

Magnifying the Good News

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In the last few sermons we have focused upon the truth of God during the era of Sardis and things that happened on into Philadelphia, the restoration of truth in the Church, the truth that was remaining at the time Mr. Armstrong came on the scene and understanding indeed why God raised him up to do what he did over several decades. It took several decades for God to work with him, to mould and fashion him, to help the Church get back on a right track, if you will, or in a direction where the Church was able to grow and many people were able to begin to be called into the Church. It wasn't just a snap out of Sardis and into Philadelphia and into those things that Mr. Armstrong learned through time and those things that God gave to him through time.

A lot of work went into it, as I mentioned last Sabbath, a lot of work... an incredible life story and exciting that he has two Autobiographies out there that people can also read if they have that opportunity, if you can find them, but they're out there. An incredible life and how God worked with him. That's what's exciting to Laura and myself when we travel around from area to area hearing how people are able to come into the groups, how God works with you, calls you, draws you, awakens you once again, or whatever it is we go through, some from our past and so forth that had been baptized many years ago and the result of the scattering that took place.

Just like here today, I was thinking about how it was a little over two years ago, *ideaCity*, and sure enough, one individual for sure that came back as a result of seeing that program, and that's exciting for Canada and for the Church when those things happen; individuals that continue to come back and those that are yet to be called...*many* yet to be called.

We went through those basic things, the seventh day Sabbath, the name of God's Church being 'The Church of God', and the basic law of tithing, first tithe. And then God called Mr. Armstrong; and we went through that sermon entitled 'The Restoration of Truth'. We covered two foundational truths that God revealed through Mr. Armstrong upon which the next 16 truths would be built having to do with the gospel. And those two truths, as we talked about, one of them being God's government; candidly a truth that people will build upon all their life. A truth that people will build upon *all their life*, and if you think you have it down, you don't. If you ever get to the point you think you have that number one truth given through Mr. Armstrong down, you don't. There's always more to be learned about government and God's government and the order of things, why God does what He does, how He does the things that He does, the things that have happened in the Church and so forth. There's always more to build upon.

One of the reasons the Church fell asleep is because they began to lose sight of an understanding of the importance of God's government and the structure that God has given within the Church and those things that took place and the things that began to break down through time and the abuse and the misuse of government. Because that's a lack of understanding of government and how God works.

One of the last great things (just to share with you) that God gave the Church before the apostasy was in the mid to late-80's around 87, in through there. We had these refresher programs where ministers were brought into headquarters for a period of about two weeks for teaching, for training, for being able to work with individuals, bringing to them things about what was going on in the work, in the Church, and helping us to become re-grounded, if you will, or grounded more deeply in those things that

God wanted us to see and understand as far as the ministry was concerned. So ministers were brought in from all over the world at different stages (you couldn't do a lot at once, obviously, it was too much to handle), into Pasadena, California. So certain sized groups were manageable, able to be placed in the classrooms and so forth – husbands and wives because we are a team. It's always been that way in God's Church, husbands and wives work together. Just because one was ordained at that particular time, the importance is its teamwork; 50/50 indeed to make 100%, if you will, of what God was doing in each Church area. And so God would bring people into headquarters.

And the last big thing that God gave, and he gave it through Mr. Tkach because Mr. Tkach was placed over the Church at that particular time after Mr. Armstrong's death – and so it happened quickly - and that was to teach the ministry, to encourage the ministry to get away from sheriffing and to learn and adopt shepherding. Now, those are words that the Protestant world, when you talk about shepherding, throws out in a very loose manner and deeply lack understanding. Within God's Church we were taught at that particular time, very powerfully so, what the difference was in this book, and how people are to be treated, how people are to be worked with.

One thing that I began to see and understand very quickly on - I'll just tell you right now - when I went out there to headquarters and went through those classes and those things we were told over and over again, that one there, for about a year I struggled... not a matter of understanding, but I struggled in the sense of feeling so ashamed that I didn't know it before, beating myself up because I didn't see it to the degree I needed to before, because I wasn't taught it from the moment I came in until it was given at that particular time; because of different ones I had been trained under, worked under, been called into the Church and was under, things I saw, things that many brethren in the Church saw that were abused and misused in the sense of how to be treated, how to be worked with.

I give the example of the age in which we live at a particular moment in time when you talk about this present truth. I think of a period of time in the 50's and especially at that period of time when in this country and in society as a whole, because it was a part of society, the work of parents with children, parental teaching in a home and so forth, it was encouraged at that particular time (which I don't think really hurts, but I don't want to get into that because of society today) that a little strong discipline is good for children. To where we've gone in society when you think about the way it was in the 50's and you think about the way it is now, it's almost totally reversed, where in schools and then it's worked its way into families, to where to raise your voice at a child - let alone any kind of correction - is almost the way it's looked at as being the right way of doing things. Sick, sick world we live in. Where is the soundness of mind? Where is the balance?

But the main thing that came out of some of that, that fits into the story here of what I'm talking about, is that parents in the Church were taught the same things, and it was a good thing in one respect, but there was one ingredient missing that later on in the 70's that began to come out especially, was that there was that which wasn't encouraged as much as it should have been, and that is love, parental love. It goes along with parental discipline. That you've got to be motivated for the right reasons, you've got to do it in the right ways and that love needs to be shown and expressed, not just correction. When parents become parents they're not taught these things. You're not taught how to raise your children. You're not taught how to rear your children. You're not taught how to teach, guide and direct your children. You learn what you learn from the world around you. Today people learn it from TV, or you learn it from your past, the way you were reared, and so forth. But as far as doing it in a godly manner? It's not taught as a whole.

And so I think of parents that were in the Church in the 70's that I knew and worked with and some of them who beat themselves up for a long period of time because they saw that they didn't show as much love. They didn't *show* as much love as they realize they could have shown in their families and in their lives. Does that make sense? Some of you who lived through that period of time, you know; others of you that were born since then, you don't. Society and times change. But the point was to all those parents who felt that way, because of children making wrong choices and wrong decisions and almost like a guilt trip, it's the parents fault; no, everybody has choices in life. Everybody in the last 6,000 years has had choices and some of those.... anyway, I don't want to get into a parental sermon here.

But the point is you move on, you repent and you move on and you do it right from that point forward. You don't beat yourself up. All of you and the sins you have in your life – when you sin you sin and you go before God and you repent and you ask God for forgiveness and for help to fight and to conquer what it is you're battling, perhaps all your life to one degree or another as you grow. But there'll be portions of your nature that are always going to be with you as a human being, but you repent and you move on and you don't beat yourself up. That doesn't get you anywhere! It doesn't help! You start doing things the right way, a better way, and that's what you search for.

I had to come to that within the ministry, that I couldn't repair anything of the past that wasn't done as well as it needed to be done, or could have been done, because God was helping us to see things that could be done better. And so you move on and you strive to do them better, you strive to do them right, in a better way. And that's the way it is in your personal life and that's the way it was in the Church at that time.

But the Church didn't learn it. The ministry didn't receive the correction from God, because it came from God through Mr. Tkach to be given to the ministry. It was a great warning to the Church that that is a wrong direction to go and you better change the way you work with people. It's one thing to deal with sin, it's another thing to be merciful and to give love as well. Those ingredients have to be a part of it - judgement, mercy, and faith - the things we believe and understand. Much of that belief has to do with love, God's love and how God's love is to be administered in life, how we live it.

And so when I think of number one, I think of all the people raised with haughtiness and pride after the apostasy took place who believed they understood it; and the very things that have happened out here and continue to happen in the scattered Church reveal they don't understand number one, God's government, how it functions and how it works in life. And many, obviously, then in God's Church who came out of that background – sometimes you have to examine yourselves to make sure that you do; and strive to make sure that you *do* understand how that works. Because you see, it isn't just a matter of just the Church, it's a matter of your life, how you live it toward others. Because something I saw after that one year in my life and seeing what I needed to address, I began to see in people's lives in the Church and have seen it ever since.

Families, and how people treat each other, how husbands treat wives first of all, how wives treat husbands, how parents treat children and on it goes – because that's government. It's how laws are administered in life. God's government is not a matter of harshness or being hard, it is a matter of order, it's a matter of how things work and how things produce fruit in life. And if you live those things it'll produce great fruit in your life, it truly will.

