

5,12, 20

We have finalized our introduction to the Colossian letter and the general themes it addresses, so tonight we're starting our exegetical study.

First, I want to share some info with you as a follow up to a short video I sent out earlier this week.

There is a bill currently being considered in the U.S. House of Representative in D.C. It is House Bill, 6666 (I'm not joking – all bills have numbers assigned and that's the one this one has – I'll send the link to the House bill in these notes and you can read it).

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6666/text?r=2&s=1>

And I'm planning to track the bill to see how it progresses through committee and the House and then if it passes the House, what happens to it in the Senate.

I'm not going to read the bill here, but I want to highlight a couple of sections that I think you'll find interesting.

Here's the intro to the bill's purpose (and make sure you read between the lines and see the implications)

(The purpose of this bill is) to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to eligible entities to conduct diagnostic testing for COVID-19, and related activities such as contact tracing through mobile health units and, as necessary, at individuals' residences, and for other purposes.

Note especially the last line: “. . . and as necessary, at individuals' residences, and for other purposes.”

- This would allow workers contracted by government grants to come into our homes, test all those that live there and remove anyone they deemed a health threat to others in the home. Since medical personnel have already told us that anyone who has received a flu vaccine in the last few years will test positive for the Coronavirus, whether they actually have the current strain or not, millions of false positives will happen.

- They could take you or your wife or husband or one or more of your children away from you and house them wherever they desire – that would be a government decision.
- And the phrase, “*and for other purposes*” is a typical legislative catch phrase that allows the government to go beyond what is specified in the bill and do literally anything they deem necessary to allegedly protect us from the virus.

Here’s the next excerpt I want to share;

. . . award grants to eligible entities to conduct diagnostic testing for COVID–19, to trace and monitor the contacts of infected individuals, and to support the quarantine of such contacts.

Key phrases here are “*trace (or track) and monitor the contacts of infected individuals and . . . quarantine such contacts.*”

So, they could not only remove and quarantine you and your family members, they could also quarantine anyone your family has had contact with.

The amount of money requested to underwrite this plan is \$100 billion for 2020 and (quote) “*sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal year 2021 and any subsequent fiscal year during which the emergency period continues.*”

Here’s a headline from ABC News:

Experts call for new national public health workforce to trace spread of COVID-19 cases. The practice, known as contact tracing, is a tried-and-true technique. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/experts-call-national-public-health-workforce-trace-spread/story?id=70144691>

And from “The Daily News”

Bloomberg to help New York create ‘tracer army’ to track coronavirus cases.

At a recent news conference Gov. Cuomo said:

“When you get a positive, you talk to that person and trace back who they have been in contact with, you then test those people and isolate those people so you don’t increase the rate of infection . . . That’s what tracing is; the faster you trace the better.”

<https://www.nydailynews.com/coronavirus/ny-coronavirus-bloomberg-cuomo-new-york-tracer-army-20200430-yvumfot42vfmdlsfyba6pvveyq-story.html>

Cuomo is one of several governors who are developing plans to recruit thousands of contract tracers to make this happen.

These governors seem to have advance knowledge of whether this bill is going to pass congress.

If it plays out as planned, these workers will be in every state, every town and every country – they will come to your house, test you; and isolate anyone with a positive test result.

The “short title” for the bill is the TRACE Act. TRACE stands for “Testing, Reaching And Contacting Everyone” – literally “everyone”!

In support of this, Bill Gates is calling for a mandatory participation in a global vaccine program which this bill would support. The vaccine would contain a chip for tracking purposes. MIT is working on this with Gates.

Here’s how Gates worded it in a recent interview:

“. . . we will have to have certificates of who’s a recovered person and who’s a vaccinated person because you don’t want people moving around the world where you’ll have some countries that won’t have it under control. You don’t want to completely block off the ability for those people to go there and come back and move around, so eventually there will be sort of this digital immunity proof that will help facilitate (a safe) global re-opening.”

Dr. Fauci recently said that digital certificates of immunity are being seriously considered among the members of the task force.

Attorney General Barr expressed concern over this plan. He thinks it may be necessary, but he isn’t excited about the implications to our privacy and civil liberties. I’ve included a link to his comments below:

<https://youtu.be/-eF0oanIsRQ>

So, our government at the highest levels and private tech. companies who would implement the plan who plan as recipients of the grants, are anticipating a law which will mandate the means of obtaining universal identification of every person on this planet.

There is so much more information out there, not just about this, but about everything that is happening on every level.

But here's what mystifies me the most in all this.

In spite of the fact that the Bible is crystal clear in Rev. 13 and other passages (Old and New Testament) about the coming global government taking control of all of this world's citizens;

And in spite of the fact that we are seeing formation of this world government along with growing evidence of the fulfillment of a multitude of other signs given in the Bible which identify clearly where we are in history;

There are still Christians that say they are 'skeptical' about the idea that we are at the end of the last generation of this age.

