

A Government Always Resisted

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Every government of every nation on earth is corrupted. It's just the way they are. That's why I try to encourage people don't take sides, don't get into political arguments or debate about what one person is doing, saying, or not saying. Just understand that God is working with the entire process. Okay? There are things He's allowing. There are things He's directly working with, with leaders around the world, and we need to understand that. God is in control. He allows certain things to take place, especially in this time period more than any other that's ever gone before us.

There are things that God is doing sometimes to raise up certain individuals to do a job. Because of their personality maybe some have been prepared for that most of their life. That's how God works. Whether it be in the Church when God calls us, there are things that sometimes that God starts to do before we're ever called, sometimes long before, sometimes immediately as soon as we're born to give us experiences and have things happen in our life to bring us to a point in time when He begins to work with us and call us. He knows what we need to experience and go through in human life even before we're called so that He can use that and work with that to mold and fashion us into what He's preparing. That's an awesome thing to understand.

He does the same thing oftentimes with world leaders or different ones in the world. There are things He does and works with in order to prepare certain ones to accomplish and fulfill His will. They have choices. We all have choices along the way, and in many cases there are individuals who make other choices and aren't able to be used to that capacity. But when it comes to world leaders He's the one who raises them up and brings them down.

He allows Satan and the demonic world sometimes to be involved in some of that, but He is in control. Everything that's ever happened in the world, He's allowed leaders to rise; all those in that statue of Nebuchadnezzar. All that prophetically that God gave God is the one who made certain that certain things were accomplished in a timely fashion in exactly the time He wanted it done. Also, certain individuals that He raised up to be in those places, to be in those positions, to teach, to give great lessons, to accomplish certain things, to fulfill certain things, that God is in control and God is all powerful and almighty and we need to be in awe of that.

And so it is today. Please understand there are leaders in place - not meaning that they're doing what is right by any measure, because none of them can. They don't know God's way. They don't know how to live according to God's purpose and God's way at all.

So please understand that there are things that just need to be accomplished by God Almighty. He does them. That's why we don't take sides. It's foolishness to take sides. It's foolishness to start

saying, “Well, he should have done this,” or “She should have done that,” or “If they hadn’t done that...” It’s all part of a purpose.

I’ll tell you what, what’s going on in Turkey and Syria right now is monumental. It’s monumental because it’s affecting the attitude of Europe in a very powerful way toward that region of the world and also toward the U.S., okay? It all has a purpose. It’s all fitting into place. For me, I’m dumbfounded by it. I’m in awe of it, that we’re able to watch it. Like Johnny says, we have a front-row seat. And we do. We have the ability to comprehend and understand things that are taking place and it’s incredible, it really is, to be able to see these things, now more than ever.

I’m thankful that I have the times to come over here because I’m able to hear a perspective on the news from different channels that is totally different from the U.S., and there is that portion in there that gives a feel for how Europeans are thinking and changing in their thinking. It’s not that remote anymore to be able to grasp why ten nations are going to make the choice that they do. Incredible. It’s hard, it was almost hard to imagine, especially in times past—not now today, and especially with some of the things writing in the book—but in times past it’s been hard to truly grasp how on earth or why on earth would they do something like that? It was almost like it doesn’t seem possible, it really doesn’t. Today it’s totally possible. Not for the reasons of WWII, for aggression and conquering. Something totally different - self-preservation.

So we live in very unique times. So again, we have to be careful that we don’t get caught upon those things. Because every once in a while I hear a flutter here, a whatever of something going on and someone said something and it’s like taking a side or whatever. You just can’t do that. It’s not wise to do that. There are times that I might say some things up here, but it’s not taking a side, it’s just expressing certain things that are taking place so that we can be watchful of them and understand this is all part of a pattern and part of a purpose.

There is a reason, a gigantic reason why there is an individual right now that likes to tweet—Really!—and who is very blunt about things. In his mind there is that desire to protect a particular country that he has very strong feelings about and it’s a protectionism type thing. It’s a pulling in, self, country, and not the rest of the world. The rest of the world, in his mind and attitude, is catch up, you know, “This is what we’re going to do!” That has a tremendous effect on everything. It has a tremendous effect on a world economy. It’s a powerful thing, it really is, what we’re watching, what we’re seeing transpire, how things move and why countries think the way they do. Well, I won’t go any farther.

But they’re all corrupt because they’re not God’s. It’s not God’s government. There is no such thing as true justice for all. It’s impossible with human beings. It can’t be accomplished. It can’t be achieved. Some people come to see that sometimes. Some judges, some leaders, other people in the world come to see some of those, the reality of those things sometimes, and it’s a very frustrating thing because they come to a point where they realize we can’t solve our problems.

Bob Marley. We were talking about yesterday a couple of his songs, and some of that, when I heard some of that, I thought, well, that's the sense that's there. It's this realization what we're doing to ourselves. It's addressing a reality that's in front of us. And basically, we just can't solve our problems.

So again, no such thing as true justice. There is no such thing as any who govern who do so without personal prejudice. It's impossible for a human being to judge without personal prejudice. That's why we've had some of the series we have about judging, because we're to strive to get away from that. We're to strive to get away from judging things the way "I" see it, the way "I" think it is, that "I" am right in "my" thinking, and others, well, they may catch up in time. That's the way we are, and so we, especially, have to fight against that in judging of all things, not just one another.

So again, no governing body agrees with another. They can't. Countries within themselves can't get along. They can't govern. I love the way God is bringing that to the forefront. He is bringing that to the forefront, of how bad it is. So modern technology has enhanced the ability to help the world to come to address something that they should have been able to see a long time ago but can't and ignore, and so forth, because we really think we can solve our problems and we can't.

