

The Existence of Evil, Pt. 4

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We are in the series entitled *The Existence of Evil*. Today is *Part 4*.

As it was stated at the very end of last Sabbath's sermon indeed evil began with Satan. Then it took root within mankind in the very first created family. It is the way of mankind if we can grasp and understand that. Sometimes that's very difficult even within the Church to grasp that that is the way of mankind. When it comes to God's way, every other way is evil, and it was in the Israelites and only became worse after entering the promised land, especially after Israel separated from Judah, the ten nations to the north.

But as this series is bringing out, the most heinous of all is that it's been in the environs of God's Church from the very beginning. That's an awesome thing to understand in so many ways. Not awesome, but incredible to understand that such a thing could take place. The understanding that God is giving us is incredible, is exciting in the sense of having a better understanding of our own human nature, having an understanding of why this had to exist and be a part of the environs of the Church for the last two thousand years.

Because it's the very thing that so often can try and test people to see where we are. More is going to come out at the Feast about some of this this year. But it's an amazing process we go through for God to mold and fashion Elohim within us in our thinking, for the minds to be transformed, and for our minds to be transformed, and it's a long process. It doesn't just happen overnight; it takes a lot of time, and by the time we go through the process, God knows us. It takes a long time to go through that entire process, to try, to test, to see where we are, to see what we'll be like when we have God's spirit within us.

Because that's what it's about for the past six thousand years, it's been about individuals whom God has called. Especially in the first four thousand years, individually working with people as a whole, giving them of His holy spirit, the impregnation of His spirit. They didn't understand and comprehend that like we do in the Church and have for the past two thousand years.

But again, what an amazing thing to understand that especially once the Church was established and we've had this that we started talking about last Sabbath in the book of Revelation with the first era of the Church. And for a purpose. There is a reason why Lucifer who became Satan was placed on this earth. Basically, in a sense, imprisoned on this earth, restrained to this earth in time.

He, evidently, had the ability of going back and forth for a time but then he was restrained totally to this earth and is going to become more restrained as time goes along until his end comes.

But let's turn over to the book of Acts and look at this, of how this began in the Church very early on. This is in Acts 5. Again, first few chapters there we have the beginning, 31 A.D., Pentecost in 31 A.D., and the things discussed by Luke, given by Luke at that point in time as he was writing.

And then, finally, coming down to **Acts 5:1** it says, **Now, a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price of it.** Now, the whole point in this story is they had a possession, but at the very beginning, if you go back and look at some of the things said here, when the Church first began the system hadn't been fully established yet as far as the process whereby the Church would grow and be funded and taken care of for the ministry and so forth. This was just a beginning process.

So, there are many who sacrificed a lot at the beginning, especially because of all those whose minds were open started with Pentecost. Then it began to grow. And so, as the Church was being established right there in the area of Jerusalem there was a lot that they went through and so there were people who were giving a lot of their possessions to start this process moving. They gave portions of it or whatever.

This was their purpose and intent, at least that's what the Church was told, and so it says they had a possession and they sold, and it says, they kept a part of the price of it.

His wife also being aware of this, and brought a certain portion and laid it at the apostles' feet. So, whatever portion of this amount that they brought, a good thing that individuals did when they were putting finances and things together to start the Church. That's exactly what they were doing. They were trying to finance the start of the Church.

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the holy spirit? Now, he was called, him and his wife. They had the opportunity of a process to begin growing as far as the Church was concerned. And this, again, was very early on, one of the first great accounts. It's interesting what took place here because there is much revealed in this beginning process here that was to sober the Church, if you will, to help the Church to understand you don't lie to God! You're not going to get by with it! God will take care of it in His time one way or another.

We've had vast numbers of people in the past two thousand years who have lied to the Church, which they're lying to God when they do this. But he said, even more so, which we're going to go into even more at the Feast, that he lied to the holy spirit. You can't do that. God knows what's in our mind. He knows how we think. There is an impregnation of God's spirit

there and God knows exactly every thought, every intent, everything that's taking place. Nothing is hidden from God.

...and **keep back**, in other words, for themselves, **of the price of the land**. Let's go on and read a little bit more because it makes it clear.

While it remained, in other words, the way it's being written here, **Before selling it, was it not your own?** So, he's making the statement here with him, he said, "This is yours, isn't it? It was all yours before you sold it. What you had afterward, that was all yours to do with it what you would. Isn't that right?" So that's what he's asking him.

Even after it was sold, was it not in your power, in other words, in your authority your power to act, is what the expression means here, with the money, in the way that you would choose? That's what he's asking him.

But the problem is, is that they were indicating that they were giving it all to God, giving it all to the Church to get started. So, Peter is making the point here, he's saying here, "Wasn't it within your power to do with it how you want? You could have given any portion and that would have been fine. But that isn't what you did." In essence, he said that he was giving it all. But they didn't. They kept back a portion for themselves. So, they did it for the wrong reasons. They did it for recognition. They did it to whatever we do sometimes as human beings to be seen as though we're doing more and to be recognized for the more that's there.

So, it doesn't say how much was given and how much was kept back. It was fine for him to do, and Peter made that comment. "You just weren't truthful about it. You lied. You lied to the holy spirit about what you were doing." It wasn't a matter of a tithe where he had to give or was supposed to give a specific amount.

But anyway, going on here. So, **he said, wasn't it within your power**, your authority, in essence, **to do with it what you wanted? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied unto men but unto God**. That's an incredible thing that is sometimes so—I can't think of any other expression—mind-boggling to think that we can do as human beings, to lie to God.

God knows what we're thinking. He knows how we think. He knows what's in our mind. Nothing is hidden from God. He doesn't have to wait until something is stated or an expression comes out or some action is taken on our part. He knows what's going on in the mind. There is no point in lying to God because you can't, can't get by with it.

Then Ananias, upon hearing these words, fell down and gave up the spirit, meaning he died. **So great fear came on all those who heard these things**. So, this is the first account in God's Church of someone who became antichrist. That's what he did. The moment he chose to lie to God about something of such importance in order to receive recognition himself, to

be lifted up in front of the congregation himself or in the ministry or whatever it was, whatever his motive was, this was the first account that's recorded of someone who did something so heinous in God's Church.

So, you can understand why great fear fell on the rest of the Church. It's like they're going to be taught and they're going to begin learning fast and it's going to set the pace for the way the Church would respond to the ministry, to God, to the holy spirit.

Then the young men arose and gathered him up and carried him out and buried him. Then, it was about the space of three hours later when his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in. And Peter inquired of her, Did you sell the land for this amount? Then she said, Yes, for that amount. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that you have agreed together to try the spirit of the Lord? She was lying. She was lying to God. She was lying to Peter, God's apostle. Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door and will carry you out.

