

Last week we began a new series entitled *The Greatest of Civilization*, so this, obviously, is *Part 2*.

We've looked at what might be considered evidence of the greatest of civilization or the greatness of civilization and it's a lot of that when you see ruins and various things that are constructed, built in different areas hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years ago, sometimes over, you know, thousand or even two thousand years ago in places in Europe and the Middle East and so forth.

It's quite impressive because we have nothing like that over here that you can go visit because this country isn't that old as far as structures and buildings are concerned. If you can find something four hundred years old you're doing quite well. But to go back hundreds of years, thousand, two thousand and beyond is quite impressive, to see what peoples have done at different times.

And candidly, even as we went through some of this, to think about the pyramids? Now, some of the dates of things there can be disagreement about some of these things amongst some people, but it seems to be, as a whole, that there is great agreement (if they knew when the flood took place) that the pyramids, the best known there right around Cairo (of course there are a lot of them around Cairo), were built 220 to 270 years before the flood is to me was astounding. To think that civilization back at that time was that advanced to do things of that nature, of that magnitude? Because it wasn't a small thing.

Anyway, it has an impact on you when you see those things, what mankind has done, that God has given us the ability as human beings to do, the kinds of buildings and so forth. I love architecture. I don't know about others. But I think of some of the different buildings I've seen in different parts of the world. I haven't seen the new building there in New York, but the building of it, the construction of it to replace the towers, quite impressive.

But I've always been impressed with different things I've seen on TV. I don't know if it's the Discovery Channel or History Channel. I think it's Discovery where they have shown where they've built certain things in Dubai and some of the islands and so forth even out there, the palms that are there. Just absolutely incredible what man has been able to do.

God has given us that ability. He's made those things there so that when people put their minds to certain things they can do it. How they constructed the one building that's there that's kind of in a circular pattern as far as some of the things that were done, that they'd never done before and they did the engineering as it was being built. Some of these things are just incredible, massive, massive structures.

So again, great things that mankind has been able to do in different parts of the world, especially in this modern age in the last fifty years or so of some of these kinds of structures. But what they did thousands of years ago? Still impressive.

Anyway, toward the end of *Part 1* we had moved forward from the flood to the time of Hiram, king of Tyre, and his cooperation with Solomon in Solomon's desire to, obviously, build the temple, the things that we have gone through.

We're going to pick up there today in 2 Chronicles. This was the time of Tyre's greatest time as far as history was concerned. It was around the mid 900's I should say, BC, and here is about 960 BC, the dedication of the temple in the time of Solomon.

We're going to pick this up in 2 Chronicles 6, some of the things that are said here. We're going to keep coming back to these particular verses at different times throughout this series because there are some things we're going to focus in on that are inspiring, to build upon them and to see what God had said because a lot of this has been deeply misunderstood by people.

**2 Chronicles 6:1—Then Solomon said, The Eternal has said that He would reside in thick darkness. I have built You a house to occupy.** It says "of habitation," but it's a word that just means "to occupy," a place, and it's not just "a place," in Hebrew. It means "an established place." So that was in his heart and his mind because of his father, David, and what was being built.

**Here is a place for you to occupy that we're building, a place that you can be, an established place for you to stay,** as it goes on to say, **for You to reside,** in other words, **to dwell forever.** Well, we understand much, obviously, that God has revealed to us about what some of these things mean, but I think of progressive revelation and things that people have understood at different periods of time and they had no concept of what God was going to do in time, what the meaning is in all of this that was being done that was a duality, some of it physical, obviously, picturing that which is spiritual.

Anyway, it's an exciting story to go through and read some of these things and to be reminded of them.

**Verse 3—Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel while all the assembly of Israel stood. And he said, Blessed be the Eternal, the God of Israel, who by His hands have fulfilled what He promised by His mouth to my father David, saying...** We'll come back to some of that a little bit later.

But again, incredible here what was being done and what was being said. Now, we know that this has more meaning in it, that there is a duality here just as there was in the tent or the tabernacle in the wilderness and certain things were to be done in a certain way. The service of the temple was to be conducted in a certain way and had been for a long time, but now they had a permanent structure, if you will, that was going to be used and this was an exciting, an incredible

exciting time for them in what they were going to construct, and the planning, the work that went into this was absolutely incredible.

I know when you go through and read some of those things sometimes and you read the intricacy of it all it can be kind of boring because there's a lot there. With any kind of construction, you get the blueprints out and it can be kind of boring. You look at these and say, "Well, what is this?" Basically, if you aren't shown those things, what they are about, what it is, you can lose your interest quite quickly. But again, we should strive to glean what we can out of this.

There are going to be a couple places we're going to look at that should move us, should be inspiring. It should inspire us and not just to read through them quickly, but to understand what God is saying and why He's saying it the way He does. It's inspiring.

But again, we understand what this is about. This wasn't about a fulfillment of something that God told David. Yes, it was going to be a physical structure, but it isn't at all what it was all about. It isn't at all what God told David because that was temporary. That which is physical, that which they built was a very temporary thing and God was using that to teach something far, far greater. Candidly, those things weren't even known for hundreds of years.

You go up to the time of Christ (they still didn't understand), then finally Paul wrote to the Hebrews and finally you begin seeing some things about the tabernacle that began to show the spiritual intent of it all in a way that hadn't really been known in the same way. So God began to reveal it to the Church a few decades after Christ's death, if you will, as our Passover, and still we haven't known everything.

So even then toward the end of this age God revealed much, much more to Mr. Armstrong that hadn't been known before. It had never been known in any period of time before to the degree that it had been given to him. Some of that has to do with because of what was written in Revelation because most of the apostles were dead before those things in Revelation were written about the temple, about some of that we're going to look at that is very clearly spiritual—it should have been, anyway—but even the Church hasn't known that.

When I go through this I am dumbfounded by how at a period of time after Mr. Armstrong was near death in the late 70's there and began to regain his strength toward the end of the 70's and then on into the 80's until he died, when he came back and had basically a focus in his life of putting the Church back on the right track. Because it has strayed; things were going on.

It was because of his illness, it was because he couldn't be there to see what was taking place primarily within those things at headquarters with the leadership of the Church, with those over different departments. It had gotten so large it was very difficult to do that, but God gave him the sense still of knowing when he came back that things had strayed way off course and so his desire was to put everything back on track and he put a great deal into that.

But in the eighties, in the early eighties there are different things you can go to, different writings, (which I think we have one on the website; I know we do), and he goes into depth talking about the temple, that it's the Church, it's about the Church, and yet within the Church there were all these people who even after that didn't get it.

Even after some had been taught that and the ministry had been taught that once we got into the period of Laodicea and things began to be watered down like they were and we began to be sluggish as a Church, I was dumbfounded later on to find after the Apostasy that people had just lost that. It was like, "You don't remember what he said about the temple and you're going back to look at something physical? Things that have to be done in Jerusalem? That somehow something has to be erected there in order for end-time events to take place?" Because they didn't grasp, because they had lost all this.

