

This will be *Part 2* of a new series entitled *Called Into God's Government*.

I want to repeat what was quoted in the introduction of *Part 1* of this series last Sabbath, which was a quote from the previous series that was entitled *It Is God Who Calls Us*. So again, I want to repeat this regularly because there is a lot said there in that sense.

In that series it was stated that we are to more fully come to grasp the depth of the importance of our calling and the exceedingly awesome blessing that God has given us in that calling. That's something we just simply are to grow in. The more we can grasp what God has offered us, placed before us, what He's invited us to be a part of, then the more we're going to be able to come to be even more thankful for that calling. Because it's a matter of understanding and seeing something and then the gratitude, the thankfulness, is just going to follow if our spirit is right.

So, anyway, God has given us in that calling, as I said, that can lead into our being a part of Elohim. Because that's what the calling or the invitation, because it's a word that means, can mean the same thing, an invitation, being invited, a calling, in that respect, but this is a calling into His family, an invitation to become a part of His family. That's what our hope, existence is about, God's plan of offering that to those whom He calls in the right time for those individuals, or the right time according to God's purpose.

Then it was added to that last week, another statement which this entire series is really based upon, and it concerns our calling being a matter of being called into God's Family, Elohim, which indeed is a matter of being called into the Kingdom of God. Because, again, a kingdom is about government, and God's Kingdom, obviously, is about His government. The more we learn in that the more we should understand or have a desire that's what we want to rule in our lives, God's Kingdom, God's truth, God's way of life, God's purpose for life.

We ended last Sabbath by covering the verses, some of the verses there in 1 Peter 1, and we'll pick up there in verses 13-16, and then continue on from there.

1 Peter 1:13—Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind. That is a unique phrase, in that sense, of understanding what it means, that God wants us to think right. It's about our mind, what's in our mind, and it's about taking charge. "Gird up the loins of your mind." It's about taking charge, being responsible with how we deal with the life that God has placed before us, and it involves work. Girding up the loins of your mind is not a simple process. It's something that doesn't just happen. You have to be engaged in this.

So again, **Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober.** Why does it say that "be sober?" Well, again, it's because of the sense of the urgency, the importance of it. It's not something to be taken lightly, in other words, but to be taken soberly, this matter of being responsible for what we do in our lives, being accountable for the choices and decisions we make.

...and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Joshua the Christ. So again, God continues to teach us. We continue to learn more. We continue to learn more about what is written in scripture concerning instruction that Christ gave and more of the things that have been revealed in this end-time that come from Joshua. Because God has given all those things; all power in the Church has been given to Christ. All those things that are to be revealed to the Church have been given to Him to give to us.

So again, it's understanding that process of how God leads us, guides us, directs us, teaches us.

...as obedient children. That's what we should want first and foremost in our life, to be obedient children, to do God's will, to follow the instruction, the guidance and direction that is given by God through Christ. Christ gives that instruction to the Church. He is the head of the Body. We continually grow in that. There are things that He continually has us focus upon that's exciting if we understand that process in our lives.

...as obedient children. So, there is law to live by. There is a way of life to live by. We should want with all of our being to grab a hold of that on a continual basis.

...not conforming yourselves to the former lusts as in your ignorance. So, in times past before we began this process, we did things ignorantly because we didn't know. Now we know and so we're to be sober minded, we're to take it seriously, to understand how serious this calling is, what is expected of us. Because there are expectations of how we're to live our lives. If we don't live that, if we don't respond properly, God isn't just going to give it to us. There is a process we have to go through. We have got to want it with all of our being because that's going to reflect then what we do - which involves work, yielding to the process, being responsible, seeking to do it the way God says to do it.

...not conforming yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance. We just live the way we wanted to in times past. That's what it's about. We lived our way and then God opened up our mind and tells us now we're to live His way, that we have the choices to make. Our lives day by day revolve around those choices, what choices do we make.

Is God first? And we find that He isn't. We think that He is, as a whole, but oftentimes we find He isn't. That's when sin comes forth. That's when the wrong thinking comes forth. That's when selfishness comes out. That's what we are! We're selfish beings, but we're to get control of that more and more in our lives. We're to gain control of that more and more in our lives as we desire and yield ourselves and pray to God for the help to live what He wants us to live according to His will.

But as He who called you is holy... I was just thinking about some of this. How do you explain some of this? Because the word is a little different when you look at it in the Greek language and what this word "holy" is. We understand for our calling this word is translated sometimes as "sacred" or "holy" or the word for "saints" revolves around this, things that the world doesn't comprehend. When God says, when it says here about God, "He who has called you is holy," it's

unique because we understand it's "to be set apart" for us, it's to be "set apart for holy use and purpose."

Well, what does that mean? Well, it's about God's way. God's way, in a nutshell, is holy. What other word can you use to describe that. It means there is a way that is right, that is righteous, and all of that that comes from God reflects that, reveals that.

So again, if you've ever looked at the word there and how it's used in different places in scripture, it's kind of obscure because the world hasn't understood God's purpose and God's plan and what God is doing.

So again here, **He who has called you is holy**. Righteous. Everything about God. Whatever you look at, the right way, the only true way, it's of God, that's God, the Word of God. It's right, it's true, it's holy, it's just, it's perfect as far as a way of life is concerned. There is not an inkling of selfishness in it.

...**you also are to be holy**. So, how do we do that? Well, we know the process. Because we're not. The only way we have that or can experience that is by God's spirit. That's because it is of God. It's like talking about the word "agape." It comes from God. It's God's love. It's totally unselfish. So, if that's able to live in us and through us to whatever degree it can and does at different times in our life, it's all of God. It's not us. Now, that's what we're to become and that's what we're being transformed into as we continue to yield to God.

It's an awesome process of this mind that's able to be changed. But for that mind to be changed we have to do it exactly the way it says to do here, "Gird up the loins of your mind." You have to fight and work to yield yourself to a process of this mind being transformed. God, He doesn't just come down here and give you a new mind. He offers it, but it's something you have to grow in, the mind, the thinking of God. It's an awesome thing, it truly is.

And so, **you are to become holy in all your conduct**. All of our conduct. Some, I think, translate that as "conversation" but it's "conduct" because it's in your actions. Sometimes the word "conversation" is used, probably because in many ways that's what is reflected in our conduct oftentimes. It comes out of our mouth, out of there, and we spew things out and we say things that should never have been said that come out of this mind. That's where it starts. That's the spirit of it. Then it comes blurting out of the mouth and that reveals who we are. That reveals our thinking. God reveals to us our thinking had better come into unity and oneness with Him. That takes work. It doesn't just happen.

We are to become holy in all of our conduct, which is about God's law, God's way of life. God is first. **Because it is written, Be holy** (become holy), because it's a process; **for I am holy**. So, everything that God is, everything that reveals God, the mind of God, the word of God, the wisdom, the thinking, the logos of God; we're to come into unity with that oneness. It's a beautiful thing, it really is.

Going on, **verse 17** now. **Then if you call on the Father...** So, God has called us, and our response then if we desire to grow is to call on our Father. Every day of our life! Because we need God. Because we need that help. We need His spirit to live within us, to dwell within us, which is a process of fighting against our carnal human nature and doing exactly what Peter is addressing here.

