

Welcome, everybody to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Before we are called into the knowledge of the truth we often are asked questions about many matters. And we don't always know the answer, although because of pride we often would believe we give an answer based on what we think is right. But the reality is we are *not* in the truth, and therefore, we don't really know the "why" of any matter. Now, we don't know *why* a particular thing is happening in the world, we just simply have an answer based on our own thinking.

Mr. Armstrong sometimes said that, "Looking at the world today was like looking (or going) to a movie half-way through." If we did not know the beginning, how could we know where we were in time? If we did go into a movie half-way through, we would end up having to lean over to another person and say, "Why is that person doing that? What is happening? What is going on?" Because we don't have the full picture; we can't see the reason "why" of a matter.

The title of today's sermon is *The Reason Why*, and this will be *Part 1*. The purpose of this sermon series is to look at the reason why of many Biblical matters from God's word, the way that *God* has established matters in His word.

We will start by looking at the reason why God has blinded the vision of mankind on a spiritual level. Now, this in its first example is quite basic within God's Church, the knowledge within God's Church, is "why" parables, that very question, "Why parables?" Now, we have that base understanding why God has spoken in parables through Jesus Christ. Well, today we're going to continue to look at the reason why to come to a deeper understanding on a spiritual level of the various matters of God, and we will start with this, "Why parables?"

What is God's intent by having Christ speak in parables? A "parable" is "an earthly example with a spiritual meaning. It is a comparison of one thing against another, a physical example or a story with a hidden spiritual principle or explanation."

Now, parables, and often the proverbs, are based on this. They actually *are* physical so that someone physical may be able to begin to perceive it, but its real meaning is hidden. It's actually spiritual in nature. And the only way to understand something on a spiritual or in a spiritual manner is to have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in them. Hence, Christ spoke in parables for the purpose of *hiding* the truth.

Parables are not meant to be understood by the world, only by those called to the truth. Parables cannot be understood by those that aren't called. They're not called to understand. Now, they may see certain elements of it from a physical point of view, but they can't "see" the spiritual application of it. Parables are for those called into a relationship with God. The point is that it requires God's holy spirit which then enables us to know, understand, to "see" the parable, the intent of the parable. The intent of parables is to hide the spiritual meaning of what is being spoken.

Now, we're going to read Matthew 13, and as we go through it that question comes up, which is, "Why parables?" Well, we're going to go through all of Matthew 13 because there is *much* in it, and we will see from going through this that many parables that are spoken *are* for particular times. Now, we may

not have even reached some of those times yet, because the way that a parable was given, we have a spiritual understanding *to a degree*, but the *full intent* or the full spiritual meaning of a parable hasn't yet been revealed to us, because we haven't reach a particular time within God's plan. And when we get to that point, God will reveal more of the understanding of the parable.

So we may look at parables now and say, "Oh, we understand what that parable is about," but the reality is we can never fully understand a parable until we get through a time-period. So there are many parables that are spoken, that when we get into the Millennium and the last Hundred-years, their *real* spiritual meaning will actually be revealed because it will have happened or be lived, and God will have provided the understanding on a spiritual level.

So although we perceive we understand parables, we don't fully understand them, their *true* spiritual meaning at this point in time. We have a spiritual understanding, but the depth of it is yet to be increased. And only God can do it by the power of His holy spirit, and God will do it when the time is right to expand the understanding on a spiritual level of any particular parable.

So we're going to start in **Matthew 13:1—On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And a great multitude were gathered together to Him (to Christ), so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.** So there were so many people there that Christ hopped into the boat and moved out further, and all the people were gathered on the foreshore.

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, so there wasn't just one parable. It was many things, and it was done in parables. Now, the word "parable" there is "figurative or figure or comparison or like a proverb. A placing of one thing by the sight of another." So it's really something that is physical (to give this physical explanation). People on the foreshore could actually hear and believe they were understanding it (because it was based on a physical parable or physical saying, or a proverb, something physical), but its real spiritual meaning was for something in the future. Only those with God's spirit in the future would be able to understand what Christ was really speaking about. But I'm sure that all those people that heard these parables on the foreshore believed they actually understood parts of it, because many of the parables were spoken in a language that they could understand, being farmers, etcetera.

So He spoke these parables **saying: Behold, a sower went out to sow.** Now, they would all understand that because they would have lived and seen what a sower does; he goes out to sow. **And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.** This is now a sower, and what happens is he has this bag of seed that is strapped to him and he puts his hand into the seed, grabs a handful, and then casts his arm out and let's go of the seed in his hand and it falls out. Now, his intent was to put the seed into the plowed ground for the purpose of growing a crop. Well, here it is saying that this person sowed the seed and some of it out of his hand went by the wayside and the birds came and devoured them. So they didn't fall in the location they were meant to fall.

Verse 5—Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth, so there wasn't much there, **and they immediately sprang up**, so they began to cast their roots down and began to grow, **but because they had no depth of earth**, so there was no soil there, **but when the sun/heat was on them they were scorched.** So there wasn't enough there. There wasn't enough moisture. There was not enough roots in the ground, and as the sun came down it required more soil, which is more moisture, and it just wasn't there because the earth wasn't there to support the root system. **And because they had no root they withered away.** So they actually faded and they died.

Verse 7—And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. Now, the people listening to this, they would have thought, "Well, here's the sower sowing it out there. Now it's gone off the side of where it was supposed to go and it's fallen amongst these thorns, which are other things that will choke it out, because the thorns will actually take all the moisture and take the sunlight as it grows, and therefore, it will choke out the seed as it begins to grow, as it begins to sprout."

But others fell on good ground and yielded, so it fell where it was supposed to fall, which is in the plowed area where the soil had been prepared, **and it yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty,** based on the number of grains in a head. **He who has an ear, let him hear!** "Let him understand." Now, those listening would have thought, "Hmm, I understand that. I understand He's talking about crops and I understand this very action, what had happened to all these different seeds."

Verse 10—And the disciples came and said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? So, "Why are You using these physical analogies and giving it to the people?" Because although they might have perceived something, they'll think, "Well, what's He really talking about? We understand aspects of it in the sense of the good seed falls in an area and yields, but what's it really talking about?"

Verse 11—He answered and said to them, Because it has been given to you, now, this is somebody whom God gives the sight to "see." Nowadays it's somebody who is called into seeing the truth. **It's been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven,** to understand and "see" the truth. So it's really referring to someone that is called into this relationship with God, someone that is *in* the Church of God. They have the ability, by the power of God's holy spirit, to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, to be able to "see," to know, and *understand* the truth, what really is important in life. And it can only happen if *God* gives it to us, because "it's given to you to know these things." **...but to them,** those that are uncalled, **it is not given.** So we see that anybody who is *not* called and reads a post, for example, or hears a sermon, it hasn't been given to them to understand. And therefore, we need to be careful how we *discern* these matters of those people that don't "see" what we see. And the reason is it hasn't been given to them, but it has been given to us.

