

Today we are going to continue with a new sermon series that began last Sabbath that's entitled, *The Rightful Place of Women*, and this will be *Part 2*.

At the beginning of last Sabbath's sermon it was stated that, "This is a very unique and incredibly meaningful Sabbath for God's Church. And the opening for this service today reflects that in a very profound and powerful manner." Although we heard that sermon and perhaps have thought about some of the things that were said last Sabbath, we really don't grasp yet the significance, the depth of importance that is to God's Church and to what God is establishing in the Millennium and what God is doing in the world. We are living in an incredibly unique time in history.

It's already been a bit of a struggle in the world, because of technology and so forth, that there have been different movements and the like because people know that there is not an equality in life - in marriage, in business, in whatever it is in society. It's not what people just "sense" in their being that it should be. They understand there is oppression. They understand there are things that are not fair, just, and right. I think that's unique because mankind hasn't really had to deal with that, in that respect, for nearly 6,000 years, but they are now addressing it in the world, and the world can't find what the balance should be. They can't. They don't know how to deal with this. But yet, it is something that God is allowing, in that respect, and working with even in the world because of what He's giving to the Church. It's preparing for a period of time here that everything is going to be set right. It has to be that way, things that God intended from the very beginning (which I find inspiring and incredibly exciting), that God has always intended from the beginning for life to be a certain way, but because of what happened in the Garden of Eden, because of what happened with Adam and Eve and the choices they made and the fact that they represent all mankind, it hasn't been that way. And so mankind has the same nature. It's selfish. It's one that doesn't want to follow God. It's one that doesn't want God telling them how to live their life. It's one that wants to do what self wants to do.

That's been going on for 6,000 years and simply by the way we were even created physically there are certain things that spun off of the sins that took place then that has resulted in a matter of oppression, of pride, of things that are wrong in families, upside down in families. Family life is not what it's supposed to be, not what God intends for it to be, especially for the future. God knew full well the way mankind would go and what would happen, and it's all for a great purpose, that for 6,000 years man has to experience what we've done to ourselves in every generation of time, what we've done to ourselves and the suffering that's resulted from going our own way, doing our own thing. But now that's going to change because God isn't going to allow that to continue. He is intervening to stop mankind from ruling himself.

Because especially with technology all we will do, all we can end up doing, is destroying ourselves one way or another, or by a combination of ways, but we will destroy ourselves. And that's why Mr. Armstrong used to quote so often, and turn to the scriptures that talked about the need for God's intervention, otherwise, mankind indeed would annihilate himself, destroy himself, because of war alone and because of the technology associated with it. So thankfully there is a point in time where God will just intervene, step in and stop the madness, stop the foolishness of man, the destruction of man. Anyway, I think more and more within God's Church we long for that time.

But what we're experiencing right now to me is awesomely exciting because it's the beginning of setting things right. You can't have a Millennium without this being set right. You cannot have the kind of Millennium that God describes, that He's going to give to this world until this is set right, that families are set right, that attitudes of men toward women and women toward men and women toward themselves and men toward themselves and how they think about things in the world, about how they think about everything, even about themselves. So often we keep ourselves prisoner, or human beings do. We're prisoners to our thinking. We're in bondage because of our thinking, and when we come into God's Church God calls us to begin a process of healing to get that thinking leveled out and to begin to be straightened out so that He can work with us. More and more we come into greater oneness and unity of mind with God and God's ways. We are so blessed because for 6,000 years people haven't known these things.

I'm going to go into some scriptures, probably in the next sermon, where Paul talks about various things because of society, because of the world, and where it was, of how things were structured within the organization and government of the Church and families as well. But it was never meant to be that way in the sense of if the world wasn't being ruled by mankind. And so we'll talk about some of those things. We're in a time of change where God is literally changing certain things and giving an understanding of why and how it's so important, how it affects our life. Again, we'll get to that in this series.

So again, Sabbath services last week began by a woman, Beth, who had been ordained to the level of pastor in God's Church, the second such woman to be ordained to that position, who gave the opening prayer to begin Sabbath services. Momentous! Awesome! Just the fact that two in God's Church have been ordained to that level within the ministry is an awesome thing, an incredible thing. It's never happened, never happened in God's Church before, not in 2,000 years. So this is incredible for God's Church and it sets us apart farther and farther, a greater gulf between us and the Church that was scattered. They're going to have a difficult time. Can you imagine? That's why I talk about that 63,000. 63,000 people out there that God's going to be give opportunity to. That means He's going to draw them by the power of His holy spirit to give them opportunity in the mind to "see" things that they cannot otherwise see. Now, that's awesome! It's just like when God begins to call us He has to place in our mind things that give us the ability to perceive the truth; otherwise, we wouldn't be able to. We wouldn't be able to act upon it.

So He gives us ability to see and understand things that are true, and then it's up to us to act upon it as to what we're going to do with something of a spirit essence in our mind that begins to draw us, begins to draw us to the point of choosing even, if we continue to follow, baptism. Because many don't even make it to baptism, who are drawn, who are called, who have the opportunity. Then baptism takes place and even that doesn't guarantee, does it, to be able to be resurrected into God's Kingdom? It doesn't guarantee it because there are still choices to make until we have finished the battle. And that means, for most of mankind, to the point of death, to the point of getting old and dying, or an accident or something else of that nature.

So it's only for a few that are going to be changed quickly, a few at the end of this period of time, a part of 144,000, and then at the end of a thousand years there could be a whole lot of people. There could be millions that don't have to experience death, changed in the moment, in the twinkling of an eye. So God has an incredible plan, He truly does. Inspiring! Exciting! Invigorating! So powerful, so clear in how the minds of human beings can begin a healing process to begin to think right and to be able to make choices that lead into God's Kingdom, that lead into being a part of God's Family.

So what we've experienced in the Church, I mentioned last Sabbath, I don't know that we really grasp that yet (because I know we don't fully), but we will with time, especially once we're in the Millennium and are able to look and see how people respond and see what God gives to the world to look back at this moment in time when God began to make great changes first within the Church. This is where it has to start because it's the Church that continues on into a new age and people are drawn into the Church then at that time to begin to choose God's way of life, the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and everything else about God because of Jesus Christ being on this earth and 144,000 who are going to take over the reins of all the government of the earth. Whether people like it or not is immaterial, isn't it? That's awesome because that's the only way to do it. But we're being prepared now. So we've got a head start, got an opportunity to begin learning those things within the Church now, and God's revealing those things within the Church now.

For all those who are scattered, that 63,000? It's going to be hard. I don't believe for one second that 63,000 are going to choose what God offers them. But that's a whole lot better than the other number that existed if Jesus Christ had returned in 2012. The potential, the opportunity, is far, far greater - into the thousands upon thousands, and tens of thousands who will have an opportunity - but it's up to them. It's going to be up to them whether they can humble themselves to accept what's being revealed right now today and last Sabbath in a greater way, for women to participate in service to God. How far that will go?

