

The Stupidity of Idols

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Welcome, everybody, to this 7th day Sabbath.

In today's world we see many false religions. The one factor these false religions have is that they demonstrate clearly that they completely ignore the first and second commandment that God has given.

The title of this sermon is *The Stupidity of Idols*.

Now, that title is not really saying that idols are stupid, because we know they are of no value. They don't think. They don't talk. But really, it is stupid for us to have an idol and for anybody to create one, which we're going to look at. We're going to look at the reason why it's stupid to do that, because, really, the stupidity is with mankind. Its mankind's thinking that is the stupidity. The idol itself, it's a stupid thing, but it's not stupid, if you know what I mean, because it doesn't think. But we as humans are the stupid ones because people raise things up before God and pray to things, which is just stupidity, we would call it.

So the title really is *The Stupidity Of Idols Is About What Humans Do*. It's not the idol itself.

False religion is from mankind's reasoning. It comes from their thinking because of the stupidity of what our human nature is. There are thousands of interpretations of what is right and wrong. So that tells you something. Out of all the false religions everybody is right in their own eyes. So all of these different interpretations. Someone can read a scripture and say, "Well, this is what it means." Another one can say, "Well, this is what it means."

So you can turn to Exodus 20:1 which is God giving the 10 Commandments. Now, as we go through this there is going to be two ways to view this. Now, the world will look at this as a physical instruction whereas we need to stop and consider what are our idols. Now, unfortunately we all have idols. It's a spiritual matter.

But people will look at this and read it and the first thing we do, and when I started researching this topic, the first thing that you tend to do is you can look at it and say, "Oh yeah, look at Israel, stupid Israel, having an idol, building things up and creating things." Well, God really raises that concern with them because they didn't know the spiritual aspect.

But this sermon is about us and what we have as idols. We all have them and they're not physical idols as mankind has, a Buddha or a cross or those things. The idol we have is our selfishness. It's what we raise up before God. So the warning here is although it looks like it's a physical thing, the reality is it's for God's people and it's spiritual.

Exodus 20:1—And God spoke all these words, saying: I the Lord (the Eternal) your God (your Elohim), who brought you out of the land of Egypt, of course people look at that physically

looking at Israel because He was the one that brought them out of Egypt; used Moses. ...**out of the house of bondage**. So now God's saying to them, physical Israel, "Well, it was Me. I did it." We look at it and say it was God that called us. We were called out of spiritual Egypt and we have been brought out of this bondage. That bondage is the bondage of the mind; that we can't see spiritual things, now we can. So we've been freed from the bondage, the captivity of Egypt, because it's spiritual. So that's the way we need to look at it.

Well, God is making this statement here before He gives the 10 Commandments, and we'd have to say, well, why is God saying that? Because God is saying, "I did it." So this is really pointing to the fact that God is great, God is eternal.

It's interesting because had a conversation during the week where somebody said that they believed in the big bang theory and explained it. We got to the point where they said, "Well, there was all these gases there, the matter and the gases." I could say, "Well, how did that get there?" They said, "Oh, it just was." I said, "That's right." I believe in God, Yahweh Elohim, and He "just was." Because, if you think about it, if you can believe that there were gases and materials there and they just were, well, why can't you believe that there was an Eternal God that just was? But the natural mind can't understand what we're talking about, of course.

So you can see their rational or reasoning and you think, "Well, that's foolishness to think it just was. There would have to be a creator of something. There'd have to be something." No, they get to the point, "Yes, there were just gases." Well, there was just God. Now, our minds can't grasp "just God" either. But their argument doesn't stand up because we can say the same thing.

Verse 2. Verse 2 really is about us spiritually being called out of this world, which we understand, we know it, and we've experienced this. We are now free because we have been called out of the bondage of human reasoning, therefore, when we go through this we can see clearly that having anything physical, which was made by God, and then carving it or making it is just... It is stupid. It is really stupid. But you look at this as the human mind. This is what the mind is capable of - of having all these different things that we think are going to help us.

Now, if you look at what is an idol really and why does a person have an idol, it's a total act of selfishness...a total act of selfishness. Why? Because a person has an idol, a physical object, for advantage to self. That's all it is. Well, you wouldn't have anything that wasn't an advantage to you, would you? Like you don't have a St. Christopher medal and you wouldn't pray to St. Christopher for protection unless it was advantaging "me." It's a personal advantage. So idols are about advantage to "me." So people pray to statues of Mary because? It's an advantage to "me." So having an idol is an act of selfishness, total act of selfishness.

So we have idols. Spiritually, we have idols. What are they? We're going to look at some of those things. But what is that really proving? We are selfish. We have selfish idols, which is an act, a demonstration, that we are still selfish. Because we have an idol that is advantage to self. It

satisfies self. We look to it for an advantage. We'll look at some of those physical things and we'll look at some of the spiritual components.

So the first commandments in **verse 3—You shall have no other gods**, which is god families, something that you look to, **before Me**. It's interesting it says "Me" not "us." Me, one God. So we're to put nothing before God. There is no other God families that we should trust in because we'll look at scriptures that will clearly say why. We'll see why God is adamant about this topic. No other Gods. There is only one Yahweh Elohim. We are not to worship anything before the Eternal. Absolutely nothing. So we look at that physically and say, oh, yeah, we can see that. We can see they got a statue and people queue up for hours and kiss the toe. Why? Because it's an advantage to self. We think, well, that's stupid.

But what about the stupidity that's in us still where we put things before God in our life? This is about placing anything before God as a priority in our life, because we're looking for it, we're trusting in it, we're not trusting in God to be our deliverer. As called out ones we understand that we are to place nothing before God, and we're not to do it because that's our tendency. We'll look at some components of that, that it's a natural thing to put something before God.

The main thing that we as God's people would place before God is our selfishness, because we don't agree with God. That's an act of selfishness. Who are we to not agree with God? When you see a doctrinal change, who are we that we wouldn't agree with a doctrinal change, really? Because it's "my" opinion, it's the way "I" feel. Just another act of selfishness being demonstrated.

Our time. So another area of an idol is our time, whether or not we put our time in earning an income for self ahead of God, a relationship with God which is going to last forever. It should last forever. But the working to earn money doesn't last forever. It goes pretty quick. It's going to pass.

Our desires, our opinions can be idols. We have an opinion about something that is against God or the way God states it, well, that's an idol because we raise up our opinion and disregard God's opinion or what God says is right and wrong. We say, no, well, this is what "I" think. The idol is us, our opinion, and what's in our minds. That becomes the idol on a spiritual level. So God must be first in our life.

The second commandment, which goes into the actual idol itself: **verse 4—You shall not make for yourself a carved image**. So the first thing is we go physical "carved image," you know, the Buddhas and all the other things, statues. ...**any likeness that is in heaven above**, so nothing that's in the heavens above. You looking at star signs and things like that, **or that is in the earth beneath**, so anything on the earth. We know Israel made a golden calf. Well, that's a classic example. We look it and say, "How stupid were they to make that, to think that the golden calf that was from gold..." and we'll look at it later where God says, "But I made the gold. It was Mine. You know, I made the gold." Someone may cover Buddha out of wood, and say, "I bow to

the Buddha,” and yet God’s word says, “Hang on, I made the tree. You’ve cut a bit of it off and you worship that, so why don’t you worship the rest of the tree? But that’s been carved so you worship that. Why not worship all the rest of it? What’s different?” Here. That’s what’s different.