Verse 12—For whoever has, to him more will be given, so whoever has (that's us, brethren) more will be given. More truth has been given. We have been provided with more, deeper understanding of God's word, more of God's mind, more of the truth, **and he will have abundance.** Well, that's what we have, brethren, we have abundance of truth. We know the reason why of many, many matters that the world can't. The world has no idea of "why." And one of those examples is, "Why does man exist?" We know the purpose of life. Now, we can't take it to ourselves. It was only given to us because of a calling. It was because of God's great mercy that it was given to us, the reason why we exist on this earth.

Well, we also understand the reason for parables. And although this is written here in God's word that man could read, saying the reason why, they just don't understand because it requires God's spirit.

Continuing on in that verse...**and he will have abundance,** which we have, which requires God's spirit, **but whomever does not have,** if they don't have God's spirit, therefore, they can't have the truth, **even what he has will be taken away from him.** He will have *no understanding*.

Now, it can also apply that once we have the truth there is an accountability and a responsibility to be yielding to God's spirit. But at some point, if we fail to yield to God's spirit, God says that He will take it away from us, that He will withdraw His spirit, the flow of God's spirit into our life. So God pours out His spirit and we have to yield to it. So if we refuse to yield, God, at some point, will turn around and take away from us the truth, what has been given. The *understanding* of the parables will be taken away from us because we refuse to yield to God's holy spirit. And this also refers to different scriptures about "a thief in the night," that comes and takes away, that steals. Well, God, at some point, if we refuse to

yield and start to lean on our own understanding, God says that He will take away from us the understanding of the parables, the understanding of the truth, because of *our* decision, a choice that we have made.

Therefore, I speak to them in parables—why?—so that they can't hear, **because seeing they do not see**, so they see on a physical level, which is this comparison of one against the other, something physical to reveal something spiritual, "but seeing," they see it physically, "and do not see." They don't "see" the spiritual part. Now, it's not their fault that they can't see spiritually. It was a decision that God made. He did not give them access to God's holy spirit. They weren't called into a relationship with God. They weren't called to "see". **...and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand**. Now, they may look at it and *believe* they understand; they will use human understanding or human reasoning to believe that they see what it means, what it's really all about.

Verse 14—And in them, in those people there that were not called into this relationship, **the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear**, can hear these things, what He's talking about, about a sower in a field and throwing seed out and it falling in different places, **and shall not understand**, won't understand the real element of a parable, which is the spiritual component. They can't understand it. Now, we know they can't understand it because of a particular reason. **And seeing you will see and not perceive**, so although they might believe they understand it, they can't receive its true meaning, it's true intent. They do not fully understand the reason they don't understand the parables. They actually don't know it.

Now, man today does not understand that he doesn't even know or "see" the true intent of a parable, but he believes he does. He believes he sees it. But he doesn't know the reason why he doesn't see it, let alone does he even contemplate it.

Verse 15—For the heart (inner thinking) **of this people has grown dull**. Now, there was an opportunity when they could turn to God's word and obey it in its physical level, but they've even stopped that. They've become dull of hearing. They can't hear *anything*. They can't hear a proverb *or* a parable and its true intent because of this choice within the mind. Because they're not really that interested.

Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed. They're *not* interested. Well, also the fact that they're not called, and therefore, they *are* hard of hearing and their eyes are closed. They can't "see" spiritually. **Lest**, and the reason why, **Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart**, with their inner thinking, **and turn**, which is to repent, **so that I should heal them**, and this was God the Father speaking at this point based on the prophecy in Isaiah.

So the reason a parable is given is for the purpose of relaying a spiritual meaning, but God has deliberately and intentionally dulled their thinking. Because *if* they could "see" it and understand it, they would begin to turn, and then God would have to continue that relationship in healing the mind, because it's spiritual in the mind; and the healing, it's not physical, it's spiritual. Now what we face in the future as we enter the Day of the Lord, this final Day of the Lord, is we're going to begin to see this healing of the mind. It's going to start. And then once we get into the Millennium we're going to *see* that people are going to understand, they're going to *hear*, and they're going to *turn*. They're going to repent, and God *will* heal them. Isn't that a wonderful thing to understand, that we "see" today because of the mercy of God? And when God pours out His mercy on those whom He will pour it out on and they move into the Millennium and live into the Millennium and during that Hundred-years, we're going to see this understanding of a parable, understanding of the proverbs, and their hearts (their inner thinking) is going to turn. They're going to repent. They're going to turn to God. They're going to desire a

relationship with God, and God will heal them because that's what God desires. God desires to *heal* the thinking, the minds of mankind.

Well, we're so blessed that we are in this process now of being healed. Now, the only reason we are being healed is because we are sick. Because before we are called, we are sick. We are riddled with sin, which is a spiritual sickness. And therefore, when we're called and we begin this process of conversion, God is really healing the mind...and it's spiritual in nature. And it's a glorious thing that God is doing. This is a work of God. God is working. God is working at *healing* our minds. And as we yield to God's holy spirit the healing takes place.

Now, this parable is saying that God spoke in parables this way through Jesus Christ so that people couldn't understand the spiritual component. So He wasn't black and white with them. He wasn't really direct on a spiritual level because He didn't want to reveal to them the true meaning at this point in time.

Verse 16—But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear, now *this* is a gift of God. They could then begin to "see" spiritual matters. Their eyes (which is the mind's eye, which is inner thinking) can begin to comprehend, begin to *know* knowledge (spiritual knowledge) and understand spiritual knowledge, and their ears, they could hear, so they could *understand* the intent of the parable. And it's *God* that is doing all of this. So they are blessed, just like we are blessed, brethren. We are so blessed that we understand God's word. To a degree we understand God's word.

Verse 17—for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*. So the prophets of old did not have all of the truth of God revealed to them. And there were many prophets, and many righteous men (and women) who desired to understand more. Now, we look at Daniel, for example. Daniel was a righteous man. He desired, he asked God, "Tell me more! Tell me more about this particular knowledge that You've given me, that I've written down, because I don't understand it. Reveal more." And then God turned around and said, "Go your way, Daniel, because it's sealed to the time of the end." Well, there's been many a man, physically, physical men and women, that have desired to see these things. The prophets even desired to see it, to understand it. But it wasn't given to them. Now, brethren, we have this opportunity to see more. We see more, all because of Jesus Christ.

Now, there were many prophets that desired to see the time of Jesus Christ. They, some of them, were aware of a Messiah, one to come. And many of the prophecies that they wrote about the Messiah, and many things that were written, for example, like in the book of Isaiah *about* the Millennium and the last Hundred-years, they would not have understood it on a spiritual level. So often things were written because God inspired to be written, but the full comprehension of the meaning and understanding of it, and the depth of it wasn't given. But deep down, they wanted to know. But God withheld it for a purpose because it wasn't time to reveal it to them.