And so I think of today in God's Church, just as an admonition to all of you listening today, be careful when you think you understand all the truths, be careful if you think you have a great handle on *all* the

21 truths that were given first – because you don't! It's something you will grow in *all your life*! And I'm not talking about all the rest that have been given since that period of time, I'm just talking about those from the very beginning; the three from the beginning that were still in Sardis, and the 18 given through Mr. Armstrong. Because all of your life, especially when you enter into married life, you'll be working with number one *all your life* to try to understand it, to strive to do it better, to strive to live it better in your *own family*, indeed. Okay? So take that to heart please, because that'll help you to remain of a humble spirit, to realize you always have more to learn and you can never get to a point where you think you have it all. Because see, that's what happened in Laodicea, people became rich and increased with goods and thought they understood it all, thought they had a *good handle* on all the doctrines and truths of the Church. Not true! It's something you have to grow in *all your life*.

And so government, again, being so awesomely important because it's the one thing God above everything else wants us to grasp. There's only one way to govern in life – it's by God's law. He gave us 10 Commandments, it's how life is governed. It tells us how to have a right relationship with God and how to have a right relationship with one another. It's about His love, it's about how to love one another, it's about how to *respect* one another even when you don't agree, it's how to respect other people in life, how to treat other people in life. And how often do you not do that properly? I don't have to look too far back to realize when I make those mistakes, when I make mistakes like that, and to ask God for forgiveness. How about you? How far back? Was it maybe an hour ago? ...a day ago? ...wasn't too long ago if you understand what I'm saying.

So God wants us to understand, deeply, what began with a mind of a being – Lucifer – who had everything so we can conquer and overcome that kind of wrong thinking and wrong thought patterns in our lives. Because you have them! It's a part of your nature! It's what God wants us to conquer and overcome.

And so we talked about then the second truth that was given, and again here, awesome what God has given here but the second truth given through Mr. Armstrong in order and importance concerns the truth of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. And because it goes along with number one in a very powerful way, revealing the authority to teach it as well. That was Mr. Armstrong's function, and in very powerful ways as we talked about Matthew 24:14, to preach the gospel into all the world to the degree God wanted it to and then the end would come...and we're living in it now, have been for a long time, since 1986.

And so again here, the authority to preach the good news, the gospel of the Kingdom, and then as we've talked about in this series here that we're talking about *Magnifying the Good News* because what we're going through right now is the next sermon in order because we're going to go through the next eight truths, but we just went through the one before that 'Truth of the Good News' because those first eight truths that followed were a matter of the preaching of the gospel, the good news, and that's what God has been doing in the Church so that many could be drawn into the Church and this long process of God working through Mr. Armstrong through the 30's and the 40's and getting a foundation built up, and then finally into the 50's and growth began to come along in a very powerful way, and then from the 60's on and the Church leaped forward in leaps and bounds in a very powerful and magnified way.

Today's sermon is entitled *Magnifying the Good News* because that's what the next eight do. We just went through the eight before that, 'Truth of the Good News' because it's kind of the foundational part of what followed the first two, and everything else that's being given now that was given through Mr. Armstrong just magnifies it even more, helps it to become clearer, stronger in understanding. One of

them we're going to go through has to do with the Holy Days, but they have everything to do with obedience to the Sabbath that was given to Sardis, it's just that Sardis didn't grasp the importance of the Holy Days, the High Days, the annual Sabbaths as well. And so through time God gave these to Mr. Armstrong and we'll talk about some of that.

11 here in order, because we've covered the first two given through Mr. Armstrong, then the next eight. Eight and two is ten, now we're at number eleven.

14 (11) **The Millennium.**

The next truth we're looking at is 'The Millennium'. And so again, those things that are not a matter of order. These aren't a matter of order. The first two very much are a matter of order and a foundation for what God was going to build upon through Mr. Armstrong; then that good news that began to come out and God being able to very powerfully then bring people in who could be fed and nurtured, because if you don't have those things you can't be nurtured and you can't grow. That's why the first three truths that were there in Sardis, people couldn't be nurtured. The Church was dead and dying out and God had to work with Mr. Armstrong to begin giving them this good news of His plan and purpose for man so that He could work with them. I'm just going to read it as it is there....

14 (11) **The Millennium.** The Kingdom of God will rule the nations on earth during this 1,000 year period. Jesus Christ and the 144,000 who are resurrected to become kings and priests will rule and bring prosperity to the entire earth. For the first time in the history of mankind, since Adam sinned and God closed the way to the tree of life, salvation will finally be opened to all.

And the world doesn't know this! What an awesome truth to give! You can't talk about this with relatives, you can't *give* this to people out there, and yet what an awesome truth that *magnifies* the good news, the gospel message and those things that we've already covered. And this one here very powerfully so adding to it to help us to see what God is going to build and what we're looking forward to, especially after God began to restore things through Mr. Armstrong and began to give a focus here. This isn't that far off! In Mr. Armstrong's time, the Millennium wasn't too far off! He referred to being in the end-time and indeed he was; not the period of time we know now, not the last era of God's Church, but very close to it...*very close to it*, right next to it, and the gospel had to go out before the rest could be fulfilled. He lived in the end-time. You look at 6,000 years, you look at 1930 and the 30's when God began working with him in that short period of time, if you will, of 50 some years, 55 years, whatever numbers you want to zero in on – very powerful what God did through him in that length of time, but a small amount of time compared to 6,000 years of human history.

That's why I marvel at the time of Laodicea, second shortest (if you will) period of time of a Church era. And so again here, the Millennium, almost on us, less than a year away; something that in Mr. Armstrong's time in the Church in listening to sermons during the Feast of Tabernacles, you'd hear year after year, that I've heard since 1969 on, being talked about, looking forward to this period of time when finally the earth begins to be able to be cleaned up with only God's government existing.

Let's go over to Revelation 5. When I go through a sermon like this and cover scriptures like this and cover truths like this I groan a little bit inside because I've *seen* through time how truths like this can begin to be minimized in our minds, where we get to a point in time if we're not careful we don't *value*

them to the *degree* that we should *all the time* in life, truly. And it's easy to do that, to begin losing that first love. When God begins to draw you into His Church it's exciting when you learn all the things you do in the beginning so quickly, so powerfully; and then you begin to digest them and you begin to live them in the sense of how you think toward others, how you think about this world, how you think about God, how you think about those things that are going to come to pass, and after a while you begin to take them more for granted, it begins to be reflected then in your everyday life, on your job and in your family, in your home, in your community, wherever you are in the things you do and how you work with people or treat people and think about people.

Because see, *all those things* in your behaviour reflects where you are in your relationship with God, how excited you are for the truths you have, how dear you hold them to yourself. We came to a point where we had to have it all snatched away from us! For someone to get up in front of God's Church and say, "Oh, you don't have to do this anymore! It's not required by God! We're going to keep doing it *but* you *don't have to do it*, you don't *have* to keep the seventh day Sabbath anymore. You should worship God on *every day of the week*." And all of a sudden all these things began to be snatched away from you and we began to treasure them in a greater way at that point in time, we truly did. Until you've experienced something like that it's hard to grasp and comprehend the magnitude that can have in your life, indeed.

Don't become weary of God's truth. Don't begin to take it for granted. Don't let it begin to take a lesser place in your life in your relationship with Him. It's always one of gratitude and growing in it and God will give you more and more and more. These truths prove it! These truths prove that God will just continue to give you more. If you treasure what He's given you, you will *constantly* build upon it. That's the way of God. He gives you His spirit, not to stagnate and to begin to level out, but to build upon it and grow and grow and grow. It's an awesome process!

