

The ability to understand *why* mankind has been in bondage, in slavery, in captivity to spiritual Egypt, is indeed a matter of great spiritual understanding. And with what we have been going through at this Feast, certainly that has been the theme that has been going through it because of where we are in time. And I am moved by, as I think about the awesomeness of the stories we generally read around the Days of Unleavened Bread because it takes us back to a time when the children of Israel were taken out of physical Egypt, out of bondage, out of slavery. And yet God shows us more and more, helping us to understand that His great desire was not a matter of taking them fully out of physical slavery and the like, but for all mankind to be taken out of the same type of thing on a spiritual plane which is bondage, slavery, a matter of our minds, a matter of those things that happen to us; so much of it having to do with different religious ideas and the like. But as we've been talking about at this Feast, it's a lifelong process. It's a lifelong process, unlike the Egyptians who chased after the Israelites and here they were at the Red Sea and God opened up the Red Sea for them and they left Egypt speedily.

Ours is a lifelong process... of course for some of them it was a lifelong process too, wasn't it, because they stayed there for forty years in the wilderness because of disobedience.

It's an awesome thing to understand they were brought up to Mount Sinai on the Day of Pentecost, when God gave His law, on a Holy Day, on a High Day that means so much; that God began to give His law to the Israelites. And that would have been, if they had the capacity, the ability to do it, to live by it, would have been their true freedom. Because just coming out of physical slavery is not what it's all about! It's coming out of that which has to do with the mind, the changing of the mind, the transforming of the mind that God offers to us is what it's all about. And that's an exciting thing, to understand where we are in time, that God is at a point in time now after 6,000 years – 4,000 years before Christ and 2,000 years since that time – we've come to the end of six days of the seven day week – we're at the end.

All these things having such incredible meaning in God's plan, and now we're at that point where God is getting ready to take the rest of the world, all of mankind, not just one nation, but all peoples of the earth out of captivity, out of slavery, to freedom, to give to them the truth, to give to them one belief, one truth, one Church, one belief about Him.

It's a *horrible* thing that takes place in the world. We went through and we talked about some of the problems since the 600 period of AD and religion that began and some of the things that made that what it was in the thinking of one individual and then a religion that began to grow. And going through some of those things and talking about a people that began – but even there, there's not been unity and oneness. Since the day it began they've had problems, battles, wars, killing over different ideas, two primary ideas of who should lead them.

The same thing has happened in Christianity and in wars. People have been blessed by the same church to go into war against others in the same church and of a different country. World War II was like that! People sought blessings and help! Where's God in all this? ...in all this fighting and warring that's gone on in the world? Incredible!

And so now the time has come where God says there will be one government on the earth, one truth about Him on the earth – not all the conflicting ideas of Judaism and traditional Christianity that exist out there today. How *blessed* mankind is to be at that point!

So, God's deliverance of freedom gets to the heart and core of one of the greatest mysteries of all time. Mr. Armstrong wrote the book entitled 'Mystery of the Ages', yet the heart and core of understanding it in its greatest fullness is a spiritual matter of grasping true freedom, what it really is. And so much of that book is really about that, it's about a process, about all the things that God has taken all of His creation through from the very beginning of time, from the time He began to create angelic beings, a spirit world, and then a physical world and then finally after – we don't know how long... millions, billions of years(?) we don't know – time passed and finally remoulding and refashioning the earth and putting man on it for the past 6,000 years.

So I think of that book, I think of Mr. Armstrong and how he went through over fifty-plus years to be able to write it. And that's what this sermon is entitled today, it's talking about freedom, it is *True Freedom*; that's what we're going to be covering today as a subject matter. This is of such great importance and magnitude as a vital part of God's plan and our ability to truly understand more about what God is now getting ready to do by ending Satan's rule and establishing that of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Because of that I'm going to repeat the introduction.

The ability to understand why mankind has been in bondage, in slavery, in captivity to spiritual Egypt is indeed a matter of great *spiritual* understanding. And God's deliverance of freedom gets to the heart and core of one of the greatest mysteries of all time.

Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians 2. Oftentimes we hear sermons and read scriptures that we *think* we fully grasp, but there is so much that's contained in the Logos of God, the Word of God. That's why I love John, the book of John and the books of 1st John, 2nd John and on, because of what God gave to him as an apostle to reveal. And the things that were given to him to understand and written about the Word of God; the Word of God, the revelatory thought, the mind, the being of God that was placed into a human being. That ability, that communication, that mind that was there in a relationship with His Father and He was called 'the Word of God.' It's an awesome thing to understand, things that are difficult for our human mind to grasp, it truly is. And so there is so much contained in the Logos of God, in His Word that we only receive portions as we grow, because we are limited as human beings. There are things we cannot grasp, and we must grow in on a spiritual plane that can't be given to us all at once because of this nature that we have and this battling that we have in the mind and the resistance that takes place in the human mind of resisting God's spirit. And that's the way mankind is because of our nature. And God made us this way for a purpose and it's an awesome thing to understand that process and *why* we're like this and *why* Satan was left on this earth, *why* the demonic world was left on this earth. *Awsome* to understand those things.

And then the blessing of being drawn by God's spirit, of a spirit essence that we all have as human beings that makes us different from the animal world. We have the ability to think and reason, but on a limited scale, by an essence that's there. Every person that's ever born receives that essence in their mind whereby they can think, remember, create, have certain abilities on a limited plane that God has on a plane we can't even begin to grasp, but He gives that to us in a limited way in a physical mind.

And so as He begins to give us that which is spiritual we grow a little at a time...a little at a time. And as much as we think or believe that we *see* all that a verse might contain or a doctrine or a truth, in time, sometimes perhaps years later, *years* later we receive more...we receive more because there is much more that goes much deeper than what we readily grasp. And so this is a good thing for people to hold onto and to understand as they are first being drawn, those of you who are very young in the faith – it's a matter of wisdom to learn these things, to strive to understand these things, to understand that's just the way it is...it's just the way it is. And to understand your human nature that actually resists that. It's an awesome thing to understand.

I've been in God's Church since 1969 being moulded and fashioned, and Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy day God continues to give more, to continue to expand, an ability to grow, to see things. Because everything illuminates, it's a matter of the light and it becoming brighter and brighter, but it's also a matter of understanding that there are those things we're conquering and overcoming if it's a matter of our physical mind. That's the process of coming out of captivity. We're not fully out. When you're baptized, when you come up out of the water, the watery grave, and you say that your life is God's and you enter into a covenant relationship with God, a new covenant that God has given to mankind. The ability to be forgiven of sin is the covenant that God gives to us and makes with us through His Son, through the Passover, but it's just a start, it's just a beginning. It's a *lifelong process*. How many times have you heard that? You've heard it a lot, but your understanding of that grows, your conviction in that grows, your ability to see yourself in that grows through time.

1 Corinthians 2:7 – Paul is talking to the Corinthians here and he is referring back to those things that he has done as he is preaching to them and teaching them, and speaking of himself and of the ministry, and of ourselves as we grow in understanding. He says, **But we speak the wisdom of God**, that which comes from God. The wisdom of God is not a small thing. The things of understanding, the things that go beyond understanding, because there is first knowledge, and then you start receiving understanding, and then wisdom is the living by that which you are given, the way you choose to live according to the understanding that God gives to you and the ability to live by that. And so God shares with us His very mind, His very being, and we grow in that.

And he said, **we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery**, because it's on a spiritual plane! I think of how many times I have preached going through these verses and talking about them, and we are able to go back and build upon them. Wherever you are in your growth, today you can build upon it. Those who have been around thirty years are going to be able to build in a spiritual plane more, they have that capacity. Because there's so much more that has been built, that they're going to be able to see something on a plane that is different from what you are if you're two years old, because you haven't had the same building yet. The same construction has not gone on in your life. *That* is a reality, and the ability to accept that sometimes in the human mind is difficult, it truly is.

And so it says...**we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery**: Why a mystery? Because God's spirit has to be in it. As Paul preached to the Gentiles, as he went out to preach, the reality is only those who were being drawn by God, who were being given help by God through the power of His spirit could receive what was being said by Paul, hear it and begin to understand it. Others around him, they didn't understand what he was saying because God wasn't calling them.

When he went to Mars Hill there in Athens... What an incredible thing to visit some of those spots and to think about those things. I think about walking up around that area there and seeing the very place where some of these intellectuals, philosophers and different ones sat as they discussed things, coming

in from different parts of the world and that being a center of education and philosophy and different things that were taking place at that time. And Paul went up there in their midst and talked about all the things of different gods he saw in the area there, that are still there to this day. And he started talking about this one inscription in one area that said 'to the unknown God' – just in case they hadn't covered all the gods they had this one that was to the unknown God. And he said, "I'm here today," in essence, paraphrasing, "to declare Him to you." And they listened, but they didn't get it, they didn't understand what he was saying. All these intellectual people who were well known in the sense of being known for the knowledge they had of various things in the world at that time. They didn't grasp what Paul was saying. They didn't accept what Paul was saying. They were enthralled by parts of it and had a desire to hear more, some did, but they never got it. Why? An intellectual mind, a well educated person? Well, we experience those things, don't we? You can't give this to anyone, only God can. It's His job. Only God and His Son, Jesus Christ, can give this way of life, because it's a matter of His communication to the human mind through the power of His *holy* spirit, and He communicates with the spirit essence that's in your being. Not by voice, but by His spirit. Now there is that which is translated perhaps by voice or your ability to read something and as you're reading something all of a sudden you see something because He's communicating it to you. He is letting you see it. It's a spiritual matter.