So we have these idols that we need to be careful, that we haven’t carved out an “image of God” that the way we think about God. Now, I’m referring to God’s nature. God says He’s all merciful. Do we really believe that? Really? Do we really believe God’s all merciful? That God is love? Do we really believe that? Do we understand it? Well, they’re the things that we can raise up where we can almost defame God’s character by believing something different than what God says He is.

...or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. So it’s about giving credit to something. God is saying here that we are to give no credit to anything other than Him. Why? Because He is the creator of spirit and of physical, and therefore, nothing else in a spirit realm should be worshiped other than Yahweh Elohim. Nothing on this earth should be worshiped other than Yahweh Elohim, because He made it. So you can see how stupid it is really if we really understand that, that God made everything physical. So why would you take something that God had made and, say, give it credit?

So who delivered the children of Israel? “The golden calf took us out.” That is just so stupid, isn’t it? Well, we have these things that we need to think about. What is it that we are placing before God, that relationship with God. He is almighty. He is all powerful. He can save us out of any environment...on a spiritual level as well.

Verse 5—You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. So, no image for a religious service or for worship. Now, that, therefore, when you look at religion, they all have an image—this commandment, this is why I said in the introduction, false religion has created it from human reasoning. So if you look at it and say, “You shall not make for yourself any carved image,” well, you automatically think of every religion. Every religion has something.

Whether it’s from India and they think of reincarnation and they worship through the cow because that’s somebody. Well, that’s an image.

The Catholic Church, for example, is riddled with images or likenesses and pictures and statues. It’s riddled with them.

Most of the Protestant world has some form of image. The cross. That little metal thing that they wear around and all the other things they carry are things from the human mind when really it should be just a pole. But that’s what they’ve created from the human mind.

Well, all these things are breaking God’s law, which is sin.

Verse 5—You shall not bow down to them or serve them. We’re to have nothing in the way of an image for a religious service. Why? **For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.** Now, this is not about being provoked in the sense of anger, but it is being provoked from the point of view of a

judgment. Now, what I'm saying there is that God who is eternal, who made everything, and then what He made turns around and gives credit to something else and yet God gets no credit, therefore, that's like a provocation towards a judgment. Well, if you want to do that and do that and not repent of that when the opportunity is given, therefore, you will pay a penalty. There's going to be a judgment. There's going to be an outcome because God has laws that are in place. You're going to provoke God to an anger? You're going to provoke God to give you the penalty for sin. "The wages of sin is death" - you're going to pay a penalty. "There's a judgment going to come on you if you want to turn around and then carve things out of wood and believe that is what saves you, when I am Yahweh Elohim, the Eternal."

...visiting the iniquity (sin) of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me. So idolatry really shows ill will towards God or hate and not love - God is love. So here we are giving credit to something else. It's God who saves. Nothing else can save. Only God can save.

...but showing mercy (forgiveness) to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments. So we clearly understand that we're to look to nothing physical. We don't have idols in God's Church. We don't have idols, as you know. We don't have anything that we trust in. Our trust is in God. Now, that is the demonstration of we don't want an idol in our life. Therefore, we don't rely on money to save us; we rely on God to save us, because money won't save us.

Someone made an interesting statement. We were in a bank and doing a transaction and the lady turned around and said, "You can't take it with you," type of thing. You can't take money with you. Because someone had died. Her father or someone had died. Anyway, the lady turned around and said, "If someone wants to take it with them, we're happy to issue a check and put it in with them." I thought, oh, that's wisdom, isn't it, really? You can take it with you, but the check will never be cashed because it's in the coffin with the person. You can't take money with you. You can have a million dollars, and if you die, you can take it with you - write a check out and put in the withdrawal and put it in, but it'll never be cashed so it's always just going to sit there. So you can't take it with you.

So that was, to me, was saying that's one of the biggest problems within mankind. The idol is money. People just look to money. It's about what will save them; all different ways of thinking about that.

So God clearly says here that obedience to the 10 commandments is required. But for us, not only the physical obedience is required, but the intent of the law, the spirit of the matter, which we have covered previously. We are to give credit to God the Creator not the creation. That's the problem with mankind's thinking.

Leviticus 26:1—You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a pillar, which is a monument, nor shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved

stone in your land to bow down to it, which is to give credit to it. Now, people do have monuments, but it's about whether or not you look to the monument as a credit to something, which is, you know, being saved. We're talking about salvation. ...**for I am the Lord your God.**

Now, the word "idol" comes from a word meaning "good for nothing." It's interesting, isn't it? An idol, the word really means "it is good for nothing"—an idol is good for nothing—"of no value." It's of no value. It can't do anything. "A thing of naught," "a thing of nothing." That's what the word actually means.

Now, the purpose of this sermon is for us to come to understand why it is foolishness to have an idol or anything of an idol in our life, which we all have that we wouldn't easily see. But we're to come to see those things. What is it that we are putting before God, where we're not looking to God to be involved in our life? It's important to go through this looking at it physically, but also spiritually.

Isaiah 45. Isaiah 45 really cuts to the chase about why it is so stupid to have anything as an idol in our life. **Isaiah 45:5—I am the Lord, the Eternal, the Self-existing One, and no other; no God, no Elohim, besides Me.** There is only one. There's not an "us." There is just one. **I gird you, though you have not known Me,** talking to Israel, **that they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me.** There is none. There is only one Yahweh Elohim.

I the Lord, and no other; I form (mold) the light and create the darkness, I make (produce) peace and create calamity (which is evil, by creating choice); **I, the Lord, do all these things.** Everything or anything in our life that opposes God is an idol.

So here we look at it and say, yes, there is one Eternal God who created everything, and therefore, mankind tends towards having something to look to, to trust in. Well, we are to be careful within our own selves about what is it we're looking to that we're trusting in. And that, generally, is self, you know, the way we see ourselves. We trust in that to get us through things.

Isaiah 44:6—Thus says the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, talking about Israel's redeemer. Now, we're spiritually Israel so our Redeemer is Yahweh Elohim. He's the one who's working towards saving us from what we are. ...**the Lord of hosts: I the First and I the Last; besides Me,** apart from Me, **no God.** There is no other Elohim. There is only one Elohim, and we know that Christ has entered that family.

Verse 7—And who can proclaim as I do? Now, that's a question. So, who out there, what idol, whatever thing there is, who can proclaim the future like God? There isn't anything - that we know there's nothing. So God is asking Israel here, well, who is there that could proclaim what is going to happen in the future? Now, we know about 7,100 years. Well, who out there and what idol has declared there is 7,100 years? No one. Only God has declared it to His Church. So we know something that nobody knows, and if we were to go out there and tell people there is only 7,100 years they'd laugh, because no other false religion has that truth. They just don't have that

understanding. They don't know about a Millennium. They don't know about a hundred years. They don't know about resurrections. They don't know anything.

They think you're going to be reincarnated as a frog or a mosquito. Well, let's hope not! I don't want to come back as a mosquito. You know, you're not going to last long at all. So we understand the truth. We understand the truth.

Verse 7, continuing on, **Then let him declare it and set it in order before Me**. Now, what God is doing is challenging mankind, particularly here Israel, but us, "Well, if there is another being out there that can declare the future, well, let that being stand up, person stand up, lay it all out before Me and just see who can bring it to pass." They can't. Only God can bring it to pass.

