

This will be the final sermon in a series on Judgement, Mercy and Faith as we've had that spin off of what Christ told the Pharisees concerning the law that they didn't understand. He talked about the importance of the law, the weightier matters of the law being judgement, mercy and faith. This is *Part 3* of that series on *Faith*.

I want to go back to where we left off last Sabbath... to **Galatians chapter 3:13** It says, **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree:** The protestant world doesn't understand these things because of so many things they're taught, they don't comprehend so many of the things that Paul wrote and I thought this would be a good one to go back and look a little at the history of what this is talking about, where it comes from and to understand something that was addressed in the Old Testament so that you can understand a little bit better what is given in the New Testament in what Paul is addressing and why he is addressing it. We'll come back to this verse a little bit later but for right now, let's go all the way back to the book of **Numbers** and see an example of some who were being hung on trees and what this means. And I think it's good again to point out that Jesus Christ was not put on a cross, he was put on a pole, a stake; that the word in the Greek language is "stauros" and it has to do with a pole – the word means a pole, an upright stake. It has nothing to do with a crucifix at all, and actually that sign or that example comes from a period of time hundreds of years before the time of Christ in pagan religions. It was a symbol being used, and so because of so many of the things that had been adopted out of paganism – Easter being one, the worship of Astarte - Ishtar – all the different words in different languages that have been used... some of the ideas that have come from there – people don't realize where a lot of ideas in religion have come from and they don't understand.. no, it's Passover, and the big debate in 325 A.D. that basically came out of that one Church that emerged out of it in time, is the Catholic Church – was the concept of this thing that they were addressing – was the reason for the meeting for the Council of Nicaea. The Nicene council was to address the matter of Passover and Easter. They wanted to institute Easter and to do away with Passover and that's where this whole separation began with time, as far as doctrine, as far as things being taught in the world about what people think christianity is all about. And they don't understand that Easter came from paganism and that it has all the beliefs and ideas there, the rabbits and eggs and all the other kinds of things that has nothing to do with Passover, the Old Testament, the Bible, except for what God condemned because there are some things He explained very clearly in the Old Testament that had to do with the condemnation of some things that actually took place on Easter.

But anyway, the reason I mention this several times now is because I hate the word "cross", I hate the word "crucifixion" that's used by the world because it gives a wrong idea of something that is not true. Jesus Christ was not hung with his arms out to his side and neither were the two thieves beside him. If they had been they wouldn't have had to come around to break their legs because they would have been able to still breath. If you put your arms up like this and you're hanging like this with your arms – one nail going between... in both hands and one nail through your ankle area, that's what they did. They used one at the bottom and one at the top and when people were hanging like that they would suffocate. The only way they didn't suffocate was if they pushed themselves up so they could breathe and that's exactly why they came around to break the legs, so they couldn't push themselves up anymore and that's what they did to the two criminals next to Christ. He was already dead when they came around. They were in awe that he was dead already. In John it states because a soldier had come

by already and pierced his side and out came water and blood; he died as a result of that, otherwise they would have broken his legs, but the prophecies were that not a bone in his body would be broken. But the other two that were beside him – they had their bones broken – their legs, so they could die quickly – they suffocated – so that they could take them down before the holy day began.

Going back to **Numbers 25 verse 1: And Israel remained in Acacia grove**, which is the actual translation into English of this particular word here, **and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited people to the sacrifices of their gods: and the people ate, and bowed down to their gods.** Obviously this is not a good thing. They began to involve themselves in pagan worship that God told them not to do and yet they went ahead and did it over and over and over again, so this is one example of a particular occasion when they began to mix with other peoples and why God told them not to do this. It's not an issue of nationality, it's not an issue of peoples backgrounds, it's an issue of who they were and that they were to continue in the religion that they had because ALL other nationalities had false religion. And whenever you start mixing with false religion and you try to bring that into or mix it with God, it doesn't mix. That's why this whole concept of some of you who were drawn out of, or went to sleep –let's put it this way, we all went to sleep that were a part of the Church before and the scattering that took place - and this idea of building bridges, these different doctrines between different groups of ideas about Passover and Pentecost and so forth – you can't do it. The truth is the truth and you can't mix lies with the truth.

And so this was God's primary focus and why various laws were given at that time. It was because of being able to remain with the truth – with the truths that God has given and so it says; **they invited people to the sacrifices of their gods: and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor:** and who is Baal? Well that's going back all the way to why we have the day Sunday today; the very name Sunday, the first day of the week comes from a period of time hundreds of years before Jesus Christ ever came along. Amazing! People don't know history, they don't understand the history of what took place in the Old Testament with Israel and the worship of Baal who was the sun god, sun god worship and all these ideas of early morning worship on Sunday and bowing down toward the sun is because of the ideas they had – that's where these names come from and people don't understand that. So, again: **So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor and the anger of the Eternal was aroused against Israel. Then the Eternal said to Moses, Take all the leaders of the people, and hang the offenders before the Eternal toward the sun,** there's a reason for this, why He said it this way. All translations don't have it perfectly recorded as exactly what was given there and why it was given out of Hebrew, but this is exactly what was being said.

**Take the leaders of the people**, in other words, they had the government set up where there were those who were over 10's, over 100's and over thousands and saying, take the leaders of the people and find out who is doing this, go through the leadership, find out who is disobeying God and put them to death. God didn't mince... He says, you have to be willing to do that amongst yourselves. That's a hard thing to do for people, a physical nation, and some were going to be relatives, some are going to be family... are you willing to put God first? Those are tough things. All of you have had to make the same decision haven't you? Anyone that's a part of this body right now has had to make the same decisions – God has to be first. And we hope that all others will see it, all other family members, but that isn't the way it works... at least not right now, it's going to be more that way as we move forward, but there must be a willingness to put God first above all else. And so He said, **Take**, and some people think that's a harsh God. That's why when you come along in time people think Jesus Christ came along to do away with that old harsh God in the Old Testament and yet speaking with a bit of a forked tongue here, they think that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament. Strange ideas. **Take all the leaders of the**

**people and hang the offenders before the Eternal, toward the sun, that the fierce anger of the Eternal may turn away from Israel.** It doesn't say how it was done, whether it was on poles or whether it was done on trees, but they were hung with their faces toward the sun. Now why would God tell them to do that? Baal worship. You want to worship the sun? You're going to be faced toward the sun. There was a lesson in this for the rest of the Israelites who were to continue on – that you don't disobey God and turn away from God... that you are to obey His law. You know, a part of me is dumbfounded at human beings – that we think we can judge whether God is harsh. God is the creator; God made us; God gave us life and we think we can stand up to God and tell Him that's not fair. That's what we do, as human beings all the time. We've done it for 6000 years –we won't listen to what God says and follow His way which is the way of love. Instead we have different ideas about what love is and our way always brings suffering and hurt and it's selfish love, but it's not God's love.

Going on in **verse 5**, it says: **So Moses said to the judges of Israel, everyone of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.** So he says, you go through and find out who within your area has gone and joined themselves to false religion and worshipping other Gods – you kill them; put them to death.

**And, indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses, and in all the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.** So here they are, they're mourning because God has said that this is to be done and the process is starting where they're going to go out and kill people for doing this, for disobeying God and people are weeping because it involves family. They know who in their own families are disobeying God and God said that it must take place. But here is this individual who has the audacity to bring a woman within the camp of Israel to commit harlotry with her. They knew what was taking place. He didn't go away and have this relationship with her in her area, he brought her into the camp to have this relationship with her. And this applies today as well, the audacity of human beings who think they can come into the Church of God, bring false doctrine into the Church of God and talk to others about false doctrine and things that aren't true. It's the same sort of thing here. That takes a lot of audacity, a lot of presumptuousness to bring false doctrine into the Church and yet I think back to the time of Mr. Armstrong and people did it over and over again: ministers did it over and over again... brought in false doctrines, started teaching people things that were not true. They started teaching what they wanted to teach that wasn't what they were taught and learned themselves. They were not faithful to the truth that God gave to them. Amazing! History doesn't change much does it? Not even in God's Church! Some of these things are so frustrating when you think about them, what our human nature is like... it's not a pretty sight sometimes.

**Verse 7: Now when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body,** because they were doing it right there and so he took the javelin and killed both of them in their act. Phinehas stood up, he was so enraged by the audacity of doing something like this in the camp of Israel and so he put them both to death. **So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. And those who died in the plague were twenty four thousand.** After all this had been going on and this man still had the audacity to do this, incredible!