And that's what Paul is explaining here; **we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery** – the reason being is because there are those who can hear it, the same voice at the same time, and there are others who *cannot* hear it! To them it's fully a mystery, doesn't make sense, it doesn't fit together.

...**even the hidden wisdom**, or as it is better translated in Greek, **even that which is hidden**, it's hidden, it's a mystery because it's hidden unless God gives it, reveals it, illuminates, **which God ordained before the world**, before *anything* was created, before man was ever on the earth, before time began, in essence, in the sense of that which is given to man and far beyond that. God determined a long, long time ago, before He ever started any phase of creation, before He ever started a spiritual creation, before He ever made the angelic realm, that this is how it would work. Because He's perfect in what He does, in His creation, and what He's creating. His ways are that of perfection and things that we cannot begin to comprehend.

How do you comprehend a God who has created everything that's in this universe? How do we comprehend something like that when we're sending a telescope out there, the Hubble, and sending it out there and trying to see the edges of the universe? It's a little bit like when different ones in Europe sent ships out – Where's the edge of the world...? People were afraid to sail. Where are they going to drop off? Where does it end? And later on come to find out its round; it's big and its round and you don't fall off. And here we're trying to go out here and find the edge of the universe so we can see the beginning of creation, but people won't accept what it says in here about the beginning of creation. Because it's a mystery! They can't comprehend it no matter what! All the intellectualism of the world can't comprehend this; God communicates it by His spirit, it's as simple as that.

...**which God ordained before the world, unto our glory**: because it's the glory of God that He shares, it's His glory that He begins to share in us, with us, in our lives, and that excitement then that we have as we see things, as we begin to learn and grow and draw closer in a relationship then to God because we're moved then by what we see and we come to understand such things, as I just mentioned about the universe. We come to understand that not only did God create it but He sustains it by His power. It stays there; it functions because of His power that sustains it. We can't comprehend that! It's very difficult for human beings to believe in God! ...to believe in such a God! And so we tend to limit Him

and make Him more human, try to make Him more with weaknesses and stuff...and He doesn't have them.

Which none of the princes of this world knew: things that...he's talking about a period of time, the time of Christ, when Christ came. **Which none of the princes of this world knew or have known, for had they known it, they would not have impaled on a pole/stake the Lord of glory.** Now, every place I come to a point where it's 'cross' I always strive to translate that as it should be out of the Greek. It was a pole. The Greek word is for a pole, it is not a Greek word for a cross, it is not a Greek word for crucifix or crucifixion. That isn't how He died – He died on a pole. That's why we talked about yesterday, what an incredible thing, something so simple, but the world is blind to it and they don't understand history and they don't understand things that really took place and that when you put your hands up there like that and you have a nail driven through it and one in the feet that the reason they came around and broke the legs of the other two was because that would cause them to suffocate.

You put your hands out like this [stretched out to either side of you] and you can breathe, but you put your hands up like this [over your head with one hand over another] and you're hanging down like this and you will suffocate. If your legs are broken you can't push yourself up anymore to breathe, and that's exactly why they came around and broke their legs, the two thieves, but it says earlier a soldier had come by and rammed a spear into His side, and it says out came water and blood, because He had to fulfill the Passover, He had to spill blood to the earth to be our Passover, and He died. So when they came to Him, He was already dead. Things the world can't see and can't grasp.

So again here, something so simple that's so important to understand that took place. And so it says, if they had known who He was, if they were able to understand these things, if they were able to truly see God and understand but it's a mystery to everybody, their eyes are blinded to it, it's hidden from them. That's what Paul is saying here. And He says, if they had seen it, if they had known it they wouldn't have killed Him, they wouldn't have put Him to death.

But as it is written, Eye has not seen, so he's quoting a scripture back in Isaiah; **Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man/mankind,** as it is, **the things which God has prepared for them who love Him.** Interesting how it's even stated here, what Paul is saying. We come to understand what this means through time.

...**Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,** people can't have it, and no one loves God. Do you understand that? **Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them who love Him.** To come to be able to be of a mind and an ability to love God – we learn what that means. God has to call you. People don't automatically love God. It says, 'the carnal mind is enmity against God' – Romans 8:7 – 'The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.' Man doesn't want God's law. Man wants to live his *own* way. It's just our nature. So when it comes down to God, when it comes down to His way of doing things, if there is one God man resists that. He doesn't like that! Doesn't like that at all; because if there is only one God and there's only one truth then there are a lot of people who are going to have to change. So who's right? Catholic church? Protestant? Some protestant church? The Jews? Islam? Who is right? Incredible! And so man doesn't even like to think about that.

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard; neither has entered into the heart of mankind the things which God has prepared for them who love Him. And when God begins to call you and you're able to begin to have a relationship with God and you come to a point where you can begin to love Him because you see

Him, it means that God has already been calling you and drawing you and giving you the ability to *see*. *Then* you come to understand these things. *Then* you begin to *see* and hear. You didn't decide! *You did not decide* that you are going to embrace the true Christ. *You did not decide* you're going to embrace the true God, the *one* Almighty Ever Eternal Living God. *You didn't decide* that one day by yourself. *You didn't do a lot of studying and all of a sudden come to say*, Oh, I see this and now I'm going to...whatever. You didn't do that. God had to start calling you. That's what God says. Jesus Christ said, "No man can come to Me except God the Father draw him." It's a calling. He has to open up your mind. He has to begin drawing you out of the world. He has to decided to communicate and start communicating to your mind and draw you out and begin to give you understanding of what is true – and *then* you make choices, will you love Him. And we decide those things as a matter of obedience, that we see the truth about the Sabbath and we see that in order to have a right relationship with God that He tells us there's something we should do – we should obey Him. There is order; and so we make a choice, is this what I want? Do I want that relationship with God?

If a person doesn't want a relationship with God then they don't love God, they don't love His way of life, but that's the beginning. And so we start making choices. Do you love God? To do that He has to give you the ability to hear and the ability to see; that's how it starts. He gives you the ability to begin to see the Sabbath. He gives you the ability to begin to understand where Easter came from – 325 AD – the Catholic church. Incredible! All of a sudden your mind is opened up and you see history and you see the great controversy of the time was about Passover and that they wanted to change the day of Passover; things we've already gone through at this Feast.

But God has revealed them unto us by His spirit: that's the truth! The only way we can see, have it revealed to us, have the light illuminated, is by His spirit! And coming out of Egypt is a process, continually receiving more and more and more of His spirit into our life.

But God has revealed them unto us by His spirit for the spirit searches/seeks to know all things, that's how God's spirit works. It works with this mind that is limited, oh, incredibly limited, and it begins to work with us on another plane and we begin to understand things of God, He begins to help us to see and have things put together. Like Mr. Armstrong used to talk about it being like a big jigsaw puzzle and you start putting in these pieces and all of a sudden a picture starts appearing as you work on it, as you grow. But the picture isn't there all at once, it takes time. And that's the way it is with us.

But God has revealed them unto us by His spirit for the spirit searches/seeks to know, in other words, **all things,** and so God will work with your mind to accomplish that.

I've referred to it here in part here, but **Romans 12:1 – I beseech you therefore brethren,** Paul talking to the Romans, **by the mercies of God that you present your bodies/life a lively/living, a lively sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world,** because it doesn't have the truth. Says, don't conform to the world, don't try to be like the world, don't try to copy or emulate things in the world, or people...he says, **but be you transformed;** it's a beautiful word because it's a Greek word that has to do with metamorphosis, metamorphoo, just like a butterfly. You see the different stage of larvae, a cocoon, and all of a sudden this beautiful creature. And that's the word that God has chosen here through Paul. **...but be you transformed,** become something different, **by the renewing of your mind.** And that's a lifelong process.

...that you may prove... and so God gives us the ability to actually prove, put to practice His way of life. We begin to prove the Sabbath. We begin to experience it. You can't understand the fullness of the

Sabbath and its importance until you start living it, until you start doing it, and then you start receiving the benefit. You have to prove the Holy Days, you start living them, the Feast of Tabernacles. You can hear about it but until you've been there you don't understand what it's like to be given God's help in spirit eight days in a row and that growth that takes place and the fellowship that takes place there and the bond that is there of a family that's made possible only by God's spirit. **...that you may prove what is that good and acceptable perfect will of God.** Awesome!

