

## 2026 1Q Earth Christ in Philippians and Colossians

### Lesson 9 Reconciliation and Hope

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

#### SABBATH

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Read Memory Text:

- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV84

What does it mean Christ was made to be sin though He had no sin?

Does our understanding of God's law make a difference in how we understand this verse?

Could this verse be explained in such a way that it causes people to fear God rather than trust Him?

How did God make Christ sin though Christ had no sin?

Those who hold the fiction that God's law functions like human law focus on the treatment Jesus received at the hands of His Father. In their view, Jesus was made legally responsible for the sin of the world and God used His divine power to execute Jesus thus making Jesus the legal holder of the sin debt even though Jesus had not sinned.

Such a construct makes God out to be a being who is untrustworthy. Such a construct teaches that God will use His power to punish an innocent person for the crimes of the guilty then will treat the guilty person as if they are innocent.

Further, this view teaches that the obstacle to our salvation is God and His law and justice that must be satisfied lest God be required to use His power to kill us. It teaches that God's government functions under the threat of Him using power to harm or kill if we don't obey by having love for Him.

This view teaches a view that is a violation of God's law, a violation of liberty because of the acceptance of the lie that God's law functions like human law. God cannot get love, trust, loyalty, devotion by using His power to kill those who don't love and trust Him.

Thus, this entire theology creates religionists who are zealous, but who ultimately do not trust God and leads to legal distortions about God that entrap people into a false system of worship—the object lesson of being enslaved in Babylon.

Why does this happen? Adam and Eve's sin corrupted their life, their spirit, with fear and selfishness. This caused them to run and hide from God and seek to cover over their own guilt and shame. Every human is born with this spirit of fear and the spirit of fear motivates to self-protection—and thus people want to fix things, to make ourselves less vulnerable, so we seek control—if we can we want to be in charge, we want to set the rules, we want order on our terms—in other words law and law enforcement appeals to the sinful nature.

Further, God is the God of order, of cosmos, of creation—and His design laws are the laws upon which life is built to operate. Sin is transgression of His design law protocols and separate us from Him who is the Creator and SUSTAINER of all reality, the natural result is decay, disorder, degradation, chaos, ruin, and death. Thus sin itself causes the dissonance in the heart, the spirit is out of harmony with God, we experience fear and we want to fix it. Think about a child who drops their mother's expensive and precious antique vase and it breaks into many pieces—what do they do? They respond with fear and immediately seek either to hide it or to glue it back together.

Sin, distrust of God, severing our connection, introduction of lies and fear and selfishness is discord, is degradation, is dissonance, and it directly causes the natural order of God's universe to fragment, decay, fall apart, the harmony and peace in the soul is shattered with fear, guilt, shame and what do people naturally do? They seek to put it back together, to fix it, to make it right, and they use the only tools that they have and that is imposed laws and law enforcement—they will make it right. And when they finally realize that all of their hard work, all of their laws and law keeping will never be able to put things in their soul right again, and they hear God's promise to set things right through Jesus, they transfer all their law-keeping to Jesus and teach a distorted penal legal process of Jesus paying a legal penalty to God to pay for their crimes.

But this false teaching does not restore trust in God, it perpetuates the lie that God is the source of death who will harm His own children if they do not get the legal payment made to Him. And how reality works is that they are not capable of loving Him until they are first won to trust, open the heart, and receive a new Spirit, the life of Christ. So they are trapped in a false legal system of salvation in which their very beliefs keep the spirit of fear alive and they end up like the zealous religious leaders who crucified Christ. And they stay this way until they experience what Saul of Tarsus did and they either choose surrender their lives in trust to Jesus and are reborn with a new Spirit and then everything changes—because they realize then salvation is not legal it is actual, or they do as Pharaoh did when he had divine revelation made to him, instead of choosing to surrender in trust he chose to reject the truth and harden his heart. The Pharisees in Christ day chose this path and sadly so do many today.

We help people experience this actual healing by returning to worshiping God as Creator, understanding His laws are the laws upon which life and reality are built and sin is a breaking of that design parameter for life, which is love and trust, and that choice to distrust and believe lies is what is the cause of the decay and degradation.

Consider the analogy of introducing random mutations into your DNA, or introducing bad code into your computer's operating system, what happens? Decay, dysfunction, disorder, and eventually the system stops working—death.

