

This is a continuation of our current series entitled *The City of Truth*, with this being *Part 4*.

This series is about the name God refers to concerning what He is creating in a spiritual city we refer to as Jerusalem or Zion. In this case here, He calls it also the City of Truth. And we've been going through some of that. Of course, that comes out of Zechariah, and we'll be going into Zechariah today as well because there is a lot there that this sermon was entitled after.

Much of what we've been covering has been in the book of John because John covers a lot about the subject of truth, and it's quite extensive in the book of John and so we're going to go back over just a few verses here today that we ended on last week and going to build upon what we covered. So, just to pick up, again, from last Sabbath, John 8:33, so breaking into the thought, the flow of what we were covering last Sabbath.

**John 8:33—They responded to him**, speaking of Joshua, **We are Abraham's seed, and we were never in bondage to anyone**. So, it's amazing what Christ goes through here in reasoning with them, some of the Pharisees there and some of the others as well steeped in Judaism, and he's saying things to them they just, they can't comprehend.

It says he's speaking to them about things of the spirit, of a matter of God's spirit working in someone to be able to comprehend, to understand, and to put everything together in a way that is true because without that all that people can see is that which is physical.

So, that's why I love the book of John because it starts out talking about things that can't be understood, John 3 goes into Nicodemus and Christ talking to him and he can't understand what Christ is saying about being born again. It's just something that is so far out when people hear it, some of these expressions that are true that we understand that they can't. And when he talked about the woman at the well with the water, all those, John 6, talking about some of those things they couldn't understand what he was talking about.

So, this is a part of the same thing. They couldn't comprehend what he was saying about them being in bondage because their whole history is one of being led out of bondage, being led out of Egypt. But still not understanding that they're very much in bondage.

And so, he said, "We are of Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to anyone." So, you know, for Christ to work up to the point here that they're in bondage to sin – and again, they can't receive that because it really wasn't to them but it's for us to be able to go through these things so that we can understand a clear distinction between what is physical and spiritual and build upon that. Just like with

the Days of Unleavened Bread coming up and all the examples of things that God uses on a physical plane to teach us things that are spiritual, so it is here.

So, they said, **So, how can you say, You will be made free?** Because as far as they were concerned they were free.

But you think, what a... Even there they're speaking out the wrong side of their mouth type of thing because they were under Roman rule. But they didn't call it bondage because they felt like they were free. And Christ isn't even talking about that kind of bondage.

So, he says, went on here in **verse 35—And the servant does not abide in the house forever, but the Son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son will make you free, you will be free indeed.** Again, couldn't comprehend a word he was saying.

**Verse 37—I know that you are Abraham's seed, but you seek to kill me because my word has no place in you.** And the reason being is because they didn't have God's spirit.

**I speak that which I have seen with my Father...** In other words, not physically seen, it's what is up in the mind and what the Father has given to him in his mind to see. That's what he's explaining to them. Now, what an awesome thing we can understand that, but others can't when you use that kind of speech or expression.

**They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. And Joshua said to them, If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I have heard of God.** So again, it's not a physical hearing but that's what a lot of people even sometimes in the Church go to or have in times past. We latch into the physical first so often and there is nothing physical in this at all.

**Abraham never did this.** Never did what? Never spoke to them the truth, revealed truth to them in a manner that he is doing. He is revealing things that they can't even comprehend because of God's spirit, and so he's telling them Abraham didn't do this. He couldn't; it wasn't given at that time. And really, compared to the things that were given later on even through Moses, there is an incredible chasm there of knowledge that was given later on. The law was given then and all the things that came.

Abraham had very basic things to deal with, to work with. He was judged in a relationship that he had with God and how he responded to that. And one of the greatest things was his willingness, you know, when God told him to leave his land and go to a land that He was going to show him. He went. That's basically what the scripture says, he just got up and he did it because he had this relationship, this thinking toward God that he'd received from his great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great whatever it was (I think ten in there), grandfather, Noah. Awesome!