So anyway, God brings it to the surface, "You can't," and everybody is seeing this. Everybody in the world, whatever nations it is, they can't solve their problems. So there are always differences and there are always divisions.

We're supposed to learn from that in God's Church. I've experienced all kind of division and differences within God's Church ever since I've been in it and it's been a great teacher. Most of my training has been in one of seeing how not to do things, of how things that just aren't right before God that we're supposed to administer, live things according to God's way. That takes God's spirit. We can't do it on our own.

So there is no one who governs without fault, not even in God's Church. We all have faults. We all have weaknesses. There is no such thing as a perfect human being except for one, in a sense, and that respect, he lived a perfect life as far as a human being, Joshua. Didn't sin. Incredible.

There is no one who governs without fault, without mistakes, or without any contradiction. Mistakes are made in life. We all make them. We have to be able to face that and acknowledge that because not to do so is hideous pride, haughtiness before God. We have to humble ourselves before God and own those things that aren't right and strive to change them before God and before others.

So there is no one who can govern by always doing so in humility. The world definitely doesn't even try that. I mean, to them it's a sign of weakness if you show humility. I think of that three years I was away. You're challenged in that. Because if you show humility in various situations and don't stand firm in certain cases they're going to take it as weakness and take greater advantage.

It's just the way of the world, and sometimes in the world we have to do that. You have to measure that out. You have to decide when it is time to stand and speak up and tell the truth or say something that is right and stand your ground.

There are times that that is just right to do in this world, okay? You can't make peace. You can try to in this world but there are times that you can't and you know it and you have to stand your ground.

So pride is always a factor in governing and pride produces faulty thinking and faulty governing. It always does. So there is no one in government who doesn't believe that their way, and speaking primarily about the world, obviously, that their way is better than that of others. We know that God's way is the only way and we strive to live by that and hold on to that with all of our being. But as far as the world is concerned - totally different.

There is no one in government who doesn't believe that their way is better than others. They know they're right. Every party, even within parties there is such incredible division. It's incredible! God is bringing it all to the surface so we can see it all.

So from here in talking about such things it only gets worse. For 6,000 years, though the world has not understood it, it has needed one government that is God's government. It's always needed it. Thank God He's prophesied that through time, through prophets, through different ones, and that's what people who have been worked with by God hold on to. They want that. They look forward to that. They have been given the ability by God to see certain things that are right in His way and those things in the world that are wrong. They have an ability because of the help of God's spirit to see clearly the things in the world that are wrong that have to be changed in time. We get a big dose of that, more than what people in the world do. They don't think about those things. They don't worry about those things, as a whole.

So except for those whom God has called, and they in turn have chosen to be led by Him, by His government, people have always rejected God. They have always resisted Him and His government. So instead people have chosen the way of natural carnal human nature. That's all they can do. They have yielded themselves to, and therefore, chosen to be led by—interesting—chosen to be led by division, and that's a choice, but they have no other choice because that's everyone's nature, by opposition, by debate, by argument.

That's why I enjoy watching... I don't enjoy it, but I get a charge out of it sometimes when I see the response of how they do it in parliament when they show this, and this hollering back and forth and it's like, wow. They don't do that in the Senate and the House of Representatives in the same way. But there they have this open kind of debate and people hollering, and to me that's unique. But anyway, it's incredible how human beings are.

But people have yielded themselves, and therefore, have chosen opposition, debate, argument, self-interests, prejudice, jealousy, wickedness. I've been amazed by some of the things that

happened in the last big election in the U.S. Some things were said toward certain individuals that were really nasty and mean. “Little Rocket Man,” or something like that, that one. But that’s over somewhere. But right within the U.S. you think of different things, titles that were given to different ones, “Sleepy so and so,” or whatever it might be, and “Low energy so and so.” I’ll tell you what, you could see later on by their response and their attitudes they weren’t forgiving. It does something inside of people and they can’t help it. They couldn’t hold back. Some personalities of some people I saw change and do things and say things that they wouldn’t have normally done. You can see they weren’t able to handle what was taking place. There was a gigantic irritation moving them and pushing them. Well, anyway. That’s the way human beings are and they can’t help it. Some people use that and take advantage of that—incredible—for power, for the sake of power, for getting one’s way.

So people have chosen the way of wickedness, the way of favoritism, the way of special interests, wealth, power, simply the way of get like Mr. Armstrong said. What an incredible way to sum it all up, the get way. It’s the way we are. That’s the way governments are. Some government leaders understood what he was saying.

I used to get so ticked off in hearing certain people in God’s Church talk about how that Mr. Armstrong wasn’t, you know, when he went to these world leaders he wasn’t preaching the gospel. Finding fault and criticism he wasn’t preaching the gospel. It was like, “You should open up the Bible and say, ‘Hey, let me look up this verse, right here it says...’” You think, that’s a dumb thing. That’s really dumb. In dealing with the carnal, physical world, and many of them who didn’t believe in God at all anyway in different countries, but he told them on a physical plane certain things that they could understand and this they understood. Get. There is the way of get. He even spoke of a demonic world or of a devil, because he knew who he was talking to. There were some that agreed. They spoke in the same terms. I remember hearing some of those things from them.

So you have to deal like Paul did with people, in that respect, strive to reach out to as many as you can in a unique way. That’s a challenge, but he did it, blessed by God’s spirit to do so.