I don't really know how the structure's going to be in the Millennium. I don't know to what degree 144,000 are going to be preaching on the earth and how many and what that will mean for different areas in the country and the world and cities and so forth. I'm certain it will be those within the ministry that will serve, but how that's going to be set up? I don't have the slightest inkling. That's something that Jesus Christ is going to have to reveal and tell us, "This is how it's

to be accomplished.” It'll be exciting nevertheless. But there will be differences in a very big way from the way it's been for the last 2,000 years to what it will be at that time. So it's exciting!

And then today, Beth's daughter, Sarah, gave the opening prayer. Awesome! And I know there are a lot of women in different Church areas that are so excited about this. Now, in one respect it's a small thing, but it's not small at all. It is incredibly big for the Church, it truly is. Something that wouldn't even have been dreamed of, nor allowed in times past, not even come across the mind. Truly! It's just like I mentioned, just before the Apostasy and the area we were in, even at that time people were uncomfortable with the fact, even in Bible Studies, that I would tell people that if they had questions, men and women, to send them in. This was new. It was new for them. Women can send in questions? Well? Well, it's because of some things said earlier by Paul that certain attitudes, ideas, and thoughts existed. And to be real candid with you, those ideas and attitudes, it was a way of establishing an order within the Church to function within a very disturbed and sick world. But God allowed it because we lived in a very sick and disturbed world and what people are being called out of. But it was hurtful. Still hurt. And you know, there are lessons to be learned from that as well.

Anyway, things are changing in a big way in the next 1,100 years. They are going to be so incredible. I think about families. It's the only way for families to be structured in a proper way. It's the only way to get rid of these prejudices, these attitudes of superiority or looking down upon other people. It happens right within families, in marriages. Husbands look down upon wives. It's like whatever they say goes. Well, that's a bunch of bull! It really is a bunch of bull! When a husband and wife can't love each other and can't do things because it's motivated out of love and true, genuine consideration and respect toward one another, how sick is that? Really? How sick is that? Not to want to talk things out, to discuss things, to share? That's what God's way of life is about, sharing. Family is about sharing! God's entire plan for His family is about sharing! Awesome! Exciting! Not to be divisive like it is in the world today.

So the world today is very divisive starting with the family. It's been that way for 6,000 years! It isn't what God desires. It isn't what produces great fruit in life, fullness and excitement and enjoyment. And so we learn within God's Church how to love, how to love others, how we're supposed to love others, and it begins, especially, if two are called, if two are in a marriage together within the Church to learn that. And if it can't be lived there, it can't be lived in the Church, it can't be lived in the world, and I don't know why you'd spend your time. You belong somewhere else. If you can't do it within a marriage. Now, it takes two. So sometimes people are forced into making choices and decisions; this isn't going to work because one desires not to work on it at all. So people have free choices to make in those things. A lot of people are having to be forced into some of those situations in life, sadly. It's happened.

You think it's not bondage? You think it isn't hurtful? Do you think it doesn't cause pain and suffering, this inequality between men and women? Because it does. Do you think there's inequality? Do you think it's just and right that people shouldn't discuss things and decide how

they're going to do certain things in their life in their planning and preparation, or should it just be one sided? Is that the way marriage is meant to be, one sided? What kind of a marriage is that if it's one sided, if family is one sided? And we all have it in us. We're just starting this process. We have a long way to go, and the more we focus on this, the more I'm able to see it in my own mind and in the minds of others. It becomes a glaring beacon - some good and some bad, and some kind of in between somewhere.

So I hope we're starting to get a picture, a vision of what God is doing and why God is doing it and to recognize there's been a lot of suffering because of this. Exactly what God told Eve in her childrearing, childbearing. It wasn't at the moment. It's not about the pain in physical childbirth of itself, by itself in any fashion or form. It's what's going to happen through life because things are not what they're supposed to be and the oppression and the suffering that goes on through life that can otherwise be so full and so rich if it's lived God's way, but because it's not, people have suffered. But you know what? They accept that as their norm. What a shame. What a horrible thing. It's like a surrender. It's like going into bondage because it's a surrender. There is no more battle; it's just a surrender and people give into and begin to expect that's just the way it is and I have to live with that, you know? Crazy. Insane.

Anyway, sorry. It's hard for me not to go off on some of these different tangents and talk about some of these things because the more we go into this the clearer it becomes and the greater we can begin to see the need of why this has to be addressed now and why at the beginning of the Millennium things are going to be set right in this world, a beginning process. People are going to learn to become ashamed that they can't dwell together in harmony and oneness - not just with God, but also with one another because that's the arena of life to learn and to live and experience God's way. It's the arena that God has given to us in life to experience and begin to experience as we begin to apply from there because it can't go out into the rest of the family, or let alone society, until it's right there, correct there in the family. So it's all about family, and it's really all about God's family, because that's where it's leading.

So last Sabbath the focus of the sermon was one of stressing how incredibly important this change is for God's Church and for all people who live on in the Millennium and the final 100-years. It was stressed how it was exactly 22 years ago that the man of sin, the son of perdition sought to destroy the truths of God's own Church. But since that event, what an awesome thing that God has been working to not only strengthen truth that He gave through Herbert W. Armstrong, that Mr. Tkach sought to destroy (because that's what he set out to do and a large number of ministers right behind him doing so), but also that God's been adding more truths to His Church that's a preparation, a preparing for the Kingdom of God - literally, for the Family of God. Thankfully that's soon going to be established on this earth.

It was also stressed last Sabbath how that it marked exactly seven years from when a sermon entitled, *Restoring All Things*, was given in which a new truth was given to the Church, which was part of a process whereby God was restoring truth about His purpose and desire for women, for

men, and family, and society, that was lost once Adam and Eve sinned. They turned away from God, as I mentioned a moment ago, and how that affected all life that followed after that. So it was exactly seven years ago that we were going through that particular series, *Restoring All Things*, that talked about the very thing that we're discussing here today in greater depth.

So exactly seven years ago God inspired it to be stated to the Church what was given at the end of that sermon. I'm going to condense one paragraph into one basic sentence stated: "As God's end-time apostle I am announcing today that women are to be ordained as ministers in God's Church." What an incredible step that was! Unheard of for nearly 2,000 years! So this is what led up to the establishment of Truth #52 and Truth #53 about, at least being set for the Church. It was there, but then they were stated as the truths God had given. 52 about "God is restoring knowledge concerning the rightful place of women in the family." And 53, "The ordination of women in the Church."

Last Sabbath we looked at what Jesus Christ revealed about God's purpose for His Family, Elohim, and the fact that in God's Family there is no male and female, but it says that they are "like" in essence, "of creation to the angels." In other words, a spirit body, but that spirit body there's no male and female. It's not a matter of a sex of a person. There is no such thing in the family of God, male and female. There is no such thing. It's a spirit creation. It's not a physical one for a different purpose that God gave. So again, just understanding that, God's ultimate purpose, should help us to learn things, should help us to understand certain things. It's not a matter of one being better or superior to the other at all.