So if you take the pinnacle of a spiritual creation, Lucifer, Satan now, so let him stand up and lay it all out and let him bring it to pass. He can't. He can't. He can't do that. He's coming to an end so he can't. He can't go much past 7,100 years, and then the end, and then Elohim, and then what? What God has got planned. We don't understand all of that but what God has got planned.

So God is challenging mankind, well, if you know so much and you want to have an idol, let the idol declare all this stuff and let's stand back and just see what happens, see whether it comes to pass. Well, we know it's not going to, is it? That's why it is very stupid of us not to be working on ourselves, the idols that we have in our own minds; it's really stupid. Because that idol is also going to pass. The idol that we carry around, our opinion, if it doesn't match as God's, if it doesn't match God's opinion, God's view, it is going to pass, it's going to be destroyed.

Verse 7—Let him, ever who it is, declare it and set it in order before Me (Yahweh Elohim). **Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, let them show these to them.** So predict the future and see what happens. See if it's going to happen.

Well, we can, because of God's people and God revealing to us, the only way we know it, that there is 7,100 years and then there's an end to Satan and a mass of mankind, as the sands of the sea, as Ron has said. But after that can we know? Can we declare it? No one can. So let them show them to God.

Well, let's predict the future past that period of time. Well, all we know is spirit beings. What will they exactly be doing? We don't know. We don't know really the order of things. We don't know. We know there is a spiritual structure as far as an order, which is spiritual Israel, the temple divided into certain areas, into gates, twelve, twelve apostles as the twelve areas, and then under that there's more, there's kings. But we don't know much out there. We don't know a lot. There is a lot we do not know. The reason would be very clear, we can see it.

God has existed forever (which our minds can't grasp), has existed forever and here we are, a temporary little period of time. Then if we are blessed enough to enter a spirit realm as a spirit being then we will never catch up with the knowledge God has if He's existed forever. Because we've come into being, but how many billions and trillions of years and never ending before us,

so whatever it is, we're never going to be like God in knowledge and wisdom. We'll have the mind of God to a degree. Look forward to the change, don't we, to not think sin.

Just interesting, at the moment within Australia there is a lot of bush fires, as you know, most of New South Wales, a lot of it's burning, and parts of Queensland are burning. There's lots of things going around. Now the politicians are standing up and saying it's because of the greenies. Another one says it's because of "this." And the other one says it's because of "that." And another one says, someone said, oh, you know, it's because of the weather.

But not one person has come up and said the real reason why it's on fire. Sin. The reason mankind has problems is because of sin. Because if you go back into the Bible God clearly says what's going to happen. Sin causes big problems.

Pollution of the waters. Saw a program where they were walking around the coast of Australia and there's beaches there where no humans virtually ever go and they're picking up plastic. So they're picking it up, would you believe, and they're putting it in piles. They do a big stretch of beach. Then they would bring palm leaves and they'd set it on fire. Well, you've got to get rid of it. There is no rubbish dip there. What are you going to do with all this plastic? So they burn it, the nets that are there and all that. You think, "Well, that helps. All the pollution is going in the atmosphere." But they think they are doing something good. But nobody turns around and thinks the reason the beaches are polluted is because sin, selfishness.

We just saw somebody going into the gym. They walked along and they had one of those cans the energy drinks. He's walking along with his muscle shirt on and he's heading to the gym. He gets his extra caffeine, skulls it down, whoosh, on the ground and walks into the gym. That's the problem! Why do we have pollution? Sin! We have pollution because of selfishness. Selfishness is sin.

So why do we have fires? Sin. People have cut down too many trees, the weathers changed. Yes, of course it has because of greed, selfishness. Sin. So the problem we have in this world is sin. It's easy for us. But you couldn't ring up a politician and say, "Hey! I can tell you why there are bush fires all through New South Wales. It's because of sin." "Oh, okay. Next!" But that's the reality because we are destroying the planet because of selfishness, and therefore, things are going wrong everywhere.

We've got floods in certain places because of the Thunders. What God said would happen is actually happening. Sin is the problem. Mankind is the problem. We're the problem because of our selfishness.

Well, with idols it's the same. We're the problem because we do raise things up before God. Well, God is saying now to Israel about idols.

Verse 8—Do not fear, nor be afraid; have not I told you from that time, and declared it? Hasn't God told His Church what's going to happen? God has outlined it. You can look at it and say different things.

Let's just look at the Seven Last Plagues, which we understand now there is a change of our understanding. The Seven Last Plagues will happen exactly as God has written them. Exactly. That hasn't changed. As God declared it. Now, our understanding of the timing changes. But the Seven Last Plagues will happen because that's what God declared. But our understanding is being adjusted.

So you can see what God declares will happen. The Seven Trumpets will happen. Exactly, we don't understand, but they will happen. There will be seven of them and there will be Seven Last Plagues. Because what God has written is exact. It's going to happen. He declared it, and therefore, it's fact. It's going to happen. Doesn't matter what anyone says about all the different theories of false religion, what they have. They don't understand or talk about it. But it doesn't matter, what God said is actually going to happen and God has given it to His Church, His people for a purpose, for understanding; He gives us the understanding that we need.

Have I not told you from that time and declared it? You are My witnesses. So we're the evidence, we have the truth. So we are evidence of what's going to happen. **Is there a God besides Me?** No, there isn't. It's a question, "Is there?" "Is there a God besides Me, Yahweh Elohim?" No. We worship the One True God, which is a wonderful thing and it's an incredible blessing that we actually have.

There are a few that aren't here today; they don't come because of health. But if you look at it, we are most blessed. All out of the seven million or so that are in Victoria, we have this knowledge. We know about this foolishness of idols. We do. They have no idea because it's not their time to know.

Indeed there is no other Rock, or that word really is "Mighty One," **I know not one.** So God is saying there is nothing else. Nothing has this power. Nothing has this power to save. Doesn't have the power to create. Nothing. Only God, Yahweh Elohim, has it, and therefore, isn't it stupid for us to raise anything up before God? Our view, our opinion, anything, our selfishness.

Now, we fulfill our selfishness, which really is idolatry. Because if we have a selfish thought we know that it's the wrong way to think, or behave, but we ignore God who said, no, we're raising something up—our view, our opinion, our sin before God—self-satisfaction. All those things.

So that's what our idols are and that is why we have to be working on ourselves and examining ourselves. So people would say, "Oh, you don't have idols," because it's physical, you can't see it, "You don't have an idol." "Well..." But you can't explain it to them, of course, but God through His spirit, holy spirit, can reveal our idols to us, about what we put before Him. There is a lot, a lot more than we would even think.

Verse 9—Those who make an image... Now it's going into something physical. We're looking at it spiritually. **Those who make an image, all of them useless...** I think that wonderful how that's put. Like, someone there will create something, it's useless. It can't do anything. God created everything and now someone is taking something and making it into an idol to worship for the purpose of advantage to self. God says, all useless, it's a complete waste of time. But man will do it. **...and their precious things shall not profit.** So it's not going to benefit them.