Well, here we have the disciples of God who now are being given this gift from God, which is to be able to see and understand it, to *hear* words spoken. Now Jesus Christ as He speaks, they can *hear* things and begin to understand them on a spiritual level. Now, the disciples at this time would only have understood to a degree. They could not have understood all of the parable because there's components that God withheld. Now, God has revealed much of the meaning of this parable in a post to God's Church. He has revealed it through Jesus Christ, through an apostle, to God's Church, what the true meaning of it was. So even the disciples then, they would have only understood elements of this particular parable. Hence, the beginning of this sermon, "There are many, many parables that we believe we 'see,' but the reality is *more* is to be given. Greater understanding is going to happen once it

is time to reveal it, once it's time for God to reveal it to His Church, all for a spiritual benefit." Well, that's what we face going forth in the Millennium and the last Hundred-years, is a greater spiritual understanding of the Proverbs and the parables.

Verse 18. Now Jesus Christ is going to explain a little bit more detail about the parable—**Therefore, hear the parable of the sower.** So this requires this spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding to be given by God. **When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom** (the gospel of the Kingdom of God) **and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart** (in his inner thinking). **This is he who received seed by the wayside.** So this person is somebody that hears the gospel of the Kingdom of God, comes into the knowledge of aspects of God, but Satan comes along and broadcasts, entices them to sin, and in their mind they are diverted, their priority changes, and they go back to the natural carnal mind. They do not continue.

Verse 20—But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, so this is that first love. They're called and they have this great joy about the knowledge of the truth. Now, there are many, many ways that people hear the truth, and it can be in incredible ways, in times past, people have been called, and when you ask people, "How were you called?" it's quite amazing how God works to call somebody to reveal the truth to them, to give them this sight to see and ears to hear. But it is God that does it. It's God that calls. And immediately this person receives it with joy. It is *so exciting!* And this is that first love. This is the *desire* to do anything to be in a relationship with God, and it is following a calling. **...yet he has no root in himself,** so now what comes in, there's an aspect of pride involved and their character is just not strong enough to withstand the pressures that are going to come on them. **...yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while.** So he starts off with this diligence, with this joy, and the excitement of the truth. **For when tribulation or persecution arise because of the word** (because of the truth), **immediately he stumbles,** he's offended by God's word because of the pressures that are put on him.

Now, this has happened to many within those that have started a calling within God's Church. And they might start for one month, it may go on for one year, but because of pressures of family and the distress that is associated with work and having maybe possibly to find another job, and the persecutions that arise from obeying God, from keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days, many a people "have stumbled at the word," because of the truth, because of God's desire for us to be in obedience to Him, to transform our thinking. So "many have stumbled" and fallen by the wayside. And this "stumbling" is done by wrong choices.

So immediately the person is then confronted with obedience to Leviticus 23 and they have a choice to make, "Will I keep the seventh-day Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday? Will I stop work? Will I tell my boss that I can't work anymore? Will I tell my boss that I have to go to a commanded assembly called the Feast of Tabernacles? Will I do that? Will I take days off like the Day of Atonement? Will I fast on that day?" Well, these are the things that cause people distress. And it can be seen as a persecution, although it's not really. It's a perceived persecution because God is greater than everything. But within a human mind we think it's a persecution, but really it's an opportunity for spiritual growth. It's an opportunity to make right choices.

Well, these people stumble because of a wrong choice. They yield to themselves. They yield to the pressure of society. They yield to the pressure of being liked or being accepted. "They stumble at the word." They stumble at the truth, the truth of God.

Verse 22—Now he who receives the seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, so he hears the preaching of the gospel, he begins to hear on a spiritual level the word of God, the truth of God, **and the**

cares of this world, which is about a priority, **and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word** (choke the truth), **and he becomes unfruitful**. Now, we've just gone through a sermon about the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, because this is about that priority. This is about a priority. This person hears the truth. They may be called, they may hear and understand spiritual matters, and they continue, and they have actually rejected the elements of the world, and they may have had their family turn against them, they have loved ones turn against them, and they had this joy, had this first love and they're so excited! But as time goes on, the cares of the world—now this is that priority; it's God first or it's our self first. One or the other. It's black and white. It's God's way or selfishness. One or the other. But the cares of the world, the cares for self, and the deceitfulness of riches.

Now, why are "riches" deceitful? Because of this priority. They're deceitful because they're temporary, and the mind can think that they're going to last forever. So this seeking pleasure for self is gained through riches and this priority of focusing on gaining riches and the cares of the world, looking after self, the house, the car, the money in the bank. All of these things choke the word. They choke the truth. They *choke* God's holy spirit, because the person fails now to yield to God because their priority is themselves and acquiring. **...and he becomes unfruitful**. He becomes unfruitful spiritually. He no longer can grow because he cannot think spiritually.

So this is about a spiritual principle. It's not about something physical; it's all about something spiritual.

So to become unfruitful on a spiritual level means we are not yielding to the flow of God's holy spirit. God's thinking is not the priority in our minds, and therefore, if it's not, it'll be human reasoning and we'll become unfruitful on a spiritual level.

Verse 23—But he who receives the seed on the good ground, and to "receive it on the good ground" you have to be part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, where it *is* the good ground. This is where a person can be fed. **...is he who hears the word**, they hear the truth on a spiritual level, **and understands it**. Now, we've been through particular sermons about understanding, spiritual understanding, because people can have knowledge of God's way; you can know the 57 Truths and be able to recite them back. That's knowledge. We can know the 10 Commandments. We can know many things in God's word, as far as *knowledge* is concerned, but this *understanding it* is the importance. The understanding is the reason "why" of the knowledge.

Now, this person has heard it, they know it, now they understand it on a spiritual level, **who indeed bears fruit**. Now this is that understanding which goes to action, which is that of repentance, **and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty**. There is spiritual growth! And spiritual growth is the development of the very thinking of God, the mind of God.

So this particular parable has many implications with regards to God's Church. It has implications in our own life because it's all about choices, what have we done. Now, if we have endured and we are part of verse 23, we've received it on good ground, we've stayed with the Body of Christ, we've stayed where God feeds His people. He feeds the seed and the shoot has sprung up, and we're about to bear fruit. Now the fruit that we bear is the mind of God, the thinking of God, which you can read in Galatians 5, which is the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, etcetera. So these things are what we should be bearing. The most important thing that we can bear, as far as bearing spiritual fruit, is to grow in love for God and love for the brethren, and love for all mankind.

Now, it is spiritual in nature and it's not a *feeling*. It's based on God's thinking. Hence, sometimes when we say we love a particular person and then they have to be put to death, well, that's love. Now, to say those things in the world, their love is all based on human emotion. It's like a "philia" love, which is like a brotherly love. But God's love is different. God's love is actually an act of mercy no matter what. So

when a person sins, God provides mercy in the sense of forgiveness. That is God's love. Being forgiving is an aspect of God's love for mankind, God's love for us that God will forgive based on the fact that we choose to forgive others.