We also looked at a couple places in scripture where God had already made it clear that He had placed women in very prominent places, and we're just going to focus on one because it is the primary one. It's about Deborah. One primary example in the Old Testament just stuck there that the Church really never dealt with because it wasn't time. It never fully addressed it because it wasn't time. What it reveals is God's purpose. There was a Levitical system established and here are the children of Israel where, as we go into the book of Judges we're going to look at little bit of this, we're going to go there in a little bit so you can just start turning there if you want to now. We're going to Judges 1. The story is one of the children of Israel coming into the promised land and they've been in the wilderness for forty years and God is dividing up and giving them territory and told them this is your land. He began to tell them how that various ones were to go in and conquer and destroy because it was for the Israelites. That was God's determination, God's judgment, God's choice in life.

I've heard people get into various kinds of debates and so forth, "Well, that just isn't fair. Men, women, and children?" And people think that's just cruel! And we judge God because we don't understand God, don't understand God's purpose. Don't understand, especially, the awesomeness of the Great White Throne and its purpose for the vast majority of mankind, because eventually that's where the vast majority of mankind ends up. That's what God's purpose is. God's purpose is that the vast majority of mankind end up in the Great White Throne. That's their purpose. I think

what an awesome thing the opportunity different ones are going to have and sometimes the younger they are and the less polluted the mind, what a blessing to be in that world, not this one. But we, as physical human beings, we don't grasp that because our value in this life here and now is greater because we can't see it. We can't grasp that. Even within the Church we don't really grasp the depth. We're growing in that. I believe we've been growing in that even more and more, but we really don't grasp that final Hundred-Years and how awesomely beautiful and exciting it is as a part of God's plan.

Now, I don't want to be there in this, because of where I am, because of what I know, but for the vast majority of mankind? They haven't been given such opportunity, such blessing to be able to have such choices before them. Incredible. So that's why those who live in the Millennium, you want to make the most of it so you can be in that resurrection at the end of the thousand years. Do you realize there are people who can live in the Millennium, who can be resurrected in the Great White Throne? To do it twice? Well, it's an incredible world, far better than the Millennium even, but I don't want to be in this twice, thank you. Once is enough. Seriously, once is enough. Though that experience for so many is going to be so incredibly great.

So again, the children of Israel being brought into the land and the story here is so awesome. It really is because God, in a sense, hid something in scripture. It's just like in the parables that Jesus Christ came and taught. The world didn't understand the parables. Traditional Christianity, they don't understand the parables. They don't understand God's plan, because the parables have to do with things that fit into God's plan, as a whole, with how God calls people and works with people. The parables have to do with things that lead into God's Kingdom, that lead into the Millennium. Over and over again things have been stated and said, that were said by Jesus Christ, that it wasn't meant even for the early disciples. It wasn't given to them to fully understand all those parables. They didn't understand them fully. They understood certain things that God gave, certain things that had to do with the end-time. God didn't give them more. They had a bit of an ability to see through something darkly, as something for the future, but to grasp what we grasp today? Not even close because things that were meant for the end-time, that's what they were meant for and they were not to be revealed until that point in time.

Well, here is one, about Deborah. Incredible story, and it's been there for a long, long time, but it hasn't been for God's people to grasp the importance of it. It reveals God's will. It reveals God's mind. It's always been there as much as parables that Jesus Christ gave 2,000 years ago, but until it's God's time to reveal the purpose and the meaning and what it's all about, it's the only example like this, in that respect, with the kind of power and clarity that God has given. I mentioned Miriam, but this one here no one can argue about it. No one can debate about it. God makes it clear what He did. He did it. He revealed something that was far more important than the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood was a physical system, men who were to work mostly with difficult jobs and tasks, hard jobs and tasks, as a whole, when it came to the kind of things that took place when it came to slaughtering the animals and the things for sacrifice and so

forth that God had established and the care of the temple and the kinds of things that were involved with that.

So God gave a service and because of the way of the world there are only men involved. So people have had this concept, well, men are the only ones to serve in the temple. Hmmm. Amazing. Deborah did something far more meaningful than serving in the temple. Hers was a spiritual job and responsibility. It wasn't a physical one. The only one that had anything akin to something spiritual was the high priest. He's the only one. The rest? Physical. Physical. Physical. Physical. Nothing but physical. Nothing spiritual. Nothing about individuals who are being worked with by God and by God's spirit in their life at all, because that isn't what was happening. It was for a physical routine, sacrifices, and so forth. It had nothing to do with a spiritual job. It had nothing to do with God communicating things into the mind that were to be communicated then to Israel. Deborah is not the same. God spoke with her in the mind, revealed things to her through the mind, as He did with so many of the prophets. It's just there. That's what God does. He's worked with different ones in different ways at different times, but that's how He worked.

So I think it's good to go through part of this story here, again, because there are some good lessons in all this as we go through it. I think it's important to get some of this in context, a period of time before they were actually established in Jerusalem later on as a nation and some of the things that took place later on, long before King David and King Solomon and the like.

So here is when they first came into the land, not knowing what to do or how to do things. There are so many lessons God has given to be learned from these things about how people are, about how mankind is, and those who are even being worked with by God, as a nation. Because as a whole, they're not good examples. It just goes to show, as it did back then, you can have knowledge about certain things about God, about truth, about the might and the power of God - to come through the Red Sea, to come over the Jordan, to see the walls of Jericho come down, and all the other things that God did for forty years in the wilderness, to see and witness those things - but what does that do to people? Does that convert people? Is that a process of conversion? Not at all. It shows how carnal people can be.

And in the Church of God, we've gone through the same thing. Even with God's spirit people can turn against God, can't they? Great lessons for people, for the Millennium and for the Great White Throne. That's what it's all about, things being written through time, growing as they go along, to get to a point where vast numbers can then be saved because all of the examples before them. Incredible!

Judges 1:1—Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Eternal, saying, Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them? And the Eternal said, Judah shall go up. Indeed, I have delivered the land into his hand. So Judah said to Simeon his brother, Come up with me to my allotted territory, and we might fight against the Canaanites...that we might fight against the Canaanites; and I will

likewise go with you to your allotted territory. So there are these territories that they were all being given. And what was their function? What was their job? To go in and destroy the inhabitants of the land. That's what God told them. "Go in and utterly destroy. Take the land. I've given it to you. I am with you. You're a nation, My people." The promised land!

And so it says here, **Simeon went up with Judah. Then Judah went up; and the Eternal delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand. And they killed ten thousand men of Bezek.**

And **verse 18**, jumping on down: **And Judah took Gaza with its territory, Askelon with its territory, Ekron with its territory. So the Eternal was with Judah...** It is making it clear here that everyone who went in to take their portion of their land God was going to be with them. God would be with them. And starting here, the example was with Judah and what was going to take place. ...**and they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the low land because they had chariots of iron.** And so they had a tremendous military and force, and it is hard to defeat something like that.

Verse 21—But the children of Benjamin... So again, it talks about some of the conquering here. You can read the whole story, if you want, later on. But **verse 21—But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem. So the Jebusites dwelled with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.** Interesting little story. They didn't do it the way God said to do it and it became a problem. You don't do things the way God says to do it in your lives, in your job, in society, in your own family? Lessons to learn. There's going to be hardships, going to be suffering.