This is why Paul wrote in Romans 14:23 that whatever breaks trust with God is sin—remember sin is transgression of the law and the law that is transgressed is the law of love and trust, not a list of rules. And breaking trust is a breakdown of love.

When we understand that life comes from God and that Adam and Eve, when they broke trust, corrupted their spirit with fear and selfishness, and that severed them from God, introduced discord, disruption to the sustaining power of God, their hearts and minds become disordered, fear and selfishness direct the formation of erroneous and fictitious explanations of things that introduce further discord and decay, their bodies respond with increasing fear, and their bodies slowly decay, the natural result of all of this is death—and there is nothing they can do to stop it or fix it. And when we understand this we understand why Jesus becoming sin for us not be a legal accounting but Him in reality partaking of the very life Adam corrupted with fear and selfishness, and introducing a new life, a new spirit, a sinless life with perfect order, perfect truth, perfect love, and by exercising His human free will when He was tempted in all points like we are He destroyed, purged, eliminated the corruption, every lie, every fear, every guilt, shame, distortion, distrust, and became the second Adam—a real human being who is perfect in all ways.

Jesus partook of that very life through Mary. Thus, He became a real human being, part of this creation, descended from Adam, and unto Him death was transmitted because the life He partook from Mary was corrupted with fear and selfishness. But Jesus' humanity was not formed by a sinful mother AND a sinful father, the Father to Jesus' humanity was the Holy Spirit, so Jesus was born with a humanity capable of being tempted in all points like us, a humanity infected with the spirit of fear and selfishness, but He was also born with the Holy Spirit and Jesus, as a human, exercising human abilities to think and choose, developed a perfect sinless manhood and character and at the cross He became sin in that He took up the position Adam held, and took that terminal life to the cross and was abandoned by His Father and that life died, but Jesus had another life, a sinless life received by the Holy Spirit so Jesus rose again with a purified and perfectly reconstituted humanity.

Here is an illustration of this:



He did this for us because no human being could do it since each of us are born with a corrupted life from both our mother and father—only Jesus, who brought a new sinless life into humanity could purge the cause of decay, discord, disorder, dissonance and death and restore perfect truth, love, trust, and harmony with His Father so that humanity is fully aligned with the every sustaining power of God. And because of what Jesus did, we, when we are won to trust, can receive through that faith or trust, His sinless life and become the righteousness of God.

This is reality, we, when won to trust in God, become animated with a new life, a new spirit, and are renewed, recreated, cleansed, reborn, regenerated, our identity which before this was animated and motivated by fear and survival is now animated and motivated by love and trust. This is the righteousness by faith message that is to lighten the world.

Sadly it has been eclipsed by the false legal theory which states when we claim the blood of Jesus then God declares us to be righteous even though we are not. This false legal theory teaches that we are not righteous, we only get a legal declaration of righteousness thus keeping people trapped in fear and selfishly clinging to their old terminal life while claiming legal pardon for their sins—a form of godliness with no power, because it divorces itself from the true power of God.

Read first paragraph,

- Paul continues the theme of reconciliation, which was so vividly highlighted in Colossians 1:20 (see Lesson 8, Thursday). There he described its cosmic scope, while what follows it becomes personal and individual. Through His death on the cross, Jesus has accomplished reconciliation for everyone and everything, especially human beings, who were alienated from the life of God through sin, but now can be reconciled to Him through faith. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 68.

Let's read Colossians 1:19-20:

- For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:19-20 NIV84

So the Bible says all things are reconciled to Christ, whether things on earth or things in heaven...what does this mean?

First, what is meant by reconciling heavenly things?

Where did sin begin? In heaven, and while the loyal angels stayed loyal they did not have all their questions in regard to God's character, methods, government, and Satan's allegations against God answered until it was all fully exposed at the cross.

That is why Jesus said:

- Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all **men** to myself." John 12:31-32

But the word "men" is added by the translators, it is not in the Greek, Jesus is drawing all beings capable of being drawn to Him by revealing the truth about Himself and the Father and exposing Satan as the liar and the author of death.

So Paul wrote that all things whether in heaven or earth are reconciled to Christ through His blood shed on the cross.

But there is a sentence in the lesson that might be easily misunderstood that I think we should clarify:

- Through His death on the cross, **Jesus has accomplished reconciliation for everyone and everything**, especially human beings, who were alienated from the life of God through sin, but now can be reconciled to Him through faith. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 68.

