to know? *He wants us to be prepared for these things, and we have to pay attention!*

Luke 22:31: "Then the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, listen *well*. Satan has demanded to have all of you, to sift as wheat.'"

The Greek word for sift, according to Thayer's definition as it was used here: ***by inward agitation to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow!***

This is what we can expect, and we must be watching for. Are we any different than these early disciples? *I think not, especially in these end-times!* We should expect no less than what the other saints have had to endure. We know all things are to escalate, and those in God's true Church are in Satan's main target, or his main focus.

Several places in the Bible it tells us what we can expect in the end-times. We can plan on one or more of these issues to affect us.

2-Peter 3:1: "Now, beloved, I am writing this second epistle to you; in *both*, I am stirring up your pure minds by causing *you* to remember *in order* for you to be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the Holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Savior, *spoken* by us, the apostles; knowing this first, that in the last days *there* will come mockers, walking according to their own personal lusts" (vs 1-3).

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of *true* Godliness. **But as for you, turn away from all these**" (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: "For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses, and are gaining control over empty-headed *gullible* women given over to *various* sins, *being* driven by all kinds of lust. **They are always learning but are never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth**"

(vs 6-7).

If we look at the way things are going, and as Fred has said, we don't have to just read the Bible to find out what's going on or what's going to go on. We can see it occurring every single day on the weekly news, and we know from the way that this 'woke' crowd is handling things, it's not just empty-headed, gullible women, it's many empty-headed, gullible men and young people who are being deceived by these colleges and universities.

These verses should be etched into our minds. These are some of the things we should be studying repeatedly and reinforcing our foundational knowledge *so that no man deceives us!*

As we saw in Matt. 24:3-5, we ought to be aware of those trying to deceive us. These can be from outside as well as inside the Church. I'd like to believe we'll be able to readily identify these outside sources. It's those who are within that is the most concerned, and should be. *This is called to our attention again in:*

2 Peter 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying the Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; and because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed" (vs 1-2).

This is talking about baptized members of the Church, people we have trusted and studied with, will end up introducing these false teachings. Again, we must be aware of these things. It's hard to believe things like this can happen to us, but look around the world.

- Did you ever expect this blatant sexualization and exploitation of almost everything we know?
- How about the lack of truth, moral boundaries, personal dealings and interactions among people?

Part of the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy sets some guidelines for us. We'll see what Paul has to say to Timothy:

1 Timothy 6:3— "If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness, he is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the

Truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness. **From such withdraw yourself**" (vs 3-5).

As we've learned, Satan always comes with a benefit.

- What is it that would get us to follow someone like this?
- Do they offer something that we think will benefit us?

We should help one another as much as we can, *but be aware when false teachings start appearing!*

Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *Gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!" (vs 6-9).

Scripture tells us we will know them by their fruits. You can find that in Matt. 7:16. Unfortunately, sometimes it's not as mature enough and can be hard to identify. This is why we need to seek the advice and counsel of those who we know are rooted in God's Word, another of the brethren that you trust, or one of the elders. I'd like to share something with you.

I listened to a country podcast recently and the presenter made a good analogy. ***Satan always comes to us bearing gifts with something good!*** When something good comes our way, we need to look at it and pray about it. When we do, we'll realize that it is good, but it's not great.

God's gifts and promises are great, so don't settle for good when you can have great! It seems straight to the point and easy to understand. But always remember:

1-Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things...."

God's Truth is the final answer. Because we are fallible humans and subject to human reasoning, we do have to avoid extremes in dealing with these issues. We cannot take these things personally; we cannot take authority to ourselves that we have not been given.

When we become self-righteous, we risk crossing the line ourselves. On the other hand, we cannot tolerate sin or the introduction of false teachings within the group. Sin within the group is not conducive to proper Bible study and learning. It leads to a heavy atmosphere of tension, which is good for no one. The authority and guidance we are

to follow are all listed in the Bible. ***God's Word is the guide we are to use!***

We are not the final authority, ***God is!*** We know His desire is that no man perishes.

2-Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not delaying the promise of *His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

That's God's strong desire. He wants us all. When we have our fellowship groups, one of the things that we bring out, because we're all human, is that we can't be tail-bearers against other people.

We have to realize that even people who have wronged us are people that God loves as much as He loves us. He doesn't want any of us to perish. We have to keep that in mind. We need to keep in mind also that we serve Him in His Church. It's our collective duty to lead and guide the brethren and each other as we are able.

As time goes by, we're going to have more people led to the Church, especially at the end-times.

- some may come from the Churches of God, some of the splinter groups
- some may come from secular churches seeking truth
- some may come from non-believing background and started searching on their own and they were led to us

In any event, we need to be able to lead and guide them. Those who follow up in the Truth, believe, repent and are baptized, will be like the workmen in the field who are called at different times, respond and are rewarded with the same reward as those called earlier. Let's review this parable of the workmen:

Matthew 20:1: "The Kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in *the morning* to hire workmen for his vineyard. And after agreeing with the workmen on a silver coin *for the day's wage*, he sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' And they went. Again, after going out about *the sixth hour and the ninth hour*, he did likewise. And about the eleventh hour, he went out *and found* others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all the day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive'" (vs 1-7).

