

Welcome to another Sabbath, brethren.

The title of today's sermon is *Motive and Intent*, and this will be *Part 3*.

Today we will continue to look at the topic "motive and intent." Our motive (or intent) is another way of saying, "Why we do what we do." Intent starts within our thinking. The issue within our human life is that before our calling we live our lives without really considering the reason we do things, the reason we say things. When we are called we are then required (by the power of God's holy spirit) to deal with our thinking, to deal with our motives and intent. Now, it takes years and years within God's Church to be able to come to see the real reason why we do what we do. The natural carnal mind has a tendency to deceive itself, so sometimes we can believe within ourselves that we're doing something for one reason, but deep down in our inner thinking we're actually doing it for something different, and that something different is because of our selfishness.

Today we will continue to explore the purpose of why we do what we do, and we're going to do that by looking through the New Testament Church to see the very events that took place after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and what people did and why they did what they did. And from that, the reason we're looking at this, is for the purpose of being able to come to see our inner motives and intents within ourselves—not within others, but within ourselves. So we can look at different examples and then we can, hopefully, begin to see more of ourselves. By the power of God's holy spirit, we'll begin to see the way we are, the way that we think, and to explore why we do the things that we do.

And as we've seen before, there are only two ways. One is either of love, which is of God, it's motivated by God's holy spirit, which is right thinking, or it's motivated by selfishness, the natural carnal mind. So there's only two intents that are really involved. And we've looked at those through the power of God's spirit. We've been able to see God's intent in many things, but we've also explored Lucifer's (Satan's) intent, which is now one of destruction, deception and destruction, and we've looked at *ours*, the natural carnal mind.

Well, they are all connected, in one way, within God's Church, because we're either living our selfishness, living our natural carnal mind (which is often tempted or tested) or we're living God's way, God's thinking toward others.

Our words or actions are either inspired by God's holy spirit or they are from the selfish natural carnal mind, which has been influenced, or the thoughts of Satan have been placed into the mind for consideration. That's how God's spirit works, which is God places His thinking within our mind and then we have to choose. Well, Lucifer places thoughts into our mind (he broadcasts to our minds) and we have to choose. What are we going to do with those thoughts?

So let's start this next part of this sermon series, *Part 3*, by looking at Acts 4:32-37. And the New Testament Church has started. The beginning of the Church is rather exciting here, in this period of time, because of the situation where they were having the urgency of a way of life, and therefore, they were willing to share together.

Acts 4:32—Now the multitude of those who believed, now, this word "believed" is "committed to," because when we believe something we commit to it, **were of one heart and one life.** Now, that "one heart" is "one motive or one intent"; they had one way of thinking, one mind. They had the same minds. They were in unity about what they had to believe. They were in unity of spirit. **...neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.** Now, they were willing to share. Now, this is about their willingness to share what they had as far as what was necessary. They were willing to share those things that were surplus to their needs. Because if a person had a roof over their head, it is pointless to go and sell it and become in poverty yourself. So this is about providing, but using balance in one's thinking.

Verse 33—And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So the "witness" there is they're giving "evidence," because they saw it, they witnessed this resurrection, because this is after the fact. Pentecost 31 AD had happened and now they were empowered to be able to go out and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God because they were saying that they were a witness of the resurrection. And they were, because they saw Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead, and Christ appeared to them, in the fact that they could see Him. So He was spirit, but He was manifest to them. So they were a witness and they could speak with confidence and boldness about the very resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And great grace/favor was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked. Now, this is about anyone that was in real poverty of any type. They were provided for by the Church, by the apostles. **...for all who were possessors of lands and houses sold them,** so this is "surplus to the needs," understanding that balance needs to be shown, **and brought the possession of the things that were sold,** so the proceeds were brought to the apostles at that time. So now we're looking at intent. What was the intent of somebody who sold their land or their home, the surplus to their needs – understanding balance is required – what was their intent? Well, it was one of sharing. And we understand that true sharing can only come by the power of God's holy spirit. It has to be inspired by God. It can't be done for a wrong motive. So their motive, which is outlined here, was to share things so that others could survive and others could be in unity of doctrine, in unity of thinking, and others did not go without, without the needs for the body.

Verse 35 ... and laid them, which was the proceeds and the provisions that were bought, which was money because they had sold them, **and laid them,** those proceeds, **at the apostles' feet; and they** (the apostles) **distributed to each as anyone had need.** So it's important to understand there that they distributed it to... they were the ones that were allocating out the funds because they had knowledge (they were powered by God's holy spirit), but they had knowledge about who needed what, "as anyone had need." So it wasn't about "wants." It was somebody that had a *need*. And as we understood, there were many there that did not have a need because they had the possessions and they were able to sell the surplus that they had to provide for others. So it would have been somebody that was in need, who didn't have the needs of the body at that time.

Verse 36—And Joseph, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement or Son of Comfort), because he was a comforting type of person, **a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.** Now, we can look at this particular example, that Barnabas (powered by God's holy spirit) had the right motive behind the action that he did, which was, having land, he did sell it, and he had the money (whatever that amount was) and he brought that money and laid it at the apostles' feet. And we don't understand how big the land was or how much money, but he had the right motive, the right intent, powered by

God's holy spirit. So he *yielded* to God's holy spirit because God's spirit had led him to see the need for the brethren, and he had the power within his own possessions to be able to have the authority over his own property to sell it. It was within his authority or within his right to do that. He didn't have to, but he did. He was led by God's holy spirit.

Acts 5:1—But, now, we're going to see an example here of the opposite, because the word "but" really means, "well, this is the opposite." **But**, so it's something different than what Barnabas had done. **But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.** Here we have husband and wife having a possession and selling it. So, we don't understand how big a piece of land it is, but it was something that they had "come into act in one purpose and one mind." So they came into agreement.

Verse 2—And they kept back part of the proceeds. So whatever they sold, they kept a part of it back. And we don't know how much they kept back, but they kept some of it back. And really, it didn't really matter at this point. When we get further down, how *much* they kept back is quite irrelevant. It was the fact that they lied which is the issue. So it doesn't matter whether it was 2% they kept back, or 50%. It's actually irrelevant because the issue comes back to the intent (or the motive) of why they did what they did.

So, **verse 2—And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it**, so she's fully aware. She is in unity here about what the outcome is going to be, what they're going to decide. **...and brought a certain part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.** So they now have an intent of heart and it's one of deception. They are basing their decision on deceiving.

Verse 3—But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the holy spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? So we'll review that. "But Peter," the head apostle, "said, Ananias, why has Satan..." Now, we know Satan is a deceiver and we know that he broadcasts into the mind, and therefore, a choice had to be made. So this broadcasting has taken place and Ananias has yielded to this broadcasting... "filled your heart," and this "heart" is the "thoughts" that are being placed into the mind, into the *inner thinking*. So it's *within the inner thinking* a decision is being made and it is actually a *wilful* act because it's a clear decision. It's not as if it's going to be a good decision. It's a bad one. It's a yielding to the opposite of God's holy spirit. "...to lie to the holy spirit." So what he's doing is that he is now setting out to deceive in his motive and his intent. His intent is to deceive. And we have to look at *why*. Where does this all come from? Well, it comes from within the natural carnal mind, and of course, here, Satan has broadcast those thoughts saying, "If you only present a *part* of what you have sold, you're going to present an *image* to the apostles that you are in unity and that you are of a genuine and sincere heart." And that's what's being broadcast. So this is an act of deception on Ananias and Sapphira's part.