So we are so blessed to know the existence of the true God and Creator of us all and to understand things about government that take a lifetime to learn. It’s a wonderful thing to be trained in God’s government. It truly is. Because through the years I’ve seen many who never got the picture. And you know, that’s the first thing attributed to Mr. Armstrong of establishing in God’s Church - government. Number one; number four in the truths. The one thing that I saw abused, misused over and over again by all that offended, all that did and go and went wrong directions and were not faithful and loyal to it. Because it’s easy to say, “I’m faithful to God. I’m loyal to God,” and then not live it within the Church. And you think, that’s the arena of your life as to whether it’s true or not. If you’re not doing it within the Church you’re not doing it to God, you’re not doing it toward God.

So today this sermon is entitled *A Government Always Resisted*.

We grasp that the world needs one government. We long for it. We desire it with all of our being. We see that only God's government is righteous and just, the only way to have real justice in the world, if you will.

Let's turn over to Judges 2. We're going to go back and look at some of those rare occasions when Israel did experience some of God's government. As we do this we're going to focus on lessons or truths that need to be realized, that need to be understood when looking at the subject of God's government.

Judges 2:6—When Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. So here the land was divided up then it was time for them to depart. They'd conquered various groups in all these regions and we went through a series in that not too long ago, and so here it is they're dispersed and they're to go out and begin to possess what they've been given by their tribes and by their regions.

So the people served the Eternal all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, in other words, those who came through that period across the river, in all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Eternal, which He had done for Israel.

So they continued in that course and so the people listened. The people still followed, they were moved. There were enough people that still had that experience. Again here, on a physical carnal way they still tried to do what was right, in that respect, in listening to them.

Now, Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Eternal died when he was one hundred and ten years old. Incredible, that long of life. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mountain of Ephraim, and on the north side of Mount Gaash. And when all that generation had been gathered to their fathers another generation rose up after them who did not know the Eternal... They didn't have those experiences and they didn't listen and they didn't hold on to the things that they'd been given. ...nor the work which He had done for Israel.

Verse 11—Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and served the Baals. Ever how you want to pronounce it. There are different pronunciations of it, but the Baals, the gods of the countries all around them. **And they forsook the Eternal God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods.** Seems hard to imagine, but there's a lot of time passing here and generation to generation these things happen.

It doesn't take long. It didn't take long for God's own Church to do what it did, forgot the ways that they'd been taught through Mr. Armstrong, began to get watered down, began to turn away from it. It's just like holding a baby, after a while we all fell asleep. We didn't see what was taking place. Incredible. It happens.

...and so they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them. What becomes involved in much of this is a desire to be accepted by others, a desire to mix. They were mixing with others anyway, but in this process because of their beliefs and how they thought, their thinking, they began to accept that. They became more concerned with what others were thinking of them rather than what God did. They were more concerned with conforming to them than they were of holding on to what they'd had before and how they'd come into the promised land. They knew how they came into the promised land. They knew the stories, but that isn't what they wanted. They wanted something else mainly because of the kind of life they wanted to live, which wasn't God's because it's restrictive to them. To the carnal mind it's restrictive; you can't do everything you want to do that's really outside the law.

...and they bowed down to them and they provoked the Eternal to anger, it says. Well, it's not a good translation. God is not like that. God is not like human beings. Because if we hear the word "anger" we think it's like you have this rage and it's like you're out of control, or whatever, and you're steaming mad, type of thing, and especially if it's a God. That's even far more powerful. That's just an absolute bald faced lie, a wrong perception of God Almighty, truly.

It's a word that has really more to do with "vexed" or "be an irritant." Here you bring a people into a nation, you give them a promised land after so long, took them out of captivity, and it doesn't take long and they begin to stray away and they begin to go to other gods. After everything that's been done. So that's an irritation, indeed. It's a vexation of spirit because they're not accomplishing, they're not living within a way that would produce real peace and a better life for them physically, so this is what it's talking about. That's all it's talking about, in that respect.

They forsook the Eternal, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth's, the Canaanite goddesses. It's amazing how that's gone through different peoples and the names have changed because of languages, as a whole, and been adapted to some other beliefs here and there, accepting certain things and taking away others and it's just kind of a gradual process of evolving within different nations.

Then the anger, it says here, again translated as "anger," and this one here it's a different word, but it's better translated "great displeasure." Right thing to think, to have, great displeasure because you're hurting yourselves. You start disobeying the laws of God and God seeing this, it's indeed displeasing. You see your child do things that you've told them not to do, you don't jump up and down for joy. It doesn't make you happy. It's something that you realize they're hurting themselves and it's a displeasure. You're not pleased with it. So, the same. This is what God is saying. It's not these human emotions that human beings have that they're not in control of.

Then the great displeasure of the Eternal was kindled against Israel, "stirred up." It's a natural thing, proper thing. **He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who then plundered them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around...** So, in other words, some were actually taken slaves because of certain nations and what they did and how they functioned

at that time. So this is what it's talking about. So in other words, God allowed this. He allowed this to happen. That's the way of people, always conquering, always wanting more, so the other nations around them God just let them go ahead and do what they wanted to do and didn't hold them back, didn't protect them, didn't protect the Israelites. So it says ...so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. They were all around.

So Israel never fully accepted God's government, and only received it for short periods of time when it, candidly, more fully benefitted them. That's why they did it, because it was a benefit to them. It was easier for the Israelites to support king David and Solomon, the riches that were there, the blessings that God had given to them because of their obedience. So it was easier to latch on to those things and be a part of that because of that, because of the prosperity that was there. Not that they believed. Human nature, amazing.

I'm going to read through some more here and make some comments as we go along here. But from the time of Joshua forward God primarily raised up judges. So we know that story there of what happened after Joshua and different judges that God raised up. There are verses, scriptures or whatever about some of them and what they did. God raised up judges at times when Israel needed to be delivered from other nations and people. So He'd let them go a certain distance and then He'd raise up a judge and certain things would be taught once again and people would respond to a certain degree. Then in time they would forget. So it was just this back and forth for a long period of time.

