

This is *Part 3* of the series entitled *God's Law of Tithing*.

In *Part 2* we covered what Paul wrote in Hebrews, or to the Hebrews if you will, about the subject of Melchizedek and a change in the priesthood of the Levites to that of Christ being High Priest of a new order. So, it is a new order, it was a new order that was established at that point, but God had established the Levitical order, if you will, because they had an orderly system in the priesthood (that I don't want to spend a lot of time on), but it was a process depending on the size and the growth and what happened over time, how that worked, because they rotated through it, and very systematic.

The book of Hebrews is about how there is no more need for the Levitical priesthood, no more need for offerings and sacrifices because Christ fulfilled everything. He was reasoning on a plane with those of Hebrew background. Anyway, we went through that portion then we continued in an area that was quoting verses in Deuteronomy 14 that concerned the keeping of 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe. So, we discussed some of that, that it's used primarily for the Holy Days, and primarily for the Feast of Tabernacles in the place where, it says, God chooses to place His name. The way He does that is through government.

It's through a system that Herbert Armstrong was blessed to establish in the sense of restoring government in the Church because that was one of the first things that's accredited to him as the 18 Truths, and yet so few seem to really understand how God's government worked within the Church. It's a matter of a system of an order of how God works and inspires and leads and guides and directs us. It's not that that can't go astray because we saw that and learned from that as well as far as time went on and what happened with the Apostasy.

But God still holds us accountable for those things, as He did with Herbert Armstrong, and when it came to a Feast of Tabernacles as the Church grew they had to have more Feast sites. They tried to do that in a way that was good for the Church as far as travel and the like. The larger a particular area would grow the need for a Feast site was such that it was good to have one in a centralized area, so they built, in some cases, some of the very buildings up in Wisconsin, down in Big Sandy, the Ozarks, and other places. That's where God chose to place His name because of the government within the Church, the order of Melchizedek. Christ is the head of the Church, and he will lead and guide and direct us to the degree, in essence, we're looking to him individually and as a Body, as a Church.

So again, we went through some of those things, talking about that, where He places His name. There are a couple of things that need to be stated on how 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe is used, and then we'll continue in the series. Because I needed to go back and there is probably a lot more that I've gone over that I've missed, but at least this gets the framework of it all and the primary things that we need to look at.

So anyway, one is the possibility to save over to the following year. So, I didn't mention this, that there may be an occasion—an example, when we tried to have Spain—and you know that the following year after a particular Feast that there is talk about possibility of having Spain as a Feast of Tabernacles and some want to go there. Well, in order to perhaps to be able to afford to do so, a person has tithe left over from the previous year, 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe left over, and that can be used then for the following year.

The reason I'm mentioning this is because the tradition within the Church and that which was established by Herbert Armstrong is also the part where it talks about taking care of others who need help. The way that's done is striving not to do that out of 1<sup>st</sup> tithe but striving to do that out of what is called excess 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe, meaning that at the end of a Feast or at the end of a year an individual knows how much money that they've used and how much is left over.

It's not the time to just go out and splurge and throw things away, but God wants us to have a great Feast and living or having a better place in which to do so perhaps, whether it be a type of hotel or in some cases as some are doing, they have these houses that people are renting. If they cost a little more and you're able to do it, that's a great thing. Better food than you might normally be able to do, eating out and that type of thing, things to enjoy even as God says in strong drink and wine. Not meaning that you're to overdo the strong drink and wine but it's a fact that people, especially back at that period of time, things that cost more, they weren't able to do on a regular basis so this was the time that you could do this throughout a Feast period, to have a better quality perhaps, whatever it might be.

We've gone through and talked about the different things to spend 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe for and not to misuse it, but the point being is that we read the verses that talked about those who should be taken care of, those that should be helped if the need is there in their life for excess 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe to be used in a 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe fund, as it were, to be used to help individuals attend the Feast.

So again, it's either sent in at the end of a year for that purpose or you can save it over to the following year. I hope that everyone understands that it's not something you can just go back and put into your account and use it ever how you want to the rest of the year. It's not done that way.

The 1<sup>st</sup> tithe, again, we've talked about 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe, so the 1<sup>st</sup> tithe is really quite basic and should be easy to understand. A tithe is that which involves a person's obedience to God in giving God His tenth, His 10% of one's income. This is a tithe, as we have been striving over a long period of time to tell everyone, it's the net income. It's after taxes. Because the principle is, Christ said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's," in other words, you pay your taxes, but that which is God's you give to God. So, you have no control of how much different governments take out of whatever it is you have, and that's not increase, that's not in your control. You're not to pay tithe on that which they take. That's deducted. So, whatever you have as income and whatever the government takes from that, then you pay on the net, what's left.

There is no tithing on pensions such as has been paid into by a company because, as a whole, you've already paid taxes on that or tithes on that on the net income portion. Let me back up here. On the pension, you don't always pay the tithe on that, obviously, you don't have to because it's put into a fund for retirement. But retirement is a matter of taking care of an individual, oneself, later on in life and though taxes have been taken out of it, tithes haven't. Let me state that properly.

But that doesn't mean that once you start receiving it once you're retired that you should pay of whatever that amount is that's coming to you. That's not what it's for. That's not God's intent for us either. There's a spirit of His law that He's given regarding tithes that should be discernable, but it isn't always by individuals so that's why God has given to the Church that guidance and direction that has been around for a long, long time, and sound principles that are used to determine those things.

So again, I'm going through different things here that people might not understand. It's just like social security. Anything the government gives as far as a program, you don't tithe on those things and there are times we tell individuals, we've had to tell individuals, "You're paying and you shouldn't be doing this. You're hurting yourself. You're hurting your own ability to take care of yourself, your life, your family, whatever it might be." That's not God's intent and that's not God's purpose. So, don't do that. God's desire is not to do that to you at that point in your life. There is a time of retirement.

That's why the Levitical system had a system set up where the reality was that while you were working and so forth you received a certain amount of tithes, but after a time even the Levitical system, people that got older and so forth, they weren't required to continue to do certain kinds of work, maybe because of health or whatever it might be, circumstance, but they were still to be taken care of. It's not God's purpose then when they receive that, which is not what they were accustomed to having before, because that's not the purpose either. So, hopefully in what I'm saying here you understand you don't have to pay on anything, any program the government would give to you.

That means, as well, if you're unemployed you don't have to pay on what the government gives you because it's not going to be what you have as your income. Well, it didn't used to be. Anyway, that's what reason some people aren't going back to work. They're having trouble... It's crazy. This world has gone nuts, it really has. But again, within the Church whatever the government gives you as a matter of unemployment, any kind of government program because of sickness, because of illness you receive help from the government, you don't tithe on those things. So, it's not required.

You can give any kind of offering to God at any time you want to. That's your business. But not as a tithe, to think that's what God demands or requires of oneself.

So again, no tithing on any government assistance programs in any country of any type, whether it be those set for retirement, the inability to work, like worker's compensation or

unemployment benefits. The same thing is about insurance companies. If the insurance company sends money because of some program you have, you don't tithe on that either. It's the same thing. You're not getting that help under normal conditions of work.