Is every single person reconciled to Christ? I don't think the lesson is suggesting universalism that every single individual is reconciled, but that Christ accomplished what is necessary for every person to be reconciled.

This statement is also ambiguous in that the word "everyone" doesn't differentiate angels and humans but the fact that the sentence states right afterward "especially human beings" indicates that they are including angels in the "everyone."

But again, I do not believe the lesson would suggest that Satan and his angels are reconciled by what Christ has done. So I think this is merely a poorly worded sentence and point it out only to prevent misunderstanding.

I know myself I have stated things sometimes in ways that can be heard differently than I intend, it is one of the hazards of human language.

But regarding angels, the Bible says this about what Christ accomplished:

- Since the children have flesh and blood, **he too shared in their humanity** so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For **surely it is not angels he helps**, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason **he had to be made like his brothers in every way**, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God Hebrews 2:14-17 NIV84, emphasis mine

What does this mean? How is it that Jesus reconciles heavenly things, we talked about the loyal angels benefiting from the truth revealed by Jesus, but Hebrews tells us that it is not angels he helps? So what does this text mean?

Was Jesus' death on the cross not sufficient to save the fallen angels?

If one holds to the penal legal view that sin is a crime and it requires punishment and someone has to pay that legal penalty for the crime, which is death; and Jesus' life as the Son of God has infinite value or worth and therefore is enough to pay the legal penalty for every sinners sins—then why can't the blood of Jesus pay for the sins of angels?

**Because sin is not a legal problem!** It is a lethal problem an actual decay and degradation of the being that results in death unless fixed.

Notice this text emphasizes that Jesus had to be born human, made like us in every way in order to save us. But Jesus' humanity has no benefit, no ability to save fallen angels—yes, the truth revealed benefits the loyal angels to clarify their questions and solidify them in loyalty, but the truth doesn't save the fallen angels and the death of Christ doesn't offer them a way of salvation—why?

Because of how reality works. Jesus has already told us that angels do not marry or give in marriage—meaning they do not procreate beings in their image. This means that every angel was created individually, with their own breath of life directly from God and they all chose to break trust with God and corrupt their spirits, their lives, just like Adam and Eve did. In other words they originated in a sinless state and sinned from that sinless state.

But every human since Adam's sin is **born** with a single shared breath of life that was breathed into Adam, which he had already corrupted and made terminal. We never chose to become sinners, and thus, Jesus, by partaking of humanity, partook of that very same breath of life and purged the spirit of fear and selfishness and replaced it with a new sinless breath of life, spirit, that we can partake of by faith.

This is reality! The sin problem is not a legal problem it is an actual problem of how God built life to operate—design laws for life.

## **SUNDAY**

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Read second paragraph,

- However, since the entrance of sin, God has taken the initiative to reconcile us, as bad as we are, to Himself. That is, from the start, God has worked to solve the problem of sin, even if the solution could be found only in His own death on the cross. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 69.

This is well stated, God has taken the initiative to reconcile humanity to Him. God is perfect, constant, never changes, and thus when sin broke our connection with God nothing needed to be done to God to restore humanity to unity with Him. Something had to be done to humanity, and that is why Christ had to become human to fix humanity, to perfect humanity, to bring humanity back into sinless unity with God.

Understanding again how reality works, God cannot create character. God can create sinless beings with free will and capacity for self-directed development. But free sentient and sapient beings must choose for themselves whether they will love and trust or not. Meaning, once Adam and Eve sinned their condition was corrupted, their spirit of fear motivated to self-protection and fleeing from God. Without God intervening they would die, nothing they could do to stop it. The only way to save humanity was for God to enter humanity and exercise human abilities to perfect and mature humanity into God's original ideal and intention for this species. Jesus did that by the exercise of His human abilities and suffered the pain, agony, torment that sin causes, the guilt of sin pressed upon His heart and mind in Gethsemane and the cross, He experienced the fear, the heartache, the horrible emotions of having His relationship with His Father broken up and the fear that He would never see His Father again. But despite being tempted in all points like us, Jesus chose loyal love and trust all the way to death thus destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, destroyed death and brought life and

immortality to light 2 Tim 1:10, and purified humanity and took it back to heaven and presented this species redeemed and purified to His Father.