Verse 8: "And when evening came, the lord

of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the workmen and pay them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.' And when those who *were hired* about the eleventh hour came, they each received a silver coin. But when the first ones came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a silver coin. And after receiving *it*, they complained against the master of the house, saying, "These *who came* last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have carried the burden and the heat of the day'" (vs 8-12).

Verse 13: "But he answered *and* said to them, 'But he answered *and* said to them, 'Friend, I am not doing you wrong. Did you not agree with me on a silver coin *for the day*? Take *what* is yours and go, for I also desire to give to the last *ones* exactly as I gave to you. And is it not lawful for me to do what I will with that which *is* my own? Is your eye evil because I am good?' So, the last shall be first, and the first *shall be* last; **for many are called, but few are chosen**" (vs 13-16).

We can see that not all were comfortable or happy with this arrangement. God has called all of us to be part of His Family and His Fellowship, and he'll be calling more in the future. He has set the path before us all. ***He has and will continue to faithfully lead us as long as we remain faithful to Him!***

As we continue on into the end-time scenario, we'll be able to help those who are called after us. Some will have more time in the world than in the Truth, and may have similar experiences that would allow them to relate more easily with those called later.

With their previous time in the world, they may be able to better mentor these newly called and help them to understand God's Truth and how it relates to all things, starting with the glory of His creation and right up to dealing with the problems in their lives.

Many will be called; ***those who endure to the end will be chosen!*** All of us will be tasked to mentor others. We need to depend on that solid foundation we are building on the Rock.

We also have to remember the most important part, ***we will not be able to accomplish anything if we do not have the love of God!*** God the Father and Jesus Christ love us, and all mankind tremendously. John was the apostle that Jesus loved. He wrote more about love of God than any other of the apostles.

In John 3:16 we're given the beginning instructions of why and how we ought to worship God.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him...”

Not a one-time profession, but a continuing commitment to love and obey Him, and to keep His commandments.

“...may not perish, but may have everlasting life” (v 16). *That is our reward, brethren!*

Jesus’ prayer to the Father before His arrest and crucifixion shows His love for not only the original apostles, but also for us.

John 17:20: “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word.”

That includes us, brethren. We’re believing in the word of the Lord through the words prophesied and told to us through the New Testament and the Gospels.

Verse 21: “That they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me, in order that they may be one, in the same way *that* We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one; and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (vs 21-23).

The love of Jesus and God the Father for us is further clarified by John.

1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of Life; (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ. These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full” (vs 1-4).

Brethren, all of us have been given a great opportunity. We have been called to be a part of God’s Family, to be with Him for eternity!

We know deception and false prophets are to have a prominent place as we progress toward the end-times. Look at the lies and deceptions right now within the government and the high-tech industry.

We will need to depend on God’s Word, this fellowship, and our brethren, and our relationship with other true Churches of God. Building and maintaining our spiritual foundation is critical. This is all part of it.

Plus, He has given us a great instruction manual to help us. When we read the Bible, we should study how Jesus and the Apostles dealt with life, and use those teachings to guide us in our personal lives, and teaching and counseling others. It is God’s inspired written Word.

2-Tim. 3 is important for us to convey to any new people coming in, because a lot of them are skeptical on this old book that we all so much depend on.

2-Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work” (vs 16-17).

God’s Scripture, His love for us and our love for Him, and the brethren, will allow us to build and maintain that foundation. Our relationship with one another and other true believers will help us shore it up and keep it strong.

We have to realize our ingrained human frailties and understand we are not going to solve any spiritual problems with human wisdom or reasoning.

James 3:13: “Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him demonstrate his works through good conduct in *the* meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie against the Truth. This wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual *and* demonic; because where bitter envying and selfish ambition *are*, there *is* dissension and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and without hypocrisy. Now, *the* fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace” (vs 13-18).

Brethren, thank you so much for having us with you. We are so honored to be part of this fellowship group and part of our affiliation with Christian Biblical Church of God. And so honored that the elders and all of those in the Church Administration and Fred Coulter are doing so much to ensure that this ministry continues on as long as it needs to continue.

So thank you so much for having me. God bless and have a great Sabbath.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:1-2
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:9
- 3) Matthew 5:17-19
- 4) Ezekiel 20:18-20
- 5) Luke 10:21-24
- 6) Isaiah 28:16
- 7) Psalm 118:22
- 8) Matthew 21:42
- 9) Ephesians 2:19-20
- 10) Matthew 7:24-27
- 11) 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- 12) Matthew 24:3-6, 24
- 13) Luke 22:31
- 14) 2 Peter 3:1-3
- 15) 2 Timothy 3:1-7
- 16) 2 Peter 2:1-2
- 17) 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 18) Galatians 1:6-9
- 19) 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- 20) 2 Peter 3:9
- 21) Matthew 20:1-16
- 22) John 3:16
- 23) John 17:20-23
- 24) 1 John 1:1-4
- 25) 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- 26) James 3:13-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 20:8-11
- Matthew 7:16

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