God desires that we tithe on our work as we're able to work, the productivity from the work that we put into something. When you retire you're not longer, in that regard, working. Now, something I thought was newer isn't as new, but because I've talked to so many people about it over the years, since 2010 when I went through this, I didn't realize that I'd actually mentioned some of this back then. But I've been trying to help individuals understand that when you get to retirement age and you are working because you can't make ends meet, because it's not enough to live on in the regard to taking care of various kinds of payments for home, car, whatever it might be, without really jeopardizing oneself, again, the same principles apply. Not required to tithe.

So, if you're of that age, within your sixties generally is when this happens, at some point government now I think is between 62 and 66, something like that when some of that kicks in. But any time at that point in your life when you are no longer working full-time and you are going into a type of retirement, you may still have to work to make certain ends meet because of the amount that was paid in, you're not receiving enough back from social security or whatever it might be. So again, you don't have to tithe on that, okay?

There are also occasions, I'll just mention, that there are times we've given exemptions to people under certain circumstances in their life. It may be, most of the time it has to do with health, whatever conditions it might be, job situations, whatever it might be. That's done on a personal counselling basis with individuals. But there are times that exemptions have been given out to individuals for a period of time. Most of those have always been meant to last for maybe a year or two years type of thing until an individual is able to get things in order. Different things happen in people's lives.

So again, those are decisions made by the Church. It's a matter of what is the spiritual principle, what does God want and desire that we do. God gives that ability, that latitude, that grace in our lives when situations aren't normal.

I do want to mention that some have been on some of those, taking it longer than what was intended so I do want to make comment that in that particular case, in this particular case that all exemptions programs right now have ended, that they need to be approved by the ministry. One can't just decide that they're going to start it and something that was perhaps was said many years ago, it was for the purpose for a period of time until you were able to get on your feet and have things moving in a normal pace.

So again, if a person feels like theirs is an exception and they're having a difficult time at this point and still in their life then it needs to be discussed with the ministry, with the Church.

All those that we've talked about concerning going to school, college, university, vo-tech, different kind of training programs out here, we have that kind of an exemption as well because it's the principle of building one's barn before they build their house and there are principles there in scripture that we apply as far as the Church is concerned, that that isn't a period of time, you're not working full-time. You might be working ten hours a week, you might be working twenty hours a week, but you're primarily working for that which is in the future. Again, those kinds of exemptions have been out there, as a whole, in the past.

I want to make comment that at this point in time we're going to stop those too. You need to get that approved because in some cases you can go from one program to another program and it's going to have to be weighed out because it seems like sometimes individuals have difficult time knowing the balance, what the balance is in some of that. I hope that makes sense, but if it doesn't, just ask and we'll help you along the way to determine what is the balance.

The point being is that if you have 20 hours, 15-20 hours of college work you're doing, that's an incredible load, and if you're able to work 10 or 20 hours a week to help sustain some of your expenses then that's a good thing. But if you're taking, let's say 8 hours, 10 hours, 12 hours of college class credits you can actually work more and that isn't considered a full load. It isn't considered that by a lot of agencies out there and it's not considered that by the Church either. Only if you're a full-time student to where you're carrying a full load so that you can get something accomplished, as an example, within a four-year period, if it be a matter of a degree that requires a four-year period. It may be a vo-tech thing that takes two years or a year or several months, and most all cases those things are exempt. But I guess what I'm saying at this point is that those need to be approved by the ministry because they've been abused as well, and that's why I'm saying it.

You don't want to be in a position where you're not doing what God expects you to do. That's the wrong side of the fence to be on. You want to make sure that what you're doing is correct, that what you're doing is right. There are times that people haven't been able to know that or determine that and that's what the ministry is for, to help the Church in any kinds of situations that come up where we don't maybe understand a principle or a spirit of a particular matter.

I'm going through this because, again, the primary way that individuals get into ruts and get into problems is not tithing. Most people leave the Church over the two things I've always mentioned, sex and tithing, because they want something else, they want to do something else, they decide to take something to themselves they're not supposed to, that God says no, whether it be sex or money. That leads into where we're going, which is Malachi.

It's very strong, what God has to say, and it blows my mind then. We don't go through and check everybody's record. Sometimes I think people think we're going through on a constant basis checking to see if everybody is tithing... We don't do that.

But I'll tell you what, we do send out quarterly reports to everyone, and you know what? We used to put them into a machine and that machine would fold them all up and we'd just take

them down to the post office. Well, that machine's kind of went on the blitz, so you know what? My wife and I in an evening, we have the joy of sitting there, and if you've seen how those are folded, you've got to go through and fold every one of them if you don't have the machine that does it. That takes quite a while. Then we stuff them in the envelope. That machine would take care of all that. The only thing it didn't do was put a stamp on, so we do that anyway.

But the reason I'm mentioning this is because when you're sitting there folding and you see one entry, no entries, two entries, you can't help but notice it. So, it's not a matter of policing and going into people's lives. It's a matter of something that God makes abundantly clear when it's right there in front of you, a yearly report, no Holy Day offerings in it. What does that say? It says you're robbing God. You're not obeying God. God tells us to give Him Holy Day offerings. So, that's up to us on a personal basis, yes, but if we don't do it what does that say about fellowship? God says we shouldn't have it.

That's where people get themselves in a financial pickle sometimes. But I tell you, I have a really difficult time knowing what I've been through in my life, knowing what different circumstances of life, of jobs and things in times past, in thinking you wouldn't, a person wouldn't tithe to God. Because that's one thing that even Sardis never lost. Sardis never lost the name of the Church, never lost the importance of 1<sup>st</sup> tithe, and the Sabbath, those three things. God let it get that far before He put an end to it. He said, basically, "You are dead, and you are dying," speaking of Sardis. That's what happened to Sardis.

God raised up Herbert Armstrong to reveal or restore, if you will, truths back into the Church, things that had been lost. Not only restored them but even built upon them in things that even the disciples didn't know, the apostles, early apostles didn't know. There were things given to Herbert Armstrong that they didn't have back then because of, primarily because of things leading up to the end here and the age in which this was being done in. Because there was going to be something so incredible happen after he was blessed to restore these things, known as Philadelphia, the Philadelphia era.

Another era was going to follow that would dive and lead into an apostasy. It had to take place, a part of something prophetic to teach us some of the greatest lessons of 6,000 years that have ever been taught. That even within a Church as it gets bigger, as it gets larger and larger, you can't control what people do. You can't know what ministers are doing. In time people became, as it's classified there, "rich and increased with goods," lifting themselves up and beginning to teach other things in different areas, other things than what they've been taught by Herbert Armstrong or at Ambassador, whatever it might be.

We learn one of the greatest lessons of time. You can have God's spirit and you can turn against God. The Apostasy. You can have God's spirit and you can fall asleep spiritually. That's what happened to Laodicea.

So, we've had to experience that to have that lesson learned in a manner that is one of the greatest lessons of time. Truly is. That we have to have God's government in spirit life. That's the only thing that can truly be trusted fully forever. What an awesome thing to experience in order to learn that in a way that helps us be more eager to receive, to have God's Kingdom, to understand that it starts with 144,000 that come with Christ, that they are going to administer God's government. Spirit beings! Awesome, to understand those things.