So our idols that we have within our minds and what we raise up we think are benefitting us. It's called selfishness. Well, God says it's of no benefit to you. It's sin. It's no benefit. Sin; there is no benefit in sin. The more we see ourselves, the more we come to realize there is no benefit. But, of course, we are human, we are natural, and we give into things. We say things we shouldn't, we give in to things we shouldn't, and God says here all of those acts are useless. We in the Church, it's about repentance. Being in the Church is about change, about overcoming self.

They are their own witnesses, their own evidence. **They neither see nor know...**this is looking at something physical. They can't see and they don't know, **that they may be ashamed,** which is a disappointment. Now, a lot of people will bend down to an idol and pray for extra money or pray for these things and they go to an idol for it. Whether it's star signs, it says you're going to win lottery, or whatever it is, people look to those things, but they will be disappointed, and no matter what it is, even if things do work out where something may come true that they wanted, because that's the way the world is, and somebody wins the lottery, and they'll say, "Oh, I won the lottery because I prayed about it." Well, it doesn't mean to say God was involved in any shape or form. It's just these things happen, someone has to win it. Virtually, in the end, someone wins it.

But in the end they'll be disappointed. Why? Because once you get into Christ returning, you have a thousand years and then you have a hundred years and then everything physical will be destroyed, it's all going. So it doesn't matter whether you win ten dollars or a million dollars, it's all going. The whole lot of it's going.

Verse 10—Who would form a god and mold an image that profits him nothing? So it's no use having an idol of any type, whether it's physical or a spiritual one, because there is no profit to self-gratification in the end, none at all, which is selfishness, in other words.

Clarify that: All acts of selfishness are self-pleasing. Because that's why we do it, to please self, no matter what it is. Pulling somebody down with words pleases self, because as you pull somebody down we're lifting up an idol, "me." Pull someone down they're less than "me," of course, and I'm higher, so we're raising something up which is called self.

Verse 11—Surely all his companions, all other idols, would be ashamed; and the workmen, they are mere men. So looking at something, it's just humans with their idols. Someone had to make it. It's just mere man making something that was already created. God created the wood. God created the metal.

I don't know whether you saw the demonstrations about the people that were demonstrating at the mining conference. The mining conference was people demonstrating about taking minerals out of the ground, and they were going ballistic about it. Then they all drove home. Well, where do you think the car came from? Minerals out of the ground. You have a mobile phone. Where do you think the mobile phone came from? Minerals out of the ground. But a demonstration saying there should be no mining at all and people getting very violent about it saying no mining at all, and then they walk on the footpath going home. Where do you think that came from?

Because we're a physical society. Not saying that all mining is necessarily good and all that sort of thing. There is a lot of mining that takes place because this is what we live in. Where did we think all this came from? Came out of the ground. Trees come out of the ground. They grow and take nutrients out of the ground. Wood that's harvested, it's like a form of mining. It's the same thing.

So you know, they're demonstrating about no mining at all yet mobile phones don't work unless there is a chip of gold in it or a bit of silver. Won't work. It's not possible. That's how electronics work. So all of these things, you know, there's logic and balance in all types of things. So we've just got to be careful about the way we think like anyone that is demonstrating against the mining company at this very point in time, really is just forcing their opinion on somebody else. "It's what I think - there should be no mining." It's raising something else up. They can't help it, of course, because that's the way it is.

Verse 9—Those who make an image, all of them useless, and their precious things shall not profit. They are their own evidence; they neither see nor know that they may be ashamed, a disappointment. Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing? So that's a question from God? So who would form something and do that, that there is no benefit? Well, that's why people do it. People do things because it benefits self. That's why people have idols.

So if you look at astrology, which is another form of idolatry, why do people get involved in astrology as far as having star signs? To benefit self. It's the only reason. Because when they read it every day and look at it and it says what your favorite color is and your lucky number, it's all about benefit to me, otherwise, what's the point of having it? What's the point of having a star sign and following it unless it's benefitting you? Because after a while, if you read your star sign and it says your life is going to be a disaster, your life is going to be disaster, you're never going to win any money, you're never going to have "this," you're never going to get married, you're never going to do "this," you're never going to do "that," how long do you reckon they're going to read it for? They'd give up! There is no benefit in looking at this stupidity.

But it's always positive things, you know, you're going to meet someone, you're going to get wealthy, you're going to have "this," you're going to have "that." That's why people read those things, because there's a benefit.

People only have idols of any type because there is a benefit to self. We're exactly the same. We think there is a benefit to us. That's why we have those idols. They're in our minds. It's the way we think.

Verse 11—Surely all his companions would be ashamed, which are other idols. The workmen, they are mere men. They themselves, they let them all be gathered together, let them stand up. Yet they shall fear. So do they have any powers, is another way. Do any of these things have any power? No, they don't. **They shall be ashamed together.** Because they're all coming to the end.

Verse 12—The blacksmith with his tongs works one in the coals. Now, when we look at this it shows you how stupid it really is, isn't it? So here is the blacksmith. He grabs it, **he fashions it with a hammer.** So it's a bit of metal and he's got it and in its raw state, it's just a piece of metal. Now he's going to get it and bang, he's going to work really hard at it to make a shape of something because why? There's a benefit to him. It's called, "How much will you pay for this idol?" So there's a benefit to him to do all of this. The person who's buying it, what does he or she think? There's a benefit to me.

So internal thinking is there's an advantage to me to have this. People will either think I'm religious or I'll have "this" or I'll have the big cross on my robe and I have my staff or my special hat. It's all about "me." It's about "me." That's what's going on here.

Well, **he fashions it, he works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he,** the blacksmith because he's human, **is hungry, and his strength fails.** So he's working really hard here and yet he's going to fade, he's going to fail. He's just a man working to make money. **He drinks no water and is faint.** So man is not like the Eternal. God is the Eternal. He never faints. He doesn't get tired. He doesn't need to drink water. But man is mortal. He needs all these things. Yet he's willing to take something and make it to stand up to believe it's of some value, when it's not. God does not need food whereas the man making this idol does.

The craftsman stretches out his rule, talking about a ruler, **he marks it out with chalk,** like a piece of flat wood or whatever, you mark it all out, draw it all out what he's going to make. **He fashions it with a plane,** so he's got the woodwork going there. **He marks it out with the compass,** he's got dimensions that he's got. **He makes it like a figure of a man.** Now, that, when you look at it, why would you do that? If you had any brain you'd think, well, God (image that God has, who God is), and why would we craft a piece of wood, that God made, into the shape of another human being, and then you would look to that as being your idol, something to look to?

Now, when you look at these things and you project yourself forward into a period of resurrections, one thing that stands out is there are people on this earth today that are used to being worshipped. So there are certain men and females that wear no clothes, and they go have a concert, and people literally worship them. Their survival rate in their mind is the amount of worship they get. Unless they're in the media and people are adoring them they don't feel

complete, because, you know, they dance around on the stage and they sing and literally millions of people will turn up over a period of time at different concerts and they'll, "Yeah, rah, rah, rah!"

Now, that person at some point will die and be resurrected and one of the things that's going to have to be told to them - there is only one true God that is to be worshipped. No human should worship or give glory to another human. Why? Well, it's not good for them, number one, to raise them up. Therefore, "You are no longer allowed to dance around on the stage nude or half nude. You are no longer allowed to just stand there and have a million people worship you because all the glory has got to go to Yahweh Elohim, the Creator." Because they're going to learn the purpose of life.

