

Welcome to the Sabbath, brethren. This particular Sabbath is a time of fasting.

This sermon is being given as a lead up to the Day of Atonement. In many ways it is difficult to give because it covers a negative subject; that subject is sin – and in particular, the sin of rebellion, which we have all been guilty of *and* possibly are still guilty of today without even knowing it. The title of this sermon is *Rebellion*.

The first spirit to rebel against God was the angel Lucifer. He desired to be like God, to decide for himself what was right and wrong, what he thought was best for himself, and by implication best for others. Lucifer was the first to rebel, go against His Creator.

Some of the meanings of the word 'rebel' are: 'revolt, be rebellious, go against'. So rebellion or being rebellious can mean 'to transgress'; 'the act of stepping forward' is another way to put it. The word also implies, 'bitter, changed, changed in thinking, be against, or opposition'.

God first created a spirit realm for the spirit beings He was going to create. This was a place for them to dwell in, to live in. Then He created the angelic beings with the power to think and reason, the power of choice. By creating choice God created good and evil. The angelic realm was shown that they were created to share and help in God's greater purpose of all His creation; they were created to serve God's will and purpose, serve His creation. Course, we understand, was to serve mankind because mankind was going to be given the opportunity to enter Elohim, and the angelic realm was created for that purpose, to support God's will and purpose.

Then after a period of time, of which we don't know how long, God created the physical universe including the earth. God then revealed to the angelic realm that He was going to create mankind and that the creation of mankind would lead to the ultimate purpose of all His creation. God revealed to the angels that they would share in the joy of what He would create through mankind. On hearing this Lucifer rebelled, he stepped forward in bitterness, changed his thinking, and set himself against, in opposition, to his Creator, Yahweh Elohim. He transgressed God's law of love, and by doing that he sinned, he rebelled.

And this is what we do when we sin; we rebel, go against, step forward in opposition, disagree with God, we fail to love. So when we sin we fail to love; we fail to love God by breaking the first four Commandments, or we fail to love mankind, which is covered by the last six Commandments. We simply fail to love.

From Lucifer's reasoning, from his thinking, he produced the first act of rebellion – selfishness in the spirit realm. He was the first to sin. Sin is the transgression, the rebellion against God's way of righteousness, against God's way of thinking, God's way of being. Lucifer would no longer accept what God had established as good and evil, right and wrong. He disagreed with and disliked God's plan to create Elohim through mankind. From this point forward Lucifer actively worked against God's plan and purpose. Lucifer *hated* what God had revealed. He became lifted up in pride and in his own reasoning he chose to believe that God's way was not best but that his own way was better, not only for himself but for others, others in the angelic realm. In his own perverted thinking he rejected the knowledge of God

and began to believe that His way was right for himself and for others. He actually became self-deceived into believing that he could rise up with others against God and take over all rule on a physical and spiritual level, making God subservient to him. And that's how perverted his thinking became. Lucifer rebelled, revolted against God, set himself against God, stepped forward against God. He convinced a third of the angels to follow in this rebellion. And we can look up a scripture that covers parts of this rebellion, parts of his thinking, in Isaiah 14.

Isaiah 14:12 – How you are fallen, cast down from heaven, oh Lucifer, and the word 'Lucifer' we understand means, 'light bringer', or 'day star', **son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground,** to the earth, **you who weakened the nations!** Now, he weakened the nations in the sense of the spirit world, he weakened the spirit world by his attitudes, by his sin, and of course he then went on to weaken mankind by deception through encouraging the first two, Adam and Eve, to rebel, to sin.

Verse 13 – For you have said in your heart, in your thinking, in your intent, **I will**, now, another way to put that 'I will', 'I will ascend' is 'I have decided to', **I will ascend**, from the earth, **into heaven**, where God is located! **I will**, or I have decided to **exalt/lift up my throne**, and that is the seat of authority that God had given him, and that was given to him as a gift, because all authority is by God's ordination, it is a gift of God... **above the stars of God!** We understand that being other angels. So here he is in his thinking, is saying, "Well, I have decided in my thinking to lift myself up *above* the other stars of God, the other angels of God. I am going to lift myself up over them!" **I will**, I have decided also to **sit/to dwell/to inhabit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north!** So he is going to raise himself up, rebel and take authority *from God*.

And we can reflect on this same attitude of pride by the way we think. Because this is what our life is about, it's about examining ourselves to see whether we have these thought processes, that we have decided to do certain things which are against God. We can do this by raising ourselves up in deciding what we think is right and wrong through human reasoning, deciding for ourselves what we think is true or false and what is good or evil. We have this same potential in our thinking.

Verse 14 – I will, I have decided, **to ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will**, I have decided, **to be like**, and that word is 'a similitude or to resemble, a reflection in both action that will be completed as an action', **I will be like the Most High**, like the Highest. So Lucifer at this point had intended, had decided to replace God in authority. He had chosen for himself by his own perverted reasoning, his own thinking, that the best way to live life was not the way that God had established. He had decided for himself that he was going to be against God and he wanted to be in authority. He wanted to raise himself up so that God was actually subject to him.

Verse 15 – Yet you, Lucifer, shall be brought down to the sheol, which is a pit or lifeless confinement, to the lowest parts of the pit. In other words, it points to a time of destruction. God is going to destroy Satan by giving him the reward for his rebellion, for his sin; 'the wages of sin are death' so that's what will be the payment for his rebellion.

From this time forward Lucifer became known as Satan, the first great adversary of God. Satan chose to rebel against God, to make himself an adversary, someone who is against God, and he was against God's plan and against God's purpose. And because we are and we make up (talking about the Church of God, His people), because we are part of God's plan and purpose Satan is against us, he is trying to destroy us on a spiritual level.

From this time, after Adam and Eve had rebelled, the world has ever since been subject to Satan's broadcasting over the last 6,000 years. Because that is the way Satan operates, he is against God's people and he is out to destroy mankind. And mankind, without a calling from God, cannot see or even believe that there is such a thing as a spirit world that is evil and that is actually driven by a motive of 'out to destroy', 'to destroy *everything*'.

Satan has built or created Babylon, a world of confusion in the spirit world *and also* on this earth. It is both. There is confusion in the evil spirit world because they have a different way of thinking than the way God has said to think. They are actually in rebellion, therefore the only thing that can come out of that is sin and the only thing that comes out of sin is confusion, Babylon. So there is Babylon in an evil spirit world but what is being projected is that Babylon, that confusion exists on this earth today.

Today we experience the effects, the effects of this Babylon, and we see the outcome of Satan's rebellion, his decision to choose for himself what was right and wrong in his own thinking, what *he* wanted, what *he* decided to do, and that confusion is everywhere and it's permeated every aspect of human life. And we should be able to see it in *everything* that we see, brethren, *everything* we see we can see the elements or the outcome or the effects of sin. Sin has permeated *everything*. It has infected *everything*, because as the Bible says 'as leaven puffs up, sin puffs up', it pollutes, it penetrates, and it filters into *everything* in life and it has filtered into the minds of mankind, the way people think, the way man thinks. In all governments we see Babylon, confusion, perverted, polluted thinking. All religions are in confusion, polluted thinking. Greed and selfishness dominate *all* thinking because that is the natural carnal mind and Lucifer has broadcast, and does broadcast, Satan broadcasts out to mankind to affect their thinking, and the end result is confusion, is *Babylon!* That's what we see today.

