

This will be *Part 7* of our current series *Elijah, Elisha, & More*.

Last week we were covering the story of how Ben Hadad, the king of Syria, gathered his army and went to besiege Samaria, the capital of Israel. And this was a time of famine anyway within the country, but it was far, far worse right in the area, the city part of Samaria, if you will, because of being surrounded and everything they couldn't go out and bring food in or anything of that nature, gather food. So, it was much, much worse here within the capital area.

We then read of the account of how Jehoram, the king of Israel, had reached his limit with all the suffering that was taking place, what they were going through, and decided it was time to take off Elisha's head, and blaming him and God for all of his suffering.

Then I mentioned after that... Well, let's just read the account again here in 2 Kings. I'll read that first.

2 Kings 6:32—Now, Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him, yet before the messenger came to him he said to the elders... So, Elisha knew that he was coming.

To me, this is an amazing thing when you see this over and over again, and especially in the Old Testament at different times and the life of Elijah and Elisha, how that God just gave them those things to see, to know at any moment. And this is one of those accounts where he knew the messenger was coming, he knew what it was all about. And to me, that's a miraculous thing, blessings from God when He does this kind of thing.

But it says, **before the messenger came to him he said to the elders, Elisha did, Look now that the son of a murderer, speaking of Ahab, who was his father, is sending to take off my head. When you see this messenger has come, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. For the sound of the master's feet is close behind him.**

So, to me, this is a good example, too, of how that there are things... I think of how the world of traditional Christianity talks about "You turn the other cheek and just take whatever is coming." No, they did something about it here. He had a plan, in essence, of partially what to do here knowing it's fully in God's hands what happens, what takes place. But there are times that certain action is called for. Just running away or running into a different direction isn't always an answer or whatever sometimes comes to the mind of people.

As he was speaking to them the messenger came down to him saying, Behold, the evil of the Eternal...

So, this is the message that was sent by the king to give to Elisha because he was right behind him and I'm sure there were others coming as well who were going to seize him to take off his head.

So, he said, **the messenger said, Behold, this evil of the Eternal.** So again, constantly blaming God. We've read stories, parts of this in the past how he was constantly like this. He gets in a pinch and right away it's God's fault and God's doing this to them, He's just punishing them like, "picking on me for no good reason," not addressing his sins.

And sometimes I marvel too how that especially as people are being called or sometimes even within the environment of the Church there are those things that can happen where people wonder why things are going badly, wrong, or not working out well in their life for various things that are taking place and not realizing sometimes it's because of the sins.

And here is a case of that, an example on a physical plane that we can see better. But these things have happened within the environment of the Church. And this one always boggles my mind, wondering why you're not being blessed when you're not obeying God, especially when it comes to various things about a job or whatever it might be and thinking, well, it might have something to do with the fact you haven't tithed for two years. Might have something to do with the fact that you're not giving offerings to God.

It's like, "How could these things be happening? Why am I having job problems, job-related...?" Well, do you want to be blessed? Do you want God's help? Then you have to obey God. Seems like a simple thing.

But anyway, we see something like that in a physical example here with the king of Israel here, Jehoram. So, we see this with this example with him, and he's been told over and over again about his sins but not repenting and not changing; ready to blame God though, and ready to take off Elisha's head.

So, then I made some comments about when things are not going well. To me, it's amazing, when people are perhaps going through various hardships, difficulties in life, or whatever, rather than looking at self and a relationship with God and repenting, so often an individual can turn and start blaming God or most often it isn't directly toward God, it's toward those who are serving God, in that respect.

So, let's continue today with the story here now of what was taking place here in 2 Kings, now in chapter 7.

2 Kings 7:1—Then Elisha said, Listen to the word of the Eternal. Thus says the Eternal: Tomorrow about this time five quarts, so it's a little less than five liters, of fine flour will sell for half an ounce of silver, and ten quarts, about 9.5 liters of barley for half an ounce of silver in the gate of Samaria.

So again, this was quite a pronouncement, and he was saying this is what was going to happen right away. God's going to intervene and do this, in essence. **And then an officer on whose hand the king entrusted answered the man of God and said, This couldn't even happen if the Eternal opened the**

windows of heaven. So, even if God opens the windows of heaven that's not going to happen. Things are too bad, things are too extreme, and this is nuts. That's his attitude.

Then he said, You will see it with your eyes, but you will not eat of it. So, pretty strong. "You're going to see this take place but you're not going to have any of it."

Verse 3—Now, there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said one to another... So, it's just bringing in the story now about them and what took place here at the entrance of the gate that's unique to them and their situation because then they said to each other... Because of the famine being so bad, here they are leprous at the gate, wanting help, not getting anything because there is nothing to give to them as far as food.

