

5,19,20

When we think about everything we've heard in documentaries, videos and articles about the plans the enemy has been carrying out over the years, it's easy to see why things have reached this point in history.

But all those things would not have happened, or been successful, if our nation was under the protection of God – He has withdrawn that protection. Some theologians call this 'God's passive judgement', meaning that He has "given us over" to reap what we've sown by rejecting Him.

And before we jump into the next few verses in Colossians, I want to share my opinion on the specifics of why this has happened.

There's been a massive increase in lawlessness and deception but here's what I believe are the *main* reasons we passed what J.D. calls, "The Point of No Return".

In my opinion these are the three biggest things that needed to happen to keep the Lord's blessing. In spite of our pro-Israel stance, there are things God will not tolerate indefinitely.

1) Child sacrifice

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. (Lev. 18:21)

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Say to the people of Israel, 'any of the people of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech shall surely be put to death . . . I myself will set my face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, and if the people of the land close their eyes . . . then I will set my face against that man and against his clan and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him. . . ' (Lev. 20:1-5)

They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. (Psalm 106:37-38)

Under the guise of supporting women's health and the promotion of the "my body, my choice" movement, we are murdering our children - and God sees and feels every child's death.

It's just Molech in 21st century, humanistic re-packaging.

Neither our president nor this country as a whole has fought hard enough against this.

2) The LGBTQ Agenda

It's not only about homosexuality, many of who are coming to Christ, there is a hidden agenda within this movement to promote open rebellion against God and what He's created and intended in the relationship we see in Christ and the Church foreshadowed in Adam and Eve.

I'll include a link in the notes on an article that shows the president's actions. It's an article written by Dr. Scott Lively which addresses the theological and political implications of President Trump's increasing endorsement of the LGBTQ agenda.

<https://www.scottlively.net/2020/02/25/president-trumps-most-dangerous-error/>

3) The unrepentance of the Church

This last one is the biggest problem, because God's people are always His main focus in history.

As I said before, He gave us, as His people, a reprieve after the Obama era to turn back to the Lord and see our land healed. We didn't do that. We just soaked in the freedom and prosperity we were given and continued our Laodicean, self-centered Christianity.

The warning to Laodicea if they didn't repent was that the Lord would judge them;

Rev. 3:16 - Because you are neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of My mouth.

That phrase, "spew you out of My mouth" is a term of judgement and we see it come up in the scriptures first in Leviticus 18:26-28.

You are to keep My statutes and My judgments and you shall not do any of the abominations (of the inhabitants of Canaan) . . . so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which was before you.

For these three reasons, America is going to fall; to a large extent, it already has.

Now, let's go a little deeper into this – I want to help us see how we can get a good idea what's really going on.

If we lay the grid of the Bible over national and world events, we will be able to give a spiritual interpretation of all that's happening around us.

The world is ruled by Satan because the dominion originally given to Man was turned over to him.

To make sense of the activities of the powers of darkness, the first place we should look is at their goal.

What is Satan's ultimate goal?

The establishment of a one-world government,
one-world economic system
and a global religion.

So, look around – do you see any evidence that our world is becoming a global community in each these areas?

This is what happens when you lay the grid of Truth on top of the events we see in our generation – everything not only becomes clear; everything begins to make sense. All the actions of kings, presidents, Prime Ministers and world-wide movements come into focus.

Simply through understanding the scriptures, we can see what other can't see – we can know our times and our place in history.

Global governance and unquestioned worship have been Satan's plan from the tower of babel to the rise of the Antichrist. It's the one thing he's consistently working toward in every generation.

So, let's make some applications to what we see in the visible world keeping in mind that principalities and powers rule from behind and are moving all things toward their goal of world domination.

We've already received a great deal of information from numerous sources regarding many of the human globalist players; there are literally thousands of individuals and super wealthy families that are the "kings of the earth".

Psalm 2:1-6,

Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.

Then He shall speak to them in His wrath and distress them in His deep displeasure:

"Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion."

Daniel 10:12-14

Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."

One of God's princes received help from Michael, a chief prince (an archangel), to overcome Satan's ruling prince over the kingdom of Persia.

Angels have names (Michael, Gabriel, Lucifer). I heard a pastor talking about this and said that the name of the prince of Persia is obvious. Modern day Persia is Iran. The prince of Iran, and of several nations surrounding Iran, is Allah. Allah is a fallen archangel under Lucifer's authority and Islam is a satanic religion totally committed to the destruction of every Christian and Jew on the planet.

Ok, back to globalism.

All of Satan's movements through his hierarchy of principalities and powers is toward a final global government and global religion, so most of the earth's "kings", whether they rule nations, states, counties or cities, are under the influence of, or in many cases fully possessed by, Satan's forces.

One way to tell which leader is in which camp is to look at their actions and their plans. If they push for increased governmental control and dominance over people and if they push for globalism, they are in the enemy's camp. And since they are servants of the Father of lies, their primary means of accomplishing these things will be through deception.