Revelation 5:8 - And when He had taken the book, the four creatures and the twenty four elders fell down before the Lamb, every one of them having harps and golden vials full of odours, this is referring to incense. The odours should have been translated as incense here. These **vials** if you will **full of odours which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song**, that's why we understand when we pray to God it's indicative of, if you will, a reflection upon something that was done in a physical manner when the Israelites threw the incense upon the fire and they were told how to do this. It had a great smell to it. Today they have these things they burn as incense and some of them make you gag when you go by some of these stores because they're burning. But this here was something that God had given as a mixture. He told them how to mix it, the ingredients, the proportions, and everything, and when they threw it on the fire this aroma went out, this sweet smelling odour that went out. Don't know exactly what it was, or exactly how it smelt, but it was good and that's the lesson to be learned on this. God shows that when He receives this it's like prayers, our prayers that go up before Him, it's a sweet smelling thing to God, it's a joy to God. He enjoys it, what He receives from your prayers. And again, those analogies that are given.

So this odour, or this incense if you will, **which are the prayers of the saints**, and that which has been going up before God with all whom God has ever worked with in the last 6,000 years.

Going on; **And they sang a new song saying, You are worthy to take the book and to open the Seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed...**it's referring back to saints, it's not 'us'. Again, how do people translate something they don't understand? They have a difficult time sometimes. And so again, this is referring back to the saints specifically, not to the 4 creatures and the twenty-four elders.

It's not about *them*; it's about the saints and that incense and those that have been redeemed to God. Because this is the way God says it is, it's the way that it is to Him. It's a simple, simple thing to God. **...and have redeemed saints/redeemed them to God by/through**, Who is it talking about? The saints, have redeemed them to God, God is the one who has done this. God is the one who has done it through Jesus Christ, through the Passover, the one who has become our Elder Brother, the one who is High Priest, and so it's bringing these things in here.

You are worthy to take the book and open the Seals thereof for You were slain and have redeemed them, in other words, we talked about the two wave loaves, we talked about why there are two, we talked about the process of that which was done through time in the past because of their faith and their confidence and trust and belief in God, that God would forgive sins – not a matter of the Levitical priesthood and the killing of animals but it's something they believed in that God would give, and things they understood even to a minor degree about a Messiah, that salvation was going to come through a Messiah. They just didn't understand the scope of it, but they believed God and so they were saved in the process and had been forgiven of sins even though they lived before the time of the Passover. And then that other loaf that followed that period of time, of those who had more understanding, but all saved through the same process; 144,000 - a few before the time of Christ, many more since that time, but all of them. And that's what it's talking about, this period of time...all redeemed through Jesus Christ, through the Passover, because without the Passover there is no forgiveness of sin at any time, for any of mankind.

...redeemed them to God through Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; people who talk about, even in times past or in the world, don't understand a process of how God works with mankind and those sometimes who get down to a point where they're concerned about a physical nation of Israel. Well, there were people who were *never* a part of Israel that God definitely worked with – Abraham wasn't Israel. They came out of him. Those who were before the flood; righteous Abel. Out of every kindred, people's and tongues throughout time God has redeemed people. It's not just about a physical nation, it's more than that, it's about a spiritual one. And so, it's talking about all these who have been saved through time – before the flood, after the flood, before Abraham, after Abraham, before Israel was ever a nation, after Israel, before Jesus Christ was ever born and after He was born, before there was a Church and after the Church, talking about the spiritual Body of Christ.

And so people have been redeemed for the past 6,000 years – again, those 144,000 that are going to reign with Christ when He returns as part of that story.

And have made them, again, it's not referring back to the 4 creatures, it's referring back to the saints, **unto our God kings and priests: and they**, not 'we' (not the creatures there, not the 4 creatures and the 24 elders) **and they shall reign on the earth**. Awesome! I'm excited about that! Really excited about that! Awesome to understand it, awesome to know you're a part of it. And for those of you living on in the Millennium, your goal, your desire is to be a part of a greater resurrection into the God Family, multiple millions, perhaps billions by that time who are going to be a part of the God Family. But there are some of us here today and there are some scattered throughout the Church who are going to be a part of this, a part of the 144,000 who will then reign with Jesus Christ when He returns. Again, awesome things! And you can't share this with anybody! You can't tell the world! But what an awesome truth to understand about a period of time, to understand 7,000 years, to understand that God gave 6,000 years to man and now we're almost to the end of that and He's giving 1,000 beyond that for Christ to rule and reign on the earth with His government, to have that great contrast so that those in the Great White Throne have an opportunity to see that contrast.

Revelation 20, talking about the beginning of the Millennium as well, what's going to take place, those who are going to rule and reign for a thousand years with Jesus Christ, as that truth reveals.

Revelation 20:4 - And I saw thrones, rulership, power, authority, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and the souls of them who were beheaded, not a matter of they saw, it's talking about the same thing here, and the souls of them who were cut off, is what the word means. Again, the world, they pick out words because they don't know what it's all about. Not everyone who's going to be a part of this was beheaded. It's a word that means 'cut off'. And so they think they had their heads cut off...**that were cut off for the witness of Jesus,** because they don't understand what that means. When you start living this way of life and what the world does in response...what happens to the world? You're no longer a part of the world at all.

...for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands; what a blessing just to understand this! A protestant world that doesn't grasp it, and those who do think they grasp it, they have these ideas about numbers like they have to be on the back of your hand or something – 666 – and then they're going to put all the rest of these numbers across and you think, "Why put those three numbers in when it's going to be so hard getting all the rest of them on there?" But they think they need to have 666 in there because they just don't *understand*! And what a horrible thing when people don't understand, and what an awesome thing when you do. How much do you treasure it? How often do you thank God? Do you do it every day? Do you thank God day by day? Do you think of it that often? To thank God for what you see and what you know and what you understand?

...and in their foreheads, some people think about you will have something up there, something that distinguishes people, not understanding this is so simple! The hand is having to do with when you work and how you work and why you work and when you don't work. And the knowledge and where it comes from - it comes from up here (the forehead). Why you make the decisions you do, the mark. Simple thing that we learn very early on, the mark, the sign of God's people is the Sabbath, and those who call themselves of Christ who don't believe that, they have a different mark. When you talk about the beast, when you talk about the false prophet, when you talk about things of that nature you know what they believe – Sunday, the day of the sun. And what's in their hand? What's in their forehead? Sunday. That's why they do what they do.

There was a time, even in the United States, and a little bit even today where you can go in to some places where they won't sell certain things to you on Sunday. Some places used to close down, they wouldn't be open on Sunday. There are still some places that...like Chick-fil-a, because they don't understand the right day, their chain of stores can't be open on Sunday because they believe differently. They don't understand the right day. Simple thing to understand, that which distinguishes us, that which is a mark that we bear that's in the first three truths – the Sabbath, the Sabbath day, the seventh day Sabbath, Saturday – not Sunday.

...and they, speaking of these who sat on thrones; and they saw the thrones and the judgement was given, **and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.** I feel badly for people in this world when they don't grasp this. The little bit of forethought, but they can't think this way because their minds are so closed, it's just something that is a mystery to them. It's just something that doesn't make any sense when they read it – like sometimes when you read the Bible. You ever read something and think, "I don't

understand that. It doesn't make sense." I still do that. There are many things I want to know and understand that I can't yet, things in the Old Testament especially that God has written at different periods of time that we don't have all the knowledge of yet.

And the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. And so again, this is talking about a few resurrected to Eternal life and talking about another period of time here when people are going to live again. **...Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection:** speaking of this one here, who live and reign with Jesus Christ. **...over such the second death has no power,** because they're eternal beings now, they can't die again. Incredible knowledge we have! Knowledge that you can begin to take for granted; you think you're not and you can begin to take it for granted.

...but speaking of these/ it says, **but they,** those that are resurrected and reign with Christ, **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.** And we know it's going beyond that, but it's focusing on the Millennium, it's focusing on a unique time in history, it's focusing on that which we look forward to that's going to come very soon now to this earth.

Let's turn over now to Isaiah 2, because the latter portion of that particular truth said this:

...For the first time in the history of mankind, since Adam sinned and God closed the way to the tree of life, salvation will finally be opened to all.