And so he said, "Abraham never did this." And so, one of the greatest things that Abraham did then later on was a willingness to offer up his own son because he believed God had the power to give life, and if God tells him to do that, he's going to do it. Incredible!

So, we're judged by other things. He was judged in a unique way by God because God worked with individuals through a long period of time there, four thousand years, until the Church was established. And then God began to work with a larger group of people through His holy spirit, through His Son. Awesome!

**Verse 57—Then the Jews said unto him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? And Joshua answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham, I am.** So, it's an expression here that even we in God's Church have had difficulty with because of the concept we had about Christ eternally existing. And once you have those things in your mind, that that's what the truth is, when the truth comes along to reveal no, that wasn't all the truth yet, you were to a certain point but not all the way. You understood that the holy spirit wasn't a being but still not comprehending that Christ had a literal beginning of life. And we didn't know that until God gave it. Awesome!

And so, to make that transition sometimes, it's hard in the mind when you've been given the truth and then truth comes. Like Pentecost. That was hard for a large number of people in God's Church. The only reason why it was hard, or it was harder was because so many were so weak by that point in time, so many were going off and doing things they shouldn't have been doing spiritually against God that they couldn't see it when it came. The majority of the Church saw it when Herbert Armstrong gave the truth, but a lot of people didn't. Into the thousands didn't. Incredible!

So many lessons in things like this, to understand what we have, why we have it, and how we're able to hold on to what God has given to us. Because that which is spirit, we don't have unless God's in us, unless God gives it to us in the mind. Incredible.

Let's turn over to Revelation 1.

So, he used an expression that the way he said it at this point in time here it was going to get them upset, and he knew that. Because the same word in the Greek language here is quoted at different times, as we went through last Sabbath, and they didn't get upset when he said the things about "I am" because he was explaining it in a different context. But when he said it this way concerning Abraham and himself then in making a comparison, they took it in a way that he's saying he is God. That's how they took it. And all the more reason they wanted to kill him.

It's a matter of knowing God's plan, through God's spirit, and then all these things fit together. That's why I loved Herbert Armstrong's example of a puzzle. All these little pieces that God has to help us to put into place, and then they're not all there until this is all over with. More comes along. We're able to put pieces in their right place. If you've ever put a puzzle together and you get a piece in there that kind of

had to force it a little bit, it fits but it doesn't fit. It's not where it's supposed to be because it doesn't fit perfectly. And that's what happens with us sometimes. It doesn't really fit there.

**Revelation 1:5—even from Joshua the Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead.** So, when he talks about various things about God's plan and talking about a particular matter here, again, he wasn't saying to them, "I existed," or "I was," but that's how it was taken. So, sometimes we have to go to other scriptures, and as God reveals truth to us and we come to understand how terms are used about being the first of the first begotten of God's plan in this particular case here.

"...the first begotten of the dead." So, in that respect, obviously, we grasp (and there are many other things), but in that respect, we understand that he was before him. He was the first in God's plan. Everything was built upon him, everything. Nothing was created until God had determined how he was going to accomplish the creation of His Family, and Christ was at the forefront of it all, the first. Incredible!

So, before Abraham is a part of God's plan, indeed, you could say, he could say, "I am... before Abraham" in that respect, in the context there.

**Ephesians 3:7**, Paul speaking here saying, **Wherefore I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the active working of His power. Unto me who am the least of all saints in this grace, is this grace given that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.**

So again here, unique words that are used, "unsearchable riches of Christ." You can't know it unless God gives it to you, and then even there it has to be preached or it has to be given, (written or preached) whether it be by word or by an individual where the truth is being given and God's spirit in the mind to where a person can grasp and understand what is being said in God's word.

**Verse 9—And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world...** It's a mystery. The world can't know it. That's the whole thing about why it is a mystery. People in the world when they hear some of these things, they can't comprehend it— "mystery" is a good word—until God reveals it in the mind. So, it was made a mystery for a purpose.

So, "to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery," because God reveals it's no longer a mystery.