Why should we sit here until we die? If we say we should enter into the city, then we'll starve in the city, and we shall die there. If we sit still here, we will also die. So, we might as well go and fall down before the army of the Syrians. If they let us live, we will live; if they'll kill us, we will but die. So, it's like what are the choices here? Go into the city – we're going to die. Stay here – we're going to die. But if we go out there to the Syrians, maybe...maybe we'll live, and if not, we're still going to die. So, they didn't have a whole lot of choices but that seemed like the better option on a physical plane. Obviously, it was.

Verse 5—So, they arose at dawn to go into the camp of the Syrians. Then when they had come to the outermost part of the camp of the Syrians, no one was there. For the Lord had made the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—even as a noise of a great army. It's amazing how many times God did this where struck fear into an army, great army.

I think of different examples. I think of Gideon and his army, when they came down the hill and they saw what they did, and God put a fear into them. Tens of thousands and tens of thousands of people in a field or in an array, if you will. And here, something like this that was happening, struck fear through them to where they took off running.

So they said one to another, The king of Israel, Joram or Jehoram as it's called at different times, has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us! Now, even this, God can broadcast. He can broadcast ideas, thoughts, or whatever, or have angelic beings do it, and sometimes even Satan and the demonic world to do various things, as has happened at different times in the Old Testament.

So, whatever the case was this was what came into their mind, this is the fear that was there, and they heard these things and they scattered. They took off.

Therefore, they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, their horses, their donkeys, and even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. This is an incredibly strong fear. But I marvel, too, how God can have that sent throughout an entire army like this and they feel intense fear of something they

don't see, don't understand, but it's in their mind as much as when God communicated things to Elisha, and he knew. But in this case here something else is sent out to where they receive this and they're incredibly fearful and they just take off leaving everything behind. That's a lot of fear.

So, when these lepers came to the outermost part of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold, and clothing, and went and hid it. Then they went back again.

Think of human nature in something like this. Things are looking good, no one is around, we go in this tent, all this food, all this drink, we haven't had any for a long time, and not only that, there is a lot of gold, different things to take away, clothing. They left everything behind. So, they go take it but not just that, they went and hid it where they could go back to it later.

Then they come back again. **So, they entered into another tent and carried from there and went and hid it.** So, they're thinking of the future now. Things of human nature sometimes, you just have to laugh at it because... Anyway.

Finally, they said one to another, We are not doing well. This day is a day to deliver good news, and we're keeping silent. In other words, we're holding this back from the city. They're suffering and we should do something about this.

If we wait until the morning light, our iniquity will be found on us. So, they began to be concerned that if they, someone comes out and finds them there and that they have known this and they didn't come back and tell about it, it's not going to go well for them.

Therefore, let us go and tell these things to the king's household. So, they came and told the gatekeeper, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians and no one was there, neither voice of anyone. But horses tied and asses tied, and the tents as they were. I guess it's donkeys. Some people don't even like to use that word.

So, I can't imagine having that kind of fear where you just take off on foot, you don't even take time to prepare the horses, saddle them up, whatever it takes to get out of a place. You take off on foot.

Then **verse 12—So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, I will now show you what the Assyrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry...** You have to look at this guy and say, this guy was a pessimist of pessimists. Always negative. He had to be the biggest downer to be around of anybody almost in the Old Testament that I have read about.

...therefore, they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. You think, to think like that all the time? To think...

That's why even within the Church we have to watch ourselves sometimes how we think. If we recognize that God's there for us that should give us a confidence in whatever trial we go through, whatever

hardship we go through. And not to go to that negative area of life so often that tends to be a proclivity of some, perhaps of their past, or whatever it might be, and something like that pop up.

So going on here, **Then one of his servants answered and said, Let us take five of the horses that are remaining which are left in the city. For they are as all the multitude of Israel that remain in it. So, let us send out to see.** So, in other words, that's what we have left, let's have someone go out there with these, check it out, check out what happened, where they are. And it's like saying, everyone is close to dying as it is anyway and so are the horses, so we might as well use them type of thing, go out and see if this is true.

So, they took two chariots with the horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrian saying, Go and see. So, finally, he agrees with their logic, which he was lacking in.

So, they went after them unto the Jordan; and all the way was full of garments and vessels. Isn't that crazy? So, some carried some things with them, and they were just... In order to keep going because of that fear... It's hard for us to grasp that, to grasp that kind of fear that you're motivated to get out of that country as fast as you can, to head back and to just keep dropping things off because now you're getting more and more tired, and you don't want to carry as much. And so, this is the state here because they kept finding things along the way.

So, full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast aside in their haste. Then the messengers returned and told the king. So, the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So five quarts of fine flour sold for half an ounce of silver, and ten quarts of barley for half an ounce of silver, according to the word of the Eternal.

Then the king appointed the officer on whose hand he entrusted to have the charge of the gate. In other words, now because when the news starts spreading there's going to be a large amount of people trying to get through there and people could be crushed type of thing and so forth, so he sent someone down there to control things and this is what it's talking about, to take control of the gate area when they open it.