Well, God's love is expounded through His word, of all the things that He has done. He has sacrificed peace out of love. He has sacrificed so much. He's sacrificed an offering for us, a sin offering, which was, Jesus Christ. Why? Because He loved us. Jesus Christ offered Himself because He loved us, which is that thinking of God.

So we have this ability to bear fruit *because* we've fallen on good ground, we've stayed in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, we've heard the truth and we understand it on a spiritual level. We indeed can bear fruit and we can produce a hundredfold (from where we were), sixtyfold, or thirtyfold, according to God's will. Now, this is all based on repentance. This is all based on repentance, our desire to yield to God's word, our desire to repent of *what we are*, which is selfishness. We are selfish by nature.

Verse 24—Another parable He (Christ) put forth to them, saying: The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; now, we can picture this visually, that there's a man and he's going out and he's putting good seed in his field.

Verse 25—but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. Now, we understand that the enemy of God is Satan, and therefore, Satan can sow seeds within the Church of God. Satan can put plants in the Church of God for a purpose.

Verse 26—But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So it was at the same time God was working in His field (the Church of God) and Satan had put plants in there that were not of God. Although they could produce an image, which is one of hypocrisy, which is "acting out a role," it's not for us to discern the tares or the wheat. And the most important thing out of this that we can learn is we need to focus on ourselves.

Verse 27—So the servants of the owner came and said to him, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? How is this possible? This is God's Church, and here it is God is saying there are tares, and have been tares, within the Church of God since 31 AD. There have been tares in the Church since 31 AD.

Verse 28—He said to them, An enemy has done this. And that enemy is Satan. **The servants said to him, Do you want us then to go and gather them up?** Which is the question to the owner. "Do you want us to go and try and pull up all the weeds that are around the good seed that has grown into a crop?"

Verse 29—But he said, No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Which is, that they will be left there to the end.

Verse 30—Let them grow together until the harvest, until it's time to be harvest, and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into the barn. So this is now talking about something spiritual. We understand, brethren, that through the history of God's Church there have been those that have covered all of the aspects of these last two parables, one about the sower, people being called and what their decisions are, and there are those that have matured and grown and yielded spiritual fruit. Now, along the way in that journey there have been tares planted within the Church, all for the purpose of growing the wheat. So a tare is there for a reason.

Now, there is a post that covers this in a lot more detail, about the reason why tares exist, and it is all about the spiritual growth. "Many are called, but few are chosen." If they're not called they can be a plant that Satan has placed in the Church all for the purpose of aiding the *few* that are chosen. It's about spiritual development. It's about making right choices.

Verse 31—Another parable He put forth to them, saying: The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, (verse 32) which indeed is the least of all the seeds, because it's the smallest possible seed, but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. Now, if anyone heard this, they would just simply think it's about a mustard seed, and if you plant this tiny little seed (which is smaller than a lot of the herb seeds) it will actually grow bigger than the herbs, and it one day will be a massive tree and the birds will come and sit in its branches. Well, isn't that a wonderful story.

Well, this parable is talking about the Kingdom of God. And that's the secret to understanding the parables that Jesus Christ was talking about. He talks a parable so that people couldn't understand, but He does start, "The Kingdom of Heaven," God's Kingdom, the way God's Government *is*. The way God's Government is going to be established is "*like* a mustard seed," because it's small. It started off small. It started off in 31 AD on the Day of Pentecost. It was small. But it grew. And over the period of time, from that time, there's been up to 144,000 that have grown now to the point of they are sealed and they will enter Elohim. So this growing, "becoming a great tree," is just a process. And the first resurrection, the return of Jesus Christ, the 144,000 that will return with Jesus Christ, is the beginning of this growing of the tree, because during the Millennium there is then this continual growth. And this growing of the tree is *about* the Kingdom of God, God's Government growing. And it grows to a point of being fulfilled at the end of 7,100 years, and it becomes a great tree. It covers *everything*. It's not small anymore. It covers everything. And everything that is outside of the Government of God, life that exists, has to be destroyed.

This "birds coming from the air and nesting in its branches," well, it's about the brethren. It's about us, brethren, that we're nesting in the branches. We're *in* the Body of Christ. We're *in* the Church of God, and at some point we will enter the Kingdom of God, because the Church today is an embryo of the Kingdom of God. We are yet to be born *into* it. Isn't this exciting?! It's a great parable to understand, that Jesus Christ is saying God's Kingdom, His Government, His way of life, His thinking started off small, it started off, in the main, in 31 AD on the Day of Pentecost, and it will grow during the next period of time, over a long period of time until it is a rightful tree and we will dwell in it. We will dwell *in* the Kingdom of God.

Verse 33—Another parable He spoke to them: The Kingdom of Heaven, referring to something spiritual again, the Government of God, **is like leaven,** so it's referring to something physical, pointing to the spiritual, **which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.** Somebody hearing that would think, "So the woman's taken this leavening and put it into the meal, into the mix of dough, and it's all leavened. Well, great story."

What it's pointing to? The Kingdom of God *is* like, it's like this, where it starts off small, "a small piece of leaven," something that is going to grow, was placed into the meal, into the mix, and it is *all* going to be leavened. So the end result is that from this small amount of leaven it will swell up and grow and be large, because the Kingdom of God is going to be large, and the end result is the whole thing will be, it will have *grown massively*. Although we are unleavened at that time, it's talking about something physical, pointing to the spiritual. So God is now saying that the Kingdom of God will start off small and it will grow to the point of being fulfilled at the end of 7,100 years, and then everything else will be

destroyed—Satan and his demons will be destroyed—and mankind that refused to "set their will," to set their mind to yield to God and they become "set against God," will be destroyed.

Now, for somebody to understand this parable, they couldn't. And there's still parts of this that we can't yet fully "see," because it won't be revealed totally until it is all leavened. And that's when we'll understand more of it. So this little part that's in, we're just part of that. We're just a small part of this leaven process that is going to take place, being put into the meal and mixed in until it is all leavened. Well, we haven't seen the end of this yet. So this parable, Jesus Christ and others will be able to explain to us in more detail because there is going to come a time when it's actually fulfilled, when *all is leavened*. It's fully *yielded* at the end of 7,100 years. It's exciting! It's an exciting thing to *know* the meaning of the parables.

Verse 34—All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, so the only time that He was speaking to them, He was talking about physical things. Now, I'm sure there was plenty there that thought they could interpret aspects of what He was saying, but a lot of people would have thought, "He's just crazy, saying all these stories. But what's the point of all these stories?" Because they couldn't "see" anything spiritual in it. And the reason He did it? **...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.** So these things that Jesus Christ is revealing, He is revealing on a spiritual level, but they had been kept secret from mankind, and it wasn't until 31 AD (in the main, we understand there were a few before then that understood aspects of God's word)...but from 31 AD it has grown. Our understanding on a spiritual level has grown with regards to understanding the parables.