**Then the Eternal spoke to Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath/my anger from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in my zeal. So God put a stop to it. Therefore say, Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace: And it shall be to him, and his descendants**

after him, a covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel. Now the name of the Israelite who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, the leader of a fathers' house among the Simeonites. And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was the head of a people, of a father's house in Midian.

**verse 16: Then the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Harass the Midianites, and attack them: For they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was killed in the day of the plague because of Peor.** God says, because of what they did and how they tried to draw you into their religion and their beliefs and so forth, go now and destroy them. And people think “Oh that sounds pretty tough.” God is God and if people don’t choose to obey God, and that’s the way it is with mankind isn’t it? ...there’s life and death and God says, I wish you would choose life – over and over again and He says, this day I set before you life and death – choose life! Choose my way. Choose my law, because God and God alone knows the best way for man to live – the only way for man to live that brings true peace and true happiness and true family – that’s what it’s all about. And so people can read stories like this sometimes and think, “Whoa, that just seems too harsh.” No it isn’t – not at all; and if you really understand it, it’s merciful because of God’s plan and what He’s doing and how He’s doing it. All of these people have an opportunity to be resurrected later on into a different age, into a different world – not the one that they were in.

That is the first example you come across where God told them about certain individuals being hung on a tree. Another example is in **Deuteronomy 21**. We’ll go over and look at this one also because this is the one that’s quoted in Galatians 3:13 that we read at the beginning of the sermon here.

**Deuteronomy 21**, I use the example sometimes of in prisons and the like when the evidence is there and it’s very clear that someone has taken someone else’s life, kills someone else; murdered someone else: you know what God says to do? Kill them right there on the spot. You don’t put them in prisons for a long time and give them life sentences... that somehow we’re more righteous than God, that somehow we’re more loving than God, that somehow you just can’t do that. You can rehabilitate them... well, what’s the purpose if you’ve given him a life sentence, what’s the purpose of them being in that environment, that sick environment for the rest of their life – because later – sooner or later, you know, there’s going to come a time – if they only understood the truth – that individuals are going to be resurrected and you’re going to begin working with their mind. But now, it’s going to be *much harder* because of that *environment* they’ve lived in and their minds have become so much *worse*! Where it would be far more merciful to have their life taken and to start working with them at the point in time when they’re resurrected later on. But we’re more righteous than God – human beings are. It’s just too cruel to see someone have an injection in their arm; it’s too cruel to see them hang; it’s too cruel to have them shot, whatever you want to choose. It’s just too cruel. It’s not a matter of the people they’ve bludgeoned and how they killed them sometimes. You know, what a sick world! What a sick mind we sometimes have as human beings. You think, well what about the person they killed and how they did it. Did they have mercy upon them? Amazing! Just wanting to show you a bit of the double standard of human beings; in the minds of human beings and how righteous we are.

**Deuteronomy 21 and verse 18: If a man has a stubborn and a rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and who when they have chastened him, will not heed them: Then his father and his mother shall take hold of him, and bring him out to the elders of the city, and unto the gate of city;** There’s more to the story than this. It’s not just a minor thing that’s taking place, this is something where someone is totally irreversible in the sense of being able to be

worked with – they will not listen to any kind of instruction or anyone period. And **verse 20** goes on to say, **And they shall say to the elders of the city, This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he's a glutton, and a drunkard.** And so the kind of lifestyle that they're living and they're not going to listen to anyone and so forth and God had a way of dealing with that. **Verse 21:** **Then all the men of his city,** see, if people understood that God means what He says. That you listen to your father and your mother, that you respect your father and your mother, and that when they tell you no – no means no. Now this goes way beyond this because of what they turn into and how far people can go in society to take advantage and so forth and so when it gets to this point here, it's obviously gone beyond someone just disobeying on occasion, it's a lifestyle they're living and they can't be turned around; and they fight and resist. And so this puts fear into people, because human beings only respond to fear, we truly do, when it comes to how you're going to live your life, when you're in this physical life.

**Verse 21:** you think in the world tomorrow, when it says justice is going to be dealt with right then and there – quickly. There's not going to be long court cases. I don't want to get into my feast sermon, but there are not going to be long court cases. You don't have to drag things out for weeks and months and years. You don't have to fill up the prisons, they're overflowing today and they're so overflowing in some states now because of the economy they let them out early because we can't keep them in there. Let's let the ones who've done the least of offences... well, why'd you put them in there in the first place? Sick world. We wonder why we have troubles.

**Verse 20:** **And they shall say to the elders of the city,** making their statement, **then all the men of the city shall stone them to death with stones, and you shall put away the evil from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.** Now this was a very physical carnal nation that was not spiritual, they were not being led by God's spirit, they didn't have access to God's spirit. It was strictly by physical laws and there was a certain standard that God said that they're going to maintain amongst themselves, but they never lived by these things anyway, they didn't do these things as a whole. Some... on a few occasions under a few kings did, but as a whole, they never followed these things anyway. God had a way of instilling fear in people so that people wouldn't go out and steal, so they wouldn't go out and murder – see? And if people don't fear, just like in Cincinnati... they're cutting back on the police department. I'd say that speaks pretty high to some of the crooks out there and some of the people who want to do certain things because they realize now that it's going to be a whole lot easier to do things and get away with it... and people understand that, because if people don't fear, they're not going to hold back...how dumb we are.

**Verse 21:** **Then all the men of his city shall stone them with stones to death and put away evil from among you.** **Verse 22:** **if a man,** now it goes into another section here but it still is tied into some of these things that happened. **If a man has committed a sin deserving of death,** so, it doesn't go into the whole story and I don't have time to go into all of it that we just went through because there are other places it discusses some of these things, when parents would do something like this but something has to be done that is deserving of death, **and he's put to death, and you hang him on a tree:** There are examples of things that happened in society that God allowed the Israelites to do; in some cases certain things that they were told to do, but in order for there to be a fear – that you leave someone there for a period of time... that has been put to death because of something so heinous – everybody knows what it is. He says, **his body shall not remain overnight on the tree,** that's not how it was done in some societies and nations around them, they would leave them there until they were only bones there – so it would instil fear in people. But God is saying when this is done, you don't leave them overnight – that's not the purpose of it. Fear is one thing, but God is saying this is going too far, **but you shall bury him that day;** so, you leave them for a time, but not overnight. You take them down and you bury them, **so**

**that you do not defile the land, which the Eternal your God is giving you for an inheritance... (for he who is hung is accursed of God;)** hung on a tree. That's where this quote in Galatians comes from, the example of Jesus Christ – why he was hung on a tree, on a pole and that was a part of prophecy that had to be fulfilled and a part of what he's addressing here then in Galatians.

So let's go back to **Galatians chapter 3** where Paul is explaining what Christ fulfilled. **Verse 13, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.** What is the curse of the law? Protestants, people of traditional christianity will say the curse of the law – they'll basically say the law is the curse. It's that same old story. You mean it's okay if I murder you? It's okay if I steal from you? ...if I take your car? If I have your house? "No, no, no, those are good laws." It's the Sabbath they always have problems with. It's the Sabbath that's the curse, that you should hold that over people – God's Sabbath. So a lot of people try to think and talk about how the law is a curse and it's not the law that is a curse, it is because of what we are as human beings and because we cannot keep God's law. Human beings, when it comes to the spirit of the laws, cannot keep God's law. That is what is given throughout the New Testament. We are all guilty of sin and that's why the death penalty is over us – all human beings have the death penalty over them, because no human being, except one whose father was God Almighty was able to keep the law perfectly in the spirit, not just the physical part, but in the spirit and in the mind, Jesus Christ. That is why he became the perfect sacrifice, the Passover. He was the only one that was able to be the Passover and so the curse of the law is death. It requires the death penalty because everyone is guilty of breaking God's law.