So anyway, Malachi 3. We're going to spend some time going through a part of this because this is an area where it is addressed, the human mind and how far people will go, candidly, even with God's holy spirit. We've already covered some of the more obvious areas of scripture that concern tithing, the 1<sup>st</sup> tithe, a 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe. We went in and talked about the 3<sup>rd</sup> tithe and something that was administered on a seven-year program and how administratively by God's government in the Church Herbert Armstrong addressed that and gave understanding of how that was to be applied in our lives and it wasn't required of Church members to do that any longer.

He begins to reveal more here about a relationship with Him, and this is what I have been struck by in this particular series that we're going to go into even more as we go into examples in the Old Testament. There is a relationship that God wants to have with every one of us when He calls us, when He draws us, when He begins to give us of His way of life, His truth, and our response to it, whatever we see in life and how we judge things by what we see and by what we grasp of truth that He gives to us. If it be the Sabbath, whatever it might be. If it be tithing, usually that's how it starts, the most basic of structure of things in our life and our response to those things.

**Malachi 3:1—Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight.** So, there have been types of this to a scale, to a point, but it's all about that which is greater that God is having us focus upon. It's about Joshua and our desire for him, not just His government that we're able to experience, His truth that we're able to experience through the Church to a degree and see some of these types that are there that God has done by, as Herbert Armstrong came along, restoring truth to the Church and how God worked with that giving us truth and understanding of things that otherwise we wouldn't grasp. But it came from Joshua because God has given all things to him to lead and guide and direct His Church, and he's about to receive a whole lot more.

So again, "Behold, I will send My messenger." Began in a very powerful way in that 3½ years, that's when he started preaching in a very powerful way, teaching things about God and God's purpose and God's plan, and the disciples didn't even, couldn't grasp those things until Pentecost. All of a sudden, everything he had taught began to ring true on a spirit plane, because they didn't grasp it all.

That's why I love John 14 when he starts telling them, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." It's like, "Well, just show us the Father and that'll satisfy us." You think, what an incredible thing, it was all spiritual in what it was showing, in what it was revealing. But they couldn't understand that until later on. You have to have God's spirit to understand those things.

"Behold, I will send My messenger and he shall prepare the way before Me." Well, started, so what does this mean? God has given everything to Christ and Corinthians talks about a time when all things have been brought under Christ's feet. When that happens they're all under God's. All things are going to be brought into subjection to them, and then it says, in essence, paraphrasing this, that it'll all be given to God. Christ will have completed, accomplished the purpose of his life as a High Priest in bringing so many... He'll always be High Priest - forever and forever and forever. Awesome to understand that!

But he has a job. He's been working at a job for 2,000 years and he's going to do a different job now more hands on than ever before as he begins to work with the world and bringing the world into subjection to God's way of life. Then, finally, the hundred-years, awesome the power of God's Family at that time then. How many will be in that family at that time to work with all those who are resurrected? And so, Christ is the one being spoken of here, to prepare everything for God to receive back to Himself. Finally, everything in the Family of God. That's what it's about.

**And he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight. Behold, He shall come, says the Eternal of hosts.** It's God Almighty who's saying these things, and He's saying these things about His Son. Incredible!

**But who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he appears?** So, what does that mean? Well, it has a lot of meaning to it. For us when we're called, people make choices and have to make choices, and it's a matter then that is your time, that is an opportunity that you have. An individual may have that later on in time as well, that is God's judgment.

It says, **Who shall stand when he appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap.** Wow! I think of what we go through when God calls us, whether it be now, different ones who have been called through time, and I think of all those that says in scripture who have been called. Many have been called, and out of that to think that only a few have been chosen over the past 2,000 years.

Now, God worked with individually people that He molded and fashioned in the first 4,000 years, but after the Church began that was another matter. It was a matter of bringing more into a Body to be trained, to be worked with in a more organized fashion in a larger scale, and to have Churches in various areas and ministers to work through those areas to whom God would work, through whom Christ would lead and guide and direct. This process has gone on.

From the beginning, this process of a refiner's fire, fuller's soap, it's been going on and it's going on now. We're still living through it. As I've been trying to tell, the Church is being cleansed more now than ever before in the sense of what's remaining, because there is not a lot remaining. What God is doing is refining the Body. Because anyone who is a part of the Church is for the purpose of finishing the 144,000, but it's also for a purpose of those who continue on, and they're going to be at a certain place on a spiritual plane in a relationship with God when that happens. There are certain things that God is not going to allow as much as He didn't allow all those thousands, tens of thousands come into the promised land on a physical plane when they came out of those 40 years in the wilderness. God is all powerful.

That's why I made comment about this Covid thing. We either follow what God has given in unity and harmony and oneness in a unified way... And if someone, which wouldn't shock me because I've lived through everything imaginable. You can't tell me anything hardly anymore of something human beings will do in the environment of God's Church and haven't done. Basically, nothing. It's all happened. To see these kinds of things take place, but to have a warning of where we're living in time because it's not like it was in times past where things would continue on by the time someone was refined and not able to continue, not chosen to continue on, separated from the Body. Because God has been doing that for the past 2,000 years within the environment of the Church.

That's why I made comments if someone came to the Feast of Tabernacles, lying to God (because that's what it would be), lying to God, I think, do you not remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira? You're not going to get by with lying to God. You can lie to me. You can lie to others in the Body, in the Church, but you can't lie to God. I know what's going to happen, and it's not a good thing.

I thought it was interesting here, this "fuller's soap." I've read over this years and years and years and never bothered to look it up because I thought soap, it's like using soap and I thought, "fuller's soap," that must be taking the soap and washing your body down type. There is that analogy there, but I thought it was kind of interesting what it says here.

The expression comes from "fulling." It's "one of the steps in woolen cloth making. It involves the cleansing of cloth to eliminate oils, dirt, and other impurities until the material is pure white." Awesome! You think of what it says of those 144,000 and the white robes and the various things and it talks about them having been made clean and cleansed through the blood of Christ, and all the expressions that are used along these lines. You think, here is a physical example of something that man, how awesome is that?

"During the process the cloth also undergoes bleaching, wetting, and beating of the fibers." We go through a lot! We do! Anyone think this is going to be a cake ride when we're called into God's Church is sadly mistaken because you're going to be tried, there are things you're going to go through. It wasn't meant to be easy. It was meant to be difficult because that brings to the surface what we are and whether or not we're responding to God. If we're responding to

God and looking to God, He'll mold and fashion things within us that can be molded and fashioned in no other way.

It's a process of developing character, yes, but it's a process of transforming the very thinking of our minds. As we do that successfully, looking to God and His spirit to work with us, to help us in those things, we're going to suffer. We're going against the tide of this world in everything we do from the moment we start keeping the Sabbath, from the moment we start tithing and our finances are pulled back and the things we have to do in families sometimes to get back on track, and all the things that go with this constantly in life. Because the more people know...? That's why it isn't always a good thing when you're first called, to share everything you know with everyone you know, because after a while they can't take that. It's like, "You are stark raving mad! You're nuttier than a fruitcake, really, the nutty fruitcakes."