Anyway, going back here to Corinthians; **But God has revealed them to us by His spirit, for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.** God wants to give us these things but He can't give it to us all at once because the reality is first of all we can't handle it, we're very limited, by design. But we couldn't handle it on another plane – spiritually – because of our human nature and how we would respond then, because we would respond in a very bad way because of our nature.

If God, at the very beginning, just put into your mind vast understanding of His purpose and His plan, the ability to see things in this book in a way that you will come to see it 20-30-40 years from now through growth and a process of development – if you had it all at one time you would do what Satan did. You could not help it. God knows that about us. He knows that about our nature. And so we learn through time what our nature is really like. We could not handle, all at once, those things, *because* of our nature. That's why in God's Church through time, even matters of ordination, they don't happen the moment you're baptized or the next month, or the next year, because we can't handle it, because we're not there at a stage on a spiritual plane yet being developed, moulded and fashioned, to where we can deal with it. Instead, it would hurt us. It would hurt us!

I've seen many of people fall, spiritually, even after being in God's Church for a long time when those things have not been used properly, when instead it became a matter of pride, when instead it became a matter of something that lifted an individual up with power and with authority in a wrong way. God knows how to work with us, how to mould and fashion us.

But God has revealed them to us by His spirit, for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God; for what man knows the things of a man, in other words, what is it that man can know about mankind save/except by the spirit of man which is in him. So I just mentioned that. There's that spirit essence in us that gives us the ability to deal with physical things in the world. We have ability to have knowledge and creative ability, the ability to build things, the ability to do various things. We all have different kinds of talents and abilities and that's what He's saying here, that knowledge you're able to have except by that which He's given to us already as physical human beings that's different from the animal kingdom, that's just a matter of something that God gave to them as a matter of instinct. They do the things they do by instinct. They don't think about it, they don't figure it out, it's by instinct. For us it's different; we learn - even a baby.

In creation, God has made things have instinct. A baby calf when it's born knows right where to go. *Knows right where to go.* A baby, if you leave it there, doesn't have the ability – it'll die – has to be shown, has to be fed, has to be nurtured, has to be taken care of, has to learn many things that we do through time. We're different. So, what things can we know except by this process that God has given us the ability to do.

Even so, the things of God, the things that are from Him, Logos, His Word, His being, His mind, the truth, **no man can know except by the spirit of God.** That's why God has to do the calling. That's why God has to begin drawing us, and He begins sharing with us then His holy spirit. He gives that in our mind

and gives us the ability to begin to learn, to begin to understand the beauty of *Passover*. What an awesome thing! To understand, as we talked about yesterday, what an awesome commandment assembly that God has given, but it's not a High Day; but you've got to accept that first, you've got to accept that Jesus Christ is our Passover, that He died for our sins, that He spilled His blood to the earth, that He's God's Passover that *God* sacrificed, in essence, and gave to mankind. God gave Him to us.

And it's through that process we can enter into a New Covenant, to be forgiven of sin. That's what the New Covenant is about, the ability to be forgiven of sin over and over and over again. If your spirit and your heart is genuine before God He'll forgive you if you ask for it once you enter into that relationship with Him.

So, I want to give an example of some of this, of things that we have experienced in God's Church, things that I have experienced over years; and we've heard about these things before, but in this context here again of understanding. Because, again, understand you have a nature that you have to battle. There is that in our minds that we have to continually battle. That's why I'm *so thankful* that God inspired Paul to write what he did when he talked about that, when he said, 'Oh *wretched* man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' Because what does it mean 'a body of death'? It means he saw that he had sin in his life and that God says that because of sin you die. 'The soul/the life that sins it shall die' – doesn't go off to heaven or hell – it dies! It's just dead! That's the penalty. It doesn't go on with some kind of eternal life somewhere. We have to be resurrected! And He says, 'the soul that sins...' So he said, "Oh wretched man that I am..." He saw his sin, he saw what he was. "...who will deliver me from the body of this death?" He says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." Because we can be forgiven of sin.

So I'm thankful that's in the scriptures and that he explained that there's this battle that goes on, as he talked about, this battle that's in the inward man and this battle that takes place in us that there, that which is inside of us because we see the truth, we know the truth and we want to live by it, we choose to live by it, but we see there's this battle that goes on because our nature doesn't want to do that. And so we have to make choices of what we're going to do.

You get into an argument with someone – it's not right! What do you do? And there's this battle that goes on because of your pride, because you're right and someone else is wrong and the feelings are flared up. It might be on the job or whatever and you've had a dispute with someone or a mate or a child or a parent, or whatever it is, and there's this dispute going on and there's this friction going on that *isn't right*. God's way is one of love but we have to learn that! We have to learn that it's a matter of sacrifice and so forth, and how to love. We learn those things through time.

But here this battle is going on – it's because of your pride. It's because of you're being right and they are wrong and you're justified and so you're justified in how you treat them. No, you're not. Not if it's wrong, not if it's bad, not if it's ugly, not if it has anger in it and bitterness and resentment and all those things. And so we don't handle things in a calm way and able to judge matters like Christ did. It says, 'when He was reviled, He didn't revile back.' When He was threatened, He didn't threaten back! "Oh, you're going to threaten *Me*? I'll let you know about a *threat*! I can call several legions of angels right now!" He didn't do those kinds of things. Amazing! Those things are humorous to us because it's so farfetched that He would do something like that. No, He dealt with it. He dealt with it calmly, in essence perfectly so in judgment.

The only time He didn't deal with something real calmly, but was just in doing it, when as He went into the temple and He overturned the table of the money-changers and the things that were going on inside His Father's house, on a physical plane, but the respect wasn't there in Judaism and of the temple and how things were taking place. And so He was very forceful in what He did there, because it was just and from God. They actually deserved far worse, but that's all He did. He wasn't out of control; He was fully in control of what He was doing. It wasn't like sometimes what happens to human beings who get into an argument and dispute and lose control of their emotions and their feelings and their thinking and so forth.

1 John 4 – again, an example here of how some of this works as far as God's spirit working in us and beginning to work with our minds and so forth, and how we grow and how we can't see everything up front in the beginning. And sometimes some of you who are new, it makes it a little harder for you because you have a benefit of seeing things, of knowing things that others in the Church before have not known. It's kind of like the book 'Mystery of the Ages' and when it was finally fully written, or anytime that Mr. Armstrong came to understand a truth and those things were given to the Church, then people had to make choices, but something like 'Mystery of the Ages', all of a sudden something was opened up that gave a better understanding in a more complete way, in a very powerful way, over fifty-some years of God restoring truth in the Church and all of a sudden here is this book with all these things in it, different things that were revealed and given. But it took *fifty-some years* for these things to come together, to give to us. So, I came in toward the tail end of all this in 1969, but he came in in the early 1930's, and God began to work with him, and so I received the benefit of that. And so we come in on the scene at different points in time.

1 John 4:2 - Here is how you can know the spirit of God, in other words if what a person is reflecting is from God or not. It's a simple thing. And this is to God's Church, this is to the Church. They're not speaking to the world, never were, because the world can't hear. So those who are being drawn at any moment in time, just like what's getting ready to happen in the world, God's getting ready to finally, after 6,000 years, give *all* mankind *everywhere* the ability to see and to hear.

Here is how you can know the spirit of God; every spirit that confesses, see, this means a great deal to me when I go through a verse like this, because I know when it began to work with me, if you will, as far as God revealing a little bit and a little bit there over time. Started in about 1982, a little bit more being added year by year, Holy Day by Holy Day, as time went on and whatever periods of time that God gave more. The understanding of this didn't come overnight. As a matter of fact the focus and the importance of this matter of the word 'confesses' – you hear it and your mind sees it at that point in time and "Oh yeah." But we haven't always known this. This hasn't always been in God's Church, what the word is in the Greek language, 'homologeō' as it really is. It's the word that really comes from 'homologous' as we've talked about – the mind of God, the Logos, the Word of God, the revelatory thought of God and that word 'homo' – 'of the same'. It's saying, 'of the same mind', the same Word, when you're of the same Word. So how can you know if you're of the same Word, that this is of God, that this is the mind of God, that this is truly from God?

Every spirit that confesses, in other words, that reveals by their life, by their speech, by what they say and by how they live, that they are of one mind. It's a simple thing in God's Church to know if people are of the same mind. It's very simple when it comes out in speech because we speak the same things, we speak the same truths. And if someone comes along with some different idea – sticks out like a sore thumb, it sticks out like you hit your thumb with a hammer and it's just throbbing and all the attention in the rest of the body leads to that one place because it's hurting so bad, it's just throbbing. And that's

the way it is, that's the way it stands out in God's Church when something of that nature comes along and happens. And it's happened over and over and over again. Since I've been in God's Church it's always happened. That's what John is showing, even here.

Every spirit that confesses, in other words, of one mind, speaking the same thing, in agreement with, **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God**. See, this didn't come overnight and there are things in your life that you will continue to build upon and though you know some of these things there are things you will grow in even in these verses we're reading here that will grow more and more in time, in understanding, in wisdom, that only God can give to you through growth.