And so it says **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law**, from the death penalty, because that is a curse to man. If you're dead, you're dead and what are you going to do about it? It's a curse to man. And so unless you're given life again, that's bad. ...**being made a curse for us:** so Jesus Christ became a curse for us. He fulfilled then that curse of the death penalty and it's only through Jesus Christ that we can be forgiven of our sins and not have that death penalty over us because he took it upon himself. ...**for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;** so again, what Paul addressed over and over is a matter of what was taking place and that salvation that was being given was not just to physical Israelites – it is to ALL mankind, it is to ALL countries of peoples and so Paul is stating that the **blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.** The promise that God has given that the Israelites never had was the holy spirit – that's why it's so important to understand the holy days and the plan that God reveals through the holy days: that it was on the Day of Pentecost that God gave the law to the Israelites and the whole history of the Israelites is one that they couldn't keep the law! Man cannot keep the law on his own by his own willpower, and so on the Day of Pentecost, when the Church began in 31 AD when the holy spirit was poured out, then God revealed on the same day, this is the only way you can *keep* God's law, is with God's help, with God dwelling in you, with the holy spirit dwelling in you. That's the only way we can change and so we begin a process. Once we have the holy spirit dwelling within us we begin a process of conquering and overcoming our own nature and learning and that's how God writes the law in our hearts and our minds. That's what these verses are all about... the circumcision of the heart. It's not of the flesh that God was concerned with, it's what's inside of us. All the things that are being taught here about the process whereby we can be saved and how God's way of life, His mind, His law can be written in our hearts and minds where it becomes a part of who we are in our thinking. And this is exactly what Paul is explaining here, that this isn't just for those who descended physically from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and so forth – it is for all peoples and the holy spirit that was promised – the way that all people are going to have opportunity of this is what's being explained here...**that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ'; that we might receive the promise of the**

**spirit through faith.** Not because of how good you are. Not because of how well you keep the law. It's because of your ability to believe what God gives you and your choice is to respond to the truth when He gives it to you. It's through what you believe... that's what we were talking about in the last 2 sermons. That God counts righteousness to you through faith, through belief, through what you believe, not through how good you are. See?

And so it goes on to say, **Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be of a man's covenant,** in other words, even on a physical human plane, he says, this is how I'm speaking to you even on a physical human plane... if it's a man's covenant... what does that mean? ...**yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto.** In other words, if the seal is put upon this covenant that people make between themselves, whatever that agreement is... today, you'd have to have lawyers to go ahead and do that too, but anyway... these agreements that are made – when it's set, it's set, and you're not to add to it nor take from it. That's what he's saying. Even with man's covenants... when it's set and agreed upon by both parties; it's set and you don't add to it and you don't take away from it. How much more for God? What does that mean then when it's a matter of God's involvement? And so that's what it's talking about here.

**Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.** A covenant – an agreement that God made, that He gave. **Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He did not say, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, who is Christ.** And so Paul is making a point that the promise that God gave to Abraham wasn't a matter of something that was going to be done because of physical lineage. The seed he's talking about is the promise of Jesus Christ who was going to come through that seed because he was born of the tribe of Judah. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and eventually you go on down through the lineage to Jesus Christ.

And it says in **verse 17, And this I say, that the covenant, which was confirmed before of God in Christ,** in other words that was to come through Christ, **the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.** In order to understand what is being said you have to understand history; you have to understand the Old Testament. And so it is talking about a period of time of something that happened 430 years later. What happened 430 years later? It says to the very day God was going to make a nation out of the Israelite people and He took them out of Egypt 430 years later. And He gave them laws to live by and a part of those laws... it wasn't a matter that the 10 commandments didn't exist on the earth and that man was to live by it; this is something else that was added to the nation of Israel and it's the Levitical system, it's the sacrificial system – that's the only thing that was done away with when Christ died – not the laws of God, but the sacrificial system that was done away with and so the Protestant world tries to say, "Oh when Christ died..." they misread what it says in scripture and they say the law was done away with. The only law that was done away with was the sacrificial system that was added.

Let's go on and read, **For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.** And so, whether it be even any of God's law, or even the sacrificial system because that's what God added to the Israelites and gave to the Israelites, that's why it says in Hebrews over and over again, the blood of bulls and goats doesn't take away sin – you still have the death penalty over you but only the blood of Jesus Christ can take away sin – that's the only way you can be forgiven. And so it's saying **If inheritance be of the law,** because of a system that you have in place, then it would be owed to them of how well they were able to follow through and do all the law, including the sacrificial system. ...**but God gave it to Abraham by promise.** Makes it clear as he goes along.

**Verse 19: Wherefore then serve the law? It was added because of transgressions,** in other words, God's law already existed – it always existed from Adam and Eve on – how man was to live. And so because of sin, because of transgressions, God instituted a program through the Levitical system of sacrifices. And every time sacrifices were brought to the Levites what did it do? It was a reminder of sin. It was an admission and acknowledgement of their sin. Every time someone brought a sacrifice before the Levites to be offered up for them, they were acknowledging their sins. Now it didn't take away their sin, but they were acknowledging it and so scripture over and over again says it was a constant reminder of sin, but it still wasn't taken care of. And that process was never going to bring about salvation. So it says, **Why then serve the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.** If there was some law out here that you could keep, that you could do that could somehow give life then... but it didn't come that way; because the bottom line is that not only through the sacrificial system could you not be saved... because of transgression, because of sin, because man was always going to have it and the blood couldn't take away those sins. Why do they bring those things before them? Because of their transgression of God's law that's always been there. The point being is man always has had sin. So when you read things that Paul writes about he makes a distinction between trying to be saved by how well you keep God's law and this law that was added, the sacrificial system... he makes that very clear because he dealt with a lot of Jewish people that were around the Gentiles and always trying to sway the Gentiles that were coming into the Church in a different direction... to become proselytes of Judaism, and telling them that they had to be circumcised, trying to do other things... in other words some of the things that they believed were a matter of law as well. But it all goes back to keeping and even being able to be saved and it's never by how you can keep God's law because the point being is you always have sin in your life.

**But the scripture has concluded all under sin...** Paul is a little difficult to understand sometimes, but if you understand the history of some of the things and if you can distinguish between some of the things being said here... at times he's talking about indeed the law, and transgressing the law – sins that are there. You can't be saved by how well you keep the law, but God added, as a part of a covenant to Israel until the seed, Christ, should come – of a process that the Israelites could go through and still be Israelites; still be a part of the camp, because if they didn't go through this process, they could not be a part of Israel, they could not continue with the Israelites as a part of a community and so that is why they had this sacrificial system, so that those who participated in it and continued in it could continue as being the nation of Israel, but that did not take their sins away. Only Christ and the blood of Christ can take away sin, and remember that sin is the transgression of God's law, it's about the 10 commandments, we're not talking about the sacrificial system. **But the scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them who believe.** Who believe what? Who believe Jesus Christ is our Passover, who believes the truths that God brings through Jesus Christ – all the law.

**But before faith came, we were kept under the law,** the sacrificial system. They were a community of people but it didn't take away their sins, but they remained a community of people as long as they had that sacrificial system, but that sacrificial system didn't do away with their sins. And so it says, **until faith came,** well, what does that mean? It means until finally the Church was established, until the holy spirit could be given and you could be saved through this process of faith. **But before faith came, we were kept under the law,** in other words the sacrificial system. **...shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.** I'll just tell you clearly – to be an Israelite wasn't such a great thing. It was

great in one respect because of... and that's why even Paul addresses some things about Judaism. They had great advantage because they were given the law, they were given how to live life, but that didn't save them and the point of Israel is, just like what happened to Laodicea, it is not good, because their whole history is one where they could not keep God's law. It would not have mattered what nation of people God would have worked with around the earth. Their advantage would have been that God had separated them, had given them blessings: this nation is a recipient of some of those blessings. We are who we are; we have what we have in this country because of what God gave and that certainly is a great blessing to have those things. But the people were not better. On the contrary, they reflect what it means to have the law without God's spirit, it didn't help them and did not save them. Their example is pretty poor. Their example is what not to do.

It is akin to what happened in Laodicea, and what took place in the Church. In large part it is not a good example... it shows what human beings are capable of doing even with God's spirit – above and beyond the Israelites. The Israelites did not have God's spirit. The Church did. It shows what every human being is capable of doing at any time in human history – even when they have God's spirit... you can still turn against God, you can still fall asleep, you can still become lethargic, you can become lukewarm and of no value in the plan of God whatsoever. You have got to want this way of life; you have got to fight for this way of life. That's what it means when it talks about watching, being on guard, being spiritually alert. You have got to desire this way of life with all your being, and fight for it, and cry out to God for help to be strong, to be alert, to be on guard – to be on guard against your own human weaknesses because even with God's spirit you can let down and begin to coast and begin to take things for granted.

