

At the actual time that I am working on these Feast sermons we have just gone through a seven part series entitled, *Herbert W. Armstrong*. It was a series that covered a Bible Study he had given back in the summer of 1978. Then, this past week, we started a new series entitled, *Own Your Choices*. In all of these I thought a lot about those things that Mr. Armstrong went through as God's apostle, who served the era of the Church of Philadelphia.

As I began to focus on the subject matter of this sermon, knowing what I was to cover at this Feast, I couldn't help but think of Mr. Armstrong again. The reason is because this is one of the primary subjects that I remember him covering often at the Feast of Tabernacles. It is about rebellions. Mr. Armstrong would drive home the point of why God was sending His Kingdom to govern mankind beginning at Christ's return and the establishment of the Millennium, which we are picturing here in part at this Feast of Tabernacles.

He always began at the very first rebellion and worked his way forward to the establishment of the Millennium. And the reason we're going through this is because this is something we need to deeply understand as God's people, why all the things that God has gone through throughout time to bring us to this time, of what we're picturing here at this Feast, of the time when God will establish His government, His Kingdom on this earth. We need to understand the nature of man has been one of rebellion again and again and again against God. That has been the nature of many in the Church, especially during the time of Laodicea and afterward. There has been much rebellion since the time of the Apostasy as well.

This sermon is entitled, *The Rebellions*.

The first great rebellion against God and His government we know well. It began with the archangel Lucifer. If we can grasp his attitude and spirit we will better understand the spirit that is involved that rejects the government of God because it's an attitude and a spirit that has continued through time in every rebellion against God's government. So it's important to review this and come to deeply understand it.

Let's turn over to Isaiah 14. Again, these things about Lucifer and what he did. We read these at least once a year and sometimes more often, but it's so important to grasp why this all began, how this all began, why God is doing what He is seeking to accomplish and work as a matter of His family, His family, Elohim and teaching us and guiding us and directing us and taking us through many things so that we can experience matters of rebellion, so that we can come to understand how painful, how hurtful, how ugly rebellion is, how evil that spirit is, something that can't be in Elohim.

Isaiah 14:12— How have you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! You know, he had a purpose, a "light bringer" as it were, one who would help to give guidance and direction, instruction that came from God, of things that God was doing and why God was doing it, an opportunity, and a great opportunity, to serve in God's government as he did. So it says, **How have you been cut down to the ground, you who have weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars, speaking of the angels of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the government.** That's what this is talking about. What an attitude that began to emerge in him, and what audacity, what foolishness - and every rebellion has incredible foolishness involved in it. That's the best word to describe it, incredible foolishness of those who engage in matters of rebellion. **And so I will sit also in the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north,** was basically his attitude and spirit and the things he was saying by what he was working to accomplish.

And **verse 14** it says, **I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; and I will be like the most High.** What an incredible thing, individuals that come along, people that think they deserve certain position, a higher position, think that something should be given to them. This is a continual thing I have seen in God's Church. I have seen it over and over and over again, people wanting power, people wanting authority, people thinking they're deserving of it, people getting mad when they don't receive it.

I think back to the very beginning of my being in the Church and beginning to see and learn and be around individuals when ordinations took place within the Church. And I began to experience and see this very early on, of how people's attitudes changed toward someone who was ordained. And oftentimes the attitude that became very clear as time went along that they thought, they believed *they* should have been the ones ordained and they looked down upon the one who was actually ordained and not understanding perhaps there was nothing more in it than for the purpose of them being tried as to what they're going to do and how they're going to respond, to help the Church to grow, to see themselves in certain things. The individual being ordained may or may not be going to be used a great deal. So often that isn't even the point. It's what can be learned by the individual ordained and by those around them.

I think of that which is, really was a custom within the Church, as a whole, that when someone was going to be ordained as an elder in the Church we would talk to them, we would spend time with them and let them know things are about to change mightily for you, if indeed we did discuss the ordination with them in advance. And oftentimes it was discussed. And warning them that there are going to be things happen, that people are going to look upon you differently now. And some who are your friends aren't going to be your friends anymore. What a horrible thing to have to counsel, to have to tell someone that's about to be ordained, "Your life is about to change, and there are going to be some who were your friends who will not be your friend anymore." Why is that? Well, because of jealousies, because of envy, because of the way people judge and look down on others.

And over the past, well, 2008 especially, and 2009 when we began to ordain a lot more people, this really became pretty rampant in the Church a lot more than all of you know because my wife and I dealt with it over and over again. The evangelists oftentimes had to deal with this over and over again within the congregations.

And so again, not a small thing. And it's an ugly thing, it really is. But it's amazing how often it's reared its ugly head in the Church - so often, *so very often*. And so we can look at someone like Lucifer and think, "What a horrible thing! An archangel given all that he was given, and such magnificence of creation, and then for him to begin to think that he could rise above the angels, all of them?" He wasn't given authority over the entire angelic realm, by any measure. He had great authority and great government that was given to him, of one of three archangels, but he wanted it all. *He wanted it all*. And he wanted to *decide* what was best for the angelic realm. He wanted to make the decisions. He didn't want God making them. Incredible thinking! Perverted, distorted, *foolish* thinking. And I think of everyone that I've ever known who has left the Church, who has gone out of the Church, who has been put out of the Church because of this kind of rebellion and attitude, because they became jealous and envious of someone else or they looked down upon or judged harshly.

So again, these things have happened over and over and over again. So great lessons here that we need to learn, because we can look at someone like Lucifer and think, "How could he have done it?" How could he have done it? Don't be too quick. Be careful. Look inward. Always be on guard because it's a spirit and an attitude that could pop up at very unexpected times in people's lives where they're tried and tested in this, "Will you seek to continue to put God first? Will you acknowledge God's government and how it works? Will you yield to God's government?" Because God tries His people in this *a lot*, not just a little.

Ezekiel 28. Again, we're very familiar with a lot of these scriptures, but **Ezekiel 28.** Again, about Lucifer. **Verse 11** it says, **Moreover the word of the Eternal came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus says the Lord Eternal; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty, in how God had created him. You have been in Eden, the garden of God;** so not only speaking here - and this isn't primarily about the Garden of Eden where he was at one point, but even well before that, that which was created in a spiritual realm and that particular presence around God, God's throne, and that areas that was like a spirit Garden of Eden, if you will. And it says, **every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, the topaz, the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship, so great riches, great wealth, great beauty that surrounded his life. And that's where he was placed, more than the other angels within God's realm, spirit realm, save for the other two great archangels that were there as well.**

And so it goes on to say, **the workmanship of your tambourines and of your pipes were prepared in you in the day that you were created.** And so again here, something that some have

speculated upon, and certainly seems to be the case of a uniqueness and power that was given to him, an ability, perhaps. It makes sense; it goes along with something explained physically here, but of that which had to do with music. And I think of music in the world and some of the music that's there, the power that is there and how it's so been misused and twisted and distorted and has led man astray because music is powerful. It's powerful to sway attitudes and thinking and mindsets. And Satan has totally misused this throughout time and influenced a lot of music that is just not good.

You were the anointed cherub who covers; and I had set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God, again, that government, you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. So again, amongst the angels.