So, he took charge of the gate, and the people trampled on him at the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. So again here, he was going to see that day, not necessarily see the things that were there, but have told them what had taken place, that yes, this was coming to pass, and then he got trampled.

Verse 18—Then it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Five quarts of fine flour for half an ounce of silver and ten quarts of barley for half an ounce of silver, shall be tomorrow about this time at the gate of Samaria. And the officer answered the man of God, and said, This couldn't even happen... So, it's just repeating here what had taken place and why this had happened to him. **This couldn't even happen if the Eternal opened the windows of heaven.**

Then he, speaking of the man of God again... That's why I love how it's stated here over and over again when it talks about the man of God because it says this so often throughout these things concerning Elisha. **Then he answered, Behold, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat it. For the people trampled on him at the gate, and he died.**

So again here, just reiterating it. So making it clear here this is why he died. This is what God brought to pass in his life, that whatever Elisha had said came to pass exactly as he said.

So again here, as I mentioned, he's continually called the man of God, and understanding again here that Elisha means "the salvation of God," or "the deliverance of God." And this comes out over and over again in the story flow here as we're going to see even next Sabbath in part of something that's stated.

But in all this that happened to the Assyrians, that enabled the Israelites to go out and receive God's salvation or God's deliverance – because this is what we're talking about here – to escape the famine. So, it's a matter of escaping the famine, it's a matter of a deliverance from the famine. It's a matter of salvation, if you will, in the way the word is used, from famine so that they could have plenty of food, that that would be taken care of.

And God intervening reminds me of another truth. You would think... So, you look at things like this and you see things that happen on a very physical plane, but God shows us a spiritual part, if you will, or a spiritual "type" of something we're to learn from it. And I think of some of the things we've gone through and another truth that I'm going to read in a moment.

You would think that if one can escape famine and be fed in such abundance indeed, like this one here, that one would indeed flee the famine and accept what God was providing. In other words, it's not a hard thing on a physical plane. Here the whole city is under famine, and when they see or hear that there is a deliverance here, of what God has done, you want to eat.

So, it's not a matter of God in this case in their thinking, in their minds, it's a matter that they can live and so they accept that deliverance and are saved from or delivered from that famine because of what God provided and all the food the Syrians left behind. And that's exactly then what the Israelites did in the capital of Samaria, and they fled out the gates and trampled to death the officer of the king, on whom the king trusted.

31(10) The first four Seals of Revelation are about the Church, and these parallel Matthew 24.

So, again here, this is something... I'll just read it as it is:

These four Seals are not about physical events at the end-time. Herbert W. Armstrong taught that these four Seals of Revelation could only be understood by understanding Matthew 24.

Now, that's an incredible thing. Sometimes God gives a part of something but not the whole thing depending on His purpose and His plan, and especially having to do with the end-time, things having to

do with the example of Laodicea and Philadelphia. It wasn't to be understood yet about Philadelphia and Laodicea and the things that were going to come to pass and things that were said about Laodicea that would be fulfilled.

And so, the Church was allowed to believe something that they only knew to a present time – in other words, a present truth. The idea, the thought was at that time, because there wasn't an understanding about the 144,000 yet, that there was still this concept of a large multitude that was going to be called during the period toward the end here that would be Laodicean. Philadelphians would be taken to a place of safety. And all that was the present truth.

Now, they weren't completed. They were on a physical plane of understanding because of present truth. To be interpreted, in other words, that way. And God knows exactly what people are going to do when that's what they're given. So, that's as far as they could go; they couldn't see beyond that. If you're not allowed to see something spiritual you're not allowed to see it. And so, you rely upon that which you know to a point in time.

And we've gone through a lot of that since the beginning of PKG, if you will, of things being clarified, having to learn as God revealed step by step what was taking place. I think of the different things that came about in the very beginning there; the first several truths were a result of that process. We couldn't see it all at once. We had to live through various things, experience various things, focus on various things, and as we began to understand various aspects like Laodicea, that they're going to be spewed out of God's mouth, an obvious fulfillment of something that had taken place, then something else God would make clear.

It's like this building process. You can't understand certain things until a certain part of the structure has been built and then God can continue to add more. Like the ten virgins, that came along later because there were things in that that we couldn't comprehend and understand until we had more of a foundation of understanding some of these things on a spiritual plane that God was revealing because of what happened with the Apostasy. I hope that makes sense. It does. You may have to listen to it again.

So, this one here, this was all we were given. But what an incredible thing that God gave to Herbert Armstrong to realize, to know that this was true, Matthew 24 corresponds to the Seals of Revelation. Now, how to fill that in we didn't know yet because we didn't fully understand the Seals. We didn't know what that was. We didn't understand those things in Matthew 24. Why? Because God didn't give it yet. It's as simple as that.