Verse 36—Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. So they didn't understand it all. They understood an aspect of it, which was mainly physically, but they didn't comprehend the deep meaning of this particular parable.

Verse 37—He answered and said to them: He who sows the good seed is the Son of God (Jesus Christ). The field is the world, and the good seeds are the sons of the Kingdom, they are those called out, begotten sons of God, **but the tares are the sons of the wicked (Satan).** These are people that are conformed. So they're acting out a role. And it's not our role, brethren, to work out who's a tare and who's not. It has nothing to do with us. We are to worry about ourselves. We are to focus on ourselves.

Verse 39—The enemy who sowed them is the devil (Satan), and the harvest is the end of the age, the end of 7,100 years, **and the reapers are the angels.**

Verse 40—Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it shall be at the end of this age, at the end of 7,100 years. **The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things, that's everything that offend,** and that is "cause to stumble," **and those who practice lawlessness;** it's those that are "set against God," those that are practicing sin and enjoying it. They do not obey God, but they've set their mind, they've set their will, and they will not change.

Now, we understand that there are many that have died that have set their mind against God, and they're going to be resurrected and they're going to have to suffer the penalty, "the wages of sin," which is death.

Verse 42—and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous (those that dwell with God) will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has an ear, let him hear! Now, we've had this explained to us of late within a post,

about the understanding of this, about the fact that Satan will be removed at the return of Jesus Christ, and it's not until the end, when the righteous are changed, "shining forth as a sun in the Kingdom of their Father," the Kingdom of God, in Elohim, in the Government of God, that then we're going to see the resurrection of those that have set their mind against God. And those, along with Satan and his demons will be destroyed.

Now, we couldn't understand this parable, this explanation of the parable, until God revealed it through an apostle. So the ongoing process of understanding parables is something that isn't dormant; it's going to continue. It's going to continue during the thousand years and it's going to continue during the Hundred-years, until the day we understand the deeper spiritual meaning of these particular parables that Christ spoke about.

Verse 44—Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. So again, we'll look at this. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure in a field, something that's found and a man finds it, let's say it's a piece of gold or a ruby, and he then finds it and he hides it. He doesn't show it to anybody else, but he keeps it for himself. And for the joy over it, the fact that he's found it, he then goes and sells everything else that he has to buy the field where the treasure was, where he hid the treasure, because then he owns the field and the treasure. Because, if he then took the treasure from the field, it could have been considered as stealing, but the best thing that he could do was to rebury it where it was, and then go out and sell all that he had so that he could actually own the field, and therefore, he owned the things that were in the field, the treasure that he'd found, the gold or the ruby.

Well, on a spiritual level it's for us, brethren. This is about us when we "find" the truth, in the sense of God calls us. And we only "find" the truth because God calls us to it because we can't see the truth without a calling from God. So we don't really find it of and by ourselves. We only find it because of the power of God's holy spirit because God calls us to find it. So this treasure is actually hidden from the world, but we, brethren, we can dig up this treasure—called the truth. And the knowledge and the understanding of God, God's thinking on any matter, *is* the treasure in the field. Well, we see it. We're called into the Church, we rejoice in it for joy, and we continue in the truth. We *understand* where God is going with regards to the purpose of life, we understand why parables, we understand the why of many matters. Well, we are willing to sell all to purchase the field. We are willing to give up everything in our life, including ourselves, the sacrificing of ourselves because we desire the hidden treasure, which is the truth, and it's only found in God's Church. So, we're willing to give up everything to remain *in* fellowship with God and in fellowship with God's people *in* God's Church.

Now, *that* is something that we have to do. We have to be prepared to sell *everything* that we have. We are willing to give *everything* to God. Now, doing this on a physical level is testing and it is a trial, but the deeper spiritual principle of this is about willing to give up the self. We don't own *ourselves*! We can't do the natural things that we often desire to do. We have to discipline the self by the power of God's holy spirit, and we have to sell ourselves to God. We have to sell ourselves to God. We have to *sacrifice*, which is to get rid of everything of ourselves. And it can be painful! But in doing that there is a great joy, because this person here sells all that he has and buys that field. Well, that's what we're doing. We are giving up ourselves. We're sacrificing ourselves so that we can have the field. We want the Kingdom of God. We want to enter Elohim. We desire eternal life.

Now, this parable is virtually going over the fact on a physical level that this treasure that is hidden, which is the truth, the word of God, God's way of life, God's thinking, God's holy spirit, it's something that we've been given opportunity. We've found it because God revealed it to us. We've picked it up, we're handling it, we realize we want it, so what do we do? We are willing then to give up everything on

a physical level and to give up (more importantly) *the self* for this treasure, for the Kingdom of God. That's what we desire. Now, we do this, brethren, because we have been bought with a price ourselves. We've been purchased. So we *should* desire to give up ourselves, to give up everything, because really, God was the one that revealed the treasure to us.

And how easy it is to not value this treasure anymore. There's been many of people go before us, brethren, that have dug up the treasure (which God has revealed to them), they've found it, they've sold a lot, they've sold themselves even, given up themselves for to buy this treasure, to buy the Kingdom of God, to buy eternal life, because their thoughts, words, and actions, because of what they desired...and then they lose the *value* of what they've found. They now look at it as something not valuable, and then their priorities change. And because it's no longer valuable, they go back to the world, back to their own reasoning, back to their own thinking, because they've devalued what God has provided them.

Now, this should be a warning for us, brethren, this parable, because within this parable we should be able to see that it is easy to *devalue* what God has revealed to us. It is *easy* to devalue the gold, the precious pearls, the knowledge of the Kingdom of God, the precious mysteries of God's way, of the plan of God. How *easy* it is to give that up! Now, we might think it's not easy to give it up. There's been thousands of people that have no longer valued what God has given them, the precious pearls. They've handled it. Now, it's of no value to them. In fact, they speak against it. They turn against it. They no longer want the field (the Church of God) and they no longer want the pearls that are contained within the field (contained within the Church of God). They actually despise the riches of the Church. And that's what we can do if we're not on guard guarding our thoughts, words, and actions.

Verse 45—Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, someone that's going out looking for pearls, **who, when he has found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he has and bought it.** So this is that same thing, where there's a merchant and he goes out and he comes across this particular pearl that someone has. They own it and he wants to buy it from them because he wants to own it. And the only way that he can do it is to sell all that he has. So he's willing to sell everything to acquire the money so that he can buy it. And he bought it.

Well, this is the same for us, same as the previous parable. We are to give up everything for God's way of life. We have to give up *everything* to purchase this great pearl, this pearl of great price which is the truth of God, the word of God, the Logos of God, God's thinking in us. Now, we have to give up ourselves. We have to be willing to give up ourselves (our own desires) for the purpose of purchasing this great pearl. Why? Because owning this pearl is like owning the mind of God. And if we own the mind of God, God can turn around and grant us life-everlasting.