Now, God had to put all this into Peter's mind. That's how God works with us. There are things He gives to us on the Sabbath, on the holy days of His word, His way of life, and God helps us to see things that we can't see in any other way except by God's holy spirit so that we're able to see and understand God's plan and God's purpose and the things that God is further revealing to us.

It's like when we're first called, there are things that God communicates to us. It's in the mind. The ability to see and understand the meaning of the Holy Days when we first start learning about it or whatever it might be.

I've often talked about the first night, I'll never forget, around ten o'clock in the evening when I first began to learn about the Sabbath, and it was like, I see it. I don't have to go study. I don't have to go worry about reading scriptures. I know it's true. That's such an incredible thing when that happens to you, or whatever process it is whereby we begin to know it's true. That's why I used to hate the things that people would talk about, "Well, you can prove all things," because those scriptures are misused and misapplied in scripture. "Well, you can prove everything to yourself." It's like, no, you can't.

You can't go into the Bible on your own and study it and prove everything to yourself because you know so much. The reality is God's spirit has to show you and tell you this is true and what is true. You can't figure it out on your own, not a one of us. Not a one of those who went to Ambassador College who began to turn against things that were given to them of truth, like Passover (like I mentioned last Sabbath), not a one of them learned anything on their own study. They learned it because it was given through God's apostle, Herbert Armstrong, and when he taught about them or wrote about them it clicked. It clicked.

How many times have you had things just click in your mind? I think of that series that we went through during the Feast in 2005. That was my first huge experience in that respect, of knowing and trusting in God, because He'd worked already in certain ways to that point in time to know that they're going to receive what God has given. Because I knew it was from God. And yet we had certain situations happen, as I mentioned before, one individual up to the very last day, about Melchizedek, all of a sudden it clicked for him. But he stayed there, kept at it. Incredible!

But it's God that has to do the clicking if you will. He has to give it into your mind so that you can see it. Because no amount of studying, no amount of what you might hear is going to give you the truth or help you to know the truth on your own. God has to do it so that when you do hear it and He allows you to hear it spiritually, when He does that, it's just there. It's not a matter of going and trying to study the scriptures in Greek and Hebrew and everything else to prove it to yourself. Because you can't.

God has to just say, "This is it." Makes it simple. We learn it because God gives it to us through the power of His holy spirit and we choose to live by it then when He gives us the ability to believe it, or not. That's when the choice comes as to how we're going to respond to it.

So, whether it be about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and you make that decision, that choice yourself because you know it's the Sabbath and you're going to go in to tell the employer, "I'm not going to work anymore on the Sabbath." Well, you don't necessarily say it that way. You learn how to say it or how to address various things because of your beliefs, and then see where everything falls because it's up to them to make a choice then too as to whether or not they're going to let you keep working.

That time when I was first called I was working seven days a week at an elevator that year. Chose not to go on the harvest run that year because I'd gone on the harvest run before that. As the wheat gets ripe in Oklahoma and then farther up into Texas, and then up into Kansas it's ripe, and you just keep moving north cutting wheat until you get up into the Dakotas or even into Canada as some of the harvesters used to do, taking the combines.

Well, that year I decided I was going to work in an elevator. I didn't realize it was harder than, much harder than being on a combine because you can move wheat all night long from one area to another in elevators and having areas for drying. Anyway, long story.

But I remember that first time going in and telling them, "Working seven days a week and I won't be in on Saturdays anymore. I won't be staying late Friday night. When the sun is down I have to stop." And usually, they ask some questions, "Why is that?" "Because that's my Sabbath." Incredible! But that's the choice we have once God opens the mind and you know it's true. I hadn't gone in before that and read any scriptures. I hadn't read anything about

the Sabbath yet because it happened immediately. I came home, I went to work, and had to go tell them right away, “Not going to work Friday night and Saturdays.”

And the same thing with the Holy Days. All of a sudden you have to make those choices. Awesome, the process we go through. But again, it’s not something I had to prove to myself, it was already there.

The migrations of the children of Israel, when I was told about it that night I believed it, I knew it. I knew it! I knew about the ten tribes. I knew what happened. I knew they lost their identity. I knew they’d been taken into Europe. I knew about Ephraim and Manasseh and where we were now as far as nations were concerned.

How can you know that without reading anything? Well, the first several eras of the Church all the way up to almost the period of Philadelphia, candidly, they had nothing to read on their own. It’s by what they heard. It’s by what they heard when someone preached to them. That’s how they learned. Because God’s spirit was working in the mind and helped them to see it was true.

I hope you’re in awe of that because it just shows the power of Almighty God and how He works with us and calls us and shows how foolish, how backward—I could say some words, but I won’t—some have been when they’ve decided that they have figured certain things out, that they know certain things that are different from what God gave to the Church.

How is it that you have agreed together to try the spirit of the Lord? Test/try. Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door and will carry you out. Whew. Wow. Incredible.

So she fell down, as it says here, instantly at his feet and yielded up the spirit. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her forth and buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the Church and upon as many as heard these things. So, it was a sobering thing to them, to fear to lie to God. Which is a healthy thing. We should fear to lie to God. The consequences, there are consequences for not being truthful to God, to do, to go against the very purpose of why Christ died, so that we could have God’s spirit dwelling within us, etcetera, etcetera.

So again, I’ve always been a little perplexed in one way and in another way, obviously, understand why not. Some not only can lie to God’s ministry even about such things similar in nature to this, because that’s what happens when people aren’t faithful in tithing or giving of Holy Day offerings. But it’s happened. Ever since I’ve been in the ministry I’ve known of these things happening year by year by year... Anyway.

So, let’s turn over to Revelation 2. We talked about this last Sabbath in *Part 3*. It began with Ephesus. Here in Acts is Ephesus. This is the first account in the era of Ephesus, with Ananias

and Sapphira and what happened to them and that example that the whole Church knew about in the beginning then, that you don't lie to God, and many more lessons in that as well that I'm sure were taught by Peter and others.

But again, as a reminder here of what was stated in **Revelation 2:1—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.** So, it's speaking of Christ. It's speaking about that which he's going to do for the next two thousand years as far as the Churches are concerned, the different Church eras.

I know your works, and your labor, "your toil" as the word is, and your patience, and how you cannot bear those who are evil. This isn't talking about the world. And candidly, through the past most of the things written to the eras here have been taken to mean something that's happening in the world when it's not. It's always been about the Church. It's always been about what's happening in the Church.

It's not about the world and what's happening in the world. We know the state of the world. That's easy to see. But we've had to grow and come to this point in time where God has shown us, no, these things have been in the environment of the Church from the very beginning. That's what we have to see in ourselves and to be sobered by it, and be trained by it, and be molded by it because you're being molded and fashioned in something that's unique to this period of time, PKG.

...and your patience, and how you cannot bear those who are evil. You have even tried those who say they are apostles. So again here, as mentioned last Sabbath, they're not actually saying, "I am an apostle." That's not what they're saying. But by their actions, by what they do, by how they presumptuously place themselves in such an office because of what they're saying or promoting that's different from what the Church is saying they have placed themselves as apostles.

