

We're now going to continue in the series *The Existence of Evil*. This is *Part 3*.

In that sermon of two weeks ago, we went through a portion of the story of Israel and how they had broken away from Judah to the south and that the first king to the north was Jeroboam. So, when the ten tribes became situated in the north under king Jeroboam he began to change everything. He didn't want people to go back down into Judah for the observance of Holy Day, so by design, he changed the Sabbath to Sunday, he changed Holy Days to holidays if you will. So, they had their own times that they would come together and worship in their own format at so forth, but not according to what God had given to Israel when they were all together as the tribes.

But the first king then being Jeroboam, every king after that did the same. That's why I read that one example about the one king. It says in scripture then every king after that followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. So, they did the same thing, in other words. Every one of them did the same thing as far as keeping Sunday, backing it up in holidays, and the like. So, every time they're mentioned, and that's one of the primary reasons God sent them into captivity, is because they totally turned away from Him, never returned in any of the true observances.

Judah was taken away captive later on because they started polluting the Sabbath and the Holy Days, but they still kept those periods of time, so they were only taken captive for seventy years.

But anyway, that was a part of the sermon for last Sabbath, about those who followed the sins or the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The soberness that comes from this story is to recognize what the majority of those who have been called have done by choosing a different way after having been begotten of God's spirit. That's the whole point of going through that story last Sabbath, or two Sabbaths ago, is that what Jeroboam did and every king after that, to turn away from God, to not have any desire to go back and worship in the way that was given to them before as far as Holy Days and the Sabbath, the seventh day Sabbath. We can look at a story like that and think, "That's pretty sick." And it was sick, what they did.

But the point of it all is it's not nearly as sick and evil as what people have done who have been begotten of God's spirit. That's far, far worse. Because Jeroboam didn't have God's spirit; none of the kings after that had God's spirit (of Israel). So, we can look at that and understand carnal human nature and why God sent them into captivity. But their example

that we're to look at and realize the punishment that was upon them, the things that took place, the invasion that took place that God allowed, obviously, reflected the fact of how horrible they were in doing what they had done.

But people who have gone back to Sunday worship, people who have gone back to various other things as far as holidays are concerned is far, far worse because they had God's spirit.

So anyway, that was the purpose of going through some of that, to show the things of the existence of evil, especially when we can look at stories in the Old Testament. But sometimes we don't realize that things that we have done in God's Church that led up to the Apostasy, as an example, are far, far worse on a spiritual plane.

So, toward the end of that sermon two weeks ago we had started through the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and reflecting a little bit on how Herbert Armstrong used to go through the story toward the end, latter days of his life. There are a lot of people in the Church who didn't get what he was saying. When he would go through and talk about the two trees they really didn't get it, that each time he went through it he was adding something to it as far as the story was concerned.

He was always very excited about it, about the story, because of what God was showing him, what he was seeing on a spiritual plane that he hadn't seen before. And yet there are so many people who didn't get it, and even people making comments that they were tired of listening to him: "He's just repeating himself," an old man going through the two trees. Incredible.

So again, we began to talk about the choice between the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It was mentioned toward the end of *Part 2* because of mankind's nature, because of being selfish by nature, all have followed the same way choosing for or deciding for, if you will, ourselves what is good and what is evil.

So, man has the capacity for doing good things. Just like some who are responding to the things that are taking place because of the fires in Maui and there are people who step up, come forward, and help people that are in trouble, and that's a good thing. There are people who do good things as far as what we as human beings would call good.

But when it comes to showing them God's way of life that's where the brakes come on because they won't do it. They won't live it; they won't accept what God shows unless or until the time that God begins to draw them by the power of His spirit. That's how those of us in the Church have come along because God draws us by the power of His holy spirit. He opens our mind and helps us to begin to see and understand things that the world can't.

And so, they really haven't been given that kind of a choice yet to see what truly is good until God begins to work with them. Then hence the Millennium and what's coming when that begins to be opened up to all the world. Because mankind has to be humbled first. And all of us, we have to be humbled before God can begin to work with us, before He can begin to draw us toward Him and begin to reveal things to us if that's a part of His purpose.

So again here, two trees just showing there are two ways of life, there are two ways of thinking, and candidly, we can't understand that the one isn't really good when you talk about good and evil because it's a mixture. And when it comes to God, mankind won't do it because the nature of mankind is enmity with God. That's our spirit, that's our mind because we're selfish by nature. We experience that in God's Church whether it be in schools when it's time to take our children out for the Feast, or on the job when it's time to ask for the Sabbath off.

We've had a couple of people here recently, one who's desiring to come back, working toward that process, and talking about job problems, job situations, and telling them, "I'm not going to be back here on the Sabbath. I'm not going to work on the Sabbath." And so, we know what that's like. They don't appreciate it. They don't want to do it. Sunday is one thing, if you had a belief in that they might work with you a little more readily if you had a strong belief. But as a whole even that they don't want to do.

So, today we're going to move on here. Genesis 3; continue into the story of Genesis here. What an incredible thing when God begins to show us our true nature. This is one of the things God has been doing this past year, is helping us to see more clearly what our nature is really like, to understand selfishness, to understand this battle that we really have, and the choice that there is if we want to fight against that if we want God's way. Because it's a battle. Because within us, within selfishness it isn't good, it isn't good at all.

Genesis 3:1—Now the serpent was more subtle than any creature of the field which the Eternal God had made. He said to the woman, Indeed, so this is what he's saying, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? You know, what an incredible thing sometimes different ways that people are tried and tested and things that are stated. It depends on our state of mind how we might respond.

But notice here how she responded. **So the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God has said...** So she knew. She's relating the story here, "We're not to touch. We're not to take part of it." **You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, unless/otherwise you will die.** Now, it's not talking about a physical death here.

So the serpent said to the woman, You will not die. Yet every human being was made so that they could die physically and therein is part of the dilemma of the human mind and how people reason around things. But I'm not going to go into that today.

But the serpent said, You will not die. For God does know that in the day you eat of it then your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods. Now, this is kind of unique because to this point in time, they hadn't been tried or tested, they hadn't had any thinking of doing something different than what God had said.

When you think of the angelic realm and what they did we don't know how much time. From the sounds of it, from the way it's expressed in various things, so much of the creation had already taken place and the angelic world had a part in that. We don't know fully what that is, God hasn't shown us yet what that is, but they were a part of what God was doing throughout the universe when He began to create things. They had their part in it, and they rejoiced in what God was creating.

So, to be in a spirit world and not see anything that was created physically we can't comprehend that because we haven't experienced that. But all they had was a spirit world in which they existed when they were created until God began to create something on a physical plane in the universe. They were excited. But how much time went by until finally one, and the most blessed one, if you will, in many ways, who was given the most, Lucifer... He was given more than the others. He was given more than the other two archangels, and God makes that very clear. But in time at some point he became jealous if you will, he became upset with God, that God said He was going to create something greater than the angels, the Godkind, if you will, Elohim.

