

The Existence of Evil, Pt. 2

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Today we're going to return to the series entitled *The Existence of Evil*, with this being *Part 2*.

Again, just want to say upfront here, I'm amazed at how all the sermons this year are leading up to the Feast of Tabernacles and giving us a better insight, a more balanced insight into various things that we need to understand, that we need to see and be convicted of.

In *Part 1* we covered scriptures that are about Satan and his eventual end, and how that, speaking of Satan, is where all evil began. We understand those things but sometimes I think we fail to grasp the depth of that and what it means for mankind.

It was then stated we live in a very evil age. The world doesn't feel that. The world doesn't believe that. They have to deal with what they know, with what they see, and they don't see it to the same degree that we do. They can't. And one day they will. But to grasp what this world is really like, to grasp what mankind is really like requires God's spirit in the revelation He gives to us of that.

So again, the most evil age of mankind yet. It has surpassed the evil of the age of Noah. They did not have technology as we do today that's used to magnify, to accelerate, to promote, and to empower evil. That should be easy to understand. Just because of technology alone, it's been a very easy tool for a spirit being to use, truly has been, and is.

Again, mentioning that sadly people can be like frogs in water that slowly increases in heat until it boils, and it stays in there, whereas supposedly the story goes that—and some have debated this, say it's not true, but that doesn't matter, it's a good analogy—if it's already hot and they put the frog in it'll jump out. So, the point being is that people can and do slowly accept various things in life, evil being one of them, as normal, something that has to be lived with in the world.

Sometimes people don't realize the change that's taking place. So, we can look back in time and recognize incredible change has taken place since radio came along and then TV, and then how TV has drastically changed since it first began, the programming and the things that are being broadcast out there, that little by little influences come in and we begin to accept them. We do too. There are things we can begin to accept that we shouldn't accept as being normal.

Now, it's normal for the world but it shouldn't be normal for us as far as how we think and our conduct and the like. Yet we're in the world and we experience those things, we see those things. That doesn't mean you go and find the nearest window in your house and chuck out

your TV. That doesn't deal with the problem, especially with children and so forth, it's a matter of educating to be able to deal with the world. We have to be able to deal with the world the way it is.

That doesn't mean we fill our minds with a tonne of garbage either. So, we have to be careful in some of that, obviously, but you can hardly watch anything anymore and you're not going to see—in commercials as well—things that are evil. "Take this and you don't ever have to worry about catching something that is a penalty for the sin you want to commit." They get quite open about it. Sick world!

So, we live in an age where a statement made by Isaiah is becoming more of a reality. Isaiah wrote [Isaiah 5:20] **Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.** Now, that's another twist on things because there is plenty of evil. But to get to that point to think that mankind would start doing that? That's what we're seeing today. It's insanity how the minds of so many are working.

That's why I know we have more to learn, and God's going to reveal more to us, but how many can be saved out of some of that when the mind becomes so polluted that it wants that and the distortion that takes place?

Going on, Isaiah said, **Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!** Sometimes you watch various things on the news, and you wonder, "How can you think like that? What went wrong?" I marvel sometimes at how people react to various things and how they talk about various things in the world, in the news, in politics, and so forth.

So going back about this matter just concerning technology we'll go back to the thing here about TV. So, this has to do a lot then with communication (and Satan has a way of broadcasting), so kind of unique. Herbert Armstrong came to understand some of those things about that power that he has of broadcasting to the human mind, and we have this that's like a receiver and we can receive those things, certain things that magnify how we normally think as carnal, human beings, he likes to magnify those things.

But consider the power that's been given to him, that he has because of things like TV and movies, music that he can influence, that can influence the mind in a more powerful way than just broadcasting. Because it does. Incredible what can take place. So, those things have accelerated to a point that evil has slowly but surely become accepted as normal. That's what happens over time.

I remember a show going way back, *Three's Company*. Now, you might think, pretty innocent little show, huh? Well, it wasn't. It was kind of the beginning of some of these kinds of things

that you could begin to accept distortion of life, of what life is like and how people can live it and should live it.

And so, if by a comedy, especially if they can get you to laugh at various things, and after a while acceptance follows. And so, a lot of this kind of thing happens where it can even be in comedy. I think of some comedy out there today that people call comedy and I think, "What do you have to have?" The kind of language, the kind of usage of various things that are pictured in it? And not only is that acceptable, that's what people want.

So, good, clean comedy, which every once in a while you can come across, someone that does have that, is very, very rare because audiences want more - or at least people think they want more. I was thinking even in that stupid, little puppet thing.

We went to a show in Vegas one time when we were out there. They have some incredible shows. One is about the individual that's very well known for ventriloquist and the puppets, and most of it's clean and good. But even he has started to bring some things in that are just edgy if you want to call it that, that they're not necessary. You don't have to do that. But probably had some pressure from those who have provided him the hiring and the place and so forth to do different. That's sad. That's sick when that happens in the world, but those things take place.

So, whether it be TV or a matter of music, if you will, I remember when I first came in the Church in 1969 I had to stop a lot of music. I had to stop listening to a lot of music because God let me see how it affected my thinking, and it wasn't good. That's 1969. That's way back. He began to show me various things in that respect of what was in it and what's being said.

And people say, "Well, that doesn't bother me; it doesn't affect me." Bull. It affected my mind and I had to battle various things because of it. And so, there are battles. We have enough battles with human nature as it is without some of the junk that's out there and the messages that are out there and so forth, and the lifestyles that sometimes go with it.