I mentioned it last Sabbath, about an individual in the elevator that I talked to, many others in this particular hotel we were at in Orlando who were there for a convention, their 97th, apostolic churches, Pentecostal, and some of them, undoubtedly so, if not maybe most of them sincere in what they were striving to do, dedicated in what they were striving to do, but just wrong. They don't understand. And my heart went out to them because they sacrificed to be doing what they were doing, indeed, to come together like that and to do – because we can relate to that in part in understanding what it's like to go to the Feast of Tabernacles, to tell your boss you're taking time off, and "Well, what is it for?" Well, theirs wasn't a Holy Day, it was a convention they were having but they had to go through some things that probably weren't received well by all their employers or whatever. I look forward to the time that they're no longer blind, that they can do it for the right reasons because they understand the truth, not because they're in ignorance.

Isaiah 2:1 - The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, the last times for man. We know what they are; there are 1,100 years yet ahead for mankind. It shows what's going to take place in that final period of time in earth's history; **that the mountain of the Eternal's house,** and 'the mountain', we come to understand that early on, it's a part of what's been given to us that we just take for granted if we're not careful. Again here, we understand so many different things, what it's talking about prophetically when it says this; mountain = government, and God's government, a mountain of God (if you will), or the Lord's House, His government. It's talking about the Kingdom of God. When it talks about being over the mountains and the hills, the huge governments on this earth or kingdoms and the smaller ones, all of them, makes it clear that God's going to be over everything.

...shall be established in the top of the mountains, here we go...the top of the mountains, over *all* governments of the earth. Jesus Christ is going to be King of kings; **and shall be exalted above the hills;** the smaller ones. Just like today, you think about large governments of the earth, certain countries, actually think about the largest ones, what are they? Different things come to your mind. Perhaps

certain economies and so forth. Then you say the smaller ones and your mind goes in a completely different direction, those who don't have influence on the earth as a whole, those who are taken advantage of, those who struggle, and so it says here that **God's 'mountain'** if you will, **the Kingdom of God is going to be established over all the mountains and all the hills and nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come along and let us go up to the mountain of the Eternal:** I have heard this year after year after year in God's Church, sometimes many times in a year, because if this is not spoken of, as a whole, during the Feast of Tabernacles...well, most of the time it has been, because it talks about the end-time. Isaiah 2 is generally always read at the Feast of Tabernacles. I don't know if I've ever known a year that it wasn't, because of what it pictures.

It says, **come along, let us go up to the mountain of the Eternal; to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways,** finally the opportunity, the way being made available to everyone out of all these countries all throughout the world, everybody. It's just making another way of saying 'all people' that are governed by one government now have the opportunity to go before God to be taught His way of life, finally! You don't have that today! The world has never experienced that, nothing close to it! And so it says, **many people shall go and say, Come along, let's go up to the mountain of the Eternal; to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for/because out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Eternal from Jerusalem.** Finally! Finally on this earth the truth, everyone's going to have the ability to know it.

And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, something they're going to have to learn quickly, in the very beginning! You're not going to have any more military, make any more instruments for war. You're not going to be smuggling weapons into different countries to prop up governments; all the shenanigans that governments play. I don't care where they are, who they are, such despicable things that take place! Close a blind eye while certain organizations and certain people out here... they know where they're making their money and how they're doing it because *they want* weapons to go into certain countries, because *they want* certain people to be propped up and be in government, when they know there are going to be thousands of people killed with those weapons. What a *sick world we live in!* I hope you yearn inside with all your being for what God is getting excited about... and you don't have to hope much longer because the reality of it is about to come to pass; but yearn for those things. I do! I yearn for the time that this kind of *garbage and double-speak and lying* is ripped away from governments of this earth. Truly, it's a *sick, sick world*, people that are taken advantage of.

I think about how the U.S. propped up Saddam Hussein and then took him down. Incredible! Propped him up, made him who he was! We do that over and over again throughout our history. It's happened! Sick...sick...sick world. And they don't like to hear that – too bad, I really don't care. God's going to take care of it all, going to bring it all to an end.

...for because out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Eternal from Jerusalem. Thank God! **And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people, and beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn... LEARN war any more.** People who teach war are *sick!* They don't understand how sick their minds are; who glorify war! There's no glory in war! There's no glory in going off to battle! There's no glory going off and dying in such conditions in this world, there really isn't. But the world thinks there is and they think if you say anything about it or against it you're just not patriotic, whatever that means. You know, it's sad. I feel for their blindness, I truly do; and I hope you do.

Toys – toys that are given to children to glorify war and fighting?! Where does that come from? Machine guns? Games? You can go out here and kill people? What's wrong with the mind that we do that in this world? ...that we enjoy getting into these kinds of video games. I see people and they're throwing their thumbs around and gunshots going off all over the place and people dying and blood is squirting everywhere across this 50" screen; and you think, "Where is the mind? Where is the sanity?" You think that doesn't have some kind of effect on the mind of a child? ...or an adult? Does it? It doesn't matter whether it's a child or adult, "It doesn't hurt anybody..." Yeah... yeah, neither does weed, does it? You want to kill a few brain cells? I've known a lot of people who have. You can't get them back, as a whole. Pray for God to heal you, you know, but there are things we destroy in life and we don't realize what we've done to ourselves. Some of you sitting in this room, I know that you have, see, because it's the way of the world! It's the way of the world and we fight these battles.

The abuse of alcohol... we learn it. The abuse of war...and we learn it; and we teach our children if we're not careful. God says they're not going to learn it anymore. You're not going to be able to go out to Toys-R-U's and find these kinds of games anymore. Maybe you'll get to be one of those that gets to go through and just help to destroy it, I don't know, or get rid of it, or change it, change the industry. It's going to change real fast! Machine guns, games, military gear – nothing glamorous and glorious about any of it. I hope it sickens you, because if it doesn't something's wrong with you, or the fact that people learn it.

People aren't even going to be allowed to begin to think about it in a sense of getting people together to go against someone else. If anyone does I'll tell you what's going to happen to them [snaps fingers twice] real fast. Their next moment is in the Great White Throne. Their next moment is going to be, "What did I do?" In other words, they're going to die. There are going to be people who die at the beginning of the Millennium and maybe at some points throughout that period of time too for things that they've done wrong. If they're not going to learn it, God's not going to allow it anymore – that's why at the end we know exactly what happens when Satan's released for a little while. You know what? He does this. He gets a band together and they go out to try to destroy part of this earth. Astounding!

I used to think it was astounding to think that there'd ever be an apostasy in God's Church. Knew it was coming, believed it was coming, but it was so far from the mind to think it was possible. Had no *concept* of how great it would be, that there would actually be a great falling away. I saw the Church getting weaker through time. I knew when Mr. Armstrong cried out and said, "I wonder if 10% of you get it!" I saw problems in the Church, but to think that an apostasy would be right behind that? It was hard to imagine. And it's hard to imagine, even with what we see and believe, that at the end of the Millennium that Satan is going to do a bit of a clean-up job and there are going to be minds that are going to be able to be swayed and to do something of the magnitude they do it. But you know what? God doesn't allow it to happen. He allows some of the organization of it to come together and then all of a sudden – whammo - it's all destroyed, because God's word is true.

Isaiah 2 is true, **nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore**, as far as what they're being taught as a way of life. There are going to be some who strive to do that at the very end because of Satan's sway when he's let loose for a little season, but as far as the earth is concerned and what man is taught, it's not going to be a way of life anymore.

O house of Jacob, come along and let us walk in the light of the Eternal. So, awesome scriptures.

15 (12)**The holy spirit coming into us only begets us.**

So many of these things are close to things we've talked about, but when you zero in on a specific area it magnifies it even more, magnifies truths that God gave even more. And so this one here states....

God's holy spirit opens our minds so we can understand the coded book, the Bible...

What an incredible thing! This has been one of the most exciting things to me since 1969, to be able to go in here and to sit down and listen to sermons or to read some publication and see things that just come alive more and more through time, and still coming alive. This morning, working on some stuff that God is giving for next Sabbath that are going to bring some things alive even more! Things I've wondered about, things I've looked forward to, things I haven't fully understood because it wasn't time for us to fully grasp and understand them yet, until we're there – and now we're there and so God's giving more! To me that's exciting! And so we see these things come alive because it is, in a sense, in that respect, a coded book. You can't just pick it up in the world and understand it! God's spirit has to lead you and open your mind to see it and then, again, once you receive that holy spirit that begets us, that which begins to come alive more and more in your life because God's spirit continues to work with you and you continue to see things you couldn't otherwise see. So again here as it says it here....

