

Today we're going to continue on with the sermon series entitled: *This Worlds Passover* with this being *Part 3*. We understand the meaning of the Passover season and the Days of Unleavened Bread; this is the Sabbath in the midst of the Days of Unleavened Bread. At the end of this day would be the wave sheaf offering and we know that from that point in time begins the counting of the period of time that leads up to the Feast of Pentecost...and so it's all exciting – very inspiring. We come to a point in time of the Passover; we've been touching upon some of those things concerning the Passover lamb and certainly the period of time that Jesus Christ is fulfilling and getting ready to fulfill in the series here we've been covering as He's going to Jerusalem to fulfill what that Passover is all about. And then the Days of Unleavened Bread, that's how we begin our journey out of sin – we have to be forgiven of sin first and have that process of a desire to come out of spiritual Egypt, just like the Israelites did – they came out of Egypt and we understand the meaning of those things.

So, again, this is a very special focus that we're having during this period of time, this Feast season, before it, during it, and afterwards - we're going to continue to go into some sermons here showing this journey that Jesus Christ took. It's an awesome thing to understand that a couple of weeks before the Days of Unleavened Bread, before the Feast season and the beginning of the year He was totally focused upon His fulfilling the meaning of Passover and it's an incredible story here because of how God moulded and fashioned so many of the events that led up to His being able to fulfill Passover. And so that's what we're going through here – that particular journey.

We're going to have a little bit of a preview here, because on the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread we began to focus on Jesus Christ's last four days before the Passover. We zeroed in on the 10th day of the 1st month which was the time the Passover lamb was to be set aside by the Israelites. What a meaningful thing! This is incredibly inspiring. We have *never* in God's Church, in the modern age, Philadelphia, Laodicea and now this period of time here – we have never been able to focus on this as God's giving us understanding of these things now of what was accomplished because it was on *this* day, on the 10th day, at the beginning of the day after sundown on the 9th day that Lazarus and his sisters along with Jesus and others were at the house of Simon the leper for a Friday evening Sabbath meal... as soon as it was sundown that was the beginning of the 10th day, the day the lamb was to be set apart and Mary poured the expensive oil on Jesus and He said that it was for His burial. Meaning it was going to be for His death. He's going to die, and it was for His burial. So again, very focused on death, the Passover being killed and all that was pictured when the lamb was to be set aside on the 10th day. An awesome picture!

And this is also the occasion when this began to so eat at Judas Iscariot that it led up to his betrayal of Jesus Christ and then Judas becoming the first 'son of perdition'. Then on the next day, still the 10th day, but on the daylight portion then, the following morning then Jesus began His journey from Bethany on that Sabbath morning along with the disciples and Christ sent some of His disciples ahead to get the colt of an ass, if you remember the story here, so that He could ride upon that fulfilling the prophecies of entering into Jerusalem. And again, that is all in the 10th day when the people were crying out because of who they thought Christ was. They understood some of the prophecies (not all of them) but they understood to a point some of the prophecies, that this is the Messiah descended from David. That's why they cried out speaking of the Son of David and a descendant of David here that was coming into

Jerusalem. They truly felt, they truly believed that He was going to establish the Kingdom of God on earth; that God's government was *now* going to be established on earth to take away the oppression of the Roman government. But that wasn't the time for it, that wasn't what was getting ready to be revealed and be given.

And then, of course, we continued on as in the evening time when Jesus Christ returned to Bethany with the disciples; and you remember that next morning then on the 11th day, the next morning then on that Sunday morning they were going in toward Jerusalem again and on that occasion Jesus Christ cursed the fig tree and then later went to the temple and overturned the money changers and ran the people out who were desecrating the temple at that time. Then it was after this that He continued to heal the blind and the lame as well as teach in the temple area. And there's so much that's taught in this period of time. It's absolutely incredible and exciting at the same time. So this brings us up to where we left off; I want to pick it up again on the story flow which is covered on that following day, that Monday which is the 12th day of the 1st month and let's begin reading it again as they were going by that fig tree that had been cursed because this happened as they were leaving Bethany again, because after the money changers and everything that had been turned over and so forth then we come to that Monday morning when they were going back again from Bethany into Jerusalem.

Let's pick it up in **Mark 11:20** - so we're picking it up where we left off, just capturing this once more. It says, **And in the morning**, speaking of Monday morning of the 12th, **as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up by the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance said unto Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered away.** And so they were astonished, we're going to read another account here, but they were astounded, astonished that here in 24 hours this fig tree has totally withered. **And Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be you removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe those things which He says shall come to pass; he shall have whatever he says.** And so again here we looked at, it was spoken, given to us that this isn't just a matter of something you work up, something you want to do and you ask God's intervention; that if you have enough faith that somehow you can work up this kind of faith and so forth and all of a sudden say to something to be done and accomplished. That's not what this is all about. This is about *knowing* what God's will is; this is a matter of great confidence of knowing the will of God, the purpose of God. You don't do something unless it's God's purpose. Something of this magnitude that comes from God is not from us, it's from God, and you have to *know* something is God's will before you can pray about it or say it and know with confidence that God is doing it, is in it. And so again here, it's a matter of knowing God's will. Jesus Christ knew God's will and what was to be done, what was to be *taught* by the cursing of that fig tree and what it pictured as we talked about on the first High Day.

Notice going on here some more of the teaching. **Verse 24 - Therefore I say unto you, Whatever things you desire**, it's not like how sometimes this is taken physically, carnally by human beings and sometimes has been taken by some in the Church, until they've grown to a point where they understand – it doesn't mean that anything you *want to have*, everything you *desire to have in life* that you can just *pray about it believing* it that somehow you can work up and muster up enough faith that it's going to be done for you. *That's not what this is about!* This is a spiritual thing – having to do with God's will, having to do with something that we agree with and are in unity with that we desire, that is a matter of God's will that He's shown to us and revealed to us and therefore we desire God's will in our life...that we can then pray in accordance with God's will because it's a matter of belief and faith of what God has said is to be, or is, or something He's given to us that we have confidence of **and you shall have it.**

Verse 25 - And when, notice what's tied to this...because there's more instruction here that's given – spiritual understanding about prayer and about a relationship with God and whether or not God's in it. It's not something to lift us up; it's not about us...it's about God and our being in harmony and unity with God. **And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any:** this is powerful, truly is...incredible what is being shown here. Something that is very basic, but incredibly spiritual...**And when you stand praying, forgive;** Why? Because that's the only attitude we can have. If we're praying to God and we're not forgiving of someone we're in sin because we don't have the right to hold things against others. God has the right to forgive; *we don't!* We don't have the right to *hold things* against others. It's not a right we have as human beings, but so often we think we do. And so it says if we're of a right spirit, and a right mind and a right relationship with God we'll be of that forgiving mind toward others. We won't be holding things against others – because if we are we're sinning and God won't hear us! That's what it's talking about here... **that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.** That's why I talk sometimes about asking very early on in prayer for God to forgive me of my sins in and through Jesus Christ my Passover because if there's sin there why go on and pray? Because sin cuts us off from God. Sin interferes in our relationship with God...until that sin is repented of and forgiven then why would God intervene? Why would God answer when we're cut off from Him. Sin cuts us off from God!