That's why it's so awesome to understand that you can't understand diddly on a spiritual plane unless God gives it to you, and if God gives it to you it's like you're first called if you were called out of the world and you begin to see things. God has to give that. You don't... Nobody figures it out on their own. That's one of the things that really used to perturb the tar out of me when different ones – long after they'd

been in the Church – still didn't understand what a calling was because they'd make comments of how they came to understand the truth, the beginning of the truth themselves.

It's like you can't comprehend the spiritual aspect of that, the ability to see it on a spiritual... Just like the Holy Days. You can't comprehend that plan on a spiritual plane unless God puts it in your mind. And for people to think they could dig into that and find it out on their own? Whacko! Absolute Whacko! Nuts! Insane!

Herbert Armstrong, after coming out of Sardis, him and his wife had to spend seven years keeping the Holy Days until... and within that time then God began to reveal the spiritual aspect of it. It was more than just something physical on a physical day! And they came to understand that on these days you're to observe them. He didn't know what to observe! He knew they were Holy Days. What do you do on Trumpets? What do you do on Atonement? What do you do at the Feast of Tabernacles? What do you do on the Last Great Day? What is it all about? He didn't know.

Slowly, but surely, God began to fill it in, this building process. Began to let him see various things through that seven years but he learned a lot more about those Holy Days after that, after he gave it to the Church and the Church then began to observe it, when he determined then that the Church needs to observe this, not just him and his wife. So, it's a marvel then how God works. So, if we really understand how God works when it comes to anything that's spiritual...

It's like God's love, agape, no one has it unless they have God's spirit in them unless God gives that portion of His mind in you to experience it from time to time. Don't have it all the time or to a great strength all the time but we grow in it, as we do in the receiving of His holy spirit. So, they go hand in hand. The truth, the ability to understand those things is a result of, a product of God's holy spirit, and we're able to receive those things then.

It's by nothing that we do. It's by no goodness of our own. It's not by how intellectual we are, how smart we are. Too many people have gone by the wayside because they saw themselves as intellectual and being able to figure things out. Nothing spiritual works that way. It only comes from God. If we could have only understood that throughout Philadelphia, throughout Laodicea, there would have been an apostasy. But we had to learn it. And how you learn it? Through experience. Sometimes the very hard way, experiencing something that's very, very difficult that you have to go down deep inside into your being and cry out to God for help to understand, to comprehend, and ask for the mercy necessary and God's spirit to reveal what we need to see.

So again here, I marvel—to me, it's an awesome thing—that God started this process a long time ago to reveal to Herbert Armstrong that Matthew 24 and the Seals of Revelation go hand in hand. They're about the same thing. But we couldn't see it yet on a spiritual plane what this meant for the Church. It was only seen, basically, as it applied to the world.

These four Seals are not about physical events at the end-time. Herbert W. Armstrong taught that these four Seals of Revelation could only be understood by understanding Matthew 24. He was correct about this, but he thought this was about physical events rather than spiritual ones that concerned the Church as God later revealed. Most of those who are scattered still do not understand that this is not about physical events, but spiritual ones.

Why? Because God hasn't given it to them. They have to go through a process which is called repentance.

So, this event, if you will, about God's deliverance that we've just read about here on a physical plane has a "type" on a spiritual plane to the Church in this end-time. So, going on:

As the Church lived through these events, it became evident that Matthew 24 was about the Church, and so is Revelation 6:1-8. The First Seal [the white horse] is about the Abomination of Desolation. The second [the red horse] concerns the spiritual warfare in the Church. The third is about a famine of the preaching of the word of God (Amos 8:11).

In other words, a famine of the truth.

The Fourth Seal [the pale horse] speaks of the perpetuation and worsening of all of these conditions [before this] within the scattered Church organizations that sprang up from Worldwide after the Apostasy.

So, again here, what an incredible thing here to come to a deeper understanding and seeing these things of Matthew 24. I think of the one about the earthquakes. So, it was always about physical earthquakes were going to take place. Well, there are things that are going to worsen at the end but that's not what this is about. When you understand how the word is used it's about a great shaking. When you understand it's within the Church you understand it's about a great shaking within the Church. We got the tar shaken out of us, truly! Battered! It reminds me of getting flipped over end over end three and a half times in that crazy car that time. I felt like I was some pepper in a pepper shaker, in other words, getting battered all over the place when you're going to shake it up and down and get some pepper out and it doesn't want to come out.

So, this one here, again, about the white horse was looked at in times past... Let me see if I have some of that written down here. I'll just read it when I come to it. I'll just wait until I come to it.

Amos 8. Now, we've always known about this as a whole within the Church, but we didn't comprehend that this was what applies to Matthew 24 and Revelation.

Amos 8:11—Behold, the days come, says the God Eternal, That I will send a famine in the land, and not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Eternal. Hearing the truth,

that's what it's about. It's not just about the words or being able to have the Bible, read through it, or whatever. It's being taught out of it, learning from it what is true, seeing it for what it is.