Then if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work... God is righteous in His judgment and there is no favoritism. God's desire is for all in time, but knowing that all haven't responded, will not respond. As human life is, all aren't going to want His way of life, but all who do can embrace it and God will bless them and help them in it if they continue to seek the things they're told to seek. So again here, showing what God is like.

Because we're not like that. We judge with partiality. You may think you judge righteously all the time, but you can't! You can't judge the way God does unless God is involved in it. And how is God involved in it? Because you go to Him, you pray to Him, you seek His guidance and direction, His will in what's taking place. Sometimes then we're tested in those things in our life. Are we placing God first?

We do things in life that reveal we have more to learn. It's a refining process because it's not something that's just automatically in us. It's something we grow in.

It says, **conduct yourselves through the time of your stay...** It's a word that has to do with like being on a journey in a foreign country, and a different country, it's governed by different laws. But God's law comes first, and God's way of life comes first, and you represent that. We are ambassadors for a different way of life as it's explained in scripture. That's what we represent. So, wherever we live in the world we strive to live according to what God has given us, and because of that we are good citizens of that country because we're striving to live God's way, obedient to God and His purpose in our lives.

Again, it's a journey. It's "sojourners," if you will, during our stay. How long is that? Wherever we live in the world, wherever God calls us, as long as we're in this body until God's government is established on this earth.

...in **fear**, it says. So, fearful not to live God's way. Fearful to do something other than that. So again, those things that should constantly be before us in our thinking.

Knowing that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct in the ways of your fathers. To free us there was a great price that was paid. To take us out of slavery, if you will, we weren't purchased out of that as some in the world may be in some of those kinds of things that have happened to human beings through life through the past 6,000 years.

But what we have been freed from, an incredible price was paid. That's what it's pointing out here, the blessings we have of that.

...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Always reminded of that. Lived righteous. Lived in a righteous way of life. Didn't sin. Wasn't worthy of what was placed upon him in the sense of death. But that's what he paid for all of us. Incredible, the system, the process that God has called us by and how we are able to be forgiven of sin.

He indeed was foreordained – I love this! –before the foundation of the world, before the foundation of anything that was established. That's what it's talking about, the ages. In God's Church, we're blessed to understand that; that before anything was ever created, not just in the physical realm but in the spirit realm as well, before anything was ever created, this was established. His life. The foundation that everything was going to be built upon. God, which we can't comprehend, by Himself, which we can't comprehend, spirit, which we don't understand. We know about it, but we're not there yet. We recognize it's a power. We see the evidence in our lives of things we've experienced.

But again, determined how He was going to have a family and the process He was going to go through in order to have that. Incredible. It really is. I was going to say mind-boggling because we can't grasp it. We can only grasp portions of it and a small measure at that.

...but was manifest in these last times for you. So, you think of all the time that went by. Didn't exist but finally was made manifest to mankind in these last times, in other words, the last couple thousand years, in that period of time in 6,000 years. So, 4,000 years went by and then Christ was revealed and the Son of God and our High Priest, our Passover, and all those things that began to come to the forefront, that all the prophets, all the people who lived before, certain things were written that they knew about God's government, God's kingdom to a point, but not a lot. Very little. Then, all of a sudden, wham, gigantic door was opened up when Christ was born and the things that began to be revealed then in his life to the time and point of his death.

... but was manifest in these last times for you. **Who through him believe in God...** So, it's because of that plan and purpose that we're able to see the truth, that God reveals His truth to us, His purpose and His plan, from the meaning of Passover all the way through the things that are going to happen through the Last Great Day. **...who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.** The first of the firstfruits.

God has blessed the Church in grasping those things and seeing this is what it's all about and this is what we're going to inherit if we're faithful to God in our calling, if that's the most important thing in our life, if that's number one in our life. We are tested on a continuing basis in life as to whether or not God is first in everything you do in your life, in everything that happens in your life. Is God first? Because that's what it comes down to, those choices and those decisions of girding up the loins of your mind. Is God first?

Because oftentimes, it's just reality He's still not. We see little things that happen here and there that need to be tweaked, that need to be changed, that we need to fight, battles we need to fight. And if we don't do that, if we're not engaged in those things, we won't grow. So, these are things we have to focus upon and have to look at. That's why we're given sermons like this and

all kinds of sermons that follow and all the ones that have come before that take us through a growing process to learn these things, to be able to see them, to build upon them.

Since you have purified your lives... So, how do you do that? How do you purify your lives, set apart your lives for holy use and purpose to become like God, to become of that mind, in other words? Because that's what it's about.

Since you have purified your lives in obeying the truth, and you can't do it on your own, **through the spirit.** It can only be done by God's spirit. The ability to see the truth? I really marvel at that. Our history in the Church helps to reveal that in a powerful way, this process of how we live life. It's a matter of obeying, living by the truth—it's an incredible thing—through the spirit. We have seen things in the Church, whether it be through time or of recent time that there are people who have come and gone, who are cut off from the flow of God's spirit. To me, it's an awesome thing to understand you're called. All of a sudden, you see the truth. But people can lose that, to lose the knowledge of that calling? That if we aren't convicted of the fact that the only way we're able to see it isn't by any ability of our own?

That's why the entire time that I've been a minister, that anyone that we would go visit for the first time and they would begin to talk about how they began to see and learn about the truth because of their study and because of what they had done, and I'd think, "Oh, be careful! I hope and pray you conquer that one quickly because that has nothing to do with your calling, that you were able to study and come to see what was the truth." No, God has to draw you to the truth. He has to open up your mind to the truth. He's the one that gives it to you! You don't do it on your own! You don't come to this knowledge on your own.

Yeah, there are people out here that know how to baptize the right way or that they should keep a seventh-day Sabbath, that they should tithe. But to have the plan of God and the purpose of God and all these truths together because God's in it, because He's given His holy spirit? That's another matter. That has to come from God. The ability to grasp Passover to the Last Great Day comes from God. It's not something you can figure out on your own.

That's why I marvel at Mr. Armstrong and his wife, Loma, that even after God began to work with him to restore truth to the Church, that even with the Holy Days, he didn't introduce that to the Church until he had observed, they had observed the Holy Days for seven years! Because he had to become more deeply convicted of what it was he was observing so that he could teach about it, and over that period of time God began to reveal to him more and more and more until finally he began to teach it to the Church. Because he had to come to learn it and see it and come to understand it first as God taught him.

Because it wasn't around anymore. There wasn't anyone that could come along and tell him about those things. You can say, "Well, what about the Jews?" Well, look at how they observe different things. There's a lot of garbage there, that even if you went and looked at some of those things that might be the only place that certain things you could pick up because they're the only ones looking at some of those things out of the Old Testament. God has to clear up the

mind, cleanse the mind, and show what is true and what is right, a little here and a little there. Awesome!

You know, God could have given that to him all at once just like He did when He started calling you and certain things came in your mind. Anything you heard you knew what it was immediately. You could go to a scripture and read something and see something you never saw before because of God's spirit, because it just comes alive with God's spirit. But He has a process whereby He teaches us, and that process of teaching is a matter of conviction, of becoming convicted of what is true and what is right.