And so Jesus Christ is teaching some very powerful things about Passover, about Him being the Passover, about the ability we're going to have of being able to be forgiven of sin through our Passover so that we can have a relationship with our Father, so that God the Father *will* intervene and help us in various matters of our life. And so if we want to have that relationship...and it goes on to say; **But if you do not forgive**, in other words, if you continue to hold things against others, **neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive you your trespasses.** And if He doesn't forgive you your trespasses, you will not receive *anything* concerning the petition, the prayer that you're sending up to God...so there's no point, we're just wasting time. So it's so important that we be able to be forgiven of our sins. And so many of our sins...what are they about? They're relationships! That's what the law is about – a relationship with God – the first four Commandments. And the last six having to do with our relationship with others...and so often what we're praying about is for forgiveness about how we've treated others, how we think about others, or think toward them. It's not a matter of something they've done wrong. Maybe they have and maybe they haven't...but it's our attitude *toward* them with which God is concerned and that must be right before God. And so that's our desire – to be right with God; our desire to be forgiven of our sins and our wrong relationships...those things that come in as a result of 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life' and that interfere then in our thinking in where we're wrong about our thinking toward others.

Let's look at the account in **Matthew 21** and how some of this is stated then...**verse 20 - And when the disciples saw it**, speaking of when they saw the fig tree, again, they were going in toward Jerusalem on that following day (which was Monday morning)...**they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If you have faith, and don't doubt**, because if we doubt, if we don't believe that this is God's will then we're off to a wrong start anyway. If it's not a matter of God's will, if we can't believe it because we know it's from God then... it's not a matter sometimes of how people thought it was, it was like you could work this up and then you wouldn't doubt. That's not what this is about. It's a matter of being in agreement with God's will. **If you have faith and don't doubt and shall not only do that which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and be cast into the sea; it shall be done.** There's got

to be a purpose behind it; it's got to be a matter of God's will. That's why I know more fully things that are going to happen toward the end... as God has given various things concerning doctrine, concerning things that are written in the books and so forth – that when it comes time there are going to be certain things that He just gives because I know how He works with me in those things that He's given in times past. I know if it's out of my own imagination then those things aren't worth anything, but if it's from God, then we can know. And so if we have that kind of a relationship and we know it's from Him, when it comes time for certain things to be done I'll know and then I'll say it because I'll have confidence in it.

It's just like what Moses did. When God told him certain things, it was time for certain things, then he knew it and he did it, he said it and it happened. And it says here...**it'll be done. And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.**

Verse 23 - And when He had gone into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, and you can just see the attitude here... **By what authority are you doing these things?** By what right... "What right do you have to do this?" It's like they don't comprehend that it ought to be obvious – the answer ought to be obvious, because of all the things He's done and so forth... it ought to be obvious by what *authority* He says these things; but that's the attitude of mind. It's been that way through time. They've asked the prophets that, they've asked the ministry those things – the apostles those things. It's like, "What right do you have to do this? By what authority? Who gives you the right?" It's like my saying that I'm a prophet. "Who gives you that right? Who gives you the right to say the things you're saying?" It's that same attitude. Well, they just don't understand it's from God. It's God! ...not us. **And who gave you this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I'll also ask you one thing,** because if you tell them, they're not going to accept it. I can tell people; I've written it out, I've told them; but people don't accept it. It's an amazing thing...well, it's not amazing, we understand that. They just don't recognize where it's coming from.

So He said, basically, "I'll ask you something..." **which if you tell me, then I will likewise tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, where did it come from? from heaven, or from men?** In other words, was it from God? Was God involved in this? Or is this just something that came from men, something that men think about, some organization, some group out here, some people... is this where it came up, some ideas of men? **And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He shall say to us, Then why didn't you believe him?** Why didn't you believe what he said? Why didn't you believe John? So they can't do that. **But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold that John was a prophet.** So they don't want to say something there and lose favour of the people because the people believed that John was a prophet; so they can't say anything. They're caught. **And they answered Jesus, We cannot tell.** We don't know; we don't have an answer. **And He said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.** Now it's should have been *obvious*; but that's not the way it is to the world and people who are trying to find fault and they were constantly trying to find fault. We're very accustomed to that. People continually trying to find fault, trying to find something that's said that they can find fault with, that they can twist and distort and they think they have a hey day...things that are written in the books that they think that they have absolute understanding of – they believe that certain things haven't happened and they don't get it. They don't understand the fact that took place. They don't understand God's will and why God has done things the way He has. They don't understand the 50th Truth; they don't appreciate, they don't like those things. And so they say... it's like nah, nah-nah, nah, nah we know you're not... and so they're just like little kids playing games and they don't understand, they don't see God; and you can't give that to them. And neither could Jesus Christ – that's why He answered them that way – that He just asked

them a question. And they couldn't give an answer...and so He just basically said the same thing – then I'll not answer you. And then He went on to give a parable.

Verse 28 – He says, **So what do you think about a certain man who had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.** You know human nature sometimes... we know we're supposed to do something and then all of a sudden we think about it for a while, the guilt is there and then we have a change of heart and repent...and then we decide we need to do what we're supposed to do. The battles we have with human nature. But to end up doing the right thing and responding – that's what it's all about, isn't it?

And then **verse 30 - And then came the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go:** so another one was told and he said, I go, I'll do it - **and he didn't go.** Akin to individuals who considered themselves to be religious and they're going to do this and they're going to do that and they go through the motions; and then they don't really fulfill, accomplish, do what was given to them to do in the first place. And that's the parable here. And so He went ahead and asked the question: **Which of the two did the will of his father? And they said to him, The first. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.** Amazing! Why? Why did He say it like this? Because there's an attitude of mind here that He's dealing with and some of those religious leaders were so puffed up and filled with pride. They *knew* they were better than others. They looked down upon other religious groups like the Pharisees looked down on the Sadducees; they looked down upon every other religious group because they knew they were right. It's kind of like religions today. They *know they're* right and they look down upon others. And even some of the scattered groups...they know they're right – that's why they don't go join someone else. United knows they're right. Living knows they're right. Philadelphia knows they're right. And they won't go give any leeway to anyone else because they know they're right and they look down upon the others and their ideas and beliefs and teachings and how they function and so forth...and on and on it goes. It's a never ending story isn't it? But Jesus Christ showed an attitude of mind of being able to work with publicans and harlots, being able to work with people who could come to see who they are and acknowledge it and admit it more than those who consider themselves to be righteous, who *believe* that they're right and better than others and those who look down upon others and can't be worked with. It's the difference between humility and pride.

And then it went on to say here...says; **For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe him:** he was teaching what was right, he was living what was right – there was nothing at fault with John and what John did and how he lived his life, the example he set with others; doing so in an incredibly humble way... **but the publicans and the harlots believed him:** There were people who turned, there were people who repented, who knew they needed to repent and turn to God; but the Pharisees didn't, the Sadducees didn't – those who were 'better' in their own thinking didn't. He says, **and you, when you had seen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him.** Never did repent.