Revelation 12:9

So, the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him

John 8:43-45

Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Nikki and I are seeing the end of this age moving toward us at an extremely accelerated speed, and believe that at some point, as a group, we need to have a discussion on what we can do to prepare for what's coming.

So, think and pray about that, and in the near future maybe we can set aside a time to talk about what the Lord shows us.

I'm going to stop for now, because I want to get back to Colossians.

Col. 1:3-8

We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Thanksgiving is the heart-beat of the life of grace. As we see with Paul, hearing about the spiritual progress of the Colossian believers naturally causes him to give thanks to God.

The reason for directing this to "the Father" is because in the relationship between the members of the Trinity, the Father is the divine Source of all grace and goodness. He authored this plan and brings all things to us through His Spirit to the glory of the Son. The way James puts might help to understand what Paul means,

This is James 1:17:

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

The Amplified says, "no shadow cast by His turning" – meaning that God is unchangeable. Once He decided to bring us into the place of grace, He will never change or alter than decision.

This goes to what we think of God as a Person. What kind of God is He?

Genuine gratitude is really only possible if we see Him as He is; otherwise our 'thanksgiving' has elements of skepticism and even doubt.

Maybe the best way to illustrate this is to go to "worst case scenario" for the Christian; which means we have to pick on the Corinthians. We'll start with 1 Cor. 15:41-42,

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also, is the resurrection of the dead.

When you and I are either raptured or resurrected from the dead, we will pass through the Judgment Seat of Christ and without going into all the details of that event now, when we come out the other side, our resurrection bodies will express from within the measure of Christ that was formed in us in time.

Since that will be different for everyone, Paul uses an illustration of the constellation to show that the light or glory emanating from each of us will be as different as the moon and the stars.

The full, combined glory of the universal Church when all members are established in their new bodies, will ultimately add up to what Eph. 4:13 calls "The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The Church, as the Lord's many-membered body, will radiate His glory throughout all creation for all eternity.

And it has taken 2000 years of incorporating into this body all those saved during this dispensation and then bringing them through to their standing in eternity – the ultimate goal of perfectly expressing the fullness of the Son of God in a corporate vessel, which Paul calls "one new Man" in Eph. 2:15.

Paul capstones this with his statement in Eph. 3:21, "To God be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever."

The more convinced we become of the reality of these things, the more we will find ourselves in perpetual amazement.

And this world and the Laodicean church will become less appealing and less dangerous to us as our thoughts become grounded in what is real and eternal. Because the truth *does* set free.

There is a coming kingdom and it's coming soon; listen to this verse in Isa. 32:1

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice

Christ is the King; who are the "princes"?

S. J. Andrews answers it this way,

"There is during the kingdom, a well-ordered system of government, embracing the whole earth, administered by Christ *through those whom He appoints*; a system adapted to meet the needs of all its inhabitants in all their varied conditions and degrees of development."

When God's King takes over this planet it doesn't mean He will do everything governmentally Himself (although as the Son of God, He could) but that He will be the final authority over princes throughout this world who will rule under His direction - perfectly according to His will.

Those within the Church appointed to this honor will reign with Christ for 1000 years in positions of the highest authority over this world.

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21)

This is a faithful saying: for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. (2 Tim. 2:11-12)

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (1 Cor. 6:2)

We will soon, very soon, stand before the Lord face-to-face and everything done by Him through us (not by us for Him) will be rewarded.

And this incredible issue of being appointed to positions of great authority in the government of God will then be determined and assigned.

As I said earlier, God never departs from His initial and original purpose. God never accepts anything less. He does not deviate, He does not abandon, He does not forfeit or sacrifice anything of His original intention in creation. It remains the standard by which God views and works out *everything*; and in the end, God will sovereignly work in relation to His original plan.

Ultimately, everything will be tested (*is being* tested globally now); not to see if it's busy or productive, but to see if it is according to God's desire. In God's purpose, that which was His heart from the beginning must be brought to fullness at the end.

Nothing, no matter how impressive it may seem to us, will substitute for this. We need to know the truth of what God is moving toward and we need to go there with Him – just as the early disciples followed Jesus wherever He went.

Ok, back to the Corinthians and “worst case scenario”.

Keeping everything we've looked at in mind and knowing that God will work all things after the council of His own will to bring the Church to the fullness of Christ, let's look at how the Corinthians were doing in cooperating with God in this.

1 Cor. 11:30-31: For this reason, many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Worst case scenario for a Christian is to be so unaware of, and uncommitted to, God's purpose that they live in what is essentially rebellion (either morally or spiritually) and since God knows they have no intention of moving forward in their spiritual life, He simply removes them from planet earth.

But even in this situation of being taken out of here with what we could call a “dishonorable discharge”, Paul makes sure the Corinthians know that this judgment of God is “chastening” or “discipline”, not condemnation.