So, I wanted to go into music just a tad to show you how we can slowly but surely accept things like in the "pelvis of Elvis," the gyrating hips. Now, when that happened on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, people can say, "Well, that was..." People were so—what would be the word—prudish, there we go. Think back, "Boy, people were so prudish back then, so prudish. Oh, ho, ho, I'm glad we're not prudish now." Well, it's like, hmm.

So, why was that bothersome to anyone? Because there's a bit of a message there and it really wasn't good, in one respect, just to be honest about it.

It's kind of like today that people are starting to accept another thing that rhymes with "working" that I don't really want to mention. I don't even want to use the word because I hate it so much! Well, it has sexual overtones to it. Calling a spade a spade.

And so did that. That's why it was repulsive to some people because they thought, "Why are you showing this?" And yet people loved it, people passing out over it. It's like "Ahhhhhhhh..."

Now, they had a little bit of help too, I'll just be honest with you. There is a spirit world out there that works, and if you have that tool to do something, especially when you have large crowds, there are things that do happen that can spread through large crowds that have to do with the spirit influence.

That's just a reality of life. That's how they function. That's how they work. It goes from one to another and it spreads. Some people think, "You must be wacky and nuttier than a fruitcake." Well, that's okay. I'm used to that.

Think how far things have gone since then. I thought I'd read a few things here.

It didn't take long, and other forms of music began to be accepted that help promote other forms of acceptance. Acceptance of what? Well, just look at some of the things that happened. The age of the flower children, the hippies. It was a movement. Think that affected people's minds and how they think about sexual relationships? It was loose sex. It was "freedom." What did freedom mean to them? Well, it wasn't just peace and "Get out of Vietnam." It was more than that. It was this freedom of love, a revolution of love.

What does that mean? Well, to a lot of people, it just meant loose sex. That's all it meant. It began to be accepted and then it evolved more and more in some of the bands that began to come out of that and the culture that went with that.

Do you think those things haven't had an influence on society and on the world? Large groups coming together and the things that it did? Another one followed that, not too long after that.

I think of the acceptance of LSD back then. People started experimenting with LSD, technology, the ability to mix drugs to a point where you can, you know, see flowers. "The room is filled with flowers!" I think a lot of movies have been made when people have been on LSD. You wonder, "How did you come up with that stuff?" And so, psychedelic things.

You think, and the mushrooms. At least that was natural, but it did some unnatural things to the mind. So, maybe a long, long time ago, obviously, some people had some psychedelic things happen to them and mushroom sales may have been great, I don't know, in certain generations. But then we had the ability of making these things as chemicals. And so, people mix up these batches and all the illicit drugs out there are a matter of growth and ability to

understand things of chemistry and the use of drugs and mixtures of various kinds of things. Insanity. And slowly but surely, more and more is accepted.

One thing I was shocked at when I went to that little place for three years, there were a lot of people in there that produced and made meth and sold meth and other drugs as well, but they had some in there that were manufacturing it. Some of them told of their stories and then they told of the people in their towns, farming communities in Illinois and Indiana, who were some of the first in line. Lawyers, doctors, police, every facet of society they're there wanting some. Think we live in a sick world? Farming communities!

I would never have believed. And I'm sure it's in farming communities where I grew up in Kansas, some of those places, that there are people who have it there too. There is no stopping, there is no limitation to where people can go and sell this crap, this evil in the world to hurt minds, to destroy minds, to destroy thinking, the way people think. It destroys the mind in time. Sad. Sick. But it's accepted more and more.

So, even the laws, well, you have to start accepting it more and more because everybody is doing it so let's, like, make Colorado High have a new meaning to it. Let's just open up everything for the marijuana, and literally, it's Colorado High. I don't know if you've ever heard that or not. John Denver, "Colorado High..." I definitely can't sing so I won't hurt you by that.

But yeah. States, one after another. And so, now because it's so prevalent and so many people are doing it and less and less penalties for any of that, so what is that? It's acceptance. It's acceptance in society. "Well, it helps to get rid of the traffickers or whatever so let's make, get these machines out there where people can just go get it out of machines, all the paraphernalia they need."

Did you see that on TV? No money to put in it, just a machine where you can go pull a thing or push a button, I guess, and it dispenses needles and whatever else you need. I think even the drugs in some cases, I don't know. I really don't care. Well, I do care but I think, how sick. Slow acceptance to where our society changes, to where this world today... I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed. Where do you go? Where do you go to get away from it? There are a few states but...

So, it's like what do you do? Where do you raise your children? Some people don't even want to have children anymore because they don't want to raise them in this world like it is. I understand that. I appreciate that. Because of the evil that's out there. That's what it is, it's evil. And to raise them up in that?

Then they send them off to school and you think that teachers are going to be doing things like you were when you were a child, when you were young, and you got taught a certain

way? But they're not getting taught the same way and they're getting to the point where they don't want you to have any say in it anyway. You think that's not evil?

I tell you; it boggles the mind of how much evil there is in the world. But slowly but surely society accepts certain things, or a large part of it. Now, there are some that are trying to have a bit of a whiplash with that and fight back, but you know what, almost like they're powerless anymore. Because even government backs up this stuff. Sick. Sick. Sick.

Loose sex. Some of these things, certain concerts, that's what it's about. A lot of it is. Can people go there and not be of that mind? Yes. But overall there is a tremendous push in a certain way and a lot of people go because of that environment, because of who they might be able to hook up with or whatever it is, the things that go on in some of these places. Incredible.

Then it wasn't long after the flower children thing people gathered in San Francisco. Well, it was right there, same time period, "the summer of love." "The summer of love." What did that mean, "the summer of love"? No, it was the summer of loose sex. That's their concept of love. Slowly but surely deterioration of society.