We go through this with family, with friends, with different ones and you keep making choices to go the right way. There are going to be other things happen on the job, whatever it might be. There are things going to hit you at different times, and some of them, they hurt. I think of the fellowship in the Church, of all the people I've known over time and all the people who have left, all the people who went through the Apostasy and are gone, and things that people did, close, eating... That's why that song means so much to me: "We walked to God's house... and counsel blended sweet. We walked together to God's house, counsel blending sweet." I think of all the people we shared things with and experiences at meals. I think just within the ministry alone, of all those who one day...

I think of the one man who came through, being transferred. As he came through there in Toledo he was being transferred to another area. We'd gotten close over the years. He was down around the Pittsburgh region; we were up in the Erie region. He was not in that particular church but another one close by. A lot of times spent together at times talking about things within the Church, what we were doing, how we were doing it, how we were working with different situations. We talked that night, and I believe it was just the next day then or the day after (I can't remember exactly the timing there now) but gave me a call and I didn't know him. I didn't know the man! He had a different mind. He was talking about things that blew my mind because he had spent several hours talking to Joe Jr. And if you spent a lot of time talking with Joe Jr. and reasoning with him, it's not something you wanted to do back at that time because people got caught up in it. It's a spirit world. Anyway, what a horrible thing to go through in life, things that we have gone through in the Church.

So anyway, we go through difficult things. All of us have gone through so many different things, especially I think of this end-time and the Apostasy and what people have done. So, we've all been touched by that. I don't believe, There is no way that there's been anyone through time in the last 2,000 years in God's Church who hasn't experienced betrayal in the sense of having friends or relatives, or whomever it might be, who have turned against you who were once with you in fellowship, in services together and living this way of life, and then turn against you. That's a horrible thing to experience.

Yet sad to say, on the other hand, it's a good thing to experience because we've got to understand what betrayal is. Because God has been betrayed from the beginning. Christ was betrayed in a very great way because that's the way of the world, and it isn't God's way. It's a mind, it's a way of life that is against God. God says, "The carnal mind is enmity with Him; it's not subject to His laws and neither indeed can be." So, we learn that, and we understand that, and we understand that the only way it can be is having God's help.

Anyway, going on here: "During the process the cloth undergoes bleaching, wetting, and beating." I don't know about the bleaching thing, but the beating thing, I... yeah. Sometimes feel like I've been beaten to a pulp. That's, basically, kind of what it is, I guess.

"...undergoes bleaching, wetting, and beating of the fibers in order to give a consistent and acceptable condition." What an incredible example of something that God gives to us to look at to say this is what we have to go through, "like fuller's soap," "like a refiner's fire." Because I also feel like that, that I was like the brand plucked out of the fire. No better than anyone else. None of us are better than anyone else, it's just a matter of God's mercy and God's purpose of working with us, and if we're able to see that and grasp that by the help He gives to us to grasp it and see it, and we accept it, then we're exceedingly blessed.

Because that's been a big problem in times past, where people look down upon others. It's horrible. It has to be a mind of humility, each one of us, toward one another, and to learn to really love each other. Because if we don't something is wrong with us, because it's reflecting our love to God Almighty, it really is.

So, the cloth undergoes this bleaching and so forth, fibers, and acceptable condition. You think, give a consistent... Consistent! What an awesome thing. To persevere! I think of the word "persevere" that we went through recently, that that's the name of Israel, to persevere. Because that reflects the mind we have to have, of Jacob that wouldn't let go wrestling with God. You know, God manifesting Himself in a physical form to be of equal with him and he wouldn't stop, because he wanted the promise of the blessings. He had to touch his thigh to put it out of whack and guy wouldn't let go, Israel, persevere, awesome! Because that's the way our lives have to be.

So again, this consistent and acceptable condition. So, it has to be something we come to that point where we're acceptable before God. That's why I love the scriptures that talk about, when it speaks about Abraham, where God says, "Now I know you." To go through whatever refining it takes to get to that point where God says He knows us. Awesome! He knows what we'll do under every circumstance because of our choices in life and a consistency of choices. Because they must be consistent, the choices, of God's way of life.

**Verse 3—He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.** So, all these examples of the impurities, when it's hot and molten and you take off the impurities, and all these examples. **And He shall purify the sons of Levi.** This isn't a physical thing. This is on a spiritual plane. So, it's not a matter of something that was being done with the physical Levitical priesthood; it's

about us, it's about God's people, it's about God's Church, it's about what we're to learn on a spiritual plane in a relationship with God.

**And purge them as gold and silver so that they may offer unto the Eternal an offering in righteousness.** God doesn't want the others. He doesn't want the physical part and offering up those things. It's what's in here in our lives and what we're willing to do - living His way of life because we want it. It's a matter of faith, isn't it? Believing God and living the way of life He's given to us. We understand that's what God accounts as righteousness. We're not righteous. None of us fool ourselves, or hopefully we're not. If we are, God will help us with a little bit more with this bleach stuff and beating stuff until it gets worked out of us and we're able to see ourselves.

Because one of the hardest things in life sometimes is to see ourselves. Then He'll help us to see ourselves. Thank God. That's a blessing. Whatever we have to go through, so be it, so be it. Because it's a matter of believing God and living by what He's given to us. As it makes very clear in scripture, Paul does over and over again, that's what's attributed to us as righteousness. Not that we are, but because we believe God.

**Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to the Eternal.** It's a spiritual thing. It's not about the tribe of Judah. It's about us again; it's about those whom God works with.

**As in the days of old, as in the former years. I will come near you to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against the swearers, against those who oppress the hireling of his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and who turn aside the stranger.** So, we can read right over that if we're not careful and not understand what God is telling us because we can look at it on a physical plane and a physical plane only. It is about relationships. It is about how we live our life. It is about whether we believe God and seek to live by what He's given us to believe, to know. That's why we do what we do.

He's saying He is going to judge. When it's all said and done He judges us, He gives us instruments and tools and things that lead us along the way in process of judgment, sometimes within the Church of judgments. But when it comes down to it, that which, a matter of what comes from God when it's all said and done.

He's saying here He's going to be swift against all these, and He has been in the Church through time. Maybe not in our time. Sometimes He'll allow certain things to go on for years and years and years until He doesn't give anymore grace and He says, "No more. Has to be addressed. It's not going to be allowed to continue any longer like this." God takes care of it.

It says **...and do not fear Me.** Because to do any of these things, to lie to God, because any of these things that we would do is lying to God, and if you look at scripture, doesn't take very much, look up a lie and see what it says, and God says quite a bit about it in Proverbs; He hates

lying. He hates a lie because it's everything against His way of life. It's against the truth. And so, if we lie about a matter, if we live a lie about a matter, whew, we're not in unity with God at all, we're not living what we should be living, and so, we can't be accounted as righteous by any measure and that will be taken care of. God makes it very clear what He's going to do because it's a matter, do we fear?

So, it's a matter not being afraid of God but fearful to do something stupid like this. To fear to lie. Yet sometimes I hear things that go through the bush, the vine, and they end up and I hear about them, maybe sometimes not for a couple of years later because sometimes they're already taken care of before they get there. But when I do and it boggles the mind, and you think, how could we do this to God? Because if we're not doing something right, if we're doing something wrong, what other definition can you give it but a liar, to lie. No one can get by with lying to God. It doesn't work. We can get what we want and deceive ourselves into thinking we have the right reasons for doing it. Choices. Choices. Choices.