Verse 15—You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you. So we've already looked at some of this at the Feast. And the reason some of this pops up from time to time in more than one sermon, maybe several, is because it's so important to grasp and understand, to learn the lessons from it. And so often, again, the greater ability that one is given, like he was, or the greater ability one *thinks* that they have, the pull exists to rebel against God, to rely upon self, to think that self has the ability to judge matters, looking upon self as an authority in a very strong way, above others. And I think of the Church, how this has happened, where people think *they* have the right understanding and the right way of doing things and look down upon certain things that are decided even within government, even administratively. "Oh, it shouldn't be done that way," or "You shouldn't do it this way," or "You shouldn't have done that." And yet they have no comprehension that things that are done and as individuals, especially apostles, look to God for guidance, direction, and leadership in their life, as they look to God as God gives them great power and strength and guidance and direction to lead *His* Church, because they have learned to be submissive and yielded to that because that's what God has molded into them. Not a matter of haughtiness, just a matter of the way it is. And yet people do not grasp sometimes that what is bound on earth in decisions, and even choices sometimes that are given to them, like it was to Mr. Armstrong or to me, or whomever through time, Paul and Peter and whomever, that God bound that - that that was backed by God Almighty, that that's the way it should be because decisions have to be made and God has allowed decisions and so forth about what might be best in certain circumstances or at certain times.

So By the multitude of your merchandise (verse 16) they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned. Therefore, I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God, out of the government. God's not going to allow anything in His government that becomes profane, that works against Him, that works against His way. It's just not going to be there. ...and I will destroy, meaning "to perish or to be destroyed." I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up, this matter of pride, anyone who rebels, anyone who becomes lifted up with pride, when it comes to rebellion, because everyone who rebels becomes lifted up with *great* pride and haughtiness. And so it says here, Your heart

was lifted up because of your beauty, you know, the way that individuals can see themselves, whatever that beauty is, whatever that ability might be that they think they have, and so forth.

You have corrupted, meaning "to ruin, to destroy, or to spoil," **your wisdom by reason of your brightness**. And so when people begin to look upon themselves, begin to raise up their ideas, their thoughts above what has been given to them as a matter of that which is a matter even sometimes of administration within God's government because there is a way that God works in the Church, and I have mentioned this so many times, and it's just the way, it's just a fact God works in a very true and right way that we recognize as right, or should recognize as right that comes from Him because He's the one who has established it. And it comes through apostles and prophets, and then evangelists and on through the ministry within the Church to the Church depending on what function or what jobs have been given to individuals and primarily through the apostles and prophets. That's how God has molded and fashioned and teaches and reveals things to His Church, to His people. And then how we respond to that, well, that decides, I should say, whether we have a spirit of unity and oneness, a spirit of a desire to be at-one with God, of placing God first, or whether we have a spirit of rebellion and believe that we have a better way, some other way that things should be done.

This happens quite often. It still happens today. You know, there's hardly a month goes by that someone isn't rebelling out here, in some way or another, finding fault with, thinking their way is better or thinking something should be done in a different manner or whatever it might be, especially among apostle and prophets. So people find themselves in disagreement. Well, if you're in disagreement, you're wrong. You're just wrong! You don't have that choice. It isn't a right that's been given. There is no such right! It's a matter of unity and support, backing God's government, "Get behind this thing!" That's what it's all about, supporting and backing God's government, God's Church, the organization that God has established to lead, guide, and direct us, to mold and fashion us, and even correct us.

So, **You have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I will cast you to the ground**. In Isaiah 14 God said to Lucifer, "You will be brought down." That's a promise. That's absolute. That's a process that's continued on through time, and as time has gone on he's been brought down more and more and more. I think of what was just given the other day here about what was said concerning Adam and Eve. And He said that, in essence, he's going to lick the dust of the earth. Well, we've been shown what the means in the Church, that the Church never understood before until God gave it. It's talking about mankind. He's going to have his nose rubbed in that which God created from the dust of the earth and what God is doing in mankind and through mankind, especially when it came to the point in time that Jesus Christ became born of human flesh. Incredible, the story.

And so it goes on to say here, God says, **I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you**. And so, again, these things are coming yet. There is much, as times goes on here, that's going to be accomplished in bringing him down in a continuing process, just as has happened in the last

few years here. We don't grasp sometimes within the Church what God has been doing in taking away more and more of his power over the Church. The stronger we become the less powerful he is. And God has been accomplishing that, doing that, molding and fashioning that kind of power within us.

So, verse 18—You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trafficking; therefore, will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you, it shall devour you, Hebrew here, "to devour, to consume," and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all those who look upon you.

The next great rebellion against God came from the first two people He created—Adam and Eve. It was in both of these that God began to reveal the inherent weakness that exists in all human life. Mankind is incomplete of and by himself. And so we have to understand that. We need to understand that, that mankind is incomplete. We weren't created whole, in the manner that God intends for us to be, to become. So, of himself, mankind, he is only a temporary creature that will exist for a time on earth to live as he or she chooses — only able to live a selfish life. Even once we're called we still have great selfishness in us and it will never be fully gone. But we learn to battle it. We learn to bring it in subjection to the ways of God. And that is part of the process. Then there is no more, after people have lived out a physical life, then there is no more unless God gives it, which is God's purpose in His creation in the first place. And those things we'll hear more about concerning the Last Great Day even. And we know those things but those things will be expounded upon and we'll be reminded of those things that God wants us to focus on at this time of the Feast, just like what we're going through here.

So, although we covered this in the sermon series, *The Removal of Curses*, we are going to look again at a portion of this concerning Adam and Eve. So, Satan, the first to turn to rebellion, worked *immediately* to lead *mankind* into rebellion also. He came along and confronted Eve. So again, just a reminder here, you don't need to turn there, but we'll review this story rather quickly since we've covered this.

Genesis 3:4—And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die. So again here, understand that not right away, but they *were* going to die and they weren't going to be able to be given what might have happened otherwise if they had resisted. But, again, that wasn't in them and they couldn't and they had to begin to experience something that was a part of their nature, that of selfishness, of something that God had intended for them to do in the first place. We had to be created this way, brethren, so that we could live in selfishness and make choices according to that, so we could come to "see" how evil it is, how evil self is, selfishness, selfish motivation. It's inward. It's not outward. It's the opposite of God's way. It's the opposite of God's love. So people had to live that from the very beginning. It was a part of God's design. But the choice, still, the choice was whose? The choice was theirs. They made the choice. And that's the point that God is giving, and the opportunity, then, to be saved from that. And so they were going to die, but not right away. And yet it resulted in rebellion, of sin, of disobedience to His word.

And so they weren't able to continue on, in that respect, as they otherwise would have been able to, to be begotten of God's spirit at some point along the way and then to begin a process whereby they could have their minds, something created within their minds that could become a part of Elohim. So that never happened in their life because they sinned. And all mankind has sinned except Jesus Christ.

So, again here, this matter of coming along here as Satan did, and said, "You shall [not] surely die," I've mentioned this before. But I truly loathe half truths. I've mentioned that already. And it's come up now at the Feast at least two times for sure, so something we need to think about, that we need to be truthful in all that we do and not trying to protect self. Whenever you try to protect self... You know, that's an ugly part of human nature. I just heard a thing today about someone, a minister, who basically when a situation came up they protected themselves and kind of threw someone else under the bus, another minister, in order to make themselves look a little bit better. Now, that's just carnal human nature, but it's something we need to recognize in our nature. And we must fight against it and seek to make sure, to seek God's help that that just doesn't happen in our life, to desire, on a quick basis here, to be able to "see" our motivations more quickly. Ask God for help so that you can see your motivations more quickly, so that you can "see" why you make some of the choices and decisions you do.