So again here He used that parable – it was against them. And then He said, **Listen to another parable: There was a certain householder, who planted a vineyard, and he made a hedge; in other words a fence around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it, in other words, leased it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:** now in this example here it's one where something would be given as far as an area to take care of, in this case here a vineyard. And after a season would come along and then they would send back to get their portion, whatever the portion of the rent was, for the

lease was. It might be an expectation of 20% of the profit, it might be a third, or whatever it might be. And then they were able to keep all the rest themselves even though they didn't own the property – but they did the work.

Verse 34 - And when the time for the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, plural, those who were working it, **that they might receive the fruits of it.** In other words, the portion that should be given to him for living on and farming the land, in this case here, working in the vineyards and so forth – taking care of the plants, the vines and bringing in the fruit, the grapes. **And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed the other, and stoned another.** Unthinkable! Unthinkable that that would happen. So this parable here shows the unthinkable that's happening of how they would treat this man's servants. Because he was so far away he sent servants to them to gain, to ask for *his* portion of what was right in the lease. **Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will show honour to my son, surely. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let's kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.** It's just going to be ours; we want this! And that's the way it's been with religions – they want their own religion, they want their own belief. They don't want God in the picture; they don't want Jesus Christ coming along telling them how they *should* live; they don't want Jesus Christ or the ministry of Christ to come along and to say you're to keep the 7th Day Sabbath; you're to keep the Passover; you're to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. They don't like those things. They want to be able to say, "No, let's do the things that people like to do; Christmas and giving of presents to one another and setting up these beautiful trees and then these lights on them and the Easter bunny and have these things that go along with our ideas of Easter and we can talk about it being of God and so forth...but this is what we like to do." Amazing how people are; human nature.

And so again, Jesus Christ giving these parables in a very powerful way to individuals who were out to kill Him, who wanted to put Him to death. And He's just stirring it up a little bit more; God knowing the response and the reaction of them that will lead to eventually them taking Him and putting Him to death. God's moulding and fashioning circumstances, situations – constantly in this situation, this whole thing here, especially these final four days...to bring it to a point in time where Christ would be killed on the Passover – *exactly*. To fulfill *exactly* what needed to be accomplished; people making choices and decisions, not forcing them to do it, but knowing their human nature and how they're going to respond to all these events. Not pretty!

Verse 39 – it says in this parable here – **then they caught him**, speaking of the son, **and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore when the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do unto these husbandmen?** And of course, what is the only answer they can give to a parable like this? **He will miserably destroy**, in other words, put them to death, **these/those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render to him the fruits in their seasons.** Well, that's the right answer, that's the obvious answer isn't it. **And Jesus said unto them, Did you ever read the scriptures?** Amazing here... individuals who considered themselves to be quite well read in the scriptures. See, that's what they wanted to portray...their knowledge, the lawyers, the ones who studied the law, the ones who knew it inside and out, or so they thought. And in many cases would, today, if they were in our presence, they would put us to shame as far as their ability to quote the scriptures, their ability to quote in some cases, the entirety of the Psalms; and yet this is what Jesus Christ is quoting from – the Psalms here. And so quite a jab to them when He asked them, **haven't you ever read in the scriptures...?** So right away it's a sword, if you will, cutting them deeply and they don't

like it. And He said, **The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner:** and so He's quoting Psalms... **this is the Lord's doing**, He's showing that this is from God – that's what the Psalms says. And He asked it in a question here because in the Psalms it's stated as a statement that **this is the Lord's doing and it's marvellous in our eyes**. For those who rejoice in what God is doing...but He says, **is it marvellous in our eyes?** So asking the question because it wasn't very marvellous in their eyes because He is the stone.

And going on here, **Matthew 21:43 - Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** So the whole story here in time was what was given to the Israelites, what was given to Judah, what was given in the functioning of the temple and the sacrificial system and all those things that were given to them. It didn't do any good. It was a very physical thing and the people didn't respond properly – they went off and formed their own religious ideas about God and how to serve God and what was righteous and what wasn't righteous. They made their own...just as the Protestant world has and the Catholic Church has today with Traditional Christianity and so forth. They've gone off and done their own things – none of them in agreement with each other. And that's what the Jewish people did. And so Jesus Christ is making it very clear, "This is being taken from you and given to others, to others who will produce fruit." And so this is kind of a bit of a parable in the sense of something that's getting ready to take place; because the whole history of Israel was *they couldn't keep God's way of life*; they didn't have the holy spirit. What an awesome picture here when they were being taken out of Egypt, brought to Mt. Sinai and on Pentecost they were given the law; but their whole history was they didn't keep it. They didn't do what God said. And then we have Pentecost which pictures the beginning of the Church and how we *are* able to keep God's way of life and live God's law – because of God's spirit dwelling in us. And that doesn't happen except for the Passover; that has to be first. And then we're able to be forgiven of sin *so that* God the Father and Jesus Christ could dwell in us and live in us and the holy spirit dwell in us so we can produce fruit. And this is the change that's getting ready to take place. That's why He's saying this...**the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation**, spiritual one, a spiritual Israel; not the physical Israel, but the spiritual Israel of God, the Church of God, **that brings forth the fruits thereof**.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken. That's what happens to us in life. I remember when I was first called; I remember the things I had to be broken of, my ways had to be broken before I'd even start listening to God. I had to go through several things of humbling over a period of time so that when I finally heard the truth I would listen to it and then God's spirit could begin to draw me and work with me even more so. But before that, a year before that if these things had happened, if I'd come across someone who began to tell me about Israel and about how the United States was Manasseh and that we should be keeping the weekly Sabbath and talking about the Holy Days... I'd have thought they were religious lunatics, way out there. It's one thing to have people hearing them talking about maybe Sunday and Easter and Christmas...but to talk about the things that we talk about... that's way out there to the world, it really is. It sounds like a *cult*. And that's how people respond because they *hate* this way, they *hate* these things...that God would expect such things of human beings and would condemn human beings for the nice things they do at Christmas time in having a celebration about Jesus Christ's birth. Well, the problem is is that God didn't tell them to do that, and the problem is it didn't come from God – they mixed it in with some other ideas from the world, from that which was heathen, pagan in belief and so forth. Human nature – what an incredible thing!

And so it says, **Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken.** So either we're going to be broken and begin to receive the stone into our life, that corner stone, and have a desire to be baptized, have a

desire to have our sins forgiven us because we want to break our way, we don't want to be the way we are anymore...or not. And that's why it goes on to say...**but on whomsoever it shall fall**, if the stone had to fall on us because we can't be broken because we refuse to change...**it will grind him to powder**. Dust you are and dust you will return for all eternity. And that's what happens to people who won't repent, who commit the unpardonable sin, who just will not accept God, will not accept Jesus Christ as their Passover.

And when the chief priests, notice this, **and the Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He had spoken unto them**. Finally! They understood this was about *them*; this was *against* them and they definitely got that. **But when they sought to lay hands upon Him**, that was their reaction...they wanted to take Him right then and there they hated so much what He was saying; **they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet**. And so just as He asked about John, they feared to respond in a proper way in answering because either way it was a condemnation of them and the same thing here, they weren't going to take Christ at that point in time.