God would raise up a judge again because He had a plan for Israel. That's why He kept doing it. He had a plan for Israel. Israel is a part of something very prophetic and so there are times when God was going to keep them together as a people, as a nation, and so He intervened, He'd raise them back up again. He raised up the judges to do so. Again, this was so that Israel could continue to grow as a nation of people in order for God to fulfill His plan through them in the future. That's what it was all about.

So this period from Joshua up through the judges lasted right at 350 years. It's a long time. It's a long time. Our nation hasn't been around that long, the one I'm from, not mine, the one I'm from. Anyway, that's a long, long time, 350 years, so a lot happens with people, with different generations and judges rising up and then falling and others coming along and doing their own thing and then God allowing other nations to have an impact upon them, to plunder them, and so forth.

So the history of Israel was constantly one of people who sought to turn away from God and didn't want His rule, they didn't want His government, didn't want it over them. That's existed in God's Church ever since I've been in it. Thankfully, God has brought us to a time of incredible refinement within the Body, but I'll tell you what, the journey has been an ugly one. It really has.

Since I've been in the Church, since 1969, a lot of it's been pretty ugly, and yet the Church was protected from much of that. We didn't grasp what was going on behind the scenes. We didn't

know of some of the battles that Mr. Armstrong had with his own ministry, with his own individuals that sat in his first classes who became evangelists in the Church. We didn't know those things, thank God. We didn't know the divisiveness that was taking place.

We didn't know about certain individuals who had become teachers then in time and began to teach things that weren't right about a 14/15 Passover. That guy did so much damage and hurt to God's Church, that individual, and there were several others who did as well when they began to divide up and decide, as Mr. Armstrong got older, who they were going to follow. It was madness, spiritually, if you want to look at it, absolute insanity for that to have happened. No comprehension of government whatsoever, period, exclamation mark. God let us experience that to learn from. It's not right. It's not right.

It's not right that someone would be taught something and get up and have the audacity to teach something different from what God had given to His apostle, Mr. Armstrong. To have the audacity to have been a student and set there and to listen and talk and then to lose that respect and understanding that "the only reason I have what I have is because of what he gave to me. And how did he get it? God gave it to him and I'm the recipient of that."

But to be lifted up with pride that you can begin to think that through all your intellect (because he was known as an intellectual), one that was able to sit on, toward the front row when Mr. Armstrong was speaking and there would be ministers who commented on, they would be in awe of it, like "It's amazing he can read a book and hear Mr. Armstrong at the same time and focus on that. He has that ingenuity, that ability. He can focus on more than one thing at a time."

I heard ministers bragging about that. You think, hmmm, someone that's knowledgeable huh, that they don't need to give full attention to what God is giving to them at a moment in time. Hmm. Well, that tells a lot, doesn't it? I mean, we can see that easily. Dumb, you know, not true, disrespectful to Mr. Armstrong and to God Almighty. But God allowed him to continue on. Then they would brag about how he'd invite individuals in who were demon possessed so he could reason with them.

We've seen that in God's Church, people who are just possessed and you know it. We had them come on to the campus in Bricket Wood at different times. There was security. We had security and so there were different ones who would come on campus, one that wanted to give this great message to Mr. Armstrong. "I have a message for Mr. Armstrong I have to give to him of what he needs to do." I'm not going to go into it.

Get them away. You don't invite them in to reason with them. How do you reason with a demon? How stupid! I'm sorry, but you've got to realize some of our history hasn't been real good, and yet God allowed it to happen just as He allowed certain things to happen within Israel through time. The most important thing out of all this, the most important thing we can ever learn in life is how God governs, is to understand the beauty of righteous, just government. It's a beautiful thing the way God governs, what He says is coming, how it's going to be accomplished because

it's not going to be accomplished primarily by human beings, because we have proven, we have made witness of the fact that we can't govern ourselves. The Church, big, growing large, can't govern itself. That's why we primarily have a voice through technology that God has given us to help us achieve greater unity and oneness, so that there aren't a lot of different ones and we're not in the tens of thousands or whatever, out there and different ones out there on their own being trusted, being entrusted with the word of God.

Because in time what happens is they start putting their own thing into it. That's normal human nature. So we have proven we have to have 144,000 under Joshua the Christ to rule and reign over the earth. That's the only way you can ensure that everyone around the world is being taught the same thing and whenever anyone comes along who desires or begins to be so brass, so proud, so lifted up as to start teaching something that isn't the same as what Christ has given the Church, it will be dealt with quickly. It's not going to be allowed to last, truly.

Incredible things we've experienced, all about the importance of learning about government, or order. Because we as human beings don't think that way, not God's way. We don't have that kind of a mind naturally. God has to help us to achieve those things, to understand the order of communication in those things. It's something that comes from the way God says it should be done that's proper and right.

So again, incredible time here, 350 years from the time of the judges after Joshua had led them through the river Jordan. Yeah, through it because they went on dry ground. That length of time then a lot of things took place - back and forth, back and forth. So after all that God records about this, at the end of the book of Judges it says, in **Judges 21:25**, this is the summation of it all, **In those days there was no king of Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.**

I really can't imagine how they stayed together like they did. I really can't. 350 years without a central government of any kind over that large a population? But they did and so different ones would unite, different ones would go off and do their own thing (of the tribes). There wasn't a strong cohesion, in one respect, unless it was needed at times. But as a whole it didn't exist until a judge was raised up. Then all of a sudden they would unite.

I think of Deborah. An incredible story about Deborah and the attitude of mind that existed then and how they functioned. As soon as that was gone they were off doing their own thing again. There was no government. We have to have government. And 350 years like this? Mindboggling!