So again, I loathe this matter of half-truths, as I said. It is a sick form of lying, because it is lying. It is better not to say anything than to paint a picture of only half a truth. So sometimes it's better just not to speak than to just tell half the story or half the truth, especially when it's designed - and sometimes we don't even know we're doing it because it's been a part of our nature for so long, we don't even see it. It's hidden deep *down* inside and we can't even see it. But we need to be able to have a spiritual mirror so that we can see it more quickly, so that we can combat such things because it's very much a part of human nature. Not just something a few do, but something that's done quite often by far too many. So this is a part of refining, an opportunity to see things of a matter of refining in order to draw closer and closer to God, to be filled with greater and greater truth in how we live toward others.

So again, a half-truth can kind of leave someone to determine their own conclusion that we really want them to draw in the first place. When that motivation is there that's just wrong. Or to protect self. I've mentioned this. And it's better to have the complete story, to be truthful all the way regardless of the light it puts us in. And if it's put us in a bad light because we did something bad or not as well as we should have, then we just need to acknowledge it. Ownership. Ownership. Ownership of our choices. And then to say, you know, I should have done this this way and I've learned the lesson from this.

Genesis 3:5—For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food... So again, it was when we came to "see" *of herself*, by her own choice and decision apart from what God had instructed her she made the choice that it was good. That's

when she rebelled. She rebelled at that very moment. And it goes on to say... **and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise**, so again, this matter of pride entered in, vanity, selfishness very much a part of just the way we are as human beings, selfish human nature. So it says, **she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband and he ate of it as well.**

Then again, chapter 3, **verse 7** here, **And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.** So again, when they made this choice they began a process that began to destroy and corrupt the spirit essence of their mind, that was in their mind that God had given them. It's a process that can only be reversed by receiving of God's holy spirit. That's an awesome thing to understand, it really is.

So, the next great rebellion.... So that's right after mankind was created. It didn't take very long. Now, we don't know how long that was. Sometimes we can read through Genesis and because it's followed up very quickly there from their being in the garden there and so forth, that we can think that, well, it happened the week after creation. We don't know if it was a week, a month, a year, or ten years, or more. But at some point, at some point it happened. Didn't take too long.

The next great rebellion is that which happened in the days of Noah. In this portion of the sermon covering the days of Noah, I am going to read through and comment on what is written in Chapter 1 of *Prophesy Against the Nations*, beginning with the section entitled, "Noah and the Ark." I want to read that from here.

Before continuing to look at such human nature that so easily sets itself up to judge and even condemn God, and that will not listen to His guidance and instruction, let's now begin looking at the story of Noah and the ark. It illustrates the struggle within the human mind to accept the most basic works of God.

In order to properly review this story, it is simply best to do so by reading what God Himself recorded for us. Before giving what is recorded in that account in Genesis, there is the need to examine a Hebrew word used in that story. It is translated poorly into other languages, therefore, when read in context it does not adequately convey the intent it is to contain. The word is simply translated into English as "corrupted," which is fine if you understand the intent in context. A couple of examples will help give better understanding.

An account in Hosea illustrates quite well the meaning and right usage of this word.

And so in the book here, now, quoting Hosea 9:9 it states:

"They have become deeply 'corrupted,' as in the days of Gibeah. He [God] will remember their iniquity and He will visit their sins" (Hosea 9:9).

So continuing on in what is written in the book:

This is speaking in a context of how Israel had turned from God's ways as they turned to their own ways of iniquity—living contrary to God's ways—and were filled with sin, where sin is defined spiritually as "the transgression of God's law" (1 John 3:4).

Another account concerns the archangel Lucifer and what he did to become known as Satan. God had created the angels to be free moral agents, and therefore, able to make decisions and choices on their own. Otherwise, they would have only been robotic in nature and programmed similar to that of the animal kingdom that functions on instinct and not by individual thought and reasoning. This is also how God created mankind to be, as free moral agents with the ability to think and reason.

However, with the angelic creation, the mind that God gave them was one that was filled with knowledge and understanding of only God's ways. This was all they knew and all that they experienced in life around them until Lucifer, and others who followed his reasoning, began to make choices in life that were contrary to the ways of God.

In an account of what Lucifer did, it reveals to us how those wrong choices affected his very mind, corrupting it. (And so this is quoting Ezekiel 28:14.) "You were the anointed cherub that covers... and I had set you so. You were upon the holy mountain of God [in the upper administration of God's government]. You have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire [among those throughout the angelic realm]. You were perfect in 'your ways' [because at this time, those ways were in unity and harmony with God] from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you."

And then verse 17 is quoted:

"Your heart was lifted up [pride, haughtiness] because of your beauty [in the excellence and power that God had created in him]. You have 'corrupted' your wisdom by reason of your brightness" (Ez. 28:17).

So it goes on to explain here, part of what we've already covered here, but we're focusing in on this part that leads up to and gives better understanding of what happened in the days of Noah. It states here:

Lucifer began to be lifted up in self-importance...

What a horrible thing when that happens to people... when it happens to people, when they begin to be lifted up in self-importance. And I think of what's happened since 2008 and many of the ordinations and things that took place. Too often it's a trap. You have to be careful. Too many fell into that and had to fight a fight. And most all fought it very well, but there are those who didn't as well. Going on:

Lucifer began to be lifted up in self-importance and began to view his way of thinking and ideas above that of God. He then began to live contrary to God's ways as he turned to his own. God told him

that by thinking in such a manner and acting upon such choices, to live differently than God's one true way of life, he had "corrupted" his very mind and thinking, which was the result of sin.

With more insight into the use of the word "corrupt," it is easier to better understand what God addressed concerning those living in Noah's day. This word implies a state of mind and thinking that is not concerned with God's ways but its own ways, which results in sin. This is important to understand because this is exactly where the world is once again in our time.

And so we can go through stories like this, and because we've heard it before it can be like, "Oh, ho hum." You know, it should never be that way because God continues to build upon these things and give us greater and greater understanding. And we should have a greater understanding of those things that are taking place in the world now because we understand what happened in times past. And we recognize, then, a pattern in those things that God has given for us to learn and grow in. So it goes on here, Genesis 6:5 is then quoted:

"And the Eternal saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts in his heart [the intent, purpose, desire, and thinking] was daily on evil" (Gen. 6:7).

And so again, showing the thinking that was taking place during the time of Noah and where people's minds were. And I think of the world today and how bad it's gotten. And people don't know how bad things are. People don't grasp and comprehend what technology has done and what it's doing to their children and to minds at a very young age and leading people off faster in wrong directions. Actually working in the mind in such a way to accelerate something that took hundreds of years in the days of Noah, but now happening much, much more quickly, the mind becoming corrupted. So the book goes on:

Because of mankind's state of corruption as a result of it drifting so very far from God's ways and becoming so vile, He responded, "I will destroy mankind whom I have created from the face of the earth..." (Gen. 6:7).

And when we really understand all of this and grasp it in the great picture that God has given to us in the last few years even more so, the reason, in order to save many more and bring about a process that ends something, that if He didn't stop it far fewer would have the ability to ever be saved, to ever have the process reversed in their mind and the corruption in the mind.

