

We're beginning a new series today that will carry us through the third annual Holy Day, which, obviously, is Pentecost.

In looking back over this sermon, I've mentioned this many of times, but I really marvel how God leads, guides, and fashions His Church, because if we understand it and if we see it, it's primarily through the sermons that are given to us week by week by week and Holy Day to Holy Day, because that's the process we go through.

He gives us the ability to hear what He is going to give to us, and then we're to drink it in, and by that we're able to be molded and fashioned and grow. That is the primary way that we're actually able to learn more, grow more, and be molded and fashioned by Him.

So, the subject we're now going to begin focusing upon is one that most who have been called into God's Church have never really grasped nor lived in my time in the Church, since 1969. So, in all that history I'd say the vast majority of people never really fully grasped this subject nor were able to live it.

Because if you don't grasp it, if you don't see it and see it's importance of what God shows us, then it's something we miss out on in a very big way. It's one of the most important things we have to learn. It's one of the most important things that we have to live in our lives. Because so much of that determines to the degree and level, in that respect, that God can mold and fashion us.

So indeed, again, I truly marvel at this process of how He leads, guides, directs, and fashions His Church, yet I also marvel at the timing of various sermons, as I've mentioned so many times. Because sometimes when you go through this process, whether you're listening or whether you're giving them—and probably more because I'm giving them—there is this history of those that have led up to a period of time, and then to see what's being given next, it all flows together. That's because there is a design behind it all. If we understand He's molding and fashioning us then there is a design involved in all this by which God is working in this process. It's an awesome thing, it truly is.

So today we're beginning this new series, beginning in Acts 1, then I'll come back to the title in a little bit. This is basically the season of Pentecost because that's what we're heading into quickly here, and I am struck by some verses that will be covered in the Pentecost sermon, because that's been pre-recorded so that everyone can hear it, yet I'm going to give it live in the US and Canada. But I had to have one for Australia, New Zealand, and Europe, obviously.

I messed up on that a little bit because I had asked Johnny to do one, too. So, thankfully we're going to be able to use his at another time here as a regular sermon because we just have to take out a few places where Pentecost is mentioned, that this is for Pentecost. So anyway, that was my fault, my mess up.

But anyway, going to Acts 1:1. Again, we have gone through some of these things in recent time, but this is a good place to begin. Here is where Luke is writing once again, and he's reminding everyone about the first document, the first letter, the first treatise, as it's called here, or former account.

So, it says here, **Acts 1:1—The former account I made**, so it's Luke speaking, **O Theophilus, of all that Joshua began both to do and to teach**. So, that was the first time when he went through and recorded those things that were stated, the life that Joshua lived.

And he went on to say then, **until the day in which he was taken up, after he through the holy spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen**. So again here, he's reiterating this story, bringing it right up, the whole book of Luke, to this point in time then and what took place, the resurrection and so forth. This story is going to pick up on that. That's what's he's basically talking about here.

He builds up to that point in time and says there's commandment that's been given to the disciples. **...after he through the holy spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen of them during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God**.

Now, you think about that period of time and what took place, because he gave some of the most powerful, some of the most meaningful, some of the most incredible truth, knowledge. Those things that he spoke during Passover itself, Passover night. All of those things were, to me, the greatest revelations ever given to mankind. To understand that God dwelt in him through the power of the holy spirit and that he was showing them, leading them to grasp and understand that the time was coming now when both the Father and the Son would be able to dwell in us on a continuing basis in our lives, to dwell in us, to live in us, to continue in us. To understand that process is awesome, that knowledge and that ability to live it.

And so, he's beginning here now to say more now has been given but it's pertaining now specifically to the Kingdom of God. Now, it isn't recorded in the same manner that other things are leading up to the time of Christ's death and resurrection. Like this here now is speaking of, of these forty days, it's not recorded in the same manner. But things are brought out in time by the apostles understanding, by the things he gave to them of things they were to teach and build upon. Yet there may have been more, but we don't know.

But the Kingdom of God, to understand what it's all about, God gave Herbert Armstrong more than what they had been given, in the sense of being able to build upon many of the things that they wrote about throughout the New Testament in the various books. And obviously, Paul wasn't there. Paul came along later. But all the things revealed through Paul.

We look at this entire process then of what's been given, but Herbert Armstrong then was given more to grasp and understand about the timing, or about things to do with the Kingdom of God because of the timing of the end-time, knowing where we were, having been given to him that we were in the end-times, and to think that the Kingdom of God is about to come to this earth.

We're blessed to understand what that's about. It's about a ruling government, which we didn't fully grasp during Philadelphia nor Laodicea, that it would be composed of 144,000 and 1. So, we haven't even grasped that fully until PKG, until God gave us this ability to see and understand, until after the Apostasy.

God has continually been revealing these things, giving more and more through time, a progressive revelation even about His Kingdom, but far more starting at this period of time here. So, the disciples, the apostles were taught things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, to understand it's about God's government that's going to rule on this earth.

We should understand this is about government, God's government. The Kingdom of God is about that rule. Because after 6,000 years, finally the government of mankind is being taken away – finally! Something to be thankful for, something to rejoice in because it's caused nothing but chaos and pain and suffering and hurt in human life.

But it's the best that human beings could come up with at different stages, like we have at this period of time here, candidly. But it's far from what is good and right and prosperous and everlasting... not everlasting, but able to last and continue on. Because every government that's ever been conceived by mankind has finally come to an end.

People should be able to see the writing on the wall already. They're even starting to talk about it on the news more, that China has a plan. We don't have that kind of a plan! We're not that aggressive in our thinking to plan so far ahead in the manner that they are, that they understand that in time at the current rate it's going it's already at the point of being a formidable foe, if not already passed, having passed us. Because the US acknowledges already they've passed us in naval ability.

Some of the power that they have is more modern and greater than ours is now, so if a conflict were to come (which it's inevitable it would come in time no matter, just on a human scale without God's intervention or the things that are to happen in the end-time), China would be a world-ruling power.

But it's not going to happen. It's not part of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar and that great cube, if you will, that came down and hit the feet and it toppled over destroying mankind's government. So you think, how blessed are we to know and understand these things?

But again, to understand government, every government is based on law. It's based on things having to do with how you're to live and how you can't live. It's based on rulership. It's based on judgment, judging, a judiciary. All those things that are in God's government are righteous. In mankind's they're not because we have prejudice, we have pride, we have all kinds of things that are inside of us, and we can't know the heart and the mind of individuals. So, we see the flaws, and God is revealing those more and more in this end-time.

But we have to learn these things on a smaller scale in the sense of a Church, which is now really small compared to what it was during Herbert Armstrong's time. And yet it's something that God wants His people to understand with every fiber of their being, to learn the lessons.

That's what it's about, learning the lessons of human government, learning the lessons of where chaos and confusion and pain and suffering and heartache and everything else comes from. Because of government, wrong government. To understand that God alone can give that which can produce, will produce peace and a true prosperity and equity amongst those living on this earth. People still have choices and there are still going to be things that are varying, in that respect, from people to people, individuals to individuals.

But again, going on in **verse 4—Then being assembled together with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, Which, you have heard from me; for John truly baptized with water**, meaning simply it's the word for "immerse" in the Greek language. John immersed with water alone. It was about repentance. It wasn't about receiving help of the holy spirit, it was about people coming to acknowledge that they had sins and that they needed help, and a desire to repent, to live differently, to change.

**...but you shall be immersed with the holy spirit.** What an incredible thing to know that that's what happens when we're begotten of God's spirit, and then that spirit that continues to come into our life. The world isn't immersed in the holy spirit. Sometimes people think they are. It's the wrong spirit. They don't grasp that until they can be called, until that period of time to understand that which is false and fake and not true and real, and how harmful it really is to that which is real and powerful. And so, we're blessed to experience that, what it means to be immersed in the holy spirit.