Sadly, however, much of Christianity has bought into the distortion that God's law is imposed rules that require punishment and thus end up teaching that God also needed to be reconciled to man. And it is specifically taught by some that when Adam sinned, God became angry or offended and needed something done to Him to propitiate Him or take away His wrath etc. This is untrue. No where in Scripture does it teach God had to be reconciled to man, all of Scripture teaches that man had to be reconciled to God. And that reconciliation is only possible through Jesus.

Read third paragraph,

- In Eden, He called out to Adam, His masterpiece of creation, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9, NKJV). And today, He continues to seek His one lost sheep—us. He seeks us out one by one. He has a perfect plan to reach us, applying the embryonic gospel promise of Genesis 3:15, putting enmity between us and Satan. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 69.

What is revealed about how reality works after Adam sinned? What did Adam do? Ran and hid because he was afraid—notice, Adam changed and that change caused him to run away from God to hide from God, to try and cover over his defects. This is exactly what sin does, it causes us to naturally, instinctually, run away from God and God is the source of life.

This reveals why sin results in death because sin causes the sinner to run from the source of life, to cut themselves off from life.

But what did God do? He went after Adam, gently calling to Him, and then when Adam said he hid because he was afraid because he was naked, notice God's response: "Who told you that you were naked?"

This is hugely impactful and demonstrative of reality. God's question calls upon Adam, and everyone of us who read this, to think, "How did I become aware I was naked? Where did the fear I am experiencing come from?"

God is saying by the question, and leading Adam to draw the reality-based conclusion, "Adam you didn't hear that from me. I am not the one pointing out your nakedness. Adam, that is your own conscience, you are the one condemning yourself, the fear is what you have chosen because you have chosen to believe lies and break trust with me and the natural result of that is fear and selfishness. Adam I still love you, I am still the same gracious, kind, loving, God I have always been, but you are not the same. You don't trust me and are afraid I will harm you but that fear is not coming because I am a threat to you, it is coming from sin, from what you have chosen. In fact, Adam, I am here not to harm you, but to save you."

But sadly, so many people teach the opposite, that God came to them and started handing out punishments—threw them from the garden, made it harder to grow food, made childbirth painful, made women subordinate to their husbands, inflicted death as a penalty by blocking them from the Tree of Life, when in reality every one of these was either a direct reality-based consequence of their choice, or a therapeutic intervention by God to protect and save them.

Read the next section:

- Sometimes the gospel is made so complicated and theoretical that it has little practical meaning for twenty-first-century living. But it's really quite simple and straightforward.

The gospel has three parts:

First, because we are helpless to save ourselves, Jesus came and died for our sins. (See Rom. 5:6–8.)

Second, by accepting His death as ours through faith, repentance, and baptism, we are justified and set free from the condemnation of sin. (See Rom. 5:9–11; Rom. 6:6, 7.)

Third, the life we live now is the result of being united with Christ, experiencing His re-creating power, and His living His life in us. (See 2 Cor. 5:17–21, Gal. 2:20.) *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 69.

Is something missing from this description of the gospel? Revelation speaks of the first angel taking the eternal gospel to the world. Is it true that in eternity past that Adam existed, had fallen into sin, and Jesus died for our salvation? Yet the gospel is eternal good news, good news that was true before humans even existed—how is that the good news is eternal if we restrict it to what Jesus did to save us from sin?

What is the war actually over? How did it begin in heaven? Over whether God is trustworthy. Thus the ultimately gospel is the good news about God, that God is not who Satan has accused Him of being, and that good news displaces the lies and wins us to trust.

Would it be good news to have eternal life in a place run by a being who is like Satan alleges God to be?

So the good news is that God is trustworthy. He is love and we are truly safe with Him. We do not need to run from Him, or hide ourselves from Him. We don't need someone to protect us from Him. We don't need to have someone cover over our sins so He won't see them, we need to pray like David did,

- Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-34 NIV84.

We don't need someone to plead the Father for us, because God so loved us He sent His Son to die for us and win us back to trust in Him!

Yes, it is good news Jesus died for us, but only because that is a manifestation of the truth about God that not only provides us with the remedy to our terminal sin condition but simultaneously proves Satan lied about God and God is our friend, He is trustworthy!

## **MONDAY**

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Read Colossians 1:22-23:

- But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. Colossians 1:22-23 NIV84.

How would you explain reconciled by Christ's physical body through death?