Then toward that time toward the end of judges God purposed to unify Israel as a nation because now it was time to begin to bring them together to work with them in a greater way and to begin teaching other lessons that can be learned by going back and looking at this history.

He had a purpose and a plan to give them greater cohesion and to become, really, a unified nation of tribes. Not just tribes anymore, but a unified nation. God knew exactly what was going

to take place. It was all purposed. It was all purposed; it was all by design. It had to come down to a time of a king, David.

You think that was all a fluke and a coincidence and that it was king David and he was the kind of person he was? Everything that God had purposed in him, very well within the womb, and who he became, who he was, the experiences he had. It's incredible the power of Almighty God to bring about certain things in His plan and purpose, to begin revealing certain things about His plan and purpose, when it finally came down to that. Of course, we're stepping up a little farther here from Saul, but anyway, not by coincidence and not by accident, and neither was the first king, the type of king he was, an accident.

It's all by design to teach incredible lessons that you can learn from, of what happens under certain kinds of conditions. It's beautiful, especially when you see who's doing it. It's God! God. The Master Potter. The one who forms and fashions things according to His will in a way that should be dumbfounding the more we understand it and the more we see it.

So now we're entering the time of the high priest Eli in the story here of what we're going to look at in Samuel, toward the end talking about the things that were taking place as far as the judges were concerned. An incredible story about Samuel's mother, Hannah, who was barren, and then how she promised God if He would give her a son that she would dedicate him to the service, to God's service in the tabernacle at Shiloh. So that was her dedication, her prayer, and that came to pass. As Samuel grew, his service was under the guidance and supervision of Eli. And Hannah? Awesome. God blessed her later with three sons and two daughters. She was barren before this.

Then the story interjects a great problem in Eli's life. So Eli is the one we're coming in on, in his time, and it was, in that respect then that Samuel was given under his tutelage in the temple there, to be trained, to be taught. So Eli is the one, we're going to look at his life and a problem concerning his two sons who served in the tabernacle. Exceedingly corrupt.

So we're going to turn over there, to 1 Samuel 2 here in a moment, if I didn't tell you already.

So Eli's two sons were named Hophni and Phinehas and they violated the law concerning sacrifice. I don't want to read all the story. I'm just going to give you a brief history of it here. They violated the law of sacrifices by keeping and eating meat that was not allocated to them. So they liked more. They wanted more than what they had for whatever purposes, their own consumption or to give to others or whatever. It doesn't go into and specify. But they were taking things. Because everything was allocated how it was to be used in the temple and so they weren't serving as they should have been.

They also had sexual relationships with women who gathered at the entrance of the tent of meeting and they took advantage then of their position, their place by silly women, in that respect. Because that's silly, stupid, foolish to give yourself to someone because of something you

think you're going to get from it. That was their attitude. So both were wrong, obviously, both sinned on both sides here.

1 Samuel 2:22 it says, **Now Eli was very old, and heard everything his sons did to all Israel.** Meaning here in what it's saying, it was well known. People like to talk. Here is the government we do have, right now is Eli, and he's in that place of service and he has placed his two sons in this area over here in the tabernacle and it was commonly known then amongst the people this is what they were doing. Well known. ...and how they lay with the women who assemble at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So he said to them, **Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings among the people.** "They're talking about it." He said, **No, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear. You make the Eternal's people transgress.** "By your example, by what you're doing, your sins make the people transgress." Well, that's obvious. They're going to see what you do and think it's okay. It's at the temple. I guess it's okay to live like that. Why should we worry? Why should we be concerned?" What an incredible example!

Verse 25—If one man sins against another God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Eternal directly... First tithe, second tithe, offerings - that's direct, direct to God. That's why I hit those things sometimes because that's what this is; it's direct toward God. God will take care of it. ...who will intercede for him? **Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, as the Eternal desired/purposed to slay them.** So, in other words here, God wasn't giving them help. He wasn't going to give them any help whatsoever to be able to hear what he was saying. In other words, they were allowed to continue on with their choices and their carnality and they're going to suffer for it now.

See, that's what happens. There are times that God just cuts off His help. There are times He'll give His help even in a physical carnal world like that. They weren't being called to be a part of something at that point in time, but God would still work with different ones who responded to him on a physical plane in being able to help a nation of people to be able to look to Him and to remember Him.

Verse 26—And the child Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the Eternal, and with men. So here is Samuel quietly serving and continuing to serve and people are seeing this and they see a different example from someone who is growing up and Eli is working with him and teaching him and he's different from Phinehas and Hophni.

But what an incredible thing here, Eli didn't go further in dealing with them as he should have. He should have stopped them right then and there. Lessons. There are times in life you have to stand and say enough is enough no matter who it is, whether it be your mate, whether it be your own child, whether it be your parent, whether it be your closest friend. If you don't put God first and stand for Him, that should be all of our motivation in life - God is first. If we don't do that we have some tough lessons sometimes in life to learn. Truly, that's just the way it is.

It's because of this that I was always harder on two of my own than I was anyone else in the Church. Always, always, always. They knew. They knew it. They knew I was. If something was done they got it far worse than I would give it to anyone else because of this. This was deeply etched into my mind because of things Mr. Armstrong had to go through with his own son. It was hard with Garner Ted. To see that pull and that pain and that hurt, and then other evangelists would come up and say he's repented, or whatever, and then he would give in to that, and they would convince him that no, he's striving to do it. It's because they were looking down the road to when Mr. Armstrong died, and so if they were able to bring him along, because he was charismatic. He had an ability to speak that just people gravitated to - on TV, on the radio. He had a personality that was kind of like a movie star. Had a lot of talent. He was very good in speech and everything else. He had a lot of gifts and a lot of blessings. But he didn't want God's way of life. He wanted his own way even within the Church of how things should be done that weren't according to God.