So, he says, you're going to be immersed or **you shall be immersed with the holy spirit not many days from now.**

So again here, it says in verse 3 that Joshua spoke of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. So, the great question we need to focus upon: What is that Kingdom about? Well, we just spoke about that, and we have to understand that deep within our being. And to grasp, too, that how important is this to God? How important is it to God that His family sees that need, agrees with that need, cries out for that need, and themselves want to live this? So again, God's government that's coming to rule this earth.

So, this particular series is entitled *Understanding Government*.

It comes down to understanding the difference between the government of God and the government of mankind, and in that process within the Church we go through things that help us to learn about self and about mankind where wrong government, wrong thinking comes from. It comes from our own motives, selfish motives, because we're selfish human beings, that works against God's government.

To have and receive God's government and live it is a matter of understanding. It's not just a matter of going through the motions as striving to obey certain commandments and so forth, but to understand them, to understand the need for them in our lives, and understand the need for that in His Kingdom and His Family. Because that's the ultimate thing, is becoming a part of His Family.

God's government is about that which is to regulate our lives. That's what's going to be in the Kingdom of God, that which regulates people's lives, regulates the lives of people in nations, in a manner, in a way that

has never been done. The closest thing would be to some effect of what happened in the times of David, king David, because of his kind of rule. Because he sought to follow God. But still, that's far, far away from what's going to come and the kind of power and the kind of training and the teaching and the things that are going to be established everywhere at that particular time.

So again here, mankind has never experienced this at all except within the Church. That's something very small, obviously, in comparison to what's going to be in the world over all the world. But that process begins by those whom God has called to train, to teach, to mold and fashion that way of life, that government deeply in their being, that unity and oneness of mind with God Almighty from beginning to end.

So again, in the midst of that which God has given as a matter of His government, it's about His laws, it's about His ways that we are to embrace and live and government is there all the time. It truly is.

So, we're able to do this, that it begin to become a part of our life, if you will, and we begin to live it. It's gradual; it's gradual from the time we're called to the time that we finish this course, whatever that might be. It involves so much learning to yield to His ways because it's about what regulates our life, what regulates my life. It better be God's ways. It better be God's government. Better be God's truth, meaning that's what we want to live by. He builds upon that, and He gives us more and more as time goes along because He gives us guidance and direction, candidly, concerning His government all the time. And so, we have to yield our ways to His ways, yield from self to Him. That's a battle for human beings.

Let's turn over to Hebrews 3. So right now just kind of setting a foundation for where we're going, to think about some of these things, to understand, again, that this is exceedingly important to God Almighty. Because what's coming, His government, is about His Kingdom, it's about His rulership over the earth. There are going to be those who will never yield to it even during the Millennium. That's astounding to think that's possible, but that's what's going to happen. There are going to be those who just will not yield to that government, which means, in that respect, to God's ways, to His truth, and so forth, not yield to it, fight it, and resist it. Hard to imagine, but it's true.

**Hebrews 3:1—Therefore, holy brethren...** So, meaning "sanctified brethren who are set apart for holy use and purpose." That's what we're called to. We're set apart for a particular purpose, holy in nature, because it's about God's spirit and that which He gives to us.

**Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling...** It's from God. God does the calling. Sometimes it's just hard to find words that can magnify what we're blessed to be able to have the opportunity to live, because so few have ever been given this. To have a heavenly calling, meaning it's from God Almighty Himself? We can't understand those things. When He begins to reach down and decide at whatever point that He's going to call us, that He's going to draw us in this age, or whatever age it's been that people have been called in, and to think how incredible that is?! So few throughout history.

Then to be more astounded by the reality that that majority of who have ever been called have turned against Him, have turned against Joshua in the past 2,000 years. Astounding, to think that we as human

beings can do something like that, to turn against the one who sacrificed his life so that we might have the opportunity of being able to be forgiven of our sins, so that we might have the ability then of receiving God's holy spirit into our lives and to live this way of life in order to become a part of God's Family.

But then other things interfere and become more important at the immediate moment in people's lives and so they abandon those things and turn against them and rebel, fight against God's way of life, that it's to govern our life. When in reality, it's something we should fight for with all of our being, to fight to live this way of life, to fight to yield to this way of life with all of our being. Because this is an incredible time for us and it has been for everyone who has ever been called, "blessed with a heavenly calling."

**...consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession or profession** if you will, in the sense of what we're to live. That's what this is about. Neither one of those words fully catch it, capture it, but meaning by how we live, what we confess with our lives, how we choose to live something by our lives. So, our lives reflect, in other words, what we've chosen to live by. It's as a profession if you would; it's what we have chosen to do always.

**...and the High Priest of our confession, Joshua the Christ, who was faithful to Him who appointed him.** Again here, I think of this, been thinking about it a lot this past week, about faithfulness and how important it is for us to be faithful to God's way of life, to God's truth, to God's laws, to God's government, and on and on it goes.

**...who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.** So, Moses was given a task, a job, in the respect, in the sense of government, government over that which belonged to God. It was God's. It belonged to God, and so what Moses was given to do, Moses, his example was one of striving to live by that, to yield to that, to enforce that way of life, to strive to help a people live that way of life, and primarily by what he had to say that God gave to him to say to them. We see how well that went. To a physical nation of people, it didn't go so well over and over again. But it says Moses was faithful.

**For this one has been accounted, speaking of Christ, worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he, speaking of Christ in that respect—also about God Almighty because he does what he does by the authority of God Almighty—but inasmuch as it's focusing on Christ, our High Priest, inasmuch as he who has built the house has more honor than the house.**

We are the Church of God, and all authority in that process has been given to Christ. All authority of government has been given to Christ. The power comes from God Almighty, but He's given that authority to accomplish it to Christ. And more power is about to be given when it comes that time, when he is the King of kings over this entire earth. It's something that's going to grow and become greater and greater as we go forward, but it's a process here when we talk about the house that's being built.

When you look at the first 4,000 years, what was constructed was from God Almighty in preparation for those who are going to be part of that 144,000. (Don't want to get ahead of myself. I almost got into Pentecost.)

So again, to think of what's happened in the last 2,000 years and that has primarily, God gave to be accomplished how? Through the Church. That's why the Church was established. That's why Christ is the head of the Church. And so, that is a unique Body in itself that's going to become greater and greater through time, but as a whole the Family of God, that's how it's being built, in the Church.

So, those who come into the Millennium, they have to be in the Church. They have to choose to be a part of the Church, to live by that way of life. Those in the Great White Throne, it's going to be done through the power of the Church, through what's given through the Church to people to live by just as we have this process that works in our life. Except we're small. Nevertheless, it's in the same exact manner, through the power of the holy spirit, of what's taught, what's given, and how we respond to it.

Christ is the one that is doing the building, in that respect. That's what it's talking about here. That authority, that power has been given to him to accomplish this, to bring people into Elohim. Incredible!

**For this one has been accounted worthy of more glory than Moses, insomuch as he who has built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.** So again, to understand it all comes from God, but He's given government to accomplish it. Starting with Christ. Starting with the Church of God, the Body of Christ. There is an order by which things are done. That's why there is a process that is very clear in scripture that God gave a ministry to fulfill that, in that respect, as far as the Church was concerned, until he comes.

That's an incredible thing to understand. Imperfect because it's about human beings. Especially since he is not here. He's in heaven with his Father. But he works with to mold and fashion, to give things. So, I understand when I pray to God asking for help with sermons and so forth, I know where they come from. They come from Christ. Because it's been given to him, through him to give.

So they are of the same mind. They're of one mind. And there are things about that we don't even begin to grasp. We don't even come close in this human form to grasp and understand the fullness of what that is about that's going to be revealed more and more to us. Some of it we can't even understand to that extent or to a far greater extent until we're a part of a spirit world, until we're actually in the Family of God. So, we've been given certain things to see and understand to a point.

**Verse 5—For Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant,** in all of God's house, it's referring to, **as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken of afterward; but Christ as a Son.** These things are awesome, they really are. To understand what that means, especially as I just mentioned, in heaven itself waiting.