Now, those people are going to struggle. Some, not all. Some are going to really struggle with that. Because if you're used to being idolized and, you know, people giving you everything because of you're so wonderful, and then that's all got to stop, the human mind is going to struggle. "What do you mean we're all the same? What do you mean I'm selfish?" Totally selfish. Whew.

You can see why people are just not going to cope. Because they live in a culture where they're worshiped and now they're going to have to learn that they are the idol.

People say, "Who is your idol?" and they say, "Such and such is my idol." That's an idol. You've got to get rid of it. You cannot go there and build people up like that. It's wrong. It's sin. The glory all has to go to God.

So people will struggle. A lot of people will struggle with the fact that they cannot be the center of attention. No, God, like for us, God is the center of our attention. We look to God for everything in our life.

So here we have somebody now who is actually molding it from wood. Continuing on in **verse 13— and makes it like the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in his house.** So he builds this physical idol and he puts it up and now he will pray to it.

He cuts down cedars for himself, and takes a cypress and the oak; he secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. So he goes and gets it and selects it, "This is the one I want to do." **He plants a pine and the rain nourishes it.** So it grows. **Then it shall be for a man to burn.** So just thinking - okay, you plant it, there it grows by itself, one lot is for the fire, but the same tree you'll use a part of it to make an idol that you'll pray to, and yet the other part you'll burn. Isn't that insanity when you think about it? Isn't that stupidity? It's just logic thinking of it. But mankind hasn't got to this point where they understand these things.

Verse 15—Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread. So he's using one part of this tree for self. You know, he's got to feed himself; he's got to keep warm.

Indeed he makes a god and worships it, from the other part. He takes it and carves an image, and falls down to it. Yet ten minutes ago he had the fire going and he was cooking his soup or his porridge, and now he's down to this part and he's worshipping that. So he falls down to it. **He burns half of it in the fire; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied because he eats it. He then warms himself and says, Ah! I am warm; I have set and seen the fire.** So he set this fire, yet the other half he's made into an image.

The rest of it he makes a god, an el, something that he's going to look to. His carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it, and says, Deliver me, for you are my god! Now, that is stupidity!

Now, we can look at it and laugh because it is, true? Just even physically you can look at that and go, well, that's just absolute stupidity. Well, we don't want to look at that on a physical plane. We need to look at it, "What is it in our life that we rely on to deliver us?" Because there are things that are in our mind (and only each one of us can know what it is), and everyone will have slightly different idols, but it's things we're relying on or looking to to save us.

Verse 18—They do not know nor understand; for He (God) has shut their eyes, which is mankind's, so that they cannot see. So man does all these stupid things, but they don't know any different because they don't know Yahweh Elohim. **And their hearts, so that they cannot understand. And no one considers his thinking (his heart), nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, I have burned half of it in the fire. Yes, I have baked bread on its coals. I have roasted meat and eaten it, and shall I make the rest of it an abomination?** Now, that is a question...but that is an incredible statement. So, an idol is an abomination to God.

Now, we look at it spiritually—the thing that we have in our minds is an abomination to God. Now, what I'm referring to there is when we look at it and say that if we have a different view than God has revealed to His Church it is an abomination to God. Because this is God's true Church and no matter what happens God works with His Church. God tests us in different ways.

Well, things that we want to hold on to or things that we want to raise up and hold to our opinion versus what God has revealed to His Church, God says, "What you are raising up," what I would raise up "as a difference of opinion than God's Church is an abomination before God." Why? Because this is God's Church, these are God's people. We will be tested.

Big shock, horror! There is change coming for the rest of our life. That's just what the Church is. We're here to change. We need to become more like God's way of thinking. That's what our life is about, changing the way we think (which is the word repent) continually.

So doctrinal change has always caused problems in God's Church. Fact. If you look at when Mr. Armstrong moved Pentecost from a Monday to a Sunday thousands of people or hundreds of people left. It was a doctrinal change. People left over it. Why? Because they hung on to an idol they had. They were right. They're going to hang on to this, raise it up opposite to God's Church.

I struggle with that in my mind. I'm capable of doing the same thing. Don't get me wrong. I'm very capable of that. But I'm aware that a difference of a view to God's Church can be raised up and it takes people out. That idol that is useless, hanging on to something.

I know Ron has mentioned somebody that wanted to be part of the 144,000, therefore, you leave to go to someone who believes that you probably are part of the 144,000. If you've got God's spirit you sit there and go, that's just stupidity! Isn't it? Really! We see only that it's stupidity.

That's the capability of all of us, to raise something else up. So what's that idol? "I am one of the 144,000. 'Me,' 'I' raise it up." Not talking about me personally. I haven't got a clue. But if you raise it up and you hang on to that and then all of a sudden it's revealed, well, no, you haven't been around long enough, you haven't grown much, and, you know, you need to be around a long time, "Well, that's my idol. I'm obviously not going to stand here. I'm going to go over here where it supports my view." No matter about what God thinks - "my" view.

So we can see there are things in our life that are there. We have to just be very careful. We have to hunt them out. We've got to examine ourselves and say, "Okay, what is it that I have in my thinking that doesn't agree with God and the truth that's been revealed?"

Verse 18—They do not know nor understand, for He (God) has shut their eyes (mankind's) so that they cannot see, and their hearts so that they cannot understand. So we shouldn't look out to the physical things of the world. We know that, you know, in certain countries where they believe in reincarnation and we can laugh at it and think, "How stupid's that!" Well, there's no point. It doesn't prove anything. One day God will reveal the truth to them.

Verse 20—He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside; that he cannot deliver his life, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? So anything that we have created is a lie because it disagrees with God. Therefore, it's a lie, it's not true. We've got to be careful in our minds that we haven't created this and we're holding it in our right hand. It's called our opinion.

A spiritual idol is something we trust in more than God and we look to us to save, like having an opinion that disagrees with God. Anything we trust in before God is an idol. Self-reliance is idolatry. Self-reliance, relying on self. Now, what is that really saying? That's saying we tend to trust in our self, our own ability, our natural abilities. Well, we trust in that, that "it'll get me through." Well, that's actually an idol because it won't get us through. Not spiritually. It won't. God's holy spirit working with our spirit can get us through because we agree with God, and therefore, we can get through. That's not idolatry. We agree with God.

We demonstrate self-reliance one way, a means to measure. It can be a good thing and a bad thing. Mainly because I measure myself. One of the measures of self-reliance, because it's idolatry, is a lack of prayer. So what is a lack of prayer really demonstrating? A lack of prayer to God is a demonstration of self-reliance because "I'm doing okay. I'm relying on myself." I'm not

putting the matters before God and asking God to guide me through those things, and therefore, “No, it’s okay, I can handle this myself.” Self-reliance. Myself. I can handle this myself.

Whereas, if I really understood the might of God and the glory of God I would turn to Him and say, “God, I need Your help. I haven’t got a clue, really, what direction I should go,” pray about it, and then step out in faith. As I’ve said before, could work out good, could be bad. But you have to put it before God and then make a decision. That’s what life’s about. Put it before God and say, “Okay, I’ll put it before God. I believe I’ll make this decision.” Well, that may work out as an advantage in the short term and a disadvantage in the long term. Well, vice versa - could be a disadvantage in the short term and an advantage in the long term. Time tells those things. Sometimes we just make decisions believing that it’s the right decision. Well, God doesn’t make decisions for us. He’ll guide us and help us on spiritual matters, which is the important part of life, not the physical necessarily.