**...which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in God.** It's in God's timing, and only in God's timing can it become known. So, all the way up to the time of Moses then things about the law and other things that God gave at that particular time, judgments and so forth that had to do with God's spirit and spiritual matters, but they couldn't understand those things that were said. But again, we can.

And then all the way up to Christ when finally, finally the spirit of matters began to be given to where we could say, "Ah, now I understand. Now I see." And that's God's timing as to when He reveals things, and

that's a marvel to understand. That's why when we look at the truths today that we have, it was because of timing in that six-thousand-year purpose that God has of why more is being given toward the end just before His Son returns.

**...to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly might be known to the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Joshua the Christ our Lord.** So again, talking about things from the beginning of the world, that they were hidden in God and Christ was the cornerstone of all of it. Awesome!

**John 17:24—Father, I will that they also...** We read this every Passover period. **I will that they also, whom You have given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which You have given me. For You loved me before the foundation of the world.** So, we're very familiar with these scriptures now. We grasp and comprehend them.

In times past within the Church this wasn't seen this way, it was seen as something that they had been together forever.

"For You loved me before the foundation of the world." So again, he was first, and long before Abraham a part of God's plan, part of His purpose for His creation.

**1 Peter 1:18—forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold, from your vain conduct...** The word is about conduct, it's not just conversation. Our conduct could be in the conversation but it's about conduct, how we live.

**...by the tradition from your fathers.** In other words, handed down from or through your fathers. **...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.** It's amazing how fast Passover is coming. We're going to be observing it very soon here now.

**...who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.** That word has to do with being "predetermined before the foundation of the world," before anything, candidly, existed. **...but was manifest in these last times for you.** That was God's purpose.

**...who by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.** Now, the danger of these kinds of scriptures is we've heard them so much, we know them so well that we sometimes don't grasp how incredible it is that we see this, and we can take these kinds of things for granted.

And it's like if there is nothing new, if our interest isn't peaked or it's not as exciting... This should always be exciting to us that we grasp and understand it, that we comprehend what's being said. And sometimes we have to cry out to God and ask Him for the power of His spirit so that these things stir us up and that we grasp how blessed we are.

There are a lot of people before us who have gone by the wayside who don't have any of this anymore. It's not up here anymore. They've lost it.

Over the past few series, we've focused, again, a lot on the subject of truth, and it's not an easy thing for us to fully grasp the extent which this period of time, our time now that we're living in, how much God has given us of the subject of truth. More than anyone who has ever lived by far. Far more than the early apostles. Far more. Even more in that respect than the time of Herbert Armstrong in the period of Philadelphia. Because it's God's time, it's His purpose to do this, before, these things were to be established before His Son came.

And this should give us deeper appreciation of a couple verses. I'm just going to read these to you.

**John 17:17—Sanctify them.** The word has to do with "holy use and purpose," "being set apart for holy use and purpose." That's everyone in God's Church, set apart. The rest of the world isn't yet. They're not set apart for holy use and purpose. Their time hasn't come.

**Sanctify them through Your truth.** This is exactly how we're set apart. That's why the truth, that's why we're going through these things, is so important, to grasp how much we've been given since the time of Philadelphia on. To treasure those things. To grasp what they are. To hold on to them, to guard them in our life so they don't slip away and so they don't become "Oh, ho-hum," type thing to us, you know, but that they stir us and we understand how blessed we are.

**Sanctify them through Your truth. Your word is truth.** So again, this is kind of hard for us sometimes to grasp, that every time God has given us more truth God's revealed more of Himself to us. Because it's all about God. It's about what God is doing and how God is doing it, and He lets us see more and more of it.

**2 Thessalonians 2:13** it says, **But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation.** Now, not individually. There are things about life and people born that God doesn't involve Himself directly in. Sometimes He has. But as a whole it's a part of life and God chooses out of that what He wills, what He wants at any specific time to fulfill certain things that are decided beforehand, to place us in that position, to place us in that place, to give us what He's planned, candidly, before time began. In other words, the creation of the physical universe.