God's holy spirit opens our minds so we can understand the coded book, the Bible, which is otherwise locked from understanding.

I could give you the title of the sermon next week and your mind is locked from some of the understanding right now, because it hasn't been given yet. But when it's given, you know what's exciting? We're all going to see it at the same time. It's like in 2005; one of the greatest times of witnessing this truth in my life was 2005 at the Feast of Tabernacles, because I saw God give in sermon after sermon after sermon truth about His Son, that His Son has *not* eternally existed, that it was still a spin-off of the Trinity teaching and the reality was His life began when his mother was begotten... when Mary was begotten with Him. He didn't have previous eternal life as a member of the God Family. And so in time sermon after sermon began to explain all those things that had been given to us in scripture and in time, to come to understand He's the first of the firstfruits, the first into God's Kingdom, the first into God's Family.

I witnessed that in sermon after sermon because I saw the minds of people being opened up to, at the same time, the truth of God; of something that beforehand if you'd said was going to be given in the Church you'd have said, "Yeah, there will be a falling away over that one. It's not going to happen." Until it's time for God to give it, what is true is true and when He gives it to your mind you see it. Now, not everyone saw it instantaneously at the same time, but as a whole by the time the Feast was over people saw it, everyone saw it...of those who were yielded to God.

Without the spirit we cannot understand the Bible. Spiritual knowledge comes from the Bible through the revelation of the holy spirit...

What an awesome process, that God grants a portion of as He calls someone, once *baptized*, His holy spirit then continues to dwell in those who have been begotten of God's spirit so that a person can continue to grow in knowledge and understanding of God. That's what's exciting. When God says He sends forth His spirit, by law, by God's way, by God's law it *has* to produce fruit. In other words, we

yielded to that, we're yielding to it and it will produce fruit if you yield to it. But if we don't and we resist then we can get cut off from the flow of that. But wherever God's spirit dwells and continues to dwell it produces fruit, *by law*, by God's spiritual law. So awesome that we can continue to grow more and more and more.

So this truth has led us up to grasp the awesome process of baptism, that we are immersed in water, and now we grasp the importance of the ceremony of how we are then immersed into the holy spirit. God has blessed us to grow in this; that even the ceremony of baptism has changed in recent time, it's been added to in understanding. It's like a continuing magnification of the gospel message, and that's the way our lives are, we continue to grow more and more and more. If you don't grow, if you begin to become stagnant, begin to be stagnant it's evidence you've been cut off from the flow of God's spirit and you begin to lose what is there. You have to do one or the other, either grow or cease to grow and start losing what you have.

We were talking about the holy spirit and how we're begotten of it and the process there whereby we're able to continue to grow and see things in this book that otherwise people can't see around us. You can talk about it but they can't see what you see and it's an awesome thing in how you continue to grow in it. We were also talking then about the process of baptism, how God has even given us more in understanding and I thought it'd be good to go through a part of this process here today.

Back in Acts 8, let's notice – again, just to be reminded of some of this because those of you who are new, you don't realize that some of these things are new in the sense of what's being added to and magnified more, and God continues to do that in the Church. We continue to grow more and more, but what an incredible process here to realize you have a portion of God in your being, in your mind, in your life; that you're able to be begotten of God's spirit is an awesome thing to understand, and that He can dwell in you, live in you. I don't know how much we can really grasp that, to what degree we really grasp. We grow and we understand that in varying ways as we grow, as we mature, but to understand God's desire to live in us, to change us, to mould and fashion our mind, each of us, it's an awesome thing, it truly is.

The baptism of John, we've talked about in times past, and those performed by the disciples of Christ did not involve giving of the holy spirit. It was a matter of being immersed, of that which came later when people were immersed in the spirit after baptism, but in the beginning it was a matter of a baptism unto repentance and the process that began there to lead people to the other. I want to read in Acts 8 just to add on to this.

Acts 8:11 - And to him they had regard, because that of a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. Speaking of Simon Magus, the one who became 'Peter' to some, became 'Simon Peter' to a big church. He's the other Simon Peter, not the one of scripture in the sense of the disciple. But this is the one where they have the big ole statue where they've almost kissed the toe off of it.

Verse 12 - But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, it says, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon also himself believed: and when he was baptized he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs that were done. And there are things about the laying on of hands and so forth that...the giving of God's spirit that.... Notice **verse 14** – It says, **Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:**

Verse 15 - Who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the holy spirit:

and so again, I don't want to go into all the scriptures that talk about the process here of laying on of hands, of things that the Church was learning and growing in. They understood things about the baptism of John, the baptism of Christ's disciples, of things of those whom they were baptising, because it says, in essence, they baptized more than John even did as time went along there. But again, there's a baptism of repentance which is basically what water baptism is about; it's about repentance, it's about burying the old self and coming out of the water to walk in newness of life. It's about a desire before God to be able to be forgiven of your sins and so forth. But the next process there is one of begetting, and that's when you have hands layed upon you and you receive the impregnation of God's spirit, because you have to be immersed in the spirit as well, not just into water. And that's a part of some of the things being talked about here. Individuals were baptized and they began a process but they had not received the holy spirit yet.

Verse 16 – (For as yet it had not yet fallen upon any of them as they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus only.) So again, bringing in a part of the story. If you want to know more about it you can go back and look up on the website there; we have sermons on this that go into this in detail, especially since we've added to this in recent time.

It says in **verse 17 - Then they layed hands upon them, and they received the holy spirit.** So, we understand in God's Church the importance that you must be immersed, that the process is being immersed in both – in water and in God's spirit. And we understand the uniqueness of what happens when you are immersed in God's spirit and you begin to receive it, that impregnation which takes place in the mind and God begins to dwell in you from that time forward. We understand that's when the begetting stage takes place.

So again here, a process that God began to give in the Church and something else that people learn from this and should learn from this – goes back to number one again about government. See, because there were some in the Church and there were some in some scattered groups that began to think that anyone could baptise someone else or someone could lay hands upon someone else. Not so in God's Church because it is a matter of authority, it is a matter of power and order that God gives within the Church; that it has to come through the ministry. And again, that which has to do with ordination and those things that take place of that matter. I think of James who tells about how when you're sick, who are you supposed to call on? The elders of the Church because it shows the way God has chosen for people to grasp and understand how He works in the Church - it's through the ministry. And so it is with the laying on of hands and the impregnation that takes place and that flow that has continued through time in the Church – never stopped for anyone who became a part of the Church.

God gave Mr. Armstrong to see the importance of being immersed completely in water and the lessons to be received from it, because for so much in the world it's a different matter, that people, babies even, are sprinkled on the head. They have a little water dripped on them on their head and they have this ceremony and they don't understand that someone has to *choose*, it's a matter of a choice, that an individual has to be old enough to make that choice themselves. They have to be of an adult age, old enough to make a choice themselves that they want to *change* their life. A baby doesn't know anything. And it takes away from the meaning of baptism. An adult can come to understand that they have sin, that they want to be forgiven, that they want to live a better life, they want to *change* the way they're living; when it comes to God's way of life they want to live *this* way of life. And that's a part of that process, a matter of being adult and choosing it, that they want to be immersed in water. And so again

here, what an awesome truth that God gave to the Church, of making a distinction here of something so important.

There's a church out there that became so excited because they learned a portion of this truth, immersion, and they realized it's not a matter of sprinkling and so they called themselves 'The Immersion Church'...they use the word Baptist, the Baptist church. They became excited because of this truth that they understood, built a church around a doctrine and a belief of something that the world didn't have as a whole. They came to understand that you have to bury someone in water and they have to come up out of the water in order to be forgiven of sin. As a whole, the world hasn't grasped that. So, incredible truth that God magnified and built upon concerning the Church.

Again, things we can begin to take for granted if we're not careful, not realizing the world of traditional Christianity wanders around out there in the dark, and you look forward to the time they're going to be relieved of this, where it won't be a ceremony of taking a baby in and sprinkling water over them and speaking in Latin or whatever they do, different ceremonies that people have. Who can understand Latin any more!