So we have to learn from things like this. So there are lessons - lesson after lesson after lesson. But the point being is here why does God bring this up and why is it in the subject of government here? Because those are the areas that are the hardest for human beings to address. They're the hardest, those who are closest to you. They are the hardest in life to address so God tests us in those things to see what we're going to do and whether we stand and say God is first, and if others don't make that choice then that's not what you want - you want them to make a right choice. I want everyone in the Body of Christ to make the right choice, to put God first, to hold on with all their being, to never, or to strive never to sin in their life, to get farther and farther away from it. But everyone has their choice.

The part of my job that I hate the worst is when I have to tell someone you're not coming back, you're disfellowshipped...or sometimes suspended. It's a hard thing to do because we don't want that for one another. We want everyone to succeed. But by this time next year there is going to be someone else—I hope there are not a lot of someone elses—but someone else that won't be at the Feast of Tabernacles! Every year it's like that! And I don't like that. I don't. But God comes first. Those other things will hurt the Body if they don't choose to repent. But if they choose to repent, they're my brother and they're my sister and everything is gone. That's the way we function. God is first. His way is right.

So God told Eli that his family line would end because of this, because he didn't do what he should have done. It would end in its service toward God, and further, God told him what would happen to his two sons.

Verse 34—Now, this shall be a sign to you, that will come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die, both of them. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, wow, who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. He was already raising him up, Samuel. He was already raising him up from his birth. From the beginning God had a purpose of what He was going to accomplish and work. He knew what Eli was like. He knew his

mind. He knew the mind of his two sons. God allowed them to go a certain direction without being given help of His spirit to understand things and so they just gave in to their total carnal human nature and did things that they shouldn't have done. Incredible how God works to bring things about.

He says, **I'm going to raise up to Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before My anointed forever.** Hmm. I wonder what that is all about. We should know. It's prophetic, powerfully so.

So by the time that Eli was 90 years old God had raised up Samuel to lead Israel, and here we are in **1 Samuel 3:19—So Samuel grew, and the Eternal was with him, and He let none of his words fall to the ground.** In other words, his words were filled with wisdom and soundness and people held on to them. They didn't fall to the ground. They didn't pass by. **And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet to the Eternal.**

It wasn't long after this that the Philistines came up against Israel to attack them and this is a continuation of the story then in **1 Samuel 4:2. The Philistines formed themselves into battle array against Israel.** So it's going back and forth in part of the story here, but it's pushing forward. **...then they engaged in battle and Israel was defeated by the Philistines who killed about four thousand men in the army of the field.** So 4,000 of them were killed and so this gave them, obviously, pause for consideration of "What's going on?"

So when the people had gathered back into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Why has the Eternal defeated us today? It's amazing how human beings think, "Why has the Eternal defeated us? Why hasn't He given us victory?" **...and why has the Eternal defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Eternal from Shiloh...** So that's the solution, isn't it? If God didn't intervene now let's bring the ark, and then He'll intervene, because we have the ark. Motivations, if you think about some of this, of what was taking place and think about the story, they were just not right and what they did was not right. Okay? They didn't have the real ability to address the problem.

Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Eternal from Shiloh to us, so that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring there the ark of the covenant of the Eternal of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, oh, that's great, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. Well, that just adds to it, doesn't it? Just make it even that much better. You know God's going to help out now because those two are here. All of Israel knows what they're like. All the army knows what they're like. They know the kind of life they live, and so surely God is going to help us now because they brought the ark. Here it is, here is the ark of the covenant.

Verse 5—When the ark of the covenant of the Eternal came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that it shook the earth. I don't understand that, what that means fully. Maybe an

expression that's just that it was great. It was big, powerful because they were so excited. Now they knew they're going to win in victory.

It affected the Philistines. Notice this: **Now, when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What does the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean? Then they understood,** they'd heard, they found out, perhaps some spies or whatever, **They understood that the ark of the Eternal had come into the camp.** So they knew why the Israelites then were shouting, because the word had come back. **So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God has come into the camp.**

They'd heard all the stories about things that God had done for the Israelites. These things were not lost in history even though the Israelites turned their back on it and didn't care. The stories were still there, but they didn't respond to them. Some of the other countries had more respect than what the Israelites did, a fear of God that they didn't even have.

So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God has come into the camp. And they said, Woe to us! "If the ark is there..." They've heard some of the stories. When they came over the Jordan and the water that was held back, you don't think these stories are passed down and people knew what had happened? These are the ones, they came out of Egypt. The entire army of Pharaoh was destroyed. Pharaoh was destroyed! Egypt isn't the same nation as it used to be.

So the Philistines were afraid and they said, God has come into the camp. And they said, Woe to us, for such a thing has never happened before. Toward them.

Chapter 4:8—Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty Gods? See, even in their perverted way and their different ideas and thoughts and things they didn't understand God and what was taught to the Israelites. But because of their belief of different gods and so forth, "We can't stand against those Gods!"

These are the Gods who struck the Egyptians... They make it really clear they understood full well that this was what they're referring back to. This God brought them out of Egypt, **with all the plagues of the wilderness. So let us be strong, and conduct ourselves like men, you Philistines, that we do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to us. Conduct yourselves like men.** Be strong, in other words, in a different way of saying it to them, a carnal people filled, the Philistines, and they said, **Let's do this. Let's be strong and let's fight.** So they were more determined trying to work themselves up and going into battle here.

So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. Incredible. Turned the Israelite's tail between their legs the other way. **And there was a very great slaughter; and there fell in Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.** There were only 4,000 been killed before and now when they bring the ark in now they lost 30,000. Hmmm, wonder what you can learn from that? Incredible stories of things that God allowed and things that are written and recorded so that we can learn from them.