And the house of Joseph also went up against Beth-el: and the Eternal was with them. So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Beth-el. (Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.) And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city they said to him, Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy. I'm just going to ask right here: Did they have that right? You think, isn't it nice to be merciful, good to be merciful? Depends on whether or not God allows it. Does it agree with God? Is God first? Because if God's not first and mercy is not to be given then you don't extend it. There's a lesson here. In other words, sometimes we can think that we can be nice or do something in a way. It's like this thing with the death penalty. It's better to keep people in an institution that destroys the mind more and more week by week, month by month, year-by-year rather than doing the more merciful thing of putting them to death for murder, where there might be an opportunity. I don't know, I don't have an answer for all those things, of what happened, circumstances that took place in different situations in life and some situations God's not going to give them opportunity. Some, God will. Those are judgments of God in God's time, but the point being is that mankind thinks his way is more merciful than God's, a little kinder. And what does it do? It's not good.

So it is with so much of the world. Incredible, and sometimes it can be that way in the Church. Sometimes people may misconstrue something as a matter of mercy when it's really not mercy at all. It's just disobedience, because they think, someone may think, well, I'm going to treat "so and so" in a certain way or I'm not going to address this situation with them in their life, or whatever it might be, because we can misconstrue it as being merciful when in reality sometimes it can end up being something totally different. It can be a matter of enabling someone in sin. Which is better? The mercy that we misconstrue as being a kind of mercy, not God's mercy, or enabling someone in sin? Because I can tell you, I've seen this a lot in God's Church since I've been in the Church. Judgments must be because they agree with God's judgment.

That's why I love what Jesus Christ had to say when He said, "I don't judge any man," and then a little bit later he talks about how he judges. To a lot of people this is a contradiction. It's no contradiction because he seeks God's will and God's judgment. It's a matter of how God judges. It's not his. That's what he's making clear. He, as an individual of and by himself, doesn't judge anyone. And we're not to. But when it comes to responsibility that God gives, then we have to enter into a judgment, a right kind of judgment that is a matter of something that comes from God and how we deal with things in life. We do it all the time. It's just that we have to learn how to do it God's way and what is in agreement with God. What is God's judgment in this? What does God say about this matter? Am I doing it the way God says it's supposed to be done? Or am I doing it just my own way, dealing with situations and so forth my own way?

And when the spies saw a man come out of the city they said to him, please show us the entrance to the city and we'll show you mercy. Well, there was another way of dealing with that, but they didn't choose to do so. "You will show us the way to the city."

Verse 25— So he showed them the entrance to the city and they struck the city with the edge of the sword. But they let the man and all his family go. See, sometimes this is hard even for God's people. Its like, "Well, that was nice. That was good, wasn't it? Didn't he show them the way into the city?" Well, does it agree with what God said to do? Is our judgment better? Do we make a decision on something that somehow we think that we can override something that God said because He sees and knows something that we don't, and so we yield to His judgment? Because this is what this boils down to. Is there something that God sees in all this that if we do it in a different way it's going to come back and bite us?

I could say a little bit more, but I won't. Bite us where, you know? It's going to come back and bite you. Okay? Because you didn't do it God's way, you're going to pay a penalty for it. There's going to be some suffering for it because it wasn't done God's way, because God sees something and has a purpose for something greater, that if you'll obey Him there'll be blessings in it, but if you do the wrong thing and go a different way because you think it's better to do so, because you think it's more merciful than God and it's okay? People don't even think things through that way. That's the problem. They don't think it through, but that's what it boils down to. Even within God's Church sometimes we can think this way. I've heard people in God's Church talk about certain things that

have happened in the Old Testament and think, "God was so hard on people. For children to be killed too? God was so harsh. He's cruel."

That's why in the Protestant world, in large part, because of those kinds of things that are in the Old Testament, they think God was a cruel, harsh God. "And so now we have Jesus Christ who came and he's setting things up for us and we can relate to him. You know? We can relate to him. He's kinder. He's gentler. It's not that old harsh Old Testament law." And that's how people think, in large part, if you can put it in terms and words. They don't understand, no, Jesus Christ is of the exact mind of the Great God of the universe - total unity and harmony and oneness. They just don't understand God and God's purpose and God's love. I so look forward to people getting their minds set right, to get rid of all the wrong thinking that the world has. Satan has done a big number on this world. Truly has.

Verse 26. A lot of our problems to this day started here in the book of Judges. A lot of the problems we have to this day started here in the book of Judges. This is where it all began. Going on, **verse 26—And the man went to the land of the Hittites, the man and the family, built a city and called its name Luz; which is its name to this day.** They multiplied and had a city in the midst of Israel that didn't bring peace and harmony to Israel.

Verse 27, going on, However, Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages.* For the Canaanites were determined to dwell in the land. And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out. So it was either death or drive them out, but they were supposed to have the land fully to themselves, the Israelites only. That's what God intended. It was their land, the promised land. They didn't receive it the way God said because they thought their ways were better.

Do you remember Saul and the king he brought back? Same sort of thinking. Samuel had to say, "What's all this bleating of the sheep that I hear in the background? You listen to God, well, what's all this bleating of sheep I hear in the background?" Incredible! Because he thought it was a little bit better way for the people. You know, bring back some riches. Isn't that a better thing than killing them all off and destroying them all? Or is obedience better? Obedience to the Great God of the universe who can bless you with things many, many times more if you just obey. Awesome, the thinking of human beings. Shows it over and over again.

Chapter 2:1—Then the angel of the Eternal came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I led you up from Egypt, and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers, and said, I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land. No covenants. To dwell there? To be under tribute? No covenant! They didn't listen. Their way was better, more merciful. They saw something financially better off too. They can

work with them for less. They could do a lot of our work for less. We can get money from them for their work. Amazing, the greed of human beings.

So he told them, **And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land.** This is what was told them before. **You shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?** Well, we know why.

Verse 3—Therefore, I also said, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall be *thorns* in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you. So in other words, it was your responsibility to act upon this, to do it the way you were shown and told it was to be done, but you didn't do it that way. You did it some other way and because of that - curses. That's what God's telling them. That's what happened with Adam and Eve. It started with curses. Here are some more curses. If we don't obey God, the result of sin; it's the result of sin. There's going to be something that's going to happen in your life because God will not bless you because there are laws. There are laws in motion that if we obey God we're blessed. And if we don't, we're cursed, we're going to suffer. There's going to be pain and suffering in our life because of disobedience.

And so here, because God saw the greater picture of what would happen in the future by leaving these people there who had different gods, different standards of life, different ideas, what was going to happen. And sure enough, it's been happening since that time. Incredible!

And so He said, **but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.** So it was and they're still a snare to this day because it's those gods that even worked their way into Traditional Christianity. Incredible! Those are the gods, as a whole, more than any other that people worship to this day and they don't know it because they mix the name of God into it and the Bible and the Old Testament and New Testament and different things they've done with the word of God and the life of Jesus Christ and so forth. They've mingled things with this. They mingle it together, added things. Anyway, incredible, what began to take place.

So it was when the angel of the Eternal spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. They saw the displeasure of God. They saw that, indeed, they hadn't obeyed God. "Day late and a dollar short." **Then they called the name of the place Bochim ("weeping"), and they sacrificed there to the Eternal. And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel each went to their own inheritance to possess the land.** So these are stories that are in a nutshell of things that took place over time, and that's what it's summarizing here.