And so Paul goes on to explain in **verse 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ**, even for the Church this is difficult to understand what's being spoken of because so much of the protestant world has been so much a part of people's minds and what they have been told over and over again and it's difficult for people to make a distinction of why God gave the sacrificial system, as a reminder always of their *sin*, which is a transgression of His holy, righteous and perfect law, which has *always* been in existence, but He instituted as a part of a covenant with them a sacrificial system, that could not do away with their sins. And so it says this was given as a **schoolmaster**, everything you have in the sacrificial system, the Levitical system, the tabernacle, everything has incredible meaning on a physical plan of something that's spiritual – the whole Levitical system does, but the Levitical system didn't take away sin and God says it was a **schoolmaster**, to teach – to bring us to a time, to the time of Christ. And everything about the sacrifices has to do with Jesus Christ. That's why I love Leviticus 16. Every Atonement as a whole, not always, but as a whole we go back and talk about Leviticus 16 because it goes through the story of the High Priest – of Aaron and what he would do on that particular day. That only himself, as the High Priest, could only go into the holiest of holies once a year to perform a ceremony, a religious service. He could only go behind that veil in the back part of the tabernacle where the other priests went in everyday to do their daily work, but 2/3rds of the way back there was 1/3 remaining behind the tent, the one that ripped in two when Jesus Christ was put to death, when he died... that showed the way into the holiest of holies where God's throne was, where we talked about the cherubim that overshadowed the mercy seat, the wings that were over the ark. And this area that the High Priest went into once a year showed something as a **schoolmaster** to teach about, more about God, but the reality is they couldn't understand all that because it's spiritual. Now we are able to see it and learn from that process on a spiritual plane of what God intended.

That's why I love the example of the High Priest when he went into the back before God's presence, to the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement. He took coals from on the altar and he put incense on it and the smoke then went up and covered the mercy seat, to the point where the smoke totally engulfed the

mercy seat – the ark of the covenant and those cherubim that were overshadowing it with their wings and it says in Revelation, what does that reflect? What does that teach? It's about the prayers of the saints that come up before God and the incense that's beaten small. God's telling us that in our prayers we're not just to have a general prayer and be done with it, He wants us to get specific in our lives of things that we pray about – beat them down small. He wants us to be specific with Him, not just to have a prayer at lunch and do it over and over again throughout our life and “thank you God for this meal...” and blah, blah, blah and that's our prayer for the day, you know, or for our breakfast, and after a while it's kind of like spinning a wheel, it's the same thing said over and over again and after a while it has no meaning whatsoever because it's just a general prayer without meaning as you through that type of routine. That's why Jesus Christ said when you pray, go in your closet alone. It's between you and God. Pour your heart out to God and beat your prayers down small – there are times to do that. Doesn't say to stay in there for hours and hours, but to beat them down small. Don't just have general prayers where you say the same thing every day. What does that mean after a while? Now there are some things you repeat on a regular case. I repeat regularly, “Father forgive me of my sins...” here are some things that you need to always pray for and sometimes you get specific about some of those things.

So, it's an incredible thing what he's showing here. So the law was our **schoolmaster**, not the 10 commandments. The 10 commandments is not a schoolmaster and then that was done away with when Jesus Christ came – the protestant world that teaches that. It's not what it's talking about here; it's talking about the sacrificial system. Paul talks about both and you've got to know the context, you've got to know the history, you have to know the truth to be able to understand what in the world Paul is talking about.

**Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith came, we were no longer under a schoolmaster.** What did God do? No more sacrificial system. Jesus Christ did away with it. It had no purpose anymore and the Israelites only benefitted from it on a very physical plane, temporarily so, but the Church benefits from it – powerfully so. We can go back and read things in the Old Testament and learn things in a greater way and understand things about God's plan and God's purpose and what He's doing because we can understand the spiritual make-up of the entire priesthood, of the tabernacles, of everything they went through. The sacrificial system; we see the spirit of it. We see what we're living and what we're going through. We understand why God gave it in a very powerful way, so that we benefit from it.

**But after that faith came, we were no longer under a schoolmaster.** No need for a sacrificial system because Jesus Christ fulfilled it – all of it. **But after that faith came, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For you are all the children of God through faith/by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.** And so we learn that very early on. It's a beautiful thing when someone is put down into that watery grave, it says it's like a grave, you're putting self to death and you come up out of the water – it's saying then that you're to come up out of that – like being given life and you're to walk in newness of life now and your sins have been forgiven – that's a part of the ceremony. After you've been baptized and you come up out of the water, you're oftentimes told... it's not a part of the ceremony, but oftentimes the minister will tell you, “Congratulations, your sins are forgiven,” because they're just reiterating something, telling you something, something that everyone needs to know when you come up out of the water. Your sins are gone through Jesus Christ – they've been forgiven. But now you're to walk in newness of life. That's why another part of the ceremony you have to have immediately afterwards is the laying on of hands, because without God's spirit, you cannot continue the process. You can't walk in newness of life. If you did, you'd be just like the Israelites – trying to keep the law on your own ability, your own power and you can't do it. Even

when you're baptized and then have hands laid upon you and you receive the impregnation of God's spirit, you still have to fight self, but now you have the help to fight self – a process begins where you actually begin to think differently. It's a slow process, but it begins: And every time you acknowledge sin, something happens, you're growing in character and you're acknowledging God is right and you are wrong, you want God's way of life and you're always being forgiven of those sins – that is the covenant that God makes with the Church.

**Verse 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** We are one family and so Paul over and over again discusses that his job was to go to the Gentiles – that means all who were not part of Judah... Judaism at that time – that he went to all the rest of the nations of peoples around and tell them that salvation's come to them, because before it hadn't, and salvation hadn't really come to the Israelites either beforehand, but that's another sermon. **There is now, it says, neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed,** isn't that amazing? Every human being can be of Abraham's seed, that is what is being stated here. **Then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.** It's because the promise is a matter of faith; of belief in *the* seed, Jesus Christ and what he did and what he fulfilled for us and the truths that go with that. It's not a matter like how the world out here believes. To say, 'yes, I believe he came and died for my sins.' ...and this kind of fuzzy feeling that people want to have about that for a short time while they're in church and whether that be 10 or 15 minutes and then they leave and they go right back into the world. No, it's a part of your being and you understand the process of how you're able to change and what that means for your life –that it's receiving all the truth of God. The Sabbath – you being to understand God's plan for 7000 years. It has meaning in it now – that's a part of belief about Jesus Christ and the process of salvation... the hundred years that follow – the Great White Throne. That's a part of believing in Jesus Christ. The things that he taught, the things that come through... the truth that comes through Christ. It's the whole package – the truth that comes through Jesus Christ – see? It's not just about the individual. It goes far beyond that.

Let's go on to **Romans chapter 9**, or back to **Romans chapter 9**; the writings of Paul are really the most difficult in this age of mankind because of what he addresses; because of his background, very much a Jew, raised a Pharisee, some of the thinking he had but of what he was dealing with in both Judaism and with the Gentile world and so the things he spoke of as he taught, you have to have a very strong background in understanding the Old Testament, of things he just took for granted as he spoke that people would automatically understand, which the world today doesn't because in the world today, people being called out of traditional christianity, they don't understand the Old Testament because they're not taught anything out of it, they're just little stories. Like the flood, and whether that was true or not, people debate that, ministers out in the world debate that. And Adam and Eve... that's a nice sweet story and some of these things out there and how they address some of the things that happened through time. And Moses and the plagues and all those things associated with it and people just know some of the stories but they don't know the history, they don't know the in's and out's of things that are given and why their given and what Paul was talking about here. They don't understand anything about the sacrificial system and why it was given. **Romans 9 verse 6**, so we're breaking into a thought here in part; he says, **Not as though the word of God has taken none effect.** Now this is what I wanted to go into here. He says, **For they are not all Israel**, physical, is what he's saying, they're not all physical Israelites, **who are of Israel:** he's talking about true Israel, the Israel of God, spiritual Israelites; he's saying here very clearly, if you understand the writings of Paul and the story here. He's explaining something that they're not all Israelites who are of Israel. There are Gentiles who are Israel. Israel is

about the name. See? Not about the physical people. There are people who got upset... Philadelphia and Mr. Armstrong and the Church in times past in many cases because they didn't understand and neither did the Church fully at that time in some of these things, but didn't understand that it's not about a physical people in the sense of one family that came out of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It's about all mankind.

So again, Israel is about the name, not the physical people. When God changed Jacob's name it was at a particular time if you remember the story, you remember the occasion of why He changed Jacob's name and when He changed it? It was when Jacob was wrestling with God. This is hard for us to comprehend – Jacob's wrestling with God? Well, God manifested Himself as a physical human being, just like He did when He came and talked to Abraham and so He didn't cheat and use greater force, He made himself of a physical body that was manifested to him that was of an equal – and He saw tenacity. It was the tenacity in this individual. He already knew it, about him. This is written for us. And so here's a story where he wrestled with God and he didn't give up. It went on for so long that God touched his thigh to put his thigh out. Now God didn't have to touch it to do it – it's written for us. It's written for those later on that can go back and see a physical story of something that God did so we can learn from it. And so in this particular case... let's go back there.