Also the ark of God was captured, so it was a while before that came back. But anyway, read about the story of David and things that took place in his time period. ...the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

So it goes on to show here that, **A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And now where he came there was Eli sitting on a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. He knew it wasn't right that they took the ark and he was fearful for what might happen to the ark.**

And when the man came into the city and told it all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, What does the sound of this outcry? What does it mean? And the man came quickly and told Eli. Eli was ninety-eight years old; and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. Then the man said to Eli, I am he who came from the battle, and I fled today from the battle line. And he said, What happened, my son? So the messenger answered and said, Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also, your sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.

Then it happened when he made mention of the ark of God that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. So he wasn't really living well himself, obviously, it shows some of this here. That's why it states it that way. He was careless in some of the things he did not only with his own health, in that respect now, but even with how he dealt with his sons. And because of this, once he heard the message then this is what God brought it to.

God brought it to this. This isn't just an accident that just happened to happen this way, okay? It's to teach a lesson, to teach some powerful lessons. He heard about his two sons and it came to pass. It was a sign and then he died. God took care of it just like He took care of the man of sin, okay? He should have taken care of the situation long, long ago and not allowed such a thing to happen. It's a hideous thing that he allowed to take place and so God removed him, and in the meantime in the background was raising up another to take his place.

There is a lot to learn in this, that when people don't put God first they're going to bring suffering upon them because God deals with that. All those who lie to God, directly to God in certain things in life when they've been given incredible opportunities, God will take care of it. That's why there is no doubt when it's stated that there are people who are not going to be allowed to come into a new era of time. They're not going to be allowed to live. Does God have that power? He did it with an entire nation of people at a specific age and He did not allow them to come into the promised land, they all had to die in the wilderness up to a certain age, and they did. God saw to it.

No one does things their own way when it comes to God being involved in their service toward God and what they're supposed to be doing in putting God first in their life. So those things

though, it shouldn't be the primary thing that moves us, but if we've got any sense about us at all we should fear to do anything against God. God doesn't play games. God doesn't owe us anything.

He's given us everything we have and every opportunity in life on golden platters, and it's for us to consume and receive. That's why we have to grasp and strive to comprehend what's been said earlier in sermons - we are the wealthiest people ever on this earth! The wealthiest! We have been given more than anyone else in time - more than the original apostles, more than Mr. Armstrong! Does that not move us to the core of our being in gratitude and thankfulness and humility, that we should be given such great possession? Because we have.

I was talking to the ministers last night about writing in this book right now and some things that are coming along. In the sermon I gave yesterday there were some things I couldn't go into because it's already changed, and I prepared that maybe 2-3 months ago or whenever that was. In that length of time we've had some change. Like the 7th Thunder - do we hear it? Okay? The closer we get and the more God reveals to us, the faster this goes and the more God continues to give. God is being glorified and raised up more and more even in the Church of God! We should be able to see that and be moved by that with all of our being, truly.

Does that move you? Hopefully and prayerfully it does in every way.

It's hard to keep up. That's why just scrap the three books. Some have asked me about, "What do we do with the books?" Burn them. Throw them away. One is going to use them for starter for the fire. That's fine! That's fine! That's great! Because they're so outdated over such a short period of time! Mind boggling!

Coming through Philadelphia we had longer spans of time before something came along. So when it did it was an awesome and incredible thing. Pentecost, as an example, or what was talked about before that, a few years before that, the spirit in man that God has given to us that makes us unique from the animal world, animal kingdom, if you will. That was about 1971, I believe it was, somewhere in there, *The Incredible Human Potential*.

Then shortly after that this thing about Pentecost flared up and Mr. Armstrong went into that and said he was going to spend a year before - I don't know if he said that specific was the time, but that's about how long it was then - before the next Pentecost to come out with a decision. He let others do research and so forth and he compiled his own and he brought all these things together and came to the conclusion, very powerfully so. Because for him it wasn't a small thing to change something like this. And it wasn't! To change a day from Monday to Sunday, he wanted to be absolutely certain. So he did. Awesome thing in the Church.

A lot couldn't handle it. A lot went off in different directions for different reasons, but the core of the Church kept moving forward. But now I'm sometimes absolutely dumbfounded by how fast and how much God just keeps giving us things. Over and over and over again. Not going to call them new truths. We're just going to plug them into the truths we have to make them better. It's

a refining now. It's like a refining of the truths we have, making them clearer, making them more sound. Beautiful. God must come first in our lives.

1 Samuel 8:1. We come up to this part of Samuel's life here and the course of history that followed in which Israel would suffer mightily through time for the choice that they made, because of what happened here. Through time all of Israel has suffered because of what took place here. But it was God's purpose that it come to pass because they live in a carnal physical world and so they must deal with a carnal physical world, and so it was God's purpose to allow them to have this and to have this in the first place and to have the types of things, kings, kings, the King of kings, the Messiah, things that are coming.

That's why the Jews when they at different times in life, but especially around the time of Christ and after his death and resurrection, and then on the day of Pentecost and the things that happened there, and the things that Peter then started speaking, he quoted certain scriptures that are there in the book of Acts there about things that were quoted out of the Old Testament in the Psalms, and basically showing that there were things they couldn't comprehend and understand of what was being written there because they thought it was about David and it wasn't. Peter was making the point it's not about David, it's about the Messiah. Incredible.

They didn't understand. So there have to be those types that are there, and it was so strong that the Jews even at the time of Christ couldn't make a distinction then. They didn't know. Until God gives the ability to see, you can't know. "That's about king David." No, it wasn't.