So, at whatever point that transpired and at whatever point he rebelled, again, we don't know how long they were involved in things in the universe, in things in the creation. Millions, billions of years? We really don't know. But it didn't happen overnight, and it didn't happen at the click of a finger. God made it very clear when He started recreating things on the earth there were six days, six days of work that had to go into the various things of creation, of different kinds of life as well that God put on the earth, but restructuring things that were already existing.

So again, there is a lot we don't know about these kinds of things. How God brought those things into existence in the universe, and what the angel's part was in it, we don't know. But a long time went by until he sinned.

But here, Adam and Eve, they were kind of neutral, if you will, in the beginning, because they had a nature, but they didn't grasp what that nature was by any measure, so it was pretty easy pickings for Satan when Satan came along and began to jab. "God said you can't eat of every tree?" "Yeah, we can eat of every tree, but God says of this tree we can't, or we'll

die.” It was just something that was clear to her. God said don’t do it, He created us, He made us. Didn’t take very long and the story starts.

The serpent said to the woman, You will not die. For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes will be opened. Why is that? This isn’t a physical thing; this was a spiritual thing. It’s about the way we are. They hadn’t come to that point yet where their eyes being opened wasn’t a good thing. It was a decision they made. They made a decision to go against God. Basically, Satan knew this.

You will be as gods. In other words, God determines right from wrong. God is the one who determines so you can be like God. You can decide what is right and wrong, what’s good and what’s bad. And you know what? Every human being does that every day. We still have battles with that, deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong.

We still have some, up to a few weeks ago anyway, still having a problem with decisions I made about Covid for the sake of the Church, for our being able to come together in fellowship. So, a ruling was made. And since the individual had the audacity to say some of the things, I’ll just share a little bit of what he had to say, though he says he’s repented now, and we’ll see as time goes along here. But basically felt that maybe I was being paid by the pharmaceuticals. Anyway, that came out of his mouth which means it had to come out of his mind.

I don’t know if I ought to tell the other ones or not. My wife says don’t tell. Okay. Why not? Basically, he called God’s apostle a “dumbass.” Well, I’ve been called that before. One individual one time from Ambassador College, the one I’ve made comments about in times past, when we were in the Toledo area all the assignments for the Feast had been given out for speaking and he thought because he was an Ambassador College graduate that he should have been given something to say or to be able to speak during the Feast, and basically asked me, “Who do you think you are?” Well, I knew who I was. I was the minister of the area. He just failed to grasp that.

But later on, he’d sent me an email one time saying that “I’m not calling you Balaam’s ass but...” The point being, that’s what he was saying, okay, which is a donkey. Of course, we know that. He wanted to make it a little milder. I don’t think the other individual meant it to be mild, however.

But decisions we make, we can evaluate things because we think we’re right. We think that it’s okay to speak out against things that are done within the Church. That’s why I always marvel at number one for Herbert Armstrong, recognized for government, the fourth truth. Three out of Sardis. The first one, in that respect, which I fully believe was inspired by God to be listed as number one, because when they began to put together that structure of the 18 Truths to me it wasn’t an accident that that was chosen as number one, government.

Because we need to grasp how God works in our lives then, and many in the Church through time haven't or they have forgotten it or lost it at some point, because God works in a very orderly and systematic way, and here is a part of that process. God told Adam and Eve don't partake of this one tree. "Everything else, everything else that's out there, enjoy yourself, live full, but leave that one alone."

Satan comes along, says, "No, you can decide for yourself what's right and what's wrong, what's good and what's evil." Mankind has been doing it ever since because of our nature because we're selfish by nature. We decided for ourselves. We think we're right about everything we do as a whole. That's just the way we are. But that's sometimes a very hard thing for people to come to grips with. "I think, I believe I'm right about decisions I make." Individuals who don't agree with me? Anyway, that's a lot of our battle.

So it goes on to say here, **Now, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food...** She starts looking at it because he's trying to get her to think about it. "Look, this is what you'll be able to do once you do it. Who do you believe? God?"

That's a choice that's given to us in the Church. What do we believe? Why do we believe it? Do we believe what God has given to us? Are we in agreement with God? Because that's what it always boils down to, are we really in agreement with God or is it something we are deciding on our own or we're coming into agreement with someone else who thinks differently than what we've been told? That's the history of God's Church. The majority have chosen to go that way. Awesome to understand that.

Many have been called and few out of that have ever been chosen. That's kind of mind-boggling. We don't have to look too far in this age because of what happened during Laodicea to realize that's true. But even during PKG, we've had many times more people go and leave than people who have stayed. That's the way it's always been in God's Church - many more have decided to leave, to go for whatever reasons.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food... She made her own choice, "It's good; it's not bad." ...and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired... Isn't this the very thing that gets us, "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes," and then we begin to make our own decision of what's right and wrong, "the pride of life." This is what we are! But it seems like it's so hard for people to come to grips with sometimes.

...that was pleasant to the eyes, a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit of it and did eat, and also gave to her husband with her, and he did eat. Then the eyes of them both were opened. So, we have to understand what that means "Their eyes were opened." It means something changed in the mind; it started a process that would be that way from then on for every human being because it was going to happen inevitably in time.

Lucifer, what happened to him, that happened in a different manner, but because over a long period of time then he did make a choice because of something he didn't like that God stated about the creation that was going to come and he rebelled against that, fought against that, got a third of the angels to follow him because of what can happen when people begin to speak and talk about various aspects of something and put doubt in their minds.

He was already a professional at this. He had already done it in the angelic realm. Human beings were nothing to him. Because of our physical makeup, it was easy to get her to do what he did. It wasn't a hard thing for him. So, it probably happened very quickly on because that's the way we are as human beings. It's just natural.

So, without Satan being around it wouldn't have taken very long for them to have chosen to do wrong in the first place, it's just that God allowed Satan to be there to do what he was going to do. And God already knew that, what he would do. God knew that he would begin to try to turn them away because they had already tried to destroy the earth in the first place. So, God allowed him to do it very early on to teach us.

That's why Herbert Armstrong got so excited when he started going through this because he saw what we are able to see in an easier way today than what people could see back in the late seventies, I'd say early eighties, the early eighties when he started talking about some of these things. Because where the Church was at that point in time in understanding of various things it was coming along, we were growing, but that's a long process.

Because of going through the Apostasy, going through Laodicea, and being where we are now, we've been very blessed to see things on a spiritual plane that we couldn't see back in some of those times in Philadelphia. We just weren't there yet until we went through some of the things we had to go through later on. God has blessed us to see more and more on a spiritual plane.