So they've kept it back, and now Peter has said to them, "You've kept back part of the price of the land *for yourself*." So that's really the intent. They were setting out to deceive, to paint an image to the apostles and to those around that they were "better" than what they really were. So this is image protection. Their intent, where did it come from? Well, it came from within their thinking, and "they're lying to the holy spirit," they're lying to God's thinking. They're trying to deceive God.

Verse 4—While it remained, was it not your own? So, "While it was yours, wasn't it yours? You could do what you wanted with it, you didn't have to sell it. You could do what you wanted to." **And after it was sold**, so once you've sold it, **was it not in your own control?** So, "You didn't have to give it all! You

only had to give whatever you wanted, but you had to be honest about what you were doing. You didn't have to go up and say, 'Well, I've sold a block of land for \$1,000 and I'm giving it *all* to you.' No, you could go up and say, 'I've sold a block of land and I'm giving part to you to distribute to the brethren, to the other saints.'" So their motive here is really one of pride. It's one of deception. It's one about having others think better of the individual.

Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? So this required this inner thinking. This intent and motive had to be revealed because it takes thinking. They had to work it out. They had to have thought it through. **You have not lied to men,** "You've not lied just to the apostles and those around," **but to God.** So this is an interesting point, because, it really comes up to the fact that Ananias and Sapphira were lying to God, because it was *deliberate act*. It was a deliberate act that they were doing. Now, they obviously did not believe that God saw or knew all things, because their thinking has now become twisted and perverted, and the reality is that God knows the heart, which we've read before in Hebrews: "God's word is powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, pierces into the inner motive." Well, God sees! The Logos, the mind of God, sees all things, it knows all things. God made man! He knows what we're like. He knows that our natural carnal mind is one of selfishness, and deception, and image, and pride, but by the power of God's holy spirit we then can fight it and make right decisions.

Well, here Ananias and Sapphira have clearly set out to deceive the apostles and others, but also to deceive God. Which is insane thinking, when you think about it. It's absolutely insane because God does see all things. God sees all intents, all motives. He knows the spirit of a matter. He knows why we do the things we do.

Verse 5—Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. So it soon got out of what happened, that once people started to hear it, they came to see that you cannot deceive God—you cannot deceive God—that God does see all things.

Verse 6—And the young men arose and wrapped him up, 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. And Peter answered her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much? So, virtually asked a question, "How much did you sell it for? Did you sell it for \$1,000?" ...which was not the right amount, which is the amount that Ananias had said, and, **She said, Yes, for so much.** So here it is, she had already predetermined with Ananias to deceive the apostles, but she really had set out to deceive God, and therefore, her intent now is revealed by this statement, "Yes, for so much." Her intent was to lie, to be one of deception for the matter of pride, image protection, projecting an image out to the apostles, to others, of what they were not. That's what it is. It's hypocrisy because they weren't doing the same as Barnabas was, which was giving all.

Now, they did have the right to sell it, and they did have the right to keep whatever amount they wanted to keep, but the reality was, this was about a lie. This was about deception.

Verse 9—Then Peter said to her, How is it that you have agreed together, this is the first instance. Firstly, they agreed together. So they both sinned in agreeing to this lie. So their intent was one to lie, to deceive, to project a wrong image. **How is it that you have agreed to test the spirit of the LORD?** Now, this word "test" is "to prove." So, what is it that they're doing? They're *proving*, they're *testing* the spirit

of God, God's holy spirit. Well, we know that God sees all things, so that's what they're testing. They're testing whether or not God sees all things, because if they really believed that God saw all things and knows all things they would never have entered into this deception because it's foolishness, it's pride, it's stupidity. It's just absolute stupidity to take it to an apostle and lie so blatantly. They have now "tested" God. They've "tested" God. Does God see and know all things? Is God really working through the apostles? Well, that's what they were testing and that's what Peter's drawn their attention to. "You've agreed together to test the holy spirit, the spirit of the LORD (the spirit of God)."

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 (at Peter's feet) and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carried *her* out, buried *her* with her husband.

Verse 11—So great fear came upon all the Church and upon all who heard these things. Because this is a demonstration of God's great power to see and to know all things. And therefore, brethren, for us, we need to look at our intent. We should be (on a progressive basis) examining our motive and intent. Are we lying? Are we acting out a role in the Church? Are we presenting ourselves as something we are not? Because it's the same motive; the motive is driven by pride. The intent is wrong. The intent is, "I am better than what I really am." But presenting it as that is true when it's not, it's a lie. We're *not* following God; we're *not* checking our motives; we're *not* checking our intents.

So our life is one of monitoring and checking our attitudes, monitoring and checking our intent, the why we are doing what we're doing. And this is something that we grow in as we proceed longer in God's Church, within the Body of Christ, because this is the purpose of life...to examine to see why we're doing what we're doing. Are we just protecting an image? Are we trying to build an image? Are we trying to be seen "well of" or spoken well of by others in authority? Because that's what the motive was here of Ananias and Sapphira. It was one of pride. "I'll present this. Look at us, we're in unity with you. Aren't we *righteous* because of this act?!" When in fact, the motive, the intent, the reason why they did it was all a lie. It was one of deception. They were setting out to deceive, which is sin. Deception is sin because it's a lie. Hypocrisy is sin because it's false, it's falsehood. It's not righteous. It's not open and honest. It's actually a big cover-up. It's one of deception.

And who is the author of all of this, when we go back? Lucifer! Satan's power! Satan's power is that of deception. He has set out to deceive the whole world, and he has. And the only ones that aren't deceived are those that have been called by God the Father out of that deception, out of that hypocrisy, out of that falsehood, out of that lie that we were living. We have all been called out of that. Therefore, we should be open and honest and sincere. And the reason is? Because God sees all things and God is really interested in our motive, in our intent, the reason why we are doing what we're doing.

Acts 6:8. Here we have Stephen. And the situation is that Stephen has been ordained as a deacon and they've been called to give an explanation in regards to God's Church and what's happening. And there is a lot of disruption going on within the communities of the Jews because of this change that they're seeing, and they're threatened by this (so-called) "loss of power," and here we have an example of Stephen.

So it's **Acts 6:8—And Stephen, full of faith**, now, this is that belief. He is that "committed to" the understanding that he's been given by God and he now sees because of the power of God's holy spirit, and he's "committed to." So he's living his faith. **And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great**

wonders and signs among the people, which God did through him. Stephen doesn't take any credit to himself because it's God that does the works in and through us. It's our ability to yield to those works that God is doing that then enables God to do these great wonders, signs among the people.

Verse 9—Then there arose some from among what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those of Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. Now, the purpose here, if we look at this, is because Stephen's intent is one of submitting to God, to live his faith. That's his intent, that's his motive. That's why he's doing what he's doing because he's living what he believes. *But* we see now those of the "Synagogue of the Freedman" are now in dispute. In other words, they're disagreeing, they're arguing a point, because they don't have God's holy spirit and they're *against* Stephen and what Stephen is teaching.

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. Now, this is the truth. Wisdom is the mind of God in him. And we've looked at that. The Bible *is* the wisdom of God. It's God revealing Himself, which is the Logos, the Word, and that turns into wisdom, because we can live this wisdom. If we're living (yielding) to God's holy spirit, we can live it. So he's got this wisdom, he has this understanding of the knowledge, and he's now been able to speak about it, which is great wisdom here coming out on a spiritual level, and the spirit, the spirit of God which is the mind of God in him, and they can't resist it. So no matter what they said it didn't make any difference. He was able to give a good, solid, foundational answer from God's word. He was able to use God's word to give them the answers and they were unable to answer the questions because he was able to speak the mind of God. What a great blessing *that* was.