If you'd like to turn to **Ezekiel 28:11 – Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD; You, the seal of perfection**, and that is a pattern or a measurement; his mind was *for* God. He didn't have the mind of God but he was *for* God, that was his thinking, **full of wisdom**, now, that 'full of wisdom' is to the level God had given him wisdom. He didn't have the full wisdom of God but he had an aspect or a part of God's thinking. He was able to teach on the level of wisdom; he was able to teach wisdom, he was able to teach on a level of wisdom that God had allocated to him, was able to teach the ways of God, the ways that God had taught him to the level that God had taught him. ...**and perfect in beauty**. As a spirit he was 'perfect in beauty'. So it's not talking about a spiritual level but a spirit level, and they are different.

Verse 13 – You were in Eden, and Eden, of course, we understand really points to a place of pleasure or delicacies or delight; and spiritually Eden is God's throne where there is delight and pleasure, living God's ways, and then of course, physically the Garden of Eden, the Garden of God, the enclosure of God which was on earth as a physical creation. So he was in both, he was at the very throne room of God in the Garden of God, and also on earth in the Garden. ...**every precious stone was your covering, the sardis, the topaz and diamond, the beryl, the onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and emerald with gold**: so this is beautiful jewels, something that is precious. ...**the workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared**, was established for **you**, which is in you **in the day**, or on the time **you were created**. He was shaped and formed, he was given life, spirit life as a being and great wealth, but he was not 'spiritual', but in fact he was given an aspect of wisdom, an aspect of God's mind – but he was not spiritual in that he had God's mind as in the sense of the Word of God dwelling in him. He had an aspect of wisdom that God had allocated to him.

Verse 14 – You, the anointed, and that can be, as we understand, being anointed is appointed or set aside by God for a purpose. **You the anointed cherub/angelic being who covers**; and that word 'covers' is actually 'defend'; and God says, **I established you: you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones**. Here we see that Lucifer was in the presence of God, he had access to God, he was at the very mercy seat of God. He understood the way God was operating. He could see what was going on in the spirit realm in the sense that he had access to God and was able to communicate with God. He was at and in the very presence of God. He had had a direct relationship with God.

Verse 15 – You, perfect, and that is 'upright' or 'without blemish'; so he was at this point a *clean* spirit. **You, perfect in your ways/in your thinking and your attitudes from the day you were created**, as a spirit being. At some point he never existed, but God brought him into existence, being created. **...till/until iniquity**, 'iniquity' is 'injustice, rebellion, sin', rebellion in the way of thinking **was found in you**. There was a point of time where Satan had decided for himself that he would take an action that was contrary, against God. He was going to step forward against God.

Verse 16 - By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, this 'violence within' is 'wrong thinking, falsehood'. And if we just think about 'violence' for a moment...the outcome is violence but where does it start? So if we see violence where did it start? Well, it started in the thinking and it starts with ill will; that's where violence starts. It starts in the mind, starts with thinking and starts with ill will, even though there is no act of violence at this point, but it starts in the mind and develops because we have this ill will towards somebody, we desire harm on somebody else... **and you sinned**: and we know the word 'sin' is 'to miss the mark, miss the way, go wrong, incur guilt', **therefore I cast you as a profane/polluted thing/an unclean thing out of the mountain of God: and I destroyed you**, and that word is 'perish', **O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones**. So there is a point where God has witnessed his rebellion and God has cast him out from His presence, because God cannot dwell with sin.

Verse 17 - Your heart/your mind/your thinking was lifted up/exalted, and that word 'exalt' is just an aspect of pride! We exalt ourselves in pride. We think we are better than we are, we take credit to ourselves. **...because of your beauty**; he saw himself as better than others. He forgot that God gave him *everything*! He forgot that he was actually a created being. **...you corrupted your wisdom/your thinking for the sake of your splendor: I cast you to the ground**, to the earth. So this point here, 'you corrupted', well, when we corrupt things we look at corrosion. If you look at a piece of metal and it corrodes, it corrupts, it destroys itself, it goes into ruin, it goes into decay and that is what rust is, rust decays metal. Well, this is the same, 'you corrupted'; so we can corrupt something in our thinking, because it is in one condition but then we pollute it, we corrupt it, it erodes, it decays. And that's what happened to Satan, he corrupted his wisdom, he corrupted his thinking, and therefore God cast him out.

And it goes on and says...**I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings that they might gaze at you**. This attitude of pride, thinking one's self as better than others is what motivates our natural mind. Our nature yearns jealously for the praises of men because that's what pride is. Pride is about trying to gain recognition or credit to self.

The history of mankind is one of rebellion against God. If we look at Numbers 13. We've looked now at how Lucifer set his mind, step forward against God. Well, the natural carnal mind is hostile to God and here we're going to see in Numbers 13:1 where the spies went into Canaan and the outcome of that.

Numbers 13:1 – And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Send men to spy out, and that is to search out, explore, **the land of Canaan;** and Canaan was a lowland and it was occupied by the descendants of Ham, in general, and others. ...**which I am giving you**, so here it is God's saying, "Well, I'm going to give you this land," **which I am giving to the children of Israel; each tribe of their fathers,** twelve tribes, **you shall send one, every one a leader among them.** So everyone was a chief or a captain of the tribes, they were somebody that was going to be chosen from the tribes, the twelve tribes and there was one from each tribe going to enter the land to look at it, to search it out.

From the term 'I am giving you' we should be able to see and understand that everything belongs to God. So this land of Canaan belonged to God – everything belongs to God – and God had allowed people's from other nationalities to live in and occupy that land for that time. But God in His purpose for the future – because it's actually a spiritual outcome that He's developing – was to give this on a physical level, but He had set it aside *for* the fulfillment of His promise, which was called 'The Promised Land' on a physical level.

With this understanding that we have that everything belongs to God, and we should understand that God allows us to use what belongs to Him, so it doesn't really belong to us at all, it all belongs to God. If we do have this understanding that everything belongs to God and we are granted the gift of being able to use it we can remain in an attitude of thankfulness and not one of pride. Pride is when we give credit or glory to the self. And that's often what happens with mankind, is that we take credit for ourselves, that we acquired something, when really God allowed us to use it. The attitude is 'I gained or achieved this by my own efforts' rather than giving the credit, *all credit*, to God and giving the glory to God.

Verse 3 – So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran according to the commandment of the LORD. All of them, men, who were heads of the children of Israel. Now these were their names, and we're not going to go into all the names but just a couple we will note; in **verse 6 – From the tribe of Judah, Caleb... verse 8 – From the tribe of Ephraim, Hosea, the son of Nun... verse 16 – These are the names of the men who Moses sent out to spy the land, and Moses called Hosea, the son of Nun, Joshua.**

Verse 17 – Then Moses sent them, the twelve spies, **to spy out the land of Canaan and he said to them,** now these are the instructions, **Go up this way into the south and go up to the mountains,** and you could ask the question, What do they have to do? What do they have to report on?

Verse 18 – And see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider, **what the land/the country, is like;** that's the main point; **whether the people who dwell in it,** those who inhabit it **are strong** (Are they mighty?) **or weak**, (Few, little in number?), **or many.** So it was about saying, well, what are the people like in there? First of all, you're to look at the land, what's the land like, but the main thing is what are the people like there, what are we going to face when we enter this land?

Verse 19 – Whether the land they dwell in is good, in other words, Is it law abiding? ...**or bad**, Is it evil? So what's their attitude like? Because knowing that would assist in entering the land. What are the people really like? **Whether the cities they inhabit are like camps,** (Are they like tents, are they spread out, are they just encampments?) **or strongholds,** (Are they fenced, fortified, fortresses, a fortified city?) In other words, are they living in tents, which is going to be easier for the army, or are they behind big walls and big fortified cities with arms? So here it is, really, they were trying to establish and measure their capacity for *fighting* against them, because they knew if they entered it that there is

possibly a need to fight, to fight against it. And what they were being told was, Moses is saying, "Well, go in and spy it out and give us this understanding."