So the people served the Eternal all the days of Joshua, so it's even going back a little bit here in time, **and all the days of the elders who lived or outlived Joshua.** So even all the elders of Israel who had come through, and it says they continued to serve. **...who had seen all the great works of the Eternal, which He had done for Israel.** So these elders were still there, different

leaders and so forth, even after Joshua died. They continued to follow certain things that God had given to a point - not well, obviously, here.

Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Eternal died when he was a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath... in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Gaash. And when all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose. So again, all the older ones that had come through, and all the different ones of the generation that had come through that had been in the wilderness. It talks about what began to take place. **Another generation arose after them, who did not know the Eternal, nor the work which the Eternal had done for Israel.** They didn't see what had happened when they came over the river Jordan, Jordan River. They didn't see what happened when God brought down the walls of Jericho. They didn't witness a lot of those kinds of things. So this is what it's talking about, a people who were different. They had lived in the land for a long enough period of time, and the longer time goes on in situations like that the more God kind of goes by the wayside and telling stories and passing things along.

Verse 11—Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and served Baal. And they forsook the Eternal their God of their fathers... the Eternal God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them. God said to destroy them. He knew exactly what was going to happen for them not obeying. That's what takes place when people don't obey God. They play a little bit with the world. Even within God's Church if we're not careful, we mix ourselves a little bit more in the world and do certain things out here that we know are wrong. After a while it does something to the mind and we begin to cut ourselves off from the flow of God's spirit and in time people are gone. Happened. Happens year after year after year after year, Feast of Tabernacles to Feast of Tabernacles every year I've been in God's Church. And I know every year before that. It's just the way it is.

And so it says, **they followed other gods from among them, the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them, and they provoked the Eternal to anger. And they forsook the Eternal, and served Baal and the Ashtoreth.** This is same word when you talk about the Canaanites, talking about Astarte, or the Babylonians, Ishtar. To this day, Easter, sunrise service, Sunday worship. It was way back here. Do you think some of them started worshipping on Sunday? Absolutely! Worshipping the sun, some of the things that went along with Baal worship? Absolutely! And then as time went along it was just a constant mingling back and forth, generation, different generations, things of the gods around them, things of Baal, Ashtoreth, if you will, Astarte, different ones at different times, different regions of the world. But it mixed in with Israel and Judah at different times and once it was set there, some of that history, it was hard to get rid of. It just followed them all through time to the time when Jesus Christ, when he was around and the disciples came along and they began to teach in areas of Samaria, and so forth. It was already there and it was easy for people because of what they'd already mingled

together about the Old Testament because there were things that different ones even within Israel had mingled together with the Old Testament and some of these beliefs. It was an easy thing for them, especially for Simon, to mix things in to what they called Christianity. Incredible! Until we had 325 A.D. and the Council of Nicaea. Awesome, our history and the history of this world and this garbage here that started way back then in the book of Judges when the children of Israel came into the promised land, things that began to be mixed into what should have remained as the truth, but didn't. It was polluted and distorted.

Verse 14—And the anger of the Eternal was kindled, stirred up, if you will, **against Israel**. So again here, I mentioned even I think last Sabbath about this word "anger" and how it is different than our kind of anger. Human anger is not a pretty thing, as a whole, and it's not a righteous and a just thing, and not for a particular purpose that's righteous, obviously. It's about self. God's isn't. It's for what is good when it comes to judgment. His always had to do with judgment. So it was stirred up in Him what they were doing, and seeing the disobedience and recognizing if they continue on like this what it means even for Israel. So there were things that God allowed for Israel, for their own good, things that they needed to go through for their own good to humble them, to bring them down. Just like what's going to happen to this world; for their own good the world has to go through what it does. People don't grasp and comprehend that the war that's coming, sadly, for mankind, is a good thing. If you understand what I'm saying. Do we want it? Do I want to see it? We don't want to see anything like that. But for mankind, for the world, there isn't any other way for man to learn the lessons he needs to learn, that if God didn't intervene we would destroy ourselves, we would annihilate every living thing on the earth!

So man has to come to that point in time. A merciful, loving God has deemed it so, judged it so. Sometimes people in God's Church struggle with this. There should be no struggle. It is what is righteous and just. It is what is best for the ability to potentially save more to be able to be brought into God's Family and into God's Kingdom, to have a right kind of world when Jesus Christ comes back, to have a beginning. Now, He's going to allow certain ones to come on in and have some of their ideas and not be fully destroyed in some areas of the world. It's not going to be a clean sweep in that respect of everyone who disagrees with God and some are going to continue on with some of their own ideas. But as a whole, especially for scattered nations of Israel and other parts of the world, there is going to be a powerful humbling that has to take place, because otherwise human beings don't listen to God.

And this is the history of what happened to the Israelites in the promised land. They had to go through certain things to be humbled at different times when they were disobedient to God, so they could come back to God. Because the truth is, if they didn't go through some of those wars and oppression that happened to them, they would never have returned to God on a physical plane. They would never have returned to God. So this was a means whereby they could be brought back to God, brought back to a sense of a society and a world and a way of life to be lived so they could be blessed and so that they can have the kind of nation that was experienced

under David and under Solomon - which is better than any other periods of time that the Israelites basically lived under, as far as the Israelites were concerned. Because from then on it became kind of disastrous, what followed that, and only a few kings of Judah then were faithful to God after that point in time and they experienced what it means to be blessed by God. But so many didn't.

And so it is with life. Physical examples for things that are on a spiritual plane as well. Think about what's happened to the Church and how stubborn some have been. I've got a sermon coming to talk about some of those things, discussing some of the things that have taken place in the short time the Church of God—PKG has existed. And it's kind of dumbfounding in one respect, truly is, to focus upon, to look upon some of the things that have taken place and to recognize how human beings can be, who have access to God's spirit, at a time when they had been awakened and charged up and on a level and ability, some who were awakened and had the ability to see things far above what they could see during Philadelphia or the period of Laodicea. It is a night and day difference as a whole - far more to see as far as God's plan is concerned, far more to grasp about the Great God of the universe and Jesus Christ! You know, to understand Jesus Christ's life began 2,000 years ago, and that he didn't eternally exist, is an incredible thing! Because it adds to our understanding of what, just on a physical plane, what he went through!

You know, some talk about he was "God in the flesh." He was God of the Old Testament. Well, that takes away from what Jesus Christ went through. He was the Word of God made flesh. He had a mind that was unique above all human beings, but he suffered in the human body. He suffered in human flesh! It wasn't that those things didn't affect him and that he didn't have to deal with those things in his life. Because he did. The very end helps to show that in a very powerful way when he knew what was going to happen to him and he was praying that last night and he cried out to God and he said, "Father, if there is any other way, take this from me." His prayers were so intense that he was perspiring and blood was coming out of his pores. No human being has ever suffered for something like that, that they understood and could see what was getting ready to take place because he knew what the scriptures said. It was real to him. He knew what he was getting ready to suffer, to have your skin ripped off your body, beaten so bad, as Isaiah talks about that you can't even recognize who he is. Now to say otherwise takes away from that. People don't realize what they do.