I remember talking before the apostasy took place, to a minister in an area, and we were discussing some of this, and his thought, his understanding to this point in time was that this is a proof of whether someone is being worked with by God, is if they confess that He came in the flesh as a human being. Islam believes that but they don't believe Him. He came in the flesh, He lived on this earth, so what does that prove? Does that prove you are of God because you believe He lived in a physical human body? And that was from a minister who'd been in God's Church for a long, long time. And the reason I mention that is because this is where we were at that time, we were limited in our ability to see because God hadn't given that yet. Because you see, God has to give these things! You have the benefit now of God giving to you where we are at this time with the present truth that we have now, and your ability to digest it and to live by it is something you will grow in more and more through time.

And the reason we're going through this is so that you can grasp and understand, if you can come to understand your own mind in a better way you can come to grasp and understand that you're still coming out of Egypt, that there are things you must conquer and overcome. That's what Jesus Christ talked about, conquer and overcome; that's in your mind, that's a lifelong process. You don't get rid of it overnight. We're going to have a sermon tomorrow – husband and wife, men and women relationships – to show how deep that bondage has been embedded in the minds of human beings, prejudices that are there, misunderstandings, things that people don't grasp and comprehend about each other that through time with God's spirit as God heals the mind that people come to appreciate and understand the way God intended it to be from the beginning but it could not be until later on. And we're now at that point of later on when God's going to grant this to the world!

Rich families in life, enjoyable families, the way family is supposed to be; not with the *hideous* things we see in the world around us today that hurt, that cause pain and suffering. That back in the States sometimes it becomes so complicated and the things that have happened in people's lives and those stigmas and those things we carry with us, and children that grow up with those stigmas and then they carry it on into their families. And the things that are out there, the music that's out there, some of the country and western music. That's why I talk about how they talk; if you play the song backwards you get your dog back, you get your job back, you get your wife back, you get your children back, because it's all about all these things that are lost and all the troubles that are out there and the way the world is. It's a sick world! Sick, sick world! And everything is about family, the joy of family, the richness of family, but people have to live it right. And when there are prejudices there, wives that can be mistreated, husbands that can be mistreated, children that can be mistreated, because we don't understand God, we don't understand the way of doing things.

So we're in bondage; and you will continue to come out of those things *all your physical life*. You will *never* be fully out in this physical life, but life will become better and better, richer and richer, more

exciting, more abundant. That's what God gives as we learn to live God's way. But we have to get rid of our way and the way of this world, and it's deeply embedded in the human mind, it truly is.

And so again here, we have come to understand the word 'is coming', a word in the Greek language that we don't even have a word exactly like it in English, but the best way of expressing it is that **Jesus Christ is coming**, present progressive tense, **is coming in the flesh**. We come to understand the beauty of that, that God dwells in human life, that when God begins to give us of His holy spirit the scriptures that come alive when we see these things, that mean so much more to us, the things that Jesus Christ spoke of, of the very night, His last night before He was going to die, gave to the Church and gave to His disciples, and awesome verses like John 15.

John 15:1 – I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and so we have choices to make when we receive God's spirit, and if we yield to God's spirit and we fight the fight you can't help it - and you want it – fruit is going to be produced in your life, you're going to grow in understanding! And the fruit is how you live your life and what you receive back as a result of obeying God, in family, in fellowship, in whatever it might be, in your job. And the more we draw closer to God and live the way God says the more we're blessed in it. And so we grow! And that's what he's talking about here, **you'll bear more fruit**, but if we choose not to change and we don't fight the fight, then God says He will take care of that.

He takes away; **and every branch that bears fruit, He purges it**. It's still not easy! We still have things that have to be taken out of us, cut off of us, in a sense, like a grapevine and a vine that's there and by cutting it...sometimes I've cut some things around the house there that my wife thinks I cut it too much and it's going to kill it – some things actually give more life! It actually gives better blooms or better fruit on something...and sometimes I have gone a little too far. But it's an awesome thing to understand; you go through a field and you see how much they cut it back, but that's what it has to have because if you let those things grow it takes the energy for the growth in those areas...and that's the way God works in our life! There are things that have to be pruned out of it, and it's not always easy when you lose a part of yourself, because your tendency, our tendency, is we want to keep a hold of it. We don't want anything cut out of our life, we want to hold onto everything that we are, in one way, as far as human nature is concerned. But because of conversion we choose, "No, I do want it cut out of my life. I do want to get rid of those things. I do want to be pruned by God."

...it bears fruit, He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit. We grow. Life is not easy; it's not meant to be easy. We have trials, and because of those trials and the gold rising and the dross, as it talks about in scripture, goes to the surface, only then can we see it and can skim it off the top and separate it from the gold. And that's the way it is in our lives. We go through fire, we go through trial, we go through hardships, and then because of God's spirit He helps us to see things about ourselves that has to change in order for life to become better.

And so when we come into God's Church we start striving to change, to live better, to treat people in a different way, in a better way, not the way we always had before. And you don't quit doing that! I have a hard time staying out of tomorrow's sermon. We have a hard time! Are you *happy*? Are you *satisfied* with where you are in your growth, in your relationship in your marriage? Do you feel like you can kind of settle back right now and just kind of let things be the way they are right now, or do you *understand* that you have *many things* yet to change in your life, in your relationship, in the way you think about your mate, in order to love her more? ...or love him more? Do you *realize* those things are in you which can make you better? ...or as our human tendency is, are we just kind of... we grow a little bit here, and

we grow a little bit there, but we don't see anything that's really that bad. There is! We can always grow and become better and more refined and love *more*. Human beings are very limited in their capacity to love the way God shows us we *can* love, and we can grow in that.

That's why I talked about the other day the mercy and the patience of God in His love. Twenty-some years...I think it was twenty-three years, somewhere in there - twenty-three to twenty-five years before I was able in spirit and truth to tell God, "I love you." ...because of what I was coming out of, and I was called at nineteen. I don't know what I'd been like if I'd been called at 40 or 50 or 60, how *messed up* the mind can be at that point in time. I wouldn't have had enough time to get to the point where I could say it, but God still loves me and had patience with me. Incredible how we are as human beings, it truly is. And we grow and grow and grow in love, truly, in God's love.

Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you, that's what cleanses us, God's Word, because as we respond to it we can change and we become cleaner; that means we get rid of more sin, we become white, more white, purer in that respect the more we yield to God.

Abide in Me, that word that just should ring out in our minds, that word that is translated so many ways in the New Testament from the Greek language that word that means the same thing; abide in, it's translated continue in, live in, dwell in – all those things that mean the same thing – remain in. All those words that constitute the same thing – **Remain in Me/Continue**, it's not a one-time event, it's a constant *continuing in*. Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh – continually coming into our life, and we must choose to dwell in Him as well, in God. **Abide in Me and I in you**, dwell in, continue in, live in, remain in. **Remain in Me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in/dwell in/live in/remain in/continue in the vine**. **No more can you except you abide in Me**. Awesome and beautiful verses, truly!

I am the vine, you are the branches; He who abides in Me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing: You can't *see* what has to be done! You can't *do it* on your own! That's what's the marvel and the beauty about the Israelites coming out of Egypt and coming up to Mount Sinai on the Day of Pentecost – and that was their true freedom but they couldn't get it. They didn't understand that their true freedom was the ability to learn by what God commanded, how to love Him and how to love each other; that if they would live by those things they would be so blessed in life. They didn't do what they should have done. Incredible! It boggles my mind sometimes of things they still did after *all they went through* – remember the occasion where they had gone out and other areas that they were around and brought in, some of the men were bringing in people from outside of Israel who had different religious beliefs. It wasn't because of race. Some people have thought it was because of race; it had nothing to do with race, it had everything to do with the beliefs, of the religion, why God told them, "Don't do it." And so they were bringing others in and as a result of that you begin to change.

Anyway, I think of those occasions there of what happened and how they suffered because they didn't obey God, because instead they were committing adultery right in front of God, right in front of the children of Israel. Not obedient to God.

So He says, **without Me you can do nothing**; so they came up to Mount Sinai that would have given them true freedom. And finally on the Day of Pentecost 31 AD God gives His holy spirit showing *this* is how you're able to obey Me, *this* gives you the power, because when it's living in you *that* is what gives you the ability to follow through, that is what gives you the ability to change and be convicted to a way

of life. Because you can't do it on your own. The whole history of Israel was you can't do it on your own. They weren't able to come out of Egypt. They stayed in Egypt all their lives, except for a few that God was working with spiritually. And we're blessed to be able to come out of bondage, out of Egypt, in what God calls a healing process, the healing of the mind.

...if a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and the men gather them and cast them in the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me and My words abide/dwell in/live in/continue in/remain in you; that's what it's about, His words, how He said life is to be lived, what we're to do and not do and how we're to do it and how we're to think – because the way we think has to change and that's a lifelong process of continually correcting those things in our mind and how we think so that we can be transformed, metamorphoo, and become something different.