**"...and do not fear Me," says the Eternal of hosts. For I am the Eternal, I do not change.** So, as a way of life, of all the things that God has given us as a way of life we're to live and He's making it very clear here we should want to listen, to have the other aspect of fear, to reverence and to be in awe of God. That's what the word also means. To love God. To be in awe of everything He's given us, every opportunity. To know what's ahead of us. To think out of so few on earth and 6,000 years, to be given opportunities to know truth, to see it when the vast majority of human beings, they have to wait a thousand years through the Millennium, and then they get resurrected and they have the opportunity to learn something that we have the opportunity for now. Then to mishandle that or not to appreciate it, not to love, to love God because of that? Kind of blows the mind!

**Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed.** So, the point being is here we all have weaknesses, we all have frailties, we all have to repent of sin day-by-day-by-day because of our nature, because of our selfishness. God reveals selfishness to us the longer we're in the Church, the mind, the human mind to the point where you just hate the human mind. Our mind. Not somebody else's mind because that can get you in trouble because that's what happens usually.

Because we can find fault easily in others and we just don't see it in ourselves. What's amazing is so often it's the exact same thing that we deceive ourselves in is the very thing we see in others. Horrible!

**Even from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return unto Me,** this plea from God to repent, to change because God's not going to. What did He say? I don't change. But you must. That's what the message is. You must. If you want what He's placed before you, you have to make the choice to change, to become different from what you are, because what you are is not acceptable.

**If you return unto Me, it says, and I will return unto you, says the Eternal of hosts.** So, when God gives us opportunity for His way of life, especially on a spiritual plane, it's a matter of repentance. If we continue to repent, God gives us opportunity, He gives us grace, He gives us help.

**But you have said, Wherein shall we return?** What is it? How is it? What have I done that I have to return? Well, there are things we should be able to see in our lives, but it's a hard thing. Candidly, you have to cry out to God for God's spirit to help you to see your own thinking, your own mind, and where it is you tend to deceive yourself. That's a beginning of great wisdom, to ask God to help you to see yourself and where you're deceiving yourself. Because that's what we do. Our human nature tends to seek to deceive itself. It's a difficult thing to repent. We have to have God's help.

So the question is asked, **Will a man rob God? – Will a person rob God?** Well, the answer should be, "Be an idiot to do it!" But so many, this is what happens. Oftentimes, what takes place in a person's life is if we begin to let down spiritually, we let down in other areas of our life to where after a time the fear of robbing from God isn't the same. We don't see God in the same way because we begin to lose His spirit, His help to see ourselves and our thinking, and our minds are being deceptive as they are as human beings, and a person begins to finagle in other areas of their life.

This is one of the main ones that hits God's people, has ever since I've been in the Church. That's why we have to be so careful of how we manage what we have, 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe, because if we're loose in that, in how we think about how we're keeping things before God, because He's given us responsibility to use something in a way that honors Him, and we do it outside of that realm that He's given to us, that very thinking will eventually work its way into 1<sup>st</sup> tithe as well. That's what happens.

He says, **You have robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed You?** And He says, **In tithes and offerings.** So often then again, it begins with the offerings, then it goes into 1<sup>st</sup> tithes. So, I see a sheet of paper in front of me and I think, hmm, April is not there, May is not there, September and October, nothing there. And what does it tell me as a minister? Someone is lying to God.

What am I supposed to do? Ignore what I saw? If I do, I'll be dealt with, see, so we have choices to make, what do we do? Well, I have to do what I have to do because it's best for the Body. So, those kinds of things, they happen, and sadly, they've happened so much for so long in God's Church.

**Verse 9—Therefore, you are cursed with a curse.** We don't know what we do. What does that mean? Sometimes it's like these things you see on TV or maybe a movie, or something, and someone has this wand and "Curse you!" Things begin to happen all over. This is not what this is talking about. You know, we think about curses. Like what happened from the very beginning, God says, basically, that how you live your life is going to result in two things, one of two

things, blessings or curses, obedience or disobedience. Because if we don't live God's way of life we're going to experience cursing in our life.

This world is being destroyed because of people who don't want to live God's way of life, they've rejected it, and God's bringing it more and more to the surface we're destroying the earth! We're destroying God's creation. It's hideous what we're doing as human beings. It's all coming to a head because of the masses of people. Anyway.

So, it makes it very clear to us this is a part of the process. I've seen this take place in people's lives. I think of one individual who had troubles with tithing for so, so long. So likeable, so enjoyable to be around to talk to. Gave him grace at different times. There was some repentance for a short period. The person would get back into the roll of things and yet had job problems.

Now, please understand if we don't obey God, He's not going to bless us. Now, we may have certain situations happen in life, but when it happens in God's Church it's going to happen more, some of these kinds of things. God will help us. We may go through a period of time where we work with something, but as we go along in that then we begin to be blessed, even on a physical plane. But if we don't we don't understand what happens to our life and what happens up here.

It's a horrifying thing to be in the environment of God's Church and to begin disobeying God. Because I've seen it over and over again, what happens to the minds of individuals in their lives afterwards. You want to talk about drama? It makes it clear in scripture it'd been better off if they'd never started the process because then you'd just be living in the world and suffering with the rest of the drama that's out there. But when you do it to God and it happens in God's Church you bring on a drama in your life because of a scarring of your mind that brings on a greater curse of life.

The other day I only have to read part of a sentence and I know what's happening to them. They claim to have a certain name that's been given to them and a message for the apostle and different things that can happen to the human mind, of how far people can go and what God will allow happen. Because God will allow them, and He makes it very clear about that. I've read those scriptures before. God will allow them to have power over us that they didn't have before. Why we would ever do things of that nature blow my mind.

Anyway, **verse 9—Therefore, you are cursed with a curse. You have robbed Me.** Does God need it? That's not the issue, is it? Does the church need it? You know, right now we don't have the problems that Philadelphia had. Herbert Armstrong, he pushed like mad to do a commission. Doors of TV, the printing press, massive translations going into all the world. That was his job, and he knew it, and he did it with the kind of zeal that puts the rest of us to shame as far as taking something like that and doing it. We were always on the edge.

I don't know if some of the people that have been around for a long time know that we were on the edge as far as finances were concerned, and yet we had millions and tens of millions of dollars being worked with. Then people would find fault in Herbert Armstrong when he wanted to build a house dedicated to God. People found fault with that. They would ask for help financially. People were asked to get loans, if need be. Okay, fine. It's not a problem. This is God's Church. That's God's apostle. We're behind it!

Others found fault with it, like human reasoning, like I've had told to me in times past. "Well, it seems kind of clear to me that God's trying to tell him not to build it." Like, okay. So, anyway, it got built and assembled in that respect, on a physical plane, of bringing different leaders as he did. He brought world leaders in there. People got upset because he had a Rolls Royce. They'd go to the airport to pick up these world leaders. You think, what are you supposed to do, go get a Volkswagen bug and go pick up a world leader? Then the jet. People went bananas over some of these things... I mean just nutty!