But anyway, sorry about that, in one respect. But you think about different ones who have been awakened. What do you think their judgment is? To be awakened? To have opportunity to see things that they had never seen, that others out here in the scattered Body can't see yet, but they're going to be able to see in time? And then they have choices to make. And sadly, many of them are just going to be in the Great White Throne because it's going to be too much, too much, though they're given the opportunity. It's an amazing thing, the human mind. The reason I'm saying some of these things is because you, too, if you don't fight on a continual basis, fight for this way of life all the way to the end, make sure your attitude is right with God, and with God

that means with God's Church, with God's ministry, because sometimes people don't have right attitudes towards ministers. They criticize and judge and condemn ministers, see?

It happened during the Feast of Tabernacles in some areas of life where people would speak out and speak against certain ones in the Church. They weren't afraid to speak out against certain things that they had done and what they were doing and how they were doing it. That's a scary thing to fall into. Truly is. And we should fear, because it's not about the person, it's about God. It's about an ordination that God has given, of a respect for something that God has established to lead and guide and direct us. If we don't respect that and don't treat that in a proper way and we think our way is better, you're already telling God Almighty your way is better, you don't need God, you don't need the government of God, you don't need the help of God in your life, you already have the answers. You can judge and criticize different things that you don't have the foggiest idea of what you're talking about. You don't know what you're talking about in most cases! I think of different examples when people have done those things. I think, "You have no idea! You don't begin to grasp what you're saying!" But in our minds we get lifted up and we think, "It's so clear to us. Pretty sharp!" We're not sharp and that's the way human beings are toward God. We think we're pretty sharp.

Look at the confusion in the world! Our politics scream out about this. Everybody thinks they have a better way. I think of gridlock we've had as a nation in Congress. Why? Because everybody, each individual there knows their way is better. You talk about a new health plan? It's probably going to be chaos. I mean, just knowing human beings, it's probably going to be mass chaos. The only reason they'll compromise together in some things is because there's going to be such pressure out there because they said this is what's going to happen; one system is going to get kicked out and another is going to be brought in. But to agree on that? They're already talking about a year or more, and some say, "No, no, no, we can do it immediately." Oh, great agreement starting from the very beginning. This is exciting to stand back and watch all this. I'm saying that in a respect to show that it just shows human nature. We're not surprised by that in God's Church. It's just human nature. People think their way is better.

I get a charge out of a program called "Shark Tank." I don't know if you've watched that, but people who come in there and sometimes there's some really good ideas, but because some can't shut their mouth, because some will not listen to people who know very well, as a whole, what they're talking about in most every area and every avenue, of a process you have to go through to do certain things in marketing and manufacturing and whatever it is in life if you want a product to put out there. Individuals come along and they know better than the ones who are in front of them. It's just human nature! "My way is better. I know what I have. I know what I'm doing." Even if they're turned down by five people up there on a panel, "They're going to be sorry they didn't pick me. One day!" You know, in some cases, maybe they will, because in some cases people go out there and that's what prompts them to really put into it and take the advice they receive, but most of the time people don't take the advice. It's just an example of human nature. So whether

it be in Congress or business or whatever it is, people do the dumbest things. They think their way is better.

I'll tell you about another program, "The Profit." Anyway, it's really a good program in the sense that this guy goes into different areas to work with to save a company, and I've seen a couple programs where he's just had to walk away from them because they're so dumb! Because they think their way is the right way and the best way of doing it and they're in the red and they're going deeper in the red, and if they don't get rid of, a hold of their pride, their business will be over in 2-3 months. In less than a year it's going to be gone! But people are so dumb because they want to hold on to their way!

Now, in government there's a lot of power there and people can make dumb mistakes and who pays? We just pay more, you know. Sad. It's just human nature. Human nature in the world. Human nature with Israel when they went into the promised land. And human nature sometimes within the Church, where if we're not careful we think our way is better. We have to be careful of those kinds of things. Truly, there are so many lessons to learn in life, to learn to be yielded to God, to put God first, to love God, to love God's Church, to love this way of life, to fight for it with all of our being, with all of our might, to seek to bring this under control in life, to be in subjection to God, to be in unity with God in the mind in our thinking because that's what God says He'll give to us. He'll give us of His spirit that works with our minds to transform the way we think as human beings. There is a spirit essence in the mind that God works with in His holy spirit. That's a marvelous thing, so much more than we know. We can see it, dimly so, but we can see a little bit.

And so again here, "Another generation arose," verse 10, "after them who did not know the Eternal, nor the work which He had done for Israel." Verse 11, "Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and served Baal." Going down and talking about Ashtoreth and Baal and they served them and their gods. "And the anger of the Eternal," verse 14, "was kindled against Israel."

So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who spoiled them. Now, this means that God withdrew His protection. God withdrew His help. God withdrew completely His favor and help. When He did that others had the power then to conquer. Others had the power because there were some powerful nations they were up against - many that were far more powerful than they were. But before that, God was giving them favor and power to conquer and overcome. There are many examples, as you go through and read some of these things through periods of time all the way up to the kings, that, where God intervened at different times in what He did, because they were powerful forces. God gave the favor. When He did they had such small portions sometimes of people who went up against them, in comparison, they knew that God did it. See, it's when you're smaller and you know that you're small, in your mind, in your being you can see yourself for what you are, for who you are, and you realize that you're able to do and see and

have the things you do because God just gives that to you. He gives you that favor and that power. It's God that does it, not us. And so it is with Israel here.

And it says, **and delivered them into the hands of the plunderers who spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.** And so, again, given over to them; in some cases, some who were taken captive as a result of some of these things, let that happen. God allowed this to take place. He didn't intervene to stop it in any fashion or form. It was the only way as a physical carnal human people to humble them so that they could get to a point where they would begin to cry out to God for help. Otherwise, they really didn't need His help. That's the way human beings are. They don't need God's help.

Verse 15—Wherever they went out, the hand of the Eternal was against them for evil, so not even just to that point there, so much taken away that others were given the opportunity, the ability to come in and conquer, as the Eternal had said, and the Eternal had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

Verse 16—Nevertheless the Eternal raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges. Isn't that amazing? If you will listen, God will listen. That's the lesson of 6,000 years. Man has not listened to God. So mankind has to be humbled to sharpen up the hearing. Otherwise, people won't listen. You have to start on a physical plane. You can't start with a spiritual plane. You have to start on a physical one. God began to work with me on a physical plane. I had to be brought down low, low, low, low before I would listen. If those things hadn't have happened to me I know me. I know what I was like back then and I would not have listened to Him. If somebody in the Church had come along I would have thought you were about as loony tunes as you can be. I have no doubt about it whatsoever. I know what I was like. I know what I believed. I wouldn't just think it, I would know it. See, that's where I'd be because that's the way we are as human beings.

So to work with us on a spiritual plane, to bring us into the Millennium, to offer to mankind around the world His spirit, ah, there has to be a worldwide process of humbling this earth - all mankind as a whole. All won't be humbled, even in that process, but the majority will be. They're going to be brought so low by what they do to themselves, let alone what God does to certain ones later toward the very end.

Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way which their fathers walked in obeying the commandments of the Eternal. It says, and they did not do so. They didn't listen to God, didn't follow God, didn't listen to God at all in that respect.

Chapter 4:1—When Ehud was dead, speaking of one of the judges, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Eternal. So the Eternal sold them into the hand of Jabin king of

Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army *was* Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth. And the children of Israel cried out to the Eternal. For Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he harshly oppressed the children of Israel. Twenty years of oppression, harsh oppression.

Verse 4—Now Deborah, a prophetess... It's no sex in this. It's a prophet, okay? This is what man has done because we have to separate that out, and people who quote and put things in the Bible and King James and whatever in different translations and so forth, there is always that distinction in their minds. It's a prophet. **Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time.** Now, she was a judge - awesome! And a prophet. **And she would sit under palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the mountains of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.** They wanted help. They humbled themselves. Certain things had to be going on that they recognized something different about Deborah. It was made known, with whatever means, we don't know how, that she was a prophet, that she was a judge, a special power was given to her above and beyond others, of things about God and God's word. So they came up there to see her, to find her. They knew where to go. And so we're not told the whole story. This is just something in a nutshell, but there's a lot more to the story. A lot more to get to this point.

Then she sent and called out for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh to Naphtali, and said to him, Has not the Eternal God of Israel commanded, Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor? So she didn't "beat around the bush." She told him. She said exactly what God gave to her. "Isn't this what God has told you to do?" So something has happened before and something is happening now, and now this is being reinforced because evidently it must have come out from her to him, but now he's come up to her, because he's seen certain things happen and some of the battles have been taking place. He's seen something here that Deborah has been saying that's been coming to pass already and so he wants help. He's very moved because by the time he makes this and humbles himself to come here he has a different mindset. He's grown in his understanding of something in a very powerful way. He believes that she is a prophet of God and he is not going to go to battle until he knows what she has said face to face and hears it from her. And so she has asked, again here, **Has not the Eternal God of Israel commanded go up and deploy troops at Mount Taber? Take with you ten thousand men, the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulon. And against you I will deliver Sisera.** Awesome! All this oppression for twenty years from this individual that was sent out by the king of Canaan, if I remember my story right here. He had this particular commander Sisera, and Sisera had wreaked havoc on Israel, destroyed so much of Israel, and oppressed Israel for twenty years. Now through Deborah, a prophet, God is telling Barak to take ten thousand. He had the power, army, and so forth, and he's being told you're going to be given Sisera into your hands.

So again here, **deliver Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the river Kishon. And I will deliver him into your hand?** Question mark. Hasn't that

already been told to you? **And Barak said to her**, this is what it gets down to, see. He had heard it, but he wants to hear it from her again. He wants to go before her again. He wants to make sure with all of his mind this is from God. And so he says, **If you will go with me, then I will go. But if you will not go with me, I will not go.** He didn't want to take an army of ten thousand up against Sisera. Everyone that's gone up before him has already been destroyed. No one can conquer Sisera. Sisera's a powerful commander, has a powerful force. He's been wreaking havoc on Israel for twenty years! See, all the story isn't always in front of you. Incredible!

And so she said, I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Eternal will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. Deborah. The glory and the honor is going to go to Deborah. That's what He's telling him. "You could have gone up there. You were told. Hasn't God told you to go up with ten thousand and I'll give Sisera into your hand? What are you waiting for? What are you waiting for?" Little fear? Little uncertainty? Well, he was convinced she was a prophet. "If you'll go with me," it was like, "this will give me the courage, the strength I need to know that God's going to deliver us." So whatever had been happening already with Deborah had already spread through Israel, and especially to this commander here, okay? **Then Deborah rose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.** You can read the rest of the story. Incredible! Incredible story.

And the songs that were sung about Deborah... and Barak, an afterthought, but the glory, as a whole, went to Deborah, a prophet. Now, God is telling us, showing us in a stronger way than ever before His will that this wasn't something against the law of God, that a woman should serve Him on a spiritual plane as a prophet. Because that's what it was. God spoke through her and gave direction to Israel how to live, what to do, and so forth. That's awesome! Incredible to understand! It's right here, but we haven't grasped nor comprehended the magnitude of that even though I spoke about this seven years ago. How many of us grasped that to this depth to this point in time? So there's more to build upon in our minds, in our lives, to come to understand even more, in a more profound manner, in a more profound way God's mind. God's mind!

I think of examples of things, if we could just work through them. I want to give one of certain things that people have believed in times past about mixture of races and so forth in the Church. A lot of it comes from people who twisted and distorted scripture in the first place about what they think is from God. That's even infected God's Church because the Church has always been coming out of the world, farther away from the world. Philadelphia did as well.

There were things that used to happen at Big Sandy, in the sense of even races back in the '50's because of society, a separation of black and white in various services to God. What a shame. But it happened. Because Mr. Armstrong and the Church wasn't there where it needed to be yet. That existed in Big Sandy. That existed in the Church of God, especially in the South because of society. If you can understand that one, you can understand the oppression of women. If you can understand that one, you can understand something about the mind of God, that His will was not that from the beginning with Adam and Eve, and for the past 6,000 years there's been an

oppression upon women, as well, that was never God's mind and never God's purpose. But He allowed it and He allowed the Church to be a certain way for the past 2,000 years when it comes to women, just as He did with certain things because of the world, because of society. I'm not going to get into some of the reasons of those things because of society and the world.

But in the South, those were not small things in times past. Sick. Disgusting. Hideous? Yes. But that was the world there at that time. So the Church even functioned within that world for the safety and wellbeing of God's Church where all could still come before God and worship Him, but it wasn't done the way God wanted it to be done. It wasn't done the way it should be done. But there are certain things that God allowed for a time until we got past that, and in time, we got past that. In time Big Sandy and even Ambassador College began to change in those things. And ahead of the world, but still behind in what it could have otherwise done. But again, there is certain judgments that are made along the way that so often have to do with the world around us and where we are and coming out of the world and getting rid of certain things of bondage in our minds, in our being. Some of those things had to be cleaned up.

So there are people out there who have tried to push the attitude of mind that certain peoples are better than others, that Israelites are better than others. No, they're not. You know, God made it very clear, neither male nor female. There is neither Jew nor gentile, but we're all one. Now we should know by those words of Paul what that means of and by itself, what God's purpose is for His Family, that one isn't better than the other, but we're all one in Christ Jesus in the Church and in God's Family and what God's purpose is for His Family, but we live in a physical world that is deep in bondage and we come out of that bondage a little bit at a time. So we still are coming out of bondage a little bit at a time, but we're getting close now to the greatest changes the world has ever seen. The biggest one is what happened from the time of Adam and Eve. That really is the biggest one. That is far bigger than the matter of races because it exists within races as well. It crosses all boundaries: men and women, man and woman, male and female, and what has existed for 6,000 years that has kept people in bondage in their thinking, wrong thinking, men and women. Crazy! Amazing! Yet God is starting to free the Church first, and then the world. It's a beautiful thing.