If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it should be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified that you bear much fruit; that's God's desire. He wants to give us more and more and more, but there's a limit on that because we're given it by measure as we grow, and then as we go to certain points then He can give us more so we can produce more. That's what Paul talks about in other places, that He gives us more and if we yield to that He'll give us even more and more. It's a continuing growing process.

As the Father has loved Me so I have loved you, continue in/abide in/dwell in/remain in/live in My agape/My love. It comes from God, even that. What an awesome thing to *understand*, that the love of God, God's love, man does not have. That's why man doesn't automatically just love God or love Christ, because of our human nature. And so as God gives us His holy spirit then we can *begin* to love, because the source of that, just as God's spirit, is from God. No one can have it unless God gives it. No one can have that spirit unless God gives it and no one can have that love and that mind and that one word unless God gives it – it comes from God! You can't work it up! You can't make it up! You can't come to see it on your own.

No amount of intellect or anything in the world gives you that ability. And yet our tendency is sometimes to begin to rely on what *we think we know*, even when brought to the truth, sometimes perhaps too much so.

So continuing on here: the spiritual understanding of this verse, the one in 1 John that we just read, developed over a long period of time, as I mentioned starting around 1982, and you've had the benefit of receiving of that development of that in a much faster plane, truly, as far as *knowledge* is concerned. But understanding it is on a spiritual plane. I think of those again, as some whose history in God's church goes back to Philadelphia and early Laodicea especially, but understanding it on a spiritual plane will take years. It takes years. I've talked to many people that are with us to this day, in times past, they have heard discussion and things repeated about some of these, where even for those who came out of Philadelphia and some out of Laodicea haven't fully understood – might know certain things – but haven't really understood the spirit of some of these things. Because it takes time and we grow in it, then all of a sudden – wow – what an awesome thing! There is so much more to this verse in understanding what it's saying than how you can physically read it and know about it.

So again, over fifty years of God revealing truth to Mr. Armstrong he wrote the most revealing book yet that had ever been written...*ever been written*... to that time, which itself reveals so much about the plan of God, indeed, 'The Mystery of the Ages'.

Turn over to Ezekiel 28. You know, one of the quickest and greatest mistakes of people who are called, once they have been baptized and been in God's Church for only a short time, is a sense, even with a level of haughtiness and pride, that they know much more than they actually know. That's just your human tendency and it's a matter of wisdom to understand that, to learn that so that you know where the battle is, so you know what's going on, so that we can learn things like this here in Ezekiel 28 and understand the dangers involved in what God gives to us. You see, the early Church, if we have time we're going to go into it, where they were given certain things that had to be taken away later on because they couldn't handle it, because it became a matter of pride – so much so there are religions today that are a spin-off of some of those things - that they think bigger, greater of themselves than what they should. And it's not true, what they do, and they don't know what they're messing with.

So, the great revelation of truth that enables your calling also gives a boost to your carnal nature. There is a battle that goes on inside of us as human beings, and it gives a boost to your human nature that you *cannot yet control* as you do not yet fully see it, the true depth of your own carnal human nature that keeps you in captivity that we're coming out of. That's why we can't come out of it overnight. It's a matter of wisdom to understand we're still coming out of bondage. It's a healing process. I love the scriptures where God talks about a healing process where He heals the mind. It's a beautiful thing.

So, this age old lesson from eons ago concerning that which happened to Satan. **Ezekiel 28:15 – you were perfect in your ways**, in everything that had been given to him. God created him. He was a created being. All the angelic beings, the millions upon millions upon millions, perhaps billions – God hasn't given the exact number of those things – millions of spirit beings who were given spirit life before the physical universe was ever created. It says when it was they shouted for joy, they were so excited by what God brought into being, a different dimension, something different than what they had around them; it was on a physical plane.

You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity/sin was found in you. **By**, the word means 'as a result of' **the multitude of your merchandise**, in other words, a result of all the riches of that which had been given you, that began to be misused. See, he was given more. He was given more than other angels. He was given *much more* as a spirit being, as an archangel – three archangels that we know of that God created, Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer – far more power, far more authority, far more responsibility, far more magnificent in their creation... and Lucifer was given *much*.

And so He says, as a result of this *much* that he'd been given – that's what's being told here in the Hebrew language in Ezekiel – it goes on to say **they**, or as it is here **these things**, it's referring back to that which had been given to him that made him as great and mighty as he was, **have filled the midst of you with violence**. Incredible! In other words, you've used the wealth of what you've been given for the wrong purpose, and instead of being a blessing to the rest of the angelic realm it has stirred up violence, that which God never intended. It took away rest, as we talked about, the name for Jerusalem, and peace, rest, peace that God desires and wanted the angelic realm and all His Family to have. That's what He offered. That's what He offered and placed before them.

But God knew. God knew that by making the angelic realm free moral agents having free choice, they were not made robots, they were not made like the animal kingdom, to respond, like geese that know when to fly north and when to fly south. They were not made that way when different migrations are made and they know when to do it and it's in their being; it's that which is there. But here – free choice. God knew what would happen through time. Incredible.

It says, **and you have sinned**, because of this, because of how you have received it, because of how you now see yourself, because of how you look upon yourself, because you're looking at the riches of who you are and what you think you are and *who* you think you are more than what your life was meant to be. **...and you have sinned, therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain/out of the government of God**, the mountain – that's what mountain is always about. Mountains and hills are about governments prophetically, and this is about that, out of Mount Zion, out of anything to do with the realm of God and being around the Kingdom of God.

...and I will destroy you. Perish, exterminate, vanish – that's what the word means in Hebrew. Came to understand that in a very powerful way last year. **...O covering cherub from the midst of the stones of fire**, of that which is before the throne of God, of that which is explained in a physical way to us, it's on a spiritual plane to the angelic realm that we can't see, we don't know, and so it's described in a physical way here. That's what it's talking about, before God's presence. **Your heart, your heart** – and when we think about heart it's our mind and the way we think and how we see things and what we believe and why we believe it, it's us, it's our heart. And he said, **your heart was lifted up because of your beauty**, because of *all* that was given to you, all this beautiful creation that was made in you, **and you have corrupted/destroyed/ruined your wisdom**; that's an awesome thing to understand. He's saying you have destroyed your mind, your thinking, by these choices.

Do you realize when you sin you destroy that which is in your mind as far as character is concerned, that which is as far as something that God wants to be different in your mind and that transformation? There's something that's destroyed in your thinking, and if you yield yourself to sin, to certain kinds of sin and you get into a habit of sin and whatever that sin might be, in relationships, in conversation, or the way people are treated, you actually destroy an essence of your thinking from the way that God has moulded and fashioned, or desired you to be. It corrupts your thinking; it distorts your ability to see properly.

That's why I mentioned the other day about simple things, sometimes moderation in things we do, the way we dress, or whatever. But sometimes when someone is so tied into the way of the world in the sense of how things are seen, how people dress or whatever, fashion, certain kinds of things that are not the way that are moderation that God says all things for us should be a matter of moderation. Until you've done it, until you've lived it you can't see it, you can't understand it, you can't understand the beauty of moderation and the importance of moderation and the love that's in there and the thinking that's in there and how it affects the mind until you've done it for a time. And so if you have done something for a time that's right and all of a sudden you begin to go back to something that's not right and not sound and not balanced you begin to damage what was there and you lose what was there, what you built, what you grew in.

So many things we have to come to see and understand about life that has to do with every phase of life. Living God's way of life, the commandments – He sums them up in one word, and so often people see things as restrictions. What's restrictive about not stealing from somebody? What's restrictive about not committing adultery? What's restrictive about not murdering someone? So even the protestant world will agree, "Yeah, those commandments, those are good." To love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your being, to have one God...it gets a little messed up... To keep the Sabbath? "Nah, that was nailed to the 'cross'." People don't understand the relationship they can have with God by doing things the way God said from the very beginning of time. It's *this* day...well, not today, this is the Feast of Tabernacles, but speaking of the Sabbath, the seventh day, if you speak of that, it's that day that God pours out more of His spirit. It's that day that God teaches His people. It's

that day that He says is a holy convocation, a commanded assembly where people are to come together on that day. And so the world chooses other days to learn about their god. Sunday, Monday, Friday, but not Sabbath. Incredible! Because they don't know how to love God, they don't know how you're to be able to learn how to love God, or for God to have the relationship with you.

And so we have those things in our life too – in relationships we learn how to love one another, because everything is about relationships. It's about *family*! But sometimes we think we know that – tomorrow you'll find out you don't know it as well as we need to really get to know it – family, the laws involved there, the ways of thinking that we need to have and how much farther we have to go; but we have started the process and how beautiful that's going to be as we continue on into time.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, and you've corrupted and destroyed your wisdom/your mind by reason of your brightness, by what you see about yourself. **I will cast you to the ground and I will lay you before kings that they may behold you.** Those you have duped, those you have deceived, those you have led astray through time, they're going to see you for what you really are when your power is taken away and when you come to nothing.