"But Noah found grace [favor] in the eyes of the Eternal" (Gen.6:8).

Goes on to say here:

This means that there was only one person on earth at that time who was of a right heart and mind toward God, with whom God could work and lead in His ways. He was literally the last one who was of a true mind and of a willing spirit to follow God. Although Noah was a servant of God and the only one who would yield to Him, God extended favor (grace) to his immediate family to the degree that

they would be saved from death and delivered to the other side of the flood. It was through this that God would begin to have mankind repopulate the earth.

It is further recorded, "The earth was also 'corrupt'...."

So this is also quoting Genesis 6:11-13 in the book:

"The earth was also 'corrupt' before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

Pretty good description of society today, of what's happening more and more and more, very quickly so. Going on:

God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was "corrupt," for all flesh had "corrupted" his way upon the earth. So God said unto Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them from the earth" (Gen. 6:11-13).

And so going on in the book it says:

As explained earlier, the word "corrupt" used here and throughout scripture is one that implies the state of mind and thinking of those who had, as it says here of mankind, "corrupted his ways upon the earth." People were not concerned with living God's way, but only their own way, which means they walked contrary to God's way, which is to live in sin.

It's a spirit of deep rebellion through the corruption of the mind. And this world today, *horrible* where it is! *Horrible* where the state of mankind and the mind of mankind is today!

The first rebellion, Lucifer who became Satan, and a third of the angels who followed him, and then mankind. God created different beings, made of physical elements, and *they* rebelled very quickly against God. And then through time different ones continued, mankind became more and more selfish and lived long lives, hundreds of years, and the corruption of the mind, because of the lifespan being so long was incredible! The corruption, because people could live for so long, was deep, incredibly deep in the human mind. And so God brought it to an end and made the lifespan then, from that time forward, much smaller.

Now, that was for us to learn from. That was for us to learn from what had happened and why it happened, and candidly, God has just began to reveal some of those things now at the end of an age at this end-time because people haven't known this before. People have not known this before! The Church has not known these things before! So, does that make us special? No. But we are especially blessed because God is giving it to us now for a purpose because we're at the end of an age. It's about His Kingdom that's about to be established, and God is giving much understanding and much insight into things to help prepare a new age and people going into a millennial period of time when Jesus Christ is going to reign on the earth. So God is revealing more and more to bring mankind up to date so that people can know and understand why

everything has happened the way it has over the past 6,000 years, so they can better understand where they are now once the Millennium is established.

And so we come then to the next great example of rebellion and the rejection of God's government, which was with the physical nation of Israel. It began as soon as God led the children of Israel out of Egypt.

So here we come to another great moment in time, through time, after many generations here now since the time of the flood. I think of Abraham - was around 10 generations from Noah. And from that point on, then, Abraham, and God began to work with him and to begin to plan and prepare a nation of people. And so after a long period, after that family, the descendants were taken into Egypt, or had gone down into Egypt, then they were there for a long period of time. And it came to a point once they had several million people - we don't know how many they had altogether, candidly, whether it was a couple of million (some have guesstimated that maybe 6 million total left Egypt at that time, counting the Israelites and others who chose to go with them) - we really don't know. But whatever the number was, very large and most certainly 2 million and above. So whatever the number was all those who began to leave Egypt, God brought them out of Egypt and began to work with a nation of people. A nation! An entire nation of people. A special relationship with a nation of people. But they were carnal.

That's why Pentecost is so important. To understand what happened on Pentecost when God gave the 10 Commandments and the great lesson we're taught year by year by year concerning Pentecost and what happened when God gave the 10 Commandments. They were given the physical law of how they should live toward one another and toward God in a relationship, in relationships, *but* they weren't able to keep it because of their carnal human nature. They rebelled. They rebelled. They rebelled. They continually rebelled. That's their history, one of great rebellion over and over and over again, rebelling against God, sinning against God, rebelling against God's government.

They didn't even want God's government when it came time for God to establish even stronger government over the nation of Israel. They wanted a king like all the other nations. They didn't want God's government. They didn't want a high priest to lead them. They didn't want any prophets to lead them. Whatever it might be that God would establish and give to them, they didn't want it. They didn't want God's government. They wanted their own. They wanted to be more like the world around them. Because why? Well, because they didn't really want God's laws. They wanted to be able to decide for themselves what laws they would have and what laws they didn't want to have, and very much like Israel today, all the confusion and all the fighting as to what mankind wants to have rule them.

And so again, the history of Israel, one of rebellion over and over again, God working with an entire nation of people.

Let's notice Exodus 14:28. Amazing here, and it's not amazing, because it's just carnal human nature. But the Israelites had just crossed the Red Sea and the Egyptians had pursued them. And starting here in **Exodus 14:28**, and it says, **And the waters returned**, after, you know, the Egyptians they were, and Pharaoh and his army, they were pursuing them, coming across the Red Sea when the waters, both sides there, and they still tried to go on the same path that the Israelites had gone across and all of a sudden, it says, **And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall for them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Eternal saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.** What an incredible thing they witnessed.

And Israel saw that great work which the Eternal did upon the Egyptians. You know, destroy an entire... not only that, but this goes all the way back, of all the things that happened in Egypt before they were able to leave, that enabled them to leave, and then even Pharaoh and his army coming after them and God destroying them in the Red Sea. And they saw all this. And they saw the end of it all with all the dead bodies that had washed up upon the seashore there, upon the Red Sea. ...and the people feared the Eternal, and they believed the Eternal. Now that should have caused fear, also the things that were there to deliver them, to bring them to that point. And though they experienced something so *extraordinary*, something that no other human beings have ever experienced like this to this degree by any measure - something the Great God had done for them in delivering an entire nation of people, whatever it was 2, 2½, 4, whatever it was million people out of Egypt. What a sight! What an incredible thing! And then for God to finally destroy the rest of those who pursued them. They were freed from Egypt. And they saw this, and it says, **and they feared the Eternal**. Yeah, that would cause some fear. Not long lived, and that's the problem. Not too long lived. It doesn't take long. It doesn't take long to begin to think in a different manner, for whatever it is the human mind can conjure up and familiarity begins to breed contempt. ...and the people feared the Eternal and they believed the Eternal and His servant Moses. Again, for a little while. Didn't last too long. Because, just as Pentecost shows, they were given the 10 Commandments, but they didn't have the ability to keep it. It takes the power of God. It takes God's holy spirit for a human being with selfish carnal human nature to turn from rebellion, to turn to God, to turn to unity and oneness, to have that desire and to pursue it and to begin to bring the carnal human mind into subjection to the laws of God, to be able to live by, to obey the laws of God. You can't do it on your own. You have to have God's spirit, otherwise, the history of mankind is, there is always rebellion. And the examples here of the closest relationships - Adam and Eve, the time of Noah and what had happened to mankind after that, but what happened to the rest of his family who never turned to Him. And then all the way down to a nation of people, the Israelites.