It doesn't happen quickly. What's the purpose of just funnelling into the mind everything? Where is the conviction? What would be taken away that otherwise couldn't become a part of us? There's a lot in that. But anyway.

...since you have purified your lives in obeying the truth. That's how you come to this process of your lives becoming purified, is through obedience to the truth, God's law, God's way of life, doing things God's way. That's why God is number 1, because I want to please God, and on and on it goes.

...through the spirit, a knowledge and understanding I can't do this of myself. As I was mentioning earlier, people that have come and gone, began to lose God's spirit. As soon as they begin to quench God's spirit because of sin—I have seen this repeated hundreds and hundreds and hundreds, and thousands of times in God's Church, literally—people begin to lose it. Because you can't have it anymore because it comes from God's spirit. What you had before can leave you because it's only made possible and sustained by God's spirit. Just because you receive it at one time, you can't hold on to it, unless God's spirit is there. You'll lose it.

That's why I marvel at what happened at the Apostasy. That just drove that home more powerfully than any other experience that I've ever had. How ministers who sat at Ambassador College, had all kinds of classes, had a calling, went out to serve in Church areas, gave sermons inspired by God's spirit right down the line, came to a point in time where from one day to the next—experienced it—talking on the phone, I didn't know them anymore.

That's why we talked about that old science fiction movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, because it was like "I don't know you!" "Sat in your house before or you sat in mine. We've eaten, we've done things together, we've walked to God's house side by side, counsel blended sweet, talked about things in the Church and shared that same spirit, the same mind, the same truth, and then come to a point where there is nothing there?" It's gone! That's mind-boggling!

But to experience that should drive the point home it's only by God's spirit that we can continue in the truth once God gives it to us, once He offers that to us. So, you have to fight for this way of life, fight to be of the same mind.

...through the spirit, in sincere love, brings that in as well because that's about God. This kind of love is about God. This kind of thinking is about God. It's the way God is. It's what God wants in

His family, to exist in His family. Not our shallow kind of human selfish love that we have as human beings. It really is! It can be a good thing to experience in the sense of people are cordial and kind and nice, but it's not God's love. It's just not God's love. That kind of love can turn around on a person so quickly because it's selfish. So, it's about self-interests. It's about unrighteous judging.

...in sincere love of the brethren. There are a lot of sermons right there - sincere love of the brethren. How do we think about one another? How much do we really care for one other?

...love one another fervently with a pure heart. Fervently. So, it's something you grow in in how you think about others within the Body and those whom God has called.

Having been born again... Because it's so easy to separate ourselves in thinking we have this calling, we're a part of God's Church, and it's about our ability to converse with God, and then leave out everything that's in the middle. Now, we don't think that way, that we do that, but that's a lot of what happens sometimes because we don't grasp that this is our arena for learning. This is our arena to experience God's way. Fellowship. It's about fellowship. Awesome!

Having been born again, not of corruptible seed... Well, it's begotten. We understand the process. A begetting takes place, we begin to grow, something begins to grow, begins to change, the mind begins to be transformed. **...but of incorruptible...** Something that comes from God. That's the source. **...through the word of God, which lives and abides forever.** It can abide in us forever if we continue to yield to the process.

That's why I marvel at what God has revealed about Elohim, that God will always dwell in everyone that's in Elohim on a spirit plane for all time. There is no other way for Elohim to exist. It's a beautiful thing, it really is.

1 Peter 2:1—Therefore, laying aside all malice, in other words, all that is evil. There is a lot of evil. Selfishness is evil. So, what do you do about that? Well, you realize you've got a battle on your hands and you've got to fight it everyday, and you're going to see things come up and they're going to help to refine this mind. The more we fight against it, the more we see it's a refining process, this transforming process.

Therefore, laying aside all malice (all evil), **all deceit...** So, that's a tall order and we can't fulfill it. But we are to grow in it because it has to come from the help of God Almighty and His Son through the power of the holy spirit, that we desire and cry out for so that we can battle these things, fight these things and grow in that which is holy, that which comes from God.

...all deceit. So, it's hard for us as human beings. We think we are, maybe, that we're totally truthful in everything we do in our lives. No. We better be toward God because He knows everything that's in our mind. He knows every thought because it's of a spirit essence that's in the mind. The more deeply we grasp that one, the more truthful we can be, the more we can grow in truth. It's a reality that helps us to begin to acknowledge certain things in life that we

need to acknowledge anyway that would help us in fighting against evil. Because we don't want to displease God. It's all in the mind - we want to honor God.

...all deceit, all hypocrisy... I hope we're learning to hate hypocrisy. It's so prevalent in the world right now. It's just sickening, it really is. I marvel at how God is manifesting these things more to the world than ever before. Everywhere you turn it's hypocrisy, hypocrisy.

That's why I mentioned last Sabbath do not take sides with anything in the world, for if you do you are in error, you are doing something hideously wrong because it's against God. Because this world has nothing in it that is of God! God is coming, Christ is coming, God's way of life is coming, God's government is coming to change everything in the world! Everything! Because every system is flawed. Because God isn't in it, that's why it's flawed. The only way it can succeed and be right and have right fruit and bring real peace is when God is in it.

...hypocrisy, envying... Envy, to see something of others, to desire certain things of others and want something that others have. Jealousy or envying. The things of the human mind are really sick. Those are our battles.

...and all slanderous talking, all wrong talking. Anything that comes out of the mouth that's not right is slanderous talking, candidly. **...as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.** So, we understand we want to continue to receive of God's spirit in our lives. We need it. We want it. We want to grow.

If so be that you have tasted that the Lord is good. In other words, taste of His way or His ways that are good. **To whom coming, as a living stone, who is indeed rejected by men and chosen of God, and precious.** So again here, going back to Christ and the importance of his life in our life.

...you also, as living stones, are being built upon a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. So again, we see those things, we grasp those things, but sometimes we need to really focus on what this is all about, having to do when we talk about God's Kingdom and God's government, how this is a part of it and what it means.

...a spiritual house, a holy priesthood... We've all been called to a priesthood, spiritual, in how we think and how we live because of God's spirit dwelling in us. So, when it talks about a holy priesthood it's talking about living by what righteously governs life. That's what it's about, what righteously governs life. God's law. God's way of life.

...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Joshua the Christ.

Verse 6—Therefore, it is also contained in the scriptures, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious. I think of Zion. I think what a beautiful example here talking about that which is a matter of government, God's government. **...a corner stone, elect, precious: and those who believe on him shall not be put to shame. Therefore, to you who believe, he is precious, but those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected.**

What a horrible thing. We can read right over things like this and don't grasp all of what God is telling us, what we're being instructed in here. "But those who are disobedient." Are we ever disobedient? Well, that's a part of girding up the loins of our mind and striving not to sin.

...to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders have rejected. So again here, what it's talking about here is this of what we do in our lives when we don't obey God. We reject. We reject. Any time we sin we're rejecting God's government in our life. Any time we go on and do something selfishly or we omit looking to God, of what His will is and His purpose is for our life and do something different when God should be first, then we've rejected Christ, the cornerstone. We do that in our lives. There are times we just have to repent of that kind of thing, because this is what it's talking about, too. It's not something we can just say, "Well, this is spiritual idolatry." Well, let's get to the meat of it. What more is involved here? Because there's really a lot more involved when we don't put God first.