Verse 20 – Whether the land is rich, in other words, Is it plenteous, is there lot's of food there? ...**or poor**, Is it in famish, is it lean, is there not much to eat there? ...**whether there are forests**, Are there lots of trees there that we could use, is the anything there or not? And then he says, **Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the season of the first ripe firstfruits, grapes.** So what he's saying is bring back some evidence of the fruit of the land. Be of good courage because *God is with you!* God has promised this land *to you*. Now, they weren't to go in there fearful but they were to go in there and spy out the land to understand what their next steps would be.

Verse 21 – So they went out and spied out, which was to search out **the land, from the wilderness of Zin**, which means 'flat', **as far as Rehob**, which it means, 'a broad place' **near the entrance of Hamath**, which is 'upper part of Syria'.

Verse 22 – And they went up through the south and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, and the word 'Anak' means 'long necks' were there. So there was these tribes there. **(Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)** What the concern was there was of course Anak was a progeny of a family of giant people.

Verse 23 – Then they came to the Valley, the river, of Eshcol, which means 'cluster', **and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes. They carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs**, and they were bringing that back as Moses had said, as proof of what the land produced.

Verse 24 – The place was called the Valley of Eshcol, 'cluster', because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there. And they returned from spying out the land after forty days. And we understand that forty days is symbolic of a time of testing. **Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Paron, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruits of the land.** So they, at this point, are bringing back the evidence.

Verse 27 – Then they told him and said, We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey and this is its fruit! Isn't that incredible! They said, "This is quite positive, it *flows* with milk and honey and here is the evidence of it!"

If you'd like to hold your place there; hold your place there and turn to Exodus 3:7, because this is exactly what God had promised, that God is true, God has promised it in **Exodus 3:7**; we're just going to pick up what God had said to them – **And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and of the Perizzites, and of the Hivites, and the Jebusites.** So here God was saying that, "Well, I've given you this land. I'm promising you this land and it is a fantastic land; it's a *large* land, it's a good land and it flows with milk and honey. It's a prosperous land."

Back to **Numbers 13:28 – Nevertheless, but the people who dwell in the land are strong**, they're mighty and fierce. So the 'nevertheless' is 'the end result of us spying this land out is the people are strong!' And that word there is they're 'mighty and fierce', that was what was being portrayed to the children of Israel. "These people are strong, they're fierce," **and the cities are fortified**, they've got cities that are fenced, the walls are up there, they're going to defend them, it's going to be *hard* to even penetrate them because all the walls have great big walls up, **and very large, exceedingly great.**

Moreover, something else to consider, **we saw the descendants of Anak there; "We saw giants there!" ..the Amalekites, which were from Esau, dwell in the land of the south; the Hittites, from Ham, the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea along the banks of the Jordan.** Well, this is really just painting a really bleak picture for them, virtually trying to convince the people that they're not going to be able to do it because there are so many tribes there and you've got no idea, there are actually giants there as well!

This negative report caused the people to be in fear, in doubt. The ten spies chose an attitude that affected others, they trafficked their attitudes. Does that sound familiar? They trafficked their attitudes – exactly as Lucifer had, he trafficked *his* attitude, *his* opinion, the way *he* saw it. Well, this is what the spies are doing, they're trafficking their attitudes, the way *they* saw it. What they were saying is, "We cannot overcome these people!" and in doing that they limited God. Without realizing it they called God a *liar* – because we just read back there that God said that this was a great land, a large land, and it was very prosperous and He was going to give it to them. So by doing this they were calling God a liar.

We can learn from this attitude of, 'We cannot overcome or conquer our sins'. Because God has said that we *can*. But if we have a negative view that God can't overcome our sins *in us* by His power, we're calling God a liar because He says He can overcome our sins in us by dwelling in us. We can overcome our carnal thinking – sin – by God's power. We have to strive and desire to fight against the natural pulls of our flesh.

What are our giants that we fear? What are our personal sins that we are scared of, that we fear? Well, whatever sin we have, brethren, it can be conquered, because God has given us the victory, it's a matter of whether or not we strive or desire to fight against ourselves. We should *fear* to go against God. We should *fear* to go against God!

Verse 30 – Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and take possession for we are well able to overcome it! So this is a very positive attitude about conquering. "Let's go forward! Let's go forward and seize it!" He was saying, "God will do it! All we have to do is step forward and move and God will fight our fights for us." We should have this same positive attitude and believing approach. The attitude is, "I now see the sin of selfishness sin me. I will take personal responsibility for it and I will strive to fight my selfishness, my pride, my lack of love in my thinking." And that's the attitude we should have towards entering the promised land, is that we're going to fight to enter the promised land.

Verse 31 – But the men who had gone up with him, Caleb, said, We are not able to overcome, to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we; "They're too powerful, we can't handle this!" They had forgotten God's power. They had looked to their *own* strength! They had forgotten about God's promise that God had promised them, this land, that God was going to fight their battles for them. We also must look to God to overcome our weaknesses by the power of His spirit; His thinking replacing our human reasoning.

Verse 32 – And they gave the children of Israel a bad report, or an evil or a slanderous report, **of the land which they had spied out, saying, The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours**; in other words, it eats up and consumes its inhabitants. In other words, we can't do it, there's no use going up there, it's going to destroy us! **And all the people who we saw in it are men of great stature**, great measurement. They created doubt in the people's minds by giving a false report, by *exaggerating* things, and that's a dangerous thing to do, because they gave this exaggerated report, they said the men were giants. Well, the men were tall, but they were saying, well, they were *huge*.

Verse 33 – When we saw the giants and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, we're tiny little things, **and so we were in their sight**. Now they're just...we're *nothing* compared to them in strength or in stature. There is no hope of going up and fighting against them.

Numbers 14:1 – So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried; and the people wept that night. "Woe... Woe is me!" Self pity, "Oh nooooo, what's going to happen now?"

Verse 2 – And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron; they lodged murmurings against him, **and the whole congregation said to them, If only we had died in the land of Egypt**, we were better off *back there!* We were better off back in Egypt! At least if we died there we wouldn't have to face all these problems! **If only we had died in the wilderness**, we'd even be better off than being here!

Verse 3 – Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword? We're just going to get killed in battle, **that our wives and children should become victims?** It's like that victim mentality that can easily creep up on us, "Woe is me! I'm the victim! Poor me." **Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?** Now, does that sound familiar, brethren? Remember what happened in the Garden of Eden when Adam said to God, "If You had not made Eve this would not have happened." It's about not taking personal responsibility.

We could turn around and say, "If only I had not been called out of this world by God I would not have to face all these tests and trials within the Church! ...*and of my character!* If only God had left me alone in my sin, in the captivity, in the bondage of my thinking. I was happy when I was back there! I was happy being selfish! God, why did you call me? Why did you bring me here to this point in time?" Can see a terrible attitude, brethren, a lack of understanding and a lack of thankfulness.