Verse 11—Then they secretly induced men to say... so now this is the intent. The intent here, because they're losing the argument, is their carnal mind now has got to react. And what does the carnal mind do? Well, it now "induced," in other words, it "has people." They've been *bribed to lie!* So the motive, the intent is, "We're going to win this argument by putting you down. And the way we're going to do it is we're going to get others to get up and lie about you and your way of life." So their intent is one to win the argument, to make Stephen look bad, to say that he is against them and that he's actually false.

We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God. So this is a lie! Because Stephen, being a part of God's Church, the Body of Christ, was filled with God's spirit and with wisdom, and he wasn't one to speak blasphemy against it. Now, they could interpret certain things to be "speaking against Moses," but the reality was that Stephen was just speaking the truth of God's word. Now, they would see it differently. Someone powered by God's holy spirit will see something different than what a person with a natural carnal mind can. That's why the religions of the world can read certain scriptures and twist them to get a meaning out of them, where, we can only see them with the power of God's holy spirit, and to understand the foundation of God's...what God is doing, God's work, we then can see the truth. And therefore, we can read one scripture and get a totally different meaning out of it compared to someone with a natural carnal mind. So they've now managed to bribe somebody to lie about Stephen.

And they stirred up the peoples, the elders, and the scribes, which were the Jews, and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up false witnesses who said, so these are the other people that they've said their intent is to discredit Stephen. That's their intent. That's their motive. That's why they're doing what they're doing. **...This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will**

destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us. Now, it's not talking about the law, but to change the customs. Now, they had certain customs and rituals of washings and that, which, to a degree, Jesus Christ had demolished. And Stephen would have been speaking the truth. And yes, it was said that the temple would be destroyed, and therefore, they didn't understand it. Because we understand what the temple was and it was referring to something in the future, that "every stone would be cast down." It was talking about an Apostasy. But here, what Jesus Christ had said, Stephen may have repeated those things, and of course there is a lack of understanding on behalf of the Jews here and their interpreting something spiritual to something physical—which is all they can really do.

And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel. So now they're viewing him and they're seeing him as something different, and this would have been rather unsettling for them.

Acts 7:1—Then the high priest said, Are these things so? And he said, Men, and brethren, and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran.... Now we're going to go through this aspect of what Stephen is now transferring to them, building up to Jesus Christ. But now he's saying something about the fathers because it's "our fathers." Well, that is true for us, brethren. Well, that is true. He's going to now relate to them about their fathers, Abraham...goes to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and we end up in a situation where we have the tribes of Israel, the twelve tribes of Israel. And they are part of it. Now, today, of course, we are spiritual Israel. We're going to be able to see motive and intent as we go through this particular story because it covers all of the Old Testament period from Moses right up to Jesus Christ.

Verse 3—and said to him, Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I (God) will show you. Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him (this is "God moved him") to this land in which you now dwell, the land of Canaan, which encompassed Jerusalem, of course.

Verse 5—And God gave him (Abraham) no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. And that word "enough" has been there, but "not even to set his foot on." So he wasn't promised that promised land, to actually go into it, which was going to come through the tribes of Israel at another time. **But even when Abraham had no child, He (God) promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him.** Now, we see God's intent here, because God is now going to work through Abraham for the purpose of creating Israel, all for the purpose of creating spiritual Israel through the death of Jesus Christ, from Pentecost 31 AD. It's an incredible story! And if mankind could only grasp the reality of aspects of the truth in this particular thing, of what God has done and how God's plan is revealed and God's intent is revealed from the beginning of Abraham, what God intended in the way of promising to Abraham and the *outcome* of those promises, which we are enjoying today. The western countries of this world—America, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and other countries—are enjoying the blessings of Abraham. And mankind today has no understanding about the blessings of Abraham. They don't understand why they have what they have, but it all goes back to this promise that God gave to Abraham and to his descendants after him.

Verse 6—But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would sojourn into a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. So this is the tribes of Israel, and this all happened through Joseph. So God intended that the children of Israel would go into Egypt and go into a bondage, into oppression, all for the purpose of a deliverance, a *physical*

deliverance, all for a *spiritual* reason. Because we, brethren, we are called out of this bondage, out of the bondage of this world and the oppression of this world *into* "a promised land," a "type" of "the promised land," which is the Church, where the protection really is on a spiritual level if we stay connected to the vine, connected to the Church, connected to God, connected to God's holy spirit is what it's really all about.

Verse 7—And the nation to whom they will be in bondage, I (God) will judge (which He did), said God, and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place. And this is what actually happened. And we're covering the period of the Exodus and they came into the promised land. Well, we, brethren, are the same. We have been in this bondage and God will judge this world, soon they are going to be judged, and God said He would bring us out. And He's going to bring another lot of people out to live into the Millennium where they will serve Him. Now, we've been called out to serve God in *this place* because the only place to serve God in spirit and truth is the Church of God—PKG. Now, people in the world can't understand these types of statements, and the scattered Churches cannot understand these statements, but the reality is that the only way that you can "serve God in *this place*" is it requires a calling or an awakening. And there *is* no other way. This is the *only way* to be able to serve God in spirit and truth "in *this place*," the Church of God—PKG.

Verse 8—Then He gave him (Abraham) the covenant of circumcision. It was "Abram" at that point, but it was the covenant of the circumcision. So we've been through this in times past. It was the agreement based on the circumcision, of physical circumcision. Well, our agreement is a circumcision of the heart, which is on a spiritual level. ...and so **Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day**, and we've just been through a sermon where we covered this, where Joseph and Mary came to have Jesus Christ circumcised on the eighth day. And there's a lot of spiritual meaning with regards to being "circumcised on the eighth day" on a spiritual level. ...and **Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.**

Verse 9—And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him... Now, let's look at that in the sense of the story, the true story of the intent. What was really going on? The twelve brothers were there, and of course, the eleven become envious or jealous of him. And what happens? They then decide to sell Joseph. So their motive, their intent is, "Let's get rid of him!" And it was all to do with the fact of *his* pride and what he used to say, and of course, his coat of many colors. But the brothers got angry about it and become envious and jealous about it all (and the love the father to the son, to Joseph), and because of that envy they decided to put him down the well (as we understand) and to sell him into Egypt. They put him down there, virtually, to kill him, in the first instance, and then of course, the elder brother has a change of mind and they manage to go back and take him out and sell him to the passing traders that go past, and he is sold into Egypt. So their motive, their intent is one of? Ill will. There is ill will towards Joseph. And if you get some time you might want to go back and read that history of what happened to Joseph and how that took place, looking at the motive and intent of *why* people do certain things. Well, here we can see that the brothers here, their motive, their intent is driven by envy. And what is envy? Pride. Envy is motivated by pride, because this envious or this jealousy is about a reputation, of who he really was and what he was portraying. Well, they wanted that themselves! They didn't want to have less favor with their father, and therefore, the best way was to get rid of him. And that's what they did.

...and **delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom**, and this is referring to God who did this, God was the one who delivered him out of all his troubles and we know the dreams that

Joseph had. ...and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. And we understand that story.