So, it comes down to understanding things about a relationship with Christ and rejecting him. If we reject him, we're rejecting God. So what does that mean? We can reject things within the Church, we can reject things in our own life, we can do our own thing, we can be selfish and yield to that selfishness, we're rejecting things that God has taught us within the Church, we've rejected Christ, we've rejected God. That's what it's talking about here; doing something different than yielding to God's law and God's way of life in our life.

...the same is become the head of the corner... The problem is sometimes we don't think that we do reject Christ or God. **...and a stone of stumbling.** Are there things we stumble at in our lives because we sin, because we do things just because we want to do it, but they're not right, or we talk about certain things that we shouldn't talk about because that's what we want to do even though it's not right, it's not healthy, it's not good?

...and a rock of offence, even to those who stumble at the word. So, to "stumble at the word." What is that all about? Just what I'm talking about here. There is something else we do, we want to do than what God has told us. God has given us His word within the Church, through the Church. That's the tool He's used, and we learn that, and we experience that within the Church, within the environment of the Church. It all goes back to God because it reveals how we think toward God, whether God is first.

So, are there things that interfere in your life, that happen, that that is taken out of the way, that some of that picture is marred, made muddy because there are things that are interfering with our spiritual life? Because there are things that happen that way. That's our battle.

...who stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. But you are a chosen generation... This is about our calling. What a beautiful thing to understand, to live by. "A chosen generation." Of all times, in 6,000 years, whatever time that people have been called, what a unique generation to have that calling, **a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.** That's what God looks upon us as. That's what we've been called to.

That's why the focus of God is upon the Church first and foremost above and beyond the world, above and beyond everything that's happening in the world. It's about what happens in His Church because those are the ones who have been called to be transformed, to be changed, the ones He's working with, giving opportunity to become a part of Elohim first. Others will have that in time, in God's time, and He works with other things in preparing them for that just as the world is being prepared for the Millennium. But again, for a calling.

...a royal priesthood, an holy nation... Though small. Look how small we are! That's why I talked about there are going to be changes in the ministry because the need isn't the same as it was back in 2008 and on through that period of time that we experienced various things and various things that God worked with in the Body.

At different times, different things are addressed for that very reason. But again here, "a holy nation, a special people." Awesome! So, as small as we are God looks upon us as being a holy nation. Because you know what's included in that? All the thousands who have gone before us when looking at the firstfruits, those who are going to be added to that, and then now this unique time of those who are going to go on into a millennial period and have the opportunity of being the beginning of a new phase, a new period of time, and an opportunity to become a part of God's Family early on still. Awesome! Though you have to wait a thousand years. But you won't know it. When you die, you're going to be gone and you're going to wait. And like all the ones that have gone before, then they'll be resurrected.

...that you should show forth the praises... I love these verses because of what they say. It's talking about how there are things that are to be reflected in our lives. It says here, when you look at the definition of what this word "praises" is, it means "the virtues; the moral excellence" of God. That's what it's about. That's what it means to "show forth the praises of God." It's about the moral excellence. Because our life is to be changing, and how we live and how we talk.

A lot of times, obviously, in the world, they can see differences in us that they don't see in others. That's the way it should be. They should see some differences, obviously, in how we respond to various things and how we speak to them and how we treat them, and on and on it goes. And if there's a conflict, how we work to resolve those things. Sometimes just by being able to say, "You know, the other day, I'm sorry I said it that way. I'm sorry I did what I did and responded to you in a particular manner." Sometimes they're just totally caught off guard by that because that doesn't happen on a regular basis in the world because of pride. People are right and they're not going to do that, as a whole. They don't learn that and it's not real and genuine. In you, it's genuine and they experience something that's unique.

...that you should show forth the moral excellence, the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. So, we're to reflect things of the light, obviously. As a whole, we do. But we know that we have a long way to go and it's a constant battle, something we have to keep on top of. "Gird up the loins of your mind." Continue to fight.

...into His marvellous light. Who in time past were not a people but are now the people of God. That's what we're to reflect. Not to take God's name in vain, but to reflect God in our life because we're looking to God's spirit to lead and guide and direct how we act, how we live before others in the world around us. **...who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.**

Well, the Bible is full of examples of right government and we're going to go through some different examples in this series in the Old Testament, primarily, that so many things can be learned from things that have happened in times past. They're written for that purpose. Things that people went through, much of it on a physical plane, but we're able to see a spiritual plane there, and principles and truths of things that should be a part of our life and our thinking and how we respond to God in placing God first in our life. Seeing the mistakes of people and things that people have done wrong because then we can see things that we have done wrong or that we have experienced within the Church that we know are wrong.

As I've explained in times past, so much of my training was about learning the things that were wrong, being done wrong, and seeing that that didn't reflect God. So, what does? That helps you to come to different decisions in your life because there are certain ways of treating people, of dealing with people.

Just like I think of this area at one time. First thing that pops into my mind (two things), competition, the competition that was there and we're better than you are, and this choir is better, and how they dress is better. The others think, "No, we're dressed better, and this is the way you should be dressing as a choir, and this reflects God more." It's this fake garbage that God isn't in at all. Then sports teams and so forth and all the things that were going on. Then this trickled down through others within the Church, leadership and so forth and people. They don't even know it, what happens to them sometimes. People get caught into something because they're seeing something, they think this is the way God is.

With God's help you come to understand God isn't like that. God doesn't want us to be lifted up with pride. God doesn't want us to be on a platform and looking down on people who aren't quite as good as we are, who aren't doing things as well in the choir as we are because we're really doing it better. You think, "Does that reflect God?" I mean, a lot of you that have been in this area, you've experienced those things. You know what I'm talking about. Others of you think, "What was going on?! In God's Church!?" Yes, in God's Church. Competition.

Battles between boundaries of ministers because they wanted to have more numbers in your reports, and if you have a few more numbers in your report or a few more numbers in your area than a fellow minister over here or one over here, then you must be better because you have more who are being taught by you. So, "I'm a better minister because I have more churches than you. I have more responsibility than you."

You think, where does that kind of (the word I'd like to say), come from? It doesn't come from God. It's not of God's mind so where is it from? Amazing! Government. God's or mankind's. Incredible.

The Bible is full of examples of right government, of how things are to be done, and a process whereby God worked with mankind and works with us in the Church. We can learn a great deal from that. So, most of scripture is about righteous government and unrighteous government, truly is. It's awesome to see so many things in scripture in that regard, of what is right.

Anyway, I want to turn over to Psalms 110. Again, so much of this comes down to whether or not we're seeking to do things God's way as a matter of God's will, because, again, that's about what governs our life. It's not a matter of just the 10 Commandments and you can do this, and you can't do that. It's a spirit. It's the mind, the spirit of God that manifests the heart and core of what those laws are all about in the first place. But it's about a way of life. It's about a way of being that comes from God.