That's an amazing thing, to realize how quickly things can be lost, lost by evangelists who had been in the ministry for decades in some cases. There's a lot here, but a lot of it was lost leading up to the Apostasy and afterward. Yet Mr. Armstrong was given great understanding of those things before he died, things that the Church really hadn't known. Because they might have been talked about at different times, but it wasn't driven home like he drove it home in the 80's. It wasn't understood to that degree, the focus of different scriptures that we just take for granted.

People have come in since 2005- 6- 7- 8- 9, in through there, and it's hard for us to grasp that history. It's one thing to live it. It's another thing to hear about it and then to think about what that was like. Because we can begin to take things for granted, that we've always known these things, and we haven't. It isn't that far back that you can go back and look at how things were and there wasn't that understanding.

That's why in the early 80's then Mr. Armstrong made it very clear what that temple was all about, that it was about the Church and drove that point home, and yet the vast majority of the Church lost sight of that. That's why they can't understand the stones of the temple, not one left upon another. That's why there are things there that they can't grasp that Christ had to say about the end-time and what was going to take place. On it goes.

**1 Kings 8:17—And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Eternal God of Israel.** So there are things said a little bit differently in some places and so I chose to read this one here.

**Verse 18—And the Eternal said unto David my father, Whereas it was in your heart to build a house unto My name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless, you shall not build the house; but your son who shall come out of your loins...** So this is what Solomon is feeling when he's giving the dedication at the temple and he believes that this is what God has fulfilled.

This isn't what it is. This isn't what it's all about. Yes, there was a son. Yes, there was that which he was going to build. But this is far beyond that and what God is revealing and what God is

showing was something far, far greater than Solomon who was going to build a house, a physical place that doesn't even exist today. It's not even there!

There are some who want to go in and excavate to get down to some of the foundation because there's a mosque on top of it now. The moment they were, if they tried, there would be an all out war. I mean, it's been bad enough through time some of the things that have taken place there and how the city, that old city is divided up into four different quarters, four different focuses on religion, if you will.

It says, **But your son who shall come out of your loins...** The focus wasn't and the message that God is giving and what is being recorded is not about something that would live for a little while and then die. It was much, much greater. That's exciting to understand what God chose and decided to do and how to do it and left that for us. Things that people haven't understood or known when they've gone through and read these things.

Even when Peter came along and started telling different things and some of the other apostles, and Paul, and different ones as they were teaching about some of these things that were pictured in the Old Testament, they didn't get it. Some of the first things that Peter had to say in the Book of Acts about David, they didn't grasp. The Church slowly but surely began to be taught some of these things.

So the one who shall come forth, **the son who shall come forth out of your loins, he shall build the house unto My name.** It wasn't this one. It wasn't this temple. God wasn't going to dwell in it. It wasn't a place for God to dwell. He made that clear to them as time went along.

Even Solomon said some things that revealed inspiration. Whether he understood it or not is doubtful, but it was the things he said, even though he didn't grasp the magnitude of it.

**Verse 20—And the Eternal has performed His word that He spoke, and I have risen up in the place of David my father, to sit on the throne of Israel.** Temporary. Forty years. That's all it lasted. That's all it lasted. This wasn't the fulfillment of it by any measure, but it pictured something that was to happen later.

**...as the Eternal promised, and have built a house for the name of the Eternal God of Israel.** So yes, a house dedicated to God but not someplace that God was going to live forever, dwell forever, inhabit, a place that He could be forever. Hardly.

Then there is Zechariah 6. Beautiful scriptures of things that are recorded in the Old Testament.

**Zechariah 6:12—Speak unto him, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH;** a word that means "to bud forth, spring forth; to grow forth." Again here, about Joshua, about the Christ and what he was to fulfill.

So it speaks of him in this case here, **whose name is The BRANCH; he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Eternal.** Beautiful! We understand what that means.

But very few through time have. Very few through time. Very few in the past 2,000 years - candidly, if any within the Church in times past - because some of these things just weren't known just like they weren't known in the 50's and the 60's and the 70's as a whole within the Church of God until Mr. Armstrong began to drive the point home more and more.

Now, there was a surface knowledge of some of this, but it just wasn't fully there yet.

**Even he shall build the temple of the Eternal; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, upon God's throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne.** So again, things about a priest and what it means. Here a High Priest sitting on the throne? More than a man, obviously. More than a physical human being to fulfill this.

**...and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.** So, beautiful verses.

We're actually going to come back to this in another section later on because there is more here to understand, of what is being said and what's being stated. Sometimes the more you dig the more you find it's beautiful, how everything fits together.

That's why I love construction. I love blueprints. I love being able to see things come together, see the entirety of something being built. It all has incredible meaning especially when you look at the Church, especially when you look at this book and see what God has built. Because in the Bible is the blueprint all the way from beginning to end of something from the very mind of God, from 6,000 years ago until the time it's fulfilled. Some of the things in the next chapter (I believe it's the next chapter it's going to come out or the one after that) we go into it in a little more in depth and detail.

But again, it's a blueprint. The reason this is so exciting is because when you see how things fit together, when you see what God has given and how they fit in place. Again, it's like that puzzle that Mr. Armstrong used to speak of and the pieces that fit here and there so meticulous, so beautiful, so perfectly it's exciting. It's exciting to be a part of that. It's exciting to know what we grasp and what we can see. I don't know if we always grasp that to the depth that we should strive to, how much we have, how much we have been given that people of times past have never known. I think that's hard for us to see.

It's hard for us to grasp that during the time of Paul, during the time of Ephesus, I don't care whether you look at Pergamos, Thyatira, especially Sardis, or Philadelphia, they didn't have fully what we have even to this day because of where we are now in time and because of how God reveals things as we get closer and closer to the coming of His Son. God has a purpose for revealing those things more toward the end. It says so accordingly. So again, inspiring.

So let's go over to Acts. I mentioned this. There are several things in Acts that are spoken of but let's notice a particular location here in Acts 7.

I hope we can see God's word that way, how things fit together like that just like in a building because that's what's taking place - it's construction. It's what God is constructing. Some places it's talking about what He's creating, but there's a construction that's taking place and we're blessed to be a part of that. Everything has to fit perfectly into place. That's what's amazing to understand.

It's not like some things you can get by with on a house and some 2 x 4 doesn't fit perfectly and maybe it's cut too short and so you just go grab another one and you maybe cut it right this time. What is that expression? Measure twice, cut once? Something like that. I hope that's right.

It's incredible how everything fits into place so perfectly in God's word, especially when you get into things in the New Testament and you see from the beginning and the end, the first four gospels, and how things are built upon and throughout the process.

I think of things that God has given us to build upon more and more. We just keep building.

You look at the truths. You're given one truth and that leads into something else and you can't understand the others so often until something is given ahead of that. Then you live that for a time. Because that's how God works, we begin to understand it more deeply and then a door opens up to fit something else on top of that that makes it a stronger structure. It's beautiful. Then to think we're part of that? Awesome! It really is. It's awesome!

So in **Acts 7:44**, beginning there. It says, **Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.** God gave to him how it was to be done and the service of the priesthood and all these things that had to take place. The construction, the building, the duties of various things that were to be done in a specific way God was giving that to Moses and said, "There's a pattern here to follow."