So, that's why Herbert Armstrong got so excited when he saw these things because what he saw was spiritual. The Church was still—maybe we can better grasp it that way too—the Church was still not at a point of being able to grasp that fully even after all the sermons he gave about it. He gave a lot of sermons. Every time he got up and spoke, in the last many times that he did, it was about the two trees, as a whole, always adding something new to it that he could see on a spiritual plane because God was working with him to see those things.

I'd say very few really grasped what he was talking about because, at the same time, he was also asking the Church, "Do ten percent of you even get it?" Because before that, not too long before that, he was saying, "Do fifty percent of you get it?" Then toward the end, it was down to "Do ten percent...?"

Because he saw the spirit of Laodicea. He saw it already in the ministry because that's where his contacts were. He wasn't able to go out into the congregations and visit with people. He was too busy. He had too much going on. He had too many people to take care of right in headquarters as far the different departments were concerned, those administrators and the evangelists and so forth. He saw this already within the ministry. God gave it to him to ask those things, to see those things.

So, we can read through something like this and, well, we see it. Because we've already talked about these things in times past and you're able to understand and know what these things are about on a spiritual plane.

So she gave it to her husband. Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. What an incredible thing, things that happen in the carnal human mind and why they were concerned about that. It's one of the major weaknesses of human beings, this thing about others, things about sex, and so forth. It's truly one of the primary weaknesses and things that have been screwed up by human beings.

Look at the world today. People don't know what they are. People don't know who they are. And you think, how could this be? Now, things happened that were bad back in the times of Noah, things happened that were bad during the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, but today because of technology we've passed that up. This stuff is so rampant, and they try to shove it down your throat.

I don't know that you can see a show on TV anymore without seeing different people kissing. Commercials. They show it in commercials. They encourage people, "Get this drug so that you don't have to worry about anything. You don't have to worry about the penalties of sin, you know, the things that will come on you as human beings, because we have a pill you can take to protect yourself from it, so you can live ever how you want to live." What a sick world!

...and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings to wear. It was God's purpose in time, which He did later and showed them various things that they could do for making of clothing and the like. But there were only two then. Because with human beings that had to become, that had to come into play as time went along. But they didn't wait. They decided for themselves.

Verse 22—The Eternal God said, Behold, again, this is an incorrect translation. It's not specifically only "the man," Adam here, but it's about mankind. **The Eternal God says, Behold, the man/mankind,** if you will, **is,** not "become as" but **is one.** It's really what it's saying. **The Eternal God said, Behold the mankind is one.** It's a word that means "first."

Mankind will see itself placing its own ways first. In other words, it's about a spiritual thing that happens in the mind as being number one. "I'm number one." "I know what's best." "I

decide what's good and evil. God is not number one. God is not first." That's the contrast that's being made here. It's not saying, "**become as one of us**," at all. It doesn't even say that in the Hebrew.

Verse 22 again here, **Behold... The Eternal God said, Behold, the mankind is one to know good and evil.** In other words, to decide for self what is good and what is bad. **And now, lest they put forth their hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever...** Now, there are things in this God still hasn't revealed, but He's using these to teach some very basic things here.

It was always a part of His plan that mankind would be made physical, that mankind would be made subject to self, to sin. That's the way we are because of our nature because we wouldn't have God's nature. So, being a part of that plan then that this is the way mankind was going to be, this matter of the tree of life, which is about the ability to have God's spirit living and dwelling within us.

"Unless they take a hold of that and live forever," well, obviously that wasn't God's purpose that that was going to take place anyway. But it's given here as something simple and basic to look at, to say, "Okay, there is a tree of good and evil, that's the way mankind is, and yet there is that which gives life and can lead to eternal life."

And so, in time God gave mankind understanding of that, but candidly, for four thousand years, as a whole, people haven't understood this. But God gave it through Christ to the Church.

Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out mankind and He placed in the east the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way to the tree of life. So again here, access to God. It's about access to God. It's about access to God's spirit. It's about the ability to have God's spirit coming into our life, as a whole. Except for those whom God called, it wasn't going to happen for four thousand, well, nearly four thousand years later.

So, a reminder, a scripture like **Revelation 2:7**, you can just jot it down, referring to the first era of the Church, speaking of Ephesus. **Whoever has an ear, let them hear what the spirit says to the Churches. To those who overcome will I give to eat of the tree of life.** So, it's about what God gives to us spiritually that He's talking about here and, **which is in the midst of the paradise, the garden of God.**

So, it's not about a garden somewhere where here these trees are growing and here are all these plants and so forth. There are those things that God says, "This is what comes from Me." That's why we've talked about in times past, that what God has described as being the

Garden of Eden, the true, in the sense of that which is in heaven, of being in God's presence and the power and the life that God has to give, these things are given as physical examples to strive to grasp something on a spiritual plane.

Again here, in **Genesis 3:24 ... a flaming sword was turned every way to keep the way to the tree of life.** So, was there some tree of life up there or somewhere on earth? That's not what it's about. It's about what God is showing that there is that which produces fruit. God allows that, gives that as an analogy, and He's saying there is that which will give life.

We understand within God's Church that is a matter of God. It's a matter of what God gives to us through the power of His holy spirit. That's why I love what He gave to us at one Feast when He let us know that there is coming that time that never existed in the angelic realm; God never dwelt in the angelic realm. He doesn't dwell in angels, but He dwells in the beginning of those He calls. We're begotten of His holy spirit, and He dwells in us through the power of His holy spirit, the tree of life. As long as we are living what we should be doing, God allows that spirit, desires to give us of that spirit, and we continue to grow and produce fruit ourselves.

So, very physical example here speaking of something on a spiritual plane, just as Herbert Armstrong came to see about the first parts of Genesis there. So, when it talks about "the paradise of God," it's the same word "garden of God."

...the tree of life which is in the midst of the garden. So, there is not some literal tree. I think of Avatar. They always have this tree thing somewhere that has this mystical type of life in it, and if you can just be plugged into it.

You think about what a spirit world has done to have something out there like that and so much that's in the world anyway has stuff like that in it, kind of mind-boggling. But it's like this power.

But from God it's just what God offers mankind, to dwell in us forever. Awesome. We can only taste of it now and when we sin we get cut off from the flow of that spirit. But as spirit beings in God's Family, we're never going to be cut off from it. God will always be in us. Beautiful.

Genesis 6:5—The Eternal God saw that the wickedness, so often translated just as "evil." ... saw that the wickedness/evil of mankind was great in the earth and every imagination, meaning "the intent, the thoughts, the way people think, the purpose of what people want to do and why they want to do it," of their thoughts of their heart was only evil continually.