It is how reality works—as we have explained, God created one human being, Adam, and breathed into Adam one breath of life, and every other human being is an extension of that one life. Eve was taken from Adam's rib, which was living tissue, she did not receive her own breath of life but was flesh and bone of Adam. And then they sinned and passed their life along to all their children and we are born in sin conceived in iniquity (Ps 51:5).

So Jesus became a real human being born of Mary and thereby partook of this same humanity, the same breath of life. And by His human body, become embodied and living sinless as a human, using His human brain, denying the infection of fear and selfishness and ultimately purging it, He became the new head of humanity and we can partake of His sinless life through faith, through trust.

And what does it mean “if you continue in your faith”?

What was the cause of sin? Lies believed that caused distrust of God that resulted in Adam and Eve breaking faith. Jesus lived as a human in perfect sinless faith/trust with His Father and eliminated the cause of death. And we, when won back to trust or faith, receive His indwelling Spirit that gives us a new heart, no motivation, new desires, as long as we continue to trust Him. If we should ever choose to, in heart distrust God, then we would experience the same problem, severing ourselves from the source of life, inflaming ourselves with fear and selfishness.

Understand, this distrust of God is not the shortcomings and stumbling of the person who does trust, who longs for heaven, longs for freedom from sin, but struggles with long standing habit patterns and they behaviorally fail at times. For such individuals when they fail grieve and are sorrowful and run to God for His healing and further development. They are not breaking trust with God but struggling to overcome patterns of behaviors established before trust in God was established.

No, the distrust that cause loss is when people choose to actually distrust God, who either deny He exists, or reject Him, or believe in a version of God so distorted that they place their faith, their trust in various things to protect them from Him. Like the Pharisees and Sadducees that crucified Christ—they

believed in the Creator God, the Ten Commandments, the inspiration of Scripture—but they did not actually know Him for who He truly is. Therefore they did not trust Him, they did not open their hearts to surrender their lives of fear and selfishness and be reborn. Instead, while they believed in God, they remained distrusting of God, and placed their faith in their genetic descent from Abraham, in their adherence to the ceremonial script, in their performance in rule-keeping, in the animal sacrifices—but they never actually had faith in God.

Sadly, many Christians have a Christianity like this. They believe in God as Creator, the inspiration of Scripture, the Bible, the Commandments, they attend church, pay tithe, etc. but they do not actually have faith in or trust God with their lives, they trust in the legal mechanics to hide and protect them from God, the blood payment, the robe of righteousness to cover them, a mediator to plead for them. They cling to these symbolic devices because they don't actually trust God.

What does it mean to exercise faith?

Biblical faith is best described in modern English as trust—so what does it mean to exercise trust?

What is the basis of trust? Trustworthiness, so genuine growing faith or trust requires it be placed in someone who is trustworthy.

So the first requirement for faith or trust in God is to have enough truth or evidence presented to us that He is trustworthy for us to be able to choose to trust Him.

Then, once we do exercise initial trust in God—what happens? God allows events to unfold that places us in circumstances where we must choose, do we trust God and do what we know is right for us in that moment or do we trust something other than God and do what we know is not right?

We are all born into the world with a spirit of fear that causes us to seek to protect and advance self. What this means is that our natural spirit, motivation, drive to act, is corrupted with fear that leads us to seek security, comfort, protection. We first seek this as infants in the arms of our parents.

As we grow, we seek it through their validation, love, approval, as we grow we begin to attach to our forming selves, our identity, who we experience ourselves to be, various things that make us feel good about ourselves, that make us feel special, valuable, secure. We naturally gravitate toward validators of us and avoid rejectors. We naturally want to invest in actions where we are good, where we are better than others, where we get praise and recognition.

Before we surrender to Jesus, our spirits of fear lead us to develop all kinds of coping and comfort strategies, comfort food, for some alcohol, drugs, others clothes, others relationships, others achievements, others escapism through entertainments, others religiosity and good behavior and performance, which often leads to devaluing of others as a means of making self feel more secure.

When we surrender to Jesus and are reborn we have a new motivation, to love God and love others and love and follow truth. But as we follow truth in love for God and others, events will transpire to

bring us to points in our journey where we must choose, do we trust God with how things will turn out, or do we seek to save and deliver ourselves? And it is when we fulfill our known duties and trust God for His leading rather than seeking to frantically make everything work out for ourselves so we can feel safe that faith grows.