So let's pick up this same flow now in **Mark 12:10** – **And have you not read this scripture**; it's back in Psalm 118 - **The Stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner: This was the Lord's doing**, it's from God, **and is it marvellous in our eyes?** Because it definitely wasn't marvellous in the Pharisee's eyes, Him standing right there in front of them. **And they sought to lay hold on Him, but feared the people: for they knew that He had spoken this parable against them**: they knew it was against them, **and they left Him, and went their way. And they send unto Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians**, now, these are individuals, supporters in that respect of Herod or the political system, Jewish people of position in the administration of Herod's government over the Jews. That's how they worked; they put different ones in there as kind of a buffer between the two. **And they sent both the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to catch Him**, as it says, **in His words**. They wanted to find something that they could twist and distort, something they could use against Him – whatever it might be so that they could say, "Ah, we caught you!" We have people listen to sermons week after week *just to find fault*. They just can't wait... because they don't get it, they don't understand what God is giving... they just see human beings and they *hate* it. They are truly stirred up and hate what they're hearing. And I think... "Get a life! Why put yourself through that misery if you hate it so much? ...if you hate me... if you hate what you're hearing so much." But it's just like the Pharisees here; they were going to lose something; because if they're wrong... so they've got to fight against it to prove themselves right, to be right. Incredible, the mind of human beings.

And so people that just try to find something that they can say that this is wrong, this is bad, "See, he's wrong again, he's wrong about this." And they can't wait to write about it or tell others, or blog about it because they just want to blah, blah, blah because they think they're so right and they just don't get it. They have a total inability to see...sad.

Let's notice how this is stated in **Luke 20**; and Jesus Christ let them know that about themselves and I'm perfectly willing to let people know what their situation is, that this is about them, this is about them as well – they're the same kind of people, the *same spirit*. But people don't see themselves this way – they think they're righteous, they think they're just, they think they're justified, and they have to live a life trying to justify themselves.

Luke 20:19 – what's amazing is they don't have to wait too long to have all these things proven to them but they just can't wait – they got to tear it apart now. Think... "Well, why don't you just take a trip for a

couple years and when it's all wrong –then you can come back and have your heyday and do your mocking and so forth?” But they want to try to do it now. Why? Amazing! **Luke 20:19 - And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands upon Him; yet they feared the people: for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them. And they watched Him,** and notice how it says it here in Luke... **and sent forth spies,** that's how they're portrayed here now, these Herodians and Pharisees and so forth – Luke portrays them as spies. And notice what he says about them... **who should feign themselves,** in other words falsely represent themselves as, **just men...** This has always been in the Church...individuals who have falsely represented themselves as being people who are interested because they're trying to find fault; trying to find some way to tear down, to destroy, to hurt...and God knows who they are. Jesus knew who they were. Interesting.

It says, **they sent for spies who should feign themselves,** in other words, falsely represent themselves, **as just men,** in other words, as others in the multitude who had genuine questions who wanted to know and wanted Christ's teachings – but they weren't that way, they were false, they were liars, they were pretenders and Jesus Christ knew who they were – knew by their questions immediately, let alone knowing them. ...**that they might take hold of His words, so that they might deliver Him to the power of authority of the governor.** So it came down to a point in time here, when it was God's time, that indeed Jesus Christ should be delivered, but not yet. It's going to happen in a specific time, in a specific manner concerning something of far greater importance than this...because of their accusation. There is an accusation they finally were able to make that they took to Pilate, only one, and I hope we all know what that is...that was grounds for putting Him to death; they held this against Pilate then; because Pilate didn't want to kill Him, didn't want to put Him to death, didn't see anything that was deserving of death. But they made a case such that that it kind of forced him politically in that respect then to go ahead then and have Him put to death.

And so it says **that they might deliver Him to the power of the authority of the governor.** So that's their whole motive the entire time...to try to find something wrong that they could take to deal with Him, to not just imprison Him...in their situation they wanted to kill Him. That was their greater desire, to have Him put to death.

Now let's go back to Mark 12 and pick it up again. **Mark 12:14 - And when they had come, they said unto Him, Master, we know that you are true,** so here these individuals are coming to Him, these false individuals, these liars, **and care for no man:** in other words no special favour given one over another, not a matter of favouritism; **for you regard not the person of men,** in other words, not a respecter of people. This is something we have to learn in the Church in time. We're not to be a respecter of people; because that's what we are as human beings until we come along in time within the Church and we learn how to better judge. We're to learn how to judge righteous judgement and we're to learn how not to do what our normal human nature does in the sense of so often people judge according to people's stature, what they think is stature...and they show respect to certain people, maybe of wealth, maybe of education or to be more impressed by certain personalities and so forth. And yet others, human nature likes to look down upon and put them in a different area so that we can feel better ourselves in being over them or being smarter than, or more intellectual, or... whatever it might be, so we can feel better about ourselves. Human nature is really sick; the selfishness, the pride, the haughtiness and how we lift ourselves up as human beings. It's really an ugly thing, and yet they're saying something that's very true about Jesus Christ. He was not a respecter of persons. He didn't do that; it wasn't His nature to show favouritism, because on the contrary, He was doing things so often that people found fault with. He was going to go keep company with, He's going to go and stay in the

home of, He's going to go eat with a tax collector, as an example, who was *really* looked down upon...or others that He associated with; harlot, whatever it might be. People who'd repented; those whom God had called, different ones who were sickly and so forth...and this was just too much for the Pharisees and those who were the 'elite' of society, they thought.

Going on here it says; **but You teach the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?** Just like some goofy religious groups sometimes – they come along and try to show by scriptures that it's wrong to pay taxes, it's wrong to support a government and so forth and they don't get it. We've had individuals try to condemn us because of becoming incorporated – that we can't be God's Church then... they don't get it; how we function and how you function within the laws of a nation; and they still try to find fault with you and it's kind of sick what happens sometimes. But anyway, we believe full well that you give to Caesar what is Caesars. That's what Christ said. **Shall we give, or shall we not give? But He knew their hypocrisy and said unto them, Why are you trying to test Me?** Why are you putting me to the test? What is it you want? He knew what they wanted. He knew what their attitude was, but He wanted to let them know, "I know, I understand what you're doing." In essence, "I know who you are." He said, **bring me a denarius**, in other words a small silver coin of that roman time. He said, **bring me a denarius, that I may see it. And they brought it. And He said to them, Whose image and inscription is this?** Who's on the coin? **And they said unto Him, Caesar's. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at Him.** This is a very basic thing. This is what we seek to help people to understand about tithing and so forth with a soundness of mind and what God expects. Mr. Armstrong had to address these things back in the early 70's in some countries of the world because people were being too highly taxed. If a king, a leader, a government comes along and they take from you half of what you have, a third of what you have or more – some places in the world they were getting to a point where some people were being taxed 60% and more – and you think, "What's left over?" And that's the point that Jesus Christ is making. If it's Caesars and Caesar requires it; if the government of your nation requires it; if your king requires it, your leader requires it within your kingdom, within your nation, the place you are – then you as a faithful citizen, as a citizen of that country have a responsibility. If you don't like it, go to another nation...and people go to different parts of the world all the time. But if you're in that area, you give to Caesar, you give to the government what is the government's – the taxation and so forth – it's theirs – they take it by law. And that's the way God has allowed mankind to do that. It's just that man has gone farther than what he should have because we wouldn't accept His government over us, the Israelites didn't. And so He said, you want a king this is what's going to happen to you, taxation will come along and it's going to be hard, it's going to be much, much harder than My way. But people didn't believe it. And so again, whatever you have responsibility of... You know if someone comes along, as an example back in this time here, let's say you had sheep and you had 100 lambs that year, what's your increase? The 100 lambs? Not if the king comes along, not if Caesar comes along, as an example here and takes 50 of them. Those are his...you have no power over that. You have no jurisdiction over that 50 that's taken away. The 50 that's left to you? Now, that's your increase. That's yours, that's what you have authority and power over and God expects you, with what you have power and authority over, to be faithful to Him then and that's where tithing comes in. That's why we don't tithe on the gross; we tithe on the net, because that's our area of responsibility in life – the rest is upon the government and upon those who administer that government.