I'll relay something that I find quite humorous with regards to my granddaughter. When she was around about four years of age, thereabouts, we started this story telling, and so I would tell her a story and then she would tell me a story, and that's how we would sit down for half an hour, just telling each other stories. And she would always want to hear stories about princes and princesses and that type of thing. Well, as time went on I started to change those stories, so made them a little bit more interesting and more true to life as we went along. And so we got to the point when she was around about five that I started to tell her Biblical stories, but not mentioning the Bible and being very cautious, because she is not my child and I don't have the responsibility to teach her of God's ways; that's up to the parents. But I also understood the parents would be sensitive about me and the religion and God and other things, so I mentioned these stories in a story form as much as I could to relay the story. And I did relay the story of Joseph in prison and how he had this particular dream and how there was seven fat cows and then seven skinny cows... and went through that whole process. So I relayed that story to her and then she would often try to tell the story back. Well, this one, obviously, was a little bit beyond her capacity, because when she started to tell me the story about this boy that was thrown in prison, about the seven fat cows and seven thin cows and the outcome of being released from prison, well, there was no longer seven cows, there was three fat cows and there was all sorts of things going on in the story. Then I realized, well, there are certain stories I need to be careful about, what I transfer at what age. So I managed to keep them a little bit simpler, covering things like the flood and pairs of animals that are unclean without mentioning the word "unclean," and fourteen animals, seven pairs of the clean animals without going into the word "clean," because she's a bit young, and therefore, I'm trying to transfer these stories in a Biblical sense, keeping to the truth without getting too involved at this point in time because of her age. And God willing, one day, she'll be able to understand my motive and intent in transferring those stories.

So here we have the real reason of what is taking place with regards to Joseph. Because Joseph didn't understand all of this. He didn't understand why he was down the well. He didn't understand why he was sold off and why he ended up in prison. And it wasn't until much later that he would have come to see the glory of God and what God was doing through him, and about the times that he went through, the seven years of plenty to the seven years of famine, and the outcome, that he was second in charge because it was all about what God was doing. It was God's intent to have the children of Israel *in* captivity in Egypt, and it was all done through Joseph, because it was Joseph that was taken there first, and then the family moved in. And that's where they went into this bondage and captivity because God had a plan. It was all planned out for a period of time; *exactly* what God had prophesied would happen had happened, and that was God's intent.

Well, these people, their intent, they probably didn't understand much of their own motives and intent. Joseph, over time, because he was of God, would have seen his intent. He would have seen more of his motives, why he was doing what he was doing. And in all of this we can see that his intent was to serve the people, but the most important thing is under government. He was under the subject authority of Pharaoh because he was placed second in charge because Pharaoh trusted him. But he had to submit to God *first*, and then to Pharaoh, second. So it would have been an interesting aspect to live that life in that environment. And one day we will get the opportunity, God willing, to discuss more detail, how Joseph really felt and what he really went through and how God intervened into his life in many, many a way and the things that he understood and the things that he didn't understand in his life.

Verse 11—Now, a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five people. So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, and he and our fathers. So that period of time is covered in great detail here all for the purpose of leading to something. **And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.**

Verse 17—But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt till another king arose who did not know Joseph. And we've seen that before, because the promise was one of the promised land, but the promise to us is that of the holy spirit, which was given in Pentecost 31 AD, which we have just covered, and the purpose of the Day of Pentecost, what it really is about.

This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies so that they might not live. So that intent there, we can see. So what was Pharaoh's intent at that time? It was to oppress the people. And remember, when Moses was born, the actual period of time that they were in, they were to destroy all the male children, and the midwives were to be involved in it, and then the midwives say, "We're not going to be involved in it." So we can see all these different motives and intents. Here we see that Moses is to be born, and his parents' intent is to save him, knowing he's a godly child. And we see pharaoh's intent is to destroy and oppress—so that's his motive and intent. So that's why he did what he did, because he wants control, and that's his motive.

Now we, brethren, can have these things go on in our life, that *we* desire control, we desire control over others without even realizing it. We oppress others without even realizing it. But our base nature, we like control. We want things *our* way. A lot of people say, "Oh, I don't like control. I'm happy I don't ever subject myself over others, to have control." Well, selfishness is control ... selfishness is control. We want things *our* way. That's control. And we generally fight and argue to get our way, which is control, control situations, control others by what *we* want, to please the self. So every time we set out to please ourselves, no matter what it is, without *sacrificing* ourselves, there is a degree of control, controlling others involved in that situation.

Verse 20—And at this time Moses was born (now, this is all part of God's plan), **and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months.** Remember, they held him and protected him so that he wouldn't be destroyed. **But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son.** Now, he's put in that basket and he floats down the river, and Pharaoh's daughter takes him out of the water, out amongst the reeds, and brings him and raises up Moses as her own son. So *her* motive, her intent, her motive is clear; she wanted to have a child and she raises that child as her own. It's a beautiful story to see that. And one day, God willing, we'll get to meet Pharaoh's daughter and come to understand how she really felt about that and what she really went through. **And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,** so now he's educated in the Egyptian system, **and was mighty in words and deeds.** So here it is, he's quite powerful because he's part of Pharaoh's household.

But when he was forty years old, it came into his mind ("into his heart") **to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.** So he knew his genealogy. He knew where he'd come from. He obviously knew the

story that had been transferred to him about his birth and how he ended up in Pharaoh's household. So he knew who he was, otherwise he wouldn't have known his brethren, which are the children of Israel. And at this point of time they are mightily oppressed, and here he is, he's part of Pharaoh's household. He has a lot of authority and prestige.

Verse 24—And seeing one of *them* suffering wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. So here we have somebody that is being oppressed by the Egyptian and Moses intervenes and strikes him down and kills him.

Verse 25—For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. This would have been a very difficult time. For Moses, he had an understanding, obviously, and that God was going to use him, but at this point, it wasn't the right timing. So here it is, he's taken a stand and the people just didn't understand. They actually turn on him. His own people turn on him.

Verse 26—And the next day he appeared to *two of them* as they were fighting, and *tried to reconcile them*, he tried to stop it, **saying, Men, if you are brethren; why do you wrong one another? Now, this is an interesting point. So here we go back to this motive and intent. Moses' motive was to defend his people. He didn't care for the Egyptians all that much, so there is a motive of ill will in here because the natural carnal mind is at work, and Moses is not called at this point in time. God is working *with* him, but God's not dwelling in him to give him the right thinking, and therefore, he's gone out and has desired and acted out ill will (his intent is ill will to the Egyptians), all for the purpose of his motive, which is "my brethren." So, "my brethren," says a lot. It's like "my family." What do you mean it's "my"? "My" is selfish. "It's *mine*! Don't worry about others. It's mine! It belongs to me!" It's a level of control. It's about pride within us. "It's mine! I'll defend *my* children!"**

I remember a conversation once I had with somebody, talking about people on a cliff, that there were people standing on a cliff, and the person's son was on the cliff. So, let's just say, for example, there's three people on the cliff and your son happens to be one of them, or your daughter may be one of the three people, and you can see the wind is getting up strong and it's about to blow the three of them off the cliff. *Who* would you run up and save? And the answer, generally, to that same question no matter who it's put to is, "I'd run up and save my son/my daughter." And then I would say, "*Why?* Why is it that you'll save *your* son or *your* daughter and not the other person?" And it comes back to this natural carnal mind, that we love our own... We. Love. Our. Own. It's a selfish love, and that's the way we can prove it. It's selfish. Why didn't we save the other person? Well, they're not ours. They don't belong to us, we didn't have them as children, and therefore, this selfishness is in us. So our motive and intent is generally to please the self, to protect our own. And that's what we will do, because it's *natural* to do those sort of things.