We could say in our thinking, "Why has God called me into His Church? Has He done this to destroy Me? Cause I just can't do it! I can't fight these fights any longer, I think I'll give up! I'm a victim...it's not my fault! It would be better if I just turn back from this course of overcoming my selfishness and just live life as I did before in my own selfish thinking." Brethren, if we turn back and if we don't fight our inner thoughts *we will die, we will perish.*

Verse 4 – So they said to one another, Let us select a leader and return to Egypt. Now this is the spirit, the attitude of rebellion. It is God who selects who is to serve Him and in what capacity. It is not by human reasoning, it is God that chooses the leadership. We don't vote for leaders. We don't *vote* in God's Church, we trust God, God's spirit working in His authority to choose whom *He* sees fit, who God sees fit to lead, for God's will and purpose. Rebellion is when we want to do it our way rather than walk in God's ways. Because we want to choose who's the leader, we want to choose who's the associate elder or the elder or whatever – we want to do it, because we think we know better – rather than

allowing God to work through His ministry, through inspiration of God's spirit. Rebellion is when we do it our way rather than the way we are instructed.

This is now a full blown rebellion against God. Remember the word 'rebellion' is 'to revolt, to be rebellious, to go against', it is 'to transgress, an act of stepping forward', and that's what the children of Israel were doing, stepping forward and voicing their *opinions*, their views. They had changed their thinking and now they were in opposition to Moses and Aaron. In reality, they're in opposition to God.

Could we, brethren, be in a spirit of rebellion without even realizing it? Is that possible? ...that we could be in that? Could we be in a spirit of rebellion, in sin, without even understanding it? ...we just can't see it on a spiritual level?

If you'd like to hold your place in Numbers 14 we're just going to work through Matthew 21. **Matthew 21:28** – This was Christ speaking; **But what do you think? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.** The man, the father, was in authority; he has a God ordained authority to give this instruction. The first son was given clear instructions on what he had to do.

Verse 29 – He, the son, **answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he regretted it and went.** He went out into the vineyard. The son's first reaction to this instruction was that he disagreed. Then he thought about it and then he repented. He changed his thinking and obeyed the instruction. So the first attitude is, "Well, I don't think it's right, I'm not going to do it. No, I'm not going to." Then he thought, "Yes, no," then he analyzed it and said, "No, I need to submit to the authority that is over me and follow this instruction."

Verse 30 - Then he, the father, **came to the second son and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir:** so he said, "Yes, no worries, I'm going." **But he did not go.** In other words, he lied to his father. The son stated that he would do it to his father's face, but deep down he did not agree with the instruction, then he disobeyed the instruction by his actions, by not doing it.

Verse 31 – Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, so they answered Him, **The first. And Jesus said to them, Assuredly I say to you, That tax collectors and harlots enter the Kingdom of God before you.** Now, this was talking about repentance. So once a person is called it's about staying in repentance. We can be in the situation of being tax collectors or harlots, in other words living in sin, but the moment we repent we have the opportunity then to enter the Kingdom of God. But the other one, who's turned around and said this is what he'll do and he's giving all the impressions that he's doing the right thing, God is saying, "No, because you're in rebellion, you've got a wrong spirit, but you're acting out a role... but you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing."

So brethren, is there *anything* or any situation in our lives today where we have been asked by someone in a position of physical or spiritual authority to do something? ...to do something that's not sin, like a written or verbal report and we're not doing it? Then we'd have to say, "Well, why are we not doing it?" What could be the spiritual issue?

There was an email sent to all elders on the 18th of August of 2012, and the subject was 'Communication'. And I would strongly recommend that *all* the ministry go back to that particular email that was sent and during this time of fasting, or even immediately after the fasting, and read that

particular email and examine the self – not others. Let's all examine ourselves. So I would strongly suggest all elders look back at this email and reread it and consider their position, consider their choice.

Every elder in God's Church on receiving this particular email has made a choice. They chose to obey Christ or to disobey and rebel and sin. There's only... it's black and white. It's either we submitted to the authority or we didn't – one way or the other.

I'm only going to read selected paragraphs from this email for the purpose of having us *all* consider our choices, the choices we have made in life about all authority, whether it's children to parents, whether it's within the ministry, whether it's brethren in the ministry, we all make choices – whether it's in the work place, it's the same thing, there is an authority. And when we're given an instruction we have a choice and we make choices every day. Well, this is just a choice in our thinking, and this particular email was to the ministry:

"....Each of you [in the ministry] carry a great responsibility due to your ordination."

Now the first thing there is, of course, we have a responsibility because God has chosen to place us into a level of spiritual authority.

"That responsibility is first and foremost from God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and you are responsible to them to carry that out in faithfulness and oneness of spirit."

So the first thing to recognize there is who is it that we work for, brethren? Who is it we work for? *All of us* work for Jesus Christ, God the Father. We have been called out of this world to come into a relationship and we subject our will, submit our will to God. We submit ourselves to God the Father and Jesus Christ. So anyone who's been called into the ministry, God the Father through Jesus Christ has placed us *into* a responsibility and we are to carry that responsibility out *faithfully* in faithfulness, in a *oneness of spirit*, be in unity. That's what it's about.

I have always considered myself that the ministry, the minister, worked for Jesus Christ! That's who I work for today; I work for Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

Continuing on with that particular email, parts of it:

"How you respond to your ordination is a personal spiritual matter and one that carries great weight with it."

Now those words alone, brethren, we should all sit back – just a calling has a great responsibility because we represent Jesus Christ on this earth, because we represent in our thoughts, words, and actions; we are members of the Body of Christ, therefore we're Ambassadors for Christ – even more so the ministry. But we all have a spiritual responsibility whether in the ministry or out of the ministry to follow God faithfully. How somebody responds to an ordination is a personal spiritual matter and it comes down to a personal choice that the person makes.

Then there are comments about offerings and tithing which was directed also to the elders but also it can be taken to brethren. This one is directed towards the ministry:

"Perhaps those of you [elders] do not grasp the importance of sending our tithes and offerings in a timely manner. That which God has charged you to do."

Now, when we stand back and look at this particular aspect this is about following an instruction. There has been an instruction given, now we have chosen, we have decided for *ourselves* whether we're going to submit to that instruction – send our tithes and offerings in a timely manner. Choice! If we don't do it in a timely manner what are we saying? We have chosen to rebel! It's reasonably clear on a spiritual level. We either follow the instructions of Jesus Christ or we don't!

Other aspects of this particular email:

"It is expedient that everybody, especially the ministry, follow the instruction given by God's servant. If we are under government we will follow the instructions given by Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church."

Because that's what I understood; that following instructions was about being submissive to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Either we are in unity with God or we are *not*. We are either in obedience or in rebellion.

The Church instituted a new requirement for all the ministry and it was about communicating once a month. Beginning in September of 2012 every elder was to communicate, report, and that meant everybody in the ministry. So this was the instruction, and when you read that particular email it is very clear *why* that was necessary, because of where we were in time.

Another part of it was:

"Senior elders were to keep in contact with Johnny Harrell, which is our senior evangelist."

And there's a reason for that, why senior elders were to communicate with Mr. Harrell...there's a reason.

Another part of it:

"All associate elders and elders needed to be in contact via phone with their senior elder..."

Now either we have submitted to that instructions or we haven't. So there was a point, and it was in August of 2012 where we all made a decision, we made that decision there on the spot. So why would any elder not follow these instructions? I just think back on a physical level... Over the years I have had many roles and positions in various companies, but I don't remember *any time* where we were asked to give a report or a communication with our managers that you wouldn't do it. We feared on a physical level not to do it. Now, I was in a management role for over twenty-five years where I had a lot of store managers reporting. They were required to give a weekly report and it was always done, basically, on a Monday morning because I had to give a report to my superior, and therefore I would always get those reports. Now, I do not remember in twenty-five years of physical management where one manager from a store did not give a written or verbal report when requested. *Why?* Because they *feared* to go against

the authority, because there is a consequence – there is a consequence for rebellion. Well, the first thing would be that you would have to ring up and say, "What's going on? Why aren't you telling me what's going on?" You become worried. You think, "Well, hang on, there's something going on there that I don't know. Why? What's this attitude they've chosen? Have I made the right decision here in appointing this person as a store manager? They won't even talk to me." And what I found was that a manager would always, a good manager, would always report *twice* a week – they'd always ring me on a Thursday or Friday and give me an idea of what was going on that week and explain to me the situation of the stock levels in the store and what was happening with people. So I was able to make decisions on their behalf with senior management, because if I knew what was going on and something came up I'd at least know what was going on in that manager's life so I could say, "No, no, you need to give that person some time because of this and that." And that was just on a physical level.