As we know from Heb. 12:4;

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
Nor faint when you are reproved by Him;
For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines . . .

God's love remains unchanged even in the case of a rebellious prodigal son.

So, as I said earlier, when we remember the incredible destiny He has for us and the great love with which He saved us for Himself is unchanging, our thanksgiving to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ does not need to be mixed with doubt.

God is, and always will be, our "Father Who art in Heaven".

The Fatherhood of God and the grace of our Lord have to be the foundation we build our lives on.

God is a God of purpose, He's not passive and He doesn't settle for less than the complete fulfillment of that purpose.

He is motivated by love but it is always toward a specific, eternal goal; and that goal, in relation to His Son and all those who are in His Son, is *always* positive.

You can see this in God's character all the way from Genesis chapter one. When God looked down on the earth which had become "without form and void", He immediately showed us that He wasn't going to accept that.

There was a purpose in the beauty of creation that had been lost, and it needed to be recovered; so, in the next chapters of Genesis, that's exactly what God did.

All that is in this fallen world is negative, decaying, impregnated with death and destined for destruction, but all that is intended in the new creation is positive, full of wonder, light and life. And eventually it is only the new creation that will exist when even "death", the final enemy, is destroyed.

Everything that God is working into our lives is according to His purpose to sum everything up in Christ – in complete and eternal perfection.

God works against what is negative, to bring about the positive; against what is empty and void, without purpose, to bring about fullness and order; against what is dark, to bring in light.

That's the nature of the Christian life; that is what will be made absolute in Christ in the new creation.

Ok, back to Colossians 1.

In vs 4 and following Paul starts listing what he's thankful for, specifically related to the Colossians. If you highlight parts of vs's 4 & 5, you see some themes that are familiar in Paul's writings.

"Since we heard of your *faith* . . . and *love* . . . for the *hope* which is laid up for you. . .

Faith, hope and love.

These are the inner graces that cooperate with God's purpose of bringing all creation to ultimate perfection in Christ.

So, when Paul sees these characteristics in the Colossians, he knows that not only is this church in sync with the Lord, but Christ Himself is being expressed through them to others.

Another way to say this would be that the Colossian's faith in Christ and love to others is based on the hope which is laid up for them in heaven.

That's why in Col. 3:1-2 Paul is going to exhort them (and us) to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth; because above is where our life is: that's where the One Who *is* our life is, and we are in Him.

The earth is a world of pain and deception; our citizenship and our destiny in Christ are "above". No matter what is happening here, nothing can take that away from us, because in Christ it's already ours.

The world and the devil pull us like a magnet down to earth. We need to read and re-read anything and everything daily that will pull our thoughts back to our home, our position in Christ, away from our circumstances in this world, away from our failures and worries to the reality of who and what we are in Christ.

There is battle on for our minds and as I'm sure you've noticed, it's more intense than it's ever been. In 2 Cor. 10:4-5 we read,

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds; casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

So, making sure our thoughts are brought into obedience to Christ means saturating our minds with the truth because we are trying to survive in a world of deception.

We want the "God of peace" to be with us; Paul tells us exactly how that happens in Phil. 4:8ff

. . . whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

So, in the last part of Col. 1:5 Paul reminds them that they had already learned all these things;

. . . Because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth

Just in those verses you can see what is underscoring Paul's gratitude. He's seeing the increasing fruit of Christ formed in these believers and the reason that's happening is because they are growing in their "(understanding of) the grace of God in truth."

As we saw in our last study – there is no way to overemphasize the importance of understanding God's grace and living in the reality of that knowledge.

Epaphras was a living example of the love and grace Paul had been talking about.

I find it fascinating that nearly everywhere in the Bible, when the Spirit wants to communicate truth to us, He will state that truth, but will follow it up with flesh and blood examples of the incarnation of the truth He's seeking to bring to us

From God's standpoint, for all of us, the Word must become "flesh and dwell among us." It's not knowledge alone that matters; it's "Life".

What God is after is men and women who are not only filled with the knowledge of God, but are also inwardly conformed to His image.

We are to *become* the message we offer to others.

The best place to clearly see this is in studying what the prophets went through in preparation for their service to Israel.

Like Hosea marrying a prostitute to be able to appeal to the northern kingdom of Israel with the empathy and sorrow of God's relationship with Israel, as Israel committed harlotry with other gods.

All of the prophets went through incredible trials and experiences to be able to be the message they were to present to God's people.

That is exactly what is happening with many of you now – our suffering is to allow us to share the burdens of the Lord in experience and not just in knowledge. We are sharing the sufferings of Christ.

It appears that Epaphras, at least in Paul's estimation, was the embodiment of the grace of God to the Colossians.

Knowing these things about him, about the prophets, about the apostles, can help us better understand the mystery of God's ways with us – because He intends, by what He's doing now in our lives, that we will also become the message that He wants to bring to others.