But anyway, that's why this world's governments are getting ready to be done away with...because they're not right. None of them! Not a one through time has been right! And God's getting ready to change all that – that's the good news. The good news of the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ as King

of kings, with the 144,000 who are going to come with Him to set up and establish God's government ruling on, over mankind for a thousand years...and then another hundred beyond that when the family's added to even more.

Going back here: these events continue on in the same day here, on this Monday. This is all happening... we're going to be going through and reading things that Jesus Christ is teaching on this day – we're not even going to cover everything, but we're hitting a lot of it because it's so important because it ties in so closely with things that Jesus Christ wanted to give, teach about the importance of receiving the Passover – those things that have to do with being able to enter into the Kingdom of God, of those things...that the whole back of those things, the very purpose and reason of why He was coming to *die* as our Passover; and things about the Church once the Church was established and instruction to them. So much of it was given on these last few days and it just escalates.

Mark 12:18 - Then the Sadducees came to Him, so again here, first some of the Herodians asking certain questions, if He's not going to give to Caesar what's Caesars... if He says you should hold back then we've got something against Him – we've caught Him in His words. So now the Sadducees give it a try doctrinally to try to find some fault. And so again, **the Sadducees came who believe there is no resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed/no children. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed:** there were no children... **and last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall arise, whose wife shall she be? for the seven had her to wife?** Now sometimes in the Church we would get caught into certain arguments. We have to be careful of what we're doing and we have to realize people don't understand the plan of God, they don't understand the purpose of God and Jesus Christ...there wasn't any purpose in here going and talking about when they're resurrected because *these* are resurrected *first* into physical life again and another whole story. But they didn't understand the plan of God, they didn't understand all these things so Jesus Christ didn't go through and start explaining the Great White Throne and what was going to happen at that time; instead, He looked the beyond that and got to the crux of the matter, when it's all said and done what really counts.

Verse 24 - And Jesus answering said unto them, Do you not therefore err, in other words, are you not mistaken? ...**because you don't know the scriptures**, what a slam to say, 'you don't know the scriptures' **neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels who are in heaven.** In other words, there's no male and female in God's Kingdom. So He goes beyond the 100 years, He goes right into talking about the very Kingdom. So when the time comes and they're all a part of God's Kingdom there won't be male and female. There's no giving in marriage and so forth. **And concerning the dead, that they rise: have you not read...** so He gets at them again, talking about a resurrection. Sometimes people in the Church have scratched their head over what He's saying. But it's very clear. He's the God of the living. He speaks of those who are dead in a very unique way because it's a long range plan. Those in the first 6,000 years... it's like they're asleep when we look at it as far as death is concerned; but it's a matter that they're going to live again, they're going to be in the Kingdom, they're going to be born in a specific moment in time. Amazing! And that's why it says here, **haven't you read**, don't you know the scriptures? ...**how that when Moses it says here... how in the bush God spoke to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?** Those who are long dead...but He didn't speak of them in

terms of being dead. He's their God as though they're alive. **He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: you therefore are greatly mistaken.** You're in great err.

So again here, over and over and over again they were trying to trip Him up and find fault and then **verse 28 - And one of the scribes came then, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well,** so here it is finally, we come to the Scribe and he's making comment here; he's seeing these answers and so forth and perceiving, again, that Jesus Christ **had answered them well asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all?**

Now there's a little more added to this and I'm just going to give this to you quickly here. You can jot it down if you want to as a matter of the flow, but going along with what Mark said is what Matthew had to say in **Matthew 22:34-36** it says – **but when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence,** see the Herodian first, then the Sadducees now because of the resurrection thing, it says, **they were gathered together. Then one of them who was a lawyer,** a scribe, this is where it starts, **testing Him.** So it was a matter here; it was like the Pharisees, this attitude of mind, "Ah, we can get Him." The Herodians didn't get Him, the Sadducees...they were put down, they were kind of thankful of that – they were glad that the Sadducees were put down now in front of the people, so now this guy is going to ask a question. **And one of them, who was a lawyer asked Him, testing Him...**so again, trying to find fault, trying to put Him to the test here. He said, **Master which is the great commandment of the law?**

Now, continuing on in **Mark 12... And Jesus answered him and said, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:** What a powerful thing here and yet we in the Church for so long, as it were, had a veil over our eyes that we couldn't acknowledge this, that **The Lord our God is one Lord:** knowing full well this is talking about God, who is Lord; Almighty God, Yahweh Elohim; **is one Lord:** not two Lords; not several Lords that were there – it's just one. And He went on to say then...**this is the first great commandment: And you shall love the Lord your God,** this one Lord your God – that's what He's saying... **with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind, with all of your strength: this is the first commandment.** And then He went on to say...**And the second is like unto it, namely this, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There are no other commandments greater than these.** Why? Because this sums up the 10 commandments. The first four commandments is summed up in this – that this one God, the one Lord. We are to love with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our being...and the other is like it, the last 6 commandments have to do with the relationship of man to man. And He said here, summing those last 6 commandments – **you shall love your neighbour as yourself.** And yet... it's a beautiful thing when we, in our growth, come to a point in time spiritually to understand very deeply so – we can't live like this! We're *incapable* of this. You are *incapable* of loving others as yourself. We just love ourselves too much. We put ourselves first over others. We don't esteem others better than ourselves – we don't raise up their desires, their will, or their needs above our own. That's just not the way we are. We're very carnal, very inward, very selfish as human beings and so it's difficult for us. We have to fight a battle. We have to have God's *help* to begin to love others like we should on this kind of a plane. And we fall short of this continually, over and over again. And of course the first one... we're not able to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our being?! We can't do that. *Every time you sin you fall on this one!* ...you fail in this one. That's what sin is; it's raising something up above God and not putting God first and not loving God with *all* of our heart, with *all* of our soul, with *all* of our life, with all of our being. We're just incapable of doing that. We fall so short of that. That's why we have to pray for forgiveness every day as a whole, as it were –because we do fall short in this every time we sin.