Now, we know, brethren, that we have been purchased by Jesus Christ, by God the Father, Jesus Christ – they've actually purchased us, so we no longer belong to ourselves anyway. So we understand that. We understand a calling is for the purpose of transforming the mind. We're called into this "field" (the Church of God) and *within* the Church of God we "see" these "pearls of great price." We "see" the truth. We "see" all the beauty of God's way of life, the 57 Truths, all of the knowledge we have, all of the spiritual understanding. We "see" God. We "see" love. We *understand* what true spiritual love is, and we're willing to sacrifice the self, to give up *everything*, to sell everything of ourselves (we're willing to become a servant, willing to become a slave) for God, because we desire to be in a relationship with God for eternity. We desire eternal life. We desire life-everlasting. We desire this pearl to be in our possession for the rest of our life physically and spiritually.

Verse 47—Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet (a net) that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, so all types of people were drawn into this, which is all kinds of fish,

(verse 48) **which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into a vessel, but threw the bad away.** The reality of this is that we can look at this as being "clean and unclean." When they went out fishing they put the net in and they caught every kind of fish. Well, there was only certain types of fish that you could eat, which were the clean fish. And they "threw the bad," the unclean away. Now, this can refer also, brethren, to people. God draws all kinds of people, all nationalities of people into the Church, and within that calling of all different nationalities, all different kinds, there *are* those that are considered "bad" and those that are considered "good." Now, to be "good" means that we are clean. So it doesn't matter what nationality we are, or what race we are, this is about becoming clean, be "cleaned by the word of God." But if we are unclean spiritually and we don't yield to God's holy spirit we will be thrown away. So it's not about race or color, it's actually about a matter of being "clean" or "unclean." Spiritually righteous, having the mind of God – clean. Or unclean, having the natural carnal mind yielding to the enticing of Satan.

Verse 49. Now it's moving to the end, which is the end of 7,100 years—**So it will be at the age,** at the end of 7,100 years of mankind, **The angels will go forth, separate the wicked from the just,** so at the end of the Hundred-years there will be those that are considered "wicked" during that period. Well, they'll be left alive at that time, but "the just" will be separated by a resurrection. And what will happen? **...and cast them into the furnace of fire.** The "unjust," those that are "wicked," those that have set their mind, set their will against God's way. They'll be cast into the furnace of fire. **There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.** Because? They're going to face a second death.

Verse 51—Jesus said to them, Have you understood all these things? And they said to Him, Yes, Lord. Now, they would have understood to a degree, and their answer was honest, "Yes, Lord," based on their understanding. Well, it's the same for us. We can read something, we can hear a sermon, and someone could ask us, "Do you understand?" And we'd go, "Yes," based on the knowledge that we have. Because we *think* we understand, but deep down we may not fully understand the deeper meaning of it. But at that time we say, "Yes, I heard. Yes, I understand." And therefore, "Yes, I understand what you're talking about." But the reality is we can't on a spiritual level to the depth of what God will give us going forward and in the future.

Verse 52—Then He said to them, Therefore, every scribe instructs concerning the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old. So He's referring now to the teachers, that "every scribe, (every teacher) instructs concerning the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder," somebody "who brings out all treasures," all things that you know, all things that you're aware of, "and new." So there's new and old. So there's both. So we have what is called "old" understanding, but there is always something "new" to be brought out in any of the parables.

We can understand the new things of God as God reveals them to His Church through an apostle by the power of God's holy spirit. So although we have old understanding, we believe we know these things, we understand them, the reality is there is always new things, new treasures that are going to be revealed in the parables to us.

John 12:37—But although He (talking about Christ) **had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him.** So Jesus Christ was there working miracles and doing many works and signs before them, but people didn't believe Him. Because unless a person is called to believe the truth, they won't believe. But all the evidence was there, that this was a work of God, but people, because of the hardness of their hearts and because of the natural carnal mind, did not believe *in* Jesus Christ. They did not believe what He said.

And the reason was? **Verse 38—that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: LORD** (talking about Yahweh Elohim), **who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?** So who it is that God has shown these things to, that "the arm of the LORD" which is the works of God "has been revealed?" **Therefore, they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: He has blinded the eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with *their* eyes, and understand with *their* hearts, Lest they should return (repent), so that I should heal them. These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him** (referring to Jesus Christ).

Romans 11:1...this is about Israel's rejection, but it's not totally because there is a time of redemption that is coming.

Romans 11:1—I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! So God has not cast away Israel, although Israel and the world today as we understand it does not "see" God, does not understand God, does not understand the Proverbs, does not understand the parables, all for a purpose, because God has hidden it from their eyes. But has God cast them away? Will they always not be able to "see"? Well, the answer is no. God is at some time going to reveal His mercy to them and they're going to be able to hear with their ears on a spiritual level, and see with their eyes on a spiritual level.

So it says, "Certainly not!" **For I also am an Israelite, and the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life?** So we understand that story with Elijah, when he fled, because he believed that he was the last one left because they had killed all the other prophets, they'd torn down all of God's altars, and they'd turned to Baal worship, and he believed that he alone was left. He had felt for himself, really. He believed he was the only one that was following God and the pressure got to him and hence, he fled to protect himself, "and they seek my life," because he believed that they were out to kill him.

But, what does the divine response say to him? So what did God say to him? **I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men whom do not bow the knee of Baal.** Because God is working a work in a time order. And God calls people for a particular reasons, for particular purposes, to fulfill His will. And He *hasn't* forgotten all those that He has blinded. There is a time where they're going to see on a spiritual level.

Verse 5—Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. So it is because of God's mercy that we are in the Body of Christ, the Church of God. There *is* a remnant now that exists on this earth, part of God's Church, the true Church of God—PKG that exists now because of the election of God, because of His great mercy and His grace.

Verse 6—And if by grace, then *it is no longer the works; otherwise grace no longer grace.* So it's not about our own physical works. We can't save ourselves. But it is by grace. It's grace that does it. It's God's mercy that does it. So it's no longer by works. It's no longer our works that do it. **But if *it is of works. It is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.*** And what he's saying there is that we can't do it by ourselves. It is by the grace of God and it has to be by God's grace. It cannot be something that we do, that we work up, or the works from the human mind. It has to be powered by God's holy spirit.

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were hardened. Because it is by God's calling, it is by God's mercy that we "see" what we see. And Israel couldn't obtain it, but we can obtain it because of God's mercy towards us.

Just as it is written: God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, to this day...to this very day. And it's exactly the same today, that people can't "see," people cannot hear because they do not have God's holy spirit.

Verse 9—And David says: Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always. So this is about a calling. It requires a calling from God to be able to "see."