If we don’t ask God for His holy spirit - is a sign that we are self-reliant. Because if we’re not asking God for His holy spirit in our life to help us, to guide us on a spiritual level, well, we’re being self-reliant again.

Another idol that we could have that we’re maybe not aware of is our food stash. We’ve been told by God’s prophet that we should put about three months away, two to three months. Whether we have it for that long is another matter. Who knows, it may be taken after day three. Because our reliance has to be on God will get us through. But we’ve been told two to three months is fine. But if we’ve got twelve months, thirteen months, fourteen months, sixteen months, well, is that a sign of self-reliance? Well, only the individual could answer that because it could be an idol that we think we’re going to save ourselves. Got bad news for you: No, God, Yahweh Elohim is the only one that can save us physically from anything and spiritually. Nothing else can save us. Extra food won’t help us. God, we have to look to God to be our provider. We should follow what God has revealed we should do.

Money can be an idol because we can seek it before our relationship with God. We’re just so busy we haven’t got time to pray. Or we’re so busy that we’re so tired we can’t worship God today. “Sorry, I just can’t go to services today because I’ve given everything this week.” There are times when that may happen. But if it’s a regular thing? Suggestion is, change your job, because God has to be first. If we’re too tired for fellowship what are we really saying? God is second, maybe? Only the individual, again, can look at that and examine it. We’re to be very careful that we’re not putting other things before our relationship with God and a fellowship as brethren.

Money can be that idol because we can say, “Well, I’m okay. I’ve got fifty thousand in the bank and I’m relying on that.” So if things go bad, when it goes bad, that’s okay, I’ve got my money saved away. Money will be worthless anyway.

So we have to be very careful that we haven’t got these hidden idols that are in our minds. Only the individual can find them.

Deuteronomy 20:1—When you go out to battle against your enemies... this is God revealing information to Israel, physical. **When you** (spiritual Israel) **go out to battle against your enemies...** Who are your and my enemies? Who are our enemies? In the mind. Sin. Sin is our enemy. Selfishness is our enemy. That's what we do. Overcoming self. So when we go to battle against ourselves what do we have to do?

So we're going, "I'm going to overcome my number one sin." I'll never overcome my number one sin ever while I'm a human. I know that. I've accepted that. But I can fight it. I'm going to be more aware of it and my two, and my three, and my four. I am human. I make mistakes. I act selfishly in lots of ways and I know that I'll never overcome them totally. I need God's help to continue to show me more detail of the sin that I've got. I'll say, today I am going to really work on it. Maybe ten minutes later it happens. But that's okay. It's not really, but it's okay from the point of view that I can repent and say, "Ugh, I don't want to be like that. God forgive me." I believe God forgives me and I'm going to keep moving forward.

We do get better at overcoming those things over time. It's like a hundred percent thing. Well, we work it down and all of a sudden it's only a part of our life, not all our life. But it takes time.

When you go out to battle against your enemies, which is self, and you see the horses and the chariots and the people more numerous than you... Well, if we look at ourselves there are days when I think, whew, the horses and the chariots, which are the sin in my life, that they're more numerous than what I can deal with. I'm never going to get through this. It's so daunting when you reveal it, how selfish we really are. It's in every aspect of our life. You think, "Well, they're more numerous than me!" So much so that we think our nature is overpowering us.

Well, that can be, in some ways, a very positive thing, that God has revealed ourselves to ourselves, that we see that, because then we can learn to say, "Okay. This is the way I am. Now I know what I've got to fight against." It looks impossible to overcome the sin. Well, there are certain sins that I know that I'll have, and there are other sins that I know that if I work at it hard enough I think I could overcome them. But they're only minor things. I'm working on the big ones, but they'll still be there. But we can reduce the amount of times that they happen.

Do not be afraid of them. Ah, great! "Don't be afraid of these things that God has revealed to me, what I'm really like. Don't be afraid of that because God with me says that He will win the battle for me, He will be with me." So there is good news in this, we can get through this over time.

...for the Lord your God is with you. Isn't that incredible? Because we look at that physically and say, oh, yeah, God would fight their battles for them. God will fight our battles with us, but we have to choose it. **...who brought you up from the land of Egypt.** We were called for this purpose, to fight against these armies that are there, which is in the mind.

Verse 2—So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, we're getting close, we say, okay, we see it, then the priest shall approach and speak to the people. We talk to ourselves about it. "Okay. God has revealed this to me..." There are things that haven't been revealed to me yet that I do that are sin, but I'm not aware of them.

We all have pride. How much we see, of degrees, is a different matter. Well, when God reveals aspects of pride to us—all sin is pride—so we look at it and say, "Ah, I'm going to work on that." Well, we shouldn't be afraid to work on it because God says He'll be with us. God's there. That's what He wants us to do, to fight, just keep fighting. Whether we win or lose in the sense of short term is not the issue, it's the big battle, because the end result is we will win. Isn't it incredible? God says that He wants us in Elohim. That's why we were called. At a particular time we've been called, we exist. What a marvelous thing that we can win this battle. We should go out with boldness to conquer self because God says He'll fight for us, but we have to look to Him to fight the battle for us, not be self-reliant.

Verse 3—And he shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, which is spiritual Israel, Church of God—PKG, Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies, which is true, spiritually in the mind. Do not let your heart/your mind faint. Don't be overcome by it. Don't be too daunted by it all because it is a big battle as you see more. Do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because by them. So yes, we all have problems, all differing problems. Not every person's the same. No two people are the same. All have got different things that are revealed to us that we have to overcome, all of us. Well, okay, acknowledge them. Don't be afraid of them. Let's tackle them. Let's go forward.

...for the Lord your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies. So God will be with us to fight against our selfishness **...to save you.** Isn't that beautiful. I find that's incredible and absolutely beautiful because God says He will save us. Not the food. Not the stash. Not all the things of self-reliance. Not all the things we raise up and we think will help us. No, Yahweh Elohim is the one that will save us from them, from what it is. God does it if we desire to overcome and fight. So God will be with us if we desire to overcome self.

Of late, I've been thinking in my own thinking, I really want to enter Elohim. I really want that. I don't want to be in this body, and I want to enter Elohim. Now, if I die and have to be resurrected and come up in a hundred years and have to do it again for another hundred years, I still want that. No matter what it takes, that's what I want. I've resolved in my mind that's what I want to want. Because I sat there and thought, "Okay, choices here, Wayne. It's simple really. Fight a fight that is difficult—it's not easy—and I will lose often. I'll lose most of the rounds, like boxing. It's going to be tough. But as long as I'm willing to get up each time and keep going God has promised that I can enter Elohim and live forever."

The alternative is to give up and never have life ever again. In other words, it's gone. It's like going to sleep. You won't know that you're asleep, it's just you won't exist. So I've resolved deep down, Wayne, I want to exist. I hope you've done the same. I want to exist forever in Elohim with

a mind that can't sin. That's what I want. We all have to come to that at some point, "That's what I want." That's why we're willing to do the things we do. That's why we're willing to fight against our selfishness because that's what I want. I don't want to be no thinking for the rest of eternity, just not existing. I don't want that. I want to exist.