When you don't sin...well, maybe you can achieve that... but as long as we're in this human flesh we just can't do that – but we grow in that, we seek to grow in that; we want that in our life – we truly do. That's why I marvel how there are some in the Church in time who never understood what Mr. Armstrong said about the difference in God's love and human love and He gave that example of a mother's love for her child. I'll never forget the ride when Laura and I were sitting with a pastor in a Church area with him and his wife in Colorado; we had gone to a service around Colorado Springs and we were with this pastor that we had known for a long time who was well known within the Church over the years, him and his father...and here he was driving up from Colorado Springs – we were driving up there, he'd asked me to go ahead and speak in the services there – we were visiting him in that area, and driving up toward Denver and he stated in the car, because I spoke about this... that he'd never really understood this – what Mr. Armstrong was saying. He started to get it. And I think... "How many people never understood what Mr. Armstrong was saying about a mother's love for her own child." That that isn't God's love, because she isn't capable of loving all other children in the same degree that she loves her own child – because we're selfish. Human love... the best as Mr. Armstrong pointed out, of human love that can be seen in this world is still so far from what God's love is. Incredible!

So going on here now, **verse 32 - And the scribes said to Him, Well, Master, you have said the truth: for there is one God; one God...**and yet there was a veil over our eyes for so long – until 2005 and God removed it for the Church, **and there is none other but Him:** Powerful words here. That's what it says in the Old Testament...several places. **And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the life, and with all the strength, and to love neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.** That's quite a statement from this individual that he made and Christ acknowledged it as quite a statement – because it's true. All the burnt offerings and all the sacrifices isn't what it's all about – the ritual, the routine of religion is not what it's all about. It's what you live... **And Jesus said unto him and answered him discreetly and said to him, you are not far from the Kingdom of God. And after that no one dared ask Him any question.** Again, a little bit more is added later here because there's more to the story.

When Jesus Christ answered the way He did no one wanted to be put down. Isn't that an amazing thing? I think of classroom situations where even children...if a teacher asks a question – you know the ones that are ready to answer? The ones who know the answer. But I'll tell you what, if you're not real sure of the answer? You don't want to put your hand up. Why? Because you don't want to be made a fool of, you don't want to be looked down upon or laughed at by others or be made to look foolish by others. That's pride! And so it was with the Herodians, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. People didn't want to ask Him any more questions because they didn't want to be made to look foolish. They were afraid of that. It was because of how they might be made to look. It's pride! Isn't that an amazing thing!

Going on here, let's notice Matthew now; going over to Matthew and Matthews account. It goes on during this same day, again, Monday – 2 days before the Passover. **(Matthew 22:41)** It says here, **While the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them saying, What do you think of Christ? Whose Son is He?** So there's more that was going on at this point in time and because Jesus Christ followed this up now, this period of time here between the time the Herodians and the Sadducees and their ideas about the resurrection...and then the scribes, talking about the Pharisees here and their try at this, and then it was right after that then... **while**, it says here, **the Pharisees were gathered together**, they were all still there, **Jesus asked them saying, What do you think of the Messiah? Whose Son is He?** Now

when they came into Jerusalem there were people who understood this only to a part. That's why they cried out speaking of the lineage because they understood the Messiah had to come from David and so they called Him the Son of David. And so, **They said unto Him, The Son of David.** Because that was the limit of their understanding, that was all that they grasped. There had to be a lineage from David and that Christ was from him. Now, He asks a question... **He replied then, How then does David in spirit,** because David was a prophet, as it says in Mark 12:36 – '...for David himself said by the holy spirit.' So Mark's account is that it was very clear that David was saying this by the holy spirit and that's why Matthew refers to it as 'David *in* the spirit' calling...**how is it that David, in spirit, calls Him Lord,** how is it... if He's his son, why is he calling Him Lord. It doesn't make sense. It didn't make sense to them. They couldn't answer that.

Verse 42 – What do you think of the Messiah? Whose Son is He? And they said unto Him, the Son of David. He replied to them, How then does David, in spirit, call Him Lord saying The LORD, which is Yahweh and they knew that, **said unto my Lord,** David's Lord, because David is the one that's inspired to say this. So it's the Great God of the universe, Yahweh Elohim, Yahweh said unto, David saying, my Lord. So He's making it very clear here – **Whose Son is He?** Then how is it that David's calling Him Lord? **Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool? If David then called Him Lord, how is it then that He's his son?** How can that be? Well, we understand that, but they didn't understand this. They couldn't answer that – they didn't comprehend that because He's not David's son... He's God's Son – see? But His lineage indeed is from David – so there are things here they could not answer; there are things here they couldn't grasp. And then it says, **And no man was able to answer Him a word,** not the Pharisees, not the Herodians, not the Sadducees, no one could answer Him. And then it says, **neither dared any one from that day forward ask Him any more questions.** Why? Because they couldn't answer and *they knew* that they were up against someone that all their questions were answered awesomely so – they were in awe at some of His answers; and they didn't want to be made to look like a fool...that the people would say more, take more of His side and be drawn more to Him. They didn't want to do that. They didn't want themselves to be made to look foolish.

I think of **Acts 2**; I think of what God revealed to us in 2005 at the Feast and how we came to see these things that were hidden from us for so long and now we can see them, we understand what it's talking about, what Jesus Christ is saying right here; because in the Church we didn't understand this in the past. We didn't get it...that this here *shows* who Yahweh is and who Jesus Christ is...that Jesus Christ *was Yahweh's Son.* This is why this is being asked by Christ. They couldn't even answer this...and even then in the Church we came to a point, because of what happened with the trinity and how it affected the Sardis era that God didn't fully take us out of that – only started the process. Coming out of Sardis into Philadelphia God revealed that the holy spirit wasn't a person, wasn't a trinity, wasn't a matter that there were three beings in the God Family, but we still believed that there were two until God took that away and took us totally out of the trinity then, out of the clutches of that false doctrine of the Catholic Church that started so long ago. It's us being delivered from spiritual Egypt – the bondage that's there, and the closer we get to God's Kingdom coming He continues to free us and deliver us, because of where we are in time.

I want to read through these verses in **Acts 2:32.** When it's speaking about Christ here – Peter is inspired by God's spirit. He's speaking to some who are being drawn to the Church, that have a desire to be baptized, that are being drawn by God's spirit, others who don't get it...but the people are listening and he says; **This Jesus,** speaking of Christ and what had happened to Him; all the different prophecies that had been fulfilled. He said...**This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.** And so they

knew of the resurrection of Jesus Christ – that He was no longer in the tomb. And he went on to say that *God* raised Him up. They knew who this God was – the God of the Old Testament, Yahweh Elohim, the only one God of the Old Testament. **Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, see, fulfilling that prophecy of being at the right hand, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy spirit, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear.** That which is here now, we're able to see, there is that which God is giving through the power of the holy spirit; **For David has not ascended into the heavens:** David's not in heaven. Different ideas that sometimes people have about different ones going to heaven and he makes it very clear – David's never gone to heaven...scriptures aren't about David; they're about David's Lord, the one that's talked about in Psalm 118 that Jesus Christ referred to earlier. Who's Son is He? ...**For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he says himself, The LORD said unto My Lord, same verses here again. Sit you on My right hand, until I make your foes your footstool.** So again here, incredible scriptures. Same types of scriptures that are being used here to drive the point home –this one from Psalm 110, the other from Psalm 118 earlier; and over and over again things in the scripture here. **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God, Yahweh Elohim, has made this same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord, David's Lord, that's referred to later that Christ referred to... and Messiah.**

So very powerful here what was being given finally when the Church was being established and I marvel at what's been given to us, what God has continued to pour out upon us and how blessed we truly are.