Well, what does that mean? Well, it got worse and worse as time went along, but it's showing something that, again, is extremely hard even in God's Church sometimes to come to grasp, that selfishness is evil. It's not God's way, it's about our way. It's what Eve chose in the very

beginning. It's what Adam chose in the very beginning. "Our way is okay; we can decide what is right and wrong."

The reality is, no, we can't. We must choose to be in agreement and unity with God because we agree with and believe everything He shows us because He's God; He knows what's best for us. How pompous of us to think something else? Do we want that? Do we want what He offers us?

Sometimes I'm blown over by how much we've been given and by how great that struggle can still be in so many minds. That's why it's hard to grasp how far we can sometimes go when people don't get along. Our carnal, human nature, it's evil. It is wicked.

Now, there is greater evil and greater wickedness, if you will, that can come out of us through times, obviously. We can look at things like, well, look at some of the things mentioned in last week's sermon, different things that were made there. Let's say, there's one here about murder. There's one about adultery. There is one about being a drunkard. So, which is the greater evil? Is that the question? They're all evil and God says whoever lives those and practices those things will not be in the Kingdom of God!

So, we can be in God's Church, and we can be impregnated with God's holy spirit, but we have to make choices of certain things in our life that we recognize are evil and we don't want them in us. And so, we don't have a choice to do certain things in our life. We don't have a choice to murder. We don't have a choice to hate someone. We don't have a choice to be jealous of someone. We don't have a choice to have drama and be of an unforgiving spirit to someone in God's Church or in the world. We don't have that as a choice.

If we want to be at one with God there is a way we are supposed to think and it's in unity and oneness and agreement with God. It is a matter of a forgiving spirit, of an understanding spirit, of a willingness to sacrifice our own way, which is what started with Eve, went to Adam and every human being since that time, our way, "my" way, "I want my way! If I don't get my way we're not going to get along," and that's the way we are as human beings.

So, when that sermon was being given, even Laura talked about it afterward, about certain things there, that sometimes we don't recognize there is evil. But evil is evil. We're to fight against evil, and if we can see something that's evil in our life and call it evil we should want to get rid of it. Evil is evil.

It's not a matter of measuring, "Well, murder is worse than adultery." No, they're both bad. They're both wrong. Can human beings do greater heinous things, if you will? If that's the right way of saying it. More heinous than other things in their life, than other people? Yes. So, there are things that are far more ugly and easier for us to see as human beings but still evil

is evil. God has called us to get rid of it all, to fight against it, to search it out in our lives, to repent of it.

Our life is not like the lives of those in the world who live whatever they want to live and the kind of junk they want to throw at us on TV or whatever it might be, or in music. Those ways are not a choice for us. That's why drama is not a choice for us. It really isn't a choice. We're to get rid of it. What are we to have instead? Peace.

Peace is a beautiful thing with God. I understand more deeply why the longer I live; and with God's spirit living in me the more I can see that and understand that and desire that for everyone, desire that kind of peace, God's kind of peace. I think of the word "Jerusalem." You think of some of the things God has given us to hold on to, to desire, and it's about peace.

God knows. Not just because He knows it but even more so because of what was created and what happened. He knew it was going to happen. He was ready to sacrifice peace. By creating angelic beings He knew that there would be those who would turn against Him. He knew that in time there would be those who would make that decision and the moment they made it their minds were changed forever.

They don't have minds like we do that we might think it over and decide, "Well, I really don't want to do that. I shouldn't have done that," and apologize for it, or in our case, repent of it. We have unique minds because we're in a carnal human body and we have this portion of God's spirit that works in a spirit essence in our mind. We can make choices like that for a time. Not forever. There comes a time when we make too many choices the wrong way and our minds can become set like Lucifer's did when it changed to Satan instantly.

Ours takes more time to become set and evil but there are people who have been called into God's Church, and that's happened to them. They've already been judged. We'll get into some of that later on. So, sin sometimes as human beings, to grasp it, evil is far more serious than oftentimes we give recognition to it, understanding to it.

So, there are certain things that really when it's said and done are not a choice for us as human beings. Our choice is to repent. Our choice is to fight against it. Our choice is to cry out to God for help of His holy spirit to help us to accomplish that because we learn we can't do it on our own. We're incapable as human beings of changing this mind and the way we think. But with God's spirit, our thinking can change.

That's a beautiful thing, Romans 12, when it talks about the mind can be transformed, become something different, something new. To me, you talk about hope. What greater hope is there than to know that we don't have to be selfish, that we can change and learn to love

the way God says to do in a sacrificing kind of way? Because that's what it takes for human beings to love God's way is to sacrifice. We have to sacrifice something in us, in our thinking.

Anyway, these are such beautiful things if we can grasp them and embrace them and live them and cry out to God for help to live them and have true peace and true love toward each other to where we value each other. Just in the Church, and that's the primary place we're judged, in the Body of Christ, to truly love one another, to love each other, to desire the best for each other, to want to see each other succeed. That should be our spirit, our mind, to see each other succeed.

I want to see everyone who's a part of God's Church come through this, either into a new age, into the Millennium and continue on, or become part of that 144,000. We should want that for each other. Who doesn't want that for each other?

So again, important to read this, **Genesis 6:5—The Eternal saw that the wickedness, the evil if you will, of mankind was great in the earth, and every imagination, the thinking...** He's saying it's always selfish. Every thought and imagination it's about self, and when we see that, the more we see that, the more repulsive it actually becomes in our own thinking and seeing it in the thinking of others. But we have to be careful there how we judge then, how we react and respond.

...of the thoughts of their heart was only evil, and the word is **every day/continually**. That's what it's saying, every day, daily. It's just, it's there. Why? Because selfishness is evil. Lust is evil. Lust for things of others or for others, God calls it what it is, it's just evil. We have a choice whether we engage in those things, or we fight against those things, whether we succumb to it or say no to it. Some of that can be very great for the human mind so we have to ask God for help. There's a battle that takes place because it's on a spiritual plane.

...continually. It's not the words, **"It repented the Lord."** That's not the Hebrew at all. **The Eternal sorrowed**. It's a word that means "to console oneself." How do you deal with this now? How can I deal with this? How am I going to deal with this and judge this in a right way at this point?

Not **"that He had made."** That's not even in the Hebrew. But it's **...how to console oneself, sorrowed because of**, as it says here, **in making mankind on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart**. So, it was that which it was painful to see.

Now, how many of us do this when we see certain decisions sometimes that people make? That's what it's talking about. When you want something so much for someone that it hurts you when you see they make the wrong choice, that's what it's talking about here. God loves us. He loves us with a love that's hard for us to really grasp fully. But the more we can grow in

that and understand that toward others and our place is within the Body of the Church, and if we can see that in our relationships with others then when someone comes along...