Exodus 15:1—Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Eternal, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the Eternal. There was great jubilation. To have such fear that

you were going to be destroyed by Pharaoh and his army. To know that if he caught you he wasn't going to take you back, he was going to kill, and kill a lot. And they feared that. They had a great fear of that. And then to see that God intervened for them to save them? And so they were jubilant. They were excited. They were rejoicing. They broke into song and they began to sing certain things. And so it says, **I will sing unto the Eternal, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea. The Eternal is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Eternal is a man of war: the Eternal is His name.**

Your right hand, O Eternal, has become glorious in power: Your right hand, O Eternal, has dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Your excellency you have overthrown those who rose up against You. They saw something. They witnessed something so great, so incredible.

Verse 11—Who is like You, O Eternal, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out Your right hand, the earth swallowed them. So this was an incredible time for them. This was an *incredible* time for them. So moved to sing about the glory of God, to sing praises about what He had done in delivering them. They knew they had been delivered!

Verse 13—You in Your mercy have led forth the people *which* You have redeemed. You have guided *them* in Your strength unto Your holy habitation. The people shall hear, *and* be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. And so they knew the Great God was with them. They saw the evidence and they said, "Now fear will fall upon the other nations."

Verse 22—So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. Just three days later. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore, the name of it is called Marah, meaning "bitter." And the people murmured against Moses, saying, **What shall we drink? It was Moses's fault. "Look what you've done. Look where you've led us." God wasn't in the picture even now, because if you can shift everything away from thinking about this being of God and justifying certain things in your mind, then God wouldn't have led us here, so it's that Moses. "Moses has brought us out here. He doesn't know where he's taking us. He doesn't know where he is leading us. He can't take care of us. He has a great responsibility upon him and he's not doing it." "So they murmured against Moses, saying, **What shall we drink?**" "How are you going to solve this one, Moses?"**

Exodus 16:1—And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. So this was one month after beginning their journeying out of Egypt. This says that this was on the 15th, and they just observed the Passover on the 14th the month before there. And in the 15th there, talking about

that day that they began their journey. And so again here, **And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.** So murmuring again here. It doesn't take long. Less than... Just right at a month! And they saw deliverance within that month. They came through the Red Sea at the beginning of that month. They saw what God had done to intervene for them.

And the children of Israel (verse 3) said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Eternal in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots... In other words, they had plenty of meat to eat. That's what they're saying. **...and when we did eat bread to the full; for you have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill the whole assembly with hunger.** Now this is *incredible* rebellion! Incredible, sick attitudes. But attitudes we need to learn from, because how much worse when given of God's spirit that attitudes can exist against those whom God has given to lead and guide and direct His people, or toward even God in feeling certain ways toward God, about whether God's blessing them and helping them and not hearing them and so forth. So incredible lessons that can be learned about a physical people who rebelled over and over and over through time.

So again, the whole history involves rebellion after rebellion against God and against His prophets. It's just the way it was. And so, indeed, the nation of Israel rejected God from the very beginning.

Turn over to **Exodus 20:1**. Here they're at Mount Sinai, and here it is, the matter I mentioned earlier, a time when God's going to give them a law, a codified law that they're told that they should live by. **And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Eternal your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods, Elohim, no other God Family, before Me.**

Verse 18. It goes on to say here, then, after all this law was given: **And all the people saw the thundering, and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they moved away from it, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, You speak with us, and we will hear: but do not let God speak to us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Don't fear. For God has come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, so that you do not sin.** In other words, this is a good thing for you to have fear. It's a good thing for you to be fearful, so that you don't sin. But that's a thing about human nature, it doesn't want to be of an attitude of mind of having to fear anything. It wants to be free from that. And if that means to disobey, if that means to rebel in order to deal with any potential fear, because there is something healthy about a fear, a fear to do wrong, a fear to do sin against the Great God. And if people can do something to their conscience to such an extent that they no longer fear, well, that's where rebellion comes in. It really does.

I think of all the things that have happened in the Church. I think of the things just in the short period of time here, not even just starting in 2008, but all the way up to 2012 and once we

entered into the sixth cycle of that 1260 day end-time prophetic period that was a matter of the measuring of the temple. And I think of the different ministers who were cleansed from the temple very quickly so - and all a matter of horrible, *unthinkable* rebellion! After all that they had been given! It is *astounding* to witness such things. We can read through the story of Moses here and the children of Israel and grasp a whole lot better when individuals don't have God's spirit dwelling in them - and therein is a great lesson and that's why it's there - but we are able to see that very clearly and understand it. It becomes more understandable how they could be so unthankful and of such attitudes to find fault with God and to find fault with God's leaders, Moses and Aaron, and to do those things in the very beginning very quickly over and over. It was just their nature. But to have God's spirit, to be in the Church, well, that's incredible!

The history of Israel was one of constantly rejecting the Government of God to rule over them. And again, only a few leaders were worked with by God, and the others were allowed to go their own course by their own choice, which was always a rejection of God's government. And once they became a nation, the very first king, again, Saul, was lifted up with pride and rejected God. And the story of rejection continued through the overwhelming majority of the kings, all of them, basically, over all Israel, but back and forth of those over Judah.

So again, the example of Satan, Adam and Eve, those in Noah's day, what happened to mankind after a time, totally forgetting God and becoming very evil and filled with incredible corruption. The rebellion was so great on the earth. Today the spirit of rebellion is so incredibly great on this earth. Everybody has the best idea of how to rule, how to govern. Just look at all the politics right now, and things that goes on, and all the fighting. I mean, no one agreeing, even with the people's own parties, and all the bickering and fighting and craziness that's going on. It's a spirit of rebellion. It's a spirit of corruption. That's how far we have come. That's where we are - "As in the days of Noah." And look at society then and all the things that are crumbling within society because of that same mind. There is no fear of God. There is no fear in mankind. Today the corruption is far, far greater than what it was 10, what it was 20, especially 20 years ago, 30 years ago. But each decade that goes by it just becomes less and less and now we are where we are, "As in the days of Noah."

So, these are all the rebellions that Mr. Armstrong spoke so often about, primarily that of Satan, and primarily that of Israel, and talking about some of those kinds of things that happened through time, and Adam and Eve, of course. So he talked about the various rebellions there showing a spirit and an attitude and magnified those things to the Church so that we could grasp and understand how evil rebellion is, and oftentimes concerning the nation of Israel and what they were like. And so he spoke often of those things, and for great reason. Because we have to come to understand this matter of rebellion, this matter of raising ourselves up to ever speak against, to ever work against, to ever fail to support and back what God is doing. Because when we fail to do that, when we find fault in it, when we think something else is better, when we pursue something different, then we are in a deep spirit of rebellion. And the reality is God will

take care of that, especially within the Church. I have seen that to be exceedingly true, powerfully true since I have been in God's Church.

There was one thing that Mr. Armstrong could never talk about, which is the greatest example of rebellion of mankind. You know what that is. You *should* know what that is, if you don't. The one that comes next - the greatest rebellion of all. It is one of the most powerful lessons yet about rebellion and about *why* God is establishing Elohim to rule, to govern. It is the Kingdom of God that is to reign and to rule, not mankind. So this great rebellion is one that some of us have witnessed in this end-time era of mankind's self-rule. You have lived through a time, and some of us have literally experienced it head on. Some of you have experienced the aftermath of it and you know of it. *But it the greatest lesson of rebellion and worthy to be repeated over and over and over again*, and candidly, in the Millennium will be. It will be. It will be spoken of from time to time - and maybe oftentimes at the Feast of Tabernacles because of the great lessons it contains.