So let's look at it on a spiritual level. We need to explore the answer on a spiritual level. Once we have looked at this on a spiritual level we will be able to see what we need to do – to repent of a situation we have decided to put ourselves in, possibly.

The first point to consider is: Are we just simply using human reasoning? ...carnal thinking? So the reason that we're not following *any* instruction from the ministry, from Jesus Christ, is what? Why is that? Is it because we're just using our carnal natural mind?

Or another one is: Is it because we're not under God's authority, God's government in our thinking? Is that what's actually happening? We're not actually under the authority of God? God is not in us to guide our thinking? Is that possible? Although we might give the outward impression like that second son said, we give the outward impression to others that we're in obedience and in unity with God, we're actually living in a state of rebellion because we don't follow the instructions?

If we think any request from anybody was sin – let's just take an example. Let's just say that we got a request and we had reasoned, we had thought that that was sin, that we're not going to do what was asked of us because we think that that is *sin*, that the person is asking us to *sin* in whatever the request was. *Surely* if we think *any* request from *anyone* is sin, surely we would stand up and explain to the person why we see it as sin in our eyes. Surely we would go back and say, "Listen, I can't do this because I think it's sin," and have a discussion.

If we will not do what is asked of us or follow the instructions from a God ordained authority, we are in a spirit of rebellion. Is pride our problem? Is it just simply we're just too proud, we don't feel that we need to follow the instructions of others? Is that what the problem is? Have we decided for ourselves in our thinking that the request has an evil intent and therefore we're just not going to do it? If we don't agree with the request because of our reasoning we are in fact imputing evil or an evil motive on the person who gave the instructions. Because what we're really implying is that we're not going to follow it because we don't agree with it and we don't agree with it because why? Well, what we're doing is we're imputing an evil motive from the person, we're imputing a motive, we're saying that *they* are doing it for evil. That's what we're actually doing.

This is something for us all to consider. We're to check ourselves – not look out at others – we're to worry about our *own* obedience. Are there certain things that we are just simply not doing because we have chosen not to do it?

Now there's another area, brethren, about how we can be in a state of sin without even recognizing it. There are some who have requested Feast assistance if they haven't given a Holy Day offering for over the last twelve months. Now we understand, brethren, that it is a commanded assembly, but we are to give an offering on that day, whether it's one dollar or one *cent*, because it reflects an attitude of obedience. Even if we don't have a job or we are on limited income everyone can at least send in a dollar or a *cent*...or even put it aside if they are not able to get it in. They can put it aside, set it aside for God – because it's a *commandment* of God, God has commanded it. He has commanded that we do this.

We all should know we are to give one cent if that is all we have to give to God as an offering. Why would we not give an offering to God? It's worth thinking about. *Why is it* that we wouldn't give an offering to God when we're commanded to? It goes back to rebellion. What is behind that thinking? Surely, brethren, we should know that God sees all things! We can't hide anything from God. So what's in our thinking that we would not give an offering to God or we would not give tithes to God? What's going on in our thinking? It's sometimes difficult to understand the way we can think.

This is an area that is obvious to everyone being led by God's spirit, but sometimes people don't really see themselves or the attitude they have towards God or to His servants. We just don't see it because sin has cut us off and we just cannot see ourselves anymore on a spiritual level.

So let's take a little bit of time now to explore *this*, this question: Why would somebody not be sending in their tithes in a timely manner or giving their offerings? Why would somebody not even tithe? Why would somebody spend their second tithe on themselves or on other things they think they can be used on contrary to what God has said? If we have not been faithful with our second tithe in the way that we should have spent it why would we expect God's Church to simply fund our new desires? There were clear instructions with regards to the use of second tithe provided by God's Church, and I wanted to read what was written...

"Some have been asking how they can use their second tithe when it comes to the Holy Days. Second Tithe can be used during the Passover and Unleavened Bread season for travel, hotel room, and travel expenses such as fuel for your vehicle or other means of travel such as bus fares, etc."

So that was point one which was the use of 2nd Tithe for that Holy Day period only of Passover and Unleavened Bread, because the intent of keeping 2nd Tithe as God has commanded is for the Holy Day season. Then there was an exception made because of the time we were in, and this was point two.

"Second Tithe can be used when Laura and Audra, Myrtle or Johnny, God's ministry were travelling to an area where larger groups are coming together for a Sabbath service..."

So it was when the ministry was travelling to a location, then the people in that area could actually use some of their second tithe for that particular occasion to travel to be in fellowship where there was a larger group and the senior ministry of God's Church was going to be there.

"...and not to be used to travel outside your local area on other occasions."

So they were clear instructions. Second tithe was not to be used for *any other reason* outside of what was instructed, these two points. But brethren, some have chosen not to do so, some have chosen to do their own will the way they saw it.

Well, we can understand, brethren, if we have chosen to go outside of these instructions we have sinned, we have sinned in doing that. If we have gone and spent our 2nd Tithe against God's instructions, that we would ask for assistance to come and attend God's Feast – if we think we can ask for something physical like money when we can't do what we are told on a physical level – sending in an offering, sending in our tithes, or use our 2nd Tithe according to God, the way God has commanded, then do we actually kid ourselves into thinking that we can ask anything on a spiritual level from God and that He would give us that spiritual request?

Well, brethren, we should know the answer to that. Well, the answer is reasonably simple, if we do those things we are in a spirit of rebellion. That's what it is, we're just simply in the spirit of rebellion. Brethren, we should also understand that if we're not faithful in the little things how could we ever be given something major. If we can't do something small on a physical plane why would we think we will get anything on a spiritual plane. If sin has cut us off and we're going towards God every day, ever since maybe August of 2012, we were in a sin of rebellion, do we really believe that God has been listening to our prayers? Do we really? Maybe we have been in sin all of that time! Well, we could be until the day we repent.

Brethren, and all elders, do we hear what God is saying to us directly today? Do we see that God through our High Priest Jesus Christ is providing us with a warning sound, the sound for the need of repentance? Do we know, do we see that if we have failed to obey God's clear instructions that we have sinned. Do we realize that this sin has cut us off from God and the flow of God's spirit? Do we see that? Do we understand it? Many of us have been going for 6 months, 12 months in sin... maybe it's possible.

The truth is that there is only one reason why we would not follow the instructions, the request that is not sin, is because we have sinned. We are sinning and are in sin until it is repented of. Repentance is when we admit our error and submit ourselves to the authority and do what is asked of us. And I have to ask, brethren, and I ask myself these questions: *Where is the fear of God in all of this? Where is the respect for God in our thinking?* Surely we fear God to go against God, to stand up and move forward against God as Lucifer did! Do we see that if we sinned on the 18th of August of 2012 by choosing to not obey God, we have been cut off from God's spirit until the day we repent? Do we understand that on a spiritual level?