So it's something we have to do. Well, with that in our minds we can turn around and say, **verse 4 –For the Lord your God is He who goes with you.** Yes, Yahweh Elohim through Joshua the Messiah, is with us, the Church of God—PKG if we want to be with Him. That's what it boils down to, and if we do, we're going to fight. If we don't, we're going to give up, we're not going to fight against it. There'll be times when we lose, but that's the purpose of life, to lose a battle but to keep fighting. God is with us as long as we desire to change and repent. God will save us from this mortal body. It's a promise. That's what God has said.

So when you take this into perspective every idol is an abomination before God. So the idol that's in us, in our thinking, is an abomination before God and we are to desire to remove it. It's anything that we're putting before God, anything at all that we're putting before God.

Deuteronomy 4:23—Take heed to yourselves, because it's about us individually. The only ones that can hear what we're talking about today on a spiritual level are those that have God's holy spirit, that are in the Body of Christ. No one else is going to hear it. They think it's foolishness.

Take heed to yourselves lest you forget the covenant with the Lord your God which He made with you. When was that? At baptism. ...**to make for yourselves a carved image,** so that's any way of wrong thinking that opposes God. Anything that opposes God is an idol, this carved image, this image we have that we're willing to raise up before God...**in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you.** So all of the things (sin) that God says is not good for us and it will cause problems we should be careful because that sin is actually something we're raising up before God.

Jeremiah 10:1. Now, this particular set of scripture the Church has gone to many a time. I remember in Worldwide days that this Jeremiah 10 because it covers particular aspects that we can deal with because often we look at them on a physical level, because it covers Easter, Christmas, and all of that, which for us is very basic. But there are other things in our life that we need to deal with.

Jeremiah 10:1. We can look at this and smile a little bit because we've passed this side of it, but we need to look at it spiritually. **Hear the word of the Eternal that speaks to you, O house of Israel. Us. Thus says the Eternal: Do not learn the way of the gentiles.** Now a "gentile" is an unbeliever. **Do not learn the way of an unbeliever.** So what is the way of the unbeliever? Christmas is one of them, Easter, Halloween, Sunday worship. So we're not to learn those ways because it's false worship, it's an idol.

Christmas is really riddled with idolatry when you look at it, raising up trees and lights and all that sort of stuff. What's that got to do with God? It's a piece of wood. It's a leaf that dies and gets put in the ground and goes back to compost. But people raise it up and believe God's in it and have a star up on top of the tree. It's just stupidity. But we were trapped in that once. That's what we did. We were trapped in it. Well, we've been called out of that.

So these are minor things to us. So we're not to learn the way of the gentiles. We're not to do the things of the gentiles. Well, there's a lot of things the gentiles do, which is unbelievers do, that we have to be very careful we're not doing on a spiritual level.

Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven. So the star signs, astrology—shouldn't believe any of that garbage. God created the stars, the universe, everything spiritual and everything physical, so why would we look to any of those for any guidance at all?

For the gentiles are dismayed at them, because unbelievers are. You know, there are magazines that come out with just all the star signs and all the things that are going to happen. It's all just stupidity, absolute stupidity. We just have to be careful not to get involved in it. We've come out of that. That's all physical. But there are other things we need to be careful of.

For the customs of the peoples are futile; it's absolute stupidity. **For one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the ax.** This is why the Church has always looked at this, said this is Christmas, true? Goes out there with the pine tree, chop it off at the bottom with an axe. **They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.** You got to laugh, true? You stick something up and you think, well, it's going to fall over. It's got no power, can't hear anything, but I've got to have it, got to nail it to something to hold it up or put it in a tub with earth in it, otherwise, it's going to fall over it's that powerful. It can't hold itself up. (That's sarcasm, of course.)

They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried. When you look at a lot of this it's hard not to laugh, really, when you think. But I was caught in that. I remember. I think I've covered this before. I remember. At the time I thought we were so blessed because my mother being a catholic was given permission to have the Madonna carried into the house and put in the house and we had it for a week. Whoa, that was just amazing stuff! Like, that's the greatest blessing! Now you read this and you think, how stupid, a piece of clay carried in, carved out, was painted, and there she is and that candle is going for a week. Then they came again and they carried it off to another house to bless the house. You think, boy was I stupid. Was I stupid! It's just stupidity. What God is saying, these things are just so stupid to rely on these things and to pray to these things. They're nothing. You might as well spit in the wind; the same, you get the same result.

Verse 5, continuing, Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, so these are just physical things that God made that man's made, nor can they

do any good. So you see how foolish. They have no power, they are from human reasoning. All of that is from human reasoning.

Insomuch as there is none like You, Yahweh Elohim, the Eternal (You are great, and Your name is great in might). Now, the world is going to have to come to realize this, that there is one true God that is almighty, the Eternal, the Self-existing One. They will learn it. Well, we've learnt it, we know it, how blessed are we? Well, what God is requiring of us is that we examine ourselves to make sure we're not still raising up things and putting them before God as an idol. That's what God wants of us. If we find something that is in our thinking, we best do something about it. We best pull that idol down and trample it, which is all about overcoming self.

Verse 7—Who would not fear You, the King of the nations? Yahweh Elohim. For this is Your rightful due. Now, I can understand that more clearly now after doing this review, that when you look at it and if you just stand back, having God's spirit, we can turn and say, "This is Your (Yahweh Elohim's) rightful due." Because He created everything! He created everything. So why would anybody put anything before God? Why would anybody worship anything before God? Anything! We have to be careful spiritually that we're not doing it.

For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You. The creator of the universe who created everything, there is nobody like God. No one. Now we know Joshua the Messiah, Christ, has entered Elohim, which is our destiny. Isn't it incredible? Our elder brother, Joshua the Messiah, has gone before us. Son of God. But we are begotten sons of God, not entered, but we are sons of God, begotten, have God's holy spirit. Our potential is to be there, to live forever. This is exciting. When you compare all this physical stuff, we look at it and think it's absolute stupidity. Why would we do it? We do it. We do it because we're natural.

Continuing on **verse 7—For this is Your (God's) rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like You.**

Verse 8—But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; they're stupid. Well, we were once stupid. Well, we've got to be very careful that we're not acting stupidly now by putting something there. **A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.** It's another way to put it.

Drop down to **verse 10—But the Eternal is the true God; He is the living God,** and I underline the word "living" because everything else that is worshiped is temporary. All idols are not alive. The one that people are following without knowing it is alive; it's a living being called Satan. People don't know it, but that also will come to an end and it won't be a living being at all.

He is the living God, is God, He is alive. ...the **living King, the everlasting King.** The King of an Eternity, the Eternal. **At His wrath the earth will tremble.** Well, no other being, no other idol can do this. Only God can do these things. **And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.** We know that's coming. So now we have a prophecy, really.

Verse 11—Thus you shall say to them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, so anything that hasn't made the heavens and the earth, which is we know God made it, **shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.** So that's a prophecy. Everything that man is looking to to save is going to pass. There is only one God and He has the power to bring to pass what has been prophesied. Well, God's prophesied here that everything shall perish, everything shall perish that is not in unity with God. God has to be first in our life.

I'm just going to power to the end here. **Deuteronomy 12:29.** Again, God talking to physical Israel and we will look at this slightly differently. **Verse 29—When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to possess...** Now, God was going to intervene and if they were to follow God's commandments God would intervene and be their God and they didn't have to go to war. He would sort it out. If they did go to war God would win the war for them, they didn't have to do anything. Well, with us, of course, we have to do something. We have to make a choice.