"You mean, my kids don't have enough food and I've got to send in tithes?" People started cheating on tithes because they made the judgment that, "He's misusing the funds, therefore, I don't... I'm not going to support that." Tried and tested in different ways. Where is our mind? Where is our heart? Sometimes that tests people. I know a lot of people who didn't come through that because they didn't love God, they didn't love God's Church. They didn't understand God's government and how God's Church operates.

I was saying we don't need your tithes. We have no need! We have no big projects like that. I don't know what to do with it. To make a long story short, I think what an incredible thing to be stumped with. I'm waiting for God to make it clear how to do some of this. I feel that some of it may be for this (use the word sparingly) "last" book and what we're going to do with it. Because I feel very strongly we're going to push it like mad more than anything we've ever pushed.

So, I feel like part of that has been answered already, but I think, what a difference, a contrast. Because there was a different thing being done then than what's being done now. It's not that we have that volume by any measure, but what we have we've been very blessed. At some point, because you know at some point here toilet paper is a whole lot better than euros and dollars, and they don't feel near as good as Bounty or Charmin, or whatever they are. I don't know what we use, whatever people use out here. Because at some time it's all going to go down the tubes. Gold, silver, what can you buy with it? People are going to want food. You think...? Anyway, we live at a unique time.

So, do we not tithe because the Church doesn't have need of the tithes? No, we obey God. That's the way it is.

**You have robbed Me, even this whole nation.** So, it's just been the way of Israel for a long time. But it's not about physical Israel, it's about the Church of God. God's Church from the very beginning has had problems with people lying to Him. Ananias and Sapphira tried it. They

said, "We have given you everything of this that was sold." They lied because they saved half of it back for themselves. They had that choice. They could have kept  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it. They could have kept 80% of it. They could have kept 90% of it, so to speak. But they claimed they gave it all. They lied trying to lift themselves up to be looked up to in a special way. "Look what we've sacrificed. Look what we've given to God's Church. Look at me." God killed them both, struck them dead. Incredible.

At the very beginning of the Church getting started and that example being there you think, you don't want to mess around with God when it comes to lying. It doesn't work. He knows what's in here. He knows how we think. Not harsh. It's just that when we've received what God has given to us, He's blessed us with so much, where is our heart, where is our gratitude, our thankfulness? How much do we love Him for what He has poured out upon us? Do we grasp what He's poured out upon us? Do we understand that everything we have is because of what He's given to us? Physical and spiritual.

**Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house.** It's not about something physical. It's about that which is spiritual. Food, He blesses us with spiritual food. Awesome, to understand what this is about.

**And prove me now herewith, says the Eternal of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing until there is not room enough to put it, to have it, whatever.** In other words, there's so much. Sometimes we tend to think just physically about we're going to have this stockpile of gold over here and this stockpile of silver over here, and of course, the stockpile of bitcoins because that's really popular. That's not what it's about, that He gives us so much. Because you can have a lot of bitcoin. I don't think there's any end to how much you could have if you could afford it all. But anyway, you want to keep buying it, they'll just keep giving you more.

That's not what this is about. It's about what we have in life. Do we grasp it's not about this short span of life we have physically? Yes, to be blessed in it. Yes, God to bless us in it in what He gives to us, how He molds and fashions us and transforms our thinking, our being. How much...? What is the value of that? How great is it to have God's way of life revealed to us? How great is it to have a mind transformed, changing, that is one day going to be spirit? What value?

The things that are out there that we don't even grasp that are far beyond the value, the magnitude of what's on this earth. We don't grasp. We can't yet. But it's all out there for a purpose and for a reason, not just to go out and look at, at night. Because you can't even begin to see it all. Incredible, the Great God and the things He has planned into the millions and billions of years that we cannot grasp. But to be a part of His Family in it all? Where are you going to put it all? It's not about a physical thing at all.

**I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground.** So, we learn that about God's way of life, that He's going to give us more and more the more we yield to Him, and He's going to destroy the one who tries to destroy what we

have, tries to destroy us, the one who keeps coming after us, has ever since man was put on earth. He didn't waste any time, and then that demonic world with him.

"I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground." So, we're coming up to a point in time where this is just about to be put into effect in a very powerful way. For the Millennium, he's not going to be around. The demonic world is not going to be around. That one hundred years, he's not going to be around, they're not going to be around. They're not going to be able to destroy the things they've destroyed in the past. God talks about you build a house and you don't have to worry about someone else coming along and taking it, like someone would like to take mine. But they can't have it because there just happens to be a law in there, otherwise, they'd have it. There come points in time where I said, "Fine, take it all. I really don't care!" So, sorry. That was just a side tidbit. It tends to get me going sometimes, gets my blood going.

But that's the way of the world and things like this have happened to people through time. Someone comes in to conquer, someone takes what you have, others come in. God warned what would happen if you had a king. If you have a leader, this is what's going to happen. They're going to take this, they're to take that, and life isn't going to be all peachy keen.

Like to meet up with some of them. Anyway, just kidding again. Laura and I have talked about all those that did that, said, "We want a king." We'd like to have them in a little line and talk to them about this. Anyway. "Do you know what you did?!"

**Verse 11—Neither shall your vine cast forth her fruit before it's time in the field, says the Eternal of hosts.** So, I think of those times in the Millennium and the Great White Throne, of what God promises He's going to give.

**Nations shall call you blessed, for you shall be a land of delight.** Can you imagine when different ones are resurrected in that hundred years and they see what God's done for a thousand years under His government? I mean, we can't even grasp that, what the world is going to be like at that point in time. We can try to imagine the technology that continues, the ability of being under one government, people cooperating, companies that cooperate, everything for the betterment of mankind.

I think of the medical profession and how you can go back sometimes and look at different stages. Sometimes some of it looked so barbaric, of things that they did and how they did it. Today what we're doing is going to look so barbaric in time. People have this concept that people are going to be anointed and everybody is going to be healed right then and there, and there's not going to be any illness, any sickness throughout the Millennium, no accidents throughout the Millennium. Yes, there are.

People are going to die. It happens. It's going to happen. Things are going to take place. Diseases and so forth, that's going to be up to mankind and our obedience to God and how those things begin to be eliminated through living a right way of life. Slowly but surely the

earth begins to be cleansed and so do those things. Because they're a result of disobedience to God. That's why they exist.

Messing around with little bats. For what reasons? War. It's about conquering. That's why they want to do these things. Now look what happens when something starts around. What's behind that? You know, you give mankind enough time the things that we can do and mess up with, if time were to go on without that war it'd be a horrible planet to live on. Truly would be.

So again, **Nations shall call you blessed.** Indeed. That's when it happens, when they're resurrected and they're able to see and think how blessed. Yet sometimes we don't grasp what we have. **You shall be a land of delight, says the Eternal of hosts.**

**“Your words have been strong against Me, says the Eternal, Yet you say, What have we spoken against You?** Ever since I've been in God's Church I have heard so much spoken against God - long before I was in the ministry. We used to have a term in conversation sometimes. Different ones were having “roast minister” because they would tear apart everything he was saying.