Because God's plan isn't something He decided through millennia and millennia and whatever millions and billions of years, it's something that was decided very early on, Christ being the pinnacle of it all. But the 144,000, that wasn't decided sometime in the past six thousand years. That was all decided before the universe ever started to ever be created, before the angelic realm.

That's what's so awesome then when you're able to be a part of that and be blessed to be called, set aside.

**Chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.** So, it just shows a process here really because that was a part of God's plan, how people could become in time part of Elohim. You have to go through this. And candidly, again, it fits in here as well about the 144,000 and what God's been preparing. That was determined beforehand. People who have been called to salvation at that time. So the timing, again, is in God's hand.

Now we're going to go back to Zechariah here and read that verse again, Zechariah 8:3, and then we're going to back up a little bit and start going through Zechariah, parts of Zechariah.

**Zechariah 8:3—Thus says the Eternal: I have returned unto Zion.** What does that mean? "I have returned unto Zion." Well, when did He ever turn away from it to return to it?

**I have returned unto Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem shall be called a City of Truth.** So, this is all a part of God's purpose and plan. We know about Jerusalem, Zion, but also identifying it as a city of truth. That's why this is so important. Matter of truth, God wants us to understand that. That's what makes it Zion. That's what makes it the City of Peace, Jerusalem, because it's filled with truth.

And we are given the opportunity to learn how to be peacemakers, how to live peace when we're in God's Church as a part of that process and it has to do with the truth living and dwelling within us because we want to live it toward others in judgment and so forth. So, it's so important to understand the City of Truth is how we can become Jerusalem, is how we can become part of, if you will, Zion.

**...and the mountain of the Eternal of hosts the holy mountain.** What is that about? What is the mountain in scripture and prophecy? It's about God's government. That was given to Herbert Armstrong to understand, that mountains in that respect, a mountain is in essence, when you're talking about something prophetic, it's about government. And so it is here. It's talking about government.

"And the mountain of the Eternal of hosts the holy mountain." Can't be anything less. The Government of God that's going to be established when Christ returns.

Now, the primary focus of the book of Zechariah, again, is about God's overall plan of building the temple. And sometimes we can go through things in the Old Testament, Old Testament prophecies and the like, and not grasp various time periods it's talking about until God gives it.

Just like in Ezekiel, I think of Ezekiel starting at the very beginning and going all the way up through things of chapter 20 and on, in through there, so much of that was about the Apostasy. It was about what happened in the Church. Things that God gave a long, long time ago that would happen later on in time at the very end of six thousand years. Incredible!

And so it is with the book of Zechariah here. There is a lot here that has to do with the very end. I think of Herbert Armstrong talking about prophetic things, and even though there is much of scripture that is

about prophecy, if you will, the majority of that was to be for the end-time. Incredible! Most of it was to happen in the last, well, candidly from the time of Herbert Armstrong on.

Let's pick it up. Let's go back to Zechariah 1, start building on some of this in the book of Zechariah. Now, there are places here – I think of some scriptures we're going to come to later on – when it talks about the Branch, speaking of Christ. We're familiar with some of those things that are used in other places in scripture. We understand what it's about.

But sometimes when Christ came along and referred to various things that we're going to look at here, even that are mentioned about what were fulfilled in him, they were really never known until they were being fulfilled, and then the scriptures made sense. But it was like it was just pulled out a section of scripture not knowing what the rest of it's about.

And sometimes God has used those things, physical analogies of things with Judah or Israel, and how they have lived their lives, what they have done, and then within that there are areas where God has hidden, if you will, things of spiritual revelation about His plan and purpose. And until it's time they're not given, what it's about, what it involves.

Just like some things in the book of Ezekiel. We really didn't know what some of those things were about until the Apostasy happened, until after the Apostasy. Then it was God's time to show us that's what that was about, a third, and a third, and a third, and then ten percent from that and various of the remnant, and all the various things we've gone through in times past. And then in some of the other scriptures later on when it talks about the ministry and what took place within the Church as far as a ministry is concerned and a condemnation that went with those things.

We understood maybe at times in part when somebody did something that could fit in there, but we didn't grasp, no, this is about our time now. So, it's been about the end time.