**Genesis 32** and notice what God said, just so you have reference to this – it's back in **Genesis 32** and if you want to read the whole story you know where to go to read about the rest of the story. I'm not going to do that here today because of the time for the sermon, but again, **Genesis 32 and verse 28: And he said, this is God speaking to him now, And He said, Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed.** There was an attitude there that God wanted to mark and make a distinction in as something He wanted us to learn from – see, because it's *spiritual*, it's not something physical. It's something spiritual, it's something everyone has to do who becomes a part of spiritual Israel – you have to prevail, you have to fight; *you have to fight for this way of life and you can't give up. He didn't give up!* ...and so his name was changed to reflect something that God wanted us to understand on a spiritual plane! You've got to fight and you can't give up. Every one I've ever known, by the hundreds – they've given up. People quit fighting! Over and over and over again, people quit fighting for this way of life. You've got to want it with all your being and you've got to fight for it. You've got to work for it! You've got to want it! And God tests us and tries us... do you really want it? Jacob couldn't give up. Do you really want the blessing? And he did and he kept fighting for it, kept wrestling God. Couldn't win, but he never gave up. Exhausted, but he never quit. Incredible spiritual lessons here. And that's all in the *name* that God gave and why He gave it. So we can all understand every human being in time has the opportunity to become a part of Israel. Not a physical people, but a spiritual one – the people of God, the true family of God.

So again he... even Israel in the Hebrew comes from a compound word and the one word means to have "power" and the other means "the Almighty". It's referring to the Almighty here – speaking of God. "To have power with the Almighty." It's how we have it. You keep fighting to prevail, you have favour from God – God will give you the power, God will give you the help and you will have the name. Amazing.

Let's go back to **Romans chapter 9**. Paul states **Neither because they are of the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall your seed be called; That is, they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: those who follow by physical lineage – these aren't the children of God! ...but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.** It's not a physical thing that God is working with and wants in this world – it's that which is going to be spiritual – Elohim, to become a part of the God family. Going on... **For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall**

**have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born/not being born neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to the election/selection,** in other words here is something that God is doing as a matter of selection, of choices, of things He's going to do and how He's going to do it. It said, **so the choice of God/the purpose of God according to selection might stand, not of works, but of him who calls;)** In other words this is everything that's going to take place and happen in God's plan. When it is fulfilled it is going to be because God did it and not because of how well we did something – that it's owed to us, but God is going to do it and this is the story over and over again. It's something that God is going to do in us. We have to yield ourselves to it – we have to desire it – we have to want it with all of our being and fight for it – see? But God is going to accomplish it in us. Because every day we sin – every day you do things that aren't right, there are things that come into your mind that are not right with God, that you have to repent of and maybe you don't see that at all times, but they're there. In family, in relationships, on the job, driving down the highway, walking through a mall... I don't care what it is... you have sin in your life. We as human beings do... we're selfish by nature and we have to fight against that selfishness, we truly do. And wrong attitudes towards people, wrong thinking toward people; and we realize this isn't right, this isn't God like, and so we go before God and we acknowledge – I don't want to be like that, I don't want that – and you make those choices and you acknowledge it and you repent of it – and God gives you help. And so every day we have sin that we have to be forgiven of. And so God is the one who delivers us because He's faithful to His covenant – willing to forgive us every day that we ask for forgiveness. That's the new covenant. That once we've had baptism and the laying on of hands, the covenant between God and ourselves is that every time we will repent He will forgive. Amazing!

Every one of us has sins... not a one of us can say that we're accomplishing this by how good we are, by how much we know. By being lifted up with pride and we think how good we are by how much we know, or by how well we're able to keep God's law, or that we're doing things better than other people in the Church. Well, if you're doing things better than other people in the Church – maybe because you've been around for a long, long time... if you get lifted up by that, it's going to work against you – it truly will. You'll have to be humbled, you'll have to go through some hard things to learn that something has gone astray in your thinking and to realize that's wrong judgement, you know? Not a one of us ever has anything to be lifted up by – we truly don't. Wish I could give you the years of experience I've had in the Church, of what I've seen. I can't give that to you; something you learn through time of how horrible pride and haughtiness is when people get lifted up... when ministers, elders, deacons, ones that serve in God's Church... how sick it is when people get lifted up with self-importance, of how important their job is, or how important their knowledge is – that other people need to know what they know... because they had this special relationship with God. It's just like an attitude of 'it's me'.... 'It's God and me! ...and you need to understand what I know.' Is that how God works?

Do we not understand how God works in the Church? There's one way that God works in the Church and it's always worked in the Church... and quite candidly it's through government... it's from the top down. That's why I marvel that there were people by the thousands who thought they knew more than Mr. Armstrong and as long as he was alive there was never a man on earth who was closer to God than him... and why couldn't anyone who had any lick of understanding and any iota understand that? When Moses was alive – there was *no-one closer to God than Moses!* Why can't we as human beings see something so clear that stares us in the face? But we don't, because pride lifts itself up and people can't see like they need to see. And ministers wouldn't have found fault with him. Ministers wouldn't have found fault with the doctrine that was there. Amazing, amazing, amazing!

Pride is a powerful thing – it truly is...and so our works are a matter of pride. And people think they can be righteous by how well they keep the law. It is a lie. You can't! You're guilty of sin everyday of your life if you understand it in spirit and in truth. And only by the mercy of God do you continue forward. What a merciful, loving God we serve. But it's hard for human beings to see that and so we resist God and we fight against God... our human nature does and certainly the world does. They don't understand that yet. And so it's a matter of God's calling, just like with the Church. We weren't called out of the world because of how well we were doing things. On the contrary, in Corinthians it makes it very clear He hasn't called the great and the mighty of the world. He's called the weak and the foolish of the world to *confound* what is considered to be the wise and the educated and the knowledgeable of the world because they're going to see things that God does through something that's so small, something that's so puny and people that are generally looked down upon by the educated or the intellectual, or the wealthy of the world and you know, they wouldn't want to spend time with those whom God calls. You're just not quit in the circle of those that they're in. And so generally people in the world look down. Well, God's going to dumbfound them by what He does in us and through us, by the change He performs in us. Incredible! Because it's not about how great we are, on the contrary.

**Verse 12:** and so, **It was said unto her**, unto Rebecca, **The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.** Now that's not a right translation. It means to have loved less by comparison. Luke 14 discusses this expression as well, let me go there real quick. **Luke 14** is a good one when people are working toward baptism. Jesus Christ said in **verse 26: If any come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.** He's not saying in the context, in the way we use the definition of the word hate in the English language – that you're to hate your father, your mother, your sister, your brother... on the contrary, it's just making a comparison here to love them less. That's what the word means in the Greek language here. So in other words, God is to be loved first – most! If you don't put God first in everything then nothing else is going to fit into its proper place in having right relationships. God must always be first, and that's why the Sabbath becomes first in our life. It doesn't matter what anybody else thinks, you have to put God first. It doesn't matter whether your mate, or your father or your mother or your children don't agree with you about what you're doing because God is first, therefore the Sabbath is something you're going to do – regardless of what someone else thinks. It's not a threat to them, or that you don't love them, but you have to obey... you've made a commitment... you love and obey God – FIRST! And you're going to be a better person for it – a better son, or a better daughter, or a better mother, or a better father, or a better on and on... by obeying God and so this word here just means to love less when you're making a comparison.

So this is what he's saying here... **As it is written**, and it's a little bit different here too, but... **As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I yes, loved less.** Because this is using the Greek word for this. What he's saying is... God loves all His creation. God knows when a sparrow falls to the earth. Something that in life we don't pay too much attention to sometimes or that we don't respect – part of God's creation – even that which lives and dies; even physically out here. There is a respect to those things that God has given in life and yet sometimes we don't treat that very well in our thinking, but the point being is that how much more God for mankind... for all of mankind because of His plan for mankind that's to continue on for Eternity – if we will choose His way when our time comes. And so what he's showing is when it came down to selection, or calling... maybe we can look at our lives... some of you, and some of your family. Why wasn't your brother, or your sister, or your mother or your father, or someone else called; selected at this time; drawn by God? Because God makes it clear that everyone who comes in the Church is there because of Him. Jesus Christ said, "No man comes to me except the Father draw him." God is the one who must begin calling us and then we're given to Christ, given to the

Church. But God the Father is the one who does all calling. All the people that are going to be drawn out of the scattered nations of Israel, by the millions in the very near future, God is going to individually work with. God has the power to work with thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions at a time – and we do not grasp that power and that might... of the Great God of the universe. On the contrary, we think... oh that's impossible to do. Yeah, it is for us! Duh! But not with God Almighty; the God who put every galaxy that's out there, that created everything we see and some millions, billions of galaxies – that we can't comprehend as human beings and hundreds of millions and billions of stars within each one of those galaxies. We cannot comprehend it and it says He sustains it all. That means it continues on because of His power. It's there and stays there because of His power. I don't get it and you don't get it either, but I believe it. I believe it – that God gave it all, that God made it all, that God put human life on this earth, that God has done everything that we experience out here that's here and we can't comprehend that. Your mind literally cannot begin to comprehend that in the smallest form, let alone it's greatest form. It's just a matter of something you believe as a result of being told and you have faith that you believe that it's true. It's exactly what scriptures say.