God, in His mercy, is revealing to His servants and all His people what we need to repent of. We need to repent of our rebellion, which is not obeying God in tithes, offerings, and not following instructions. They are the three areas that at this particular fast that we can focus on. We can focus on, to see whether or not we are in unity with God and Jesus Christ, are we in unity in following God's will in this? Thankfully God in His mercy to us has provided a way for sin to be forgiven. It is forgiven and forgotten upon repentance. Repentance means change to think differently. Isn't that incredible?

Now, when we hear such correction, brethren, because it is correction from God, when we hear this correction there is a natural tendency within us and that is the tendency of justification, to make excuses *why* this happened.

Let's have a look at – which we have looked at before – in Genesis 3:12. Because this is a natural thing to do, is when we're confronted with sin is that we want to justify, and justify is simply make an excuse of why we did it. In other words, we don't take personal responsibility and admit we are wrong. It's better just to be quiet and admit we are wrong, and what we do from that point is to change, to repent. To change means to change the way we think and therefore change our actions. And the way we repent is send our tithes in on a timely manner, send an offering to God no matter what the value is, if we've been instructed to do something start doing it – that's how we repent and change. But the first thing that comes in our mind is we will raise up in our mind and say, "Well, the reason I didn't do this or..." and we'll justify ourselves.

Genesis 3:12 – Then the man, Adam, said, The woman whom You, God, gave to be with me, she gave me the tree and I ate. In other words, he refused to take responsibility, he justified himself, "Well, the reason I did this..." "The reason I haven't communicated with you is..." and we make these lame, self-justified excuses, when really we can't blame anybody but ourselves and we should take our personal responsibilities.

Verse 13 – Then the LORD God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. Again, we're just simply going to justify ourselves because that's our nature.

So when we hear this correction it's natural that we will turn ourselves and start to justify or make excuses for what we've done, when it is far better now for all of us to stand back and just say, "Well, I admit my error, take personal responsibility, repent, and change..." and the way we change is we demonstrate now that we're going to put it into action what we have failed to do in the past. That is repentance. Change. It's not just a matter of changing thinking it's about changing actions as well.

If you'd like to turn back to Numbers 14. I know, brethren, this can seem rather confronting; I found it quite confronting myself, for myself, because I had to examine myself when I was going through this particular sermon and I had to look at areas where I have had wrong attitudes. Some of them I had and identified, I had repented of, but I did rebel in some things in my life where I realized that I had the wrong attitude and I needed to change. Well, I was fortunate that I was able to get through some of those things with God's mercy and to change the way I thought and therefore change my behaviour because of it. So we all have sin, nobody is immune from this, and we can always improve our obedience to God.

Numbers 14:5 - Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. They humbled themselves out of respect for God and they knew that God would respond to sin, He would respond to their rebellion.

Verse 6 - But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among them, those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes: it's a sign of grieving...and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel saying, **The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land;** so this is contrary to what the other ten had said. This is like having a positive attitude towards God's Church. It is an exceedingly *good* location to dwell in! Why would we want to be anywhere else but in God's Church? Why would we want to be anywhere else where we can receive Godly correction, spiritual understanding, spiritual knowledge where we can receive wisdom? Obeying God is a positive thing! Obeying God is actually a demonstration of wisdom.

Verse 8 – If the Eternal delights in us then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Well, this is symbolic of the Millennium on a physical level where if we simply follow God's commands God will delight in our obedience and He will bring us into the Millennium, a land that is going to flow with milk and honey on a physical level. But also we can look at it on a spiritual level. If we are to submit ourselves to God and obey God, well, God says here that He will take delight in our obedience and He will bring us into everlasting life, a true land, a spiritual land that flows with milk and honey. The Church is where spiritual food is poured out for our consumption. Why would we want to go *anywhere else*? For the 144,000 the Kingdom of God is the land of milk and honey – to enter Elohim is our goal, all of us. Our goal is to enter a land of milk and honey spiritually.

Verse 9 – Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land; don't worry about what other people think or other people say, it's all irrelevant, their opinion is irrelevant; **for they are our bread, their protection has departed from them,** so God is going to take it away, God is not going to uphold them because of their disobedience, they're against God...**and the LORD is with us: do not fear them.** So there's no fear, let's go before God and repent! We are not to fear others – our family, our friends, or enemies of God's Church. We're not to fear them! God is for us, so who can be against us? Because we are God's, we are God's people.

Verse 10 – And all the congregation said to stone them with stones, because they didn't like what was being said – because really it's a contradiction to the other ten. So we can look at this brethren; we may not like what's being discussed today, the spirit of rebellion which we all have had, or still have. We don't like hearing it, and we shouldn't react in a negative way, we should react positively, and the way we react positively, of course, is to repent.

Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. Then the LORD said to Moses, How long will these people reject Me? So when we reject an instruction we're rejecting God, we're rejecting what God is communicating. **And how long will they not believe me? With all the signs which I have performed among them?** God has given us so many signs, so many truths to believe, so many signs that this *is* God's Church, this is where God *is*!

Verse 12 – I will strike them with a pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make you a nation greater and mightier than they. So we can look at this on a spiritual level. Brethren, we don't want to be disinherited, we do not. We desire the inheritance, the promised land. God says that if we repent we can stay in unity with Him.

Drop down to **verse 19** – this is Moses' attitude now revealed...**Pardon, the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy,** God's great mercy, because God will pardon if we repent, **just as you, God, have forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. Then the LORD said, I have pardoned according to your word.** So we understand, brethren, that God forgives our sins upon repentance. God will take away the penalty of sin – death – but another penalty may still have to be paid because we have scarred our minds, scarred our thinking.

Verse 21 – But truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Eternal. Because of all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to test now these ten times and have not heeded My voice; in other words, they did not follow the instructions.

We have seen God's glory in God's Church. If we disobey instructions, rebel, we have to pay a price. There is a price to be paid. It's not the wages of sin, death; we don't have to die spiritually, we don't have to be cut off from God, because if we repent we won't be cut off. Therefore, what has to follow is works; we have to now demonstrate that we have changed.

Verse 23 – They certainly shall not see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who reject Me see it. So really, an unrepentant sin, unrepented rebellion will mean we will not see the physical promised land, the Millennium, and on a spiritual level, an unrepented sin, an unrepented rebellion will mean we will *not* enter the Kingdom of God, Elohim. We just won't. That's what God says. Because God cannot dwell with sin. So it *is* about repentance.

Verse 24 – This is about being faithful, **But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.** We can look at that on a physical level but also spiritually. If we are to follow God fully in spirit and truth, if we are *faithful*, brethren, God says He will give us the promise.

There is an example of rebellion and then the justification of that rebellion if you'd like to turn to **1 Samuel 15:1**. We understand from this example here that Saul had been anointed as king and Samuel, as God's servant, was dealing with Saul. **Samuel also said to Saul, the LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel; now therefore heed the voice of the words of the Eternal.** Listen, understand, and obey the instructions.

Verse 2 – Thus says the LORD of hosts; so here are the instructions; **I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up to Egypt.** We can look at this, brethren, as a 'type' of Satan where spiritually once we are called Satan sets out to ambush us on the way of coming out of Egypt. Out of coming out of sin, there are traps set for us to ambush, to kill us, to destroy us on a spiritual level. **Now, go and attack/smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and do not spare them.** Now, this is a clear instruction. On a physical level people look at it and say, "Whoa, what sort of instruction is *that*?" Well, this is about showing no compassion or not tolerating evil. That's what it's really about. But on a physical level the human mind will saying, "Wow, this is difficult, this is hard!" **But kill/slay both man and woman, infant and nursing child, oxen and sheep, camel and donkey.** *Everything* had to be destroyed.