I remember driving with some people, riding with them to services, about an hour and a half to almost two hours away to another part of a state, and on the way home it's like little dumbfounded on occasion like that, being a young person and new in the Church and you hear people chewing apart things that were said. You think, “And this is God's Church?” There are people who couldn't make it through things like that because how do you deal with that if this is happening in God's Church? We're all human beings and people sin and either they grow, or they don't, and that comes out in time.

Anyway, going on, so, **You have said, It is vain to serve God. And what profit is it that we have kept His ordinances?** Every time someone sins this is what happens. I mean, when they get into a sin and continue in it, this is spiritually what's being said. They can't see and grasp the profit, the importance of the value of what God has given, to want that and to continue in it. And so, because they look down upon that the attitude of mind is to lift up something else. A new car. A new house. A different apartment. Whatever. Better “this.” Better “that,” and use whatever for that. So, it all starts somewhere in how we think as human beings.

**You have said that it's vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Eternal of hosts?** I think of people that I've known have made comments about, “You know, I'm so tired of hearing how bad I am at services.” We do tend to hear that because we talk about human nature. This is what you have to conquer, so yeah, we're going to hear how bad we are. Our human nature sucks! Our human nature is selfish. It's opposite of the way of God, the mind of God. We want for ourselves. We don't want for everyone else. We want, as a whole, we like to baby self. We really want self. We love self.

That's just the way our human nature is, and if we don't see that we've got big problems spiritually. We have problems. I have problems because I have human nature. Until I'm rid of this, I have a battle to fight my human nature. It all depends on, the success of battling that, depends on where we are spiritually.

So, we have to be in battle. We hear about this regularly, "the carnal mind is enmity against God; is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." That's why we need His holy spirit. To have His holy spirit what do we have to do? We have to repent of our ugliness, of our sins, of our wrong speaking to others, of whatever it might be; whatever we've done wrong we've got to repent of that before God.

We say something wrong to someone else, we say it in a wrong way, we better be on our knees, we better be repenting to God. Say, "Father, forgive me. I've held up an idol before You." See, that's my number one. Anything that interferes with obedience to God is lifting up an idol before God, and I do not want to do that. So, whatever my two and three and on down the list is here, if something happens to them it all goes back to number one. That should be our greatest motivation of all; I want to honor and love God and I don't want those others, so I want to repent whenever I see error in the others. Because if I don't then I'm holding up something above what God has told me I should be living. I don't want to be guilty of that.

So, that's the way we have to think. We fight. So going full circle, heard people in God's Church say, "I'm really tired of hearing how bad I am." Going way back into Philadelphia, through Laodicea. Another one I love? "I just don't see love in God's Church." You can always take that to the bank that they're a hop, skip, and a jump away from leaving the Church or they already have. Well, generally, they already have. To get to that point where you say, "I just don't see love in God's Church. Where is the love in the Church?" So, in other words, they're being so critical, and nobody is showing love, but I want to be around where love is...so I'll go find it somewhere else.

That's what people do. It's human nature. Over and over and over again. So, if anyone ever hears those words, cringe inside, cringe because you're about to be stabbed in the back.

**Verse 15—Now you are calling the proud happy.** It's not the word "we." It's about us. **Now you are calling the proud happy.** So, when someone comes to this point in time, it's a way of thinking and a judging and so forth, and what we tend to do in a perverted way if we're not careful.

**Yes, and they who work wickedness are built up.** So, if we start straying away from God we start seeing something of greater value somewhere else and we have to deceive ourselves even more.

**Yes, and they who test God...** It's not the words "are delivered." It means, **Those who test God get away with it.** It's talking about how we can judge. I've seen so much of this in time as well, how human nature tends to judge others, and we're talking about the Church. If we find

fault with others, usually the human mind is feeling a whole lot better about itself because it's a perverted thing, you see fault in certain ones. But if you see certain ones doing something that's wrong and there's something that you want to do that's wrong, you can't tell yourself that because you can't admit it, but that's what the mind is doing. It has a desire for something, whatever it is that's wrong, and so it has to try to justify. "So-and-so's getting... They're not being dealt with. That must be okay."

Sometimes we have to be very careful in our lives, too, because by saying something that isn't quite right, just because it isn't dealt with right then and there doesn't mean it's okay. You know, I don't want to go into all these.

**Then they who fear the Eternal spoke often one of another.** I love these verses here. This verse here talking about, especially at this time, because I think of the more refined we become the more cleansed we become. As you go through the story of Malachi it builds up to this and it talks about if we're living God's way of life what we do. We get farther and farther away from, and we want to be far away from, judging of others. We want to be far away from disobedience to God. We want to be repenting and not thinking wrong things like this, of justifying ourselves by thinking, "Well, so-and-so did that, so what I'm doing doesn't look so bad."

"Then they who feared the Eternal spoke often one to another." What is that talking about? We're drawing closer together, fellowship. That's what it's about. The closer we draw to God, want to draw to God, it means we're practicing what He's given to us and we're truly drawing closer to one another. We're not finding fault with one another. We're not looking down upon one another. If someone is doing something wrong, God will bring that to the surface and deal with it. Or if we know of something then we know of our responsibility. We've already addressed that recently, and generally, that's to go to the ministry and discuss something with them. Because a lot of times your judgment is off the wall, you're not seeing things properly, you're not understanding something as well. So, you have to be very careful in some of those matters.

So, it's a matter of wanting to be one, wanting to love each other. Understanding, we're all in this together. We're a family. That's what this is about. I think the closer we come to this time of Christ returning the more this scripture becomes fulfilled. To me, it's a beautiful scripture.

"Then they who fear the Eternal," had great awe and respect toward God, want God's way of life with all of their being, want what He's placed before us, fighting for what He's placed before us. The fellowship then becomes better and better and better.

Don't think I said it in the beginning did I? Did I mention about the ministry? Did I say anything about that, making some changes? Yeah, okay, thought I did. I probably will give a sermon about some of this, but to me, one of the exciting things is we don't need as many anymore again at this point in time because the Church is being cleansed and we don't have the kinds of problems we've had in times past. It gets cleaner and cleaner and cleaner. The more it's

cleansed the easier it is to work with, to administer God's way of life as far as the Body is concerned, the Church is concerned. To me, that's exciting because I, candidly, have not enjoyed or seen the Church, ever since I've been in it since 1969, on a spiritual plane that it is today. To me, that's an awesome thing. Much of this has to do with what God is doing and what it's leading up to. We understand that and are excited about that.

So, we have gone through even a period of Covid, which I feel has been a blessing to the Church. Truly has been. It's going to try some because some can't hear. Some are more concerned with what their government has to say about some of these things, and if that judgment is made accordingly... I've personally had to fight some battles in some of this because I do not comprehend the lack of willingness to love others in the Body, to grasp the importance of the Body spiritually. I have a battle with that, and I've asked God for help in that, that I don't let myself get in the way of some of this because it's been a bit of a battle. Yet we're to be patient and I know that God will address those things, take care of those things.

But it's difficult inside when I see where we are in time and what's taking place and I think here is something sweeping and it's going to get worse. It's not going to get better, and if we're not of a mindset of a willingness to love one another for the right reasons, no matter what harm may come - which is the greater harm? Well, God's Church leads and guides and directs us in evaluating some of those things. And how can I share more?