Verse 12—So they shall wander, a word that means “to waver; stagger,” or “to be shaken.” That's what the word means in Hebrew, “to be shaken.” **...from sea to sea, from north even to the east. They shall run to and fro, and seek the word of the Eternal, and shall not find it.** Now, have to understand that in the context of what took place, in the context of what is true.

“They will seek it.” Well, does that mean they are seeking it in spirit and in truth? What are they seeking? Well, we lived through that in a very big way, what took place especially once the Church was scattered. It's from one's own ideas and thinking, to seek out what they believe is the truth. That's why there is a famine.

So many out here began to use what in some ways, in a perverted way, thinking it's an opportunity to finally be able to teach what they've always believed. For some, for a lot in one organization, it was the 14/15th Passover. They couldn't wait. They couldn't wait to start giving sermons on it and trying to cram it down people's throats. Caused a lot of dissension throughout the Church. A lot of fights and a lot of struggles, this idea of the 14/15th Passover, just in that one organization alone.

And then other things started popping up in different places. That's all we did for the first few years until we were settled, basically, as PKG. It was like putting out fires. One thing would pop up. I remember one subject I didn't even want to... Said I wasn't going to preach on it, it was so frustrating to me. It was like, “You've got to be kidding!” A little fire that popped up in an area and then it kind of got bigger. Found out other areas, and the bigger it got the more I realised, “I guess you're going to preach about it.” So, had to be worked with that way sometimes too.

But it was about going to heaven, this idea of different ones, of 144,000 going off to heaven or whatever is taking place out here and different ideas that people had and things that some different groups started teaching. And so, had to address that one very early on.

Pentecost. Just one doctrine after another that were being twisted and distorted. So, that's what was taking place.

They'll go to and fro and seek the word of the Eternal. “To and fro.” Some were jumping from one organization to another. Some were trying to reach out to different organizations and whatever to push their stuff.

This concept of building the bridges. Exactly what this is about, building bridges and kind of compromising. Kind of meeting at the top and having a meeting and you have to compromise if you believe one thing, and someone believes something different that you don't believe. Then if you're going to be in a group together and somehow come together in an organization you've got to compromise something to do that. You've got to compromise something up here.

And that's how a lot of these got formed, because they would compromise. It had to happen in some of the big groups too. Had to compromise on various things. Those in that one, the largest organization had to compromise on 14/15th Passover. "Well, we won't teach it anymore on the Sabbath. We won't teach it at all" because it might mean their jobs. Finally got down to it where, you know, you keep doing this and so... They never did find out who all of them were.

So, a famine, the shaking, as it brings out here. **So they shall wander**, or be shaken, that's what it means in the Hebrew, **from sea to sea, from north even unto the east**. So, this happened before the Apostasy, as the Apostasy was happening, and after the Apostasy, this matter of earthquakes, this great shaking within the Church.

It's easy for us to forget some of our history, but candidly, it's what made us who we are. Everything we went through, everything we learned we learned through experience, through God's spirit working within the mind to help us to comprehend what those things were all about, what they meant.

Wouldn't trade it for anything on Earth, or in the universe. Do you know why? God says that's what we're going to inherit, inherit all things along with Joshua the Christ. You think, so what is it that people leave over? What is it they want compared to that? Pretty dumb. Not pretty dumb. I don't think there are words that can grasp how dumb it is.

Verse 13—In that day shall the fair, that which had beauty, **virgins, and young faint for thirst**. "Young" in the word here is "the choice ones," is what this is about. Some of these things are not translated very well. nowhere does it say "men." It's a word that has to do with the choice ones, the choicest of things. In other words, how people value things.

In that day shall the fair, the virgins, the choice ones faint for thirst. In other words, it doesn't matter where people were in the scheme of things. It doesn't matter if they had been an evangelist. It doesn't matter if they'd been on the council. It doesn't matter if they were a regional pastor. It doesn't matter if they had been a preaching elder. It doesn't matter if they... Wherever they were in the scheme of things, any and all throughout the Church that had been esteemed in times past, looked up to as being the choice, you think, because that's kind of how things were looked and that was a problem there anyway. The choice?

So, they're all going to faint for thirst. It doesn't matter how strong someone might have been or how much they might have been looked up to they're going to faint. In other words, they're not going to survive spiritually. So, to faint in this respect is that which has to do with God's spirit, to become weaker and weaker to where there is no strength left in an individual on a spiritual plane. And that's what's happened.

Those who swear by the sin of Samaria. What does that mean concerning the end-time, concerning God's Church? What happened in Israel? What happened? Samaria is picturing the leadership of what

happened to Israel because they all followed the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He changed God's law. He messed with God's law. And every group out there has messed with God's law since the Apostasy.