The reason for that is because an apostle is one sent by God and the truth comes to God's Church in that manner. It's always been that way. Happened with Peter. Happened with the disciples there at that time who became apostles. It happened with the apostle, Paul. The things that we know and go back and read about that are in scripture, the truth that was revealed to them, things that Christ hadn't even told them at that time. Things that they were inspired in and given later on to even add more to scripture, and then finally all the way up to John toward the end.

But awesome, some of the things that have come that way. Then we learned that through Herbert Armstrong and what God revealed to the Church, things above and beyond things that the disciples didn't even know, who became apostles at that time. More was revealed to him as well.

The point is only an apostle brings new truth. If something is new and given to the Church that's the means in which it happens, and that's the way it's always been. So, that's why it's using the expression, "You have tried those who say they are apostles." Because of what they're saying they're in disagreement with something they've been taught in the Church and so they're coming along teaching something different to God's people.

It was really easier to do back then in the beginning because they couldn't travel to all the different areas. Look at Paul and the travels of Paul. All the places he went to. He couldn't go there. Basically now, with jets, and means we have of being able to video things in the manner we do and have videos that go around in the world, people can go on to YouTube and watch, learn, and see what was given in the past Sabbath and it's incredible.

But they didn't have that. They didn't have anything like that in the beginning, so if they got around, we get around, as a whole, try to, once a year, to every location, and yet they weren't able to do that back then so it might be several years - years go by in some cases with Paul before he was able to go back to some of those areas he went to in the beginning. Then he ended up in Rome and he was there for years as well. Timothy and others were sent out and were able to do various things as far as the Church was concerned, but still not able to visit them all. Incredible!

So, it says, **you have tried those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars.** Now, this is talking about people in the environs of God's Church, people who are baptized, people who receive the impregnation of God's spirit and they begin to go off on a tangent. We of all people know how powerful that can be because of what happened leading up to the Apostasy and afterward. They come along and start, and they flip-flopped everything.

Some of these back then it was only certain areas that they were going off on tangents. We finally came to a point in the Apostasy where everything, basically, that had ever been taught was thrown out the window and a full blast of protestantism brought back in. Incredible!

So, to understand that evil has existed in the Church from the beginning is one of the greatest lessons in many ways that people have to learn. We can see it in Lucifer, what happened there. It's easy to see what happened in Adam and Eve. Easier, I should say. It's easier to see what happened in Israel, a carnal people who didn't even have God's holy spirit, and what happened to the ten nations as they rebelled and all of them followed "the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat," as it says, king after king after king until they were finally taken captive into Europe and lost as a people, not having an identity anymore.

Then we start seeing this, what happened with Ananias and Sapphira, what happened as further things are said here that happened during the period of Ephesus, battles that have taken place, and why God allowed them. For the same reason He's allowed Satan to remain

on this earth and the demonic world to remain on this earth - it's to mold and fashion His people whom He has called over the past six thousand years.

People during the Millennium don't have to have that. It's going to be a different age, a different ability to help. But these things had to take place first to prepare God's government. We really can't understand all that to its depth and won't be able to until we're Elohim. But it's awesome to understand it, to see the more that God gives to us the more that we're able to see. It's an incredible story.

So, let's pick this up again here, just refreshing our thinking here, **verse 3—You have borne**, carried, in other words, to bear under what was given them, **and have had patience**. Because this applies to everyone who is called. There are things we carry because that we bear up under because it's not easy. God didn't call us to something easy. He called us to something that's hard as far as our nature is concerned. It's difficult.

It's difficult to first maybe tell your family and family members what you're going to do, what you're determined to do when they don't like what you're doing. Then friends who no longer want to be your friends because you're weird. That's what happens. It wasn't that hard to change friends that I had in college. First of all, I knew I had to get away from them in the first place because I couldn't continue in that lifestyle. I had to get away. Flee, God says, flee sin, in essence. That's what you have to do. You have to flee with all of your being and strive to run toward God. That's a choice.

So, on and on it goes. We have to go through a lot. That's what it's talking about. On your job, going and telling your boss, that's not easy, and sometimes people losing their jobs over it. You have to bear underneath that because you carry more now, a lot more. You know, to swim with the rest of the world, to go along with the world really isn't that hard, to do whatever you want to do ever how you want to do it. Selfish human nature.

But when you come into God's Church you have to fight against that because you can't live that way anymore. You can't live the way the world does. You can't act the way the world acts. So, we begin to make a lot of changes.

...and have had patience. Patience. Still patient. Went through 2012, we're still patient. We're waiting. We know. God has revealed things to us to help us understand what took place in that period of time. We learn lessons from that. You don't give up your crown. Because even up to that point in time in 2013 people who had been in Worldwide, who had opportunity to be awakened again, and then to turn against God to become antichrist, evil? It's really sick! It's really sick. It's one thing to be called by God and to be given the truth, but it's one thing when you've fallen asleep and you've been spewed out of God's mouth and then allowed to be awakened and come back, and then to spit upon that, to become antichrist.

That's one of the most heinous things ever written in scripture, it really is, what we have experienced in God's Church. Because it's one thing in the last two thousand years that people have been called into God's Church and they've decided to turn in a different direction, but it's once your mind has been opened to everything that's taken place and you understand there was an Apostasy and all the stones of the Temple have fallen down, and we were spewed out of God's mouth because we were all Laodicean at that period of time. It's one thing to go through that and to be awakened. But to be awakened and to have an opportunity to be stirred up in spirit and to actually learn more and to know more than you knew before and then to turn against God? I wonder what kind of judgment awaits. Because this is not a small thing. It is the worst recorded thing that's happened to date in the environs of God's Church. It's worse than all seven eras of God's Church.

So, at this point anyone listening today, I don't know how anyone could let down, could become lethargic, which is a battle because you've been given more truth than ever before, and that's how they became lethargic, rich, and increased with goods, and if that mentality exists then bad news. We've got to be shaken out of those kinds of things and stirred up in spirit and really understanding we've got to fight for this to the end.

We're down to the end. To fight for it, we should want to fight for it with all of our being, "I want Elohim! I want that life! I want that existence! I want that mind with all my being and there is nothing else in this world that's more important or of greater wealth!"

You know, what was it, this last crazy lottery, over a billion, a billion and a half, whatever it was? "Wouldn't it be awesome? I mean, it'd be nice to win a million-dollar lottery, but a billion, oh, that would solve everything." Doesn't solve your problems. How long are you going to have it? Is that what our life is about, what we can have in this age in these bodies, of what we can accumulate?