Then only a couple of years over that a movement was called Woodstock. Or the Woodstock Rock Festival. Has both names, as a whole, but most people, all you have to say is "Woodstock." People know what you mean. I wish I could remember the numbers that were there. It was mind-boggling. I'd looked it up and thousands of people gathered there. What was that all about? Just a nice little concert one evening? People drugged out of their minds, drunk out of their minds, loose sex again, all kinds of drugs involved in it. Then people don't realize what they've become captive to.

And people who have always tried to promote, "Oh, marijuana can never hurt you." You know, some people can get by with trying it, and even maybe a lot. Some people can do that with alcohol and get by with it. Some people can't. Sometimes because of a person's chemical makeup, things that they've inherited, they've become addicted to various things in a way that others don't. So, some, some people might get by with it to a point. It depends on what they do with it, how far they go, and how it affects their other actions in life, which generally isn't good.

Whether it be alcohol or marijuana or other drugs, a little bit out of your mind, stoned, whatever, and it's this looseness. It uninhibits you if you're inhibited. If you have some reality it helps to get rid of some of that where you feel free and you don't feel as guilty.

I'll tell you what, we need Christ's return so, so badly, so much. We truly do. Think, how much worse can this get? One year to another, you think, surely this can't get much worse,

and then it gets worse and it's like, man, how far will it go? How much will God allow? Well, a lot of that depends on us still.

Drug use. Oh, yes, I was saying about marijuana, I've always hated the arguments that people have tried to use that, "Well, Marijuana isn't addictive, and marijuana isn't 'this.'" Well, you know, I really don't give a flip what people think or say or how educated they think they are or what they've read on the internet. I've known of too many people even before I came in the Church who were on that stuff and what it did to their personality and to their mind permanently.

I had a good friend, that his mind, he became mush. He became mush, and that's all he used. And people think, well, it doesn't affect them. Yeah, it will on your job and future life a lot of times because you know what, you start going just a little bit slower, start talking just a bit slower, it affects your speed, which isn't too great anymore. It's like, "Be cool, man," you know. It's easier to feel, "Be cool, man," when you feel like that all the time without even taking it because your mind is screwed up. It affects things in the mind.

This is the most precious thing that God has given to us because that's, when it's all said and done, that's all you have. If you understand what I'm saying. It's what's in the mind and what you've done with it. Because God doesn't resurrect this body again. Well, He's going to resurrect, it's going to be a different body, so that's good news for a lot of people. But the point being is it's the mind that continues on. God gives us spirit life.

Now, in a hundred years, for those who are a part of that, yes, but you're going to have a different body because it's going to be the same mind. Well, what shape is that mind in?

That's why I'm in awe of what God has been revealing, that that hundred years is not going to be a picnic. When you have a lot of people who are resurrected and they're going to be able to be healed of various things, but if they spaced out their life with drugs, putting that crap in their body, sick, sick.

And people making money off of it and politics over it when they could stop some of that junk? Just that alone is an incredible shame to both parties because of the border. It really is. It's a shame to both because, candidly, it should be a matter of war. The cartels, people won't fight a cartel, they just let them exist. You want to play pansy with another country? You want to be careful because of their democratic society and so forth?

I wouldn't. I wouldn't. I would go in there with every power I had and destroy every one of them, every one of the cartels, looking at it in a physical carnal way. They wouldn't be walking around. We've got the ability, the drones, and everything. Just declare war. I'm sorry, but evil is evil.

So, where is the mind when you tolerate evil, and you allow these things to exist in your world? Yeah, the cesspool we have today, I don't know about you, but I am so sick of this, so sick of evil. We should be crying out.

I think when it said about Lot, vexed his righteous soul day to day because of what he saw was happening to his world around him, what people were doing. Ruining their lives, ruining their minds. Parents who get involved in these things, what about the children? What chance? They bring children into the world in that state? The injustice of such things when there should be such outrage. We don't have it as a whole.

That's why Christ has to come back and to come back with great power, with 144,000, and clean up this cesspool around the world in everything. In the judicial system, in all the government agencies, in everything, top to bottom. That's the only way.

You know people talk about and get excited about the possibility of draining the swamp. You can't. It's too powerful. Well, Christ is going to, and the 144,000. Because the reality is you don't drain it, you destroy it. That's what's going to happen. That's what it takes. Isn't that amazing?

So, a lot of us...well, some, whoever is a part of that are going to have an opportunity of being a part of literally destroying a lot of that garbage. Cartels? They're going to be destroyed. They're going to be destroyed because that's the only way to deal with it, everything that's evil.

So, immorality, it's come through the use of things of music, bad messaging, things that are promoted and said. People say, "Well, that doesn't affect my thinking." Baloney! I lived it. And that was a long time ago. I had battles because of it, and it's much, much, much worse today. So, people who think that they don't know their own being and their own minds, their own thinking, and where they are.

Movies? TV? Like I said, it's not a matter of saying you can't watch anything anymore, it's just a matter of what do you think in the mind. It's kind of like what I've said about Vegas. "Sin city." Well, that depends on what you do. It depends on what you do and your actions in life. Same thing on TV. It depends on what you do and what you think and what you see. You know, that fast-forward is on there for a reason nowadays. There are times you just have to use it.

So, it's living in this world and dealing with this world but doing it God's way. That's how we have to live our lives in everything.

So, I hope we understand that slowly but surely society does accept things that shouldn't be accepted that are evil. That's the world we live in today.

Thought about going on in some of this thing about TV and different movies and things, but it's just such insanity out there, things that you would think you would never see there that now they're trying to cram it down your throat. Not only to your children in schools but there they're trying to get people to accept "These things are okay," "People are okay that live that." Well, no they're not. But neither do we have any ability of doing anything about it. We just live in this world and strive to live God's way of life and that's what our life is about, fight the battles.