Romans 6:3 – Don't you know that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? It all pictures something, has meaning and importance to it. **Therefore we're buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so also we should walk in newness of life.** And so Paul is teaching a people here, a Gentile people, something of things they didn't grasp and comprehend, and he's beating it down fine and showing every minute step here, what it pictures, what it means, what it symbolizes, and things the Jews couldn't even begin to understand (until they came into the Church).

...even so we should also walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, you're buried, you're putting to death the old person, we're to come up, have a determination, we come to a point where we make a conscientious decision, "I don't want to live this way anymore, I want to change. I want to obey God's way of life. I want to live the way God says and shows. I want to change!" And so this is the process you go through, and God grants us that. He says, "You can put to death the old self." Doesn't mean you're not going to have some of those battles, obviously, but you can start the process and God will give you the help.

...even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is – again, that word that doesn't mean what it says here, '**crucified**' it's not crucified, it's not a crucifixion, it's a word that just means '**impaled on a pole**'; to be impaled on a pole in essence here. **Knowing this that the old man is impaled with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed,** the picture is putting to death. He was put to death, put in the heart of the earth. We picture this when we go under water – it's like a burial – we're being put under the water and when we come back up it's like a resurrection and you are to walk in newness of life. But you can't do it on your own, you have to receive the impregnation of God's spirit.

That's just the beginning of the process we must go through. A process that says, "I want to be forgiven of sin. I want to be buried in water. I want to walk in newness of life." And then you have the minister that lays hands upon you and you're begotten of the holy spirit. Quick thing that's said over your head, that's all that needs to be done; just showing, again, the process here, and God grants it, something he does [snaps fingers] just like that. It's what He does; it's not what any human being does.

...that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he who is dead is freed from sin.

Verse 14 – again, For sin shall not have dominion over you. Why is that? You know, we read things and we need to think about what it is we read and what God is revealing here through this process of burying the old self, of what this pictures of putting it to death. It's an awesome thing! When you come up out of that water, you're to be a different person, you *are* a different person. As far as God's concerned *you are a different person!* By the time you have hands layed upon you *you are completely different!* Why? **For sin shall not have dominion over you.** Before that it did, and you know what the dominion was? The power? Death. The death penalty. And because of that you can't grow and learn God's way of life. God won't be in your life until that's gone. He won't have anything to do with you, as a whole, until that's gone! Because God won't dwell in sin, He won't be around sin. That's why Jesus Christ had to die; so you could be forgiven of sin so God could come and be in your life then, be a part of your life.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law. See, the Protestant world says, "See! You don't have to keep the Sabbath! You're not under the law." They don't understand what that means. This is not what it's saying; it's talking about what every individual should understand when they read this, when it says, **you're not under the law**, it's about the penalty. There are penalties for disobeying God's law and God's way of life and the penalty for human beings is death. So you put to death the old man – he's dead. He comes up out of the water forgiven. It's because now you can be forgiven of sin through Jesus Christ your Passover, have hands layed upon you, receive the impregnation of God's spirit and God can dwell in you, will dwell in you, and from that point forward you have entered into (when you are baptized) a covenant relationship with God! It's called the 'New Covenant'; and the new covenant is about that which God has made with you that from that moment on you can be forgiven of sin *every time* you ask for forgiveness of sin. You're forgiven of it right then and there and from that point forward, for the rest of your life you are no longer under the **dominion of sin**. As long as you repent before God you're forgiven every time, and you don't have to *beat yourself up* like sometimes you do, like we do. You're to have a boldness and a confidence in God and thankfulness to Him that that's behind you and you want to fight it and you don't want it to be a part of your life anymore and you just let it go.

There are times when I've sinned that I have a difficult time...there's been times in my life... you feel, "Why would God listen?" I don't feel like I can go before God. Have you ever had that happen to you in your life when you sin? But what an incredible thing what you can do – walk away free. There's a matter of faith in that. And the more you grow the more you're able to do that to where you don't beat yourself up anymore and to where you *can* go before God *immediately* and thank Him, and thank Him for the relationship you have. He knows you inside and out. He knows how you think, why you think the way you do, where you're deceived in your life, and helps to reveal those things about you that you don't know. He shows you a little bit at a time. Thankfully He doesn't show us all at once. He shows us a little bit at a time, those things that can be changed.

...sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under the law; the penalty of it any longer, the penalty of the law, of being cut off from God because of sin, as soon as you repent. That's what's so *awesome* about that covenant that we're entered into with God. We just repent and say, "Father forgive me *through Your Son*, my Passover, Your Son, my Saviour." And you get up and it's gone. As far as God's concerned it's gone and He continues to dwell in you. **...you're not under the law**, or then the penalty of it which is death, **but under grace**. Grace; meaning that you've received forgiveness of sin.

We're going through some of these things because sometimes we read through these quickly, the truths that are out there, we feel we see them and grasp them in their deepest form and the reality is you will grow in them the rest of your life. You'll grow and build upon them the rest of your life. God continues to help you to see more and more and more with understanding, not just a matter of knowledge.

Verse 22 - But now being made free from sin, how? Through repentance and forgiveness. That's how you're made free from sin. You have this relationship with God through baptism, through this process of this covenant. Now you can ask God at any time you sin and He forgives you, it's gone, you're free from it; **and become the servants to God**, What an awesome thing – servants to God – living God's way of life. **...you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life**. That's what we strive for and look forward to.

For the wages/the payment of sin is death; that's the penalty. That's what it means by being under the law, the penalty of the law for breaking the law. **For the wages of sin/the payment for sin is death**. It's not about dying the first time, that's just a part of God's plan. It's a part of God's plan that as a whole that human beings were designed to be able to die. You weren't given a spirit body for a reason; you were given a physical one, made of the dust of the earth so it could go *back* to the dust of the earth because that's part of God's plan. And then put everything else in there concerning the Church and everything else and there are a few who won't even see this, they'll just be changed; but their body goes back to the dust of the earth, that's just [snaps fingers] dust. **For the wages of sin is death**, it's the second death, see. Eventually everyone must pay or be forgiven through the one who paid it for you, Jesus Christ. **...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**. Beautiful scriptures. Awesome things that we grasp but the world doesn't.

Sometimes it doesn't take too long and you begin to forget what it was like when you were in the Church of Christ, or the Catholic church, or the Lutheran church, or the Baptist church, or whatever church it was that God called you from and began to give you understanding and insight into what was true; and you forget what it was like being in bondage. And sometimes we lose feelings for those who are still there and we shouldn't.

Mark 1:1 - The beginning of the gospel/the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare the way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the Lord, even to understand what that means. What does it mean, 'prepare you the way...'? *You* prepare the way of the Lord! What is that? **...Prepare you the way of the Lord, make His paths straight**. In other words, in *your* life, choices you have to make. That's why people wanted to be baptized – because they wanted to live God's way, to live His way. **...Prepare you the way of the Lord**, make some changes in your life, do something different, stop living the way you're living and live His way and **make His paths straight**, in your mind, in your life. Those paths are straight but you have to determine that that's what you want to live, the straight and narrow in God's way of life, indeed.

Verse 4 - John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. So again, that's what that was all about.

Going on down to verse 8 it says, it shows here then that John went on and said this about Christ, about Jesus Christ in **verse 8 – I have indeed baptized**, he says this is what Christ has given, **I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the holy spirit**. Because of what Jesus Christ taught; this is what he was showing then concerning Jesus Christ. He says, **I baptize you with water, but**

He shall baptize you/immerse you in the holy spirit. Beautiful! So we have both in our life when we go through that process.

To realize what this means in a fuller form, it's not just the impregnation we receive but what it means when you receive the impregnation of God's spirit. **1 Corinthians 12:12 - For as the Body is one,** speaking of the Body of Christ, to be in unity and harmony with God and with Jesus Christ in everything – that's what we strive for, to be at one with God in whatever He gives us, in the truth He gives to us. **...and has many members, in the Body, and all the members of that one Body, being many, are one Body: so also is Christ.** The Body of Christ, the Church of God. **For by one spirit,** God's spirit, **we are all baptized,** and the word, again, means being 'immersed'. **We are immersed into one Body,** it's a spiritual thing, a spiritual life, a spiritual Body, a spiritual organism, if you will. It has God the Father, Jesus Christ and the power there, the immersion into the holy spirit given by God. It says, **whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; we've been all made to drink into one spirit.** ...able to drink of it. Again, something we're able to receive constantly into our life.