Because you can't take anything with you, and everybody dies. Everybody in time dies, except for a few who are going to have the unique experience of being changed in the moment, in the twinkling of an eye when Christ returns. Maybe someone sitting here today, maybe several sitting here, I don't know. But it's going to happen to some. But you're going to be very few in all of mankind that that's ever happened to or ever will again. Just a moment, a twinkling of an eye. All of a sudden, you're walking around and all of a sudden you're experiencing something you haven't experienced before. We can't even comprehend that! I mean, whew! But then others to be resurrected, obviously.

But what's more valuable? What is more valuable in life and yet people give up this way of life for the puniest of things. We have experienced, my wife and I in the ministry, and different things that have happened, of things that people will turn to, will go to, to give up this that God has offered us.

A fling. That's probably the most predominant. A fling. We were pretty young when we first started and the first time I ran into a situation within the Church where two, both of them had committed adultery. Out west there. It was like, what is wrong with you? To me, they were so old. They were at least in their fifties or sixties at that time. So old and to do something so stupid that late in the game in life and you're going to give up God's way? And how long is that going to last? How long are you going to be happy?

If you've done something bad before and you've lived wrong before, I wonder what the odds are that you're going to repeat the same stupid things again and suffer again, and want to go have another fling someplace else because that one didn't work out? That's the repetition of life. That's how it happens. Nuts! Crazy! And to maybe give up life forever for something so menial and stupid?

Sometimes we haven't grasped and comprehended how important, how awesome it is that we have God dwelling in us, that we have a measure of God's spirit dwelling within us, that we're in embryo waiting to be born and we're growing, and how precious, how awesome that is.

Verse 4—Nevertheless, I have this against you because you have left your first love.

Something that every time period of God's Church should always be reminded. Never lose your first love, that zeal you had when all of a sudden you've learned the truth and you're experiencing things you've never experienced and you see this dynamic and dramatic shift from the way of the world, the way of that which is false in the world or protestantism and everything else that's out there.

It's such a stark change in reality and you're excited by it, you're moved by it because now you see the truth, you understand things from Passover to the Last Great Day and it so stirs you up and you're excited by it.

Well, we have to work to remain stirred up. We have to cry out to God to stir up His spirit. We have to cry out to God every day for His holy spirit to dwell within us. Because you can't make the changes you need to make without His help. And sometimes you may feel like you're repeating certain things. Some things you do have to repeat, but that's the most important one of all, "I want Your holy spirit. I want to be always forgiven of my sins through Joshua my Passover, our Passover. I need, I want Your spirit every day." God tells us from the very beginning, "If you don't ask you don't receive." Isn't that an amazing thing? You've got to ask if you want it because there is something being developed within you if you learn that. There are things you will learn and grasp and comprehend in a deeper way if you do that.

Remember therefore how you have fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I will come upon you quickly and will remove your candlestick from out of its place—except you repent. So, the point is here is sometimes people will linger in sin and not be shaken to

repent, and hearing of sermons, will not repent at things they hear and continue to exist in whatever they're doing wrong.

And I'm just going to use it because I've used this expression so often, the example so often because it's a live and living example every year in God's Church, that people begin to steal God's tithes. And the reality - and I don't care if it's first, it's also about second. You can be faithful in first and if you're not faithful in second you're a liar. You're lying to God. You're lying to yourself if you're not faithfully doing both.

Because they both are tithes and ways that they can be used. One decided by the Church, the other decided by us and how we observe Holy Days, especially, primarily, the Feast of Tabernacles. So, how that can happen boggles my mind, but it does, and I know it still exists.

So, if we can't hear things in sermons? Because I wonder how often I've mentioned this about tithing and Holy Day offerings and nothing changes for some people. Some just continue to rob God. It's like, can't you hear what I just said? Can't you hear what God is telling you, that you should repent and do things faithfully and trust in and rely on God? Do what you should do, honor God, love God because you're not loving God, you're not honoring God, you're not growing. You are cut off from God's spirit if you're lying to God.

So it says here repentance is always involved in our lives. But here it says, "Remember how you've fallen." So, sometimes people fall, they make foolish choices and hopefully something will shake the tar out of us so that we can see what we're doing wrong, and we actually come to repentance then.

Anybody who has ever left, I've been thinking about this this past week, anyone who has ever turned away from God's Church has the ability still to repent if it's genuine and truthful before God. Has the ability to repent and work to become right with God. But if you don't, what awaits us? What do we think is going to happen?

"Well, if I'm wrong and don't live in the Millennium, God is going to resurrect me in the Great White Throne." Hmm. Wonder what difference that's going to make in your life. Wonder what you'll be like then different from what you are now. Because, you see, there are realities of things that can happen in the mind where we can so corrupt our own thinking.

But this you have, in that you hate the work of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Now, in times past, primarily within the Church, this has been seen as some outside groups coming in and they are trying to hurt the Church. And the reality was, no, there really is more evidence in that respect that this is something that cropped up within the Church after a certain name of an individual. But time will reveal that too.

Because it's like what we used to think antichrist is; this great false teacher down in this little place in Italy and that somehow he's going to start deceiving the entirety of the Church. You

think, give me a break! What power does he have to come along and say, “You should observe Christmas. You should put up the tree.” How many people are going to listen to that in God’s Church, who really are in God’s Church? He’s nuts. He’s stark raving mad. No one is going to listen to someone like that.

The same thing with the Nicolaitans here. You know, when your mind is opened to the truth, and you know the truth you know the truth! And it’s not going to be easy to deceive you except by your own choices within the environs of the Church.

So, we learn from this. We learn that these things happen. They’ve happened in the past. They happen. They still happen. Not as much. It’s far less. Still, every once in a while something with a conspiracy... I mean, of all things, some goofy conspiracy theory, these streams that go across the sky. It’s like, “Head for cover, the government is out to do something bad to us!” And some days it’s worse than others because they’re all over. If you live close to Chicago, O Hare? I’m kidding. I hope you understand, in jest, making fun of such things because conspiracy theories are so stupid. Things about Covid and the shots and people want to believe different things. You don’t have to worry. Your life is in God’s hands, and if you obey God and do what God has shown that you need to do at any particular time He’s going to take care of you. That’s what it’s about.

After the Ephesian era, there was Smyrna. We’re just going to go through each one of these because it’s really kind of dumbfounding. Because as a whole, during Philadelphia and Laodicea, there were things here not seen as this is the Church, this is happening within the Church, in the environs of the Church.

Revelation 2:8—Even unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna write, These things are said by the First and the Last. It’s like speaking here of the last Adam was a quickening spirit. It talks about the first Adam and then the last Adam was a quickening spirit, lifegiving spirit. So, it refers to Christ in one respect in that regard in things that are spoken of here, and this is what it’s about, the first of the firstfruits. It’s not about God Almighty, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. This is unique.

...and was dead, and is alive. Obvious who it is about then.