Let's review Proverbs and then continue on from there. But we really have to see evil for what it is, the evil that it is. It's a powerful word. But even that we can water down if we're not careful.

Proverbs 8:6 just to be reminded. **Listen, for I, wisdom, will speak of excellent things.** It's God, the mind of God. It's the only source for what is excellent, true, and right, just.

From the opening of my lips will come right things. For my mouth will speak truth. Beautiful. Truth.

Wickedness, word uses "evil" is an abomination to my lips. It should be to ours as well. Just like that one word. I didn't even want to use it, the movements, and the gyrations that some people think looks good or whatever. And you think, "You're sick. What you're showing others is appalling and shameful." But they're not ashamed. They think it's a great thing...great thing. Advertise it; let everybody see. Weird minds.

All the words of my mouth are righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse, in other words, **twisted is in them. They are all plain to those who understand, and right to those who find knowledge.** So again, we're blessed to be in that. God gives us true knowledge. He shows us what is truth. He begins to show us His way. We begin to become convicted of it. It's a beautiful thing for this to get cleaned up.

There are a lot of people who will never, ever, ever be able to be cleaned up in the mind. They've gone too far just like in the days of Noah, and their minds can become set in it. It's a shame. That's horrible. But God allows it.

Receive my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choosing gold. Because human beings would choose the gold. And in some ways, we may have those problems ourselves sometimes in life and not realize it, where is our value? Where do we put the greater value? Too often it's other things besides God, the word of God, the mind of God, the being of God, the living of God's life.

For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one might desire cannot be compared with her. I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Eternal is to hate evil. To hate it. To see it for what it is, not let it lull us asleep, to

begin to accept things that are bad, worse, maybe less bad if you want to try to classify bad. Evil is evil. Bad is bad. But that's the way the human mind too often works. It begins to accept certain things, the gyrating of the hips that everybody made fun of. It was like, "You mean, you think that was bad?" Was it Elvis's pelvis? And it's like, "What's wrong with that? You prude! You are such a prude!"

Well, people don't know how that can affect the mind of some and how people think. Or maybe not understand how their own minds can think. So, on a spiritual plane especially, if we grasp and understand such things.

...pride, self-exultation, the evil way, and the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom. I am understanding; I have strength. Those verses right there could be a series of sermons.

Let's continue on. Let's go to 1 Kings 15. Looking at the story of the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel when it broke away from Judah to the south. This is the story about Jeroboam, further into the story.

1 Kings 15:25—Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel for two years. He did evil in the sight of the Eternal and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he made Israel to sin. So, what did Jeroboam do? He turned away from truth that God had given to Israel, from the Sabbath, from the Holy Days, to Sunday worship, to observe counterfeit holidays, and Israel followed him.

So, that was the beginning. That's why everyone that followed him in power in Israel it speaks of what they did, basically "following the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat," every one of them.

So, what has the history, especially the recent history of God's Church revealed? Large numbers within the ministry turned away from God, turned from the truth that they had been given, and large numbers in the Church followed them. Incredible, the things we've lived through, the things we've seen. They can only be described as evil...evil. It was far greater evil than what Jeroboam did. Incredible, if we understand that. I hope we do.

What they did was evil. What he did, king after king after king as far as Israel was concerned. Well, let's read **1 Kings 15:27—Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. Then Baasha killed him at Gibbethon of the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. Then it was so, when he became king, he killed the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the Eternal which He had spoken by His servant**

Ahijah the Shilonite, because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and in which he had made Israel sin, thus grieving the Eternal God of Israel unto vexation.

So, you know, God gave everything. You think of all the things, He started to do it with Saul. Saul didn't obey. Then he began to work with David and He worked with David's son. After that, you think of the things that took place, the separation of the kingdoms, and the evil that began to transpire.

Verse 31—Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? Then there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah and reigned twenty-four years. He did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and he walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

That's incredible as the story goes on, it talks about different ones over and over again here, they followed the same pattern when you talk about those who were a part of the kings of Israel especially. Judah, they had their problems from time to time, obviously, but not like the ones of Israel, the nations of Israel, because right away, starting right away with Jeroboam, the kinds of sins that they committed, the things that they did in turning away from the Sabbath. Began to have a Sunday worship. Turned away from the Holy Days of God. Changed those times. The things they began to observe; they polluted them.

Incredible, the things that took place with every one of the kings then of Israel from the beginning until they were taken into captivity.

That was bad but it's not nearly as bad as what people have done in the environs of God's Church. They didn't have God's spirit. They did things from a carnal vantage point in looking at life. Didn't follow God. Judah and those partial families that continued on with Judah, under Judah's name, basically, from that point forward, they held on to the Sabbath, they held on to the Holy Days. They got to a point where they so polluted those things—not by changing them—and the lives they were living that God had them taken captive. Then they were able to come back to that region later on, some seventy years later.

Israel, they were taken into captivity and lost their identity, didn't know who they were. Because every one of them followed the same things, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat." Every one of them is known for that. Continued in sin, continued with the things concerning Sunday, continued with their own holidays, if you will. But wanted God out of the picture, in that respect, and so God let them be taken captive permanently. They lost their identity.

Judah, they lost it in the sense of being able to continue as a nation, but God eventually blessed them to bring them back.

Amazing some of the histories that took place. But in everything that they did, no matter how bad it was, nothing has been as bad as what people who have been called by God have done in turning against God. Because everyone called by God has had the opportunity of receiving of His holy spirit. Far, far more grievous thing when people turn against God's spirit.