I think of different ones who have made different choices, and I have to say for myself, it hurts. It's painful here because why? Because I'd have loved to have seen them continue the fight. I'd love to see them continue as Family. But the majority have left. But this is the kind of thing that it's talking about, that God is expressing here. It pained Him to see mankind doing what he was doing over and over.

It is a frustrating thing. You look at the world and the choices people are making out there, and today it's so bad there is no soundness of mind hardly at all anymore. It's painful to see people living like this, getting worse. Candidly, it's like at this point in time, I'm almost afraid to say it. "Can it get worse?" And every time I think that, it gets worse. You see what people are doing and how people are thinking, and you think, how much more?

That's why I think of righteous Lot, as it talks about, vexed his righteous soul day by day because of what he saw taking place in Sodom and Gomorrah and how people were living and the squalor and the filthy minds. It tore him up because he saw what people were doing with their lives, with their minds. We should have that toward one another within the Body, where there is absolute peace within the Body.

Toward the world, we know it's going to continue to get worse and we know the only solution, the only answer. Matter of fact, that should have become magnified in your mind over the last year because of everything you see out here, that you can't wait to see Christ return. You're anxious to see him come back, anxious to see him come back and stop the evil that's in this world, that's gotten so out of control, to put an end to it. Say no more. But it's going to get a whole lot more evil before it's over.

...the Eternal sorrowed in making mankind on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart. It wasn't saying, "I've made a mistake and I shouldn't have done it." Sometimes people think that when they read it because of the way it's written. It's not being said at all. It's just it hurts when people make the wrong choices. It hurts when I see people leave the Church. They don't know what they're doing. They don't know how dangerous a thing that they have done and what it might mean for their future.

Because most deceive themselves so much that they think they're going to be able to continue on or do their own thing and whatever happens in the mind, that God's going to bless them with eternal life in time their way. Doesn't work that way. It's God's way, only God's way.

Verse 7—Then the Eternal said, I will destroy mankind whom I have created from the face of the earth, of both mankind and animal and moving thing and fowl of the air, for it

makes Me sorrowful that I have made them. In other words, "I'll console Myself in having made them."

So, this thing of having a thousand - nine hundred and some years that people could live - I can't imagine how set the mind becomes in that length of time in the way a person, a being, a human being is.

So, what an incredible thing here, **Now, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Eternal.** You think of all the people there was one that God felt, knew that He could work with. Mind-boggling! It had gotten that bad to where there was one that could be drawn, that could be worked with, and the rest of mankind, no. Except He allowed his family to come along, and what did they do?

This is a mind-boggling story to me. You think of the sons, and they were upset. They were upset with their father, they were upset with God for what had happened to all their friends, to everything else that had taken place on the earth, and that God had destroyed everything. Couldn't get over it. That's a mind-boggling thing to think of what took place in their thinking after everything they witnessed.

Well, you'd think even the Israelites, when they came through the Red Sea that would have done something. But it didn't. We've been given a whole lot more in the Church and sometimes it doesn't phase people at all to go ahead and turn away from it.

So, I'll just read this verse to you, **2 Peter 2:5—and He spared not the old world but saved Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness.** So, through all this time he was the eighth through whom God worked to do some of the things that had taken place, and here finally going to be the last one before the flood then. ...**bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.**

Genesis 6:9, continuing on here now. **These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and complete, "sound" as it were, in his generations as Noah walked with God.** So, it just showed that he was the one that God could work with. He was the last one at this point in time and the only one that God was going to bring through this. God was going to change the lifecycle of mankind from this point on, to take it away from being several hundred years and slowly but surely down to a time that God said, basically, three score and ten, seventy years.

Now, Noah had begotten three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt, or it means, in ruin before God, and the earth was filled with violence. You think, look at it today. Everywhere you look and the kind of evil that's out there, the kind of things that are going on in politics, the kinds of things going on in governments, it just turns your stomach.

This is happening all over the world. I was amazed to watch, and I wish I could remember the one country. There are two countries out there that are almost a duplicate in politics of what is happening here in the States. Incredible! There are spirit beings out there who have a tremendous power right now, and these are the things they're doing.

And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, or means "to be going in ruin." It's going the way of ruin. **For all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.** So again, it's the way of mankind. It's the way we are, and if God doesn't save us, we don't have a chance because we're just carnal, we're selfish. Thank God He has a plan for us and why He created us and put us here. That's what gives us the hope we have in the Body, in the Church.

So, as was stated in this series we focused on how evil began with Lucifer once he sinned, once evil had taken hold of his thinking, his thoughts, and he became the adversary of God, he became Satan the devil. As it's been stated, Lucifer was created in spirit essence as a being, as an angel, but he was never begotten of God.

That's something that to me is one of the greatest things, in that respect, to understand what happened and why and what can happen to human beings, to understand that difference in spirit that once spirit composition turns against God in the angelic realm, once their mind is seared, their mind is that way forever because that's their choice in a way that God gives us the ability through physical life, through a different kind of way, there is a spirit essence in the mind that gives us the ability. But we're not spirit, and we have the ability to repent and to change. I mean, you have to be in awe of that, that God created us in such a manner in order to create Elohim. It just glorifies God in a very powerful way.

Let's turn over to Deuteronomy 30. So again, this matter of focusing upon, building upon in that respect, those whom God has called and those who later then turn against Him, who become adversarial to His Church, to Christ, and thereby become antichrist.

We have really never grasped that to this degree until after the Apostasy and understood then what antichrist meant. That's why there used to be this thought within the Church there would be a great religious leader who would deceive everyone in the world and deceive, work at deceiving God's own Church in an apostasy, but it was looked upon as being that big church in Rome, and that individual in Rome would be the antichrist.

And not until after the Apostasy and coming to understand some of these things in a deeper way did we come to see that no, anyone who has been given of God's spirit and turns against God's way, turns against Christ and the calling that's been given to us, becomes antichrist. Yet there would be one who would be the man of sin, the son of perdition who would turn everything that had been given as far as responsibility over the Church away from God. Holy Days, you name it, Sabbath.

Again, we couldn't understand those things until we went through them and then God let us see this is what this was all about, this is what antichrist really is.

But I think of people in the Church who become antichrist. Everyone who's ever left began to work against Christ. Christ died so we could be called, so that this mind could be transformed. But if we make a choice to turn away from it, from what God called us into? He calls us into the Church. He calls us into the Body of Christ. To think what happens in the mind when people turn against that to become antichrist, adversarial to God again because it has to become adversarial to truths that it had received.

Sometimes it's almost as difficult to try to grab a hold of it as it is to think the Israelites came through the Red Sea, they came on the other side, and how on earth they could start complaining and griping and moaning and finding fault with Moses and with God. It boggles the mind. Here they saw the Egyptians destroyed, those who were going to come after them and kill them, and they were saved from that. Rather than rejoicing and being thankful and saying, "Look! God's blessed us and we've been saved, and if God can do that God can take care of us here in the wilderness." You'd think that that would be the thinking, but it wasn't.