And so this great rebellion, it happened, of all things, *IN God's Church*, and it happened among those who had received the begettal of God's holy spirit to live and dwell within them to transform them into Elohim. You're not there until you're there. You're ever learning until you're there. You're ever fighting until you're there. It isn't there until you're changed from mortal, from physical, I should say in this case, from physical to spirit, mortal to immortal, yes.

Let's notice this story again, one that we know well, but one that should be repeated over and over again. It is an example that is so profound. It is so incredible what we have witnessed! It is so incredible what we have seen, what we have witnessed in the end-time concerning those who have had the spirit begettal from God Almighty, for Him and His Son to live and dwell, and then to have such rebellion! It is the greatest rebellion that has ever taken place in God's Church - and massively so! Not just a rebellion, but a *massive* rebellion! And it is truly astounding, and it *is* the greatest lesson ever of rebellion.

It is *greater* than that of Lucifer and what happened to him. Because for Lucifer it was never intended that he could become a part of Elohim, that he could become impregnated with God's spirit, to become a son of God by inheritance, as we read earlier in another sermon in Hebrews there when it talks about the angelic realm. Mankind, the purpose for mankind, and the purpose for those who would be called into the Church, to be able to be begotten of the very spirit of God in order to, in time, be born into Elohim, and to have rebellion at that level? That is truly astounding. And if you hadn't experienced, or known of the great Apostasy, you wouldn't be able to grasp this that happened. We used to talk about a falling away. We knew there was going to be an Apostasy, but we had no idea how bad it would be! We had *no idea* the *levels* of rebellion that would take place and how *far* people would really go - to actually go back and embrace doctrines in the Protestant world.

That is astounding, that a human being with the impregnation of God's spirit, after having been in the Church, in many cases, for decades, and even trained at Ambassador College and even teaching Sabbath by Sabbath in church areas, as it happened to ministers, to come to a point where they would turn away from the truth, the truth that they had lived longer than they had lived in a Protestant world? To turn that way? That is a most *dumbfounding rebellion ever recorded* because they all had the impregnation of God's spirit in their mind that enables a unity and a oneness with God that is unique to mankind when he's begotten of God's holy spirit.

And so the story is in **2 Thessalonians 2:1**, a story that the scattered Church doesn't understand. So don't become or don't come to a point where this doesn't stir your thinking or it doesn't help you to see and be moved by and even sobered by what human beings are capable of. Don't ever let it get to a point where this just becomes a story that is sometimes read in the Bible, as happens when people read about Noah or some of the various individuals throughout time in stories about their lives that are written throughout the Old Testament. This is a story, alright, but it is most profound in what it teaches.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ... See, this is clear to you, this is awesomely clear to me, that it's talking about a specific period of time about "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." We know when that is. But there are tens of thousands who have never seen this yet, who were in the Church a lot longer than most of you ever were. **Now I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.** See, that meant a lot to them because there are other scriptures they're familiar with. There are scriptures they grasped and understand what that means, when the primary focus for the Church was a matter of recognizing that there is going to be a great resurrection of those who are dead, and at the end those who are still alive who are going to be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" whatever that might mean. They didn't understand the vastness of time that was going to be there. But still, that was a very matter of their focus, and they had been taught some of these things to realize that there are some that already had died and they would be in a resurrection at some point. And they looked forward to that time. And to understand there would be some who would be alive whenever this would take place, whenever this "gathering together unto him" would take place. They didn't understand about the 144,000 yet. It hadn't even been written yet! That number hadn't even been given yet by John, hadn't been recorded yet. They didn't know that when Paul was writing this to the Thessalonians. And so they did understand that there was going to be "a gathering together unto him" when he returns.

That you do not become soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as the day of Christ is at hand. Don't let anyone come along and fool you or persuade you of something different or lead you in a wrong direction, of something that isn't true. Because you're going to be able to see it. You're going to be able to know this, about the day of Christ, about his coming when it's time. There are things you're going to see and you're going to be prepared for. You're going to know it, that you're there, that this is your time.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first. The word "apostasy," "to forsake," "to depart." I still can't help but think of what it was like way before the Apostasy when some ministers would give sermons and cover these verses. And we heard it in the Church. We knew that in the end-time there would come a falling away - we talked about it - and at the time of Christ's coming, just before he would come, that there would be a falling away. Because it would be a great sign that indeed he is coming, this is the time of his coming. And we have lived through that. But we had *no idea* of what this was going to be like. There would be a lot of people who would go by the wayside, yes. We never grasped... we didn't begin to grasp how many! We just knew it was going to be great, as it talks about here, "there would come a falling away," and we knew it was going to be a good size, but nothing of the size that it actually was. Maybe a few thousand. But tens of thousands? As a matter of fact, most of the Church? No, that didn't cross our minds at all. We had *no* comprehension of something like that. It just, it couldn't enter the mind. It's too far out there. It was seemingly... we wouldn't even have considered. Anybody who would have mentioned something like that, it wouldn't have been, probably, received too well, because how could that happen? How could something like that happen to people begotten of God's holy spirit? To so many? It just couldn't happen! And we didn't, we couldn't grasp how great, how massive this would be.

So you live at a very unique time. You know what these verses are about. But tens of thousands who were in the Church a lot longer than you still don't know this. How do you know it? How do you know it? Did you figure it out? When you read it, did you figure it out? Or were you told it in detail what it meant, and then all of a sudden you could "see" it, whenever it was that you read it, whenever it was that you heard it and you just knew it was true. Well, that's from God. That's not of you. We should never take anything to ourselves like that. It's of God. God gives us the ability to "see." Because, you know, if you don't have it, you just don't have it. If you can't see it, you can't see it. And there are people who have been a part of a remnant who have gone right back out who don't understand these things.

And so it goes on to say here, again, reading in **verse 2—That you do not be soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away, an apostasy, first, and that **man of sin** be revealed, the **son of perdition**.** I know we didn't grasp that one. We didn't understand that because that was just something that wasn't even contemplated as being a possibility within the Church. That was something that was looked upon as being in the world, an antichrist - the Pope, or whatever it might be, a great false religious leader, a man of sin, a son of perdition that could deceive God's people, that *would* deceive some of God's people. To think that was somebody within the Church? Never! Never! Never! Never! Couldn't cross the mind! And even after it happened, to even say it and to say who it was was difficult. And it was not accepted except by those that God began to open their minds.

There were some. There were some who thought that this might have been fulfilled, even on a physical plane, as they looked at it for what it said physically. There was one group that left very early on and followed, supposedly, a "prophet" at that particular time. And anyway, it was just something that, as a whole, most just... the vast majority couldn't even begin to contemplate. And then that individual, once Mr. Tkach died, began to think that it had to be his son that had to fulfill that. So, again, just looking at it on a physical plane, because of the evidence of what was there, at least drew a type of conclusion of something that should have been evident to all, but it just wasn't. It was so far removed from thinking.