Consider these passages with me; first from Luke 12:49-56;

I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division . . . And He was also saying to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out. And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be a hot day,' and it turns out that way. You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?"

A recent LifeWay poll revealed that over 92% of pastors in our country won't even teach eschatology for fear of losing people in their churches by being controversial or viewed as being 'negative' – even though over 1/3 of the Bible is prophecy, and the future, for the believer, is called the “blessed hope”. Which is the *opposite* of negative.

And then in 1 Thess. 5:6;

. . . let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and alert.

And in 2 Pet. 3:3;

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come . . . saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?”

So, now, you have an idea of what kind of people remain 'skeptical' in the face of the obvious.

My appeal to all of us is this - don't be a part of this group.

I know that the fact you are listening to our studies means you are open, but open is not the same as convinced.

The Lord's desire for us, instead of being spiritually asleep, is that we become children of light in a darkened world of despair and confusion.

This world desperately needs us to wake up.

If we really desire to honor the Lord in our generation, we have to be willing to put in the effort needed to know what's happening in the church and in the world – and to make sure we know exactly where we stand in relation to all we learn.

Between us and the Lord, personally, we need to be convinced – we need to know; just like the sons of Issachar in 1 Chron. 12:32,

Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, to know (exactly) what Israel should do . . .

Finally, before we jump into the first verses of Colossians, I've received some emails I need to briefly respond to – for some of you this will be a quick review and for others it will hopefully help answer their questions.

Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler and nearly every other dictator of the 20th century have followed a simple but effective method to gain control over the masses. There are books that go back to the 1800's that lay out the "what" and "how" of this.

It's exactly the same pattern as the present-day globalist leaders are using to move this planet into a one-world government and global economic system.

Here's how it works:

- 1) Create a crisis (or take advantage of one that has arrived)
 - In this case, the Coronavirus (I lean toward 'created' but at this point it doesn't matter).

- 2) Bring about an economic crash
 - Force every one to 'shelter-in-place' in mandated lockdowns destroying millions of lives and the loss of millions of jobs.
 - And lie about the real risk of the virus and the numbers to generate and amplify fear so the population will fall in line.

- 3) Create confusion
 - Flood the world through media with constantly conflicting information and claims; no one knows who to believe, who to trust, who's telling the truth - and then fear grows in the face of ongoing uncertainty.

- 4) Cause intensified division
 - Pit political parties, races and nations against each other – generate growing frustration and anger in the streets and in our hearts as we look for someone to blame for our fear.

- 5) Finally, bring in hope and a solution for which personal freedom is gladly sacrificed to achieve personal safety and some degree of normalcy.

1Thess. 5:3; "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon them."

Peace and safety are now much more important to the citizens of this world than freedom and truth.

The method of bringing order and safety out of chaos has been around for a long time. It's used because it works.

Once the chaos, fear and frustration are significant enough, a savior can be brought into the picture and people will not only welcome him, they will worship him.

Even if he is Satan disguised as an angel of light – which in this case is exactly what the Bible says will happen.

Paul tells us to 'not be ignorant of Satan's devices' and to 'expose the works of darkness' – so this was just a brief update on both.

Ok, now Colossians 1 vs's 1-2:

Paul an apostle, commissioned by Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy, to the set apart for God's purpose and believing brothers in Christ, grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the way, just an FYI, the word "holy" or "set apart" is always focused on a specific purpose. Even predestination has more to do with ultimate conformity to Christ than with eternal destiny.

So, Paul begins this letter with his standard greeting, affirming his commission from God as having the calling and authority of an apostle.

I don't want to tangent on all that we could consider about apostles other than to read a passage from 1 Thess. that describes what they were in action; and notice the personal as well as the comprehensive nature of Paul's understanding of what an apostle is;

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— nor did we seek glory

from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

They didn't fly in Lear jets or start movements with catchy acronyms or get top billing at local stadiums with Jumbo Tron lights and photos with smiling headshots and a listing of their best-selling books.

They were "the least of these", the "poor in spirit"; they were humble and would have torn their clothes and sprinkled ashes their head if anyone had tried to make them celebrities of any kind.

What a difference 2000 thousand years makes.

A couple of passages come to mind:

That which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination to God (Luke 16:15)

Why is the Lord so against us trying to be impressive or "highly esteemed" among men? Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 1:26-29;

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the

things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.

These comments by Major Ian Thomas really drive this home for us:

“Jesus was thought to be the illegitimate child of an unfaithful woman, so socially, how much was He worth? Nothing.

Born of peasant stock, His schooling was negligible, sufficing only to equip Him for the humble duties of a common craftsman. Professionally, how much was he worth? Nothing.

A fanatical street-preacher and rabble rouser, He was totally repudiated by all the ecclesiastical dignitaries of His day, and having had absolutely no theological training whatever, was looked upon with supreme contempt by all that called itself scholarship. Ecclesiastically, theologically, and intellectually how much was He worth? Nothing.