So, in going through some of these stories like this when we do and thinking about what it says here of them, what they did, and talking about some of their sins, it's good to be reminded their sins aren't near as bad as many of the sins of people we've known in the environs of God's Church, of what took place during the Apostasy. Far, far more heinous. Far, far worse because everyone had the ability, the opportunity to receive the impregnation of God's holy spirit. These people never did. They were just carnal.

That's why you see two different kinds of people and how God blessed one tribe to continue on and hold to various things like the Sabbath and the Holy Days, even though they polluted those drastically as time went along in their own lives. But Israel, another story. None of that is as bad as people who turn against God once they've been impregnated with His holy spirit.

That's something we need to have deeply embedded in our minds, because we've witnessed a lot of that during the time, especially, of the Apostasy and what happened there. Incredible, what we've experienced, what we've seen, and it's not going to be good for a lot of people who were a part of that. Not a few, a lot, into the thousands when it's all said and done.

So, it's because of what this new sermon series is addressing that I rather marveled at how important those things were that we covered when going through the book of 1 John and what it has to say there over and over again. Let's turn over there, 1 John 3.

The reason why we've gone through and read a little bit of this about Israel and what happened to them is because yes, they turned away from the Sabbath, they turned away from the Holy Days, they did heinous things as far as the people were concerned, but a lot of them in their minds they have opportunity one day in a great resurrection to live what is true and live what is right in a different world, in a different age.

Whereas there have been many people within the environment with God's Church, their sins go way, way, way beyond what these people ever did and why they were taken captive. This was a pretty tough thing, taken captive, lost their identity, ten tribes taken captive by Assyria, taken north. A lot of us descended from them.

But what's happened in times, especially even in this end-time in God's Church, is far more heinous, far more sick, far more perverted, far more evil if we can grasp it, truly. The existence of evil, amazing.

1 John 3. Now, we've gone through a lot of these things here in recent times, gone back to review some of these things again to have them more deeply embedded in our minds so we can grasp and comprehend indeed what's been said and what's being said.

1 John 3:7—Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever does—makes, practices is the word—righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. So, this is about those who are called. It's about those who have opportunity to receive God's spirit in their life and live a different life than these referred to as the nation of Israel and the things they went through. Because every one of these that were a part of Israel, they all followed the same. It mentions, basically, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat," because it's the same spirit and the same attitude, and totally moved away from God, the truths of God that God had offered to them from the very beginning.

Judah held on to them in a different way in the sense of the Sabbath and the Holy Days, although they did pollute a lot of things, obviously. But what about people who have God's spirit? There is such a vast chasm of difference between the two it's not even funny. People who have been given opportunity, who have been given God's holy spirit and the impregnation of His mind?

That's why I feel in many ways the Church hasn't grasped the severity of what it means to move away from God, to move away from truth, to do some of the things that we have witnessed during the times of Laodicea, for those who witnessed that period of time, and even during the times that we're in now, to realize opportunities different people have been given, and some of them a second time, a second time an awakening, which is awesome. So many have turned against that. Far more have turned against it and rejected it than have embraced it.

These aren't mild things in God's purpose, in God's plan. They really aren't. The damage, sometimes to a point that it cannot be changed to this mind. Those who have been asleep, those who went to sleep, God judges those things, and we still have things to learn about that. God's going to still awaken a lot of people who did that, but some went too far...too far. Still happening to this day.

Boy, when you've been given an opportunity to have been awakened, and then to turn against it again, whew. I'll say this loosely - wonder what will happen to them, what kind of judgment? It's not a small thing. When you've been given opportunity for God's way of life we're in judgment.

The Israelites, they were in a physical way. Those who followed "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat," every king after that that followed the same course, as it talks about, that we just read about some of this. Everyone after that did the same thing. They continued on the same course.

They preferred the mixture of other gods around them or the kind of gods they had so they would blend in a little bit more with the other nations around them. Wanted to be a little more like them, which sometimes happens within the environs of God's Church where some want to be a little more like others around them and engage in some of the things that they're engaging in and don't realize if you've been able to receive the impregnation of God's spirit it's not a choice to do such stupid things. Because it's a matter of destroying your mind. That's what it can end up being, to destroy your own mind to the point it can't be retrieved.

So again here, **1 John 3:7—Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.** Because we can't live this way of life, God's way of life without God's spirit. Israelites weren't able to do it. Judah wasn't able to do it. They were able to do physical things to a point, but when you talk about what God has given us in His Church you can't live this without His holy spirit.

So, when you talk about righteousness, true righteousness, it's only because of God's spirit that we're able to live what is right, because we're able to think what is right.

"Whoever does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous," speaking of Christ, speaking of God, but of Christ here.

Whoever commits sin is of the devil. That's that way, in other words. It's the way of get. It's the way of selfishness, and that's why God says this is where it all began. We know that's where it all began. It began so long ago. Incredible. Lucifer given so much, the height of all God's creation to that point in time in the angelic realm, and yet he turned against God, and he became the devil, Satan.

"Whoever commits sin is of the devil," following the same way, that's what it's saying. We're free thinkers. We can do whatever we choose, whatever we want. You can't once you're called. We've had a lot of free thinkers in God's Church, in the environs of God's Church who are gone, who have come and gone because they think they're free to think certain ways. You deceive your own mind after a time. You can't think right. You can't judge right.

Because when you start committing sin you're cut off from God's spirit. You're on your own. But you can be in the environment of God's Church, be deeply deceived.