And so, you think about people in the Church, given everything that we have, all the truths, understanding of the Apostasy, that we actually had an apostasy, how on earth could you leave and go out to some other groups or do something different and they don't believe there was an apostasy. "And yet you were convicted that there was an apostasy. There was a man of sin."

It shows what the mind, what can happen to the mind when you start becoming adversarial to what God gives to us. There's an incredible danger in that.

So, that's really a lot of reason for this particular series here, is for us to come to understand we all have things to fight within ourselves, and what is not of God is evil. Selfishness is evil. We have to engage, choose to engage in the battle against that in a greater way. That's what God wants us to do at this time, to see it more fully for what it is and to engage in the battle more fully ourselves to fight against our own nature, to see the evil.

Because there are still going to be people over the next year who are going to be separated from the Body of Christ. We've already had three recently. So where does it end? Well, that's up to each one of us.

So, evil is just evil. How do you describe something that sometimes the world doesn't look upon it as being evil. That's why I think of that scripture that speaks of (that I mentioned last Sabbath), "call good evil and evil good." I mean, that's how crazy things are in the world. But sometimes this happened within the church, the environment of the Church. And you think, how is this possible? Just as with the two trees, there are two ways of life. That's what it is

and that's what Herbert Armstrong was talking about. There's a give way and there's a get way, and the one is simply evil.

Deuteronomy 30:9—The Eternal your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Eternal will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers. Now, here is a point where in Deuteronomy where the law is being given again. That's what "Deuteronomy" means, "the second giving," if you will, "of the law." Second law. It's the same law, it's the second giving of it.

This is toward the end of the forty years now. They're getting ready to go into the promised land. So, that's what the book of Deuteronomy is about. Moses is reminding the Israelites of these things. God is giving it to him to remind them and to show them what's happened over the forty years now, over that period of time what they have done, to hopefully learn from it before they go into the promised land.

For the Eternal will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Eternal your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes. It seems like a pretty simple thing. But it really isn't. It just wasn't with them as carnal human beings. You look at the history of the judges. You look at the history of the kings. Then you look at the separation of the north and the south and then the north from that point on always off base, always away from God.

I look at the Church and the things that have happened in the Church. When I think of those things I think that which is far worse are all those over the last two thousand years who went right back into the world for whatever reasons, not grasping what God had given. Not really the best way of putting it. Sometimes we are able to grasp it because God gives it to us but not valuing it. That's the difference. We have to value it. If we really want it we have to fight for it. It's just not given to us on a silver platter and then we can do whatever we like, ever how we like. We have to do it God's way. There is a way that God shows us how to do that - Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day in His Church.

For the Eternal will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Eternal your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in the book of the law, and if you turn to the Eternal your God with all your heart... You know, when I go through this I think of the sermon series we talked about being a man after God's own heart as David was. That should be our prayer, our desire, to have that kind of an attitude and a heart. To see all that we see, how can one help but love God and hold on to those truths that He's given to us? And yet people don't. Mind-boggling!

...if you turn to the Eternal your God with all your heart, and with all of your soul. So again, this is only possible if God calls a person. But for us? Again, they couldn't do this. They

were really incapable of it. The message is more for the Church, obviously, and as so much is in the Old Testament. Because they were incapable of doing any of this on a spiritual plane.

Verse 11—For this commandment which I command you today is not hidden from you, nor is it far off. Is it not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very near you.

So, he's just reminding them to look what God's done over these forty years in bringing you out of Egypt, taking care of you in the wilderness for forty years by miraculous means, providing manna. Knowing human nature, people got pretty tired of manna. You think of this day and age if that's the primary thing we had to eat?

But the word is very near you. So, it's like, do you see what you've been given? That's what's being asked: Do you see what you've been given? Do you grasp that here is your God, He's given through Moses all the truth, all the things that you have about God, about a nation, about promises that He's going to fulfill for you in taking you into a promised land?

But the word is very near you in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. So I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. The whole point of this is this is the choice. When God calls us into the Church it's to life, real life. Not drama but life that's a matter of peace, a matter of how people think toward each other in right ways, where there is peace that leads to all good. Everything that's good, that tastes good in the sense of everything we drink in in life, rich in life.

Then there's the other, death and evil. The reality is if we don't get rid of the evil death is what's there. That's so hard sometimes for people to grasp even within God's Church. And yet there are so many that are going to have to face that reality.

Verse 16—In that, I command you today to love the Eternal your God, to walk in His ways. You think about this one, being told with a carnal mind to "love the Eternal your God." They couldn't grasp that fully. But even on a physical plane there should have been a better response. Even on a physical plane after everything that God had done there should have been a better response.

...to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments.

That's why it's such an incredible thing to see what happened to the ten tribes in the north. They got away from it all and they never tried to go back to any of it, as a whole. Now, there are a few that stayed, but as a whole, it was Judah, Benjamin, and Levi primarily, some of Benjamin, but mixed together with Judah in the south. Primarily Judah.

And yet they've always been known for something that in many ways has to be admired. They kept track of the Sabbath. They kept track of the Holy Days; though they did it in their own way in time, they never let it go because of all these experiences and the history, the rich history that's written about them. Incredible.

In that, I command you today to love the Eternal your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His commandments, His statutes, His judgments, that you may live. So again, this message is to the Church. This message is to people who have the capacity, the ability to truly love God, to keep His commandments. They didn't. Now, they were supposed to strive to in a physical plane in order to receive physical blessings, but this is a message far beyond.

And so it says, "Keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live." They were all going to die. This is about God's people. This is about those who have the capacity once we're called in order to live. It's talking about not just a physical life, it's talking about everlasting life, because this is what leads to it.

...that you may live and multiply; and the Eternal your God... So, it's about what we're able to produce and multiply in our lives by living God's way. It will never cease. We're supposed to be producing fruit now in our lives, but what we produce in the future we don't even comprehend.

...and the Eternal your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. So what was happening to them on a physical plane is a picture of something we're supposed to grasp on a spiritual plane, of that which is far greater into that which God promises us, to inherit all things with Christ.

And if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them...? To. The. Church. Physical? Yes. And these things happen on a physical plane. But this is to us spiritually. **I declare to you today that you will surely perish.** It's not about a physical death, it's about death forever.

You will not prolong your days or your time, in other words, in the Hebrew, "will not be extended," **in the land in which you cross over the Jordan to possess.** So again, a physical thing as a reminder to them, but we have the ability through a calling God has given to us to prolong our days. That's what it's all about. That we are able to grab hold of life that God offers us and have everlasting life. We can't comprehend that. But is it worth fighting for or do we want something temporary?