Again, when I think of this I can't help but think of Leviticus 16 and the Day of Atonement when it says he went into the Holiest of Holies and he wouldn't come back out, he couldn't come back out until that house, as a whole, had been fully sanctified, until it had been complete. Then he could come out. That's when Christ returns, when it's complete. That's why he hasn't returned yet. We're not ready. We're not there yet. There is a little bit more taking place.

Now, as far as God's concerned that timing could have always been exactly what He's planned, and I believe that it has been. But He lets us go through various things to experience part of that process and to learn from that, to grow from that, and to try us to see where we are.

So, it says, **Moses was faithful as a servant as a testimony of those thing which would be spoken of afterward; but Christ as a Son over his own house.** He's doing the building. Incredible. **...whose house we are if we hold fast.** So, we're able to be a part of it. It says "if." So, there's always that big "if." The majority who have ever been called haven't.

"If we hold fast." So, it's something you hold on to with all of your being, with all of your might, with all of your life because you grasp the importance of it, and you don't want to be a part of the many who have gone by the wayside because you appreciate and are learning and understanding more and more what an awesome and valuable thing we've been given.

**...whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.** It's a hope we have because it isn't here yet. We know it, we know we're close, we know we have been for a long time, we just don't know exactly when because we don't know either when we're all there, in that respect, ready. But when we are, when we've finally been completed as a part of the building then it's God's government that comes to this earth.

So again here, "rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Now, that's really beautiful, what it says there. To be able to do that, to have the opportunity... He gives us the ability to do it.

"Rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." So that hope very much involves, again, yielding to and embracing God's government.

As I've been thinking about this series and going through it, because I've been able to get out ahead, thankfully, to the next sermon and the one after that so that I can have time to begin focusing upon things for the Feast, but this is so powerful, it truly is, this matter of yielding to and embracing God's government. Because so few have done it and I've known so many who haven't embraced it.

I think of how we were spared, most of us, within the Body during the late 60's. Well, let's put it a little bit later, the late 70's on into the early 80's there when there was so much rumbling in the Church, so much shaking that was going on within the Church. Most of it was under Herbert Armstrong. It was the evangelists who were fighting! Those who were to be the very fabric and foundation of so much of the government of the Church were fighting and resisting him.

That's why I mention in the book about Leroy Neff, who was our paster when we were in Houston and Herbert Armstrong had him come out to headquarters to be the treasurer of the Church. I know now, but I didn't understand what was happening then (we couldn't), the kind of individual he was, his faithfulness to various things. That's one area where more people have gone astray, when they've gotten involved in the finances. Because the human mind begins to change, and it begins to judge how things are to be done more so.

I think of all the way back to Judas. It just got under his craw. (Which, he didn't have one. I understand, but it's an expression.) It just irritated the tar out of him, obviously, of what Christ was doing with what they had. He didn't get it. He didn't try to get it. He didn't understand it because it was his carnal mind and how he felt about finances. They were something that ruled his thinking in his mind, and he was judging then along the way in a very distorted, perverted way because he didn't grasp, "This is God's government. This is the Son of God. Who do you think you are?" But he didn't see those things.

Now, the others, they had a different mindset. They had a humble spirit, a meek spirit, a willingness and ability to be taught. They wanted to learn. But something happened to Judas over that 3-3½ years there. His mind became more and more messed up to where he came to a point where he was willing to betray him for the money—incredible—some money.

So, it's something we have to learn. We have to see the whole picture and how that's very much a part of the picture. Because when we really begin to grasp it more fully it comes down to God's spirit working in our lives and whether it is or whether it isn't. This is one of the biggest areas of our lives that reveals whether God's spirit can continually work in our lives, mold, and fashion us, or not. Because if we start to go astray in that particular area then there is a battle going on in our minds that if we're not able to come to a point of repentance it takes people away. Because they can't be worked with.

Because it's about God's spirit. What was it that Christ wanted the Church to have? The holy spirit. That's why he was willing to die. That's why he wanted to die as a sacrifice for all mankind, to be our Passover so that we could have the ability of coming before God and being forgiven of our sins through him, so that God's spirit could then dwell in us. Because that's what it takes – repentance and ability to be forgiven so that God can dwell in us. Because God will not dwell in sin. We had to come to a point of being forgiven of sin.

So again, that brings up other things to understand, the mind of an individual, that we can't be perfect. But for what we're given in the time we live we're to strive to live by that with all of our being because we love God. But to understand in that process then what God accounts as righteousness towards it, towards this even within the Church, isn't a matter that we've been forgiven of sin, it's a matter that we believe God, we believe that Christ is our Passover. We've gone before God and asked for forgiveness because we want His holy spirit. It's because of that that that's attributed to us for righteousness—awesome—and then He'll dwell in us.

Because we're very imperfect human beings, but He still dwells in us until a sin pops up, where there is resistance going on that we have to conquer. Then if we're not careful we can begin to quench the holy spirit. So, it's all about receiving of God's spirit and how that's received into our lives, and if we resist along the way that spirit can stop.

Again, I want to reiterate mightily so that all that I have seen before I came into the ministry and afterwards, is when it comes to resisting government and not repenting that people go astray. Every last one of them that I have personally known it came down to that. It came down to a mindset that had to do with the Church and the government that exists in God's Church.

**Verse 7—Therefore, as the holy spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice...** So again here, talking about these things and then comes down to this, if we will hear, if we will listen. And listening isn't just hearing the words. It's with that desire of hearing those words with the knowledge that we're striving to change and become something different because we know we need them in order to grow.

So it'd be good to ask at this point, very basic, but there are so many who haven't understood this in the sense of really understanding it and grasping it to the point of choosing to live by it: What is the primary means we have of listening to His voice? Well, it used to be by many in the Church that they felt that they could open up their Bibles and do their studies and that's hearing His voice.

Now, that can be a part of our life, it can be a part of the process, but that isn't the process whereby He molds and fashions us, by our own personal Bible studies, getting out our *Strong's Concordance*. And of course, today we have computer programs. You could have five computers up here – look at all that knowledge. What does it mean? God has to be in something to mold and fashion, to be leading someone in what they need at any moment in time for His spirit to work with them to bring about change.

So, the process is a matter of His Church and every weekly Sabbath, every annual Holy Day. Those are the primary ways that God had chosen, that was given to Christ, to mold and fashion the Church through time. To mold and fashion. He knows what we need at any moment in time.

That's why I say so often in sermons that if someone gets up just to give a sermon for the sake of giving a sermon that isn't what it's about. If it comes out of an individual by what they think is needed?

I think of the refreshing programs toward the end. I'm going to repeat it again because I've mentioned it before. Where the Church was moving more and more during Laodicea toward the protestant world. So, we'd go to a refreshing program, we'd go through these different classes, and they'd come in and tell us about how to plan ahead for giving of sermons. And you have to have, you need to be thinking in the terms of how many child-rearing sermons and how many husband and wife sermons, and possibly when to give them, and on and on it goes. And they came up with this term, "hermeneutics." You can look it up later. It's meaningless, it's valueless, in the sense of the way the world uses it in the protestant world.

But certain kinds of studies that people do on their own and planning and various things of giving the sermons. It's like someone maybe gives a sermon and you hear that and so, "I want to try to get that down. I'm going to write those things down and I'm going to give that one in this other area." So, maybe they're at the refreshing program, they hear a sermon given, and "Oh, that's a good idea. I'm going to give that exact same one."

What's missing? It's one thing if an individual is so moved by it they know, "This is what I am supposed to do." That's one thing. But if it's a matter of you're trying to come up with different things and then every year you're repeating certain subjects and you're actually going through sometimes and giving the exact same sermons because it's time again. A childrearing sermon, probably ought to have four of those in the year with all the children we have.