## **TUESDAY**

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Read Colossians 1:24-25:

- Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—Colossians 1:24-25 NIV84.

What does this text mean to you? Here is the Remedy version

- I am glad and rejoice in bringing you this healing truth about God despite all the unavoidable sacrifices, and eagerly follow in Christ's footsteps; and if necessary, I willingly suffer physical torment for the good of the body of believers—the church. God has given me the responsibility of working for the full healing and restoration of the church by presenting the truth about God and his plan in its fullness—Colossians 1:24-25 REM

Have you found this to be true? That when you are carrying out God's calling, even when struggling with some physical ailment it is worth it?

Studies have shown that those going through high stress events with a sense of meaning and purpose compared to those without that sense of meaning and purpose, those with meaning and purpose had slower cellular aging, longer telomeres (predicts longevity and provides ability for cells to replicate), and slower telomere attrition compared to those without purpose, despite reporting similar levels of life stress. In other words, honestly facing negative realities under the umbrella of God's truth with meaning and purpose is healthier than either denial with positive thinking or facing the reality without meaning and purpose.

Epel, E. S., Blackburn, E. H., Lin, J., Dhabhar, F. S., Adler, N. E., Morrow, J. D., & Cawthon, R. M. (2004).

Accelerated telomere shortening in response to life stress. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 101(49), 17312–17315.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0407162101>

Alimujiang, A., Wiensch, A., Boss, J., Fleischer, N. L., Mondul, A. M., McLean, K., & Mukherjee, B. (2019).

Association between life purpose and mortality among U.S. adults older than 50 years. *JAMA*

## WEDNESDAY

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Read first paragraph:

- In another place, Paul refers to “the mystery of God,” which is God’s eternal purpose “ordained before the ages for our glory” (1 Cor. 2:7, NKJV) and revealed through the plan of salvation. Peter speaks of this truth as something that the prophets anticipated and that “angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:10–12). It was devised “before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:20) and “kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25). However, through Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, this mystery has been unveiled (2 Cor. 3:14). *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 72.

Paul speaks about the mystery of God, but what is interesting when Paul is writing in the first century Greco-Roman world there were an abundance of what are known as mystery religions.

These were initiation-based cults that were called mysteries because only those who went through the secret rights were permitted to know the mysteries. Think about certain organizations or religions today who practice similar things, mysteries that only those who go through their initiation rights are allowed to know.

These mystery religions promised purification from sin and guilt, protection in this life, and a blessed existence after death.

There were many of these cults but they all had a similar pattern or structure:

1. Secret initiation through stages that outsiders were forbidden to witness or discuss. Initiates swore oaths of secrecy.
2. Ritual drama, typically a death and rebirth theme. Almost all of them reenact a scene where the god they worship dies, descends to the underworld, and rises again. The initiate participates in this through ritual and the ritual **was the means** of the initiate identifying with the god and receiving the blessing.
3. Purification rights of various kinds, washing, fasting, special clothing, incense, sacred meals. The goal was cleansing from moral spiritual pollution.
4. Sacred meals involved eating consecrated food and drink thought to impart divine powers or life or protection.
5. Promise of immortality in the afterlife through union with the god, which diverted from most of the Greco-Roman religions that offered little hope.

They were called mystery religions because it was kept secret, required initiation, knowledge was experiential not cognitive, they were not taught the mystery, they experienced the mystery and outsiders were excluded.

Paul, knowing the culture of the day, deliberately used similar language but purposefully and radically redefines it. Paul's mysteries are exactly the opposite of the pagan mysteries:

**Pagan mysteries:**

- secret
- elite
- ritual-based
- myth reenactment
- salvation by ceremony

**Paul's gospel "mystery":**

- openly proclaimed
- available to all
- relational, not ritual
- historical, not mythic
- salvation by trust in Christ

Paul explicitly says: this mystery has now been **revealed!**

- Not hidden.
- Not restricted.
- Not experiential through rites—experiential through trust!
- Revealed through Christ.
- And crucially: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

That is not initiation into a cult, that is restoration of relationship!

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## **THURSDAY**

The title for the day is Power of the Gospel—what is that power?

It is the power of truth and love—and how does that power work?

Where does truth and love work? What does truth and love do?

- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV84

Are truth and love the divine weapons that demolish strongholds? How?