Those who swear by the sin of Samaria and say, Your god, O Dan, is living! So, what does that mean on a spiritual plane concerning everything that was scattered? It has to do with what you believe, whoever you are, wherever they are, about themselves, their group, their organization, or whatever, and they believe in essence, this.

...and the manner or the way of/to Beersheba is living. In other words, from north to south, all the way through, on a spiritual plane, throughout the entirety of everything that was scattered, it's this concept, this idea that their god is alive, their god, what they have worked to bring about.

That's pretty strong language when you think about it and understand what has taken place out there over a long, long time. Because weakness became so strong, and when you don't have God's spirit because of a famine or because of compromising or doing things that you know aren't correct or right and you go ahead and do them you lose more and more of God's spirit to where something...

What is an amazing thing to me is that something that was spiritual, or people were together at one time together spiritually in a body could lose that and become like protestants but elements of the truth in it. But don't understand it anymore on a spiritual plane, don't really see it on a spiritual plane.

Sometimes we still get one magazine from a group that sometimes some of the headlines, some of the headings alone and what something is titled you realize it's protestant. Where is the truth? Where is the life? Because the life is a matter of God's spirit. It's a matter of something that God makes alive through His spirit, which makes His word come alive, which makes whatever is being talked about come alive, that you can see or comprehend on a spiritual plane.

But when you start seeing things more on a physical plane and you go through the motions...? You can go through the motions of the Sabbath, the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles, the sending in of tithes, and not have God's spirit. You can go through things of the past, whatever that might be at some point in time, and no longer have God's spirit. And that's why it's so difficult to grasp and comprehend some of the things that are out there.

And until God shakes them up on a spiritual plane, and on a physical plane as well, if and when it's His purpose to call different ones or in many cases, obviously, to awaken them. Because that's what it's going to have to be, a spiritual awakening. In many cases, going to have to go through an awful lot. Because you know what, we've been through an awful lot since the Apostasy. And it's those kinds of things that the Church went through that should cause one to cry out and ask God, "What is it I need to see?" Because it's out there, the truth is there. Amazing. And if it's not received then mercy is not shown.

So, “those who swear by the sin of Samaria,” in other words, whatever it is they’re holding on to, whatever it is their concept, their belief is, **Even they shall fall and never rise again.** In some cases, some are going to fall and never rise again. Others who are asleep and have just lost certain things God is going to be able to awaken. Others won’t be able to be awakened because they lived something for so long pride won’t allow them to change, to accept what is true.

And you know what the biggest test is going to be? Right here. “Him? You’ve got to be kidding.” “What he said? You’ve got to be kidding! That we were all spewed out of God’s mouth, every one of us, that we all fell asleep, that we were all Laodicean? I don’t believe him one iota.” So, how do you deal with that?

Matthew 24:7—For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. It was always seen about the world. Yes, there is a portion of a “type” of physical things like this that are going to take place at the end-time, but that’s not what Matthew 24 is about. It’s about the Church one hundred percent, in that respect.

A “type” in some things that are physical, yes, there are going to be some things like that that are going to be in the world. Just like I talked about, earthquakes, yes, there are going to be some little earthquakes. But the primary thing that it’s speaking of here throughout Matthew 24 is about the Church. And if you look back at the beginning and what Christ is talking about, about him coming back, it’s about the Church.

And nation against kingdom? Well, it’s just talking about government, different sizes, different structures, and how they work against each other and are not united and don’t come together in any fashion or form. And that’s the way it is with everything that’s scattered out there. None are going to come together and join together if you will. On the contrary, what has continued to happen is that different splinters will take off and it just gets worse and worse instead of better and better.

“And kingdom against kingdom,” whatever those are, whoever had the power, has the power in some of those things.

And there will be famines. It’s the result of it all, of what took place before the Apostasy and then what took place afterward. Because what happened during the Apostasy as far as a famine is concerned is horrifying.

That’s why sometimes we don’t grasp even within God’s Church how much we’ve been blessed of what we have, with the truths that God has given to us, that’s come through a lot of struggle, a lot of pain, a lot of suffering. And yet God has blessed us with those things, and we’ve been richly, richly blessed because of things we can see on a spiritual plane that others can’t see – not just in the world but in the scattered Church, which is still to God exceedingly important.

A lot of time, a lot of work went into the Church through time and there is a time that there is going to be a shaking that will help many to repent. How many will when it's all said and done? We don't know. But it's going to be a tough, tough battle, it really is.

"And there will be famines." So it just gets worse and worse and worse as far as everything that's out there that once was a part.

...and pestilences, and earthquakes in different... And the word "in different" isn't here either. Basically, it's "different" in one respect but it's **against places**. It's how the word is used.

So, that which shakes has generally been against because it has to do with things that are upsetting, things that come along that cause problems here in a relationship with God and other ideas come in that are designed to weaken and to destroy, as it talks about in the Seals.