And so, why weren't others called? Well, basically what God is saying is when you're called, God begins to pour His love out upon you at that moment in time – not on the rest of your family, so He loved you more. Do you understand what I'm saying? It's time for your calling and being drawn to Him for whatever that purpose is and now He's going to begin to give you grace, favour, pardon – bring you to Christ so you can be forgiven of your sins; that He hasn't yet given to your other family members. Not because of anything we've done, how well we've done it... none of those reasons. It's just a matter of His choosing and His selection. In time His purpose is to call all. That all will be selected. And so we don't understand the reasons for those things. All we can do is respond by saying, "I'm thankful for that. I'm grateful for that and I want to make the most of that and respond to it, to what God's given us. It has nothing to do with the fact that He doesn't love the rest of His creation – on the contrary – He does. Everything is geared toward saving everyone and as time goes on, to even make it easier for people. The millennium is all about making the process easier to receive salvation: Satan and the demons not being around. The Great White Throne is all set up to make it easier for people to see the contrast of what God's world was like for 1000 years compared to man's self-rule of 6000 years and the total sickening mess that we've made out of it. As human beings... murder, killing, wars and wars in the name of God that God was never a part of. Different religions at war that fight and kill each other in the name of God. Incredible what's going on through history – the crusades... God was not in any of those things or on any of the sides! World Wars that we've had – God's not been involved in any of those except to allow and bring certain things to pass that He said would come to pass.

Going back to the verse. **As it is written, Jacob I loved but Esau have I loved less**, because he wasn't selected. It wasn't because Jacob was better. It wasn't because Esau was worse. It had nothing to do with that. **What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?** Esau, in what we've believed in times past which I have no reason to believe differently – became the nation of Turkey today. Turkish people came from Esau.

Going on... **What shall we say then? Is therefore unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.** He is God; and the reality is because of that plan that is perfect in its design and purpose, He couldn't call millions and billions in the beginning here – He's called exactly 144,000 in the first 6000 years, worked with them, moulded and fashioned them for the most perfect government that's going to exist during the 1000 years that follows – things that we can't begin to comprehend, but He's designed and made and created. We are a creation. We are the greatest part of His creation if you understand

what the scriptures say about an ongoing creations that's taking place right now. It's in His family. The physical part was done a long time ago – the greatest part of His creation is what's taking place with mankind.

Going on... **so then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs**, in other words, it's not because of your own self will of how well you're able to obey God and keep any of God's law and way of life. It's not because of that. Job is the best example in all human history that was given, written about and recorded that had that kind of will power. He says, it's not because of willpower, **nor of him who runs**, when he talks about running the race, how fast you run, how well you're able to run in this, it's not because of that, **but of God who shows mercy**. That's how it's accomplished. **For the scripture said unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up**. Pharaoh, when the Israelites were freed from Egypt. Even the kingdom and what became of the kingdom. God allowed them to be raised up for a purpose of something he was going to do later on and specifically this Pharaoh and the things that God gave to him; the wealth and the power and the Israelites who were slaves at his beckoning, at his call of whatever Pharaoh wanted to do. God said, **I raised you up that I might show my power in you**, or through you. Incredible here because there's a purpose in something God was going to show – to teach mankind: not necessarily at that time because what did they learn then? Zilch! Nada! The Israelites sure didn't learn a thing. As soon as they got across the other side of the Red Sea they started murmuring and complaining. They didn't learn too much, see? It's for those whom God calls in their time. That's when the learning begins and we understand. And so He said... **that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared throughout the earth**. So God did something of an incredible magnitude at that time that caused the nations around to fear. When the Israelites came up 40 years later there were nations that still remembered the history of things that had happened to Egypt and what had taken place in Egypt, the stories that had gone out to all the surrounding nations of a Pharaoh and a massive army that was destroyed in the Red Sea. You think that the whole world didn't know? The whole world knew. Nations knew. They knew about the Israelites out there in the wilderness and when they started knocking on their door, they didn't want them there. They knew there were massive numbers of people and they knew that they were coming for "*their land*." You have multiple millions of people across in the desert area coming over and eyeing your property, what you considered to be your property...

So, their power... God was declared throughout the earth because they talked about this God. You remember when the walls came tumbling down finally... you remember the woman who believed – Rahab the Harlot. She believed those stories, she believed and she helped the spies to escape – see? Because she believed and she feared God. She believed these stories that she had heard about the God of Israel. And her lineage? Do you know who was born through her? Jesus Christ, incredible story. Because she believed in the God of Israel – believed what she heard. She didn't know all the things, but she believed.

So again, **he has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens**. There are a lot of people in the Church who had trouble understanding when it says He hardened Pharaoh's heart; it's like... that's not fair. God hardened Pharaoh's heart? There's more to the story if you understand how it happened. It was his choice. Amazing. I'll get back to that in a moment.

**Verse 19: You will say unto me then, Why does he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will? No**; in other words, it's not a matter of human thinking and how we sometimes respond to some of these things and how we think about God and the fault/the wrong conclusions we sometimes come to. It's just like... well, you had no power to resist therefore who can resist God's will.... So, it's like if God does

this then nobody has a chance type of thing. **...but**, he says, **O man, who are you that replies against God?** In other words we should seek to learn from God, rather than coming up with our own ideas and conclusions about Him. But it says, **who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why have you made me this way? Has not the potter power over the clay**, if God has placed us on this earth then doesn't He have the power over us to put us where He wants, when He wants, how He wants? And the obvious answer to that is you better believe He does and if you understand God and who He really is – that He's love, that everything about God is love. Everything is to give to us, is to bless us, is so that we are rich in every way – every way! But we resist Him, we resist His laws which show that way.

Going on, **Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make of one vessel unto honor, and to another dishonour?** See, Mr. Tkach had choices to make, but someone was going to fulfill those things in prophecy. Someone was going to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> man of sin, the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of perdition – Judas Iscariot was one who betrayed Christ. Then there would be someone who would be raised up within the Church who would be put – set – sitting in the place of power as it says in Thessalonians, to be able to do something that had never been allowed before – that someone who was over the Church could make choices to turn against the Church – who would betray Jesus Christ. Someone was going to fulfill that – vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour. Was he worse than any of us? Are we better than him? Is anyone better than him? It's not about that because we've all sinned and we've all fallen asleep, just like he did. But God let him go his course because of circumstances and things that happen and because of falling asleep spiritually what happened to the Church. God allowed him to go his normal course. God allowed Pharaoh to go his normal course. You know what his normal course was when plagues came around? ...and Moses was there? ...and these plagues came? ...and after a while, Pharaoh, because of the people murmuring and complaining and because of the harshness of the plague he would finally relent partially and give audience to Moses and make certain promises that he never kept until the last time. But each time it says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Do you know what was happening? Each time that a plague came long and Pharaoh gave in a little bit to it, then as soon as the plague was gone he went right back to being the same person he was except he became worse every time. His pride became worse every time – see? ...because that's normal human nature – because he had a kingdom. He was Pharaoh! He was god to the Egyptians. That's how they treated Pharaoh's – they were their god. That's how they were looked up to – as their god – and here is God meddling in his business. And so for him, he was so lifted up with pride that every time a plague came he would be humbled a little bit to say, "okay, I'll let your people do this and that." But it wasn't what Moses was asking for and saying you should do and so the plague would go away and he got worse and so his heart became more hardened because of his choice, but until he's called, until he's able to be called to the truth, until his mind is able to be opened up to see spiritually what he's done – he wouldn't be able to get that, he wouldn't be able to make those choices so he's allowed to just do what human beings are allowed to do – like they've been doing for 6000 years. Choose your own way. You don't want me, you've rejected me. So, what do you get for it? Through time then, it wasn't until his own son died that out of such anguish, the one who would become Pharaoh, that out of such anguish and such torment he told them to get out. Didn't take too long though did it? Start eating at him... they were leaving, he saw these masses of peoples leaving... Egyptians wanted them out so badly they said get them out or we're all going to be dead. And so he told them to leave and then he went after them. He was going to kill them – he was going to bring them back and they were going to be slaves or he was going to kill them. That was his desire – murder was in his heart obviously. But it didn't work. He was humbled to the ultimate – brought to death. Died with all the rest of his army. And so God hardened his heart. God didn't force him to be hard – that was just a natural thing of pride, of human nature, of selfish human nature. It was because of the plagues that were greater than Pharaoh. His heart was softened a little

bit and then he went right back to what he was but each time because of his choices he became stronger, harder, in his own self will against God.