Put a poison in my arm? If it means loving my brother, if it means loving others around me. I'm looking to God. God will take care of me. We might think, well, no, God's going to take care of me because I won't do that. Well, time will tell. We don't have a whole lot of time. We've known for a long time we're getting closer and closer, and have thought in times past, this is it. Well, right now to look at the world it should sober us to the core of our being to look at where things are between nations and what's happening.

A lot of times you can tell some of those things too by the Church, by where we are. I look at the cleansing of what God's doing and what He's doing in the life of the Church.

So anyway, going on here. **A book of remembrance was written.** Beautiful. **Then they who feared,** had awe, love, respect to God and would totally fear doing something against God. That's what drives us then to honor, to love God, to obey, to repent and so forth. **...spoke often one to another, and the Eternal listened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before Him about those who feared the Eternal and who thought upon His name.** It's pretty awesome. A book of remembrance. Hmm.

**They shall be Mine, says the Eternal of hosts, In the day when I...** It's kind of interesting, this word here, what it really is in the Greek language, **"am making"** or **"am appointing"** **My jewels.** That's what God has been doing. The 144,000, that part of it, and then those who live into a new age, awesome.

**And I will spare/have compassion, as the word is, have compassion upon them as a man spares his own son who serves him.** God is very merciful to us, very patient. If we're striving to live what is right, we want to see where we're wrong, we're striving to repent, we're crying out to Him for help to see ourselves and we have a desire to repent, He's an exceedingly patient and merciful with us. To have His holy spirit, to be begotten of His holy spirit, how can you describe that kind of love if it goes beyond human love? We tend to equate things with physical human beings and it's so far beyond that.

**Then you shall return/turn back and discern between the righteous and the wicked.**

Interesting word, "Discern." If you do certain things then there are things you're going to be able to discern that you otherwise can't. **You'll be able to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him.**

Awesome!

I want to go over to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11, then we'll stop here for today after this. But I had mentioned this some time back about going ahead and looking at some verses here when we talked about this particular word before as it's used here in Corinthians and looking at what it says in Malachi here about how we come to this state is awesome, it truly is.

**1 Corinthians 11:26—For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.** I love the story of Atonement and Leviticus 15 and the story about the priest and the high priest that represents Christ, and how he goes into the tabernacle, and he can't come out until he's fully atoned everyone in his family, and then he comes back out. All symbolic of Christ for 2000 years doing His work, doing a work and then coming back out when it's completed. He can't come out until its finished. To me, that's an awesome thing to understand what it means to become at one with God, to be atoned to God. When it's talking about this, about what Christ did, and it's talking about "until he comes." So, we understand what that's all about.

**Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** What a horrible state. What a horrifying thing to think that we could partake of a Passover, partaking of bread and wine, and not do it in a right manner before God on a spiritual plane and understanding of what it is we're striving to accomplish and what it is we're representing by a part of a physical ceremony, but which is spiritual in every way, spiritual meaning to it and the purpose of it.

**But let a person examine himself.** That's what our life is about. It doesn't say, "And let a person examine others in the Church." It doesn't say, "Let a person judge others in the Church." It says do it to yourself because you're the only one you can change with God's help, and you can't do it without God's help.

**But let a person examine himself, and so let them eat that bread and drink of that cup.** That's our life, because if we don't understand the Body, it's about the Church. This here is about the Church. It's about His Body.

**For whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself.** In other words, if we don't do it right, we're being judged. We won't do it ourselves; God will take care of it; God will do it.

...not discerning the Lord's Body. Powerful, what it's saying here. It's about the Church. It's about our relationships within the Church. If we don't properly discern one another, that we're all in this together, that we are a family and that we each have this to work upon, self, and we're not hard and judgmental toward others, and we're truly praying to God to help us to love every member of the Body - every member of the Body - and not to have prejudice and wrong judgment towards anyone, that it be genuine and true because it's filled with God's mind and God's spirit. This is our calling. This is our quest. This is what God has given us to accomplish through the power of His holy spirit. I love what it's saying here because it's powerful.

**For this reason or On account of this,** because it's not being done as it should, **many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.** The vast majority who were once a part are in a state of sleep, fell asleep spiritually. God spewed them, He said, all of us, every one of us that were a part of that, out of His mouth, and if we didn't come to repentance because of what was happening and acknowledge I'm the cause of this as much as everyone else (we're all a part of this), I did this, I'm guilty, and repent of that, whew, it's the only way to come out of that sleep, to recognize the Body of Christ.

**For if we would judge ourselves...** It's beautiful. What are we like? There are times I pray to God, "I'm sick of this. I'm sick of this carnal selfish human nature that's in us. I want to conquer it and overcome it. Look forward to being in a spirit body."

**For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.** So, God has great patience with us and there are things that He will do directly in our lives to bring us to repentance if we'll listen, if we'll hear. If not, wow, we won't be a part. We won't be a part with His holy spirit in our life. We won't have this time to change, to conquer, and overcome. It'll be in a much later time.

So anyway, this thing about discerning. Let's go back up there and read this. It's about understanding what God is creating, what He's making within us, that we're a part of something so incredible, His children receiving of His holy spirit and that change that can take place in us, is taking place. As God says, He's appointing and making up His jewels. That's how He looks upon us. We're everything to Him. This, the focus has always been about the Church for the last 2,000 years. The world goes it's own way; it hasn't been called yet. He's got a plan for that.

**And I will spare,** have compassion on them, **as a man spares his own son who serves him.** Why? Because we are His children. We're His begotten children. **Then you shall return.** When we grasp these things, when we cry out to God and the more we cry out to God, the more we do what it talks about up here, about those who feared Him and spoke often one to another,

had rich fellowship with one another. That's why I love the results of Covid as a blessing to God's Church. Because we weren't able to have that fellowship for so long, I know people value it more than they ever have in their life, the opportunity to be together and to share as a family with one another. It's richer today than it ever has been because of that experience. Awesome!

It says, **Then you shall return**. So, it's this always turning more and more to God, repenting, **and discern**, it's where discernment comes from. It comes from God's holy spirit. It comes from what He's given us. So much of it then is about a Body and about fellowship and about us and how we relate to each other, how we think about each other, how we pray for one another. Then we'll have this ability of discernment. This ability of discernment is something that comes from God, and most of it's directed to this. **...between the righteousness and the wicked, or between righteousness and wickedness**. It's not a matter of having to judge others, although that enters into it from the Church's standpoint, but it's a matter of our own lives. We'll be more balanced, more sound minded.

We've gone through some sermons recently that talk about this, the need to be fully sound minded in all we do and to be as close to God as we can. I think it's an awesome thing to see people change and repenting quickly of different things in their life as different things come out. It's awesome. It truly is. It's a beautiful thing.

That's what God wants us all to do as we hear and learn different things that we see in our lives that we need. Every Sabbath we should hear something that we need to work upon, whatever that is.

**...and discern between the righteous or between righteousness and what is wicked, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him**. We'll see that battle that's inside of ourselves.

Anyway, with that we'll stop for today and continue with *Part 4* next Sabbath.