Now, Moses is amongst these people and they're fighting, and he doesn't understand it. You know, "If you're family, how can you be fighting? Why? What's going on? What's wrong? What's your motive and intent?" Well, they're fighting and he's saying, "Well, I'm involved here. Well, why aren't you stopping? Why don't you stop? How can you do this, wrong one another?" He can't understand it. "How can you be fighting against each other when you're oppressed by the Egyptians...and now you're fighting each other!?" And that's something you often see in the world. Just like what is happening now within different countries, like Iraq, where people have gone in there believing that they can solve their problems, when they can't. Armies have gone in there and thousands of people have died, and now that

they've all left, guess what? It's going to go back to exactly what it was like before. And it won't get any better; it's just going to get worse because it's the same thing. Why are you fighting? Why are the same families, from the same tribes, why do they even fight? Because "the natural carnal mind is hostile against God, not subject to the law of God, and neither, indeed, can be." The natural carnal mind desires ill will because it likes control. It likes control of *others*. It doesn't want, necessarily, to control itself. It wants to control others.

So here we have Moses' intent and now we see the two men's intent. They have ill will to each other. **But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, Who made you a ruler and judge over us?** In other words, "Who do you think you are?! What do you mean you're getting involved here? It's got nothing to do with you! Who made you judge? What makes you say this is right or wrong? You're telling us this is wrong, who gives you the right to tell me what's right and wrong? Who made you the judge? Who made you the ruler?" **Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?** Now they've thrown it back at him, and now it's causing problems, of course, because now he realizes that there are more people who know about this. He's in big trouble. And they've turned on him and just virtually justified their fighting, saying, "Well, what are you going to do about it? You going to turn on us now and kill us like you did the other guy yesterday?"

Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he had two sons. So his intent was self-protection. His motive was self-protection. Why did he flee? To protect himself because he knew that this would get out and that Pharaoh's household would soon know that *he* killed an Egyptian; therefore, he's in big trouble. So his motive is self-protection.

And when forty years had passed, an angel of the LORD, or "a messenger of the LORD," **appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai.** So here he is, he's 80 years of age and now God is going to begin to work with him. He is now being called to fulfill God's will. God's intent is to deliver Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians. God's intent is to *use* Moses, to get Moses to fulfill *His* will, *His* purpose, by delivering the children of Israel. Because God's going to do it, but He wanted to do it through Moses. And this is a great opportunity for Moses. Now, Moses didn't see it that way. He didn't really say, "Well, this is a great idea!" He actually resisted it all. His intent was one of (still) self-protection. God's intent is to say, "Well, I'm going to use you no matter what. I am going to use you and you *will* do as I desire." And God was going to give him the help, of course, as we understand, which was Aaron.

Verse 31—When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the LORD came to him, saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look. So Moses now has moved into this state of fear, because this would have been quite an awesome sight. This is Yahweh Elohim appearing in a burning bush, and we know that this [bush was] burning but not being consumed, and that God now calls out to Moses and tells him who He is.

Verse 33—Then the LORD said to him, Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. It's holy because God is there.

Verse 34—I (God) have certainly seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt. Now, they *are* God's people because God created all humans through Adam and Eve, but God had chosen Abraham, then through Isaac, and now Jacob, therefore, the descendents of Jacob are God's people. Now, we,

brethren, are God's people today because we are part of the Body of Christ; we are spiritual Israel today. So this same calling that Moses had, we have had. We've had that same calling. We've been baptized and received God's holy spirit by the laying on of hands of a true minister of God. Now we can have this relationship with God, a direct relationship with God, and we can allow God (by our choice) to live and dwell in us. God *desires* to live in us, that we be His temple, His dwelling place. But there is an aspect of us humbling ourselves and yielding to God, because God can't deal with pride...because pride is sin.

I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt. So God's intent is to use Moses. Moses, well, his intent is one of self-protection. "I don't really want to do this. *I do not want to do this.*" That's his motive. **This Moses whom they rejected, saying, Who made you the ruler and a judge? This is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.** And we understand that was God, Yahweh Elohim.

Verse 36—He (God) brought them out, after He had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. So this is where we get that first period of time in Moses' life, of this education in the ways of Egypt. So he would have had this understanding of Pharaoh and how the household of Pharaoh worked. Then forty years, he goes out and he's in the wilderness for that forty-year period where he has children and he marries, and now God is appearing to him. He's about eighty years of age and now God is going to use him for the next forty years. So there's three lots of forty years here, which make the 120 years, and then Moses dies, which we may or may not get to in this particular sermon. And God had used all these signs and wonders, which is the ten plagues that are poured out, and we know that the last one is the plague of death that happens. And they are released and they wander. They leave Egypt on the night portion of the 15th of Abib (in the first month), and they wander. And on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread they cross over the Red Sea and they come out the other side and they have seen all these wonders and miracles of God. And God's intent is *to show them* His great power, knowing that they have this hardness of heart because they don't have God's spirit. They have the natural carnal mind that soon forgets.

Miracles and wonders last a very short time because the natural carnal mind will work it through and justify its actions.

Acts 7:37—This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet, like me, from your brethren. And it's referring to Jesus Christ. That is the Prophet that has been raised up. **Him (Jesus Christ) you shall hear.**

Verse 38—This is he, it's talking about Moses, **who was in the congregation of the wilderness with the angel (with Yahweh Elohim) who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, and the one who received the living oracles to give to us,** so Moses received this from God, which is the word of God. And we understand it involves the 10 Commandments, which are the principles of life, of a converted person's life, which is, the first four show how to worship God in spirit and truth, and the last six show how we should have a relationship with one another, how we should learn to love one another, and the principles that are based in that very fact of the law.

Verse 39—whom our fathers would not obey... They wouldn't obey God because of the natural carnal mind. They wanted a freedom, but they didn't want, really, the freedom from sin. They wanted to live the way they wanted, and that's the natural carnal mind. It likes to control its own environment because something that affects it, anything that affects the self, people like to control it. But the people, because

they didn't have God's holy spirit... **but rejected. And in their hearts**, now, this is that inner thinking, in their minds, in their motive, in their intent, **they turned back to Egypt!** They turned back to the ways they had lived, back to the world, back to the normal way of life, which was one of looking after the self and doing what the self wanted.

So this world's sin is what we have to come up against, brethren. We have to fight it. So in our hearts we cannot turn back. In our inner thinking, in our motive and intent, we cannot turn back. So our part in it is we have to set our intent. Our motive is one to obey God no matter what. We have to obey God no matter what. And that "no matter what" can lead to (it may lead to) death. It may mean losing relationships. It may mean losing finances, losing jobs, lots of things. But in our heart the most important thing is our motive, our intent, our desire is to put God first no matter what...no matter what. Whereas here, in their minds, in their inner thinking, deep down in the inner thinking, their intent and motive, they wanted to turn back, they wanted to go back to the way it was, because it was getting all too difficult. They forgot about all the miracles and all the wonderful things that God had done. That didn't matter. They just wanted to go back to what was considered "comfortable," to please the self. Even though they weren't "comfortable" because they had been crying out to God because of the oppression of the Egyptians. But here it is, they're complaining. After all that's been done for them, now they're complaining.

Verse 40—saying to Aaron, now, remember, Aaron had stayed down at the base of the mountain and he was among the people, and Moses had been gone for a period of time and they're getting anxious and they realize that, "Well, he may be not even coming back, so let's make us a god that we can follow, something we can see."