I want to read this one here too, **Mark 13:8—For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be earthquakes in different places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of birth pain** is what the word is in the Greek language. Birthing pain.

So, we see it in the world. There's a "type." But it's still a matter of all that's out there as far as the Church and even the scattered Church. And we don't know what's fully in front of us.

That's why we're admonished to stay close to God, to seek to be close to God, to draw closer to God, to make sure that we're examining our lives and repenting of the things we need to repent of that perhaps some are tolerating in their life or they shouldn't be tolerating it – or maybe the word is allowing it. Because it's still going on. I know it's still going on.

And so, it's a matter or not of whether we're addressing some of those things and truly conquering them, crying out to God for help to conquer certain things that are just wrong in life. And everybody knows when something is wrong and being done that's wrong. And if there is desire for things that are wrong and you start giving into that, whatever that might be in life, it pulls you away from God.

Well, that's a matter of personal choices and whether or not we really, really, really – even if you cry out several times in a day to God, just stop what you're doing and just ask God for help to conquer and overcome and ask God for repentance, to be able to repent and to be forgiven. And God's there. He wants to help. He wants to give His holy spirit, but we have to do the right things, which generally involves repentance.

Revelation 6. So, I think of our history, I think of how things have grown from the very beginning of some of the first truths that had to be built, and one upon another, and how God just continued to give different things and how blessed we are because of that. And the only way we see it is because of God's spirit working in our minds and whether or not we're receptive to that – not only receptive but desirous and continually crying out for these things, that God keep us in the truth. Because you can lose it.

I guess when I'm going through some of these things I ache inside, to be candid with you, about so many who have gone by the wayside. Because things have been preached over and over and over again, and some receive it, and some don't. And those who do are the blessings of encouragement I receive. Those who don't, those are the ones that hurt. Because they always had choices before them. Why make wrong choices? Why give up? Why not fight for this way of life? But you can't give that to anyone. That's what it comes down to.

And the more that God has revealed to us, especially since the Feast this past year, to think that when it's all said and done? We've always had this concept of billions and billions and billions, but the reality is at the end that many are going to be destroyed. How many? How many will be left? Don't know.

That's up to each individual because everybody is given a choice, an opportunity to fight. How much do you want it? How much do you love it? How much do you love God's way, the way of peace? Because if we love the way of peace you know what? We'll strive to be living by it. We will try to fight against this when we see it gets in the way of peace with whomever in whatever kind of situation it might be and repent of what we see is wrong in us and seek to be right with God in our thinking. It's choices all the way to the end.

Revelation 6:1—I saw when the Lamb opened one of the Seals, the First Seal, in other words, and then I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder, as one of the four creatures said/one of the living creatures said, Come and see. So again here, it talks about this white horse.

Then behold, I saw a white horse, and he that sat on it had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. Now, one time this was looked upon as being equated with the great antiChrist that would come out of the world, probably located in Europe, southern Europe, Italy—it's like, it's not about that at all—and what they were going to do in deceiving the world as far as religion and God's people, as far as...

It didn't happen from without, it happened from within. What an incredible thing. But God didn't give that to us to see because we had to experience it, what it was like for someone to rise up and fulfill those scriptures in 2nd Thessalonians. And we've lived through that. We have lived through so much, some of the most incredible things ever prophesied to take place.

So, I saw a white horse, and he who sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer. So, that's what happened. And those who followed him, those who followed that way, that's what took place. But within the Church.

It's not about the world and it's not about some false teacher in the world going to rise up with great power that could deceive God's people. Can you imagine someone coming along and convincing you of Christmas again or of Easter or of Sunday?

But when it happens from within and people are taught various things within a Body, within an organization from the top down, now that had power. Took a long time, several years, but it happened. It's almost unbelievable.

When he had opened the Second Seal, I heard the second creature say, Come and see. Then another horse went out that was red, and it was given to him who sat on it to take peace from the earth, that they should kill one another as a great sword was given to them. Now, another one here. It's about the Church. But we didn't know that. We didn't know this before. We couldn't see this before. We couldn't comprehend this, knowing it went along with Matthew 24, because that was fully taken then, Matthew 24, as being physical and about things that were going to happen in the end-time on the earth physically.

But this? Couldn't comprehend that yet Herbert Armstrong said this goes together. So, we could only see it physically in that regard in thinking again this is about nations that are going to rise up at the end and things are going to happen as far as war is concerned. And this verse here has nothing to do with...

Do you remember some of the horses in some of the ads in times past, the four horsemen of the apocalypse, and the way the world talks about it as well? And it's about WWII. It's about things that happen in the end-time. But Revelation 6 has nothing to do with WWII. It's not a "type" of it either. This is a hundred percent about God's Church.