So, there is a lot more written about a time that you're blessed to live in. In scripture, there is really a lot. That's why we live in some of the most exciting times. Why? Because Christ is about to return. He's about to establish God's Kingdom on earth. Awesome!

And so, God's focus has been on that for a long, long time, things written in scripture about it, looking forward to it because this is exciting to God. An excitement we can't even begin to comprehend actually.

**Zechariah 1:2—The Eternal was provoked by your fathers. Even you said to them, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, Turn unto Me, says the Eternal of hosts, and I will turn unto You, says the Eternal of hosts.**

Now, it's the way it's been from the beginning as a whole. People haven't wanted God in their life. So, when he talks about "Your fathers," basically by what they did, "provoked the Eternal," always doing something different, testing God, that's the wrong way, it's the other way around.



“Turn unto Me,” says the Eternal, “and I will turn unto you.” So, it has to start by what people receive, by what they hear. Mentioned that in a recent book a while back here. Because people don’t want the truth when it comes right down to it.

I was thinking about that the other day. What a horrible thing that this... Again, that this world has to go through to get to a point where it will start to listen. And the reason I mention this is because some newscaster was talking about certain things in such a way that referring back to a period of time of...like the origin of NATO, the beginning of NATO, some of these things that just, they don’t work. The League of Nations didn’t work. NATO hasn’t worked. We see it’s a farce and why it’s a farce and why governments just don’t work. They can’t work and they can’t work together.

And these are the things that human beings, mankind has to learn. We have to have our noses rubbed in it as it were, and literally have to go through a period of time where it gets so bad that finally, we will want deliverance, or the world will want it. They’ll want to be delivered from what’s taking place.

**You shall not be as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, Turn from your evil ways.** In other words, this is what has been preached from the beginning through the prophets. So, you have to acknowledge what evil is, and to do that you have to acknowledge who God is because He’s the one that tells you what evil is. And people don’t like that.

**Turn from your evil ways and from your evil doings. But they did not hear, nor did they listen.** It’s a word that has to do with “You didn’t incline your ear,” **to Me, says the Eternal. Your fathers, where are they? Even the prophets, do they live forever?** Dead. Life goes on.

**But My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers?** In other words, “overtake” is what the word is about here. In other words, they died, God’s word continues on. They didn’t live by it. His word is true.

**...and they turn back and say, Like as the Eternal of hosts has thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so has He dealt with us.** So, it’s like in this giant hamster wheel and you just keep going around and around and around and keep repeating the same things and dying and another generation comes along and does the same thing. It’s what life has been like.

So basically, it’s just setting the stage here this is the way mankind has always been, it’s the way mankind is now.

**Zechariah 2:1—I lifted up my eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Where are you going? Then he said to me, To measure Jerusalem.** Now, God has been doing that, sending different ones at different times as a part of that process. The 144,000 are a part of that, being measured, being prepared for God’s government. An exact number. Incredible. Because there are exact things to fulfill to complete that government that we don’t comprehend yet until it’s here.

“To measure Jerusalem.” So, it’s not about the physical city, it’s about spiritual Jerusalem. ...**to see what is the breadth of it and what is the length of it.** It’s like, where things fit when you go out and you map something out, and then you start building. Things have to fit into place. Everything has to be measured to fit into place. You, first of all, have to have the whole thing set out as to what it’s going to be – the Temple of God, Jerusalem, Zion, God’s government, and the 144,000 – and it’s all set out, established. All has its dimensions, what it has to measure to fit into a place.

That’s why we’re not all the same. There are things that God has that people work with carpentry, work with building (these are things you understand), things have to be continually measured to make sure it’s right.

**Then he said to me, To measure Jerusalem. To see what is the breadth of it and what is the length of it. Now, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, saying unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited** (dwelt in, lived in, to remain in) – shouldn’t escape us what it’s saying. ...**shall be inhabited.** Now, the word “**as towns**” isn’t even in there. It’s an expression that means, **without walls for the multitude of men and of animals in it.** In other words, as in the prosperity of it it’s so great and so expansive in that respect. So, it uses a very physical example here of something that God is doing in the sense of building that is on a spiritual plane if you will.