I know your works, in tribulation and poverty (but you are rich). That’s what we have to come to see through time. That’s what we were just talking about a moment ago. Sometimes we don’t grasp how rich we are. People may have poverty. But on all people on earth, they’re the richest that have ever existed if we really grasp it. Everything belongs to God! What He’s promised to give, “to inherit all things” means all things, and it’s not a small thing. And to fight and to work for that? How much is that worth for the puny lifespan we have in human life?

Most people don't think about that until you get close to the point of closer to dying, and then it becomes more of a reality. See, it's very much a reality to me because I actually arrived at that point. Had to have these things put on the chest to burn skin and hair off my chest to bring me back. Well, when you wake up from that and you've been told that it's like, death is close. It happens. It happens to all of us, and we go through different things and it's just a part of life. There is life and then there is death. And then there is life. That's what we hold on to, that life.

So, we are so blessed, we have such riches if we really see it for what it is, treasure. All the truths we have, more truth than any other time in history? I can't find words to express how incredible that is if we can grasp it.

I know your works in tribulation and poverty, but you are rich, and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews... So, no, it wasn't talking about Jews who were coming in and deceiving God's people. How much is that going to go over? About as much as the Catholic Church coming in and trying to dissuade you of various things. So, if Jews come along and they're trying to preach various things about what they believe, you think the people back at that time in God's Church who in the first era, especially, and into the second as well - but Paul was already here at this point - but that they're going to be deceived by some Jews who come along and say, "You need to do this as a part of Judaism."

We have nothing to do with Judaism. We're Christian. We follow the ways of Christ. That's why Paul wrote the things he did. Sometimes even trying to persuade the Jews, when the book of Hebrews was written and the persuasive things that are written there to help them if they're being drawn to understand things that they couldn't grasp before.

So, I hope you understand what I'm saying. They weren't persuaded by, as we've sometimes thought in the past, by Jews who would come along saying they came from Jerusalem supposedly and teaching different things. If you know the truth you know the truth.

If you know the truth all this garbage that happened during the Apostasy shouldn't have led you to a point where you could no longer believe there was even a God. Because that's where a third of the Church went. They just lost it. They knew Christmas and Easter and the protestant world was wrong, and if this could happen to God's Church then that evidently wasn't true either because of an apostasy. They didn't understand it was an apostasy. But if this has happened then this can't be God's Church either, so there must be no God or something, whatever goes through the mind. Horrible.

...those who say they are Jews and are not. So, who are they? Spiritually. It's spoken of in scripture. I'll read the scripture to you in a moment. I'm trying to right now, but I'll just wait.

...who say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue, the congregation of Satan. Now, that's a mouthful. When you understand what's being said there that's powerful because they're not in the Church of God. They should be in the Church of God but they're doing something different. They're liars. They're antichrist, and they're of the synagogue of Satan.

Because you see, the reality is there are two ways of life. One is of Satan which has to do with everybody doing their own thing, whatever they want. The other is of God, of living a specific way of life that's based on love, God's love. No in-between, just the two. So, it's very easy when some have turned against God what they have done. And if they continue teaching various things it's not of God, it's of the congregation of, the synagogue as it says here, of Satan. That's the truth and needs to be seen for what it is.

I'll just read this to you in **Romans 2:28— For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly.** So, it's like talking about what is Judah. It's not about a physical tribe; it's about what God is molding and fashioning. When it talks about Jerusalem and some of the Old Testament scriptures that talk about Judah, they're not about the tribe of physical Judah, it's about a spiritual Judah. Or Jerusalem, it's not about the physical location of Jerusalem.

Something that used to blow my mind. People who call it the "holy land," or the "holy city." There is nothing holy about it today. That's what the world calls it, as a whole. "It's holy, the holy city." No, it's a place.

...but he is a Jew who is one outwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart. So, it shows what the spirit of things are all about, what they are to picture, what we're to learn from it.

It's like the word "Israel." It's not about a physical tribe of people, it's about that which is spiritual that God's molding and fashioning. And candidly, in times past, even within the Church, there were hang-ups about some of these things. Sometimes because some people maybe thought they had a strong Jewish background, that they maybe were a little bit better than those who had an Ephraim background or Dan, especially Dan, you know, and this kind of garbage and stupidity that existed because we just weren't spiritually at the point where we understood those things yet.

Well, now we are. God's calling people, will continue to call all people in time, give them the opportunity. A lot of people aren't going to choose it, and all are going to have the opportunity to become a part of Israel. Not a physical bunch of people but what the word means, those who stay with it, those who persevere. That's what it pictures. That's how we become a part of spiritual Israel. And circumcision that it talks about, it wasn't a physical thing that was important, it's the spiritual part of the heart and what has to happen inside here in our being, in our minds, if you will.

...in the spirit. In the spirit! It's of the spirit, the spirit essence of our minds, **not of the letter.** Not about physical routine and physical things... Anyway.

...whose praise, in other words, "worthiness of praise," **is not from out of men but from out of God.** That's what's important.

Notice verse 9 here now. **Revelation 2:9** again and then what follows. **I know your works, in tribulation and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but of the synagogue of/congregation of Satan. Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. Behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison that you may be tried. You will even have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.**

So, every era had to go through different things depending on what was happening in the world at that particular time. So, there is a period in history of ten years of great persecution that took place and believed that is what this portion is about and people in the Church especially, what they went through when people weren't just put in prison, but a lot of people were killed for what they believed that went against what the Roman Empire was doing and upholding.

Verse 12—Write this to the angel of the Church in Pergamos. So, going on here, next era. **These are the things said by he who has the sharp sword with two edges: I know your works, and where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is.** So, this shouldn't be too hard to know where this is, where Satan's beginning was in the sense of his perverting everything about God's way as far as a religion was concerned and the strength it grew in during this period of time and Rome.

...even where Satan's seat is. And you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith even in those days where antipas... Know what that word means? It means "against father." "Against papa." "Against pope." That's what the words mean, just different language if you will.

...wherein was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you. So, here is someone who stood up against what was taking place in that area, and he was killed for what he did. That's what it's talking about here. Now, what's amazing is this was written, given to John long before it happened. But when God has a plan and a purpose there are people called to fill those things. Just like in anything in the Temple, there are people who are called to fulfill and fill in various parts of the Temple.

That's an amazing thing when you think about it. That just like what happened in Philadelphia, God knew what was going to happen in Sardis. He said what would happen in time. Because there are ways that God works with mankind to bring His way to light to learn

from. Because we learn from all these different things through time, and everyone was molded differently. There had to be these different periods of time for the sake of how they were molded and fashioned, what they had to go through in order to have things molded into here because of where they're going to fit in the Temple. I hope we understand those things.

That's why we go through different things. We're not all called to go through the same experiences, to be molded into the same part of the Temple. We fit in different places of the Temple. But God knows what He's building, and He knows, He knew exactly what it would take in order to mold certain things within human beings. Awesome! The great power of Almighty God to know how to mold and fashion those who would be called, those who would be part of the 144,000.