So, don't let this happen to *you* simply because God begins a process in you that enables you to *know truth, understand* your mind. Sometime we hear things and we think, "I'd never do that! I would never do that!" Laodicea. Turn over there right quick – Revelation – the last era of God's Church. There were several eras, Jesus Christ warned and said the Church would go through from the time of Ephesus and all the disciples there, the apostles were there and the period of time that they lived through and the different eras of time, Pergamus, Thyatira being the longest, over a thousand years, and then we came to Sardis and God's Church began to lose what was true and ended up with only three truths left by the time...and God says, "You're dying, you're dead spiritually." God raised up Mr. Armstrong, raised up the Philadelphia era toward the end, and we've gone through the Laodicean. Incredible!

And I remember back in Philadelphia before Mr. Armstrong died hearing sermons about Laodicea, and they, that period of time was looked down upon. It was like, "How on *earth* could *anyone* do this?!" And yet we saw within the Body things that were beginning to let down on occasion here and there and Mr. Armstrong crying out about some of those things. Let's just read it.

Revelation 3:14 - And unto the angel of the Church of Laodicea write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginner of the creation of God; In other words, when you're talking about the Passover, it begins with Him, and then the change that begins to take place – salvation comes through Jesus Christ. **I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: and I wish that you were either cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm,** that which God will not accept. He'll not accept anything being lukewarm. If we choose to be cold, that's a choice. If we choose not to respond to Him and live by His ways of life, that's a choice. God desires us to be hot, to be zealous, to *love* His way of life, to *want* His way of life, to be willing to fight for His way of life in the sense of fighting our own nature and desiring to change and obey Him and live by His ways and have that mind moulded and fashioned in us.

Verse 17 - Because you say, exactly what Lucifer said. This is *exactly* what he did. There *is no difference* on a spiritual plane. The only difference was he was a created spirit being, that once he did this his mind was set to be that way forever. We're different. We are physical human beings with a spirit essence, and that can change, it can be moulded and fashioned by our choices. If we don't choose God it will become set and that which God can never use – and we know the outcome of that. And in time when

God draws us and calls mankind, as people respond to that, then there is that which, as choices are made to respond to God, because of that mind that can be transformed. That's the marvel of God's creation in making us physical human beings. He couldn't create – you cannot create – a God Family cannot be created! It has to be *made* through the exact process that human beings have to go through, through choices. That before He gives that power which is greater than the angelic realm, before He gives that kind of life, we're tried in this life, and that changes can take place in our mind in *this* life through a process of repentance and God's spirit working. It is an awesome, awesome process, something you'll grow in understanding and appreciation of the more you grow. Because the more you change the more you'll understand it, the more you'll see what God is doing in your life and the life of others that becomes richer and more exciting through time.

Because you say I am rich, and increased with goods, that's what he did. "Look at me! I'm important! I'm important; look at how beautiful I am. Look at what I have in power." You know this tendency that sometimes is manifested in different ways as human beings, it comes out in many forms. A great one is we lift ourselves up and we don't understand what's happening, how we think the way we do. We think our way of seeing things is really the right way, the best. We believe we're right. That's why we get into arguments and disputes and that's where disagreements come, because, "You're wrong, I'm right! What's wrong with you? I'm right! My way of doing it is what's right!" That's where disputes come from, because we're right and we want someone else to do the same thing or think the same way. And if you don't think that way, what's wrong with you?! It's perfectly clear! *This* choice is the one we should make, this is what's right! And it doesn't work that way, does it?

It doesn't work that way. Life doesn't work that way; the ability to work things together, the ability to be a family, the ability to work things out. You can have a car with four people...and of course you don't want to do this, we do it in the States, but it's not good for our health...but we have so many fast food places around so you can pull up to an intersection and there's one on each corner and it's time to eat, time to grab something quick because you're doing something and you're on the move and so you ask in the car, "Where would you like to eat? Burger King? McDonalds? Wendy's? Kentucky Fried Chicken?" and everybody wants something different. Well, what are you going to do? You going to take the time to go to all four? Who's going to give in? That's a small thing, but that's very much the way life is. We see things, we want something, we want something different than somebody else and we have conflict. How do you work that out?

That's why there are so many religions. People don't *think* they're right, they *know* they're right. How can everyone be right about God? People don't even think it through! Methodist? Catholic? Why doesn't one join the other? Because the other one's not right, there's something wrong in their doctrine, there's something wrong with their teaching. Amazing, the human mind.

...because you say I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; when you get to that point you don't realize that there's more that you really need in life. That's why I ask, marriages and families, husbands and wives – are you content with where everything is right now or do you see that you need to make more changes in your life? Or are you pretty much keen on keeping things the way they are right now until everything is taken care of, or just going through time? Or do you really see that there are things in you that need to change to have a better relationship, to have a better life, to love your mate more? Can you grow in that? Is it possible to actually grow in your ability to love more? Is there still any measure of selfishness in your life whereby there's some things that need to be worked out, that sometimes things don't go the way they probably should, obviously, because you're really kind of happy with the way it is? Or do you recognize there's a need to change? It's a spiritual thing,

brethren, because if you're content you're in the wrong place. We can't be content with where we are – not in *any* kind of a relationship – because you have changes to make. I have changes to make. There is never an end to growing as long as you're in this physical life. You are to grow, you are to be able to become better, to do things better, to love better, to grow in God's love better, more. That's what God desires for us.

But if you get to a point where you're not crying out about help to see things in yourself... so often we want someone else to change. What about us? Do we need to change? Incredible!

...and have need of nothing; it's a horrible, horrible, horrible spirit to have. If you get to a point where you don't recognize what you need it's a horrible spirit to have, because we always need more, we need to grow more, we need to change more. That's what our life is about, it's about growing, it's about maturing on a spiritual plane, not being satisfied with the way things are. Because we *know*, if we're truthful to ourselves, that we don't always love the way God says to love. We don't always *talk* to someone else the way we should talk. We don't always say the things exactly the way we would like to be able to and not have conflict. So what has to happen? Change. Who's going to change? Always starts with you – changing self. That's what it's all about.

Lucifer wasn't that way; he actually wanted God to change. He got to the point where he was so filled with ego and pride and self-importance he actually wanted God to change. He wanted *God* to change His plan and what He was going to do. *He* wanted to be at the pinnacle of it. *He wanted to be like God.* He didn't want a Son to come along to be like God. He hated that; that's why he hates Jesus Christ. We talked about that. He loathes, he hates Him, he tried to kill Him. And when he did kill Him didn't understand what would happen afterward, didn't know what would be developing after that fully. He learned and He's been learning it for 2,000 years.

Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: That's not a negative thing, it's a reality. A person can take this personally and say, "Wretched? Miserable? Poor? Blind? Naked? Not me." Yes we are, without God. You need God and you need to continue to grow in that way of life. And it's the attitude of mind of thinking you don't need more that's a danger. This ability, as Paul said, after twenty-five years - again, how *awesome* is that - "Oh wretched man that I am!" He knew his nature. He knew what his mind was like, and yet by that time he had grown tremendously on a spiritual plane that would make most here look quite puny in their spiritual relationship with God. But he recognized no matter how long you're in this human life you need to grow much more, as long as you can, as long as you can yield yourself, as long as you're alive there is more to grow in and understand and conquer and fight, because there's this battle that goes on inside us and we have to continue to fight this that's in us. Awesome things to understand!

See, because these things do happen – the reason I mention this. Don't let this happen to you simply because God begins a process in you that enables you to know the truth. I have seen *hundreds* if not into the thousands of people go by the wayside over time since I've been in God's Church; people I 'had walked to God's house with side by side and council blended sweet' as the Psalm goes. And seeing people lifted up with their importance to where they would not receive guidance, direction, correction, help anymore from God's Church because they knew better; because somewhere along the line they became offended at something. They actually became offended in Christ and in God, but they don't understand that and nor do they believe that. They believe they're justified. Everyone always believes, as a whole, as human beings, they're justified in the choices they make. That's just carnal human nature

- we're justified. No, God is justified. The scriptures make it clear who is just. Jesus Christ is just. God is just. Unless our judgement comes from them, inspired by them, blessed by them because it's in agreement with them, with the word 'homologues', and if it's not of God it's not right.

The truth can cause you to become lifted up in how you look at others and the world around you, and *even in God's Church*. The truth can cause you to become lifted up, not because of the truth but because of our selfish human nature that tends toward pride. Do you see your pride? Do you *see* your pride? We all have it and we're to conquer it and we're to grow in overcoming and fighting it, to where it becomes less and less and less. This could be so many sermons; it is, many, many sermons, this matter of pride and what we see in ourselves and whether or not we recognize there's the battle, the fight, and you never quit fighting your own human nature. And as you do your life becomes richer and more exciting, more fulfilling. The more love you're able to experience, the love of God, the more you can experience that in life toward one another the richer, truly, life becomes, the better relationships become. That's how we draw closer together as a Family.