So **verse 40—saying to Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.** So they're going to justify why they're doing what they're doing. So their intent, really, deep down, is one of finding somebody to lead them, something that they can look to. That's their motive. Because? *Why* they're justifying? *Why* are they doing what they're doing? Because they're saying in their minds, "Well, this Moses, who knows what's happened to him. We need someone to follow. We don't know what's become of him."

Verse 41—And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoicing in the works of their own hands. So it's something that they had made (that Aaron had made for them because of all the gold that he had collected), but it's something that's actually *worthless!* But they could see it, and that was the point. They needed something physical.

Now, in the world today it is no different. People build idols, something they can see, because to worship God in *spirit* and *truth*, mankind, of himself, can't do it, because he needs to see something. Something has to be *provable*, has to be able to be seen. Yet, all the things that we believe are spiritual. We believe things that are spiritual, and there is not often a physical evidence. Now, we can believe certain things like the Apostasy, and there is evidence, that you can see it, and we know the records of what happened, but there are many other truths that we have which you can't see. Like, for example, you can't see the Millennium. You can't see it; it's hope within the mind. It's something we see in the mind because of God's word. Others can't see it because they want something physical. They want to see it to believe it. Whereas we believe things we can't see because they're spiritual in nature. We believe we have God's holy spirit. We believe we're in the true Church of God. But you can't see God's holy spirit...can't see it.

So they rejoiced in the work of their own hands. So their intent was one of wanting to leave. Now, the same principle applies to us, brethren. They wanted to leave, just like people after a period of time of going back to the natural carnal mind, they desire to leave God's Church, they desire to have control over their *own* life, the way *they* want to do it, the way *they* see it, *their* opinion, and they get on this drift and eventually, if time goes on long enough, they drift into this going back to Egypt, going back to the old way, the way they were. But the problem is, people can't see they're on the drift. People can't see that they're drifting back into the old ways, the way of Egypt, back to a land of bondage and hard work. But they can't see it.

Verse 42—Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heavens, which is the signs of heaven, which is the planets, as you see nowadays, all the signs of the Zodiac (I think they call it), and people look up every day to see what so-called "the star signs" are telling them this, and this is their lucky number and all this other garbage. But that's what happens. They turn back to things that can be *seen*, because you can see the planets, "the host of heaven." **...as it is written in the book of the Prophets: Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?** So that's the question. "Did you offer Me," talking about God the Father, "slaughtered animals and sacrifices during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?" **Yes, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch**, which is a false god, it's false doctrine, **and the star of your god Remphan**, which is part of this idolatry system which is coming out of Egypt, **Images which you made to worship; and I (God) will carry you away beyond Babylon.** So now God is saying, Because of this sin, you're going to get carried away into captivity. *Now* they're going to be taken captive and taken *away* from the land that had been promised to them.

Well, for us, brethren, we have to be careful that we're not carried away by the captivity of our mind. Now, we're called *out* of this captivity, this bondage. We're called out of it. Well, we've got to be careful that we don't go back into it because of our sin, because of unrepentant sin.

Verse 44—Our fathers had the tabernacle of the witness in the wilderness, as He (God) appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen... So what's God's intent here? Well, God's intent was to provide something physical for them (a tabernacle), but it really pointed to something spiritual. So that is God's intent. Now, Moses' intent would be to build the tabernacle so that it was *exact* as God had said. His intent and motive, his reason *why* was because that's what God had wanted, that's what God had instructed him. So his intent is to do it exactly, not to have anything different. The command was, this was what had to happen. Moses' intent, motive of why he was going to do it? He wanted to please God. Moses wanted to please God, so he's going to do it *exactly* as God had said. **...which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the promised land...into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom the LORD drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David.** So it was God that was preparing for them.

It's interesting that the history of mankind, and it's difficult for mankind to come to understand this, but the point is that man does not trust God. Man does not trust God. Israel was supposed to trust God. Now, God's intent was to protect and guide Israel to the promised land, and He did say that, "I will," God will, "provide, and I will fight your fights for you. You don't have to do anything." But mankind just cannot trust God to that degree, and therefore, mankind has always taken up arms and always sets out to fight his fights.

Now, this for us, brethren, is a principle that we have to look at, our motive and intent. Our motive is one that we should have...our intent is, the reason that we don't fight back, is because we rely on God to fight our fights for us. We don't set out to defend ourselves in an aggressive way, physically, because our intent is that we desire to rely on God. God says He's going to fight our fights for us – physically *and* spiritually. So the armies of the world all set out to defend themselves, defend their countries, when God says He would do it *IF* we could only trust in Him. Well, we can't on a natural carnal mind. Our minds can't go that far, to believe that God would defend us. We don't have to have nuclear bombs; we don't have to have jet airplanes; we don't have to have massive armies to defend a nation. We should trust in God and wait. Now, the natural carnal mind cannot comprehend in any shape or form that God would fight our battles for us. That's the history of mankind. Mankind will set out to defend himself.

So mankind's motive is to defend the self. And yet God says that we shouldn't defend the self, that if we were to obey Him in spirit and truth that *God* would be our defender, He'd be our fortress, our high tower, our strength would all come from God. Well, that's not possible within the natural carnal mind; it requires God's spirit to understand that principle of trusting in God and not defending the self.

Continuing on **verse 45... whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, until the days of David (verse 46) who (David) found favor before God and asked to find (and that is "to build") a dwelling for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him the house.** So the intent was that David desired (his motive, his intent, why he wanted to do it), he wanted to build it for God. He was doing it for God, but because of sin, God had said to David that he wouldn't, and that his son, Solomon, would build Him (God) a house—the temple.

Verse 48—However, the Most High (Yahweh Elohim) does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says. God can't be held in a physical dwelling place because God is all-powerful, all-mighty, and He created everything. He created everything. So nothing that man could do, nothing that man could build is a place worthy of God.

Verse 49—Heaven is My throne, this is God speaking, Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Eternal (says Yahweh Elohim). Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hands not made all these things? So God is the God of eternity. He is God All-Powerful.

Now, today, brethren, we can look at this on a spiritual level. *We* are the Temple. God dwells in us, people of the Church, the called-out ones, those that are yielding to God, have repented of sin, in a state of repentance. God says He will continue to dwell in us. Now, God dwelling in us empowers us to live righteously, to have the right intent, to have the right motives towards others. God desires to live in us for eternity so that we will always have the mind, the thinking of God. It'll be spirit life forever!

Now, remember this is still Stephen wanting to convey to these people the very fact of a way of life, and explaining what has happened to them to bring them to a certain point, and what God has actually said to bring them to the point of coming to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, that He has been resurrected to spirit life. Now, he's talking to them because he knows exactly their attitude and their motives, because they've already demonstrated it in the fact that they're resisting the truth that is being given, what is being spoken, and they're fighting against it and arguing against it.

Verse 51—Now we'll see the intent, really, of what's really going on... **You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the holy spirit.** Now, it's not saying that they *had* the holy spirit, but they're resisting God's spirit coming through Stephen, and the truth, because God's spirit empowers truth. So what is being said, which is the inspiration *from* God, inspiration *of* God, they're now *resisting* it. So, "You *always* resist, You *always* fight against it! You're not yielding to it! You're not willing to humble yourself that you might be wrong and listen to what's being said. You *always* resist the holy spirit, the things of God, Gods Word that is being preached." Now, we know that we have been through a period of witness within God's Church to the world, that period of time has been fulfilled. And what was it? They resisted the holy spirit. Mankind resists the holy spirit. They don't want to hear the things of God, and that's what this is saying. This inspired speaking that is coming through Stephen to them, they're resisting it. And it's not saying they actually *had* the holy spirit, but it's things that were coming through Stephen were of God's spirit. They were of God's mind. They were inspired through God's *thinking*. So the inner intent was one of resistance...was one of resistance.