The thirteenth truth given through Mr. Armstrong as a continual magnification over and over again of what was being given of the good news, and as time went along these things were added to that period of time that Mr. Armstrong taught. He grew in them, he came to understand them more deeply and gave them to the Church, and we grew by them, we began to grow more and more and more through time so that by the time that some were called in 1984, 1985 and before he died in 1986, they had the benefit of all that had gone before, just like some of you who have come along now in the last year, two years, three years, and you have the benefit of all that we've gone through from that time on into Laodicea to now. Incredible!

16 (13) We are only begotten now, not born again.

These truths fit together, it's an expansion, it just expands more and more, that good news, the gospel message that God has given.

16 (13) We are only begotten now, not born again. We are not yet inheritors, but only heirs of God. The holy spirit begets us as children of God, but we are not yet born of the spirit of God—spiritual in composition.

We talked about this last week in other truths that God has given, but it stands alone as well as a very powerful truth.

Those in God's Church can only be begotten of God's spirit and born in God's Family in a resurrection to spirit life.

There is only one Body, there's only one Church, only one group made of this, composed of this, just like the previous Truth talking about the Body of Christ again here.

This truth enhances what we covered in a previous truth concerning how the Church is not yet the Kingdom of God. Again, the magnification of various aspects of the truth God has given as necessary because of the false teachings of the world. So again here, these things given over and over again and if we're not careful begin to lose sight of it. The reason they're given is because these are the things the

world is deceived in. They don't grasp these things because they teach something opposite or different from what we see.

17 (14) **The identity of Modern Israel.**

So again here, especially because of the timing of when Mr. Armstrong lived God began to give something here that leads into the next truth after this. But again here, beginning to understand what happened to Israel and what Israel is. Most people think of a country. And after a while you don't think about these things, it's just a part of your mind. You know who they are! Never lose sight of the awesomeness it is to grasp and understand it and what it means in your life.

17 (14) **The identity of Modern Israel.** The Church understands the identity of modern Israel and the location of the lost ten tribes. It understands that Jews are Judah and that the United States is Manasseh. Mr. Armstrong clearly saw from the Bible that the descendants of Israel were to receive the *birthright* promises and that the English-speaking peoples are the descendants of Joseph's two sons.

What an awesome thing to understand! And what an awesome thing at the end-time to still see that God is still doing things that affect the age we live in and why God is primarily calling people within the boundaries of these nations – why it's that way. People of all kindred's and backgrounds and lives, not just people of Israel as far as a national heritage is concerned, but this is where God blessed. This nation I am speaking today in, Canada, the awesomeness of resources, the awesomeness of the things that are given here, that you have such an abundance of and the life you're able to have because of what God gave to Ephraim, a great nation and a commonwealth of nations, as it's described to Ephraim. And talking about Australia, and New Zealand – awesome! And then the last one that was to be of the greatest power was Manasseh. God fulfilled His promise of those things He said He would give to Joseph – physical not spiritual – because those are still coming. See, spiritual Israel is not about just a physical people, it's about all people on earth that are going to become a part of spiritual Israel as time continues on because of what Israel means.

Sometimes people get hung up on nations, who they're descendants of. Like me, I'm convinced I'm Heinz 57 with a *huge* measure of German/Assyrian. And no marvel, because that's where Israel was brought, through Assyria. So somewhere in our past, all of us, we probably have different mixtures of different things. Some are more predominant than others, you have some tribes that are more predominant than others. As a whole up here in this part of the country Ephraim is more predominant. People have tended to, because of how God has led them, as a whole, especially in the beginning, to migrate to those areas that they had more of that dominance in their life. Just like with Manasseh and the people who ended up there. But again, the promises go way beyond that which is physical – but it shows something that God gave.

I used to hate history. I used to hate those classes in school until I came into the Church and all of a sudden things changed. I don't know about you, but all of a sudden I couldn't get enough of it. It was awesome to begin to learn about nations of the past and kingdoms of the past and you begin to learn about the kingdoms that have risen and those that have fallen and God's hand in it all through time. And then all of a sudden He began to work with a people and took them out of Egypt and made an incredible nation out of them... and you think, it's history! Why can't people understand when they read the Old Testament, that here's this big tribe that stayed in the south called Judah, and these other tribes that stayed in the north and it was Israel, and why is there such ignorance in the world about

Israel today? To me it's such a marvel when you come to understand that Israel is far more than Judah. Judah was just one of the tribes. And when people... again, how that's been a blessing to us, to come to understand things that are taking place at the end and that's the next truth here, number 15.

18 (15) Prophecy can be understood only if you know who are the modern day nations of Israelites.

We understand today that that which has the name Israel is only one of the tribes, Judah. What an awesome truth! And then it's more of a marvel when you begin to understand that God said at the end that there would be a throne that would still exist on the earth, that Jesus Christ is going to take over, the throne of David. Think – Judah – Jewish...and then you begin to realize it is still here. And then you begin to realize and learn some of the other history of it, that it's actually in Great Britain and its been over Ephraim, but it's made up of Jews....Judah...because the throne and that line that God said would exist till the return of His Son, that Jesus Christ would receive that throne back, in essence the reign, that it would still be there on the earth. And you marvel to think that they don't know who they are. I think some know who they are, but as a whole they don't claim to know or don't want people to know that those who reign over Ephraim are Jewish descent, of King David's descent through time. Jewish, Judah, as a whole, coming down through time.

18 (15) Prophecy can be understood only if you know who are the modern day nations of Israelites. The Church understands what prophecies apply to the modern day nations of Israel. These nations include Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and most of Western Europe, including the United Kingdom. The Church understands the Great Tribulation will be the time of Jacobs's trouble. As well as proclaiming the Gospel [that good news], Mr. Armstrong also preached an Ezekiel warning, which was meant for the descendants of Israel at the end-time.

So again here, not knowing fully what it was, that we're in the end-time, and really helping a lot of the western world to begin... even having some churches that began to take on more of that banner, that they have their own ideas about some of those things. But he was out there so much in the forefront talking about some things that others had to start addressing some of it. Interesting what took place through time here. And just like that Stone of Scone that is no longer under the throne. Incredible stories. I don't know about you but stories like that to me are inspiring, to think that a stone through time, Jacob's pillar stone, was carried through time and so many of those who have reigned over Ephraim, over Great Britain, coroneted on that throne and underneath that throne was that stone that's up in Scotland now. Incredible stories, and the world is totally ignorant of it – but they're inspiring to us. Very powerful in what God gave to Mr. Armstrong with the 'keys of David' and so forth. Very powerful for his ministry and for what God gave to him at the end-time here in what he preached.

19 (16) The annual festivals.

We haven't talked about them yet, but what an incredible magnification of the gospel. You know, Mr. Armstrong was keeping the Sabbath from the get-go, when he started keeping it, his wife and himself, and some of the groups and some of the people that were there. But there was that which Mr. Armstrong and his wife did by themselves for a long time, several years before he began to understand more... because he had to learn, he had to come to understand what these things were. So he saw that it was commanded, he started keeping them in the sense of observing them, but not knowing fully what

they meant and what it was all about, let alone what it pictured. Just knew that it was a matter of obedience – Leviticus 23. Let's go to Leviticus 23.

In studying about the Sabbath this was one of the things he came across, but didn't grasp it. He saw the seventh day – he proved that to himself; God helped him to see that powerfully so. But this thing of the holy days didn't happen overnight. And there were things added to the gospel, the good news, about the holy days over a *long* period of time, and in actuality that's something that grew year by year by year, magnified more and more and more as time went forward in the Church.

Leviticus 23:3 - Six days shall work be done: wasn't a mystery to him! He understood fully what that was, he knew what was to take place on that day, he knew it was a day that was a commanded assembly of God's people. It said; **the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation;** in other words, sanctified by God for holy use and purpose, that people are to convene on that day, that's when they're taught. Just like when people used to (they don't do it so much anymore) convene on Sunday; that's when they're taught, to learn about what *they* believe. We convene on the Sabbath because that's when God teaches us.