As you grow, as my wife and I travel from area to area and visit about every six months, we are able to experience this. It is a very encouraging thing because it's a matter of God. It's God in the picture because we don't grow in those things without that help. We don't draw closer together as a family, or spiritually, in our lives without that help. It's the yielding to God and it's a beautiful thing. But to understand that and to fight for that and to grow in that and to want that with all of your being – it's a battle to constantly fight against self.

And so again, an age old lesson, because we *can* destroy, we *can* corrupt our mind when such things begin to happen. We can *hurt* what God is striving to do within us if we allow ourselves to be lifted up by anything on a spiritual plane. All a process of coming out of spiritual Egypt.

1 Corinthians 13, let's go back over here a little bit again, a little farther. During the Millennium this process is going to take a giant leap forward since mankind is going to be freed from false government, false education, false religion, all the garbage and the swill that comes through communication to a young child at a young age through games, through music, of a way of life they think it's supposed to be like in things of TV and stuff that isn't real and messes with the mind. Things that are going to get straightened out. So things are going to take a *giant step forward* as people are freed from false things in the world, false religion – and add to that which becomes so much different to the Israelites in the wilderness and that now God's spirit is going to be made available to all people. What an awesome thing, but all must still choose to come out of bondage. Everyone that comes through to the Millennium, they all have to choose to come out of that bondage, of that which holds people in captivity. Just coming into the Millennium isn't enough; it's the blessing of receiving of God's spirit and the change that takes place in the mind.

1 Corinthians 13:12 - Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known. I've heard all kinds of things about this verse, things that just haven't been where they need to be in what it's all about. *What* does this say? It says so much, it truly does, and to understand one has to understand the context, to grasp the context. And although Paul is about to address a subject...he's about to address the subject about the misuse of God's blessing in life that the Corinthians had received concerning the ability to speak in tongues. Remember as we're going through this; and people in the world and people in times past sometimes in the Church have gotten off on this thing on spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts; and what gifts do you have and what gifts can you grow in, and this isn't what this is about! But people have this protestant type of mentality sometimes out there

and it's this feel good thing about self and you have certain gifts and I have certain gifts and others can grow in certain gifts and the meaning is not there of what this is all about. When it says 'tongues' it's...the world is so messed up. It's about languages. It's the word in the Greek that just means languages, the ability to speak in languages.

And the purpose was, going back here in the history a little bit, is the ability when God's word was preached, and in the beginning, that on the Day of Pentecost so many people heard, and it mentions all the countries they were from and regions they were from. It says 'and they heard in their own language the truths of God', the word of God, the good news, the gospel as Peter was speaking on the Day of Pentecost. And so they think that this ability to speak is... they don't even understand it's in different languages. They actually think it's some kind of a language that nobody can understand, it's like an angelic language or something. Duh! Anyway, they don't have such a thing, I hope you understand that. It's all spirit, communication is spirit. It's not physical like we have as human beings – words go through the air and we have different syllables and different ways of pronouncing things and different languages and so forth.

But this is what people in the world think and they have this desire of wanting to speak in tongues, because it comes from here. It was for the purpose of preaching the gospel so that people could hear it, so that people could receive the truth of God. And that's what happened on the Day of Pentecost, it was more a miracle of hearing than it was of speaking. We don't know what came out of his mouth; it was probably just his same old language, it doesn't exactly explain it all, but it says everyone heard in their own language. How can you hear someone speak at the same moment and yet you hear perfectly in your own language. Well, God made it possible, the ability to communicate something to a large group of people from over a dozen different areas, it mentions them in Acts, it mentions the areas they're from and the languages and it says they all heard in their own native language the word of God. Incredible!

So that's what Paul is getting ready to address, because you see, by this time in the Church in Corinth *it began to be misused*, it began to be misapplied, it began to become something of pride and haughtiness and look what I have, *in God's Church*, look at the gift I have, look at what I'm able to do. Well, whoop-tee-doo! But it was like you were better, you're spiritually better than someone else who can't do the same thing. And so if you had the ability...and they knew what this was for, they knew it was a matter of different languages. And so if you have the ability of speaking in different languages and whatever and you're able to talk about God's way of life and teach others and it became this 'teacheritus' type of thing we've read about in times past. Anyway, let's read the story. This is what Paul's addressing, this is the *context* of what he's addressing here, of something that's received by God, and whether or not it's used God's way for God's purpose or whether it's something that it raises self up.

I think of times past, just as in a passing here, of people sometimes when they're ordained to different things in God's Church, deacon, elder, pastor, whatever. Sometimes those things were destructive because of the way people received it. They were lifted up by it...lifted up by it and it destroyed them because they didn't use it the way God intended it to be used. They misused it.

So let's look at this verse again and what it says. This is all about how we *use* what God gives to us, the truth, the power to see something that others can't see, or different abilities within the Body at times, to grow and see one thing and someone else see's... and it's not a matter of a competition. It's not a matter of someone being better than someone else, because that's what Satan did, he was better than all the other angelic beings – that's his mind, and so his way is right. That's how we are.

For now we see, that which we're able to see on a spiritual plane, and the word is here 'by reason of' or 'on account of' or 'because of' **a glass**, and the word is 'a mirror'. It's about a mirror in the Greek. So there's something we're able to see, has to do with a mirror. It says, **darkly**, and it's not even a word for 'dark'. It has nothing to do with dark, it just means 'with'; **with a mirror**. We're able to see something with a mirror. We're able to see something by looking into it and it comes back at us so we can see. That's all it's about. And it says we don't, in essence here, it just shows here of something that we're able to do on a spiritual plane.

So again here, he went on to say though; **but then face to face**, so the correct translation of this is, just to get moving along here because I've got so much to cover: **For now we see by reason of/because of/with in a mirror**, it's a simple thing. In other words, **for now, because of looking in a mirror we see where we are spiritually**. That's all Paul's saying. We can see where we are spiritually by looking into a mirror that God has given to us, but we don't see really well. That's why this is mistranslated here in some parts about 'darkly'. The ability to really see self is difficult, that's what he's discussing here, but we can still do it. So we only see in part. We don't really see ourselves fully, that's what he's saying. It's hard to see self, he says but we do have that ability to begin to see self on a spiritual plane, in a mirror. God has given that to us because of His spirit, because of those things we can measure by, that we can look at in ourselves, in our own lives, that we know ourselves inside - not inside and out - but we know ourselves better than sometimes we really grasp, if we'll be honest with ourselves and how we're thinking, why we think the way we do, and that's what God wants to work with, to change that.

Verse 12 – For now, because of or being able to look in a mirror spiritually we see ourselves; now I know in part, so you can do this in part no matter where you are in your growth, you can do it in part, **but then shall I know even as also I am known**. The point Paul was making is here, you're never going to know yourself completely, but there's a process you go through to do that. And this has to do with a process we go through of truly being made free.

Let's go back to 1 Corinthians 13:1 and see the context of all this: **although I speak with, have the ability to speak with tongues, the languages of men and of angels**, speaking facetiously here to them. So, even though I was able to communicate as both, **and do not have agape**, the word 'charity' is God's love, it's the word for God's love, it's not human love, it's not philia, it's not any form of human love, it's God's love, it comes from God, the source is God. He says, if I even have all this ability – because he's getting ready to address a problem in the Church because they've been misusing this ability, lifting themselves up and comparing themselves amongst themselves. That's not God's way. That's not God's Church. That's just wrong! To look down upon others in God's Church? To think we're better than others? Then we miss out totally with what God's doing with His Church.

He says, **if I don't have agape/God's love dwelling within me, then I become as a sounding brass**; I'm just like a bunch of noise. Even if I'm able to speak in all these different languages, if I'm able to communicate God's truth to everybody in the world in all the languages and if I don't have God's love in me then I'm just a big noise. You know why? Because it's just about self, and that's not God's way. It's not about us; it's about God and the blessing we have of participating and sharing in God's life, God's purpose, God's plan which is full and exciting if we yield ourselves to it.

Verse 2 - And though I have, it doesn't say '*the gift of*'; that's not even in the words. Isn't that in italics in some of your Bibles? The reason it's in italics is because this isn't a translation from any word in the Greek language. Somebody just put it in there and there's a reason for that. They want you to get caught up in...even in this, as Paul was explaining truth here, those who translated this, going back to

what happened in the Old King James and protestant world at that time, it was to confuse some of these things because they still didn't get it, because they couldn't. It's about these 'gifts' and they want people to think about the gifts that God has out here and so there's much here that's just messed up in translation.