What's awesome to understand is it's about something in the future. It wasn't about this tent. It wasn't about this temporary structure. It wasn't about the one that was built by Solomon. But everything in it pictures something in God's plan. Everything in it. We don't know what all those things are yet. God hasn't revealed the meaning of all those things that are there.

There are a lot of things in there I want to know what the meaning is specifically because it'll be inspiring when He gives that to us, when we see, "Oh, yeah. Why didn't we see that before?" You can't until certain things are given. Then when it begins to fit in a certain pattern we see what God is building. That's exciting. He'll show us as time goes on.

**...he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.** God gave it to him by whatever means, whether it was communicating it to him in his mind and he began to see it come together. It was to be done exactly that way. Then he had to pass it along to others who did the work, others who were equipped or able to carry out various functions of what had to go into the structure, what had to go into the things within it and so forth. If you look at the Holy Place, the

sanctuary and the service there, and then the Holiest of Holies, the ark, all the things that had to be a part of it, beautiful! Beautiful.

**Verse 45—Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua.** So it's talking about when they came into the promised land, finally, after forty years in the wilderness. This is what it's talking about here. So this came with this, travelled with them where they went.

Remember the time when they came up to the river and the ark and the water stopped and then they went on across the other side and the waters, you know, and all of Israel went through.

**Verse 45, again, Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua into the possession of the gentiles...** Hope you understand what it's saying here. What do you mean "into the possession of the gentiles?" Well, Israel began to sin. Israel began to live in a way they shouldn't live, and finally, in time even the ark, the main thing of the temple, they didn't have it anymore. It was in the possession of the gentiles.

**...whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.** So again, if you remember the story of Eli when we went through that here recently and Samuel that began to be trained. Anyway, it might be good, I have it here in my notes, so let's just go back there, back to 1 Samuel and look at some of this, of what took place.

So it's good to understand why this is being spoken of in Acts the way it is. So often, especially in the book of Acts in the things that were taught. Constantly they went back talking about their history, whether it be the beginning of the Church or things that happened in captivity or things when they came out of captivity and went in the promised land. The history. History is so important, that we understand what happened, because if we understand what took place then God can begin to show us why and how He worked with them and we learn from that process.

1 Samuel 4. That's why we talk about history so much. It needs to be deeply embedded in us. Even recent history, obviously. That's why we talk about the Apostasy. Because that's one of the greatest things, in the sense of importance, that's ever happened.

So anyway, **1 Samuel 4:2.** Again, we've read this not too long ago. But going back through it again here it says, **The Philistines formed themselves into battle array against Israel.** So this is that time period I was talking about and some of these things that took place at this particular time when they no longer had the ark. This is what's being referred to in Acts. They lost possession of some of the things (that should have always been in their possession) because of their sins.

It says, **Then they engaged in battle and Israel was defeated by the Philistines who killed about 4,000 men of the army in the field. So when the people had gathered back into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Why has the Eternal defeated us today before the Philistines? Isn't that just typical human nature? "Why has God allowed this to happen?"**

“We’re the Church! How could this happen in God’s Church?” The Apostasy. “Yeah, how could it be in God’s Church? How!” Well, sadly, not enough people asked the question. But again, it was asked. It’s like, “If there is a God...” “It’s God’s fault! I mean, why would He let us go through this? Why would we have someone that we’ve been following, that we had ‘faith’ in following who followed after Mr. Armstrong? We had faith in following him and then he started changing things? All of a sudden he went to Atlanta and he’s changed everything! So why, God?” That’s basically what the reaction and the response of some people was. It’s like it’s God’s fault. Look a little deeper.

Because that was the whole problem of what took place. It was us and we couldn’t admit, as a whole, in a scattered Body of people after the Apostasy that we were all Laodicean. Because it’s hard for us to grasp that attitude and spirit back then. Why can’t you admit that? “Well, because I’m Philadelphian.” That’s the attitude and spirit and until people can come to that, because there are still people who have to come to that, to come to understand what that means, “I was Laodicean. I lived as a Laodicean. I became sluggish. I became sleepy. I sinned.”

Isn’t that amazing? But it’s easier to look elsewhere. “It was the ministry that did it.” “It was him! He did it. He’s the one that changed all those things and caused these problems. Then those ministers that followed him, and then all these others that wouldn’t get off the pot soon enough!” That was the attitude. “They’re not moving fast enough so what are we supposed to do?”

Israelite. It doesn’t have to be Israelite. It can be any gentile. It’s just human nature. Incredible. So this is the story here, going through here, basically, “Why God? Why?” They were talking amongst themselves, “How could this happen to us? Why has God allowed us to be defeated like this?”

**Why has the Eternal defeated us today before the Philistines?** They didn’t understand, obviously. They didn’t understand spiritual things. But to think about being there, doesn’t that put a little bit of fear in you to think that you would do that? That you would have that kind of attitude about God? But they couldn’t help it because they weren’t spiritual. It wasn’t spiritual at all.

But some of those kinds of things have happened in God’s Church. Not some, a lot has happened in God’s Church. What a horrible thing to ever blame God.

That’s why there was a saying that I used to hate whenever I heard it, when someone would give a reason to someone else, maybe a mate, maybe to their boss at work, “Well, the Church won’t let me do that.” “It’s the Church’s fault! The Church won’t let me do it!” “The Church won’t let me work on Friday night.” “The Church won’t let me keep this tithe. I have to send this in.” “The Church won’t let me not go to the Feast.” Where is your own responsibility? So we can do the same kind of thing.

So it's the same here with them. It wasn't about them. It wasn't what they could see and the priests that were Eli's own sons. No, they weren't at fault at all.

**Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Eternal from Shiloh to us...** It's like it was almost like this superstitious kind of thing. It was to them in a sense because they didn't get any of this spiritually. So it was a very physical routine, physical routines they went through.

Even the whole system of the priesthood, it was a very physical thing. There wasn't anything spiritual in it whatsoever. So if we ever think that there was something like we have in services or in church or what we've had in the Church in the last 2,000 years, it wasn't anything like that. They didn't get it, period. They were just carnal human beings.

**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 the enemies.** It's no different, in that respect, as far as their attitude is concerned, than this pole with this serpent on it. If you're sick let's just make one of those because it has healing power in it, you know.

**So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Eternal of hosts.** Now, they had enough understanding to know so often things that happened in the past, great battles were won when the priesthood and the ark and the presence of God was there. But to do this under the wrong auspices, the wrong reasons, not too bright.

**So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Eternal of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim.** That was their decision. Big mistake right there. It didn't come from Eli. They didn't go and ask Eli if this was something that they could do. They didn't ask permission. They didn't decide that, "Hey, there is a right way of going about this so we need to check and he can ask God, he can beseech God to see if God will come and be with us in this." No, it wasn't. It was just go get the ark; bring it out here and this'll take care of it.