I'm not talking about us, but in Worldwide when there were 3-600 people in a congregation, most of my experience, of where I was, and you think different things you're going to come up with and this is the dates you're going to have them on. That doesn't mean that God wouldn't plan something in a manner that some should be given, but if you're doing it on your own ability and you're not relying on God? I hope you understand what I'm saying.

It either has to come from God because it's timely, because it's been prayed about and it comes into the mind this is what to give...and even scriptures and things that are used, it has to come from God, otherwise, what value is it? Because God is the one that molds and fashions us. Otherwise, where is God?

God uses that time to mold and fashion us. We are in His hands. He teaches us what we need when we need it. That's why there is nothing in the sense of consequence, just coincidental in that respect, that something is given unless it's needed. Because this is when God molds and fashions primarily above everything else.

Feast to Feast, they're different, and I don't know what they're going to be. Sermons from time to time, I don't know where they're going. Sometimes I'm glad when I do because that means I've already been given it and I can see this is a series I'm supposed to go into.

But just like this series here, I had no idea, like I mentioned last Sabbath. That's the way God's spirit works to lead, guide, and direct us. And if you know where it comes from then that's an awesome thing. It comes from God, comes from Christ and he gives it to his Church because this is what we need. He's not just trying to figure out, "Well, what should we give next week? What should I have the ministry give next week? Yeah, they had a good idea; childrearing sermon, I guess."

God doesn't work like that. Now, if there is a specific need for something like that that's given in a congregation then it should be inspired by God because this is something to learn from and there'll be things in there everyone in the congregation can learn from. And if we don't see those things in God's Church you don't understand God's government, you don't understand your calling, you don't understand how God molds and fashions you! This isn't up to you how you grow! It isn't up to me how I grow! We have to be fed. Then it's through that process that God molds and fashions us. "This is the way."

God's Church as a whole through time has not grasped this, especially during Philadelphia and Laodicea. People in the Church didn't grasp it! Instead (what I'd like to say), those evangelists who turned against Herbert Armstrong, sitting on their butts in their homes (I wanted to say the "a" word because that's what I'm feeling inside), because that's where they were. If I pronounce it like the Scottish it wouldn't sound maybe as bad.

So, supposedly they had it piped in because if they had a hard week... I mean, they live up to two blocks away, they could stay at home and not have to walk all the way down to the big building that was dedicated to God, where everybody could come in and sit and listen to a Bible study that Herbert Armstrong was giving. Because, I mean, they've been working hard and after all, they've learned really all they need to learn.

Do you think they were at home listening? If they're too lazy to walk down there in the first place or to drive down, they missed the mark.

This is exactly what happened in God's Church, they rebelled against God. The majority of them turned against God, fought against Herbert Armstrong for many years. His battles were against those that sat at his feet in the beginning in the late 40's and in the early 50's. I think about those things now and I get fired up inside. I really do. To think that individuals could go off and do their own thing, begin to think that certain other things should be taught, but instead of this or that?

Because that's what happened. They started teaching their own things in Ambassador College classes. He wasn't there to be able to go through all the sermons and see what was being taught. It was given to them that they would be faithful and do what? Teach what they had been taught. To pass along, to build upon, but to pass along those things that they had been given. To do otherwise is rebellion. If they teach their own things, which they began to do, things that weren't even true, things that were way off the wall about doctors, about medicine.

Herbert Armstrong didn't live his life in a cocoon somewhere. The proof is in his very son, that he tried to help him to live when he had a car crash and died. But all that he did to seek the help of those who had the talent, the ability, the education to do on a physical plane something that was very physical. But there were certain evangelists that I'd love to name some of their names (they're dead already, some of them), but certain ones that began to teach, "To go to a doctor is a lack of faith. It's like you're not trusting in God. Didn't you get anointed? Well, isn't that enough?"

And what has God shown through time? Is that enough? Is that what faith is all about? Is a stubborn holding to something when God says, "No"? Because sometimes we're to learn through that process because it forces us, if we're being led by God's spirit, to learn. Sometimes we have to learn that way, we have to go through some very hard things sometimes, and then it tries us, and then we come to see what is right, what is true as God works with the Church to lead, guide, and direct us.

I'm sorry in talking about some of those things of the past; but I'll tell you what, we have to learn from those things. Because we have done a horrible job in the sense of faithfulness of the ministry. You know, when ministers went out to serve they were to be faithful. Faithful, first of all, to what Herbert Armstrong had given to them, because that's from God.

To teach something different, it's rebellion, it's evil, it's sick, it's perverted, and it did incredible damage within the Church. That's why we came up to an apostasy and had an apostasy. "Apostasy" mean's "rebellion." It's about rebellion. There's been a lot of rebellion through time in God's Church. The majority of people in time have rebelled against God because they didn't grasp how God's spirit works in our life.

That's why I love Acts when it talks about they were supposed to stay in Jerusalem until the time came that they would receive the gift and the power of the holy spirit. And what Christ taught them in that meantime was about the very reason – because of the government of God. In the Church first, in the

world...but you know, the fact is if it just came into the world, it would have no meaning whatsoever if there wasn't a Church.

What would it mean if Christ came to this world and left it the way it is with different governments and so forth? Or even tried to rule with the 144,000? What would you do with people who aren't going to do it? Because the majority wouldn't want to do it. They wouldn't want to come to the Church. They wouldn't want to give their lives to this way of life, to live the Sabbath and Holy Days. They'd want to hold on to Halloween and Christmas and Easter and those things.

And so, God isn't doing it that way. He's going to make sure that people have come to a point of a willingness to cry out to God to save them and a willingness to change their life. To understand that if He didn't intervene we'd all be dead.

What a sad state that this world is in. It's like this last book. Why – to me, because of knowing what the world is like – why even bother? It's for us as a Church, to be encouraged by what God has brought us to, finally, compared to, and so we have something that's of value in a greater way than ever before. And unless God begins to draw, which He's going to at some point, but we don't know when that point is, so how much do we do?

I still haven't been shown. Still waiting. But there's coming a point where we'll be able to see it, we'll know when the timing is. So, I'm not shoving something, pushing something, and just letting it go per se for the sake of doing it, because where is the value in all that? Unless God begins to draw individuals, begins to work with them?

So, what we do is we test the waters here and there, and if there is nothing happening what do we know? God's not working with them yet. So, we put some here, we put some there, we try to do our part the best we can to see and to know. There's been a little bit, but nothing what it needs to be. And so, God will make that plain in time by this very method.

But that's the kind of world we live in. That hurts to think that mankind is to that point where it's harder now to reach out to this world than ever before. I am amazed by, and I'm not, Ukraine and what's happened there. That shook some people up. Now the talk of WWII is kind of common place and it doesn't scare people like it did a few weeks ago. Already! Already! And it's not a big thing on TV anymore. Instead, somebody's computer is more important, what happened, the smear, the smut, the garbage. And so, that becomes big news.

And so little things here, they're trying to find different things that they want to make news. Can you imagine different news agencies sitting around deciding, "Okay, what things shall we focus on? What things should we talk about that are news?" ...that really isn't news all the time. But anyway.

So, that's the kind of world we live in, and you think, what a sick world! When you know that this world should be scared to the core of their being of where we are in the world as far as the potential of a nuclear war. But now the terms are being used and it's like, think, what, how far, what do we have to go through to learn what we need to learn? It's going to be pretty bad. Sad. But we're to watch these things take place.

So again here, the things we haven't grasped and understood about government, how it works in our life. Just to grasp how God molds and fashions us is really a great revelation. Something to be embraced. Something to love with all of our being. Something to be thankful for and to strive to live whenever He gives us that which we need.

Again, **verse 7** here, going on, reading it again, **Therefore, as the holy spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.** I think about the world. Do you realize this is what's happening in their hearts right now? Ukraine to them, to most people, has come and gone. For a little bit it really did something to the heart of people in this country. That's going by the wayside really quick. What's replacing it? A hardness of heart, a willing blindness, a desire to get away from some of the things that were there, not to focus upon them. Sad, sad world.

"Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." So, there's been a lot of rebellions. We see it all the time in the world. But when we see it in a relationship toward those with whom God is working with or has called, whether it be a nation in times past, peoples in times past. Not just the Egyptians, but the Israelites, they hardened their hearts toward God.

Then I think of the Church. If we don't see those things on a spiritual plane of what's happened over and over again, especially in the end-time here, from Herbert Armstrong's time forward, massive hardening of hearts. All those who did what they did in the past in the ministry, and the evangelists who turned against Herbert Armstrong, there were those they plotted his downfall. They desired his downfall. They desired to be placed in control. They tried to work with a government to be given control.

Those kinds of things took place within the Church. And I'll be candid with you, they've happened in the end-time since the Apostasy. People have struggled and fought and tried to take over and tried to do various things and have been very conniving about it. I believe involved with the government, too. But anyway.

"Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." Things just repeat as we go through time. We witness and go through these things, and we learn from them. It can be something that strengthens us when we see it and understand it. We weren't called to something easy. This was not meant to be easy. It was meant to be a struggle, a struggle on the outside because of the world, a struggle in here, and a struggle within sometimes. It's been that way. We've come a long, long way as far as the Church is concerned, though we had to be whittled down in size dramatically to be able to be of the strength and focus we are now. What a blessing.

So that admonition here, **Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years.** We can't miss this, what it's saying. They did this physically, but the warning is to not let this happen spiritually.

Because instantly what comes into my mind are those individuals in the late 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's, their hearts became hardened. They turned. They turned against the very one who was there to teach and

guide and direct them, the primary one that was there. And if they couldn't be loyal and faithful to that and to that which was given to them, what does that say?

So, individuals not knowing, because people can become so weak, have tried and tested God over and over and over again, those individuals during those forty years. So, it's not just about what happened in the wilderness. I think of Herbert Armstrong and some of the times when he was talking about crying out in a spiritual wilderness. But even within the Church you think, pshaw! Why have we experienced all these things? Because this is what we're to learn.

These things happened for a reason. They were allowed to happen for a reason. So they're so deeply engrained in us, how important the Kingdom of God is, the government of God is, the faithfulness to that process, this is what we're to learn. We learn through experience.

You can't just learn by knowledge. That's why you can't just open up a Bible and learn by knowledge. You can be inspired by certain stories that are there, and so forth, but the teaching, the things that God illuminates our minds in and understanding what we need when we need it, when we're remolded and fashioned, comes through sermons that God inspires.

**...where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore, was I grieved,** as the word talks about "angry," in the sense of the choices.

God loves His people. This is something that is difficult for people to comprehend. God loves us but will not tolerate sin, ongoing sin. There is a grief, a feeling of being grieved by what our choices are, angry at the choices in the sense of how harmful and how painful it's going to be for different ones, but loving the individuals. That's hard for us as human beings sometimes to grasp and comprehend that.

So He says, **Therefore, I was grieved with that generation and said, They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.** So this is, as it were, a very physical story, but we're to learn that which is spiritual from it.

This is being spoken to the Church. This is written for the Church. And so, making it clear here there's always been that which fights against, which resists God, which resists the way He chooses to work in our lives. Because He's chosen the means of human beings. Sometimes people just have a hard time with different human beings.

That's what I really love about the Church and how God has blessed us as a Body. We're so different. In life before we were called in the Church there'd be very few of us who would have ever befriended each other. We wouldn't have necessarily gone out and chosen each other. It's just the way it is. If you were working on the same job there would probably be most likely, the way human nature is, certain irritations.

People are generally attracted to someone more like them in the sense of how they think and they don't go to something which is to a total opposite extreme that's always going to be a battle. So, we choose an easy course.

We are a Body of many different people. Look at the combinations and the differences. We're so different, we really are. If you could get the Church, if you were able to get the Church together worldwide our personalities sometimes are way different. But to love each other, to respect each other, to see God in that calling individuals and working with individuals, because we love God we love our family.

Though we might be different we learn to appreciate the differences. Not everything, because some of those differences mean there are some things that are perhaps... Like me when I'm setting up, the Church knows, "He's not going to talk much to you if you go up there before services start. Matter of fact, he may tell you to go away." Because I'm focused on that; it has to be done. I'm thinking of the entire Church. That's my personality.

Now, there are other personalities who can handle that differently, but that's my personality. And so, that doesn't always charm people, endear people. But we learn to appreciate that because we recognize that this isn't my forte, but it has to be my forte in part, in the sense of doing it or it's not going to get done.

So again here, we're so different. I think of myself. I have a hard time... How can I put this? I know that I'm not the easiest to approach. I know I'm not the easiest to talk to. And if you do and when you do it's probably a little more difficult. What do you talk about? Well, you know what? I'm in the same shoes. "What am I... I don't know! What are we going to discuss?" "Pretty hot out there today." So, we revert back to what the normal kind of thing is we get started, and "Boy, that was a horrible storm we had last week."

But it's the understanding of who we are that's awesome. We're God's Family. We're God's children and we learn to love each other, and that is unique. We strive to overlook the areas that are different. We can have those things in physical families in life. I've seen that throughout the Church. There are differences in families. I think of one family one time, I think there were six children, not only were they different in personalities, they didn't even look alike. They were just all so different. It's like, kind of reminds me of the ark, you know and all the families that came out later on. But anyway, that was meant to be that way.

But what an awesome thing when God is in the picture, when the Church is in the picture, and we see family. Because God does the calling, and we learn to overlook the things that might normally annoy us as human beings because of our personality. Does nothing annoy you in life with anyone else in life? Does anything ever bother you because someone is different? And is there a certain thing there that can be a little bit like sandpaper because that's not the way you would do it, that's not the way you think? Well, I think we all have to say surely, yes, or we're a more unique human being than I have ever seen on this planet.

So we have to work on things like that. And when we don't think right toward someone in the sense of it begins to bother us and we begin to dislike, find fault, there's where we cross over something that God holds us accountable for in a very powerful way that has to be repented of because it's wrong. We have to work on self to love because love isn't something natural within us. We have to learn it, and so it is with God's way of life, with God's government.

He works through human beings who have weaknesses and frailties and faults and so forth, and there we go, we can find fault because of something different of the way "I" might do it. That's where we have to learn, and we have to question our thinking to make sure it's right.

**Therefore, I was grieved with that generation and said, They always err in their heart, and they have not known My ways.** Because there is the key. To know God's ways isn't a matter of just being aware that God has said something, it's coming to know it, seeing it, and grasping, beginning to grasp, leaning toward understanding what it's all about, what its purpose is, of what's revealed.

Because you can't live His ways unless you see them and know them and embrace them and agree with them. And then, because we see the value of that, we want to change things that are in disagreement with that.

**So I swore in My wrath,** which has to do with a judgment against evil, that's what this is about, **They shall not enter My rest.** So again, we have this thing that's given physically to say that there are certain ones who entered into rebellion. They were in the wilderness for forty years and there are certain ones who would not go into the promised land per se, as far as that region of the world is concerned and the promises that were being given, and that which is to be learned on a spiritual plane, that there are those things if we don't think right and live right, if we don't know God's ways in the sense of this is what I have chosen.

Because how can we make a choice for the way God is doing something unless we really, truly know it, see it, learning to understand it, grasping it's value, choosing it. To do that means we're living by it then (that's what it's about), which is a matter of wisdom.

**Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.** So again, this all goes back to what do we believe? What do we agree with? What do we see? Because God gives us the ability to know something, to believe something, and then we have to make a choice in there, "Do I believe it? Am I going to live by it? Do I really believe what's being told to me?" Some new truth comes along, does everybody believe it? Sometimes it takes a while. Sometimes we're tried in certain things.