We understand, brethren, that this is actually God's mercy at work because of an opportunity called the 2nd resurrection, and we're not going to go into that today because it's been covered in times past.

Verse 4 – So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah, 210,000 men as far as an army.

Verse 5 – And Saul came to the city of Amalek and laid in wait in the valley. Then Saul said to the Kenites, the tribe that lived in that area, Go, depart, get out from among the Amalekites lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites, (verse 7) and Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

Verse 8 – He also took Agag, king of the Amalakites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. Now this, of course, brethren, is not following instructions because God made it very clear that everyone was to be destroyed. But taking Agag the king was not part of the instructions.

Verse 9 – But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, and notice...**and the best of the sheep**, this is according to their own thinking, **the best of the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good**, in their own thinking, **and were unwilling** – they were unwilling to yield, to accept, **to utterly destroy them**. So they weren't going to destroy them. They'd made a decision; that particular time when they went in there they made a decision, so at this point they enter into a spirit of rebellion, because they made a decision not to follow the instructions. **...but everything despised and worthless**, what they thought was useless, **that they utterly destroyed**. They had a different opinion of what should happen, because they had made a decision, they had made a judgment, "This is what we're going to do." They rebelled against the instructions, they did what they thought should happen as far as they could see it, what *they* thought was best. They refused to yield themselves to the authority that was over them, and that authority was actually God, but they refused to follow God.

Verse 10 – Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel saying; in all of this, brethren, we can understand that Samuel really did love Saul because Saul was the first king and God had made a way for Samuel to announce that to Saul, that he was going to be anointed, and it's a wonderful story because there is great compassion on Samuel who was wanting Saul to do the right thing, and you can see there is a great emotion here from Samuel if you read all the story, that Samuel actually did love Saul and he was so disappointed the times that Saul disobeyed God.

Verse 11 – I greatly regret, the word is actually, can mean, 'sorry', **that I have set up Saul**, because it's God that did it, **as king; for he has turned back from following Me and has not performed My commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried out to the LORD all night**. Because there was this emotional feeling, this attachment that he had to Saul. So could this be said of us, brethren, with regards to maybe an ordination or maybe to our calling, that we have turned back from following God, and therefore God is saying, "Well, you've turned back from Me and you won't perform My commandments." Is that possible? Have we turned back from following God by not following instructions or instructions from authority over us?

Verse 12 – So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul it was told Samuel saying, Saul went up to Carmel, and indeed he set up a monument for himself and he has gone on around/passed by and gone down to Gilgal. Well, you can imagine Samuel's thinking here – Saul's gone off and he's gone and set up a monument for himself, he's kind of doing his own thing. And Samuel would have been discouraged here because he knows that Saul is in rebellion, that he's doing something that he shouldn't.

Verse 13 – Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of the Eternal. I have performed the commandment of the LORD. ☺ So here he's looking straight into the face of Samuel and he's lying to him or he's saying it in a way of self-deception, really, he's actually believes in himself that he's done everything right. He hasn't done anything wrong, he can't see it.

Verse 14 – But Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? In other words, it's obvious to me – What's all this going on? I can see all this, I can hear all this! What's happening?

And Saul said, They, talking about the people, have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Isn't this incredible? Sound of justification! And if we look at it he's saying, "Well,

they, the people..." This is like Adam and Eve, isn't it, "Well, it's the woman, she did it! God, if you hadn't given her to me this wouldn't have happened!" Well, he's saying, "They, the people, brought them and they did..." Why did they do it, "...well, they did it, for they, the people, spared the best of the sheep and oxen." Why? Well, their motive, the justification is, "to sacrifice to the LORD *your* God." Isn't that incredible how things can be changed around? "But the rest of it, we've destroyed." In other words, "We've rebelled against God to worship God." That's what they're really saying.

They did what they thought was right in their own eyes, they justified their rebellion, their disobedience.

Verse 16 – Then Samuel said to Saul, Be quiet! Stop talking! Stop justifying! Just be quiet! Because here you would see that Samuel would have been upset with Saul because he was obvious, that Saul was in rebellion. ...**and I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night.** And he said to him, Speak on. So now Saul's going, well, "Speak on," maybe he's starting to listen a bit. **So Samuel said, When you were little in your own eyes,** when you had this humble attitude, when you were teachable, when you hadn't lifted yourself up in your own thinking, when you didn't think you were important, you thought that you were not important, you had humbled yourself, you were lower in your thinking, in your attitude, **were you not head of the tribes of Israel and did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?** Didn't God raise you up? So when he didn't have this superior attitude God could work with him.

Verse 18 – Now, the LORD sent you on a mission and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed. Clear.

Verse 19 – Why did you not obey the voice of the Eternal? Why did you swoop down on the spoil and do evil in the sight of the LORD? We know, brethren, it all is to do with pride. Rebellion – when we look back at what Lucifer did, it all boils back to pride, what drives our thinking, lifting ourselves up against, stepping forward.

Verse 20 – And Saul said to Samuel, But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD; so here we go, this is this self-deception or this justification for sin, **and gone on the mission which the LORD sent me and brought back Agag the king of Amalek. I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.** So now there is a justification, it's a delusion. He's saying, "But I have obeyed God! I've done it. I've done this. ...but I've done it for good reasons."

Verse 21 – But the people took the plunder, "It wasn't me...it wasn't me, God, it wasn't me that brought all the sheep back, it was the people!" ... **but the people took the plunder, the sheep and the oxen, and the best things which should have been utterly destroyed.** He justified the action. What he's really saying is, "We did evil for a good purpose – the end justifies the means." Why? **To sacrifice to the LORD *your* God in Gilgal.** Now, they justify why they did what they did. It was still sin but they're justifying the sin, because see, we're going to do this sin because it's a good reason why we're doing it, we're going to worship *your* God....*your* God, Samuel.

Verse 22 – Then Samuel said, Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the voice of the LORD? That's what God wants. God wants obedience from us in spirit and truth. That's what God wants. **Behold, to obey, to obey God, is better than sacrifice.** God doesn't want these animal sacrifices, God wants a broken and contrite heart. God wants obedience from us. He wants us to submit our will to *His* will...**than to heed then the fat of the rams.** So it's to listen to God's instructions, to take the correction, to repent. God doesn't want the fat of rams, He doesn't want the

animal sacrifices, He doesn't want all the burnt offerings, He wants obedience, He wants us to *hear* the warnings and to heed them, to heed the warning and to implement the warning into our life.

Verse 23 – For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king. This is the outcome of this rebellion.

So when we look at this statement, **Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft**, or divination, it's really saying, to go against God's instructions – rebellion – is like turning to demons for instructions. Witchcraft is turning to seek the advice and or direction from an evil spirit world or from human reasoning, a carnal mind, and then believing and trusting it. That's what it is, that's the sin of witchcraft! To trust or rely on *anything* other than God's word is sin. To go against God's instructions is rebellion, is sin, and there's a statement there that says, **Stubbornness**, which is pride, **is as iniquity and idolatry**. Holding on to our own will, our own opinion on how things should be done, having a stubborn pride-filled attitude is rebellion and placing ourselves as God, just as Lucifer did. Idolatry is placing *anything* before God, placing *anything* before the instructions of our Creator.

We, by nature, place ourselves, our views, and opinions, before God's instructions. That's the natural carnal mind, because we think we know better.