So again here, continuing on in the final 2½ days of Jesus' life before He would be dead – this was on the 12th day, on a Monday there's an incredible amount of teaching that continued to be given. Let's notice **Matthew 23** – continuing on right along here in **verse 1 - Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes, and to the disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:** There are those decisions and judgements that are rendered from that specific office that existed there. I think of this as something that existed still at this time. It was getting ready to change in part, some authority that was certainly going to be a part of the Church; but there was certain authority that was never given to the Church...part of it is like the Hebrew scriptures. It was never given to the Church to have a responsibility, to be able to preserve the Hebrew scriptures. It was given to the Jews and they've done it meticulously so; and that was a part that was given to them. Also a part of this was what Mr. Armstrong had to come to understand later on that something else that was never given to the Church was how to count time – the responsibility of establishing specific moments in time as far as God's calendar was concerned. It was still given to the Jews, to this day; you know those things still continue on from what was given from those who had the authority to pass these things along and certain decisions that have been made through time. It's not that they observed them properly, because they don't even observe the Passover properly, but they know when the 14th is, they know when the 15th is; but they just don't keep it on the right day when it comes to Passover, they changed those things in time. But they know when the day is and that's when we observe it. We've had people that come along, because of all the scattering that took place and some have come to the point where they think they know how to look at the moon, when to count it, how certain times are to be kept and observed and they are so messed up, but they come across as so expertise. But that responsibility was never given to them, it was never given to the Church. And so Mr. Armstrong came to that conclusion a long time ago. I believe that's truth number 17 of the 18 Truths.

So it says here there are certain things that you're to do but He says, **All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but don't do after their works:** when it comes to the way in which they conduct themselves in their religious beliefs and their practices. Don't follow them, their ideas and

so forth because that's not of God – that's not been given to them. They've gone astray. ...**for they say**, in other words, what's to be done, **and they don't do it themselves**. There are things they don't even do. **For they bind**, and this is an interesting word; it's a Greek word that means 'to chain' or 'to tie as a prisoner' **heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and they lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers**. So, attitudes of mind of things that are just like I've talked about in times past when visiting Jerusalem...that *self righteous attitude* that people have so often in various things there. Like when you're around Jerusalem...when it's sundown, it's sundown, but they have to make it a little bit longer to be more *righteous*. So an hour before sundown the sirens go off and people are to quit working right then and there. They're to finish their work at that moment in time because that's *more righteous*, and then after sundown... oh, no, no, no... you can't immediately go and start working, even though God says you can. But they say no. So about an hour later sirens go off and people can start working again – they can open up the restaurant –whatever it might be, and start serving people food again an hour after sundown. Well, it just makes it... you know, when you know something's in a certain timeframe and it's of God...because God established it that way it's fulfilling that way; but when people come along and add to it, to add their righteousness to it...

I think of different ministers at times who've added things and an attitude of mind that's sometimes is there. I remember one minister who talked about how you shouldn't take a drink of water a little before sundown because that's just not righteous... you know, if you can't quit at least an hour or so ahead of time then it's like you've got this measure of righteousness that's just a little bit better than what God says. If you do it a little longer it's like you're a little bit stronger, a little bit better. That same attitude! Incredible! And you don't definitely want to have a drink of water as soon as it's sundown because then that's just pushing it to the edge and it's like something's wrong with you then spiritually... go a half an hour, hour easily you know, and that comes across as more *righteous*. No it isn't! No it's not! It's perfectly fine as soon as it's sundown...you've done it, you've accomplished it, you've fulfilled what God said and the fullness of it is there from God in something that God has established. When God establishes something in His laws, it's fulfilling; but when you start adding to it and making it harder, making it more difficult...

I think of the story that I've told at times here... I think of that this even goes back here to the time of Christ of how they criticized Jesus Christ at times for things He did on the Sabbath – for walking through the field of grain and they would grind a little bit of the wheat... you'd take wheat and you can grind it in your hand and get some of the grain there just by rubbing it around in your hand and then eat the grain. I used to love to do that at harvest time. Anyway, they did this and here the Pharisees and different ones are ready to condemn them right away – they're working on the Sabbath, or their going too far – they're walking too far on the Sabbath, they're going longer than a Sabbath day's journey – whatever's righteous in their mind. They make it hard on people. And I think of this freeway up in Detroit I've mentioned in times past. I believe it's 696, it's on the north side there running east and west on the north side of Detroit. There's this one section when you come to a Jewish area where I believe there's two sections of it...the freeway becomes a long tunnel there because what they've done over the top is they've had to build a park; and I think the State and different ones had to get involved in this, the government did, because this interfered with the Jews being able to walk to their services... where they're building the highway separated the Jewish community away from the Synagogue and so they wouldn't be able to keep within the Sabbath day's journey...so they built this park that's above the freeway and you have these pine trees growing up there and so they can walk through the park and not break the Sabbath because they don't want to go too far and break their own law about a Sabbath day's

journey. And all the millions of dollars that went into building these things – incredible! But it’s more righteous (to them)!

And yet that is what God is saying here. They bind things upon people and make it heavy and demanding – they feel it’s more righteous that way. **Verse 5 - But all their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,** To be seen of people. And the farther right that some religious groups get, even the Jews, but the farther right they become, the more they do it for show. To put certain shawls around them and there are people who wear their hair longer – women that think they have to wear their hair to a certain length to somehow look religious. Sometimes you can go in the south and you can pick them out – you can pick out who are Pentecostals and different religious groups in some areas because they think it’s more righteous... or wear a certain thing on their hair, or wear a certain garment...and somehow this is religious to them, of how they look and appear and it’s all a matter of show – that we’re righteous and we’re living ‘godly’. And it’s not a matter of what they *are* living...it’s these standards that people have so often and when they get farther to the right in religion, you know some of the ones that have little curly hair things and they just love people to see these things and... Anyway, it’s just a sad thing; it’s sick how human beings are – just so they can be seen of others to be religious. They love that... that’s what Jesus is saying.

And they love the uppermost rooms at the Feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, to be raised up above the people. We have a congregation that’s listening today...they know full well who I’m talking about in certain situations. One thing I hated to do when I was in this area as an associate pastor at that time, being trained in the ministry...we would have meals but we couldn’t even call it potluck. I think Laura said we had to call it a banquet or something; we couldn’t call it a potluck even though people brought in meals and food like you would at a potluck. But oh, we couldn’t call it that because that’s too demeaning, we’ve got to raise our standard better – it’s got to be called a banquet – that just sounds better, doesn’t it? So we had to do that. And then the ministry... you know all the people are sitting out there in the audience at their different tables, but you know what the ministry had to do and what I had to do that I just loathed and hated? We had this area of risers that were about a foot high, higher than the rest, and we had tables up there we had to sit at and we had to go up there and sit, the ministry, the elders had to go up there and sit and eat and have their meal while all the brethren were down a little lower...because we had to be elevated, we had to be raised up higher. That’s what the minister wanted. He wanted to be looked up to. And not only that, we had to have crystal to drink out of, we had to have silver for what we ate with, we had to have china to eat off of, we had to have white napkins... you couldn’t use paper –we had to have the cloth, and the table set up so-so because of who we are. It’s like... to be elevated. And that’s repulsive! And God said we’re not to do it. And so here’s something the Pharisees liked and we had too many ministers that liked that in the Church.