1 Samuel 8:1—Now, it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Hmmm. The name of the firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah, and they were judges in Beer-sheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. Here we go again. They turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted judgment. It went to their head, used it for the natural carnality that sometimes exists there, and God didn't prevent it. God let them go that course for a purpose.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together, and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Look, you're old and your sons do not walk not in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. They had a little bit of history - Eli. Hmm. Now this. We don't want to go through this. They understood the slaughter of the Philistines and how many they lost and that was still a part of their history.

When Laura and I in times past here, and we still do at times, when this subject comes up about government, especially when it's not being too kind to you and you're suffering because of what took place here, it's kind of a thing of humor to us. We talk about we'd like to get all these who made these decisions in a line when they're resurrected and just kind of go down and give a swift boot to each one for the stupid decision they made of wanting a king. Just joking.

Verse 6—But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to the Eternal. Now, Samuel was taking this in a way that he had to learn something from this, that God had to tell him directly, because he took it personally about what he was doing and how he was doing it. Anyway, this is part of the story.

And the Eternal said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you. It was, basically, God's purpose anyway that it come to this. The way it came, well, another part of the purpose. ...**for they have not rejected you.** "It's not about you, Samuel." It's not about me. It's not about you. It's not about anyone. We're just blessed to be a part to serve with God. This is a great lesson in itself. We don't deserve what we have. We don't know why we were called, but we're to be exceedingly thankful that God has called us and that we have such an incredible opportunity.

There are many people who are much nicer in the world on a carnal way than what I was when I was called. Far, far from being nice. That's the way we are as human beings. We see others around us, perhaps other family members who live far better lives than what we did when we were called, and it's not about that. It's about God's purpose and God's calling and what He's doing and why He does it the way He does, so just to be thankful for the opportunity and embrace it, awesome.

But whatever you have and whatever you receive in life, don't let it lift you up with haughtiness and pride, that we begin to see ourselves more than what we see of God because many have fallen before you because of that. Samuel is being given here an important lesson to record that has been valuable to God's Church and to God's people, to those who have ears to hear this and listen to it and make sure that they grasp and see then what is being said. It's about God.

That's why when I talk about fellowship and seeing God you have to understand what's being said on a spiritual plane. God's children. And when you see that and you believe that you're going to be different in how you treat one another. Everyone who is baptized, you're going to be different in your attitude and spirit toward them because it isn't about another person or by themselves, it's about another person who has the impregnation of God's holy spirit, who belongs to God Almighty. That should cause us then to step back and think mightily before we say and do things that could hurt another person that belongs to God. Who would want to cause hurt to God?

So great lessons to be learned there, see. That's what we're to learn. That's what we're to understand. That's what we're to embrace in our lives - to grasp, to comprehend how important it is of how we honor God, that we honor one another. How we think toward one another, it's how we think toward God.

So it is here. Here was a servant of God Almighty, but it was a place and a position of responsibility, yes, but the eyes and the understanding are always directed toward God. It's about God and so the people and how they looked toward Samuel and wanting now a king to reign over them wasn't something to be taken on a personal plane of offence or anything like that, or what

had been done before. It didn't negate any of that because that is all about service to God. So it's about God. So if they don't want and receive what you're teaching them it's about God. It's about God.

For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. Our lives first and foremost about God. Our calling; it's about God. Our relationships; it's about God. Because as I mentioned, and I love that expression now, to understand it, it's not about friendship it's about fellowship. That's about God, see. Big difference there.

God went on to explain to Samuel how this is just the way of mankind. It's the way of people and how they think, one of not accepting His government to reign over them. Because the reality is the carnal human mind has always battled against God. It's at enmity with God. So, indeed, God's government has always been a government that's been resisted by carnal human nature. Even those of Israel through time. It's just the way we are.

And sadly, it's been highly resisted within the Church of God through time. Many have gone by the wayside because of that, and there was mass destruction in Pasadena because of that, because there, there were all these pecking orders and all these battles. What survived out of it? I know nothing that's survived out of it. Incredible!

1 Samuel 8:8. So again here, God went on to explain to Samuel how that this is just the way of mankind, of one of not accepting His government to reign over them. It says, **According to all the works which they have done since the day I brought them out of Egypt, even to this day, with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods.** It's just the way they are. It's just the way of carnal human nature. It wouldn't have mattered what nation it was it's just the way of human beings.

They have forsaken Me and served other gods. After everything that God has done, you think, how is that possible? I look at the Church and I think of people who went back to what they came out of and think, "How is that possible, to go back and put up a Christmas tree, to go back and hide eggs for your children, to go back and start keeping Sunday worship? How is that possible once you've been in God's Church for a length in time?" It happened to right at a third of the Church. That should sober everyone. It's a great lesson to learn from because none of us are above that. If we don't stay close to God those things can happen, they happen to people.

...and served other gods, so that they are doing to you also. Now, therefore, listen to their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them. Why? Because they have carnal human nature and people can't govern themselves. It takes God to govern righteously. Man can't do it.

So that has been the story, incredible, through time, of things that have happened and things that have happened here, things that have happened in God's Church. It's something always to be on guard against and understand how you're functioning within a Body, how you're functioning

within the Church, how you're functioning within the world, because there are things, whether it be an employer and so forth, there are attitudes that we're to have that are different from others and there is support that we give that is different from others in the world, and we're to act and react differently to things than others. And it's because God's first in our lives. So we strive to be that example.

So strive to learn those things and not resist God's government. Because every time we sin we've resisted the governing of God's way of life in our lives. That's what it's about. It's a matter of yielding to God's law, to God's ways. They are to govern how you think, how you live, how you are to one another, how you are to others in the world.