That's why my mind is boggled when I think of people that make the stupidest choices in life sometimes, of something so trivial! How long is it going to last? What you're leaving God's Church for, how long is this going to last you? Don't you grasp life is fleeting? Yeah, you can go out and enjoy something, but will you ever be able to come back? Do you think you can just

choose at some point later on, “Well, I’ll go back later on,” or “In the Great White Throne I’ll go back?” Will you? Can you?

People don’t know what they do to their minds sometimes by making bad choices. It’s all a matter of choices, and nothing is owed to us. That’s something that God is showing us that’s leading up to the Feast this year, nothing is owed to us. But it’s our choice to love God, to be able to love God, to treasure what He’s placed before us, to agree with everything He’s placed before us, to want to be of the same mind. That takes work!

We can’t become unselfish without a lot of work fighting against this and our stinking rotten minds that are selfish by nature, and candidly, evil. There is that portion of our life that lives in us. We all have it. Selfishness is evil because it’s of Satan. That’s the source.

That’s what God is helping us to grasp more and more, selfishness, our way, our choosing what’s right and wrong for us, going against something God has told us to do, it’s evil. Anything against God is evil. God’s going to destroy everything that’s evil. That’s a part of His plan. Seems like a simple choice, but it escapes too many too often.

“So, if your heart turns away so that you do not hear.” It’s like I tried to reason with a person here recently. Well, I knew it wasn’t going to do any good. “What are you going to do? How did you learn this? How do you know the truths of what’s happened to us since the Apostasy and everything that God has revealed? Where did you get them? Going to do it on your own, you have your own system already set up of how you’re going to accomplish it without the ministry, without God’s apostles, without Sabbath services, without Holy Day services, without the process whereby God teaches us?” That’s insanity, absolute insanity on a spiritual plane.

“And are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them.” So, in the church, it’s they’re leaving but they’re not going to go serve other Gods and so forth and do some of the things that people are doing in the world. Not going to go to Christmas and Easter. But by the very fact that they made the choice they have they’ve made themselves God. That’s the whole point. They’ve made themselves God to decide for themselves right and wrong, good and evil, and God is no longer the authority.

When we decide we don’t need Sabbath services anymore—I was going to say something, but I won’t—we’re up the creek.

Verse 18—I declare to you today that you will surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land when you cross over Jordan and possess. I call heaven and earth as witness against you, that I have set before you life and death. It’s that simple. The life is everlasting life. The death is death forever.

...blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live. So again, those who are from us that we can have impact on and a desire we should have, even within the Body. We're a Family and our desire should be to see each other live, to want that for each other.

...love the Eternal your God, to obey His voice, so that you may cling to Him, for He is your life. What an incredible thing. I mean, it should be obvious, but yes, that's that life. We have it living in us now and in time we get to have that life in us forevermore.

His is your life and the length of your days. So, either our life is in His hands, and we want that life and desire that family, to inherit all things with Christ and everything that God has planned for us, or the length of our days is going to be pretty short.

So that you may dwell in the land which the Eternal swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. Too many people read this and only think of a physical land when they crossed over Jordan, which was actually on both sides of the Jordan that God gave them. But anyway, most of it was on the other side of the Jordan. But that isn't what the primary promise was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That's why Abraham spoke of desiring "the city whose builder and maker is God." That's what he was looking at. He wasn't looking to a physical city like Jerusalem or whatever.

Then on into the next chapter, **Deuteronomy 31:23—Then he, Moses, speaking of Moses, gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge and said, Be strong and courageous.** You know, and that's to all of us because it's about going into the promised land, to go into the land that God has promised from the very beginning of time, that we have potential for, that we are to be strong and courageous indeed. That comes from God, even that.

But to seek that, that God helps us to be strong, to grow stronger spiritually, to have the kind of courage, the kind of mind that's willing to fight. Because it's about fighting for this way of life.

For you will bring the children of Israel into the land which I gave oath unto them, and I will be with you. Now, it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bare the ark of the covenant of the Eternal, saying, **Take this book of the law, and put it in the side the ark of the covenant of the Eternal your God, that it may be there for a witness.** It's not "a witness against you." A witness. You know some of these things are really distorted sometimes when they translate things totally wrong, and that one is totally translated wrong.

So again here, it's about a witness. It's about that which God has given to them that they can have, that's a part of their life, that they can receive from God into their life, and if we can see that on a spiritual plane what this is all about.

Goes on to say, **verse 27—For I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day...** So, God knows us. He knows what's in us. But He's called us to conquer that, to come out of that, and we'll never be fully out of it as long as we're in the physical flesh but at least we're fighting it and growing. That's what it's about until we attain to what God has called us to.

You have been rebellious against the Eternal, and how much more after my death? So again here, showing what's going to happen to them on a physical plane, but I'll tell you these things ring very true in things that have happened within the Church from time to time.

Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to bear witness, of what he's giving them, the truth, to live by it. **For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt/go to ruin and turn aside from the way.** Isn't that a horrible thing to contemplate, that in time this is what's going to happen on a physical plane to them?

And candidly, I can't help but think of the Church and how this is done on a spiritual plane, that there are those, not all as it's referring to primarily back here in the time of Moses because they didn't have God's spirit.

But for the Church to know that people are going to make decisions and the majority are going to turn away from the truth, and that's what we've lived through...or that's what Christ and God have lived through and have watched take place since the Church began in 31 A.D. That's why I think of every year at the Feast of Tabernacles as a whole, I've made these comments, "Next year we won't all be here." Every year! Every year of PKG! Will it be this next year? Yeah, we've just had it these last few weeks here, three people. Crazy!

For I know that after my death you will utterly go to ruin, as it says, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days... And just to the Israelites? When it talks about the latter days it's talking about a specific period of time that God is bringing everything up to, six thousand years of human history, and this is a part of the story.

...because you will do evil in the sight of the Eternal, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands. So, I think of what happened in the Church. God knew exactly what was going to happen through Laodicea, warned the Church what was going to take place, had sermons about a great falling away. We didn't grasp the magnitude of it. We knew that Laodicea was going to come on the scene and that it was a time of being lukewarm. We heard

the cries of Herbert Armstrong when he said, "Do fifty percent get it?" And then later on, those ring in my mind, "Ten percent, do you get it?" toward the end.

"Because you will do evil in the sight of the Eternal." I am dumbfounded by the evil that's been done in the Church at the end of this age. All the ministers that went out and taught the things that they taught. I think of the one organization that was the largest of all of them, that when it was all said and done after the Apostasy, that nearly half their ministry believed in a 14/15 Passover. They can't call it evil, and they don't see it as being evil. And yet sick, perverted, evil. What do you think their judgment is? How do you think God looks upon that? To do something of that magnitude, to go that far, to teach against the truth that God has given.