**...and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Eternal came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook.** I don't understand that fully, but it was, in other words, it was just loud and they were excited. They'd just lost 4,000 men and now they felt confident. They felt so confident because, finally if the ark is there then God will be with us. It's nothing we have to do, it's just that the ark has to be there and we'll win.

**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 that the ark of the Eternal had come into the camp.** So whether there were scouts and they came back and told them, which was probably the likely case. Those kinds of things happened.

So anyway, they understood that it had to be because of the ark and the excitement was there because of that, whether they overheard certain things or what. But anyway, this had a response with them as well. They had a response to that because they understood some history here as

well. They weren't Israelites, but they had a knowledge of history, of things that had happened because of this ark.

**So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God has come into the camp. And they said, Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before.** To them. They knew a history of things that had happened in the past so they were shaken by what was taking place here.

**Woe to us! Who will deliver us from of the hand of these mighty Gods?** So obviously, they didn't get it. One God. One Almighty God. But because of their beliefs and because of the way they could see things, this is all they could grasp. "Their Gods are great."

**These are the Gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in 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.** So they had other skirmishes in the past and they'd taken people to be slaves and so forth. So here they are again in another great battle and so they're going to go into battle with the intent of not being slaves, not serving the Hebrews, the Israelites.

**Conduct yourselves like men, and fight. So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a great slaughter and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.** Now, this is incredible. Four thousand before, and now with the ark there thirty thousand. So what do you say to that?

**And also the ark of God was captured. Incredible! And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.**

So again, we can go back and read stories like this and grasp they didn't understand what was taking place. But again, the things that God has to say about it and why are important to grasp, to understand, and to learn spiritual lessons. Just as a matter of recognizing that we have to look at this.

To ask, "Why did God do this? Why did God do that? Why does God allow that?" Well, it's pretty shallow, but they can't help that. People can't help that unless they've been given that ability by God. That's a spiritual matter.

Returning to Acts 7. So, a little bit of history. This is what's being referred to in the Book of Acts. That's what they spoke of, or what he was speaking of at this particular moment in time when he said that they, in essence, as he's said here in **Acts 7:44—Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers...**

What is the most important part of that? The ark of the covenant. It represented the height. It was the most important item in the temple. It was in the Holiest of Holies, in that portion of the temple behind the last veil. The High Priest went in there in service once a year on the Day of Atonement—incredible—because of what it pictured. It pictured the throne of God. Yet it was

symbolic of those things. It obviously wasn't and God didn't dwell there, but it was important as a symbol, as something that the Israelites were to respect and to treat in a certain way. But they could only do it physically.

I think of this crazy show where they're trying to find the ark right now. I don't know if you've ever seen any of this. It's up in, is it Nova Scotia or somewhere up that way. They're digging down trying to find these secret vault areas, flooding vaults. I can't even think of the name of the crazy show now. *Curse of Oak Island*, yeah. Anyway, nobody knows where it is. It's somewhere. Someday it'll be found, if God allows it to be found. Maybe He won't. But a part of something that's a matter of history, maybe He will. It would be an interesting museum.

But anyway, that's what they're hoping to find because they think the Crusaders, some who were part of the Crusades, maybe brought it over at some particular point in time. And it is. Nobody knows where it is.

So again, he said, **Our fathers made this**, speaking unto Moses, a certain way that he'd been appointed, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua into the possession of the gentiles... So this. Eventually, the gentiles received it and then Israel got it back.

**Verse 46—who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house.** So again, this is the story going through Acts and it's telling how this took place. **So Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet said.**

So again here, He's teaching some principles, some truths of understanding here that it wasn't about a physical temple, it wasn't a matter of something that Solomon built, and God didn't dwell there—never did.

**Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.** So quoting those verses of the prophet, as it talks about here. **What house will you build for Me? says the Eternal, Or what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things?**

That's the point. It's to understand it's so hard for human beings to say, "God made this possible. God gives us the ability to build. He gives us everything we have here." Those awesome structures, the marble, the stones, the different kinds of things that man has used, whatever it might be, God made it possible. God created it. God put it there. Who are we? What are we?

But we're enamored with ourselves. We are in love with ourselves. We look at ourselves and what we do. You think about some of these structures and it's, "Look at us! We have to have the best." "We have to have the tallest." "People have to see it when they come into..."

Anyway, just like the Statue of Liberty. I don't know how many of you have seen some of the story about that. Quite an interesting story how that was constructed, how it was, an individual that

built all that, put it together, the pieces they brought it over in, the reconstruction, the refurbishing it of recent time, some of the things they've gone through. It's an incredible story. Again, a masterpiece in how it was built. It's a shallow, hollow structure, very thin. Very thin! Yet the engineering, of the mind that was able to put that together in such a way, it's incredible! It really is. It was an incredible feat. Still is to this day. I wish I could remember the thickness of that that's on there, but it's extremely thin (3/32" or 0.09375mm). It's awesome! It's the guts of it. It's the frame of it. It's the structure inside that holds it up upright as strongly and as powerfully as it does, effectively as it has through the period that it's been there.

But anyway, the different things that people have built, to look at what we have done, look at our handiwork. That's all great as long as God gets the honor. Anything we do, anything we build, to thank God for what we have. Anything you have, anything you're able to do, it's because God's given us the ability.

That's why I love the expression in the Old Testament there about "dress and keep it." It's about we have the ability to cultivate, we have the ability to build, we have the ability to whatever it might be in that process of construction or building. It doesn't matter if it's something outside that we do to a garden or to a yard or something bigger. Small or big, it doesn't matter. Everything is there because God gave it to us.

Then when He gives it to us it's up to us whether we can keep it up, whether we can maintain it. That's what it means by "dress and keep." We're the ones that have to, as a matter of upkeep, if you will. It takes work! Because if you don't, you know what happens? Well, look at the ruins. In time things just fall apart and they disintegrate. They fall over. Things have to have constant care. It could be a pain sometimes. It's work!

But anyway, it's God that makes it possible. That's what people miss. The world doesn't recognize that. Who has given God credit for all these things? No, that's different civilizations, it's different peoples. It's "what we did."

It's like right now I think of what's taking place in this country and the pride is so great. "Look what we're doing." "Look how great we are!" "Were the greatest we've ever been!" "We're getting greater!" "Things are going great!" "We are great!" Think, whoa, whoa, whoa, because those are the times that God humbles nations, and there are reasons why things are allowed to take place the way they are this time, especially because of what's prophesied.

That's why he said in **verse 50—Has not My hand made all these things?** "Don't you get it? Don't you see? I've made it all possible." Yes, you're to rejoice in the things you can do. Yes, it's awesome, you know, to be able to do something, to take pleasure in it, whatever it might be. Small or big it doesn't matter. But to stand back and think, "This is exciting to share in something that God has made possible on this earth." But we don't tend to think that way. Sometimes in the Church we don't tend to think that way. The more we can learn to think that way the richer life becomes, it really does.

So how do we think when it comes to everything we have, everything God has given us?

Anyway, it's evident that anything that might be considered as the greatest of civilization that is evidenced by what mankind has made or constructed is short lived. It's short lived. It's not around very long. It's all temporary, it really is. Things are just temporary and they decay and they turn to ruins. That's the way human life is.