He knew what was going to rise up. God knew, predetermined there would be a false church and it would spread throughout the world and become very great into the multiple millions, and into the billions as it turned out in time. And you know what or why? All for the sake of the Church. All for the sake of the Temple.

That's why sometimes we don't grasp it's not a matter of size, it's not a matter of how big at any one time. And yet that's kind of the mindset that happened during Philadelphia and then Laodicea and within the ministry and all the arguments and fighting between Church areas of who is in someone's Church area. Because you wanted to have more, and if you had the most then you were better. These things happened in the ministry. Mind-boggling!

Like pride. "There are three hundred in your Church? We have three hundred and twenty-five." It would come out somehow or another in a very humble way, I'm sure. Things like that happened. And if someone was right on the border sometimes there were disputes over which area they should go to. It's all God's Church. What works out best for them? To travel to that one? Or maybe the roads are better going to the longer one that might seem to be longer but maybe it's better for them. Did anyone think about asking them?

Some of the most crazy things, goofiest of things that have happened through time that we learn from, and there's a reason for it. We're to experience these things. We're to learn right from wrong, good from evil. We learn it through experience. God shows us, "This isn't right. That isn't the way to treat people. That isn't the way you should talk. That isn't the way you should express yourself if you're living God's way of life."

But I have a few things against you, because you have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Now, I'm not going to try to go through and say what this fully was because of the context, though probably could fairly well. The point being was that

there was that which rose up within the Church of different ones that began to teach things that were wrong to God's people, and some of it had to do with relationships.

It's the same old thing pops up. But when someone puts their stamp of approval on it and says it's okay or "God understands we're weak and we have needs..." I've heard these things in times past. "He knows our weak frame." Does that give excuse to sin, to commit adultery, to commit fornication, or whatever? And yet things like that have happened.

So, whatever happened here it was wrong, but it was happening in the environs of God's Church. It wasn't something happening in the world. This boggles my mind that we were at that point in time, now that we are where we are now, and to be able to understand that there are many things that are covered and talked about because we couldn't see it yet because God hadn't given it to us yet. You can't see what you can't see if that makes sense. That which is spiritual is spiritual. God has to give it to you to grasp and comprehend.

And so, He continues to give more to us to comprehend and understand things that have taken place. These things apply to all eras of God's Church. It doesn't matter who it is or what it is. Because they're examples of Church areas where there have been ministers who have done things, and because ministers did it or some who are ordained as elders did certain things and people knew about it and so they felt justified.

Because as a whole, things are never hidden within the Church. People know when things are going on, especially if it's in one city and you have a Church there and as people are together and several hundred and some minister is doing something and you know this is kind of hanky panky, or some elder has or some deacon has, there'll be people who look at that example and justify what they're doing. That's what happened here.

So, it says here, **you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come unto you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.** In other words, it's about God's word, the word of God. We either live by it or we don't. We either yield to it and repent or we won't. And if not then there are consequences. That's what this is about.

Verse 18—Even to the angel of the Church of Thyatira write, These are the things said by the Son of God. It's interesting each point in time here it gets a little stronger. It's about Christ. He's the one that was given this to give to John about the eras. He's the one who would be in the midst of all seven eras of the Church and what would happen in time in dealing with the Church because God has given all things to His Son to give, in essence, to the Church. Everything that's going to happen was given to His Son.

...who has his eyes like flames of fire, and his feet like fine brass, I know your works, and love (agape) and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works; even the last to

be more than the first. Now, this was an incredible thing. Thyatira was a unique era because it went on for hundreds of years. It was the longest era by far. Over a thousand.

Notwithstanding, I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel...

This word here “because you allow,” it’s a word that literally means “to let alone,” which comes into the context, **that woman Jezebel**, symbolic, in essence here, of the false prophetess of witchcraft, **who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**

It’s amazing the world that people lived in at that time, and even from the very beginning because of the practice of other religions, and even within that false church that was rising up in power, we look at something like this and we think of something happening physically. Well, there were things that happened physically, and some of that is clear in parts of these things because that’s something that’s gone through time, but now we’re getting into things that happened on a spiritual plane of what God calls some of these things as well.

And so, there is that which can seduce in the sense of the truth. Everything that happened during the Apostasy was spiritual adultery, spiritual fornication, other ideas and beliefs of things that turn away from the truth that God has given to the Church. To go back to any of those kinds of things that God has called us out of becomes spiritual fornication, spiritual adultery, etc.

And I gave her time to repent of her fornication and did not repent. You know, God did. It’s amazing to me sometimes how much time God gives. He doesn’t just come down and address everything immediately when something happens. He allows things to continue on for a time. He allows people to do various things. And candidly, sometimes at some point that people can by their choice, by what they hear, be moved to repentance and begin to grow. Where they should have a long time ago but start because of repentance because God allows that. He gives time for that process and for judgment to be established.

He has incredible patience but there comes a time when it can’t be given anymore. That’s one of those times we live in right now where we’re almost there and this Body must be cleansed top to bottom. That’s what’s happening.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and they who commit adultery with her, into great tribulation/great affliction. So again here, expressions are used of something that’s physical, “cast you into a bed,” showing this thing of the act of something physical, but it’s spiritual, and if that’s what individuals want that’s what they’re going to be given in time if they keep fighting for something that’s opposite of what God has given, God allows that and gives that because that’s your choice.

...except they repent of their deeds. So, that's something that God always offers. Isn't that amazing, over and over again we read that God offers repentance if we'll just repent when we hear various things and know we're doing wrong.

It's like some of the things I referred to last Sabbath, again, about certain things that will not be, individuals sometimes don't put as much importance on various aspects of life, but there are ways we must live, and God spells it out. Certain traits, certain characteristics of things that individuals do physically in a physical world, a carnal world, God makes it very clear those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God, will not become part of Elohim. So, those have to be repented of.

We live in an age where drugs are prevalent. We've had individuals come along in God's Church who take drugs, who have taken drugs in the past, and go back to them. There is a battle there.

There are people who drink too much. Some people don't think that drinking too much alcohol is a bad thing. Yeah, it's one of those things you have to conquer and overcome. It's one of those things.

Certain lifestyles that people have lived and because of the age we live in come into God's Church, and they have to cease practicing wrong things because of certain thinking that's in the mind.

And so, God tells us right from wrong. We may be a certain way, maybe an alcoholic, maybe an addict, but you have to stop practicing it. In other words, some things are just going to be with us because of the way we are as human beings.

Some sexual things that perhaps are in the mind, and that's the way an individual is, they may have to fight against that for the rest of their life and change their lifestyle for the rest of their life. But that's what is expected by God Almighty, that we do those things if we choose His way of life and want His way of life. We cease practicing sin.