Whoever commits sin is of the devil, for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. And so, God created us with that nature, Satan's nature. That's how we're created as physical, carnal human beings: "Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." It's not of God, it's our nature just by being made physical human beings. That's incredible to understand. It's incredible to know that. The only thing that can come out of that is evil. But people don't see it for that. The world can't see that. They don't realize that's what it is.

Only when you come into God's Church and have God's spirit, the impregnation of God's spirit come into your mind can you begin to see it. You begin to see it for what it is, evil, not God's way. That which is against God's way, that which doesn't live God's way. Because that's the choice when it comes down to it. It's either God's way, but no other way when we're given that opportunity. Only each one of us can make that decision.

So, "For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." So, what an awesome thing that we can go under the water, come back up, have hands laid upon us, be forgiven of all of our past sins, and have the impregnation of God's spirit within our minds so we can begin to think differently, so we can come into agreement with God and see things on a spiritual plane as God teaches us and helps us to grow spiritually. It's an awesome thing.

And what a horrible thing when people turn against that and begin to live in once again or dwell in various kinds of sin. Everyone who's ever left or been put out that's what they've done, haven't held on to what God gave us in the mind.

1 John 5:17—All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death. Amazing here, some of the wording of some things sometimes. And without knowing the context or going through it all it's been kind of a mystery even within the environs of the Church for some time, of what some of these things are all about.

We know that whoever is born of God does not practice sin. Well, it's about being begotten of God. We're not yet born; we're not born until we're spirit beings. That doesn't happen for a long time. We have to live a physical, carnal - well, hopefully not so carnal - we have to live a physical life with carnality. But that's our battle, that's what we fight against, the carnality that's in us. That's going to be the rest of our battle from here on out. But it's the choices we make that we want to be engaged in that kind of a battle.

So again, it's about not practicing, not wanting these things in our life, and we want to repent. When we see them we want to repent. The faster you repent the smarter you are because you don't want to continue holding on to certain things because you see the evil, the wrong that's there, and you recognize you've been called to do that.

All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God does not sin, does not practice sin. That's what it is in context, doesn't practice it. Do we still sin? Yes. We still have to fight against things that happen. For me, it can be as simple as driving down the freeway. I have to battle certain things in my thinking then, of how I think about someone else doing something on the highway. Well, there is a way to see stupidity and things but not to get riled up about it to where you begin to react to it in a wrong way, to do stupid things too.

But one that is begotten of God keeps (watches over; guards) **themselves**. One who is begotten of God. Awesome! To have God's spirit and to recognize what we're to do, we have to always be on guard. We have to watch.

...and wickedness, or "evil" as it is here, or wickedness, speaking of evil, **does not lay hold of them**. So again, what an incredible thing here that God gives us the ability, the help, and the power to fight various things and the blessing of being able to combat evil, evil in our own thinking, evil in our own lives so that our minds can become more sound, more at one with God.

We know that we are of God and the whole world lies in evil, wickedness. It's only because of God's holy spirit. That's what we seek to cherish. That's what we want to hold on to and fight the battles that we need to fight. That's major, the things that God has given us, the blessing, the opportunity to fight, to deal with.

So, there is evil, evil in this world that sometimes we don't call it what it is. Sometimes it gets drug into God's Church. So, each of us has God's spirit dwelling in us and it's to grow in ability to see the ugliness of evil. That should be our desire, to see evil for what it is, the ugliness of it, to see how it hurts.

The more you really hate certain things that we tend to do, if you see those things in yourself, the easier it is with God's spirit to conquer and overcome it. But we have to be at that point where we really loathe the things that affect our minds in a wrong way. There is a lot of evil out there to affect and infect your minds that you have to be on guard against.

So I think of, just thought I'd mention here the definitions of evil. You can look them up and they really don't get it. Not like we can with God's spirit. God blesses us to be able to see evil in a way that the world really can't because it's difficult. When I talk about various things that I did in the beginning there about various movements that people might make and to see the evil there and how our human nature can tend to be drawn to that because that's the way carnal nature is without God's holy spirit.

It's easy to be drawn to because that's our minds as human beings. But with God's spirit, He shows us that there is a battle that we have to fight, and we have to choose to fight it. It's not easy. You have to stay on top. You have to stay close to God because it can creep in into life so easily.

So, the definitions of evil don't capture the true depth of wickedness and the vile state of being that such a word should stir up within our minds. That's why when we use the word it ought to be deep in the sense of cutting deep and realizing how ugly, how sick, how perverted, how distorted, how backward evil is.

Because the reality is the more you hate it and the more you hate it in your own life the easier it is to conquer and overcome it. But we have to see the things for what they are in our own minds. It's a matter of our own conviction.

So again, it's hard to capture such ugliness, such devilish (if you will) and vile being of existence, of such depraved thinking in action or actions, if you will, with all the heinous, atrocious, degenerate, rotten, shameful, reprobate, and detestable things in life as they are around us. And those are the kinds of words that should mean something to us because we're convicted that God is right, God's way is right, and we don't want those things in us. But you rub up against them constantly in this world, and if you're not careful, we're still coming out of them, and we have to be careful, we have to be on guard, we have to be close to God, so they don't infect our thinking and our being spiritually.

So, we just don't tend to naturally see evil for just how evil it really is. When we use those words it should mean something different to us totally than what it does to the world.

Herbert Armstrong spoke of there being only two ways of living all life. One was expressed as the give way, and the other the get way. You know, a lot of people made fun of that. A lot of people talked about how he was oversimplifying things. And the reality is, no, if you get that on a spiritual plane you've gotten a lot. You truly have. The give and the get way. Incredibly true to understand the vast difference of two as a matter of God's spirit.