And it says, **and you shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath unto the Eternal in all your dwellings.** So, powerful, but then it goes on to talk about other specific times... **In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S Passover.** What is this all about? What does this mean for the Church? It didn't exist when he first came along. They didn't know what it was in Sardis, to have a Passover. What does a Passover mean? How is it to be observed? What did Christ say about it? What did the disciples say about it? He didn't learn that overnight.

You can go to 1 Corinthians 10-11, in through there, and you understand what Paul is talking about with Passover. It's simple. It wasn't when you don't know it, when it's not there. Through time, through many, many years, Mr. Armstrong began to grasp what it meant. He knew that it wasn't a High Day. He studied it, God began to show him it's not a Holy Day, it's not a Sabbath, but there's a day that follows, **the 15th day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread.** What's a Feast of Unleavened Bread? ...and how does that affect the Church? But it's tied into the Sabbath and it has powerful meaning and it's with the same authority and the same power as the seventh day Sabbath, so what does that mean? He came to a quick conviction that it meant he better observe it, even if he didn't understand it. He better do it even if he didn't understand it! And he did it year by year by year, his wife and himself, until God revealed more.... You know, sometimes it's just a matter that you obey God and after a while He begins to help you to understand it. It's one thing to have knowledge too, but you obey the knowledge you have and after a while you begin to understand it, you begin to see it, it begins to become a part of you because of God's spirit. It's an awesome thing, truly is!

All these Holy Days then came along to reveal far more. This is very powerful in the gospel message that went out, because all of a sudden for the sake of the Church the plan of God began to be revealed. Because the Sabbath, even the fact of seven days and seven thousand years, it wasn't all coming together...and then that one about the Millennium, that began to come along, began to see it. There's a period coming, it's the end-time. Begin to understand the fall and rise of the Roman Empire. He began to understand at a moment in time, one time he read some scriptures in Revelation and he realized, that's now! That's happening right now! ...as far as a period of time that could only happen in one moment in time when he came to understand it, that this has happened – the second world war and what took place, the sixth revival of the Holy Roman Empire, and he realized, God gave him an understanding there's one more coming. He began to understand we're living at the end-time. Began

to understand the Millennium, that there's going to be a Millennium, God's going to establish His government on the earth.

We take all of these things for granted in a sense, because they're so easy now, they're so simple for us now – and they weren't simple back then because he had to be shown a little bit at a time and grow in it. And now we're able to benefit from it in an awesome way. Even that should mean a great deal to us.

19 (16) **The annual festivals.** The plan of God, as shown through the Holy Days, was revealed to the Church of God only through Herbert W. Armstrong. The Passover and Holy Days picture God's plan of salvation for mankind.

From beginning to end, it's beautiful! The Passover: you can't even enter into God's plan until you start there. What an awesome thing! Until you receive the Passover, until you receive Jesus Christ, until you receive the forgiveness of sins you can't start the journey. And then the Days of Unleavened Bread, to become unleavened in your life, to come out of sin – you can't do it until you receive the Passover, are forgiven of your sin and receive God's spirit and God's help so you can come out of sin. Pentecost: again here, showing the receiving of God's spirit. It all goes together, the Holy Days are a part of salvation, the picture there. So we see coming out of sin, the necessity to do so, the help to do so in Pentecost. We have all the things that follow later on in the fall, Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

I can't but help think about number 16 here again, in thinking of what God gave to him, because there was a period of about 14 years that his wife and himself went through and the Church began to go through and they began to observe things together and God began to show more and more meaning as time went along; and then at whatever stage some people were called in the 50's and 60's, like me at the end of the late-60's. Whatever period of time you were called in, these are just there, they're there. But he went through a lot and I respect that mightily of him, truly do. Admire his tenacity, learned a great deal from that, of things he went through and suffered through in order to give us what we have today. Just like other people in scripture through time. Hopefully that has meaning in our life as well.

20 (17) **The authority of the sacred calendar preserved by the Jews.**

Not the Church of God! Simple truth, one Mr. Armstrong had to learn, but one so many have had troubles with because they never grasped number one, government, the way God works in the Church, the authority that goes with it and so forth.

20 (17) **The authority of the sacred calendar preserved by the Jews.** Through Herbert W. Armstrong, the Church understands the authority God gave to the Jews to preserve the weekly and yearly calendar.

Just like the Old Testament written in Hebrew, He didn't give that to the Church to preserve. Nor did He give the New Testament and what is written in Aramaic in some cases and in Greek to be preserved by the Church. He gave it to the world, to the Jews in the world to preserve and to meticulously keep the Hebrew; and they were meticulous through the ages in keeping everything that was written in the Old Testament scriptures. Their system was awesome, meticulously awesome, and God gave that to them; and so He did when it came to a matter of authority concerning time and when the Holy Days should be.

Now, they understand the calendar, it doesn't mean they observe it right. Just like Passover! They know when the 14th and 15th of Abib are, Nisan, they just don't keep it right. The reason I mention some of this is because we have dealt with so many, especially after the apostasy, of different groups and different ones who came to a point in time where they thought that they were more of an authority of being able to go out and study time and study when the new moon begins and thought that they became the authority of how to put it all together....and came up with a wrong conclusion. There are a lot of scattered groups who are out there that in the beginning they became consumed with this. I think, and my answer was always the same, "We already have the truth. It's number 17. Simple!" It was given to the authorities to preserve the sacred calendar of when we should observe. Not that they observe it properly. We know when those days are. We know when Trumpets comes around. We know when Passover is and we observe God's time in His time.

And so again, it's not something that was given to anyone in the world other than the Jews. It wasn't something given to anyone in God's Church. No one in God's Church, not Mr. Armstrong, not anyone had the authority to determine something differently than what the Jews had been given as to when the 14th of Nisan was year by year by year. It's a simple truth. If you want to know more about it you can go back in past literature and sermons and listen.

21 (18) **Second and third tithe.** The second tithe is for observing God's feast days.

We still find, within the Body of people coming along, new people, that people don't understand second tithe. It's the same as first tithe in the sense of a commandment to keep. You don't have any option. You keep it! Except you keep it yourself to be used only for Holy Days, only primarily first and foremost for the Feast of Tabernacles year by year by year. Now we've gone through some different things in the last few years because of the struggle, because of where we are in time, because of things that have happened, and because of things that God was using to teach us by those things we've gone through – but first and foremost it is a command to keep it.

First tithe is God's, for God to use for the Church, to be used in the way God deems it, gives it, inspires it to be. Second tithe, there is no inspiration of how it's to be used save the understanding you receive from God to know that you should do it and then you use it for the Feast of Tabernacles as a whole. And if you have extra to be able to use it for other Holy Days like Pentecost or maybe to come together, if you were to come together a day early there to be there that night so you're refreshed for the next day, or that weekend because you have a weekly Sabbath and since Pentecost is always on Sunday then you have those two days next to each other. And since we're scattered so far away in some cases some people can use some of that to come together, obviously.

So please understand, even more so, we're going into a period of time where you should know this more deeply, that you save every year to observe and keep God's times, and it isn't an option, it isn't a matter of a choice in the sense of maybe you'll save some of it, or a part of it, or use it for other things. No, no, no, no, always, always for annual Holy Days, *not* weekly Sabbaths, always annual Holy Days. So again, it's a matter of something God has given to us to keep, to use for those periods of time to be able to observe them in a greater way before Him.

I've already gone through and explained third tithe, that part of that process when I talked about first tithe and I'll just read it in fullness here.

21 (18) **Second and third tithe.** The second tithe is for observing God's feast days [annual Holy Days]. Third tithe is for the needy, and was established within God's Church during the earlier part of the Philadelphia era. It began to no longer be required of God's people for the Church when more governments began to institute social programs to better take care of such needs in their respective nations. This third tithe was originally established to be collected and distributed in the nation of Israel, much like what government assistance is today (collected by taxes).

Something that Mr. Armstrong began to do away with in the sense of a choice and a decision, because the government was doing it like they were supposed to be doing it. It was never meant to be a system within the Church in the sense of taking care of those things except for a period of time when governments weren't doing it.

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