Consider,

- For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 NIV84

What does this mean? The Word of God is Jesus, the living Word but also the written word, the Bible. How does the Word of God divide soul and spirit?

What is the soul? It is the psyche, the individual, the person—and what is the spirit? It is the animating motivating energy or drive to action.

We come into the world corrupted by the spirit of fear and selfishness and God, through Christ, is working to separate our soul, our individuality, our personhood, from the spirit of fear and selfishness and establish our souls upon Him, filled and animated with His Spirit.

How does the Word of God do this?

When we ingest the Words of truth the truth displaces lies, distortions, misunderstandings and wins us to trust, which causes our selves, our souls, to let go of the spirit of fear, of the need to protect self, and to trust Jesus. Simultaneously, as we choose to internalize the truth it becomes encoded into our brains and our brain resonance, harmonic, quantum energy or spiritual sensitivity changes to be ever more in tune with the Holy Spirit and we cut out of our being the lies, fear, and selfishness.

This is not a legal adjustment in a book, it is an actual change in the sinner.

Consider this Bible commentary about the work of the Holy Spirit:

- The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the **Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart.** Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the **Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself** *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

## FRIDAY

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Read first paragraph, which is a quote from the book *Steps to Christ*,

- “We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. . . . If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as

your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned. *Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

What does this mean? Is a legal process being described or reality? This is reality, nothing legal going on.

We have no righteousness—our natural life is the spirit of fear and selfishness, no matter what we do of ourselves we are still animated and motivated by fear and selfishness. And the claims of God's law are love and trust, and the spirit of fear and selfishness cannot love and trust—it is reality, very simple.

But, if we give ourselves to Jesus, surrendering our lives to Him and trust Him, infected, fearful, and self-centered as we may have been, we are reborn with a new heart and right Spirit. That is what happens in reality when we trust Jesus, we receive a new life, the life of Christ that lives in us as Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20. Thus, God recognizes reality, and accounts it as such, we, through faith, have become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21) and Christ's character stands where our corrupt character had been, which is inside us, "It is no longer I that live but Christ lives IN ME!"

This is reality of design law and how life is built by God to work. His living law of love and trust must be written again in our hearts and minds and the only way this happens is through restored trust and receiving a new sinless life via the indwelling Holy Spirit. The same author describes it powerfully in *The Desire of Ages*:

- In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as **a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail**. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the **fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer**. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a **partaker of the divine nature**. Christ has given His Spirit as a **divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church** *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.2, emphasis mine.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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**The God of Reality: Separating Truth from Fiction Seminar:** August 13-16 2026 Orlando, Florida—More information coming soon. First 500 get five free meals.

**REMEDY APP:** Updated, many new features including the ability to listen to the audio right from the app!

**AFRICA:** Our first shipment of resources has arrived in Kenya, *Could It Be This Simple?* Wycliffe has been passionately sharing this end-time message about God with great success and Jacques van den Heever, our Come and Reason Ministries Director in South Africa has been able to produce and get him these resources. It is through the support of you our friends that he has been able to do this. If you are in Kenya or know someone there who would like this book email [kenya@comeandreason.com](mailto:kenya@comeandreason.com)

Our South Africa Distribution Director, Jacques Van de Heever, has been translating many of our materials into Afrikaans and now has added Swahili. Reach him at [southafrica@comeandreason.com](mailto:southafrica@comeandreason.com). While Thomas Wansara, in Ethiopia, has been translating blogs and some of our printed and online publications into Amharic. Reach him at [ethiopia@comeandreason.com](mailto:ethiopia@comeandreason.com).

If you want to access these resources on our website, just click the Languages menu.

**AUSTRALIA:** Simon and Maani Harrison Direct Come and Reason in Australia and New Zealand and have a Facebook group in Australia and Come and Reason resources available there: You can email Simon at [australia@comeandreason.com](mailto:australia@comeandreason.com)

**ENGLAND:** If you are interested in connecting with our team in England you can contact Michael Dragoyvich and his wife Billie Jordan at [uk@comeandreason.com](mailto:uk@comeandreason.com)

**New Pamphlet:** *The Trap of Perfectionism and The Fear of Making Mistakes.* These are available for free shipped to any US Postal address, they will also be in our resource section under the publications to print and share. You can read this online, download pdf, share with others, print your own. If you are not in the US, we anticipate our various hubs (Australia and South Africa) will eventually get this in print also, but until then, please use the online resource.

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