His financial standing was such that he even had to borrow a coin for one of His far-fetched illustrations. He was an incorrigible scrounger by all natural standards of value, for He had no home of His own. Born in a borrowed stable, He lived and dined in borrowed homes; He rode upon a borrowed donkey, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. He was bankrupt from the start. Financially, how much was He worth? Nothing.

If the Lord Jesus Christ were to appear in the world today under similar circumstances, what church would allow Him to be their pastor? What Bible college or seminary would appoint Him to their faculty? What missionary organization would invite Him on their board or even send Him to the field?

The reality is this: No matter what our current standards of evaluation may be, a man is worth only as much as can be seen of Christ in Him.”

Have you ever seen the required qualifications for a pastor or missionary or seminary professor? Jesus wouldn't get a first interview, let alone a second.

In the first century, apostles were men who shared the cross of Christ Who said, “the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.”

Things have changed radically since the 1st century.

I can absolutely guarantee with 100% confidence that when we all get to heaven, “The first will be last and the last will be first.”

The next thing we need to see is that Paul nearly always connects “peace” and “grace” in his greeting.

Over the years I’ve come to believe that these terms are “cause and effect”. In other words, those who have a full and accurate understanding of grace, will experience a deep and indestructible peace in their spirit.

Paul stresses this because *assurance* in the midst of a world of uncertainty, suffering and deception can be an anchor in our souls that helps ensure our spiritual and emotional survival.

More than anything else, the giant question-mark Satan wants to put in our mind is doubt about the integrity and faithfulness of God – especially when we’re under pressure.

Bishop Moule says that “Grace is the free and loving favor of God and peace is the removal of all barriers between God and us, but so as to imply its results *in us*”.

His comments led me to realize that rather than praying for peace (which we already have through Christ), we should pray to better understand what grace is and especially as it applies to us, personally, in our relationship with the Lord.

To really get an idea of what this can mean on a personal level, we have to see how unconditional grace really is.

Here’s what I mean. In 2 Cor. 12:9 Paul writes,

But the Lord said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

I know we’re familiar with this passage, but think through the implications. Grace isn’t meant for, or appreciated by, people who are doing well – who are strong.

Maybe more than any other time in the history of the Church, what God told Isaiah was true, “My ways are not your ways. . .”

It will be difficult to have peace, to know grace, as long as seeing things through the eyes of the world keeps us from seeing as God's sees, and valuing what God values.

It's not our strength that commends us to the grace of God; it's our weakness.

The things in our lives that we believe make the Lord withdraw from us, are the very things that draw His compassion *to* us.

As Spurgeon put it,

"Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation. We are saved *'through* faith,' but salvation is *'by* grace'."

Faith is the only thing you and I can do and after having done it, we have done absolutely nothing but receive God's grace.

So, let's take a few minutes and look at some of the practical implications of grace.

- 1) Grace is much more than forgiving or recovering us from the consequences of failure and sin. It is that; but if that's all God's grace did it would do no more for us that restore us to Adam's unfallen condition.

Grace doesn't just restore and regenerate, it takes those of us who were once enemies of God and unites us with Christ at the right hand of God.

Grace takes us from the lowest position to the highest – and none of this is based on our deserving any of this.

1 Pet. 1:13 says, "The God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus".

- 2) Think about the way Jesus dealt with Mary and Martha up to the healing of Lazarus. He waited – too long. Not only did He not go to Lazarus when he was sick, He waited two days after hearing about Lazarus' illness to go to him.

Mary and Martha were torn up over this and in their anguish, they even accused Him of deliberate delay.

Those two days were days of suffering and sorrow for them.

And when Jesus saw their pain, He wept.

But when Christ *did* come, their sorrow was turned to joy.

The church has been waiting for two thousand years and has been suffering, and in many places has been desperate for God's final demonstration of grace in freeing us from this world.

When He comes, sorrow will be turned to joy – and the longer the wait, the deeper the desire and longing for His return, the greater the joy when He comes.

The story of Lazarus is only one of hundreds of events like this in the Bible.

Whenever the Lord delays in moving into action on our behalf, there is always a purpose that will ultimately work out as being in our best interest.

God does nothing on behalf of those who are His children that is not motivated by pure love – by grace.

- 3) Grace is God's love *in action* and His love for us is measured by what He gave to redeem us; His own Son.

Rom. 5:8; "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Rom. 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

Even in eternity we will barely understand the depths of a love that would sacrifice at the level that Jesus suffered when He was pulled into eternity to receive the wrath of God, the punishment that we deserve – all so that we can share the glory that *He* deserves.

4) Finally, here are some comments I found in the Strombeck Collection that help sum this up:

“This is the consummation of grace. All who in this age of grace believe on the Son shall be one in the Father and in the Son as they Two are one in Each Other. The Son has given them the glory which was given Him by the Father. They shall be with Him where He is. And they shall be loved by the same love wherewith the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world.”

So, now maybe we can better understand why Paul wrote this in nearly all his letters, “Grace and peace to you through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Getting a firm grasp on grace brings peace to a troubled heart.