We do. We don't last too long. How long was Solomon around in his great reign? Wasn't too long. What happened to him? Well, the same thing that happens to all people. We get old. We start decaying in the sense of our bodies starting to run down. They don't get healthier. They don't get better.

I think it was on TV. It's in the news here this past week that the age, I think it's 47 that that's a point in people's lives that's kind of like its devastating. Because it's kind of like its right in there that the tide begins to turn in the mind and you realize it's not that far... Where did time go? That's nothing compared to the older you get the more you realize the tide has really turned.

Anyway, it's a process of life. But to give God thanks for the time that we have? That's why I think sometimes if this is all we had, what do we make of it? What do we receive from it? What is it? You think if it's lived in a right way it can be such a beautiful thing, it truly can be. The more that God gives us to how to live life right the better it is. We go through that process, we truly do. Thankfully, there is that which is far, far beyond it and it's about what we're covering here. It's about what God is constructing, what we're able to be a part of.

So whether it be something physical that we're able to be a part of like they were in the building of the temple... Can you imagine if they really understood what they were building, what it was all about? If they could understand what it all pictured? If they were given the mind of God's spirit in their mind so that they could begin to be taught what the temple was all about, what the services of the Levites was all about, all the things that took place inside of it. They'd have been dumbfounded.

One day they're going to be dumbfounded because they're going to be resurrected and they're going to begin to be taught those things, what they were doing. They didn't know what they were doing. They were a part of something, but they didn't realize what they were a part of. I think that's going to be such an incredible time for people to live again when they're given that opportunity.

Let's turn over to Ephesians 2.

So the first part of this series has been given in order to focus on the incredible divide and the vast difference that exists in what mankind builds and what God builds. There is no comparison. There is no comparison. But as human beings who take selfies and they're so in love with self that epitomizes mankind in the past 6,000 years, of peoples, of thinking that's taken place and it's never been about honoring God and glorifying God.

Even in the structures that are built, we talked about some of those that were found in France, the oldest of structures that are found that are still here to this day and then others all over Europe. What were they about? Death. It was about something they should have learned from. We die. We all die. Nobody escapes it. Yet we build these great big things for whatever purpose, to glorify self, perhaps of a religious belief of something beyond that we think about or people have thought about in time.

Then the pyramids come along and then you have these great big tombs, you know, giant tombs because of how “great” leaders were. You think, “Yeah, where are they?” Look at those structures. They’re still standing, but there was a day that they were far more beautiful when they were layered with the kind of sheets, I think it was marble, whatever it was.

It’s just like in the Coliseum, all the seats, all the chairs at one time, all that was stripped away later. But all the marble that was there covering because that’s what they did. They used other kinds of stone and stuff to build structures and then they would come in and cover it with the more precious stones to beautify it. Incredible!

Where are they today? Well, most of that marble there is in all over Rome, but it’s not in the Coliseum. People rob, people take something and go build something else that they want to be after their making.

But anyway, to think about that, that everything, that the divide, the difference between what God is building and what mankind builds there is no comparison. As we go through this series I can’t wait to get to a certain part because there is an area that just drives that home so powerfully. It’s incredible what God is showing. Yet sometimes we can read through those things and when we get to that portion of scriptures sometimes it can be easy just to stop and skip it or run through it right quickly because sometimes it’s hard to get the message of what God is saying and what God is showing and what we’re supposed to be impacted by.

So anyway, that’ll be later.

So indeed, the greatest of civilization is indeed what God builds. It’s not what man has built. It’s what God builds. That’s the greatest of civilization, out of civilization, if you will. Everything that man has ever done falls apart, decays, is run down, the people are gone, the people decayed, they’re not around. It’s the cycle of life, and if there were no God, what hope do people have?

The greatest of civilization, again, is indeed in what God has built and what He constructs and creates. We even understand much about the vast difference between the physical temple commissioned by Solomon and that which God is building. So we’re blessed to know those things because not many people have. Not many people have...not even in God’s own Church.

**Ephesians 2:11—Therefore, remember, that once being gentiles in the flesh, in other words, by birth, who are called uncircumcised by that which is called the circumcision of the flesh made by hands...** So he’s going through and explaining something here that has incredible lessons

in it and teaching something on a spiritual plane that is an awesome thing to know what God gave at that particular time in the Church.

**...that at that time you were without Christ, being foreigners from the citizenship of Israel.**

So he's beginning to show something here, but again it takes time for people to receive this. The only way anyone can receive this is by God's spirit because it's a spiritual thing that he's talking about, it's a spiritual matter. It's not something physical and even though he talks about a citizenship of Israel he's using a physical type to teach something that is a spiritual type that we're to learn from.

**...without Christ, being foreigners from the citizenship of Israel...** Because the reality is so was Israel, so was Judah, foreigners from the citizenship of Israel. Because this isn't about physical Israel, it's about something far, far greater.

So at certain times "you were without Christ." Well, who was without Christ? Who was without Christ during the time of Christ after the Church began? Everybody that was called. Not a one of them had Christ until they were called into the Church. Jew and foreigner or gentile, if you will. It didn't matter where people are from. Then finally, and that's part of what Paul teaches through here and other scriptures as well.

**So again, at that time you were without Christ, being foreigners from the citizenship of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Joshua you who once were far off have now been made near by the blood of Christ.**

Again, it doesn't matter who it is. Until we have that, which, what does that mean, "the blood of Christ"? It's our Passover meaning that we can have the ability to be forgiven of sin. Without that what do we have? And so, finally, we recognize we have a different thing that we belong to, a citizenship, if you will, that is not something physical, not at all.

**For he is our peace...** What does that mean, "he is our peace?" Well, until, literally until someone is called into the Church they don't really have the peace that God desires we have. There is a peace of God. There is a peace from God that is not the kind of peace of mankind.

Because peace of mankind between nations, as an example, is "if you do things my way once I conquer you." Or, "If you do things my way because I'm bribing you. Because if you don't do it I'm going to put sanctions all over the place! And you're going to love it. We love it. You're going to love it!"

But that's typical, isn't it? That's typical of human nature. It's the way things are. It's control. So our peace comes from (human beings), by having a measure of what we think is control. That's the way it can be in families. There is peace as long as you do it "my" way. That's the way people are. But you don't really have peace because that isn't what it's all about.

Just because you get your way doesn't give you a kind of peace that we have in God's Church from living His way of life, from having done things the right way that are spiritual in the mind, and that which God gives. How do you describe that? The peace that's in the mind that's void of drama?

"No drama, drama, drama!" Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze that little llama. Because that's what man is. Even when you get your way, if people are controlling and it's about control and it's about self and then when you get what you want and you don't really have what you want because you really don't know what that is! And yet God offers it. It's what God offers. Until we have that we can't have that kind of mind. We can't have that kind of freedom.

So what an awesome thing that God gives to us, a peace that comes from God, from living His way of life, that's enabled because of His spirit, because of learning how to live and think more on a spiritual plane, not on a selfish physical one. That's what we have to battle. That's what we fight against. It never ends as long as we're in this Body. So how blessed are we?