It's as simple as that. We cease practicing sin. Because if we don't we're going to lose out totally. That's the end of the story.

So, all these things era after era after era. In the environment of God's Church evil has always existed. That's how people grow. You can learn from that. We are to learn from that. God knew it would be that way because of human beings because of human minds. He gave an opportunity to be called, to know the truth, but not all choose God. That's why we know more about the story to the Last Great Day now. That's why we know more about the story of people who think, "Well, I'm going to do this now because this is my world now and in the Millennium or the Great White Throne I believe. I'll change then."

Oh yeah? Interesting. What have you done to your mind? What are you doing to your mind? The longer individuals put off repentance the more that becomes their mind.

It's like character. Character is able to grow and it's because we obey God because we fight the fight, because we cry out to God for His holy spirit. The more we repent, you know what? Every time you repent you're growing in character spiritually because you're acknowledging that God is right, and you are wrong. Every time I repent I want to acknowledge that. I want to see it. I want to see the things I don't see, that I don't grasp. I want to see every thought in the mind that has to be fought.

And so, that's what we should have, and repent of the wrong. That's the way we should be.

And I will cast her into a bed, and they who commit adultery with her. Speaking of the Church, who spiritually commit spiritual adultery. ...into great affliction, except they repent of their deeds.

I'm going to read Romans 2:4 just to throw it in here in the midst of this because it goes along with some of this. **Romans 2:4** where Paul is saying, **Or do you desire**, "think little of," is really what the word means in the Greek, **the riches of His goodness?** So, it's not a matter of despising something, it's a matter of the way we think that's being brought out here. "Do you think so little of...?"

Sometimes we don't—that's why I was mentioning earlier—we don't grasp the treasure, the riches that God has really given to us that's more valuable than anything in human life. What is it we want to hold on to? What is it we think we're going to take with us? This life doesn't last long. Well, what God has given us is what is supreme in life.

...of the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? So, what a horrible thing, in essence, if someone doesn't respond to that kind of love. Because that's when God begins to pour out His love upon us, when He offers us the ability to repent, to change, to grow in that which is true from Him.

Because human beings can't do that until God begins to draw them. And so, to think of the patience that God has? All these things, as it talks about here, His goodness, longsuffering, forbearance, and that these things are the things that the more that we receive them, if we're honest and truthful, we begin to learn more and understand this is why we want, that's what we want, we want to repent. It leads us to repentance.

But in accordance with your hardness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up for yourself wrath unto the day of wrath. That's about judgment. Wrath is about the execution of God's righteous judgment. Everyone has to address that, face that in life if they choose that which is wrong.

“And storing up for yourself.” So it’s like building this up, a store, of the wrong kind of store of product, of whatever it might be that you’re trying to store up in life.

...and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Because that’s what is revealed in time, the righteous judgment of God. So, we’ve had a lot of that being revealed toward the end of PKG here, the righteous judgment of God, how things should be administered, certain things that should be tolerated and other things that should not be tolerated, and when to address. We learn from that.

...who will render to each one according to their deeds. To their working, to their choices, in other words, of what they’re going to do. It’s there but so often as human beings, we seem to want to deceive ourselves into thinking that isn’t real or something, I don’t know. Rob from God? We don’t have to pay the price?

...who will render to each one according to their deeds, eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality. That’s what our life is about, that desire to become part of Elohim, to be in God’s Family.

...but to those who are self-seeking, selfish, choose the way of selfishness. Every time we choose something different from what God has shown us is the right way we’re making ourselves slaves to our own selfishness. We just choose to be selfish rather than to obey God and strive for what He’s offering to us. Because we don’t value it enough. That’s why it starts out by saying, “Do we think so little of the riches of what God has placed before us that we would do these things?” Yeah, it happens.

...but to those who are self-seeking and not obeying the truth, but obeying unrighteousness—indignation and wrath. It’s going to come. If that’s the choice this is the result. It is absolute. It’s not something we’re going to change at the last minute. It’s like these stories of people in foxholes and all of a sudden it gets pretty bad around them and “If you’ll just intervene, God, and save me I’ll do ‘this’ and I’ll do ‘that,’” and then as soon as they’re out of the foxhole and back home it’s like they forgot, you know, they’re back to selfishness. Human nature.

People do that spiritually as well, thinking that somehow, some way they deceive oneself. It’s like all the different scattered groups out there right now. It’s like as long as you’re not a part of this one and you’re a part of some of the others that God’s kind of working with all of them to bring them all together later on.

It’s like the protestant world, that’s kind of what the protestant world thinks. “We have different teachings and different beliefs but God’s working with us all in a unique way to one day we’re all going to be in heaven because that’s how God is working with all these different religions out here and all these different beliefs.

It's like that in the scattered Body right now. You can't flirt around and be a part of that which is out there in the scattered Body even, and yet we still have that going on in the midst, in the environment of God's Church.

...tribulation, affliction, in other words, and anguish will be upon every living person who does evil. If that's our choice then that's justice and that's what God is pleading and crying out to His people about. This is to God's people. Paul was writing to God's people. It's not for the world, it's for us.

...to every person who works good, to the Jew first and also to the gentile. So again, early in the Church and they did bring that out.

Verse 11—For there is no respect of persons with God. That's what we have to learn. We have to learn that thinking, that kind of mind, that kind of judgment, to judge righteously.

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law—for not the hearers of the law, and this is what it boils down to, not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law shall be justified... So, if we do the things that God has revealed to us and given in our minds it's showing there are different mindsets in the world, Gog and Magog, if you will. Because that's what this is about. Some are given opportunity and receive it; others don't even want it.

Let's continue on in **Revelation 2:23**, again. **Also, I will kill her children**, in other words, those who have grown up with her following her ways, **with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the reins and the hearts.** That's an awesome thing to understand. In other words, that's why it says, "Judgment now is upon the house of God." When you're called judgment is upon you. It starts.

Before that, the world, it's not on the world yet. There is a different type of judgment that's upon them and upon the world right now, and one that God gave as prophecy throughout the Old Testament that would happen at the end of the age, that mankind would be allowed to, brought to that point, because of their greatness, that they would come to a point of annihilating mankind if God didn't intervene.

So, this is about the Church: "He searches the reins and the hearts." God is going to know what is inside of all of us. When it's all over with, that's what it is.

I will even give unto every one of you according to your works. Judgment. It's about judgment. So, everyone has to have this addressed in their life at some point. It's a part of life.

Next one, Thyatira. **But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira**, again, going on here, **as many as do not hold to this teaching and who have not known the depths of Satan...** See, sadly, this is the Church! "Haven't known the depth of Satan," the way of evil, the choice of evil. It's an evil, evil thing when God has given us of His spirit in the mind, to choose against God. There is no greater evil. It's the most heinous of evil, if you will, to do that. We need to see that within the environs of the Church.