2 Corinthians 3:12—Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly at the end of what was passing away. But their minds (their thinking's) were hardened. They became blind spiritually. **For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament,** they can't understand it spiritually. They can't know spiritual understanding. Somebody reads the Old Testament, they cannot understand the spirit of the law or the spirit of the matter, **because the veil is taken away in Christ.** So it's only by Passover. It's only by a calling and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Passover that we begin to see spiritually.

Verse 15—But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lays on their heart. So this "veil," this covering (which it is, a veil is a covering), it covers their eyes. It covers their mind, their inner thinking. They cannot see spiritually. **Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord,** when one turns to God, one turns to Jesus Christ as our Passover sacrifice, **the veil is taken away,** the mind is opened. And it's all done by repentance.

Verse 17—Now the Lord is the spirit; and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. It cleanses us spiritually; we begin to "see" spiritual matters.

Verse 18—But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in the mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the spirit of the Lord. So we are being called to change. We are being called to be "unveiled in our thinking." Not to have our thinking covered up, but be unveiled, to have an "unveiled face beholding... the glory of God," the mind of God. And we are to be "transformed into the same image," the same thinking of God. Because we are going to move "from glory," which we have a human glory, which is a glory, but "to the glory of God," to another glory which is a spiritual glory, "just as by the spirit of the Lord." It's the *only way* that it can happen. We are to move to be transformed, to be more like God.

Leviticus 23:1. Now, we're approaching God's Feast, and they are a marvelous time because they have a lot of meaning. So now we're going to start in Leviticus 23 and we're going to go through the "why" of God's Holy Days. Now, we understand the purpose of the Holy Days, which is revealing of the plan of God, but there is much more to it.

So the title of this sermon is *The Reason Why* and this is *Part 1*. Well, we're going to look at the reason why God created the various Holy Days. And we're going to start by reading in Leviticus 23:1 all for the purpose of coming to understand more, a greater, deeper understanding on a spiritual level of the real reason why these days exist. And we will end up at the Last Great Day, because we're heading to the Feast and we're going to be able to celebrate these various Holy Days of God, but we need to understand why we're doing what we're doing.

So we're going to start in **Leviticus 23:1—And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, speak to the Church of God today, God's Church. We are the children of God. We are begotten sons of God, therefore, we are part of the children of spiritual Israel, and say to them: The appointed times of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My appointed times.**

So God is speaking to us, saying, "Well, these are *My* appointments." These are appointments that we have to hold with God. Now, the world runs appointments. If we wanted to see anybody or meet anybody or have a meeting with somebody about a particular matter, for a purpose of doing something, or learning something, or acquiring something, or establishing something, we have what's called "an appointment." So we would ring the person up and we would make an appointment to see them, a set time to meet. Well, these are the appointments of God. These are set times that God says that we are to assemble before Him. They are a holy convocation. They're a commanded assembly before God. We are to come together under the authority of God, because God is the one who made the appointment. We have to yield to that appointment and turn up to that appointment all for a purpose. And we're going to go into that.

So the first thing that we need to do is to come to understand the Sabbath, why (the reason why) the Sabbath was established. Now, we have been over this and we're just going to review it today because it is so important. Because spiritual life in the Church of God starts with the Sabbath because this is the day where God has commanded that we come before Him on a weekly basis for a set purpose—the reason why we come before God on this particular day.

Six days shall work be done, so we are free to operate for six days of the week, working on our physical acquisition of things for the purpose and the benefit of physical benefits. But we're to do it in a spiritual way, which is the right attitude, yielding to God's holy spirit during these six days. So, six days work can be done; we can hold our jobs, we can do housework, we can mow lawns, we can do all the physical things of life that are essential and need to take place, because that's why six days is given to it. **...but the seventh day**, which is from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, so it's the whole day, Friday night and Saturday, during the daylight portion, **the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest**, so it's a rest, a solemn rest. It's something we must do on a physical level, but also rest on a spiritual level, because it's a day we assemble before God, **a holy convocation**. So it's in spirit, a relationship with God in spirit is why we stop work and we come before God to be fed. That is the purpose of the Sabbath, to be fed by God. The reason why the Sabbath was created. It was created for man both physically (on a physical level it was created for man, physically), but the more important part is the spiritual.

So it's like a parable, one part you can understand on a physical level, and that's what the world does. Some Jewish communities, some tribes of Israel, and other people actually hold a Sabbath on the right time. They actually rest physically because they understand the parable (or the proverb) on a physical level. But here it is, an appointed time which is actually spiritual in nature. But we have to understand the physical component then we can understand the spiritual. And only God's Church can understand the spiritual matter of a proverb or a spiritual matter of a parable, and also of Leviticus 23, because it requires God's holy spirit.

You shall do no work on it; it is a Sabbath (a rest) **of the LORD** (of the Eternal) **in all your dwellings**. So if we belong to the Church of God, in the dwelling of God, in God's house, this is a day for rest. It is a commanded assembly before God. Now, the purpose of the Sabbath, the *why* of the Sabbath is that we will rest physically, we will rest spiritually, we will assemble before God so that we can be instructed of how God thinks, the way God thinks about a matter. It is all spiritual in nature. God reveals His spirit to us by the power of His holy spirit, and if we yield to it, we are re-educated because we're educated in the ways of man, the natural carnal mind. Well, it takes a renewing of the mind. We have to be re-educated in the right way to think, to think like God. We have to be transformed from one way of thinking to another way of thinking, and it's *only possible* by two things. Number one, we have to be called to it. We have to have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. That's number one. Number two

is it happens on a Sabbath. The Sabbath is the key to spiritual life. We have to rest on this day and turn to God to listen to what God has so that we can be re-educated in God's ways, in God's way of being.

So the purpose of the Sabbath is for spiritual edification. It is for spiritual growth. It is the day spiritual food is provided to us and we have a choice of whether or not we're going to consume that food. Now, by consuming spiritual food it means we gain knowledge of God, we gain spiritual understanding of God—like the "why" of a matter, the why of the Sabbath. We "see" it, we know it, now we start to live it, which is that wisdom component. We have to implement it. So just resting on a Sabbath on a physical level is not enough before God. God requires us to consume the food that He provides, which is spiritual. We have to yield our thinking. We have to yield our opinion to God's thinking and God's opinion on a matter. Now, *that* will trigger spiritual growth. We will put on the mind of God. We will transform our thinking. All done by the power of God's holy spirit.

So *that's* why the Sabbath is the key to life. It's the key to physical life and it's the key to spirit life in the future. We have to be fed on the Sabbath. We have to yield to God on this Sabbath day. That's the key.

Leviticus 23:4—These *are* the appointed times of the Eternal, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. So at a particular time they are to be *proclaimed*, they are to be *announced* to God's people.

Verse 5—In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at, or between the evenings, ***is* the LORD's Passover.** So the next one is the Passover. We cannot proceed further into our relationship with God or in a relationship with God unless we yield on a spiritual level to the Passover.