Anyway, **Psalms 110:1—The Eternal said unto my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.** I love this because all the way through Philadelphia and Laodicea this verse wasn't understood at all, period, exclamation mark, for what's being said and who it's about, and what it's about. But you've been blessed to come to grasp and understand those things. It's hard for us sometimes to put ourselves in a place where we can say, "I don't know how it could be seen any other way." But it has been for a long, long time.

David is saying, "The Eternal said to my Lord." So, who's he talking about? He's talking about Christ. "Sit you at My right hand." God the Father, Yahweh Elohim to Christ and what is said prophetically concerning Christ, of what Christ was to do. And you know, he's been doing that for nearly 2,000 years, sitting at His right hand, until he returns like Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement, when we go on to that, what it talks about, and then he returns once he's reconciled his house. Incredible, the process through the Passover and what that means that's reflected in the Day of Atonement.

The Eternal said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. So, it wasn't about David, it was about a relationship between God the Father and His Son.

The Eternal shall send the rod of your strength out of Zion. Beautiful when you know what those things are about. "Out of Zion." It's talking about a Kingdom, Zion, talking about God's government that's to reign that comes out of Zion, and it comes from Christ, comes through Christ as our High Priest and soon King of kings.

You will rule in the midst of your enemies. Incredible. "You will rule in the midst of your enemies." What is that all about? It's about mankind. Even during the Millennium and the Great White Throne "you're going to rule in the midst of your enemies." Why does it say that that way? Because human nature resists God. Human nature is an enemy to God, it's at enmity with God, and it's a constant battle as soon as one is called to fight against that nature, to fight against that

mind no matter when you live your life, whether it be in the Millennium or the Great White Throne.

There are going to be others, obviously, even in the Great White throne, that are resurrected that are going to resist even more. Because that's going to be a toughie. You think of all the generations of mankind and what they were called out of, with all the false religions going all the way back to Egypt and the building of the pyramids before the flood, and then you think about the flood and what led up to that and all the people of that time so corrupt. Mankind has always been corrupt, but there have been ages of mankind where it's been worse than others, more corrupt, if you will.

They're going to be resurrected and given opportunity, and some of them are going to resist all the way up to the end of the Last Great Day. Not a few - thousands upon thousands, upon hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of thousands. Hard to grasp and comprehend that. But when you read about what happens on that last day, or the last period of time there in the last day, in the Third Woe, incredible.

Let's turn over to Romans 6 before we continue on in some of the things in the Old Testament. Because God's Kingdom is about His government. It's about how His ways govern our lives. But we have to yield to them, we have to choose them, we have to want them and see the beauty of it.

Romans 6:12. So, this great admonition: **Therefore, do not let sin reign** (rule). It's about what rules in our lives. Does God's way by choice rule our lives? Do we yield to that? Do we cry out to God for help, that we grow in that, that we be able to see that even more clearly, to see where it is we resist? Because our nature does because it's at enmity with God.

What an incredible battle of human life. I marvel how Paul wrote about it. He finds in himself this battle, this war that's going on, that with the mind, with the knowledge of the truth he chooses and wants God's, but with the flesh, with the carnality that's in him he sees this battle and so often yields to it because it's natural, because it just comes natural to carnal human beings to respond and act according to the things that happen to us in different ways. We have to work at changing that, and it takes a lot of work and a lot of crying out to God because only His spirit can help us in changing.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body. I love that. "Mortal body," your dying body. Because that's what's happening to it. It's not going to live on. Only one thing can live on. If we've yielded to the calling God has given to us and by His mercy and purpose and plan we can be changed from mortal to immortal.

Don't let sin reign in your mortal body. A choice. What's going to reign? Carnality? Selfishness? Or by choice God's way? Even if we make a mistake and sin we can repent of that and respond then by doing what is right, fight it by doing what is right, start practicing more in our lives, the doing of what is right, catching those things more quickly in the thinking and the mind before they happen, doing what is right. It's a refining process.

...so that you would obey it and the lusts thereof. Neither yield, in other words, yes, yield or present **your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin**, whatever it is. The greatest of those is right here - what comes out of the mouth. That's where most sin comes from in life. It comes right across the tongue, past the lips, and when it's past the lips it's too late; you can't take it back.

...neither yield or present your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, to do His will, to be governed by His ways, **as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God**. To honor God. That the virtues, the excellence of God can be manifest in how we talk, how we think. We don't talk like the world does.

I'll tell you what though, the language that people use in this world today? What's common today is what used to be referred to more as construction workers or different ones on a job site somewhere, blue collar type workers, or whatever, because of the kind of language they used on a regular basis. Because that's just the way people talk. Now a days in all phases of society that language is just the way it is, foul, ugly, hideous, sick language. People talk that way. Children learn it very quickly at home. They grow up using that same language because they hear it all the time. What a sick world.

We are not that way, thank God. We're not to speak like that, thank God. On and on it goes.

For sin should not have dominion over you. It's not to rule us. We're to learn to rule self, we truly are, God's way. So, it's a matter of rulership. It's a matter of government. Because we want to reflect that in our lives, we want our lives to be governed by God's ways, by His mind. What else would we want? But sometimes we have various tests that bring to light whether or not that's really happening or to what degree it's happening.

...for you are not under the law, but under grace. In other words, it's not a matter that we don't have law at all like the Protestant world talks about, "We're freed from the law," but under grace. Yes, we are under grace, God's mercy, God's favor, God's love, the revelation of truth from God that He's given to us. We're not being judged now by trying to keep the law, because no one has been able to do it anyway. So that's what it's talking about. It's talking about judgment that comes as a result of whether you're saving yourself by how you live because you can do it so well and you don't need God's help and God's spirit. Anyway.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Do you not know that to whom you yield (present) yourselves servants to obey... So, it's still about obedience to God's ways. I marvel at how... Well, they can't help it. They can't help it because they're blind. Until God calls them they don't have the ability to see what we're blessed to see. Again, how thankful are we that we can see these kinds of things and they're so clear to us and that we can be in such a battle, engaged in such a thing, learning how to obey God, that His laws, His ways govern our life?

So again, **to whom you yield (present) yourselves servants to obey, you are his servants whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.** Because it's a process. The more we learn to yield our self to God's way, His laws, obeying, being obedient. Because what else would we want? Because it's wanting to be of the same mind of God. That's what righteousness is all about. It sums up what is holy. God is righteous, righteous in everything He does. It's the only right way.

Let's turn over to 1 Samuel 8. We're going to begin there now. There's a lot to go through here in this particular area of scripture that brings out things about government on a regular basis, things about human nature on a regular basis, that have been manifested of things that we have experienced, especially in times past going through Philadelphia and Laodicea within the Church, about how government works and how it doesn't work in life.

The Bible, again, is filled with these examples. Most of what is written, candidly, is about government, whether it be mankind's or God's. That's what's in the Bible. Over and over again the examples that are given there, whether it be from mankind or God's, what governs life.

One of the places here that reveals so many of these things is in this story that starts here concerning Samuel's life and continuing on then of how Israel responded to God's rule in a physical realm. Though Samuel experienced that on a spiritual plane with God, Samuel was dealing with a carnal nation, not a spiritual people.