"To take peace from the earth." That's what happened in the Church. Anybody who lived through the Apostasy knows that peace was taken away from the Church very powerfully so. Didn't know what to do. Didn't know how to do it. Had to make choices, most excruciating, painful time up here of a battle, "How could this happen in God's Church?"

That's why a third of the people left. Because they couldn't comprehend. If they have believed for so long that this was God's Church and this happened? Then where is God? It's like, "We were wrong." No, they weren't wrong. But they didn't fight for what they'd been taught, for what God's apostle had given to them.

And then to look to God to reveal to them whenever He chose, why? Why did they go through it? Why did they have to experience it? He shows. When you go through something very traumatic like that God's going to show if you strive to hold on to that which God has given to you to hold on to. That's a part of holding on to, preserving, guarding what? The truth. That's what we're told over and over again. That's what we're to watch over, to be guarding in our minds and in our being.

"And that they should kill one another." So, this is far, far worse than something physical because literally, if someone can have an effect on someone else's life on a spiritual plane and they be led away from the Church not all are coming back. We understand that better than ever before. We hope that the majority will be able to be shaken and seen.

I don't have a whole lot of confidence in that anymore. I really don't, as to how many are going to really repent. That's in God's hands and I know that God is very merciful, but I also know human nature. Learned a lot about it. And within the environment of the Church as well and what it takes to bring people to repentance sometimes. And just because people see a third world war start and all of a sudden everything else that begins to happen doesn't mean they're going to change and believe what is true.

Even when the 144,000 return and they're not a part of it. That can actually make it worse up here because of what? Pride.

When he opened the Third Seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see. I looked, and behold, there was a black horse, and he that sat on it had a pair of balances in his hand. Then I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see that you not hurt the oil and the wine. That makes chills go up and down my spine. Very close to what happened there in the time of Elisha and what happened to physical Israel and talking about famine. Because this is about famine. But this is about a spiritual famine, not a physical one.

And it's talking about the blessings then of being able to have the truth and the fact that God is going to preserve it and make sure that it's there. "Don't hurt the oil nor the wine." So, that which is true and close to God and of the product of being on the vine, if you will, that can be in our lives, a part of our lives figuratively speaking physically here, and the oil which we fully understand a matter of that which is symbolic of God's holy spirit, that it can't be hurt. Because wherever God's spirit is and those who are a part of that, they will be blessed. And that's what it's contrasting here, that which is going to be destroyed, that which is going to...where there is nothing left in that respect as far as being able to continue in truth and what happened to two-thirds of the Church at the very beginning.

Anyway, going back through some of these things isn't easy because it brings up so many things that happened in our past. It brings up a lot of bad memories of bad choices that people have made. But the reality is that's why we have what we have, and we look to each other and we hold on to each other because we treasure those relationships and want to see that continue to the end. Because we've also been told and understand that it won't all be there at the end. But our hope and desire is for that.

But each one of us has to fight this. Each one of us has to do our part because hopefully and prayerfully then indeed everybody has learned what they needed to learn by going through this at the end time.

And I think I passed up what I was talking about a moment ago, about those who kill and destroy. So, if you affect someone else's life and realize that kind of death... Because if you're talking about something that could have been forever and that's taken away because of someone else's influence?

I think of that individual in headquarters who began to teach 14/15th Passover. He killed a lot of people. Because of him, I know that there are people because of their choices and their sins and what they have done they're set. They're not going to repent. You can go so far with something for so long that you can so destroy your own mind. It's the most precious thing we have, it truly is, that God has given to us, because that's all we take with us. This is what it's all about, the transforming of this.

So, the great difference between the physical type and the spiritual type of the story concerning God's deliverance, His salvation of Israel that we see or have looked at on a physical plane concerning that famine, the deliverance He gave, I think of the deliverance He gave at the end-time here because it fulfills a name. And that's what this period is about, it's about God's deliverance, of how He's bringing a small group through all this, through the worst times that have ever happened spiritually with a Body that was so large at one point in time to what it is now. And yet God offers a deliverance from it all. It's a matter of choices.

And I think of those Israelites who knew they were starving. But you know what's bad within the environment of the Church? When famine comes the majority have never understood they were starving. They went out seeking God and made God or ideas of the past into something that they'd always wanted or wanted to perpetuate because they didn't believe Herbert Armstrong was the apostle and that the work of Philadelphia or the work of Herbert Armstrong was over with. Instead, they had to continue to do it. Because that's where the money has gone in order to accomplish all that. Because in this concept of 144,000, it's a sad, sad... It really is a pathetic thing.

So, you recognize how blessed, how rich you are? Because that's what this series has been about in large part. We can look at physical examples and physical stories but sometimes we don't grasp how rich we are or how much God has given to us. And all the truth and the truths that God has given to us, they're far more miraculous than anything that we saw in examples concerning Elisha's life, like the axe head coming to the top. Can be sluffed off as unimportant or some truth can be in time if we're not careful. Instead, you hold on to it with all your life, truly.