Because you really can't see evil for what it is until you receive God's holy spirit. It requires God's spirit to grasp and comprehend what it is and what the give way is. Your whole life once you're called is a matter of learning to discern those things. You're always having to make decisions day in and day out if you see it, if you understand that's what you're doing.

Sometimes we just do, we hear a sermon, we hear certain things, we realize there is certain change that has to take place in our life. Anyway, it's the discernment of those things that comes through the power of God's spirit.

I think toward the latter end of his life, Herbert Armstrong delved deeply into the subject of the two trees in the Garden of Eden. And you know what? There are so many people in God's Church who didn't get what he was saying. Instead, there were people who complained about it: "You know, I'm tired..." Those are comments that people made. "All I'm hearing from him are these two trees. He says the same thing over and over again." In God's Church when he was doing these things, I heard people making such comments or heard of them repeating such things or saying such things to others in God's Church.

Think...? I understand that. They don't get it. They don't comprehend what he was saying. They don't grasp that every time he spoke he was adding something different to it,

emphasising certain things within the realm of that truth, of trying to comprehend, if people would with God's spirit, what was being communicated to us as a Church.

Because most of, all of life really, it boils down to this. He gave a simple example of something like this, two trees and how we respond to various things of life. Incredible.

Anyway, Genesis. Let's look at the beginning, Genesis 2:1. Literally, the difference between the way of what is true good that comes from God, from God's plan, and that of evil is something that is very hard for the human mind to grasp and comprehend. It's only with God's spirit that we can cut through and discern those things and know those things.

So, I think of how toward the end of his life, Herbert Armstrong delved into the things about two trees and the Garden of Eden, and a lot of people never really got it, never really understood what he was saying.

Genesis 2:1—Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. Then on the seventh day, God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

What an incredible thing here, to go through things like this. This is the history, the things that God has revealed to us from the very beginning of time for us as human beings.

This is the history, or the word means here, "the generation," "the beginning of," "the birth" of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day the Eternal God made the earth and the heavens. Now, this doesn't mean when it's going through here in Genesis and talking about some of this, it's not talking about the whole galaxy and our solar system and then the entirety of all creation out there that's in the universe. It's not talking about those things at all in that respect. It's going through here telling a story about God putting mankind on earth and what He did in six days and what He did in the seventh day.

Everything else as a whole that was out there, the vastness of it, but when God began to work with the recreating of what was already here as far as the earth was concerned and putting life on it so it would exist again is a totally different story that has been very difficult for people.

You know, people just don't pick up their Bibles and understand that. They don't grasp the truth that we have learned within God's Church, that God revealed to Herbert Armstrong, and so forth. So again here, "this is the history of the generation of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day the Eternal God made the earth and the heavens."

Verse 5—before any plant of the field was in the earth, before any herb of the field had grown. For even the Eternal God had not caused it to rain on the earth, no one tilled the

ground. What an incredible thing to go through this beginning when you understand what God is saying and when He's given us a better ability to comprehend some of these things, what took place, literally, in the beginning, that was already here as far as a creation was concerned, but God did remolding and refashioning so that mankind could live on it.

...but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. That's why I marvel when you go through stories like this and you can't tell people in the world of things like this, but they don't grasp that weather wasn't like it was today. They didn't have weather. They didn't have the clouds and so forth and the things that we experience today and the effects of the sun on the earth and so forth. It didn't exist. It was a different creation and how things were watered. It was, again, by those things that were even low-lying, that the mist and so forth that took care of everything that was here.

...but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. The Eternal God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

The Eternal God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the Eternal God made every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So, simplistic in many ways for carnal human minds to see something. But that's the only way we can begin to grow and understand various things if we'll receive what God said the way He said it. So, that's why I always marvel at Herbert Armstrong going back here in the beginning and talking about some of these things, that candidly much of the Church never got what he was saying. Things about the two trees they never got. They couldn't hear it.

Because the Church went through a period of time when Herbert Armstrong was sick that it became very weak. Then when Herbert Armstrong was given life like he was again, in the sense of greater energy, greater strength, greater focus, more truth and he came back preaching like he did there was a lot of weakness already in the Church that had already been planted there. So much of what he had to say went right over the tops of heads. He would even ask the question, "How many of you, how many?"

It was like this thing of Philadelphia and Laodicea; how many are really with it? What percentage? Half? A third? Ten percent? It's incredible what happened to God's Church toward the end before, right up there to that point and then to the time he died, some of it was already in motion, things with those who had already rebelled, things with his own son, Garner Ted Armstrong, and the things he did, different evangelists and what they had done.

I marvel when we go back and think of some of the history of what we went through in the Church and what took place in that period of time of the late seventies when he became ill near to death and wasn't administering things anymore. Those of you who don't know the history of the Church and what we went through. How many of you lived at that time, lived through that time? Okay, not very many here, but a few.

But we went through and experienced some incredible things. There were those who were vying for power during his illness, and the reality is thinking he's going to die, he's an old man. And the other reality that became a very carnal thing is, who is going to have the power? Who is going to take over? Battles began.

That's why things like the receivership and different things that took place in time through those periods of time that we have history of, and marvel that those things happened in the environment of God's Church. Then when he came back, he came back really strong. But a lot of damage had already been done by a lot of evangelists. Which we didn't fully grasp within the Church at that point in time, his own son, what he had done when he rebelled, and then other evangelists and what they did, the majority of them who'd, candidly, turned against God. Amazing.

Our history is awesome, but we have to see it on a spiritual plane for what it is. A lot of people didn't understand what was taking place then. So, we have different ones even at that time, evangelists and so forth, that had already picked sides of who they were going to support and who they were going to follow, already one who had been, was being dealt with. Herbert Armstrong's own son because he was starting his own church. Others who were vying to keep what were there. They were trying to work their way in so they could take over what was existing there. Incredible, some of the things we went through.