Now, they had all this incredible history of coming out of Egypt, of all the history that they continued on with all this time, God bringing them into the promised land and conquering all the nations that were there at that time. Then time went on through the judges, the period of the judges, several hundred years coming down to this point in time now of Samuel.

1 Samuel 8:1—Now, it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Again, this process here of something that was being done to serve on a physical plane. So much of what was done with Israel was through a process of a priesthood, things that still had the Levitical system involved, and on and on it goes. But a lot of these things came and went, if you will, in the sense of what was being done.

But anyway, **The name of the firstborn, it says here, was Joel; and the name of the second, Abiah. They were judges in Beer-sheba.** So, again here, we're talking about two sons of Samuel and they were given certain responsibilities. Samuel was getting old and so we're just entering into a part of a picture here of what existed at this moment in time.

But it said, **His sons did not walk in his ways.** What did that mean? It means they weren't walking according to what God had revealed to them about how to live life and what Samuel had taught and been teaching. Because so much of his life as a servant of God was to teach about God and God's law and God's truth and things that they understood to that point in time, to those who would listen. But by this time things were breaking down a great deal.

Candidly, even through the period of the judges it didn't take Israel very long to begin straying away from God and God's ways because it really just wasn't in them. It wasn't a part of their thinking even though they had this history, steeped in this history. They knew a lot of this history. But it wasn't for them to live. They were drawn to other things that they saw in the world around them so it didn't take them long to stray away from God's ways and then, all of a sudden, God would allow some other nation then to come in and start killing, destroying, conquering different areas of Israel.

This happened constantly on all sides of Israel. Then God would raise up a judge. I think of Deborah. I read about her just recently and how she was raised up. It was a matter of when those judges were raised up it was a matter of delivering Israel from their oppressors. At those times then, because of the oppression of being conquered and all that was involved in that, and all the loss of life and properties and wealth, and so forth, that they would begin to cry out to God.

It's like being in the foxhole, the old story here of people praying to God all of a sudden when they're down to the point of they're going to lose their life and "Just get me out of this and I'll do anything. I'll do anything." Doesn't take very long does it, they get out of the hole. But that's just human nature.

So it was here. God would send someone along then to free them of their enemies. That's the primary function of the judges at that time, though they were there as well to, in many cases, not all cases (think of Samson), but in all cases here turning people to God, of talking about God. But still, God used different ones at different times, raised them up for the purpose of delivering Israel. That's what it was about. Because they'd begin to cry out to God and God would deliver them and then they would come back to Him to a point, you know, and then they'd start straying away again. It just repeated over and over and over again. Amazing, about human nature.

Anyway, here it's talking about the two sons. **But his two sons did not walk in his ways.** So, they were doing things that they shouldn't be doing. ...**but turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted judgment.** They were straying farther and farther away from the way of God.

I can't help but think about what happened to Herbert Armstrong in his life and how different ones began to see he was getting older. This is what happens. It's just repeated so many times throughout history. And so, here it is, he's getting older, had heart problems, looked like he was about to die and all this struggle then for power. Who's going to follow? Who's going to be the next one to lead the Church? All the shenanigans of human nature that took place and others who wanted, who maybe felt that certain ones were going to gain power and they themselves started trying to pull it toward themselves and all this battling that was going on. Evangelists in God's church! Incredible, the history we have.

It hasn't been a pretty thing all the time but it's what we learn through. God sealed many people through that period of time who are going to be a part of the 144,000. But there were many others who weren't. Many of them were in the ministry, sad to say.

But anyway, it's going on here then telling about this, about the two sons and what they began to do, and they weren't living this way. Again here, this thing of seeing someone's getting older and ready to die and so how are they going to do it? Because they see themselves as being the next ones in power there and so they're thinking in a certain way what they're going to do and how they're going to do it. So often people want to please the people, do what's pleasing to them. Because why? It comes back to you. If you're ruling in certain areas and you get certain benefit and favor. It's just a carnal human nature.

Look at politics. That's what politics is all about. That's why people flip flop back and forth. They go to one section of the country and they say one thing. Go to another section and they say something totally different. You think human beings would pick up on that quickly, but they don't. Anyway, this is what was taking place then.

Verse 4—Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. “We need to discuss this. Something needs to change here.” Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

Now, a part of their motivation was because of what happened throughout the period of the judges. They had other forces coming at them and battling and threats of conquering and so forth that was already starting here. And so, they wanted to be like other countries. What they were wanting in large part was power to deal with some of those things. Because every government that was around that had a king, what did they have? An army. That's basically a lot of what they wanted. They wanted power. They wanted an ability on their own terms to do what they needed to do, what they wanted to do in order to meet something like this. Carnal human nature.

So, again here, **Now, make us a king to judge us like all the nations.** So, there is a lot more involved here than sometimes meets the eye.

Verse 6—But the thing displeased Samuel. Why? Because there was a way of doing things, a right way that he understood, that he lived, that he desired. You know, I can't imagine living in a period of time like that. You have this desire for others to live what you see. But you're called, but they didn't understand about a calling, that he had access to God's spirit, that God was working with him with His holy spirit. He was able to see things that others couldn't see. And yet to have this desire for others and God was working and molding and fashioning... They didn't have the Church and whether he was by himself? Possibly so in how God was working with him. Perhaps there were others, but it doesn't say. But what an incredible thing to experience something like that. How do you deal with that when others, a whole nation of people, they don't want to live God's way of life, and yet that's what you want for them, that's what you want for your children, that's what you want for your family, that's what you want for all the people in your community, for all the people in your country. But they didn't want it. They didn't want God's way.

So, it says, **the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us.** So, Samuel obviously saw something different here than the others saw.

It goes on to say, **So Samuel prayed to the Eternal. And the Eternal said to Samuel, Listen to the people in all that they say to you.** So again, Samuel was very upset because he saw this as a kind of an affront to his work as a servant of God, as a priest, and therefore, being against God. It was a difficult thing for him because he saw in this, government. He saw in this how God was working through his life toward Israel. And for the people to reject that, to want something else, to have the say over the kingdom, it was hard. It was very difficult for him to go through this and so he shared it with God.

The first thing that people should always do when any battle arises, when something takes place in our life that is major, let alone minor (there are minor things in our life, too, that God should be at the forefront in our thinking), but the more important it is the first response we should always have is one of going to God. That's why he did this. He went right to God with it right away, no hesitation.

So, Samuel prayed to the Eternal. And the Eternal said to Samuel... Now, this is an amazing thing because God has worked with different people in different ways at different times. Hebrews makes that very clear. All that took place, how it took place, we don't know fully. He didn't speak out of a bush like He did to Moses. But Samuel had been around long enough that he heard, whatever method that was. We saw it as a child how God was beginning to set him apart and began to speak to him, if you will.

Now, it's a unique thing. It doesn't mean that he heard the sound literally. God can communicate with the mind and that's an awesome thing. But He can also manifest that in such a way that a person feels that they're actually hearing it. That's what Samuel experienced. He started experiencing that in a young way and continuing on. It's not something that others standing by would hear. That's the point. It's not like everyone else when God spoke to him heard the same thing. That's not what it's about. Because it wasn't through the air. It's in the mind.