Although I have prophecy, in other words, the ability to speak with inspired speaking. That's what it is, inspired speech. In other words God is in it. And we all have that. God gives that to us on varying planes because now we can talk about the plan of God. You know, before we couldn't when we came into God's Church, and until we come into God's Church we can't know God's plan, we can't know about the seventh-day Sabbath, the seven days and what that's about, seven thousand year plan of God, a day for a thousand years, six days is ours, is man's, but the last one, the last thousand years, that's God's. Amazing! And then all the Holy Days that magnify all of that, just like this Feast of Tabernacles, it magnifies the Millennium, that thousand years, and then on the last day, the eighth day, what do we have? It's called The Last Great Day; that's the day God gives to us to observe, commanded in Leviticus 23 and so we observe it and it pictures the last hundred years of mankind, and we'll hear about it on that day, when everybody who has never known God's way of life, the *billions* who lived during the 6,000 years are resurrected and given physical life a *second time*. Scriptures in the bible that people read over and don't even acknowledge in any fashion or form, when it talks about the second death. How can you have a second death in a human body unless you have two lives? But they don't grasp that, they don't understand God's plan. But it's all there. It's beautiful!

And so we have the ability to talk about those things. I can talk to you about it and you can talk to each other because you see the truth, and so we have inspired things we can discuss that's inspiring. Incredible!

...**and understand all mysteries**, all the things that aren't known to the world but you can know them, **and all knowledge**; talk about things that are true and right, **and have all faith**, all faith, **so that I could remove mountains**, you know if there's a purpose in something being removed from one spot to another to fulfill God's plan and purpose, and if we really understood what this is about it's even more so; **and do not have agape**, If I don't have Godly love in me, in other words if it's just about self and your ability then you don't have anything. He says you don't have a thing! You have nothing!

And although I give all my goods to feed, doesn't say '**the poor**' either, but it's to feed others, to give to this world, to give to others who need it, **and though I give my body to be burned**, in other words your life in sacrifice, that's what it's talking about, that's the expression used, **and don't have God's love/agape it doesn't profit me a thing**. What does it mean? You give everything to others and you don't have this love? It's just about self then, it's about what you do, it's about glorifying yourself. That's not about God, that's not about God's purpose, it's not about how you live life toward each other so it's meaningless because it's just about you. See?

Charity/agape/God's love suffers long: It's longsuffering. We're not too longsuffering sometimes. I suffer when I get in a car sometimes, talk about that once in a while, because it's human nature, the way people are, the selfishness in the world and the way people cut you off and different things that happen and that's a tough thing and it gets to you sometimes, it truly does. And how you deal with that is important. You do it God's way.

...**and is kind**; kind to others, never unkind, always kind to people! I wish I had more time to go into this but I don't. You can read through this, you know what it says. All the qualities of love, agape; and so

Paul was telling them what it's like, and the reason he went through this like this is because he's saying, "Is this how you are? Because this is what it's all about." He says it's not a matter of how much you know, it's not a matter of how much you think you have from God, how much knowledge, how much ability you have. It's not about what responsibility you have in God's Church; it's not about any of these things. *It is* about how you live your life! It's about the way of life, God's love that comes through you to others, of how you treat others...of how you *treat others!*

I'm appalled sometimes travelling and seeing how people are treated. People who think they're owed things. People who think things are *owed* to them! It's sick, this world, selfishness of this world! How a maid in a hotel sometimes is treated by others. They're looked down upon. People who have different kinds of jobs and how some people are treated very nastily by others because, "I paid for this room and I demand this...!" Or people who go out to eat and they *demand* certain things and they're *demanding* in their meals, of the way certain things are and are *hard* on the people. You know, if the cook in the back room did something wrong and you take it out on the waitress, who are you? Because you demand, because you're paying for this thing, so you have a *right* to be snotty and nasty to someone else? No, you don't! But these things happen sometimes, don't they? People can treat each other really in a nasty fashion, and people can tend to have their nose up in the air and they don't realize we all function together in a body, this society, the world, jobs that are out there. But people have this tendency that if you're a banker you're better than the guy who is collecting the trash bins on the side of the street. No, you're not! *No, you're not!* Who do you *think* you are?

So Paul is going through this story here and talking about some of these things and that's why it comes down here, **verse 9 – For we know in part**, so there are things we can know of God's way of life, and we're ever learning and we grow more and more and more. But for now **we know in part, and we prophecy in part**, we don't know it all. We don't have it all. *I don't have it all!* Sometimes people want me to have it all! You know, it's not like having a crystal ball and you rub it and think, "Oh, this is what's next and it's going to happen *exactly* at this point." He's given us some things where we know.

That's why I marvel how it's written in the book. You will know when it happens; when #2 happens you'll know; 3-4-5-6 – but we won't know until then! Oh, I'd like to know! Just like *you* would like to know! But I can't give it to you because it's not been given to me. So, there are things we want, desire to have, and yet still a matter of how you live your life. It's how you treat each other, really is. It's what it's all about. It's about how you live your life. Are you living by this way of life? No matter what happens in life are you going to obey God and live by His way of life in how you love Him and how you treat each other and so forth? Because that's what it's all about.

So he says, right now we know in part, but we don't know everything. We don't! We just know a little bit! We know a lot more maybe than what was known fifteen years ago, obviously, or ten years ago, or three years ago. We know a lot more, but it's only in part still. **For we know in part, and we prophecy in part**, with inspired preaching, speaking, or even talking to each other, because we only know what we know now, the present truth. We're going to know more before long.

Verse 10 - But when that which is perfect, that which is perfected, made perfect as far as our growth is concerned, **is come**, when is that? It doesn't happen until you're out of this body, I can tell you that. When it's finally perfected, when you have arrived, when you have been resurrected into a spirit life, when that change comes in your life, *then* you're whole and complete. And that's what he's talking about here. **...then that which is in part shall be done away**. Because then you'll see it all. You have

the mind...God gives you that of His mind, of everything about history that's happened to bring you to that point in time.

So again here, this is the context of an ability – and this is wisdom – an ability to have to see, that we don't see it all yet. And no matter where you are in your growth, that's the point, whether you're a week old, a month old, a year old, ten years old, twenty years old, we don't see it all yet.

So again, the context here.... And I can't give this to you! I can tell you about it; we receive this in varying *parts*, truly. We see in part, and one day we're going to come to see, and really what it's talking about even more fully is we're going to see ourselves in ways that we didn't even understand, things that we didn't know inside of us, of how much we were in bondage to various things. But it comes to a point in time where God finally says, "Now, I know you." And we're at that point where He just says, "You're there." And He will give you a spirit life. But we still only see self, truly, ourselves in a mirror in part, because that's what he's working up to, that's what he's building up to.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: there's great wisdom in this - don't allow yourself to be lifted up! I can't tell you how many young I've seen come and go since I've been in God's Church, since 1969, people who start a journey and become lifted up by what they think and believe they see. Don't ever let that happen to you. If you understand how God has worked with you and what He's given to you, hold onto that! The truth! **...I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things.** You mature and slowly though time on a spiritual plane we begin to put away; we grow and we see and we learn and some of those ways that we didn't see back then... There are things that if I had the same ability I have now way back earlier then things would have been totally different, but that's not the way it works, because I couldn't have had it then. It's a matter of what you grow in in your mind.

Verse 12, that's what he works into here, that's what it leads into. We have this mirror, but we still only see in part; but then we're going to see even ourselves, what we're truly like face to face in essence, spiritually.

Verse 13 – beautiful verses here – **And now abides faith**, in other words, that which lives in us, dwells in us, **faith, hope, agape**, God has blessed us with that. We have faith we're able to live by, hope; we have hope, we're motivated by it, those things we have for the world, desire for the world, ourselves, our families; **these three; but the greatest of these is agape, God's love.** How you live your life, how you treat each other, how you talk to each other, how you think about each other.

1 Corinthians 14:1 – all of this about coming out of spiritual bondage, all of this about...this is *how you're made free*, how you live your life, and it's all about God's love, it's all about relationships. The law is about relationships with one another and with God. **Follow after**, word that means to **seek after/pursue agape, and desire spiritual**, that which is spiritual from God in the sense of faith, in the sense of hope. Those are spiritual things, truly, of that which is spiritual, understanding, yes, desire that which is spiritual; it doesn't say 'gifts'. Again, that's another word that's not there. Desire that which comes from God, that which is spiritual, **and**, not the word 'but'; it's the same word as above, '**and desire**'. **...and even**, it's not 'rather'; **and even that you may**, in other words, **have inspired speaking in your speech**. Yes, desire to have those things in your life, desire to grow in understanding so that our speech becomes better, we understand God's plan better, to better our fellowship, and our conversation will be, the more in unity, it will be. You know, it's a beautiful thing, the more we grow and the more our conversation has to do with being spot on. Spot on; it's not always spot on. Sometimes

we think, speculate, repeat things that we don't fully understand yet we feel that we do and someone else will like, "Oh, do I say something or not...do I..." And so we have these things. It's all a matter of growth and love and patience with one another.

So deeply understand brethren the awesome process that God has given to us of coming out of this world, to understand the most important thing is summed up in what God says in 1 John 4:8 – **He who does not exercise love, he who does not love, does not know God.** We want to know God, for God is love; there is true freedom. Awesome!

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