...**as your fathers did, so do you.** So it's exactly the same thing. They're just acting out exactly as the children of Israel did. They resisted God's holy spirit, they resisted God, they resisted the words of God that came through Moses, the 10 Commandments. There was one point where they turned around and said, "All that we've heard, we will do." Excitement! But deep down their intent soon changed to resistance. They didn't want to be told what to do. They didn't want to have control of self, you know, because it requires self-control to obey the 10 Commandments. You have to *control* yourself. Well, they don't want it. They *want* control, but not someone to control them or controlling of the self. That's not possible within the natural carnal mind. It just doesn't like it.

Verse 52—**Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?** Well, the truth is, all of them...all of the prophets have been killed, all the prophets have been persecuted *by*, and it's generally *by*, their own people! That's normally what happens, their own people. Prophets are persecuted and killed by their *own people*. **And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One.** So all of these that prophesied about the Messiah, the Anointed of God, coming, the Anointed Messiah coming, was killed. All of them. And if you go back through the history of the prophets, that's exactly what had happened, and they all were prophesying about a time of a Messiah, God providing a Messiah, a Savior for them! Now, many of them would have seen it on a physical level, and they're looking for a physical redemption, the saving of Israel on a physical level, not understanding that it's all about a spiritual salvation. But there *is* a point coming up where they will be saved on a physical level as well, because to be saved on a physical level is to live into the Millennium. This coming Messiah, which we're waiting for now, and will happen soon on a Day of Pentecost... **of whom you now have become betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels (or messengers) and have not kept it.** So they've actually received it, they've been given the law, God has provided it, but they're still not keeping it. And the reality is that they continue to resist God, they continue to resist everything of God, and all of the prophets have been persecuted.

Verse 54—**When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart.** So now this is about being furious! This is not about one of repentance. This is furious, this build up of emotions that has now taken place. Because Stephen has now called them murderers. He's called them stiff-necked: "You're resisting God and you just kill prophets. That's what you do, just like your fathers have done!" And now they're "cut to the heart"! They are *furious* about this and they're angry, so their intent is one of, "We'll sort this out." Their motive is one of, "Well, we're going to *really* deal with you now!" ...**and they gnashed at him with teeth.** Now, this is about words. So they're now speaking, really, directly to him, because he said certain things that really made them angry.

Verse 55—But He (Stephen), **being full of the holy spirit**, which is God's mind, God's thinking, inspired speaking coming out from him, **gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.** Now, this is rather exciting! The fact that God has now given him the eyes to see something on a spiritual level. They can't see it, but he can see something. He can now see "the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Now, this would have been an incredible thing... and the confidence that would have given him at that point to continue to speak strongly about God's way of life.

Verse 56—And said, Look, I see heaven opened and the Son of Man (which is Jesus Christ) **standing at the right hand of God.** Well, this would have tipped these people over the top. **Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears**, so now their anger, their tempers really driven up, and now they're yelling out and they've put their hands over their ears to stop it. They don't want to hear anything else that Stephen's got to say, because to them this is just beyond what they can cope! **...and ran at him with one accord**, so they've all run together at him, **and cast him out of the city and stoned him.** Here it is, their intent now is to kill him. Their intent is to kill him, to get rid of him.

Continuing on there... **and the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul**, which is the apostle Paul, **and they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not charge them with this sin. And when he had said this, he fell asleep** (he died).

So this humility that he has now displayed shows his motive. Because this is a motive of forgiveness, because he understood (by the power of God's holy spirit) that you can't hold people to what they are, because they are what they are because they're not called, and therefore, even if they do ill, and even if it's willful, we still can't hold things against them because it's not our accountability...because we can't judge anybody. We have to worry about ourselves.

Well, here we have this great demonstration of a humble mind at work. He knew that they didn't understand what they're doing. Just like those that killed Jesus Christ and staked Him on a pole, they didn't really know what they were doing. Although they had an intent, which was to carry out the instructions of their leader (which is what they did, the soldiers did exactly what they were told to do), their motive and intent was one of obedience to a government. They didn't have a spiritual intent or a spiritual motive. Well, here we have Stephen demonstrating a spiritual intent, a spiritual motive, and it is one of forgiveness. "Do not hold it against them. Don't blame them. Don't give *charge* to them for this sin," which is one of murder, because he had the spirit of God, which is demonstrating the spirit of forgiveness and mercy. It's a wonderful thing to see.

So we can see that God's intent is one of forgiveness, and yet man's intent is one of destruction. And where does that come from? Where does that destruction come from? Well, it's leveraged, it's *motivated* through a spirit being that broadcasts *to* the mind to make it angry. Because we should never get angry, brethren. Anger or fury or this ill will is all from self. Anger is a demonstration of selfishness. And if we can ever feel ourselves welling up and being angry about something, it's a demonstration of our pride, it's a demonstration (a sign) of our selfishness, because we should never get angry. Now, we will, and we do, and we should know it. Whenever we raise our voice or we go down that path or we come to sense it or feel it, we can pull back and just remember, "I am demonstrating my selfishness. I am demonstrating my pride. Because things aren't going the way I want, I'm going to raise my voice and

I'm going to get angry because it's not what I want. I've lost *control!*" ...rather than demonstrating self-control.

We will pick more of Acts in the next part, *Part 4*. I just want to drop down now to a period of time which is in 325 AD, because it actually demonstrates the intent of the way things have gone because of an intent, or a motive that took place. In the next sermon, in *Motive and Intent – Part 4*, we're going to pick it up in Acts 8 and we'll continue on in Acts 8 and go through Acts 8 and Acts 9, and then look at other scriptures with regards to just looking at our motive and intent, *why we* do the things that *we* do. And it's worth considering and stopping and trying to work down deep in our minds, "*Why* am I really doing this?" And we will start to see that often, without even knowing it, we justify our actions. We are often presumptuous without even understanding what it really is because of things that we do. So once we have God's spirit, we have this ability to dig down deep and just stop and examine, "Why am I actually doing the things I am doing?" And often we will see our own selfishness.

I want to jump forward now to a period of time when it involved three aspects to this, really, and that's 325 AD. And at that period of time we see God's true Church, which had grown and was operating, keeping the Sabbath, keeping the Holy Days, and keeping God's commandments in spirit and truth. Then we see another organization called "The Catholic Church" and it was called, "The Roman Church," and we see then the third group which is the Jewish community, which has come through the Israel (which we just saw then, the twelve tribes of Israel), and they call themselves, now, Jews, or Judah, or the Tribes of Israel. And those three groups have their own religious beliefs. And we're going to look at the story of Simon Magus and how the Catholic Church started, but we're going to just jump forward a little bit now for the purpose of reconciling an aspect of people's motives and intents.