...and you displace them that dwell in the land. So the called out ones from this world, we are placed into the Body of Christ. So it's a similar thing, we're going into a land. We're in the Church of God, now we have to do something, but God says He will win the battle for us if we trust in Him.

Verse 30, this is the warning to physical Israel. Well, this is the warning to spiritual Israel as well, **take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them,** which is the ways of this world's system, the satanic system, the ways of selfishness.

If we look at Satan, he is totally selfish. Well, God created us with this nature that we are to overcome. He can't overcome it. He's made a choice and he's set. We're not set. We have a choice here. So when we see these things, we see the ways that Satan is drawing and tempting us with, we have to now fight our selfishness because that's what God is looking for. Will we fight our selfishness? Well, we're to take heed to our self. The self, take heed to it, have a look at it.

...after they are destroyed from before you. So God was going to destroy these things. Well, we have to work with God to destroy our selfishness. Now, the way it's destroyed - we accept Joshua the Messiah as our Passover sacrifice. What's that about? Well, sin is destroyed by repentance. Sin is destroyed at baptism. So all our previous sins to a point of baptism are all destroyed. They don't have to be brought up again. Baptism, we come up as a new person, well, that's all destroyed, it's written off, it's gone. Now we're to walk anew in a new way of life. So the only way we can destroy the sin is by repentance, which is this desire to admit we're wrong, our desire to be more like God. That's what we have to do.

Continuing on in **verse 30—and that you do not inquire after their gods,** which is looking to other ways to overcome self. There is only one way you overcome self. That's God's holy spirit with us to reveal sin and to make the decision to overcome. **...saying, How did these nations serve their gods?** Which is looking to something else. "Well, how did these other people do it?"

Well, within God's Church there is only one way - personal choice to repent. It's the only way to overcome sin. **I also will do likewise.** So here it is, this is about Church government. I will do it another way. So you're looking to other things and say, "Oh, I wonder how this Church group," (used to be part of Worldwide), "I wonder how they're doing this or doing that." No, that's all gone. We're not to look to those things. That's the past. We're to look to God's Church for direction in our life.

Verse 31—You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, which is we're to worship God the way we're directed to worship God. We are to worship God as directed by God's Church, the way we do it. We understand that. **...for every abomination to the Lord which He hates...** So if anything we do outside of God's way—so we're looking Christmas, Easter, those types of things—**they have done for their gods.** So that's why they do them. Because that's the way they believe their worshipping their God.

So when you look at Easter, Christmas, Sunday worship, it's really the demonstration of their works, which we've heard about. They demonstrate their worship of their religion, their gods, their idols by their works, what they do. Well, we demonstrate our worship of the one true God by our works, Sabbath keeping. Sabbath keeping is a work. Tithing is a work. All of those things are works that we have to do because we're measured by our works, the choice in the mind.

....they have done to their gods; they have burnt even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. We understand there was child sacrifice where they would say, "If I burn my child to the idol," like Incas and things like that where it used to happen. Israel got involved in those things. Thinking, "Well, it's going to rain and all the fires will go out in New South Wales if I burn my child to Moloch." Now, our minds go, "You're insane!" People wouldn't even talk about this in the world today, they'd say there is no way we're burning children to a god because we want it to rain. Well, cultures have done that, humans have done that.

We have to be careful because we can do something similar, but it's worse. Not physical. Physical is temporary and they'll be resurrected. This is worse. We can offer our children to this world by failing to teach them God's ways. It's the same thing. If we've got the responsibility of children up until the age of 16-18, and we are not teaching them God's ways, what are we doing? We're giving them over to the world so that they can worship a false God. They will worship Christmas, Easter, sun worship. So if we do not teach our children about Yahweh Elohim, the creator of all things, if we fail to teach them that way what are we doing? We're offering our child to a false God called Satan's system.

Verse 32—Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it. It's God speaking. **You shall not add to or take away from it.** So it's what God teaches is the most important thing, and God's Church, what God's Church teaches.

We'll conclude in Nehemiah 9:6 because the way to understand this sermon is always remember there is one Yahweh Elohim, one God, and He is the creator of all things. If we really believe that

and understand it we can pull down the idols on a spiritual level. The physical ones we've already gotten rid of, we should have, and we shouldn't be looking to anything physical. But within the mind, sin, selfishness is still there. We accept it. We know we have idols. Everyone is different. We have to work on those idols. We've got to pull them down because there is only one true God.

That'll give us the motivation, when you look at it, if we really understand there is one true God who created everything, why would we allow anything to raise itself up against Yahweh Elohim who cannot die, who has existed forever, who is the Eternal, the Self-existing One. Why? Because we're stupid. That's why. It's just the selfishness is stupidity. Selfishness is stupidity. To raise self up against God is absolute an act of stupidity. We have to come to see it.

So there are times when we can go before God and say, "God, I've been stupid. I've sinned." Because sin is stupidity, it's rebellion against God, it's raising something else up. "I've raised my selfishness up."

Nehemiah 9:6—You alone are the Eternal; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. So God sustains everything physical for this point of time, for a purpose, to have a family. **The host of heaven worship You.** So all the angelic realm that is in unity with God will worship God.

Now, when they see it and they see what we are and what we do you can see why they can turn and worship God, because the incredible thing: None of this existed how long ago, we don't know, but none of this existed. There was nothing. Now it exists and you would have seen God create it all. Well, surely you would look at that being and say, "Whew! All glory to You!"

Now God has a family and He's going to create Elohim from us? What an achievement! What an achievement. What an incredible thing that's going to happen.

Well, it's only going to happen for us individually if we are willing to pull down the idols. The sin in our life, if we're willing to pull it down, that act of selfishness, pull it down and always turn to God and repent. It's the only way it's going to happen.

It is very clear why we must not place anything before a relationship with God, absolutely nothing. The most important thing in our life is God. That's why we behave "strangely" compared to other people. People think we're quite crazy and do those things. To me that's good news. I've often said if people think I'm a nut and I'm religious and they don't want to talk to me and want nothing to do with me, I actually think that's good news. I'm on the right path. The day they start accepting me and saying, "You're not a nut," we've got problems because it's evidence that I'm obviously getting too close to the world. Whereas this is good news.

So we should know from this sermon and from our calling that the most important thing in our life is God. If we do, and if we put up an idol and if we continue just to live self and not fight, it is an act of stupidity, it really is. We have been called to flee from idolatry. So you know it says "Flee

idolatry,” we’re to flee sin. We’re to flee selfishness, because that’s what it is, an act of idolatry. If we lift up anything before God, which is to put it ahead of God’s word, it’s an idol. So if we disagree with God, we’ve raised something up. What is it? Our opinion.

We have been called to put to death our selfishness. That’s the purpose of our calling, why we’ve been called and why we’re in the Church of God—PKG this very day with God’s holy spirit, to pull down the idol of self. If we fulfill our selfishness in any way it’s sin and it is idolatry. Idolatry reveals that we do not know God as we should. Because if we are unwilling to repent of the sin that’s in us we obviously do not believe that there is only one true God that created everything, otherwise, if we did, we would be learning to pull it down.

So the title of the sermon is *An Idol Really is Stupidity - The Stupidity of Idols*. We can understand why. Because it really is stupid to raise anything up before God.