I think of when things were revealed during the Feast in 2005, sermon after sermon after sermon. God gave every, inspired every sermon to be given on that subject, that Joshua hasn't eternally existed. Incredible. Every sermon. Ending with one about Melchizedek and explaining that. Couldn't understand that unless you really had a framework of all the others and began to understand. Then you would be able to see that.

That's what God led us in; He led us in those things to reveal it to the Church. There were different ones along the way even as it was given that didn't believe it as it was being given. I think of one individual that acknowledged, admitted it wasn't until that sermon on Melchizedek "Finally, now I see it." Stuck it out. Kept fighting. Kept listening. "How does this fit?" Didn't believe it until then and then all of a sudden, wham! What an awesome thing.

So, do we always believe everything immediately when it's given? No. We have to deal with self first. Sometimes we have things we resist because we don't see what God's giving us, we don't see what He's molding and fashioning. But He is. And if we yield to it, it'll be in us. That's what it's all about, it's so it'll become a part of us inside of us.

Because the most important thing is not just in the sense to do God's word, to do the laws of God. You can try to do those on a physical plane and you're not going to succeed because it's going to be weak and not grasping the spirit of it. But we can see that and that's the only way we can, is by God's spirit.

But to do it because we're coming into agreement with it, because we see it, because we learn by practicing it. That's why God says even about tithing and things we do, try it, prove it. In other words, put it to the test. And you know what? That doesn't mean you learn it in the first year. That doesn't mean you see it the first year. You can go through a whole cycle, like we used to, of seven years, and as you go through that you begin to see things that you weren't able to see otherwise because you're fighting against self perhaps, of doing something that you don't see fully. Then you begin to see.

And you know what the greatest blessing of all in that is, the greatest wealth of all, the greatest riches? It's what we're given in the mind. It's not the physical. Even in that though God blesses us, He helps us. We go through various things, but He blesses us in those things, brethren.

So again here, **lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.** So, no, understand that everyone who hasn't believed, who hasn't conquered this part of it, because of fighting or resisting against it haven't come into agreement with what God has given. This is what happens; they depart from the living God. They can't help it, it's what happens.

**But exhort**, which means to **encourage one another daily.** And so, sometimes we can read that in a wrong way. We have to be careful what that means. That doesn't mean that we see something and it's our duty to go up and tell them how things should be done, "Don't you see what you're doing here? It's a matter of a mindset.

You live it. You be an example. You talk positive about something when someone else is tearing somebody down. You change it around by example, by doing it the right way. Has that ever happened in God's Church where somebody has started to kind of whittle on somebody, whittle away on someone, talk down on someone, diminish someone, tear them apart? What purpose?

So, what do you do? Well, one of the best things you can do, especially if you're in a group of people, is start talking about the good, the right. Not the finding of fault. Not the tearing down, but the building up. We're brothers and sisters. We're in a family together. And what should family do, especially the Family of God more than a physical family? Stand up for each other. It's one thing to say, "I'm standing up for God. I'm standing up for God's way of life." Sometimes people carry that way too far. I'm not going to go there.

We have to be careful how we do some of those kinds of things and we have to be careful of that within the Body. It's about loving each other, living that, encouraging by our example, what we do.

**But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.** So, that's what's bad about it. If somebody does something, says something, and sometimes by people, an individual's silence or individual's silence, someone can begin to feel that others are in agreement with them. That can be more harmful to them if something isn't corrected by maybe just by the simple thing of making something positive that's been made negative. Then that helps to set things right without just getting on the individual who said it directly. If that makes sense. Hopefully, it does.

Deuteronomy 32. We're going to go into an area now that this is where we have to really zero in to begin to grasp government and how it can work in our lives. God's ways have everything to do with righteous government, with righteous judgment. Because government involves judgment and that judgment has to be in unity with God, because if it isn't then it's not proper, it's not correct, it's not right. So we have to learn righteous judgment, we have to learn what it is. We have to practice it in our lives. We have to strive for it in our lives.

We are to learn how to judge matters, judge matters of life according to God's righteous laws, not our ways. And that's the problem. With human life, that's the problem that's created problems within the Church over time, that it hasn't always been done this way because people haven't understood how government works because it's based on judgment.

It boils down to the fact of coming to understand how to judge. That means not "my" way, not "our" ways, and therein is the battle. Truly is.

**Deuteronomy 32:1—Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, from God Almighty. O earth, hear the words of My mouth. Let My teaching drop as the rain.** Again, where does teaching come from? We don't figure it out on our own. We weren't called because of our own abilities. We weren't called because of our own understanding. We weren't as Herbert Armstrong. We weren't drawn to begin to see things and begin to give it to people and a Church came up from it as a result.

**My speech distills as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as the showers on the grass.** That which gives life. When you have certain parts of the country right now, in New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, all the way west into California, and you see some of the incredible drought that's taking place in the United States and how dry things are, this becomes a very beautiful thing, something that's sorely missed in those areas right now because it helps to give life. That's a part of the analogy of what's being given here.

**For I proclaim the name of the Eternal.** God proclaims His name. He has to do it. He is the one that created everything. He is the one who has to show everyone the beginning from the end. He is the one that has to show everyone why they're here, why they exist, what they're to live if they want to live on, and on and on it goes.

**...ascribe, or as it means here, to give greatness to your God.** That's what we have to do through time as we grow. We begin to grow in that.

**...the greatness to your God, the Rock,** speaking of God Almighty, **His work is perfect,** in other words, complete as a matter of perfection. **For all His ways are judgment.** "All His ways are judgment." And we

have to learn that. So, as we're taught various things about God's way and way of life, it has to do with our ability to judge. Otherwise, how can you live it? How can you know how to put it into your life? We have to learn how to judge.

This is one of the greatest things we have to learn within government, is how to judge. God wants us to have that ability, and I believe for this era or this time period more than many others because of what's being molded and fashioned in those who are called at this time. There's a purpose why there are different periods at different times because there's different construction that goes on in different times.

**For all His ways are judgment. A God of truth.** Everything comes from God. Everything that's true has to come from God. He's the source of it. And how blessed are we for all of it He's given to us? Incredible.

**A God of truth, without injustice.** So anything that's true can't be mingled with things that are unjust, not just. It's a matter of what is just and right. Because it comes from God that's what makes it just. But we have to learn then in things of life how to judge those things.

**He is just and right.** We're not, except for the change that's taken, the transformation that's taken place in us, and the agreement we have with God. The more at one we come with God in our agreement with God, more incredible it becomes.

**Deuteronomy 30:15—See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil.** So this was the second round of giving of the law again, reiterating certain things before they went into the promised land from when it was given earlier. And so, certain things are being gone over again and added to and so forth. So, he's going through this process.

**See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil, in that I command you this day to love the Eternal your God.** I'll tell you, that to me that's one of the most incredible things. The longer we're in God's Church the more He gives us to see and understand about life, about our part in it, about where we are in time and why, where we're going and what's happening, and what's about to take place, all these things and all the truth that God has given to us.

That's why I marvel sometimes at all the truth we've been given. I marvel at what was given the night of Passover when Christ said what he did. "Do you not believe that the Father dwells in me, and I in Him?" What an incredible thing to come to understand on a spiritual plane. They didn't grasp it then. They couldn't understand it until Pentecost. Then to grasp what he said later as we go through those verses in chapter 14 and 15 and 16 and 17, about the fruit of the vine and how He wants us to dwell in Him and He'll dwell in us. On and on it goes.

To me, those are some of the most incredible things. Then you just keep adding to it through time. I think of this end-time, of all that's been added that we've been given of different truths. I'm not going to get into those, I'm saving those for later.

**...in that I command you this day to love the Eternal your God, to walk in His ways.** You know, if we love God we're going to love walking in the way of life He's given to use because we agree with Him, we are

coming into agreement with what He said and why He said it, and we see why it's right, meaning then the process then as we're learning that we're learning how to judge what fits in there properly.

I think of so many things within the ministry. Thinking of having another ministerial meeting coming up to bring up to date because we're so far beyond where we'd been before when some of those things were put out there. To realize how God has continued to refine and mold and fashion us. Because it's going through this kind of a process and things that are passed along then within the Body, within the Church that we learn.