That's what's so dangerous in this world right now. That's what's so dangerous in the scattered church now. People have been so long in some of their groups and some of the people that they're with that they are so strong in their pride right now that it's horribly difficult to draw them out of that, to call them out of that, for God to awaken them even, to come out of those things and they're going to have to go through some very difficult humbling, by God – see? Because we're nothing, we're so puny, we're looked down upon. Look at what we say about Jesus Christ – he didn't eternally exist and so they know they're nuts... that group is nuts. They're crazy. A prophet... riiiiight! End-time witness – they have really gone over the deep end. Because you know what they believe? The end-time witnesses will come out of their group. It's true. It can't come from someone else – especially not them. See? And that's how God humbles people because He's going to show through time what He's doing and how He's accomplishing it. It's a horrible thing but we're not better than any of them. That's what we have to remember all along the way. It's a matter of God's selection. It's a matter of what God's doing. Not only why should I have ever been called above one of my brothers, or cousins, or someone else... God just did it and so I have the choice to respond. Why should I have been awakened and worked with in the last many years above all those I used to walk to God's house side by side with and council blended sweet? ...a part of the Church of God? We all fell asleep. Why should I have been awakened out of that? Why as a part of a selection? Well, God did it. It's because of God's selection, because of what God is doing and it's not because I'm better. It's not because anyone else who was a part of Worldwide in the past as an organization, before that period of time when the apostasy took place. It's just because of God's selection and so He's calling people out of and awakening people out of many different backgrounds, primarily as a witness of His glory, of His power, and of His might. And these are all things to be humbled by, to realize it's always a matter of God's selection and thank God for it. We just must respond to it then and make the most of it. Just be grateful and thankful, because in time God will be drawing all. In time, all who are a part are going to have their minds opened up – in God's time, for His purpose, for what He's moulding and fashioning – and no one can tell God, "Why are you doing this to me? Why...? Why are you moulding me in this way? Why didn't you do something else with me? Why wasn't I one of the 12 disciples? Well, one of them, you wouldn't have wanted to be anyway. They argued amongst themselves – who's going to be greatest in the kingdom and it's not about those things. All of us when we're called – God is moulding... just like any galaxy out there... why is one out there and another over here? It's because He's chosen to do it and He gives each one a certain glory. And everything in His family, every single one of us He is going to give a certain glory but we can't all be given the same things. There's only *one Jesus Christ!* There's only one Jesus Christ! There's only one group of people that are 144,000, for God's purpose and so whatever God calls us to, that's where we'll be the most fulfilled, that we'll be the most excited... anyway... and wherever it is in God's family – whether it be in the Great White Throne or wherever in God's family – we're a family and we'll function together as a family. No jealousies, no envying, no pride.

So going back to this story here, **verse 22**, it's incredible what Paul is revealing here if people could only see and understand these things, but they can't. **Verse 22**, so it goes on to say in the story: **What if God, willing to show his wrath, to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:** You know what's being said? What if God chose, whether it be with Pharaoh, to do what he did through him to show His anger at mankind for what mankind's did. It reveals certain things about how far mankind has gone and whatever has happened at different times; has a plan to fulfill and **make his power known**, everything that's ever happened to Israel, everything that's happened on the earth through time when you understand the truth and what God is bringing as

far as the truth – is to bring honour and glory to God Almighty. God is the one that's bringing it all to pass – what's going to endure and what's going to continue one. And so he is saying, if God has a plan to do this and He chooses to work with vessels... **vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:** every one of us is fitted to destruction because of our choice in life. Every one of us has sin. Every one of us deserves the death penalty. Death for all eternity because that's the penalty of sin, of going against God. We don't think that as human beings. We think that's too harsh. Well, then give yourself eternal life. Do you want to be a part of that family? Do you want to understand what that families all about? Do you want to understand God? Do you want to understand why the law is good? Do you want to understand these things or do you just want to find fault with God and ... well, if you do you have a choice... and since you can't give yourself eternal life, I guess just make the most of the 3 score and 10 you have, if you get that much, or if you had more... whatever. If that's what you chose to have then that's it – so be it and you know what? There are going to be many millions of people who choose that, who will not choose God when it's all said and done. Not a few – because we're all free moral agents.

Going on... **that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,** what an incredible thing when you come to understand that God has dealt with you according to mercy. When you come to understand what you are deserving of. You know, that's why I'm moved by in Acts when it talks about those who had heard things that were being said, that knew about Christ and those who were gathered together on Pentecost and when 3000 were converted in that one day, and Peter began to preach and it makes comment there that they were "pricked in the heart at what he said." Because they all came to understand something that they never understood before – that Peter told them – you were there and you killed Christ. Only one person killed Christ in the sense of the spear that was rammed into his side, a soldier did, and out came water and blood, but they came to understand something on a plane they never comprehended – that because of their sins, as Peter was preaching, they came to each understand that they were guilty of Jesus Christ having had to have died for them and everyone that's called comes to that point in time when they realize that because of their sins Jesus Christ had to die and then by God's great mercy, in time, when we can be drawn and called to Him by His selection – He draws us and we're able to come to a point of repentance, and all of it here...**verse 23** again, **And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, whom he had before prepared unto glory.** God had prepared a plan before mankind was ever put on this earth, that all of us in time – He wants to give us glory in the God family – to become higher, greater in creation than the angels in the angelic realm. That's been our purpose. The angels were created to help bring that about – to help minister to mankind – to help bring mankind to that point in time. Only 2/3 of the angelic realm remained faithful to that and has participated in that; of things we don't even comprehend that have happened around us.

**Verse 24: Even us, whom he called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? And he also said in Hosea, I will call them my people, who were not my people; and her beloved, who was not beloved.** Things throughout the Old Testament were written showing this is beyond Israel –that it's for all mankind! ...that are going to be His children, His beloved. **Verse 26: And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.** Over and over again prophecies that have to do with what it means to be in the family of God, not by something that a people were chosen for a physical image, but that which was to be a spiritual – to be a part of the God family. **Isaiah also cried concerning Israel, spiritual Israel; Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord do upon the earth/or make upon the earth.** And so this includes the vastness of God's plan and what He's doing. Even if you look at 7000 years... that's not much time; truly it is not for what He's doing, for the

billions He's going to bring into His family. It's a short time. To us, because we have 3 score and 10 allotted to human life – then it's like – oh it's been a long time, and the more aches and pains you have the more you might think that way and the reality is we don't comprehend time. We don't comprehend what God's been doing for billions and billions of what we would call earth years, before earth was even here. We don't understand – we can't. And so time, even in a small frame like this is but a fleeting moment, truly it is. 3 score and 10 – milliseconds in the plan of God. Incredible!

**So he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness.** What does that mean “cut it short in righteousness?” We're all going to be brought to that – everyone that's going to become a part of the God family – through faith, not because of how well we keep the law. We're going to strive to keep it, we want to obey God, we seek to obey it, we want to come out of sin. We want to repent. We repent of sin, but we recognize we're saved by what we believe; that God accounts that to us, attributes that to us for righteousness, **because a short work will the Eternal do upon the earth. And as Isaiah said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have been as Sodom, we would have been made like unto Gomorrah.** If God had not fulfilled the promise of the seed that came through Abraham and Isaac, that seed being Jesus Christ, there would be no hope for human beings. We would all just have life and then death – that's it. Thank God there's a greater purpose – that He has a great purpose. **What shall we say then? The Gentiles, who did not follow after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith....**so the gentiles, they didn't have the laws given to them – not the 10 commandments, nor the sacrificial system to remind them of sin and law, but it says **they have attained to righteousness, which is of faith. But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.** Here they were given *the law* and didn't attain to it. They weren't able to be saved by it. Why is that? **Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.** They tried to do it by their own willpower. They saw it as a matter of willpower, of how well you can keep the law and whenever humans do that – in every case you know what there is? Bouquets and Bouquets of human pride... look at what I can do and how well I can do it. I have a hard time with it when I see certain ones that bring such shame to Judaism – see them in an airport or see them someplace else and they're bobbing against the wall, with their heads back and forth. It's sad, it truly is. They bring such shame to Judaism. The very tribe that Jesus Christ came out of and they don't understand the shame that they're bringing. I have a hard time with them because they're so lifted up with pride, and the curls that come down and I think... look what they did to the law. Look what they did to the Old Testament – but they couldn't help it, no more than anyone else could do what they're doing in this world – because that's just the human mind. Nobody's better than anybody else – nobody! It's only when God brings you to the Church do you begin to have life and we all become a part of what God calls and has always called the Israel He looks to – why He gave the name Israel in the first place. It's about everything that's spiritual – not about that which is physical.