Verse 4—Who opposes, in other words, means "to stand against, to be adversarial," a real spirit of rebellion, in other words. **Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God.** Well, that surely couldn't be anybody in the Church?! That surely couldn't happen to someone in the Church, could it? Incredible! That's why people find it so hard to acknowledge, to accept. That's why it's hard for people to even accept that there's been a great falling away yet, even though their very lives are the evidence of it. Astounding even on a physical plane that this can't be seen, let alone in the truth of the spiritual plane from God. ...**that exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.** So just exactly as Satan did in his rebellion, just exactly! Their minds and their choices in life, and it doesn't matter... see, the lesson is he was an angelic being. And within mankind then, when mankind came along and Adam and Eve, and there are people who find it hard to believe sometimes this happened. I've heard of conversations of people talking and they just, "How could they have done that when they were made, supposedly, this neutral thing," they used to talk about, and, "How could they have started to sin?" Well, duh! But especially now, the tough one *is* when someone is begotten of God's spirit. And therein is the lesson: just because someone is impregnated with God's spirit doesn't mean they can't rebel. On the contrary, *most* who have been called have rebelled. *Most* who have been called into the Church have rebelled. Far more who have had opportunity to be a part with the remnant have rebelled. Far more!

So those things are sobering and they are great lessons about the spirit of rebellion and what human beings *with* God's spirit are capable of. Not to be lifted up in pride and thinking that we're good and great, have great ability, because we don't. *God* is great, and His power is what we have to have in our lives to come through these things, to be successful in continuing going forward. That's why I've continually talked about the need to fight, to fight for this way of life.

So again, **and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sits in the temple of God.** Well, this is exactly what Satan wanted, isn't it? And so God's showing here, "Look what happened to the Church!" Not to a spirit being who rebelled, but to individuals who were given the impregnation of God's holy spirit. "Sitting in the temple of God." To have that position. So, **he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself**, this word, "intent" in Greek, means "to display himself, or to declare himself," by what he was doing. To have the audacity to change laws? To turn things totally around in some of the most basic laws of God

concerning that which is stated very clearly even in the 10 Commandments? So, indeed, to display himself, to indeed declare himself through his actions who he was. He made himself as God, as no other ever has, in that respect! Incredible! ...**showing himself that he is God.**

Do you not remember, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now you know what withholds... I never get tired of reading these things and being reminded of who we are, of where we are, of what we have experienced, and of what we have learned, and these things, indeed, because we know them, because we see them, because they are so clear, how blessed are we to see them and to know them and to be sobered by them, and to recognize the battle that's before us, and to be moved and motivated to have a greater desire of unity and oneness with God. To *never* rebel. To *never* question. To *never* fight against God and His way of life, His government over our lives and how He works to lead, guide, and direct us. And if we understand these things, happy are we, indeed. **And now you now what withholds**, the Greek literally means "to hold back," holds back, **that he might be revealed in his time.** Holds back what? Well, it's from the very beginning of the verses - the coming of Jesus Christ.

He cannot return, he would not return until this began to happen. It was a sign for God's Church that *now... now* nothing is holding back Jesus Christ's return. It is started. It has started. It is starting. Now, we have not known and grasped fully what that meant, but we understand it more now, and we see it even in the last chapter of this book. An incredible process of time and order and counting of things that began, of things that have taken place since that day, even to the very day of his death, even to the very time of the establishment of the Church and things that have gone on, things that have worked out in incredible ways as a matter of timing of events. And we're going to find out more later on. It's far more punctual, far more to the point than we even know now, because it hasn't all been revealed to us yet.

And now you know what withholds, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work. You know, this matter of something that John addressed later on about antichrist's, the spirit, the attitude. They had people leaving the Church. They had ministers that had to be put out of the Church. They had situations happening toward the beginning. They began to experience that within the Church. They began to experience this matter of "many are called and few are chosen." They began to see people go by the wayside. They began to see people turn from God, to return to the world, to rebel against God, against God's government. And so they had those things happening, those who began to work *against* Christ because of sin, because of rebellion, because of turning away from God. And so John addressed those things, obviously, even later on. Said, "there are *many* antichrists." And so even Paul is addressing here that **the mystery of iniquity is already at work.** It's a spirit. It's an attitude that is working, but it wasn't time yet for the end. It wasn't time yet for Christ's coming. It wasn't time yet for *this* specific prophesy to be fulfilled, of a great Apostasy, of a falling away that would take place. And so it says here, **only he who now lets**, this word "lets" is that same word translated as "withholds," meaning "to hold back." ... **he who now withholds will, in**

essence, **until he is taken out of the way.** Who was taken out of the way? The man of sin, the son of perdition.

You know, there's great lesson in that of and by itself. God will deal with, God will take care of sin in the Body of Christ. He will take care of it. Now, He does so through administration in the Church, that has been my greatest experience through time, or if it comes to a point in time, as we have experienced as a matter of just simply being totally spewed out and separated from the Church, from God. And that took place. But God's purpose and intent was that the Church would continue on. It would be raised up. There would be a remnant. It would be small - designed and purposed that it would be small for a great purpose.

And so again here, these things that had to take place within the Church, "until that wicked," until the man of sin is taken out of the way. So these things were to continue on, and would be held back, until he was taken out of the way. And you know, God took him out of the way. And God has continued, even in the cleansing of the temple and the measuring of the temple, if you will. There's been a measuring. And that measuring, again, is positive and negative. Those who would be measured to be fit into place, to be worked with as hewn stone, as it talks about concerning Zerubbabel and the plummet, and the ability to mold and fashion and to work with those who respond and yield to what God is giving to them, to the Church. And they embrace those things and desire those things and seek to make changes by the things that God has given.

And we have seen that, even preceding here toward the Feast here and the Holy Days. Basically, there has been quite a bit of correction that God has given to us to sober us, to stir us up, to help light a fire, as it were, in our lives, to stir us up with greater fire and zeal, to "get behind this thing," to realize there's a great work in front of us right now. And that's where we are, we're at the door of that right now and getting ready to walk through. The great purpose of the remnant Church and why we exist, why we're here before Christ actually returns, certain things that God is going to fulfill and accomplish written in prophecy for this end-time that we are all blessed to share in, to be a part of. That's incredible! That's exciting to understand, it really is. And so that's who we are. That's how we are so blessed. And so we've gone through things to help us to be stirred up, to be moved and motivated.

I've had a lot of good comments from people about.... I've seen and had comments from people and things been written about how people have repented, they're repenting of certain things that they're doing and what they've done to others, and striving to make changes and striving to stir up their lives and asking God to stir them up and not to be lethargic in nature, not to be lukewarm, not to take things for granted. That's where we are. We have to light a fire! A zeal! A fire of zeal and enthusiasm for God's way of life.

Now, the lighting of the fire you can strive to do and work to do by how you respond to God and how you cry out to God, but the power and the ability to do all this has to come from God. And God *will* stir you up in greater spirit as He is doing right now and has been doing within the

Church. People are becoming stronger. They're responding. There are still things that people need to clear up and take care of in their life and get better focused, but that's going to be an ongoing process here over this next year, of things we're going to keep working on in our own lives.

Going on then, **Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth**, indeed, taken out of the way to learn once and for all that there is a countdown, that we're living in a period of a countdown. We learned that period very quickly. We learned, we came to a point in time where we saw a period of 280 days, 40 Sabbaths. And in time God began to add more and more to our understanding of a countdown and we realized it had begun. It began with the Apostasy. And God revealed who this man of sin was by taking him out of the way, by "consuming with the spirit of His mouth." In other words, He saw to it. It wasn't a natural, physical illness. It wasn't something that was done by accident, that was just accidentally happened. 40. 40 (judgment) X 7 (seven days of the week); the Sabbath when the rebellion took place, when the great Apostasy took place, and exactly 40 Sabbaths later? Not by chance! Not by some freak health issue in life that just happened to come to the point in time to that exact day and to the very *hour* of the day when that sermon was given, when he said the Sabbath is done away - that exactly to the same hour he died. When God said, made it clear that, no, His laws are not being done away with.