Verse 24 – Then Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned; well, that's a great start. There is an admission of guilt, we've done something wrong, we have gone against God; **for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words**, hasn't followed the instructions. And now he's going to fall back... oh dear, now he's going to fall back into self-justification, **because**, the reason I did this was, **because I feared the people and obeyed their voice**. Like it's a half-hearted repentance. "Well, I've sinned, but the reason I did it..." In other words, we're justifying, we're trying to explain our rebellion. It would have been wise to stop at, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words." That would have been the best thing for Saul to have said, and not to have said, "...because..." We have not followed instructions *because* – in other words, justify the reason why.

Verse 25 – Now, therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may worship the LORD.

Verse 26 – But Samuel said to Saul, I will not return with you for you have rejected the word of the LORD and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel. There is a penalty going to be implemented here. Saul was going to be removed from being king over Israel because of his continued rebellion, because of his continued sin.

Verse 27 – And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe and tore it – he's reached out and he's grabbed it because he was turning to walk away.

Verse 28 – So Samuel said to him, the LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you. So this is a great penalty to be paid for the rebellion. God can forgive the sin but often there is still an outcome, a penalty to be paid. On a physical level it can be paid. And often that is actually what happens within sin, within our lives, is that God will forgive the sin and the penalty of sin, the spiritual penalty of sin which is death, but there's often physical penalties to be paid because of the decisions we made.

Verse 29 – And also the Strength of Israel, which is God, He's the strength of Israel, **will not lie**, God can't deal falsely, **or relent**, change His mind **on this matter; For He, God, is not a man that He should relent**. God's not going to change His mind on this decision, it is set; that Saul would be removed and that David would be raised up as king.

Verse 30 – Then he, Saul, said, I have sinned; yet honour me now, please... so what he's really saying is, "Well, yes, I admit that I've done wrong, but we don't want the people of Israel to know," he's trying to cover it up so that it can give the appearance that things are still right between Samuel and Saul. **...please, before the elders of my people and before Israel**, and how is that going to be achieved, **and return with me**, because what he wanted was for Samuel to walk back with him so that everything looked fine in the front of the eyes of the children of Israel. In other words, it was a cover up, the appearance of doing right but underneath there was rebellion. **...that I may worship the LORD your God**. He's saying, really, "Please return with me to give the appearance to Israel that God is still with me."

Verse 31 – So Samuel turned back after Saul and Saul worshipped the LORD.

Verse 32 – Then Samuel said, Bring Agag the king here to me. So Agag came to him cautiously, well, you can understand this, here is Samuel and Agag is turning up there and he's *very cautious* because he's really worried about what the consequences are here because he'd seen all this other destruction of all these other people and all the animals and the women and the children as well. **And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death has passed;** in other words, "Surely you're not going to kill me now because there's no need, really, because surely you've had enough with all the killing of everyone else. Can't you just let me live?" ...basically, "Surely that emotion that you're feeling has passed, you're no longer angry at me?"

Verse 33 – But Samuel said, As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women. And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

The beauty of God's plan of salvation is that He has provided the gift of repentance, a way to come back into a relationship with Him. If we *have rebelled*, if we have sinned, we simply need to admit it, accept personal responsibility and take it before God and admit it before God and ask God to forgive us. And God in His great mercy will forgive us our sins. We can then move forward and implement the change of our thinking into actions in our life. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that a beautiful thing that God has given us? ...the gift of repentance.

Any rebellion against God has a consequence. Deception or giving a false impression is sin. Sin is a rebellious attitude. Not being in unity of spirit is sin.

If you'd like to turn to Acts 5, because there are subtle sins. God has revealed through His word that sin will always find us out, brethren. Sin always finds us out. We think we are getting away with certain sins in our life but God says we get away with nothing. We just don't. God will reveal it in time, in His time, to us, but also if we don't repent once we see it God says, well, we don't get away with it, there is a penalty to be paid.

Acts 5:1 – But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. This is a time when the Church was coming together in unity and people were sacrificing to support other people within the congregation.

Verse 2 – And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it; so they both were aware of it and they both agreed to it, **and brought a certain part,** it's not all of it, **and laid it at the apostles feet.** They had sold a piece of land and decided to keep part of it for themselves, which was *not a problem*, it was a personal choice, they had that option in their life. The problem was they made out that they were giving the full value of the land; they were being deceitful, they were being deceptive. They walked in a lie, they lived a lie. It was willful and deliberate, they planned it.

Verse 3 – But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart, your inner thinking? Why have you gone down this path of thinking this way? **...to lie to the holy spirit?** The spirit of intent, God's spirit. Why are you fighting against it? **Why are you rebelling against God's spirit and kept back the part of the price of the land for yourself?** Now, it wasn't a problem that he had done it, it was because he had lied about it, he was being deceitful saying that he was giving the whole lot.

What was their spiritual intent? ...the motive behind the action? Deception driven by the desire of the praises of others, "Look at me! I'm being so generous. I'm sacrificing it all!" Living a lie. It's like the Pharisees, it was all a big act, "Look at me! I pray all these times and I fast. I do all these things..." but it's all for a wrong reason, a wrong motive. It's deception.

They did it to appear to be something different than the truth, something different than what they really were thinking. "Look at me," attitude, and it was like the Pharisees, a self-righteous approach, to lift up the self in the eyes of others, "Look at what I have done."

Verse 4 – While it, the land, remained in your possession, was it not yours? Wasn't it all yours while you had it? **And after it was sold was it not in your control?** In your own control? You still have property, you could have done what you wanted with it. **Why have you conceived this thing in your heart/in your inner thinking? You have not lied to men but to God!** That's what we're doing. You can't deceive God, brethren. We cannot deceive God! We cannot put things over God by living a lie; God knows all things.

This reminds me back of where we were beginning in the sermon, when we don't faithfully tithe, when we don't faithfully give an offering we lie to God. We're not lying to the ministry, we're lying to ourselves, we're lying to God, we're being deceptive.

Verse 5 – Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down dead and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. And the young men arose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

Verse 7 – Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. They didn't have mobile phones to make those phone calls.

Verse 8 – And Peter answered her, tell me whether you sold the land for so much? And she said, Yes, for so much. Now, Peter had already known what had happened because God had put it into his mind. Now he's just challenging her to see what she would say. **Then Peter said to her, How is it that you have agreed together to test the spirit of God?** This is a thinking of rebellion, to go against God, to be so self-deluded to think that God will not reveal our sin. **Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out.** Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed

her last, and the young men came in and found her dead and carried her out, buried her by her husband.

Verse 11 – So great fear came upon all the Church and upon all who heard these things. And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done. And that was by God. God did it through them among the people, **and they were all in one accord, unity of thinking, in Solomon's porch.**

Verse 13 – Yet none of the rest, all the remaining people, **dared join them.** They didn't want to keep company with them because of what had happened, **but the people esteemed them highly.** So they stayed back at their distance. They kept away from the apostles because they feared to come into contact with them because of what had happened, because of the death of Ananias and his wife, because they had lied and therefore what the people did was stand back and go, "Whoa!" But then God did add to the Church during that period.

Rebellion is when we want to do it our way rather than God's way. Rebellion is when we do it our way rather than the way we are instructed by God. Rebellion is sin. The Day of Atonement pictures how sin can be covered, gotten rid of, so that we can be atoned to God, we can be at one with God.

So what is required, brethren, is today, this day, we can look at ourselves, examine ourselves, examine our thinking and go back over things in our life and see whether we are in a spirit of rebellion. And if we are, the beauty is that we can admit it and we can go before God and God will forgive us that sin, and then when we come up we then walk before God in spirit and truth and we implement that change of thinking, that repentance, into our life and begin to follow instructions, the instructions of God.

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