Do we think a light thing that can easily be forgiven at some point? Because see, it comes back to their choices. Will they repent? That's the problem.

"Because you will do evil in the sight of the Eternal, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." I think of Laodicea. There is no better description on a spiritual plane of what happened in the latter days than this.

Because what the Israelites did was mild, expected; they were carnal. They didn't have God's spirit. They couldn't see things like we see it. But once God gives the Church His mind, a measure of His mind, ability to see things spiritually, an impregnation of His very being inside the mind to grow, and then we turn against things that He's given to us, the truth whereby we're sanctified? We're set apart by the truth. Yet this has happened every year since 31 A.D., that people have left God's Church. It's not a light thing. Evil is evil.

So, Moses spoke in the ears of the congregation of Israel the words of this song until it was completed. So again, it's about that which was given as a song to be sung.

Let's wrap it up here. Going into a different section here because it is about the Church, it is about being able to see, yeah, Israel did a lot of ugly things, yes, Jeroboam did a lot of ugly, stupid things, they went to the north, they didn't want people to go back and hang on to Rehoboam because he was the king in Judah at that point in time when Rehoboam and Jeroboam were kings then and the tribes separated. They didn't want them going back down and keeping the Holy Days because he was afraid, as scripture says, that some would want to hold on to the ways of Judah then and be affiliated with the king, and he was more concerned about himself. So, that's why he was moved to turn away from the Holy Days and the Sabbath.

And so, those things are atrocious but not near as bad as things that God said to the Church that we have to watch out for because we're given of His spirit.

Revelation 2:1, the first Church era. **Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write, These things are said by he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.** It's about Christ. It's about the power that God gave to him and that which was given then from him to give to John even here to write about, is warning to the Church.

I know your works. In other words, what you do, what you live, what you exercise, as the word means. **...and your labor**, your toil. For those who change, conquer, and overcome, you have to work. Fighting by its very nature, by what it says, to conquer, to overcome, as the word is, to conquer means you're in a battle and you have to work at that. You really have to fight.

...and your labor, and your patience, and how that you cannot bear those who are evil. Now, in times past I'll tell you, candidly, as a whole by the Church of God, this was read as those who are in the world. It was not looked upon as being in the Church, and yet that's exactly what's being said here.

"You can't bear those who are evil that have come into the midst of the Church." Because they had to start dealing with those things very early on. Paul had to deal with those things, and he mentions some of those ministers by name so that people would be aware of them, of their evil, because they turned away from what God had given to them.

He says, **and I know that you cannot bear those who are evil.** In other words, they did something about it. Paul did. He had them put out of the Church. He was the one who wrote many things God gave to him, Christ gave to him, things to write about disfellowshipment and what it means and not to mess with those kinds of things, to beware of.

You have even tried those who say... So, it's not actually making the statement, in other words, not literally saying it as words but what it means spiritually. This is what they're saying. It's like those who lift themselves up as God when you decide for yourself what is right and wrong. That's what you do. And so, this is a kind of way of saying that as well.

So it's saying here, **You have even tried those who say they are apostles.** This isn't talking about the world! If you understand it spiritually here, they're saying it by what they're doing. It's that kind of an expression. They're lifting themselves up.

Because what is it saying? It's saying, "God gave me this." "God gave me this truth." I've known of so many people that they suddenly have this truth that they're supposed to give to the Church, and it comes into their mind. It's a dangerous thing because it's generally the demonic world that gives them that. But they've opened their minds up to it. Sometimes to think people get lifted up by certain things that they think they see.

This happened a lot after the Apostasy. Different ones thought they had certain things that they had to give to the Church, that they had to give a sermonette, they had to give a sermon of whatever it might be because God has given me this to give to the Church. "Okay."

So it's lifting oneself up to the point that people began to spread things around that you should listen... All those ministers who did the same thing as Dr. Hoeh did, began to teach or back secretly so, a 14/15 Passover, this is how they operated. They made themselves apostles. That's what they did. In other words, "God has given me to see something different from God's..." Hmm, well, they wouldn't call him God's apostle, "He's just a great teacher, learned a lot of things from him."

But what an incredible thing. Herbert Armstrong, God's apostle, wrote very clearly the fourteenth is in the fourteenth. There is no fifteenth in it. The Passover is in one day. Made it really clear in the book he wrote. They had access to it, they read it, but they believed an evangelist who had already cut himself off from God's spirit a long time ago.

This is what it's talking about. It's talking about people who come along and raise themselves up. That evangelist made himself an apostle too. He didn't literally say it, "I'm an apostle," but because of what he taught he was saying in essence, spiritually, "I'm an apostle because God has given this to me. Herbert Armstrong is wrong and so this is what you need to know about a 14/15." Sick. Sick. Perverted. Evil.

I'll tell you, those things are really evil because they had the impregnation of God's spirit. To turn against God and teach something opposite and different from God's apostle at that time at Ambassador College to students who are going to become, taken out in the ministry? That's as evil as Satan. That's how evil it is, of what he did. Satan never had the impregnation of God's spirit. He was given everything to know and to see that was true and right because that's all that God gave to him, and he made his own choice.

But to think that some are impregnated with God's spirit, and they do these things? That's why we have to understand it's far, far worse.

You have even tried those who say they are apostles and are not and have found them liars. So, this was a battle during the very beginning in Ephesus, that people were coming into the Church and there were those who were teachers. Because they didn't have communication like we do today. They didn't have transportation like we do today.

Paul couldn't go around and jet from one spot to another and be with people and have a live hookup and everybody hears the same thing. Herbert Armstrong couldn't do that except at the Feast when they had those giant satellites set up and then they could see him throughout the Feast sites around the world.

So, these things crept in pretty easily. So, people popped up in different areas because Paul might not be around for several years if he comes around at all again, and then when he was taken to Rome he definitely wasn't coming around. So, different ones began to become these teachers that had things to give that were different from what Peter and Paul and other apostles had been teaching. That's exactly what happened during the period of Ephesus. But as they could they dealt with them and that's what this is talking about.

So, we sometimes go through things like this, the story of the seven eras. We see things that happened during Sardis and think, "Uh, that was really bad." "Laodicea, that was pretty bad." Every, as a whole, every era had something to address. Why? Because we're carnal human beings, and in every era there have been people who have turned against Christ once they've been impregnated with God's holy spirit.

So indeed, evil began with Satan. We have to understand it for what it is. Then it took root within mankind in the very first created family. It's just the way of mankind. It was in the Israelites. That's why we've gone through these things. It was in the Israelites and only became worse even as they were up to this point of entering into the promised land and the things they did. I think of the judges and the kings back and forth until Israel separated, and Jeroboam, that example.

But again, the most heinous of all is that it's been in the environs of God's Church from the very beginning.

Part 4 next Sabbath.