So God made it clear He did this. **...and shall destroy with the brightness** (appearance, as it is) **of his coming**. Revealing his coming. That's what the first verses here are all about. "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and being gathered together unto him...and not to be soon shaken by the day of Christ," the time period. It's all about the time period of his coming.

Verse 9—Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. I remember speaking on this down in Georgia when I was covering this, in a two part series I believe it was, talking about "power, signs, and lying wonders," and showing what Satan had done and showing how he was behind all this and that individuals were yielding themselves to him, and that this individual yielded himself to him, bowed down before him, as it were, spiritually on a spiritual plane and became "the man of sin," the "son of perdition," and had a great rebellion that was worse, that was worse than even that of Lucifer's in that respect on a spiritual plane.

Verse 10—And with all deceivableness and unrighteousness in them who perish, "are perishing," **because they received not the agape** (agape, agape, ever how you want to pronounce it), **of the truth...** And so this was what was taking place in the Church, even as it talks about in Matthew 24, "the love of many waxing cold" through time. And that was taking place. Love, how we treat one another, this is one of the most important things to learn in relationships, in fellowship, is that we love one another. *We are a family!* And it goes back to this matter of how we love and to love the truth, the truth that God gives to us, the truth of a way of life to live. And the greatest of that truth is about how we live toward one another and toward

God in obedience to His way of life because we love His laws, because we love what it produces in life, because we "see" what's right, because we "see" what it produces and we want that in our life. And so again here, "They received not the love of the truth."

And so, indeed, it's about relationships. It's about how we live. It's about how we live towards God - things like the Sabbath, the Holy Days and so forth, and on it goes through all of God's law and God's way. But all of the truths that God gives - and I think of the 18 that God restored through Mr. Armstrong - and those things began to disappear. Those things began to go by the wayside. "That they might be saved." So again, it takes God's love, because this is about God's love, to even love what He gives to us. All the truth that He gives to us, we can't love it without His help. You don't just naturally love the truth. You don't just naturally love the things that God reveals. It isn't natural in the human mind. Look at your relatives. Look at people at work. Look at others around you. Look at people who have left, who cut themselves off from God's spirit. It takes God's spirit to think like this, to live like this, to love like this, as it says here, **that they might be saved.**

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion. That's a scary thing. It's a scary thing to rebel against God. It's a scary thing to begin to talk against God, to begin to talk against God's servants. I'll tell you what, I have seen a lot of things through time, but I have seen God deal with that powerfully, *powerfully*. If individuals speak against God's servants, you know, it says it's just like God taking that personally. And He takes care of those things. He will see to it that there are things that are just taken care of. It's a fearful thing to do something like that; it really is, because it's speaking against God in a very powerful way, in a very direct way that sometimes people just don't get.

And so, **for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.** You talk about a strong delusion, "power, signs, and lying wonders," that took place within the Church and the power that was there, as it talks about, even Satan being behind it, the power to deceive. And so God allowed it, sending them strong delusion because they didn't have a love of the truth, they didn't have that desire, they didn't have that zeal and that stirring up within them to want to *fight* for this way of life, to *love* what God is offering to us and to continue at the fight. It is a constant, continual fight in life because it's a matter of a love for the truth, of God's way.

And so it says here, again, that they shall be sent **strong delusion that they should believe a lie.** That's why so many, a third of the Church, believed a lie, almost, as it were, overnight. And another third, well, they believed a lie too, that this can't be God's Church because this can't happen in God's Church. They believed a lie, because that's not true. It can happen in God's Church. **That they all might be,** the word, it's "damned" here, but it's a matter of being **judged** or brought into judgment. There is judgment, very powerfully so, that comes as a result of rebellion. **...who believed not the truth.** So if anyone leaves the truth, once they believe it, once they "see" it and they get to the point where they don't love it and get to a point where they no longer believe it, well, they're brought into great judgment all right. For some it will be that

they won't even be given opportunity to live into the Millennium - for a lot. And God's been very merciful, however, and given opportunity. But, you know, just because 63,000 are given that opportunity, look what happened to all who have been given opportunity to become a part of the remnant. People don't always choose it. And not all the 63,000, I believe, will choose. I believe that they won't, in other words, choose to receive the truth about God's remnant Church, the truth about Jesus Christ not eternally existing, the truth that we had an Apostasy, the truth that God has two prophets of a small group, of one who went to prison. They just can't believe that, because, you see, he deserved that. There's no other way he could have gone there if he didn't deserve it. That's just the way people think, human beings. That's the way it was when Jesus Christ was on the stake, on the pole there and people wagged their heads. It's like, "He's up there with those two thieves. Well, he deserved it, didn't he? I mean, he wouldn't be up there if he didn't deserve it." Amazing how human beings think.

...that they all might be judged who believed not the truth; but had pleasure in unrighteousness, in their own way, in some other way, but it wasn't God's. Had pleasure in something else. Had pleasure in jealousy. Had pleasure in envy. Had pleasure in finding fault with others so that they could raise themselves up and justify why they could leave the Church and go do something else and have their own little group, whatever it might be. They rebelled against God.

So that which has happened to the Church is indeed one of the most hideous rejections of God's government ever – *the greatest rebellion ever* among mankind. And I believe *the greatest rebellion* against God, in a more personal and direct manner than any other rebellion that's ever taken place - even above that of the angelic realm - because these had the impregnation of God's very holy spirit. And so again, the greatest rebellion ever among mankind, certainly. And all because the same evil spirit that was in Lucifer also entered into those of the end-time Church. It is a spirit and an attitude of pride. That's why, brethren, we really need to hate pride. We need to hate pride in ourselves. We need to be able to spot it quickly when it raises its ugly head because it is a great evil. God made point in saying that rebellions are the sin of witchcraft. That's pretty bad. Witchcraft. It is a spirit and attitude of pride that produces rebellion. That's why it's so dangerous. That's why it's so evil. And the more we hate it, the more we loathe it, the more we will fight against it. The more we will seek to spot it. The more we'll begin to even recognize it in our own lives and constantly fight that battle, and to never let it be there. To constantly make certain that we love God's way, we love unity and oneness with God, we embrace that and we want to fight anything that would fight against it, that would fight against God, that would be against Christ, anti-Christ.

So, we have focused on the great rebellions of history. And the lessons from these should be so very deeply engrained in our minds, in our being - *deeply* engraved. However, even in all this, the battle against rebellion is never over. There are still some who will rebel – in God's own Church – before Christ returns. Then, even after he returns, human nature is so contrary to the ways of

God that there will be people throughout the Millennium who will rebel against God and choose their own ways. That is astounding, but it's the truth!

Then even during the hundred years there will be those who will still reject God's government and rebel. So the outline of the prayer Jesus gave will be with mankind until the end of it all "Our Father, who is in heaven, *Your* Kingdom come." And so it's a matter of understanding God's government and desire for it. Yet, we are indeed entering a glorious time when man will begin to embrace God's government on a worldwide scale. Thank God that the rejection of His government is being reversed in such a powerful way so that Elohim will become so very great.