Because, there is a motive and intent behind *every single action*, and we see that in politics today. Politics is all about transferring an image or maintaining an image, and therefore, when someone is asked a question they never answer it directly because they're trying to *protect*, they're trying to *control* the situation. And their motive is one of? "I desire to be re-elected. That's my motive and intent. I desire to protect my image. I desire to protect my party. And more importantly, I desire to be re-elected! That is my motive. That is my intent. That's why I *always* answer questions that I'm asked without answering them at all. I never answer truthfully. I always talk around it all and divert it to somewhere else." For example, in Australia, if you ask a politician of one particular party why we have the debt we have, the answer can be given automatically, because of the image, the motive and intent, is to transfer the blame. So, why have we so much debt? Well, it was the people in government before. They overspent! Now, that same storyline has been going on for years and years and years. No matter what party is in power there is always someone else to blame. "It's not us! You've elected us to fix *their* problems. All the problems that *they* created, we're here now to fix it." That's a standard line. So their motive is, "I desire to be re-elected, and I'm going to transfer the responsibility and the blame to someone else." Does that sound familiar from Genesis? It was someone else's fault! "It's not mine. It's somebody else's fault." Well, that all refers to motive and intent.

So if we ever find ourselves justifying or being presumptuous about a matter we need to stop and look back at why we are doing what we're doing. And that'll come up that we often do things because of our selfish human nature. We're using *our* nature and not using God's holy spirit to come to the right conclusion about what is right and wrong.

So by 325 AD the Catholic Church had become very strong and it had great religious appeal among the population, as well as leaders in the government. The Council of Nicaea was called by the Catholic Church to address some fundamental doctrines of their church that would carry powerful influence over all who would follow this same false course, even among later splinter organizations. Now, that's a truth that is not accepted or seen by all the church that came out in protest (Protestant) against the Catholic Church. Because the majority of all of the doctrines come from the Roman Catholic Church. And it's called "Roman" because it comes from Rome, "Latin Man." That's where it comes from. And it's "Catholic," which is "Universal" church. So it's a group, dominates its religion, coming out of Rome. So the Council of Nicaea now is being called to address issues that are going on, and they're seeing problems within two groups, but one main group, and that main group is God's true Church. But also, there were Jews that were keeping certain aspects of God's law the way that they saw that they should keep it.

Now, over time, when we get up into the 1400-1500's in the main, we see people coming out in protest, protesting against, coming out as Protestant, to come out. Now, when they left they took with them all the doctrines that they had, only they added some new ones for one or two things that they may do differently, but they kept on the very doctrines we're going to cover. So these organizations splintered off and they took what came out of the Council of Nicaea in 325.

The true Church of God at this time had remained small and was hated by others in the Catholic Church. Up to this time, and ever since, this great false church has been the primary persecutor of God's Church and has been responsible for the slaughter of many of God's people. In 325 AD the council was called by the Catholic Church and they convened this Council of Nicaea. "The Passover was in controversy and the Catholic Church wanted to be rid of it..." Their motive was now obvious. They wanted (their intent was) to get rid of the Passover and to change it. So this is about control, since it (the Passover) and other things were a problem, the church wanted to separate itself fully from all ties that associated it with the true Church of God, which faithfully remained and was being observed by God's people annually every year—which was the Passover. So every year, which was this annual observance, as outlined in Leviticus 23, the Catholic Church wanted to rid this and wanted to change it.

"It also wanted to distance itself from Judaism. The annual observance of Passover was replaced with the observance of Easter, which itself was rife with pagan practices (eggs, the Easter eggs, rabbits, fertility, hot cross buns, sunrise worship of the sun god, the resurrection of Tammuz, the queen of heaven—Ishtar and Ashtoreth)." Now, we understand that Ishtar moves to Easter, which is that celebration, which is all false. It's not of God. But the Catholic Church wanted to bring something in, so here we have their religious beliefs coming along and now they wanted to change it, because they're trying to incorporate much of the pagan people that are worshipping pagan gods, so they're merging two things together, then they bring in all this error. And Easter is just a pagan ritual and has no foundation of truth. None at all! It's actually all perverted and all twisted, but it's one way to get rid of Passover and the truth and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

So what do we see? Hot cross buns during the period of Unleavened Bread. And normally the Passover season runs very similar to the time of Easter, and they have things like "Good Friday." Now, there's nothing "good" about it. They have Sunday, which is that sun worship of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which He didn't rise on the Sunday morning; He rose on the end of the Sabbath. So all of this is just another way of just trying to twist and pervert things, because the reason they're doing this is to separate—their intent—is to separate themselves, to be different.

God did not establish a holy convocation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but only for His death in the observance of the annual Passover. "The Catholic Church even perverted the Passover observance by instituting weekly Communion," which is, they go there on a Sunday (I believe it is), Sunday morning, and they go up and there's a little round bit of unleavened bread and there's a bit of wine, and they call it "communion," which is this "fellowship," and they do it every week. Well, it's replaced the annual Passover. The truth is, "The taking of a small piece of unleavened bread and the drinking of a small amount of wine is a yearly observance commanded by God for His Church, called Passover, which represents the religious significance of Christ's broken body and the blood that He poured out for our sins. By substituting Easter with Passover the Catholic Church was also attempting to give credibility to Sunday worship rather than the seventh-day Sabbath. By observing Easter and saying that Jesus Christ was resurrected at sunrise on a Sunday morning, it could then say Christ should be worshipped on Sundays." And we know that is error, but their intent was to separate themselves from God's true Church.

"Not only did the Council of Nicaea seek to destroy" –now this is their intent – *to destroy!* So where does that come from? What does that remind us of? Who is the destroyer? So we see this motivation, this intent, this broadcasting to destroy God's Church, to destroy the doctrines of the Church. To destroy the truth comes from Satan. And now the council is yielding to this, and now the council has set out to destroy. That is their intent. It's the same as Satan's, to destroy what God has established. And that's what God has done, has established the truth, and Satan has set out to destroy the truth, what God has established.

So, brethren, for us we should be on guard, because what has God established? *Us!* We have been established, brethren, *in* the Body of Christ, the true Church of God. So God has established us, so what's going to happen? Satan is trying to destroy what God has established. Therefore, we need to be on guard spiritually, to be awake, to be sober, to be sober-minded, because Satan is out to destroy us, and in ways that we don't often see, but it mainly will come through thinking, attitudes. It will come through our motives and intent, the *why* of why we do anything. It's either going to be motivated by God, God's spirit, God's inspiration, or it's going to be motivated from self, from selfishness, from pride.

So, "Not only did the council seek to destroy the true identity of Jesus Christ by instituting Easter, it also sought to destroy knowledge of the truth and the identity of the Eternal God by instituting a perverted, sick, and damnable doctrine called the Trinity," three in one. "These two doctrines have been Satan's greatest and most fruitful attempts to deceive mankind into greater ignorance of who Jesus Christ and God the Father are."

Now, that is an incredible thing that God in 2005 revealed to His people His true identity, and by revealing His own true identity He revealed the true identity of Jesus Christ. And that is a wonderful, wonderful doctrine to have. And I know, for me personally, brethren, that it's changed my life. To understand and to see from scripture there is one Eternal God, Yahweh Elohim, and He has sent *His* Son, He has provided His Son, He created His Son from birth as a human for a Passover sacrifice, that Jesus Christ did not pre-exist, that He was made the Son of God. Isn't that incredible to understand and to know?! And I know it's changed my life.

So we see God's intent is one to save. Satan's intent is to destroy. And *our* intent is what is important. God needs to see our heart. That's why *we* need, through the power of God's holy spirit, to continue to examine ourselves to see why we do what we do.

Well, we'll leave the sermon there and we'll pick up *Part 4* next time, and when we do we're going to pick it up in Acts.□