It goes on to say, **Why is that? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumble at the stumbling stone;** at Jesus Christ. **As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.** So when Jesus Christ came along out of the tribe of Judah the Jews wouldn't receive him because they had their own standard of self-righteousness; the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots and different ones. And so he couldn't be The Christ, the Messiah, because he didn't teach what they believed. He wasn't from them, among them. Because if he were really The Messiah, he would have the same beliefs we do and teach the same things... and he would recognize us for who we are! Look at us, how important we are. The Rabbi's and things they thought about themselves... and Jesus Christ condemned all of them for what they thought and what they believed and the hypocrisy they brought to Judaism and making the law hard and harsh – the Sabbath hard and harsh. Took the joy out of the meaning of the Sabbath day.

To this day it's that way. Feast of Unleavened Bread... I hate being there – have been there twice during that period of time. They take the joy out of it on a physical plane... they make it harsh and hard and God never intended His way to be that way, but they do because they see a righteousness in how well you keep the law. So if God says keep the Sabbath for 24 hours, they keep it for 26! An hour before and an hour afterwards. We've had ministers like that in the Church of God. If you're going to fast... oh you're unrighteous if you don't start your fast well before sundown. If you wait right until 2 minutes before sundown, having your last drink of water 2 minutes before, something's wrong – you're not being spiritual. Give me a break! God said to do it for 24 hours. I'm going to do it for 24 hours and be right with God and thankful for it. But someone who lifts themselves up and thinks that they are better because 'I started my fast an hour before, or two hours before and therefore I'm going to get more out of it'... That's the attitude... seriously, that's been the attitude that so many people in God's Church and you think, you don't get it! You're missing the mark! You're saving yourself by your own willpower and not by the belief in what you have, what you've been given. Pride is such an ugly thing. I loathe pride with all my being. I hate it, hate it, hate it! That's what Satan did in the very beginning. It started with Lucifer and it's gone through 1/3 of the angelic realm and it's gone through every human being that has ever lived – save one – whose father was God.

I want to go on to **Philippians**, one more area of scripture because over and over again it makes it so clear – things about the law, the weightier matters of the law, it's really been a beautiful series in that respect if we understand because there's so much more to God giving the law than do's and don'ts. There's so much more given to the law that God wants us to understand. He wants us to understand the spirit of it. He wants us to understand right judgement in it, in how we deal with other people who know it and who don't. And so when we truly see it, we're going to treat people in the world differently because they don't know it and they can't help it. Even people who are asleep right now... we will treat them differently because we understand they can't see right now until they're awakened. It's not a matter of harsh judgement upon them right now. We understand because we were in the same condition. We look forward to the time they're going to be able to be awakened so we can embrace again as brothers and sisters in the body; and we're not lifted up in pride over them. So how we judge people... judgement and then *mercy* that goes with that, not lifting ourselves up because whenever you lift yourself up you won't have mercy. Whenever you lift yourself up with pride you lack mercy toward other people and God wants His people to understand the importance of mercy in dealing with people, in dealing brother to brother. And sometimes people will tax that mercy, and disobey God and be disobedient to God, and continue to be disobedient to God and try to justify themselves and continue to be disobedient to God.

**Philippians chapter 3 and verse 1:** says, **Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.** Paul let them know it was better that he write to them than he be there in person. It's better you get a letter from me than you get me in person and I deal with this matter, cause I've already judged this – I don't have to be with you to judge this matter. He says **Beware of dogs**, isn't that amazing, some of the words that were used sometimes... we're so politically correct today – whew – there are words you... what was it the other morning I heard? Some of the things on TV they're trying to take out of textbooks and out of use – it's incredible this politically correct nonsense. And you think, you keep teaching younger generations these politically correct words and after a while you've got messed up minds – so messed up. They're messing with minds and they know they are, because they want those minds to think the way they do. They want a whole society thinking the way they do, a perverted world. Thank God it's almost over in the sense that they can't continue to do these things – teaching young people, perverting their minds, distorting their minds and thinking if you don't use certain words that are 'approved' by them...

**Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision, For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, making it clear that we are the ones who are part of the true circumcision of the heart.** It's not something physical, and so don't let others mislead you and lead you away from the truth and beguile you as Paul said over and over again, **and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.** So don't trust in your own flesh. We've got battles to fight and don't rely upon yourself in them. Don't trust in yourself and if you don't trust in yourself you know what you do? You cry out to God more... you cry out to God to save you and deliver you and you thank God often for His mercy. The longer I am in God's Church the more I learn and understand God's grace and mercy because I know what has been given to me. I marvel that God can do what He's doing with me and with all of us – that includes you. I marvel at what God can do with us as human beings. Amazing! And yet He is.

**Verse 4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.** He says if you want to talk about confidence in the flesh... you think you have something? Then I have more! He said, if it was a matter of pride... **If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I have more:** You think you're somebody? He says... I am more. So he would talk to them in that term to help them realize, 'you are nothing'. Can't you see you're nothing? You can't start being worked with by God. We can't until we come to see that we're nothing and thank God that He's helping us to become something, a part of His plan because you know that's the only time our life really has meaning and purpose and direction is when God is in it, otherwise we're just wandering around in this world, groping in the dark, truly! So he says **I have more.** In other words if you want to talk about things that are a matter of pride – I have more... I can show you... **confidence in the flesh. If any man thinks he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised the eighth day, you can't get any better than that! of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee;** max that one! That's what he's telling them. **Concerning zeal, persecuting the church...** he was there when Stephen was put to death – he nodded. He was the one who was there who nodded to give approval to put Stephen to death. In Acts... it was Saul – and God turned his name to Paul. So Paul was zealous because he had these things in the back of his mind that I'm sure, even with the mercy and grace of God, that were with him until he died because we as human beings have a hard time forgiving ourselves, but it gave motivation even more so to do what he needed to do that was right. Incredible how God works with us.

**Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.** If you want to talk about the law, the physical law, I was blameless. That's a pretty powerful statement – not the spirit of the law, but if you want to look at the physical keeping of the law, he said he was without blame. Job learned later on that it doesn't save you. It's not what it's about. Spiritually breaking it right and left – filled with pride... **But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung.** The use of the word dung is not how we would normally think of it. It is a Greek word that just means those things which are thrown to the dogs. During that period of time (of Paul) you're talking about a dog on the street. We're not talking about our pets that we give food to, that we spend more money on in nutrition than we do ourselves... which I've been guilty of. It's talking about a dog on the street and you'd throw them the scraps and the stuff you'd throw away that's not fit for human consumption. So that is what he is saying... I don't count it of any value – just to be thrown away – of no use whatsoever. And that's the point we all come to. We all come to understand that without God everything we're motivated for in human life – what's the purpose of it? What does it achieve? What does it do? ...and

then we begin to see the selfishness of it all and the sin in it all and how human beings just hurt human beings. You break God's law, you hurt people. It's one thing I hate. I hate to hurt people. I'm more repulsed by that in my life than so many other things because I learned that at a young age, around 18 and 19 as God was calling me and God let me have a big whiff of self and realizing how, because I had been hurt and betrayed by a lot of people at a young age, I realized I was just as guilty as they were of hurting others. And so I knew the pain I had that I'd caused others – and I hate that. We as human beings should hate the pain we cause others. If we can understand the pain that we have experienced, how much more should we hate the pain we cause others because of our sins, our selfishness and our pride because it always hurts other people. It's always going to hurt others – sin does.

Going on, **verse 9**: we need to finish this, and this is the last verse... **And be found in him, not having my own righteousness.** He didn't look to himself by all the things that people would have accounted important in the Pharisees and so forth, **which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:** Incredible how that we are accounted righteous by faith. It's an incredible thing to understand.