So, Philadelphia was not an easy time to live through. And what it led into, speaking of Laodicea, it became even worse because then we were lulled to sleep. Every one of us who was a part of the Church went to sleep. Every person in God's Church, and that's been a hard thing for many in God's Church to accept. Everyone in God's Church went to sleep spiritually before the Apostasy took place. That's just a reality of life.

And sadly, when people began to be shaken to be awakened a lot of people wouldn't be willingly awakened because they couldn't admit that. They couldn't admit what happened and what took place in time there within the Church during Laodicea.

So again here, going through these scriptures on what it's talking about, let's go back up here again a little bit. Thinking about the history of the Church and the things that Herbert Armstrong used to teach, that once he came back so many didn't grasp. He would talk about percentages and who was really with it, who could really hear, who could really see.

Well, Laodicea was on the doorstep, and that's the problem, we were getting closer and closer to that point in time. As soon as Herbert Armstrong died it was full-fledged, full-fledged within the Church. That's why I marvel when one era stops and another one begins there was a clear distinction of what took place at that time.

So again, **verse 7 here—The Eternal God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.**

The Eternal God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Eternal God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So, talked about that.

But again here, incredible this process here of what we went through and the things that God gave to Herbert Armstrong to grasp in the period of Philadelphia of what this is about.

Verse 15—The Eternal God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it, "to improve it by labor, to build, to cultivate, to foster the growth," if you will. It's what the word means. ...and to keep it, which means "to watch over, to preserve, to maintain, to strengthen something." God put, as it says here, mankind there for that purpose.

Then the Eternal God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. What an incredible thing here that Herbert Armstrong gave to the Church that some grasped and comprehended the spirit of it in what he was saying and what he was going through.

...commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. So, it was a beginning process here. God was showing that when you begin to take certain things to yourself, dying, as the word means in Hebrew, you will die.

And it's not a physical thing. It wasn't about physical death because God had already made mankind with the capacity, the ability in time to die. You look at the first period of time after Adam and Eve and that's the way life was. They were given a long length of life, but the purpose for God was eventually everybody is going to die once.

And so, we see a period of time there that people lived for a long time "but dying you shall die." This goes way beyond what some of this is about here in the sense of understanding what was given here concerning knowledge of good and evil and what would happen to people and how people would think.

So again here, because of mankind's nature, being of a selfish nature, all have followed the same way. That's just the way it's been ever since the very beginning with Adam and Eve

choosing what they chose, choosing for themselves or deciding what is good and what is evil. That's the failure of mankind. Because we're all the same.

So, when we were made physical God gave us that capacity. That's all we can do. Because by its very creation, being made physical we're going to choose evil at times. I mean, that's just our carnal nature, "Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" as it talks about in 1 John. It's just a natural consequence that's going to follow because we were to experience what it was like to have a mind like Satan.

Then in God's time when He begins to draw us away from that, to be able to have a true choice to reject that and accept what God is revealing. Awesome.

Amazing how many people in the Church have never really grasped that. So again, because of mankind's nature, because of being selfish by nature all have followed the same way, choosing for ourselves or deciding for ourselves what is good and what is evil.

So, it's an awesome thing to understand that mankind has the ability to do what is good on a certain plane, but it's not God's good. It's not what is lasting and good and right. So, we come into God's Church, and we begin to learn we have an evil nature just because of selfishness.

I don't really have time to go into what I wanted to go into here so I'm going to pull this to a stop here. But just setting the stage for what's coming in the sermons to follow this.

But it's incredible here understanding a beginning in the sermon series here *The Existence of Evil*, to understand what happened in the Garden of Eden, to see what took place and choices that were made, and to realize we have a basic nature that we'll always choose evil.

With our carnal human lives, we can't help it. "Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" is just a part of our being, a part of our nature. God calls us with His holy spirit and then we have a choice to begin fighting that and to become something different. An awesome process.

I didn't get to where I wanted to be today here, how far I wanted to get down in this. So, this has been a little slow getting into part of this, what took place with Israel, going through and talking about the Israelites and what happened to them, realizing that they had to be separated from Judah in time because it was a part of God's plan. They went to the north. They didn't have any relationship with God whatsoever.

Then we have those of Judah who were able to continue on but had to be taken into captivity—and God let them come back after seventy years—and only had a form of what is true in their life in the sense of the Sabbath and the Holy Days. All physical, nothing spiritual in it as a whole, whatsoever. We read stories about Judah and about Israel and the things they went

through, and we read that every king of Israel went the same way, from the beginning they followed the sons of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

Then we see the example here of Judah and they held on to the Sabbath and the Holy Days, but they began to pollute them. God then corrected them for that and let them go into captivity for seventy years plus. Others stayed longer and some stayed there forever in the sense of generation to generation afterwards never came back. But there were those who were able to go back and begin to build in Israel or areas of Judah again.

But all those things happened; they were all physical...all physical.

Then we're to learn and understand things that happened to us on a spiritual plane, where we go through various eras of the Church. That's kind of where we are right now in going through this sermon series and realizing there are things that God has taken us through, Herbert Armstrong went through, and talking about the two trees and what they mean. Aall the way through here is what we've talked about.

But to think what's happened in the Church is so much worse than whatever happened to Israel is rather mind-boggling and I can't get into that in this particular sermon but that's where we're going, to understand how God has had incredible patience with us for so long, taken us through the things we have that we don't even grasp and comprehend oftentimes what evil is.