Things like not inserting ourselves into other people's business. It's such a basic thing, but I think of how God doesn't insert Himself into our lives in the sense of being there to go over every little thing that we do. He lets us do things. He lets us sin. He doesn't stop there. Like, that's why I marvel, kind of have to laugh at now what we didn't understand a long time ago.

But I think of different ones that used to say in the Millennium, Great White Throne, there's going to be someone tapping on your shoulder, "That's not the way to walk. This is the way, walk you in it." Think, boy that was so shallow, so protestant. But we had to go through that to learn that, that that isn't what that's about at all.

**...in that I command you this day to love the Eternal your God, and to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments.** Because see, this is a refining of the process all the way down. Judgment is getting down to the nitty gritty, in that respect, of understanding what they're all about, how to apply them in life, where, when, when to and when not to, various aspects of God's way and God's law.

**...so that you may live and multiply; and the Eternal your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it.** So, the more we're able to grow in these things and do this and live this way the more our lives are enriched, the more excited we become about God and about what He's doing in our lives.

**But if you turn away so that you will not hear...** So, what does that mean? When can that ever happen, that we get to a point where we don't hear? Well, I think of what an incredible example that those evangelists set who sat in their homes when Herbert Armstrong was giving a bible study. Because, candidly, what is in their mind is they didn't need it. They didn't value it. They've already been taught so much. They had so much. They already knew things and that would just kind of be a waste of time. Others, the congregation needs it, but they didn't need it. I mean, look at who they are? Do they need to sit there and listen to God's apostle? Yes. But somewhere they lost that. What a horrible thing.

And I think, look what it says here, "when your heart will turn away so that you will not hear." That's a perfect example. You won't hear if you're not going to give it a chance, if you're not going to try, if you're not going to see what you can learn. If that isn't your attitude and your mindset, because why would you do that? Because you know where it's coming from, God Almighty and His Son. And if they could have known that in the sense of living by it, they would have been there...if they loved God. If they love the process whereby God molds and fashions and trains His people.

That's why something like that is mind-boggling, how somebody could live like that, to think, "I don't need to be there anymore." That's why I get so irritated when I hear different ministers in the past here during the Apostasy, right after the Apostasy, and they get up and start talking about, "You know, he was a good teacher. I learned a lot of good things from him." When I get that way, right now I'm on fire inside, just the thought of it. I really am. If I were so blessed that they could sit right there right now, I would be talking to them very strongly, telling them... Have to tie them in a chair... Anyway

**...so that you will not hear, but should be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them.** So if we're not careful we can read right over that and not grasp this is exactly what we've lived through, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and even now into PKG. Some of that has existed all the way through.

What happens? What do you mean "other gods?" Well, where is the truth? Where is God's spirit working? How are we being molded and fashioned? Where is God speaking to us? Because somewhere, wherever God's Church is, God is speaking to His people. That's how He works to mold and fashion. That's where people have to make choices and decisions.

And so, if they don't like certain things that are being said or certain things that are being done, they'll try to do something different – worship other gods and serve them. Because it's not serving God. It's either serving self, self-serving, which is generally the case, making self a God, raising up ourselves, our own ideas above and beyond what is being given to us. And this has happened over and over and over since the Church began. See, it's just the way it works. Mind-boggling.

So, we are blessed. Really! I don't know if we grasp sometimes how blessed we are that we have this that we can look through as a matter of time, through some of the most incredible times on earth's history in the sense of God molding and fashioning the Church, bringing it to a greater maturity in the sense of where we are in time, because it's where we are in time and what He's about to bring to this earth, His government.

To have the blessing of seeing what happened in Philadelphia, to see how God's apostle was spoken of and treated by those who should have been faithful and loyal to what had been given to them as they were sent out into different areas. I could tell you a horror story that would be a ten-part series of minister after minister, of situation after situation that would blow your mind. But there is no purpose in that. Just to know the outline of it because those things happen.

Laodicea, worse and worse and worse until we finally had the unthinkable, which we thought we knew about until it happened, and then it's like, "How could this happen to God's Church?" Well, we'd been forewarned, we just didn't grasp how incredibly large it was going to be. Always resisting God even within the Church. It's astounding.

**Proverbs 16:1—The preparations of the heart of man...** Now, I love this particular word. You have to understand what's being said here because it's a Hebrew word that has to do more in the sense of planning, planning ahead, "the plans," which the word is translated as "preparation." But preparation to me is more of setting certain things in place already according to a plan.

So, has more to do with the planning, in that respect, **the plans of the heart of man**. So, you can have plans of things and so forth in life, **but the answer of the tongue is from the Eternal**. In other words, if it's going to be right, if it's going to last, if it has meaning it should include, it should have at the forefront of it all God.

Everything we do in our lives in the Church, God should be at the forefront. To present, to go before Him in prayer about things we do and decisions we're trying to make and asking for help, that we want to be wise, and in the process asking for blessings and help, looking to Him to guide and direct us in things that we do in life.

It's always having God at the forefront no matter what it is, truly, to include God. Little things! There was a time when I wouldn't have prayed about as much, little things, but now a days if there is something that is really small in my own personal life, to even ask God for help in that whatever it might be. Little, small thing. I mean really small. To include God because it's a matter of sharing life.

We, as we grow in families, we share things we're doing. Even the small things should be shared. That's so much of what life is about, it's about the sharing. God is the greatest sharer of them all. He wants to share life, everything in life, our day to day lives with us. So, to pray to Him about those things, to talk to Him about those things is a good thing, to include some of that.

It's not wasting God's time. God can handle it. But sometimes as human beings we don't want to bother, maybe, certain people with certain, what we might consider trivial, something we're doing. And think, share it with God! That's good. He wants to hear. He wants to be a part of your life, obviously.

**All the ways of man**, of mankind, **are clean** (clear, pure) **in his own eyes**. That's an amazingly deceitful thing of the human mind that is so difficult sometimes to grasp. We do the things we do, and we even justify along the way, even certain things that we may know or do know that are wrong, we don't feel right about, and yet the human mind works that way. So it's right in it's own eyes in what it does. Otherwise, if it felt bad or troubled by it might consider it differently. But that's not the way our human minds are.

We go full blast into something we feel clear and good about what we're doing, or we wouldn't be doing it. That's what we have to do to our minds. That's the way the world is right now. You think, what a horrible thing it's moving forward and doing things and feeling good about whatever you're striving to do.

**All the ways of mankind are clear in their own eyes/in his own eyes, but the Eternal weighs or measures** as it is, **the spirits**. In other words, the spirit of mankind, the mind of mankind. In other words, God knows our motive, He knows our thinking, and that's why we should want Him involved in things we do in our lives and wanting to make sure that we're in unity with Him, that we're in agreement with Him, especially after we grasp judgment, and we begin to understand those things.

Judging all kinds of aspects of our life, striving to make sure always that it's in agreement with God. Then when we know it's in agreement with God there is incredible peace with that, incredible clarity as well and so often great blessings that come on top of that.

**Commit your works**, what we do, **unto the Eternal**, whatever we're involved in, **and your thoughts/your thinking shall be established**. So again, it's a matter of keeping God in the picture. God should always be at the forefront. He wants us to think that way. Why should we want to do anything less?

**The Eternal has made all things for Himself**. It's hard for us to grasp such things. Everything is created for Him, but His spirit is one of love and sharing. He wants to give us all things. Our minds can't grasp that, really, but He wants us to inherit all things, to be in His Family.

**The Eternal has made all things for Himself; yes, even the wicked for the day of evil**. Now, things like this have sometimes been difficult for God's Church to understand until we came to a point in time where we were blessed to address that God creates good and evil, if we understand what that means. He doesn't make anyone be evil. He didn't make Lucifer be evil. But the potential was there because of what He created.