He's talking to the Ephesians here, foreigners, not some Jews that were there. Jews were in the Church in different areas because they were scattered all over the place, but again, Paul was sent out to the gentiles, as a whole, and so the majority of people were gentiles that were being called. But he's using this to teach something that applies as well to the Jews.

**For he is our peace.** There's a lot more than that sometimes in what we grasp. He is our peace. It starts with him being our Passover. What an awesome thing that when you sin, because you all sin - I sin, you sin, we sin. Did you like that? Anyway, we sin! What an awesome thing that we can go before God and say, "Father, forgive me. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to do that. I don't want that in my mind and I want to be forgiven through my Passover, our Passover." What an incredible blessing.

There's a peace in that because you know the more you live it, the more you've done it, the more you realize you're in God's grace and mercy. He forgives. He doesn't keep count. He doesn't keep record. We don't have to carry it with us like we so often do with all this bag of rocks behind us and you go dragging it along. We don't have to do it. Let it go! It's gone! But to think that way and to have that kind of peace is something you grow in in God's Church. It doesn't just happen. But the more you live it, the more you practice it, the more you have it.

How can you describe that? It's something you'll receive from God. It's an awesome thing, peace. He is our peace. It's how we're going to have peace. That's how peace is being created. That's how peace is being made. It's through him. It starts with him. But it doesn't end there. It goes on through him as our High Priest and all the things that are involved in that and where it leads.

**...who has made us both one.** Jew and gentile; the Jew needed it too. They weren't anything better than the gentiles. That was something for the Church that was difficult for them to learn in the beginning. Peter had a tough time with some of this in the beginning because he was of

Judah and it was difficult for him in his relationship when he began to realize—if you go through the Book of Acts and some of the things that are said there—to realize that God was calling gentiles and to be seen with gentiles, to be seen with gentiles in public because he was still a Jew. That mindset, it took time as a disciple of Christ, as an apostle to work through some of that. Incredible!

**For he is our peace who has made us both one, to make us at one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition.** So again, a relationship with God, a relationship even between gentile and Jew because one isn't better than the other. We both have to go through the same process of a calling, of being able to be forgiven of sin, a receiving the peace of God, the peace that comes from Christ, through Christ.

**...and has broken down the middle wall of partition.** In other words, that has enabled us then to have a relationship with God. What a peace in that! To know that when you're forgiven of sin you can go before God at any time of the day and He's there to hear you. He wants to hear you.

Now, these next two verses have been horribly mistranslated. The reason a lot of things have been mistranslated is because translation is not word by word. That's one thing sometimes I really hate when you go through and you read something in English and they claim that basically they're doing it by the meaning, by the words, but so often they don't, they have put their own thinking into it because that's all they can do. They don't understand.

So there really isn't such a thing as a word by word translation because other languages, other things are expressed in meaning to explain something that takes time to understand. You have to understand what is being said to do it properly.

**...having abolished in his flesh the enmity in the law of commandments through ordinances in order to create in himself both into a new man, so making peace.** So again here, that's what it's talking about here. It's what Christ did. There is that which kept us from having a relationship with God, from not being able to live by the ways of God, the law of God. There's an enmity toward God's law as human beings. We're carnal. We resist God's law and the carnal mind is at enmity with God. We want to do our own thing. Our nature is we don't want someone telling us how to do everything, how to think.

In time in God's Church we come in greater agreement with God, that God is right and we better want to do everything His way. When we don't or where we don't we need to correct that and ask for forgiveness. It's a transforming of the mind and the way we think to get rid of that enmity because the carnal mind is just selfish. We're just selfish human beings and that's not a pretty thing. It's just downright ugly. But that's the way we are. Thank God He has patience with us, mercy. I marvel at that sometimes, I truly do. I'm talking about me; I'm not talking about you.

**...having abolished in his flesh the enmity in the law of commandments through ordinances...** So again here, when it came to various things being done even when you look at the physical

routine of the temple and so forth, some of those ordinances are about the process of service that were done away with as well. But not God's law. But yet the human mind still fights against God's law.

**...in order to create in himself both into a new man, a new person, if you will, so making peace.** So we're able to become more at one with God.

"In order to create in himself." So it's something that God is doing. We're not able to do it. It's a creation. It's an ongoing creation. So when God begins to call us, the first phase of it, the first part of it, obviously, was to make us physical, to give us physical life. Then in God's time He calls us to that which is His purpose for creating us as physical human beings. It's to transform what's in the mind.

Because what He gave to us in the mind has to be rejected by choice, by free choice. What an awesome thing. That naturally we're selfish and by free choice we have to start making decisions to reject that thinking because we don't want it because we see how ugly it is. We come to see and the more actually the things that come out of us, the uglier they are to us the easier it is to conquer them, to overcome them, to see how sick certain things are and to even pray that God help us to see that, how sick, how disgusting anything that's different from His way is. Then that gives us strength because we come into a conviction" "God is right. I'm in agreement with God!"

It takes time in various phases of our life, various things in our life to really come into agreement with God. When you think that same way, what a transformation, what a beautiful thing. When you come to see certain things for being as ugly as they are? You may still battle them! But if you are of the mind you hate and you loathe the ugliness of it and you're convicted of that and you keep fighting and it's why you keep fighting, you have to keep fighting until the end. So be it. But that's what makes you stronger, the more you become more at one with God.

So, "in order to create in himself both into a new person, so making peace." So it's making peace with the gentile, with the Jew, because they're coming into agreement with God, making peace, being at peace, having peace, having God's peace, the right kind of peace, how to live in unity. Like in the Church, having peace. There's no more beautiful thing, to have peace in God's Church.

I see greater peace in God's Church now than I ever have in my life. Does that mean we're perfect? No, we're far from it. But it's far greater than it's ever been. It's a beautiful thing. When I talk about that I can't help but think of Mr. Armstrong at the Feast of Tabernacles when you'd hear him and he would talk about that. He would talk about that oil that was poured down over Aaron and how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together, basically, in peace, in harmony, in unity and oneness. It's a beautiful thing.

I was thinking, talking to Jeremy this morning and he was talking about hearing the last part of the sermon last week and he couldn't believe it was only 52 minutes. So I told him, basically, that

that was a good thing because so many people couldn't hear it in the beginning of it because of the connections and so forth. That's why we had so many on mixler.

Anyway, he was talking about what I'd said, something toward the end of the sermon, and I said, "I don't remember that." I guess it was when I was probably talking about, sounds like in the context, I'm going to go back and look, but it was in the amphitheatres they've found, that I was talking about in Greece especially the one that was uncovered and you could stand at this one stone and then you'd move farther out. Anyway, talking about at somewhere along the line there about, if you will, like an orchestra playing a music.

Anyway he went back and looked at certain words and I can't remember if it was in the New Testament or the Old Testament, some of the words that talk about agreement or being at one, whatever the word is. I'm going to have to go back and look it up or ask him to give it to me.