Every Church era has had to address these things, or certain things that are brought out here, and it's all about the fact that within the environs of God's Church, there's always been evil because God allows us to all make our own choices. We make choices as to how we're taught, how faithful we are to what we're taught, what we're given, how faithful we are to God's teachers, to the ministry.

I can tell you stories of things that have happened in PKG in the last three years that would blow your mind sometimes, of how people have been so incredibly disrespectful to the ministry of God's Church! I'm not talking just about me; I'm talking about the ministry and how that certain actions come out to show what's inside the hearts and minds of certain individuals that's just wrong. Our thinking has to be right.

If it's not right toward God's ministry it can't be right toward one another within the Body! If we want that which God has put here with command, with guidance and direction of how we're to function and act and think, how are we doing within the Body? I can tell you right now, lousy. Bad. It's just the way it is. That's a law of life. It has to do with the mind, the spirit that's in us, the mind, the thinking, the choices we make.

So, what's this all about? It's about understanding how blessed we are. It's understanding how important it is that we stir up God's spirit, that we want to be stirred up in spirit, that we want to draw closer to God, that we want to see the things in our lives that must yet be addressed and changed and repented of and seek God's help in that process every day until we're through this. Because this is a battle. It's a battle and we're down to the end of the battle.

...holding to that teaching, who have not known the depth of Satan... I read this and think, what a horrible thing to have to say within the Church, that even within Thyatira that there were those who were choosing to turn away from God, antichrist, to choose Satan. That's what he's saying. That's your choice then.

...as long as they speak I will put or cast upon you any other burden/any other weight. But that which you have hold fast/lay hold until I come. And so, that's what we're to do. Whatever we have. And so, for us, we've been given more than any period of time, and God says hold fast to it, lay hold on it because that's our life.

Revelation 3:1—Even to the angel of the Church of Sardis. So, we know what came along now. We're getting to a point now where the printing press comes along, things aren't just in Latin out there any longer, now they're being translated into other languages, people can read, different areas of the world can read in their own language so things began to change and it led to one of the greatest spiritual battles, in a sense, within the Church that ever existed because it allowed for, opened the door for people themselves to become teachers.

Kind of like today, where people can get on the internet and become intellectual, know it all "Because I read it on the internet. I'm self-taught. There is so much out there I've taught myself." Not knowing in many cases you're just being led down a particular little road because this AI stuff and the way they feed you information. Sick world. Even that, it's so different than what it was five years ago.

There are things out there now I have such a hard time trying to find. It's just like throwing up your hands and saying, "Why even try?" Because they're spoon-feeding you... You know what I want to say. Spoon-feeding it to you. It's like, can't we see what's out there? But sadly, within the Church we still have those that have so much ability to "search out the 'truth'"

You mean you're not getting it from the Church, you're not getting it through God's Church? God's not showing you, teaching you what is the truth? That somehow there are things you think are more important? Like those stupid white things going across the sky, or some of these other things that are going on in the world? You'd rather believe in some of that garbage and stupidity and ignorance? I'm sorry, I'm just calling it what it is.

So, anyway, Sardis came along, and they had battles. And finally, because of all these things, what does it mean? It means that people can start teaching what they were reading because they were able to afford a Bible. Bibles were expensive. To buy one in your own language? Extremely expensive. To come across one to be able to read it? But all of a sudden all this knowledge of something you had never heard taught to you in Latin because you didn't know Latin anyway in many cases.

So anyway, now you're able to read things for yourself and you see that, "I've been lied to! I've been lied to!" In other words, what that church has been teaching. Because people were pretty hung up with those things. But even within the Church people became intellectual in things that they were reading that Paul had written, that Peter had written, and about the Church. They became experts.

This was what was happening during Sardis. And finally, they began going off tangent because they weren't being faithful to what God had given to them. They themselves were becoming expert, and after a while the Church got weaker and weaker and began to lose every truth there was except for three by the end. That's exactly what happened in Sardis.

Anyway, **To them write, These are the things said by he who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and are dead.** You can be called The Church of God, but you can be spiritually dead. Proof of that's been in the Worldwide Church of God. People can have the name The Church of God, doesn't matter whether it's Radio, whether it's Worldwide, or PKG. You can have the name Church of God but not be alive spiritually.

I know your works, and that you have a name that you live, and are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. So, telling what was going to happen toward the end here. These things are dying out. Hold on!

...for I have not found your works complete before God. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard. See, every one of these eras is written for everybody through all time. Certain things were high points or a magnification of things that happened at that time but there is information there for all of us all the time, just like this.

"Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard." Most of the majority of the ministry of God's Church in Laodicea lost that one. So, how did the Church fare? They lost it too because everything that they knew that was true came through one man, Herbert Armstrong, God's apostle. Did they forget? Yep. And look where they ended up.

Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard, and hold fast. God says hold fast to the truth, to what you've been given, **and repent.** Because that's what we do. Sabbath by Sabbath we're able to learn a little bit more of something that we hadn't seen perhaps and so we change. We change in our thinking, and we agree with what's given, in essence, whether we say it verbally or not, we're changing, we're repenting, we're turning away from what we didn't see clearly or understand, and maybe made mistakes in, and then there are times that it becomes more important to us, and we do repent specifically of some of those things.

If you, therefore, will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you'll not know what hour I come upon you. The point being is that this has happened throughout the past two thousand years, that if people become weak and begin to let down the time is going to come when you're going to be cut off from God's spirit and you're never going to know it, you're never going to understand it.

That's all it's saying: "I'm going to come upon you and you're not even going to know it." All of a sudden, by the time you're formally put outside God's Church you already lost it before that. It was already taken away from you, what you thought you had.

You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments. So, very few during that period of time, obviously, by what they're judged. You know we're judged by what we're given, what we have.

That's why I have hope for different ones who by the time that the Apostasy happened had fulfilled their portion with what they knew, some who died within the Church who were older, who were ministers and other brethren within the Church. Because God judges according to what we have. And so, if someone wasn't able to be there long enough to receive the things that you are blessed to receive they had what they had been given to that point in time and they were faithful to it then there are going to be those individuals who have opportunity to continue on.

It says, **They have not defiled their garments and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. Whoever overcomes...** I love that word because it's the word conqueror in the Greek. It's about fighting. It's about war. It's about battle. That's what God called us to. It's a burden to be in war. It's a weight to be in war, and if we grasp that and comprehend that then yeah, we're going to have hard times, we're going to have hard battles. But it's a battle but it's on a spiritual plane. Awesome!

Whoever overcomes, the same shall be clothed with white garments, and I will not blot out their name out of the book of life; but I will confess their name before my Father and before His angels. Beautiful.

But what an incredible thing every era here it shows things that weren't right, things that weren't good, evil that existed, what took place through time. Very few could come through Sardis because evil came in. And if we understand how that happened? So it will be in the next two eras that we go through next Sabbath.