And especially with mankind, God knew what mankind would be like. But we make the choices. We decide what we want. The ways of man are selfish, always have been. That's no mystery. We're just selfish human beings, and when we come into God's Church we're blessed to begin to see that and to understand that and come to where we really hate it. We really come to hate selfishness. We want to change. It's great motivation, to change.

"The Eternal made all things for Himself; yes, even the wicked for the day of evil." So we learn from those things. And candidly, it's the only way we can really learn. We had to be made human beings and the capacity for evil so that we can see that it's wrong.

That's why I mention so often my primary teaching within the Church, within the ministry has been to be around, submerged in things around me that were wrong to where it became obvious there are certain things that "You can't do that, that's totally against God's way. What you said, what you're doing, that's contrary to what God is teaching us and it shouldn't be that way. People shouldn't be treated like that. People shouldn't be spoken to in that manner."

So if something is wrong, then what's right? It's easier to see then. And if you learn to hate the evil...? And that's what we have to do. I think the Church, in the beginning especially, some had to go through a period of time when, even in Philadelphia but more so even toward the end here, of coming to understand that every government is evil. Inside and out. Every facet of it is evil. Any phase of it you want to look at.

I'm thankful that God is exposing those things in the world more and more and we see this conflict, whether it be in secret service groups. Well, I'm not going to mention them all, some are just bad words. (Just kidding.) But there are different groups and organizations out there, they really are filled with evil. We've got to come to hate that system that hurts people and the oppression that's there, and the lying that's involved. You think, just like to win an election what people will stoop to, that's nothing but evil!

Then some will say, "Well it wasn't that way in George Washington's day. George wasn't like that, some that followed him..." They were incredible individuals. They did incredible things. They were blessed because they had God's blessings to establish a country, Manasseh, to get it off the ground in order to

become the greatest nation the world has ever known, the most powerful nation that's ever been known. That was a part of fulfilling something.

There are individuals who are a part of something but they themselves didn't do it all. But to understand that even within that it wasn't a right government. There is nothing right about any government of human beings because there are going to be problems. It didn't take long, and we had a great war because there are problems in judgment, there are problems in agreement, there are problems in things of the human mind and people struggle and will go to war where brothers will kill each other.

Massive slaughter of families who fought against each other north and the south, up in Canada when they fought up there around the Niagara region. Was it 1812, in that region? Some came down and burned Buffalo, as it were, I believe, if I have the story right here. Different ones fought across the river back and forth. And in the same families! Same thing as what happened between the north and the south and families were killing each other because of the hatreds and the feelings of certain things that they're so right about what they're doing and upholding.

And you think, what a horrible system that that could happen! So, we come to a point in time where we realize no government has ever worked, no government has been right and pure. It may be the best that human beings can do but man, it sucks. It really does. It stinks!

But what God offers is beautiful, it's awesome. To think that it's just all the way through and it's desire is for love, to help people, to serve, to give, to help people to prosper?

**Everyone proud in heart is an abomination**, it's a detestable thing, in other words, that's what that means, **to the Eternal**. So that means when we raise up our ways and we don't listen to God about His ways, we feel our ways are better. I ache inside when I think about some of these things and think about the truth they could have but they won't receive it no matter what until it gets so, so bad.

**Assuredly, they shall not go unpunished**. In other words, the word really has to do with being held innocent. In other words, sin requires a payment. That's just the way it is. It's a law. It's basically death. Not the first death, that's just for everyone to experience, but the second, something that human beings haven't learned because they won't listen to God.

**By mercy and truth, iniquity is...** and it can have to do with "being purged" but the word is about being atoned, "propitiation." So, iniquity, or as it says here, **By mercy and truth**. So, by God's mercy and by the truth **iniquity is propitiated**. Because of God's plan through His Passover.

**And by the fear of the Eternal they depart from evil**. So there has to be a fear that we grow in. Just having a fear of God is not a bad thing but it has to mature to where it's not one of being afraid of it's one of maturing to a point of fearful to go the wrong way, fearful to live something different, to know where it will lead, to see what's happened to the Church through time, fearful that the vast majority have separated themselves and that that could happen, that should be a fearful thing that sobers the mind.

To realize, “I’ve got to fight, and I’ve got to fight everyday. I can’t give up. I’ve got to hold fast. I’ve got to keep addressing various things in my life” because this is a battle that lasts until we’re gone, until it’s over. And it’s the fighting to the end that counts.

That’s why I love what I see in the Church today, people that have gone through incredible things, things that others weren’t able to go through, some who gave up their crown because they couldn’t go through some of those things and dealing with it in the mind. But to hold fast, to keep fighting, that’s what this is about.

And being in God’s Church has always been about that. So what incredible blessing to know those things, to see those things, and to realize when things are bad, when you’re going through a difficult time and there are battles out there, especially around Passover a lot of times or before a Holy Day, you find out from someone else you know what, they’re going through things too. We share in this. We go through some hard things in life. Sometimes they just bombard us because of the kind of world we live in and especially that fact that it can be stirred up by a being that God allows. For what purpose? So that we can learn that.

This is our home. This is our family. We all share in this together. We’re all in a battle. We’re all in a fight. Have mercy upon each other. Be patient with one another. Love each other.

**Romans 11:33—Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable—unsearchable—are His judgments.** Now, that’s a mouthful but we have to understand what it means. Because it comes down to judgment. Just knowing the law, having been given, as an example, the 10 Commandments as the Israelites were, that’s scratching the surface. There is so much more involved, choices that have to be made until it comes down to the choice that they be implemented into our life by God’s help, with His holy spirit because we can’t do it on our own. But to understand in that process then we’re learning judgment, how to judge things in our life day by day, how to judge within the Body, within God’s Family.

**How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!** You can’t find them out. God has to show them. God has to reveal them. That’s how He leads and guides and directs us and teaches us in the Body and we’re able to grow and continue to grow.

**For who has known the mind of the Eternal? Or who has been counselor/His counselor, if you will. Or who has first given to Him that He should owe something back? For of Him, through Him, and to Him are all things, to Him be glory forever. Amen.**

So again, it’s a matter this focus to have on God, that we want God in our lives, that we’re going to fight for that, we’re going to fight against self, and strive to learn what He teaches us, and wanting to yield ourselves as clay that’s pliable, to put it in whatever shape He wants it to be. Not to resist that.

One last area of scripture and then we’ll stop.

**Romans 12:1—I implore you, therefore, by the mercies of God.** Over and over again it's the mercy of God. You know, when God begins to work with us He pours out His mercy upon us because He's called us to a purpose to separate us so that He can even grant us greater mercy in our life, greater help in our life.

**...by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.** Now, we're told this over and over again, and we need to be told it over and over again because this is our choice. That this isn't meant to be easy. This is meant to be hard. It's meant to be a battle. It's meant to be difficult, and we have to fight. Giving up self is the hardest of those battles, fighting against self, what self wants.

That's what it means to be a living sacrifice – to give up self, which means giving up our ways and embracing God's with all of our being.

**Giving your body, present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** So again, that's a sermon in itself.

**Do not be conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.** And we know that. Our minds have to be changed. That never stops, this renewing that taking place inside of us. Because there is a creation taking place inside here.

**...so that you may prove...** How do you do that? By what you live. That's how we prove it, by exercising God's way of life, by being able to make the kind of judgments in our life that reflect that that's our thinking.

**That you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone that is among you, not to think more highly than you ought to think.** We have to be careful. That's where we have to be careful. There is the quicksand – to lift up self, to lift up our own thinking, our way, to where we resist what God gives to us.

**...but to think...** And this word literally means "to have understanding," if you will, **but to think...**it's "soberly," but the words really should be **according as God has dealt to everyone the measure of faith**, in other words, the ability to believe through the holy spirit that's measured out to every one of us.

So anyway, this is kind of a foundation into what we're going into. But again, coming to understand government more deeply and understanding that it has so very, very much as we're heading into matters of judgment and how we judge.