But anyway, it's a word that comes from the word for symphony. I believe it's in the Greek. But I thought what a beautiful thing because it's the word for symphony. If you've ever been to a symphony, I guess I had talked about that a little bit, the sound of the music and all at one time, all the different instruments. The reason it can be so beautiful is because they're all together. It's not so good when different ones are playing different notes, when it's not altogether.

That's the way it is in God's Church. So those same words, those type of words, to recognize what a beautiful thing when we're all together of a same mind, speaking the same thing, of a same mind with God, more and more growing in that, it becomes more and more beautiful. It's a harmonious. It's a unity. It's a oneness. That's a beautiful thing. Because what isn't beautiful is when there is something said, something done, something that is just like when you take a violin and just screech and that sound that can come out that can just, like, cause your spine to cringe.

I couldn't help but think of different examples of things that have happened in recent years and going back in time here and things that have happened with different ones who have left and things they've done. Peace is a beautiful thing. Harmony is a beautiful thing. Oneness with God is a beautiful thing.

**Verse 16—Even to reconcile both unto God...** Reconcile. Reconciliation. The meaning of different words like that and what it's about. To be reconciled to God. What a beautiful thing. To get rid of anything that isn't reconciled to God, that isn't in agreement with God, that isn't in unity and oneness with God, to get rid of all the enmity that exists. So we battle and strive to do that and it's ever a battle, but we grow.

**Even to reconcile both unto God, both Jew and gentile, in one body, beautiful, by the pole, by what he did, by dying on it, having slain the enmity in/by/through it, if you will, because of what he did. Because that's where you have to begin. You have to begin because he spilled his blood to the earth.**

We can be forgiven of sin. What a beautiful thing to understand we can get rid of the enmity between us and God and have sin forgiven as we've constantly gone before God and ask for forgiveness of our sins, what we do wrong, when we think wrong.

**Who came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to those who were near.** So again, gentiles far off, never been around things that were from God even though they didn't grasp it, and the Jew who had the benefit of that history and so forth, of knowledge of God's law, the Sabbath and those kinds of things but never understood it. They still needed the same thing, needed this, Christ, the blood of Christ in their life.

**Who came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to those who were near. For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.** These are beautiful things. One spirit, God's spirit, that we have access to God through Christ.

**Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.** So again here, I hope we never get tired of scriptures, of things we read because of all that this means to us, the household of God, to recognize we're a part of a structure, to recognize we fit into some place that we don't fully grasp yet, of something that God is building that is so far greater than what we can begin to comprehend.

Some of the things we're going to look at even if we were just to see them on a physical plane (in *Part 4*, I think), is incredible! It really is. To see these things, to grasp these things. But not just to see them, but to be able to see them spiritually and what God is blessing us to grasp and understand, of what it means that we all have a place, we're a part in it, and to leave our lives in God's hands, to have that trust, that confidence to know that we can't even begin to grasp the glory, the beauty, the awesomeness of what He's going to give to us. You can't! But what you do see you strive to hold on to with all of your being. The more beautiful it becomes to you, well? The more richly blessed you understand you are, the more you thank God.

**Verse 20—you are being built upon,** as it's showing here, **the foundation.** So it's something that's ongoing. It's not something that happens immediately. It's an ongoing project. It's an ongoing construction.

What an incredible thing. They try to figure out how long it took some of these things to be built and with machines and equipment today how quickly some things can be constructed is mindboggling compared to what it was several hundreds of years ago, thousands of years ago. If they'd had some of the kind of equipment we have today who knows how big it would have really been!

But again, to understand what God is building and the length of time its taking? For us, each one of us, it takes our entire lifetime, whatever that is from the time we're called to the time we die and it's faithful to the end. That's the only way we can be a part of the building.

...you are being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets... Again, I like certain words here. “Built upon” is a compound word. It means “to build a house upon.” There’s something being built upon, something, a foundation here. So it’s something we’re doing and something we’re a part of. Awesome!

...the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Joshua the Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building is fitly framed together grows into an holy temple in the Lord. We know these things. We’re familiar with these things.

But sometimes I wonder how deeply do we really know them? How much is it in our being and in our mind, what we’re living, what God has called us to, what we’re blessed to be a part of? Because the more we see those things the more we’re thankful to God, the more we give God the glory, the thanks for what we have, for what we’re able to do, for what we’re able to live.

...in whom you are also being built together for a habitation of God through the spirit. What an awesome thing to know these verses, to know that verse, to know what it means. “Built together for a habitation of God through the spirit.” Not a physical temple, a spiritual one.

Let’s turn over to Hebrews 8. It seems that so often it’s difficult for God’s people to grasp the greatness of what God is doing in the lives of those He’s called. Sometimes it’s hard for us to grasp how great this is, what we’re living. We go through routines year by year, but to really grasp what this is, of what we’re doing and what we’re a part of that’s sometimes very difficult to grasp a hold of, to grasp the kind of building we’re blessed to be.

That which indeed will reveal the greatest in all civilization, we’re it. We’re it. We’re the greatest in civilization. Not those buildings!

You can be in awe of seeing things that people have done and they’re incredible! But nothing compared to what you are, compared to what God is doing in you, compared to what you’re blessed to be. Do we see that importance? Is it real to us?

**Hebrews 8:1—Now, all things which we have spoken, this is the sum.** “This is the main point.” This is what’s being said here. **We have such a high priest, who is set in the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle** – not a physical one, not a temporary one, one that will live into time, something we can’t even begin to grasp – **of the true tabernacles which the Lord set up.** The word means “made fast,” “making fast,” if you will. It’s what God is making fast, what we’re a part of, what we’re going to fit into as we yield our self to the process.

I think of all the people who have robbed themselves of fitting into a place, of fitting into a position, of fitting into a spot, of fitting into whatever that part of the temple is. What a horrible thing, all those who have gone by the wayside who didn’t make the kind of choices they needed to make in their life to keep at the fight.

**...which the Lord set up, made fast, and not man.** In other words, it's what God is building, not what human beings built.

**For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, of necessity that this one also had certain to offer.** In other words, there are things that he was to fulfill, was going to fulfill, has been fulfilling, and still fulfilling. He's the High Priest. There are things about that that we think we maybe know but, you know, there are things we come to learn more and more as we go along. What does it mean? How does that affect our daily lives?

**For if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, seeing that there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.** So again, through Hebrews here it's a very powerful book in the sense of showing God's plan, of revealing things about God's plan on a spiritual plane that pulls in the things of the Old Testament, pulls in things about the sacrificial system, the priesthood, and so forth, and reveals then what God is doing through Christ and what God is building. It's a beautiful book, in that respect.

**Verse 5—who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.** So they didn't know what they were doing. That's why I love, like, Leviticus 16 when the high priest went into the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, the veil, the back, to perform a service that was only done once a year on the Day of Atonement and how much that means and everything that's stated in there. Everything in there that has meaning in it. You can break those things apart.

And candidly, you can't even go into everything in detail that's contained in that chapter in a sermon. There is so much there in the sense of everything that God pictures there on the importance of that particular day, the Day of Atonement, and of our High Priest. Because that's what it's about. It's about what he's doing, what he's been doing for 2,000 years.