Samuel was familiar with this from a very young age, how God was working with him and continued to do so. We learn that in our lives. I probably ought to back away from that just a little bit. I have learned that in my life, how God reveals certain things, and other things I have to work through and try to discern. I've had to come to a point in time in my life, because I had no one to tell me, where I've had to experience various things, whether it was a matter of because of a prophet or because of an apostle. There's a difference there. I have learned some things that I can't even fully convey. I don't know how to convey. But I've had to go through different experiences in some of those things to learn, and we as a Church have grown because of some of those things as well.

It's a learning experience because God molds and fashions different things within all of us in how He works with us. But for Samuel certain things were given to him to give to the nation. That's how he functioned. He would pray to God about various things when he didn't know. Certain things he obviously knew. Other things God had to show him and tell him what to do, and did so in a personal relationship, in a very unique way. There wasn't anyone else around to tell them.

That's why I marvel at this process. I'll just interject that here, how much of what we have come to in this time period of God's Church that began in a very powerful way with Herbert Armstrong was a reality of how God revealed things to him in the mind. Not by a voice that he thought he heard, but in the mind, of truth that became clear to him, and then it be a matter of faith. Because truth was revealed. Just like the Holy Days. He came to a conviction in his mind and he knew, and when he knew he began to teach it to the Church. He knew at that point in time this is what God had given to him. He knew this was his responsibility, to teach not only about the weekly Sabbath, but now the annual Sabbaths.

It wasn't an easy thing; I can guarantee you. There wasn't anyone there to tell him this. God didn't speak to him verbally. God spoke to them, him, through what is in the Bible. Over time began to reveal it and manifest it and make it clear to him, to where he finally came to a conviction after seven years, now it's time to begin to teach the Church. That's a marvelous process, truly is, of how God has worked with us in the Church beginning with the period of Philadelphia, and it's continued on. It's a process that involves faith. It involves truth and how God has revealed those things to where your eye, your mind sees certain things you know it.

Like Laodicea. What happened to us as a Church. You come to a point where you see it and you know it's true. God vomited the entire Church out of His mouth. We came to see what that was, that it happened to everyone and why. Because of that spirit, because God won't accept that kind of a spirit, a lukewarm spirit. Within the Church there are those who are witness of that period of time and what happened.

There are these kinds of lessons that God teaches at different times that are absolutely incredible. I remember how uncomfortable some were when I began to talk about the man of sin. It was uncomfortable. It was uncomfortable for me. Because at that particular time within the Church it's like, you can't mention anyone's name and say something that's negative. That was hard because that's kind of how we thought. Something about someone else, verbally to everyone?

But then God began to reveal things that Paul had said about different ministers in the Church as a warning to the Church, "This is what happened." "Look at this." "Flee this." "Get away from this." "Don't follow this." "Don't listen to this." It was a process of conviction. Then after a while you come to a point where you know God has revealed something that you're to act upon. I hope that makes sense. On and on it goes. Stones of the temple. Incredible. All these things that we began to see that fit into place over and over again.

But that's what we're talking about. How does God work with us? He works with different ones in different ways at different times. But I rejoice in and am thankful for this period of time that is a matter of growing faith because it's a conviction of the mind that only God can give through His holy spirit. And you see something, and you think, "It's clear." 144,000? It's clear. It's for the past 6,000 years. Not something you figure out, it's just something God has to reveal. Then when He does it's like you look at it like you did the first time you were called and you begin to see thing

about the Sabbath and Holy Days, and it's like you see it. It's not because of how smart we were and we figured it out. God just gave it in the mind and you could see it. What an awesome experience. That's the process of faith and God's spirit.

So, he prayed to the Eternal and the Eternal said to Samuel, Listen to the people in all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you. That's what Samuel felt like. They'd rejected all his service and all those years, and so they were rejecting him and they wanted someone else to lead them and not to have—which he understood was a matter of something from God. So, he took it personally and God told him not to.

This is a good training thing as well, because there have been times in my past where it's because of this that's written here that it's easy to understand. That when different ones reject government, when they reject how God is working within the Church it's not a matter of something we take personal. It's understanding this is because they're rejecting God's truth, what comes from God.

Like what happened in Toledo and what happened in Detroit in the very early stages after the Apostasy, and on and on it's gone for all time since the Apostasy. Incredible, what we've experienced as God's Church, things that have trained and taught us, and molded and fashioned God's way more fully within us. God's government. God's way. God's truth. What an awesome thing!

Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me. Because I'll tell you right now, it's a painful thing even when you know that. When people you have been very close to, and the ones in times past that we've tended to be the closest to were those who were more involved in decision making and planning and things that we were doing in the beginning stages after the Apostasy, and to have them turn against you in the manner that they did at times?

I'll just share this with you. I think it was a snowy night, the time there we met down by the river. We only met there a few times when we were going to have a meeting at the house. This is kind of all that's in my mind. It was a snowy night in the winter and we were going to have this big meeting because of what was taking place, and anyway, the group that was organized to help in the organization of what was taking place in the Church there, we were having a meeting that night after Sabbath.

Now, on that Sabbath I experienced something that I hadn't experienced since I had been back in another Church area, over the two Church areas in Pennsylvania. I've mentioned this at times past, where I was in one occasion, I think of Spokesman's club and another occasion I think of a Bible Study. In another occasion I think of a Sabbath service where, I don't know how to explain it to you except to say that I knew there was a spirit power there fighting against me to where I could not express and get into the things that I needed to get into. It's like this wall and it's like this battle that's going on and you have to fight and pursue it because there is a resistance coming at you to shut you down. I don't know how else to explain it.

God helped me to understand what it was. Then I knew what I was dealing with and it was easier to deal with. To make a long story short, I hadn't experienced that again until what happened out there that day, that Sabbath. I was giving a sermon in a series about spiritual idolatry and I felt nothing but—I don't know how to explain it—except a power that's just working to shut you down.

It's like it would be like looking at an audience and everybody's—this isn't what was happening—but it's like physically if everybody is grimacing, where total disgust is in their face with what you're saying. Now, if that's something that comes at you as a spirit, that's another matter. Because, you see, that's exactly what was happening spiritually that I didn't know. But I felt it. Knew it was there.

Got there that night and everyone that was on the board, save one, and I have my suspicions about that because of some—I'm not going to tell you about it—some things that happened there. But every one of them had turned against the direction we were going and what I was doing as far as serving in the Church. Wanted to take control of everything. Wanted to take control of the website. Wanted to take control of everything that was there. One even got up and came over and kissed me on the side of the cheek when it was all said and done. I thought, "Let me out of here!" I mean, that's just kind of weird, isn't it? And so, obviously goes back to what happened to Christ in thinking about that and realizing this is a betrayal in the nth degree. And why the individual did that, because it wasn't a part of his character, his mind to do so.

But anyway, these things, I'm saying this because even though you know that different ones all of a sudden have come to a point, it isn't you, though it hurts like mad. It's about God. They had just rejected everything. From that point on, their minds were not the same. From that moment on, things began to change in their life. Not a pleasant thing when God's spirit begins to be taken away or is quickly taken away.