And it says, **And they liked greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.** To have others hear them, to say... just like a ringing in their ears, they just loved it, they perked up, they want to hear that, to be looked up to that way – there are people in the world who just love to be called ‘reverend’ or ‘father’ or whatever it might be, or ‘papa’ or whatever it is. God says, not a religious title! **But be you not called Rabbi: for one is your Master,** your teacher in other words, guide as a religious title. **...one is your Teacher, your Guide** when it comes to religious title... **even Christ;** or the Messiah: **and all you are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth:** sometimes people come along in the Church and they’re afraid to call someone their father. No, your father’s your father; it’s not a religious title, it’s a physical thing. But when you use something as a religious title, that’s different – God says don’t do it! **...for one is your Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called you masters:** again, as a

title, **for one is your Master, even Christ**. So there are religious titles that people should never use... pastor so and so; reverend so and so; rabbi so and so; father so and so; those things are wrong and so what does the world do? They use them. Traditional Christianity...they use them, they love it, that's what they want. And they want to wear these little black outfits with these little white things in front because they stand out, or to come out with a crowd and have this great big fish hat on and all this rich garb looking stuff and wave the hands around a little bit to bless the people...to be looked up to, to be revered like that... Man is not to have that! Anyway, that's what man does though, incredible, the very thing's God says don't do, that's what people do.

Verse 11 – and do they like to hear that? Do people out here like to hear that in religion? ...that people shouldn't be dressed that way? ...that they shouldn't call anybody Father, they shouldn't call anybody Cardinal, they shouldn't call anybody the name of a bird if they use it as a religious title. Going on... **verse 11 – But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant**. That's the attitude of mind. It's a matter of serving. It's not a matter of being raised up. It's not a matter of the one being served...and yet so many people want to be served, they want to be looked up to. God says it's the exact opposite way, totally the opposite way... turn it around. **And whosoever shall exalt himself**, this is a beautiful thing...it says, **shall be abased**; so powerful. If there are situations in life that if you try to raise yourself up or you like to be looked up to or whatever... me, I try to warn the elders in the ministry about these things... don't let this happen to you; don't desire that from people; don't desire to be looked up to and have people come to you because of who you are in ordination. That's not what it's about. Don't let that go to your head because if you seek to exalt yourself God says you'll be abased, you're going to be brought down. God's going to teach some very powerful lessons and it can actually destroy a person if you let that take over... it's destroyed many a people. It's destroyed many in the ministry in the Church of God – truly has – that kind of human nature... **and he who shall humble himself**, you know if we'll humble ourselves and do what God says, you know what? God raises us up. God places us where He will. All of us in the Church...if we'll continue to yield ourselves, we can't begin to comprehend how God will esteem and give to us that which is exalted. You don't want to do it to yourself. When God does it its good, it's right; it's just, it's beautiful.

Verse 13 - But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Can you imagine? He's telling them what they are. You're hypocritical, your hypocrites in what you do... Well, they wanted to kill Him already – this is just stirring up the pot and bringing it about a little sooner, a little more to the point in time where it's going to happen in a specific moment in time. ...**for you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves**, do what they're supposed to do, live what they're supposed to live... **neither do you allow them who are entering to go in**. In other words, when someone is called, when someone *is* brought to God, you know, what do the religious people do? They try to keep them from it. They try to hurt them. They tried the prophets... the ministry in the Church. Those who are called in the Church – what happens when you begin to do what is right? You have those who are supposedly religious who do everything they can within their power to trip you up, to turn you away, to get you to do something different, to mock you, to ridicule you, to try to get you to do what they're doing, to prevent you from doing what is right. Amazing!

I think of the Church of Christ and the Baptist Church...of how they fought against Mr. Armstrong and wrote so much literature and just loathed what He had to say on the broadcasts and the telecasts as He had the most powerful media going out in this country, in the U.S. and even Australia and New Zealand in time; and 'The Plain Truth' magazine, and all the free literature that was going out and some of these

religious groups...they just *hated* it. A small group like that of people able to do so much because they were much larger in size, but here's a small little group doing incredible things. Amazing what God does.

So it goes on to say, **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' homes, and for a pretence, in other words, for show, you make long prayers:** that's why I tell people, don't have long prayers; don't do things to be seen of people, to be heard. You know there have been times, I remember in times past in the Church where people'd get up sometimes and do a prayer and it'd be so long you just... it's like a sermonette. And a sermonette, for those who didn't know – there was a time before a sermon someone would get up and speak for 10-12 minutes – generally it was very hard for them, they'd generally go 15-20; do what they weren't supposed to do because it's like the long prayers, it was about them; it wasn't about the message. And sometimes it's just a prayer to the point – that's all we have to do. Even in anointing people, it's just to the point; to thank God that this individual is seeking to be healed and we're coming before You seeking the *gift, the blessing* of healing and to thank Him that through Jesus Christ we're reminded of, we're always brought to remembrance of the suffering Jesus Christ went through for us to make it possible so we can come before God to ask for the gift, the blessing of healing – and that's all we have to say in a prayer. It's not like the longer the prayer that somehow it's going to increase the healing – that the more you have to say to God that somehow you're going to work it up enough that He's going to intervene. It's to be to the point and to the point is better because sometimes if we get long, it becomes about us. I've cringed many a time when people get up and give a prayer because it's fully about *them* and their opportunity to shine before the congregation. Wrong spirit – wrong mind! And so this is what He's condemning here. And He says, **for a pretence/for a show, you make long prayers.** It's about yourself... **therefore you shall receive the greater judgement. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you compass/you encircle sea and land, in other words, to make one proselyte,** you work so hard to get someone to follow their ideas, their beliefs, **and when he is made,** when you make your proselyte, you get someone to follow you in your religious ideas, your religious beliefs... it says...**you have made him two times more the child of hell than yourselves.** ...of gehenna, final judgement; because they could so ruin the mind of someone, take them so far away from what is true to where a person begins to believe in that which is false so much it's hard... it's hard for people who are so deeply entrenched in their religious ideas – like in the United States...people who are sometimes in the South are so deeply entrenched in some of their religious ideas. Some people in some other parts of the country and up around Salt Lake City...different ones who are so entrenched in their religious ideas that when something else comes along, when it's true, when it's right from God – they hate it, they loathe it because it fights against everything that they are. And so they fight more to maintain and hold on to what they are and anybody they can get to believe what they are and follow them and their ideas... again, lead them down the same path of potentially severe, harsh judgement.

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