**...who serve unto the example of the shadow of heavenly things as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle.** So again, everything in it, every piece that was in there, every service has spiritual meaning as far as the building, what God is constructing, what God has planned for so long and bringing together.

**...for He said, See that you make all things according to the pattern.** So it was only a pattern. It's like a blueprint. It's just like a blueprint and here's the blueprint. That's what we are. We're filling in the blueprint. God is building within us, building us as a part of that blueprint that's been going on for a long, long time now, a piece here and a piece there. It's taken hundreds, well, several thousand years to get to this point because the first big part of it is in the first great resurrection that takes place, and then the rest that's able to be as the construction begins to go faster.

That's the way it is in something. You know, the foundation takes a long time to sit, to place in a building, to get everything squared away as far as the blueprints, the planning. You have to go out and survey, the different things that take place. It seems like this is taking so long. I can't see it.

Then all of a sudden you get to the framing - boom - and it goes much faster then. Similar examples in some of this depending on the size of the thing you're building.

**...for He said, See that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you in the Mount. But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much more he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.**

That's why I hate Protestantism. I hate things of traditional Christianity that go through and try to say, "See?" They don't necessarily focus on this verse here. But everything is physical. It's like, "God's doing away with the law." When you read certain things in Hebrews it's like, "See? We don't have to keep the law anymore." It's like this void that's so great in the mind.

It was about a physical temple and service that was done and things that were to be learned on a spiritual plane. So was the Old Covenant. Then the New Covenant. So the Old Covenant and things that had to do with service in the temple and the like.

Just like things of the Old Testament law, if you will. It's beautiful. Now, certain structure, and so forth, of those things that were pictured in the priesthood and the temple, we understand that's about us. It's about the Church through time and what God is building. But even the law, it's something that has to be in here. It's something that's spiritual and it's not about physical do's and don'ts.

A lot of those things are going to pass away in time. They truly are. Think about it. Murder? Don't have to worry about it. You can't kill anybody anyway. You wouldn't want to. You're of the mind of God. No human beings around. We can't even comprehend that one, to realize we're not that far away from that point in time.

To me that's a marvel, just writing some of the things in the book, talking about it. It's a marvel to think there comes a point in time when there are no more human beings on the earth. It passes. Its purpose is fulfilled. God's family is complete. Those who weren't, aren't going to be a part of it, they're no longer around. God's family is full. God's family is complete. The structure is complete. We can't even begin to comprehend these things.

**But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much more he is a mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then there would have been no need for the second.** Now, it was by design and purpose. The greatest of the fault is in the human body, the human mind. It was never intended that that be the covenant that would continue on. It was never intended that man would live by physical do's and don'ts and laws and a physical ritual in a temple. It was never God's plan and purpose.

In that regard it was incomplete. It doesn't work for human beings. God knew that. He gave it for a purpose - to guide, to foreshadow, to picture things as a pattern of things to come, and making it very clear, because I've heard of people go through and try to defend and say, "Oh, it was

perfect.” No, it wasn’t perfect! It wasn’t perfect! It was incomplete! It wasn’t God’s purpose. It was to accomplish something during a period of time.

That’s why some people made a point of the fault is always with us. Well, it is when it comes down to the bottom line, if you will. But it means what it says here - there were problems here. We can’t be saved through it. It doesn’t give salvation. It’s incomplete.

**So if the first had been faultless then there would have been no need to look for the second.** Thank God there was a second. Because if there had only been a first none of us would be here today.

**For finding fault with them, he said...** So it shows it’s with human beings. That’s the problem. That’s why the first covenant doesn’t work. That’s why a physical temple and a ritual in a physical temple doesn’t work. That’s why the Levitical system didn’t work. It didn’t bring about a spiritual change in the mind. It can’t. It couldn’t.

**Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.** So they didn’t continue in it because they couldn’t. That’s what human beings are to learn from Judah and from Israel, physical Judah and physical Israel. It wouldn’t have mattered who God worked with on the earth, what tribes of people God worked with. It would have all ended up the same way. We’re selfish human beings and we can’t see and grasp anything spiritual until God gives it to us in the mind.

**For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel...** That’s why I get a charge sometimes out of people, our thinking, especially when we’re first called, to think about those Israelites. “Man, they were bad! Hard-hearted? Yeah!” It’s hard sometimes for us to look in the mirror and say, “That’s exactly the way I am. The only thing that separates me from them is God, Christ, God’s spirit, a calling, the Church, the ability to live within the Body, a spiritual Body.” Otherwise, we’re all the same.

That’s why I marvel, and I hope you do too, the difference in things of what people went through who even when living in Laodicea insisted they were Philadelphian. That’s the reason so many could not be a part of a remnant. Because they couldn’t come to a point, even when they were called and given the opportunity to do so, could not say, “I was a Laodicean.” Because that was a shameful thing. It was looked down upon.

There was one organization that took on the name thinking that made them special—Philadelphia—therefore, you can’t have any fellowship with anyone who’s a Laodicean, cause they’re the scum of the earth! Really! That’s basically the attitude and spirit. “So we, we’re Philadelphian. We’re still Philadelphian.” You think...? Anyway, isn’t that amazing how the human mind can be

on something like that in thinking? To lift ourselves up and not grasp the spirit of it? But that's another story. But that's all of us. The only thing that makes us different is a blessing of a calling, the blessing of an awakening, if you will, for anyone who was a part of the Apostasy.

**For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel in those days, says the Lord. I will put My laws in their mind...** That's what makes the difference. It isn't anything any of you do, it's not anything that I do that makes us better than anyone else. It's just making the most, striving to, of what God gives us the opportunity for to stay in the fight, to continue to fight against self, to recognize this is the fault, this is the problem. It's not others. It's not anyone else's fault. It's definitely not God's fault! The Church didn't make me do it! Choices!

What do I believe? What do I stand up for? How do I think? Because no one else is responsible for this except me. That's a hard thing for human beings to do, to accept responsibility for self. A major part of our society today - problem, if you will.

**For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel in those days, says the Lord. I will put My laws in their mind and write them in their hearts.** What a beautiful thing. Because it's of the heart, too. It's a softening, if you will, of a hard heart. Israelites were hard-hearted. God is taking that hardness away from us and blessing us with a different mind.

How precious is that to us to be able to have some of that thinking working in our minds to get rid of the garbage, the swill?

**And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. Beautiful. They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness...** Do we see that in our lives, God's merciful to our own righteousness? Has patience with us? Gives us time?

**...and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.** How blessed are we to have that? That we don't have to worry about our past, of mistakes we've made, of things we've done wrong. Because we've all made mistakes and done wrong things. But it's behind. But some, so often, we don't let ourselves be forgiven. We should.

**In that He said, A new covenant, He has made the first old. Now that which decays and grows old,** that's temporary, never meant to continue. The old temple was never meant to continue. Life is not, physical life is not meant to continue. A different life is, a converted life, a different mind.

**Now that which decays and grows old is ready to vanish away.** Thank God what He's building doesn't.