Because some of that started happening before that. I could spend the next few hours here just telling you some stories of what happened at that period of time that are really quite amazing, how far people can go and conspire and talk about things and do things way in advance. Because, this is the time that they were down in Missouri ahead of time, when we were gone, and they were talking to them down in Missouri, a larger church group down there that was kind of affiliated, anyway, in part. They were all plotting and planning how to take control of everything. And you think, whew!

It's like, "You're going to tell me that I can't go to Cincinnati anymore because I am your minister? I can't travel to Georgia? I can't do this or that because God's working there? And you're going to tell me as God's minister that I can't do what God has given me?" Sayonara. That's basically what it amounted to.

These things have gone on for ages and ages and ages, the way human beings fight and resist God and God's government. These stories here about Samuel and what happened are things that can be very powerful when the time comes to need them. That was a time when I needed this. "They haven't rejected you." It hurt like mad. You talk about being, feel like you get stabbed and a

knife turned inside of you? The Apostasy was hard enough. But to have another thing on the backside of this? It's painful.

So, if you've ever experienced betrayal, you know it's painful. This is what Samuel was feeling. Yet God was reassuring him and letting him know, "Samuel, it's not about what you have done. It's about Me. They have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." Powerful!

There are all kinds of examples as we go through this story about Samuel and what transpires after this that we're going to continue to go through. Because there is lesson after lesson after lesson that just like this we can see on a spiritual plane and learn from as far as God's government and how it works within the Church and things that we are to learn from it and be inspired by. Because we see things on a spiritual plane that these things help to magnify very powerfully so.

He says, **they have rejected Me, that I...** Because it's about God. That's why I mention so often that within the environment of fellowship it's easy to bypass this matter of fellowship and just think about a relationship with God; tithing, Holy Day offerings, the Sabbath, going to the Feast, going to the Holy Days, and it's okay. And no, it's not okay. Because if we don't have this right within the Body and where God is...? This is where God is! God lives and dwells within those whom He has called. And if our fellowship isn't right with one another, our fellowship is not right with God. People can deceive themselves. Again, we're blessed to see such things. So that's what so much of this is about.

Verse 8—According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, wherein they have forsaken Me... Over and over again! He's just letting Samuel know it's the same. "I've been going through this a long time, Samuel." Another way of paraphrasing some of this.

...and served other gods, so they are doing toward you also. "Nothing new, Samuel. This is the way it is with carnal human beings, human nature." **Now, therefore, listen to what they're saying.** Now, you have to understand in all this it's been God's plan all along. It's been God's plan all along that there would be a king who would reign over Israel. This didn't just happen as a fluke all of a sudden. It happened by design. Awesome, to understand that. Because it's about, candidly, the King of kings, eventually. It's about David. It's about different things that were going to have to happen in time here and lessons to be learned that are written throughout scripture that God had planned and purposed would have to come about.

The life of King David didn't just happen. It was by design. God started working with him immediately after he was conceived because He had a plan and a purpose for David. It's hard for us to grasp those kinds of things. It really is. And yet he was the one that God had chosen to work with in a very specific manner, in a very specific way. In that in itself there are sermons. It's inspiring to see how God has worked with mankind through time to plan ahead, to prepare for various things that He was going to magnify in a greater way in time because it wasn't about that

reign that was important. It was about another reign that was going to come of the one who would reign over Israel, spiritual Israel, to be the King of kings. Awesome!

He said ...so they are doing unto you also. Now, therefore, listen to what they're saying. However, solemnly forewarn them and tell them the manner of the king that will reign over them. So Samuel told all the words of the Eternal unto the people who asked of him a king. ... He will take your sons, and appoint them for his own chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some will run before his chariots. He will appoint captains over thousands, and captains over fifties to plow his ground, to reap his harvest, and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

Now, this was a part of what they wanted so it didn't dissuade them by any means. Because a lot of this was about an army, a military or whatever. They wanted to be like all the other nations around them. They wanted to have a king. But to grasp what he was telling them; they didn't grasp it. Just like so often in life certain things are said and we can think we hear but we really don't because it goes far deeper. It depends on where we are spiritually and are able to hear spiritually.

He will take your daughters to be ointment makers, cooks, and bakers. He will take the best of your fields... So, when you think something is far removed from you, you don't think about it because it isn't happening yet. And so, it's like this isn't totally real. Anyway. ...your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain, and your vintage—Oh, if that were only all that they would take, whew!

These things, obviously, took place very early on, but as time went along and different stages in different times as you see the reign of different kings through time and those who were descendants of that which became Manasseh and a Commonwealth of nations and things that took place in their history, amazing how people lived. Almost, as it were, in slavery, in many cases.

He will take a tenth of your grain and vintage and give it to his officers and servants. He will take your male servants, and your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to work. He will take a tenth of your sheep: and you will be his servants. Now we're getting closer to it because it's a tenth of just about everything you have. Sorry.

Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves; and the Eternal will not listen to you in that day. Then you'll throw tea overboard. Finally, to be separated from the taxation. Because that's a lot of what that was about during that period of time, and they were having a hard-enough time. So, God allowed a nation to rise that He'd prophesied and how it should come about and that it would take place.

Verse 19—Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel. They couldn't. They couldn't hear what he was saying because of what they wanted, when you want something so much. It boggles my mind even sometimes when we have access to God's spirit.

I think of the period of time I went through, and it's probably over a period of time of at least three years, hit hard over and over again at times about tithing and Holy Day offerings. Because if we have the capacity to follow through and rob God of what is His how can we begin to think that we have a relationship, that we're in the Church?

Now, that's mind-boggling, but it shows how the human mind can work and what takes place. You know those things to be true, of how I said those things over and over again. And yet, how often the very reason so many have gone by the wayside, have been told they've gone by the wayside. How anyone can think they can be in God's Church and not give a Holy Day offering to God, no matter what the small amount might be. I don't care if it's a widow's mite we're commanded by God to do those things. For a mind to think that somehow they don't have to. They don't hear. It just boggles the mind even on a physical plane. But that reveals the spirit is not there or the willingness to be ruled by the Kingdom of God is not there. They want something else. They can't have it. They can't have it. Amazing how the human mind works.

So, this can apply to many other facets of our life. What is it we want? What is it we do that conflicts with what God says is right and just before Him?

Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No; for we want to have a king over us. They couldn't grasp what he was saying even though those things came through and much worse (came true, I should say). ...so that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

Because that's what it came down to. They wanted to be like all the other nations and they never learned the lessons of how God delivered them over and over and over again if they would live by His way of life, if they would obey Him. On and on it goes. That's not what they wanted. They wanted something different. They wanted to be able to have their own army or the ability to fight in war without having anything to do with God.

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the Eternal. So, the Eternal said to Samuel, Listen to their voice, and make them a king. So, Samuel sent the men of Israel, every man to go into his city.

We're going to stop there because it kind of continues on with the story flow in a moment. But again, incredible lessons and things to be learned from a story flow of a physical people, the establishing of a king over Israel, and what that king was like, how he started out his life, what happened not too distant down the road, and how God worked still with Samuel, and so forth, through a period of time here of things that have spiritual lessons in them that we can glean from our past as well as our present.

So with that, next week we'll continue on.