Now, people in the world take a Passover. They can consume wine and a small piece of bread, but that does not mean they're keeping God's Passover. Because to keep God's Passover one has to be part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God. We have to worship God in spirit and truth. We have to do it the way God tells us to do it. So to keep the Passover we need to be a member of the Body of Christ.

I know there was an example where somebody was disfellowshipped from God's Church, and they decided that they would keep the Passover. Well, in doing that they actually sinned. Because if they're *not* in unity with God, if they're not *at-one* with God, they're not keeping the Passover in spirit and truth, and therefore, they *shouldn't* have kept the Passover. But because of human reasoning and their thinking, they would think, "I need to keep the Passover. I need to worship God. I need to do the Passover on Passover night," and they would follow through with their own thinking. But anybody that has been disfellowshipped from God's Church, is not in a relationship with God's Church, is not at-one with God, is not keeping the Passover in spirit and truth. It's impossible. In actual fact, they are sinning against God. It is sin upon sin, because God's not there. It's not done in humility. They're not washing one another's feet in humility, which is part of the Passover service. They're not accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and they're not living an unleavened way of life. They're actually absorbing sin. They're absorbing leaven in their life, because the shed blood of Jesus Christ enables us to have a relationship with God.

So why the Passover? Well, it's the covering of sin...this covering of sin. The sacrifice for sin was paid by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ's shed blood was all for the purpose of enabling a relationship with us and with God the Father, because sin needed to be paid for, and Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin, which is death. Blood was shed on our behalf! How incredible is this?

So "on the fourteenth day of the month, of the first month, is the Lord's Passover." And it's between two evenings. It's from sunset to sunset. And we take the Passover as outlined in the New Testament, as Jesus Christ demonstrated on the night before He suffered. He took the Passover and He changed those

symbols all for the purpose of a new agreement. There is a new agreement that we have to do. The agreement is not old; it's not about obeying the law in the physical level. Now it's about obeying the law on a physical level *and* it's *spiritual* intent. The spirit of the law is now what is important before God. So this Passover is a sacrifice for us.

So why the Passover? Passover is God's mercy to us. It provides a way for covering sin. Jesus Christ has died on our behalf. Now, we have to accept that sacrifice before we can move forward in a relationship with God. So that's why the Passover exists.

Verse 6—And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so we have Passover, now we move into a period of Unleavened Bread. It's a Feast of Unleavened Bread **to the LORD: seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.**

Verse 7—On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary (occupational) **work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation** (commanded assembly); **you shall do no occupational work or customary work on it.**

So this next period, of "why" the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Day's of Unleavened Bread picture us moving forward spiritually. We've accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Now there has to be a demonstration of a way of life. We have to demonstrate before God that we no longer want to live a leavened way of life. We desire to be unleavened. So these seven days of Unleavened Bread, we would remove leaven from our home. Why? What's the reason we delevan our homes? The reason we delevan our homes is that we desire to demonstrate before God that we desire to be unleavened. We unleaven our homes on a physical level as a physical act, but it is pointless unless we are willingly and desiring to delevan our minds. And that's what it's about. It's spiritual in nature. It's not just about removing leaven from a home and finding every little bit of leaven that's in a home. It's about unleavening our minds, finding leaven in our minds. Leaven is sin.

So the purpose of the Days of Unleavened Bread, the "why" of the Days of Unleavened Bread is a demonstration of our desire to be at-one with God. We desire to get rid of sin out of our life. And that's what the Days of Unleavened Bread are about, getting rid of sin, getting rid of leaven, *then* getting rid of sin from within our minds. And this is a concentrated period of seven days where we wouldn't *handle sin*, where we will not eat *leaven* during this period. We'll eat *unleavened* bread as a demonstration of our *desire* to be unleavened.

So getting rid of leaven is one of the steps, but eating unleavened bread is another one, because leaven is symbolic of pride—we don't want to have pride. We want to be *unleavened*. We want to be humble. So the reason for the Days of Unleavened Bread is a demonstration of our yielding to God, a demonstration of our desire not to be puffed up like leaven is, our desire to leave sin (leave Egypt). We want to flee all of that and we desire to be *unleavened* because only the unleavened—only the clean—can enter the Kingdom of God. Hence, God provided us a way to demonstrate our belief, our faith, our desire to be unleavened. And although it's a physical act, God looks at the heart, the spiritual act of whether or not we desire really to be unleavened.

So we eat that piece of unleavened bread over the seven days—each day—as a demonstration of our desire to be unleavened, our desire not to dwell in sin. And the offering that we make is the offering of our self. We are willing to sacrifice ourselves, to sacrifice our desires, to put God first. We want God's thinking in our mind, therefore, we are willing to sacrifice the self during this period, because that's what we do. We give up *our will*, *our thoughts*, *our motives*, and put them before God and say, "God, I desire *Your* thinking on all matters."

Then we move to the Feast of Pentecost. We understand the reason for the Day of Pentecost. And I won't go reading the aspects of this, but the reality is the Day of Pentecost is a glorious time. It is about a Wave Sheaf offering and then an offering before God on the 50th Day. So we know the counting of 50 is all for a purpose. And we've had a post just recently which outlines the beauty of this count, the reason we count.

So "why" Pentecost? Pentecost points to the return of Jesus Christ. It points to the 144,000 over the 6,000 years of mankind that will be resurrected on the Day of Pentecost, on the day that Jesus Christ returns. So how beautiful is this day? This Wave Sheaf, which points to Jesus Christ, and then, of course, the two wave loaves, "the two-tenth's meal, which is made of fine flour, is baked with leaven" because they came from the world, 6,000 years of mankind, and had sin. Well, this all points to the firstfruits. And it's a glorious day which we will soon see being fulfilled on a spiritual level.

Now, people can keep it all physically, but we understand the purpose of the Day of Pentecost. It's a time of rejoicing on a spiritual level for what God will do for mankind.

Now, this counting of 50 has great meaning on a spiritual level. We understand aspects of this counting 50, and now more has been revealed to us, but it is about a Jubilee. It is about a release. So this counting of 50 gets to a release. So we understand there are two periods of 3½ years, and we're almost through one of them, which is the measuring of the temple. Then we're going to move into the physical tribulation into the world, and then we're going to have this count 49, count 50, which takes us to a Jubilee. And I understand within my own being that this final count of counting the last 50 days of mankind—50th is when God intervenes through Jesus Christ to this earth, and it is a Day of the Lord, this final part of the Day of the Lord, one day (not the full year period, but the one day period) is going to be a day of horrendous death and suffering, but is a time of joy, because God's Government has been brought to this earth.

So the beauty of the Day of Pentecost and all its meaning is yet to be revealed to mankind. They won't understand what's happening, but we will. We know the reason "why" Pentecost must take place. We understand what God has been doing because we understand God's plan.

With that, brethren, we'll leave the sermon for today, and we'll pick up "The Reason Why - Part 2." We'll pick it up next Sabbath, and we'll continue by exploring the Feast of Trumpets.□