And so I mentioned some of that, of what happened a long time ago in God's Church, to give the ability, hopefully, to see a parallel there of things that have happened as far as women as well, of things that God never intended but has allowed within the Church for 2,000 years but now needs to be changed, needs to be addressed to set things right, to make things right, to give family the kind of structure it needs, the kind of structure that is supposed to be there so life can be lived more fully.

Anyway, to me this story of Deborah is an exciting story because it shows the mind of God. The reason I was going into that, about the races and so forth, is because there was this concept not that long ago, even within God's Church about those things within the Church about different races to be married, as though it were wrong. Yet there are things that Mr. Armstrong allowed,

but there are other things that certain evangelists did not allow. Certain things were taught at Ambassador College that were not allowed. Yet it was Mr. Armstrong's responsibility, but he didn't perhaps understand and know what was taking place fully within the colleges and so forth, which was usually the case toward the last 10, 12 years. But anyway, another story.

But the reason I'm bringing this out is because it is because of certain mixtures that there are some entire nations of people in the world, that exist because of races coming together. If the thinking was true, that would truly reflect God's mind that that was sin, then what about all those people of all those nations who exist to this day because of different races who have come together? The product of sin? Are they then sin? Is their life one of sin? I hope you understand what I'm saying because that's what's being said on a spiritual plane. The reality is I learned a very great lesson back then going through some of those things and coming to a point of having to address some of that because of things that were going on within the Church. The reason God said what He told the Israelites from the very beginning was because of the religion. It wasn't because of the races.

Even Moses married a woman who was not of his race, but of a black race. Miriam and Aaron got in trouble because of their condemnation there that they had of Moses. God never condemned Moses. He never corrected Moses in any of that. See, there's an example there of something that we could have, should have, but couldn't because we weren't there until God gives it. It's there in the Bible! It's very clear how God dealt with Moses. He dealt with Miriam and Aaron because of their attitude of rebellion and because of what they were doing, and nothing was ever said that Moses did anything wrong. If Moses had sinned and done something wrong, of all people who was leading Israel through the wilderness, God would have corrected him there and said, "You should never have done that Moses!" And He would have corrected him mightily being the leader of God's people at that time. He never did. Not one word. Because it wasn't wrong. Because it wasn't sin.

Here is another such example, Deborah. It's there. Nothing. Nothing in God's word that a woman can't serve God in the temple of God on a spiritual plane. Because she did. Not a physical temple. She served, if you will, in a spiritual one. She is a part of the 144,000, see? Everyone God has worked with through time, they didn't have to be ordained to become a part of 144,000. But here God makes it very clear something that He's revealing to us now in a profound way; this is good, this is right. Whomever God chooses, whenever God chooses them to serve, so be it. People will fight against it, people will resist it, some people of the scattering won't be able to accept it, because there will be people out there who will not (mostly males), who will not be able to humble themselves because this is so wrong in their mind, that a woman would even open up in prayer, let alone be ordained in God's Church. So how do they look at God's Church today? It's not good. There's going to be some great humbling, going to be some incredible humbling that has to take place before the vast majority of them will be able to come to a point and say, "I surrender. I 'see.' I accept it. I embrace it. You are right, God, and I've been wrong." It's a tough thing but it's going to happen in a very profound way.

So I love this story. It's a beautiful story of something that's always been there. God didn't put a lot of these examples in scripture. He didn't have a lot of women who were prophets for this very reason of what we're going through today because He had a time that He had chosen to give this to His Church. God's the one in charge. God's the one who determines when certain things are to be given. Every truth that God has ever given to His Church, there's a timing involved. There was a timing involved when God determined to reveal to the Church that Pentecost was never on a Monday. There is a specific exact timing when God revealed to His Church that Jesus Christ wasn't going to return on a Trumpets, but on a Pentecost. Timing. God's timing. So we yield to that and we have proof. We learn where God is. We live it. We experience it. And we're judged by it, how we respond to it then, how, what we believe, and how much we're able to learn from that.

So we live in some incredibly exciting times. To me, these are some of the most exciting, in one respect, for change in God's Church. And do you know why? Do you understand why? Do you understand where the greatest excitement should be, needs to be, why it should be there? It's because of the future. It's because of what it means for families. It's just wrong the way things have been structured. It's just wrong. It's wrong for family, for men to have a superior attitude toward women, to think they're better than women, to put down women, to look down on women. It's wrong, truly wrong! It's really sin, because God, though He allowed certain things to exist, told in scripture how people should think toward each other. That'll be *Part 3*.

It's already in scripture how people are supposed to think toward each other. See? It's already there. That's what makes it sin. Though people didn't grasp it. Though God allowed certain kinds of government to exist within the Church, to be a certain way, people misused it. I hope you see what I'm saying right now, because this is important. God allowed something to be and exist a certain way within the Church, of a structure within the Church, as Paul talks about the man being the head of the woman in family, okay, that was allowed to exist within the Church, though it wasn't God's way from the beginning, because of the world, because of living in this world, because of existing in this world and the way society was; but that did not give right to a man ever, ever, ever, ever to look down on a woman. But that's happened, massively so, in the environs of God's Church.

Just like within the ministry. There are things that should never have existed in Philadelphia, especially in Laodicea when it came to sheriffing, when it came to ministers inserting themselves into people's lives and seeking to control people in their lives. There's one thing to deal with sin, it's another thing to insert yourself into people's lives to control. God doesn't work that way with us. So we're learning that within the Church. We've learned that there's a right way to work with people and there's a wrong way to work with people. There's a way to lead and guide and direct people, and there's a way to oppress people. And sadly, because of the structure that existed in the past, because of human nature, not because of God's spirit, because of human nature, people lifted themselves up. Just like what happened in the ministry - the higher the ordination the more

people tend to look down upon those under them. That was human nature. It wasn't right. It isn't right for a pastor to look down upon an elder, to think them less than them.

You know, there are certain ones who came into God's Church, that God called, who were exceedingly successful in business in the world, who had great minds, great abilities, very clear to see that the level of things that certain ones had, education and so forth that some had that far superseded some in the ministry. Actually, most. I lived through that. I saw that. Yet there were people in the ministry who thought they were so much better when it came to certain jobs and certain things that they'd be able to do and the like and judged certain individuals less than them. It's not right. It's just a wrong kind of thinking.

So I hope you understand what I'm saying about the structure, and it doesn't give right within a structure of anything for people to look down upon others. There are right ways to think toward one another and God has made that abundantly clear in how we love each other, how we think toward each other, how to respect one another in life. There should never be a condemnation, a judging, lifting up self, thinking our ideas are the best, the better way. Even if they are, what does God say? Even if your idea might be better about a certain thing, if it's not a matter of sin, what are you supposed to do? What are you supposed to do? Esteem the desires, the ideas of others above yours. It says, "Better than yourselves," because it doesn't understand what God is saying. But it's "above yours," because it's about a matter of giving. It's about a matter of giving. Something isn't a matter of sin, you give because it's about letting people experience things, do things, and letting them have the excitement of certain things in their life. How husbands should think toward wives and how wives should think toward husband, etcetera, etcetera.

We'll stop there today. This is a good place to end.