**Verse 5—For the Eternal declares, I will be a wall of fire surrounding her, and will be the glory in the midst of her. Woe, flee from the land of the north, says the Eternal.** So again here, it’s the expressions throughout this, when it talks about some of the things having to do with north, when it’s talking about the north and you look at Judah and Israel we understand who was in the north, the ten tribes that were up there, as a whole. And what goes with that as well is what they were living because of the things that the first king here, Jeroboam... It was between Jeroboam and Rehoboam, and Jeroboam was in the north. And then they refer to “all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.”

But anyway, it has to do with all the things they began to do. I’ll wait until I get there in the flow of the scriptures here because it’s very much something that spiritually happened to the Church here at the end-time.

So anyway, He says, “Flee from the land of the north.” Why? Well, it’s used in a good expression here about Israel to the north that wasn’t following God. They changed the laws of God. They turned the Sabbath to Sunday. They turned the Holy Days to other rituals, other observances, or whatever in the north and that’s why it says flee from there.

So, it’s basically using something for us when God says to flee sin, and the same thing here, but this is prophecy. This is prophetic. **Flee from the land of the north, says the Eternal, for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven, says the Eternal.**

Before we get too far, just mention that this is about what happened in part, in that regard, to the Church and how the Church was spread out as it was in the world. So, it says here, “For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven.” Scattered all over the place – another way of expressing it.

**For thus saith the Eternal of hosts, Follow after the glory he has sent me unto the nations which spoiled (plundered) you. For he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.** So, it’s using some expressions here to show how important God’s people are, those with whom He works, and He’s talking about those who need to flee, need to flee from the north, need to flee the sins of the north, the way that they went because they didn’t hold on to God’s truth.

Judah is used as an example of someone who held on to truth, if you will, Sabbath, Holy Days, though they didn’t grasp it.

But these are the kinds of analogies that are being used here for us to grasp something on a spiritual plane. Flee from those things that people have turned away from as far as God’s way of life is concerned.

And so again here, **For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven, says the Eternal. Deliver yourself, O Zion.** How do you do that? Well, by obeying God, by fleeing the things that you are supposed to flee. **Deliver yourself, O Zion, that dwells with the daughter of Babylon.** So again here, these expressions that are used, “the daughter of confusion.” It’s all around us in the world and there is a certain way we’re supposed to live. We’re supposed to get away from that. We’re to hold on to what God gives us.

**Follow after the glory He has sent unto the nations which spoiled you/plundered you.** Again, things that have to happen through time, of people who have gone against God’s servants, God’s prophets. We’ve just gone through a series talking about some of those things and Elijah and how he was treated and, again, history of the same history over and over again.

**For he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.** Something to understand. There are others who have always come after us. There are those who have tried to take or steal or hurt or destroy, and God says that anyone who touches you, in essence, that’s what He’s saying here, “touches the apple of His eye.” Because God’s people are important to Him. And sometimes it’s hard for us to see that ourselves.

**Zechariah 3:1.** It takes a little while to get into this. It’ll come along. **Then he showed me Joshua, the High Priest.** Now, should any of this escape us, what it’s talking about, the High Priest? In times past we didn’t use the right names so some of these didn’t jump out at us in the same way.

**Then he showed me Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of the Eternal, and Satan standing on his right hand to be his adversary,** as it is. The words that were translated here, about “to resist him” but literally it means “to be his adversary.” So again here, things that are leading up to the end of the age here, things that were to take place. These are the things being addressed.

**Then the Eternal said to Satan, The Eternal rebuke you, O Satan; even the Eternal who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes you.** In other words, “pushes against you; to reprove you.” And this has been happening the last two thousand years to the Church. Satan, the adversary. That’s why it brings these things out and talks about what he is like. And Joshua the High Priest who has been placed there to push at him, to push him out until the time finally he’s put away for nearly a thousand, one hundred years.

**...O Satan; even the Eternal who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes you. Is this not the brand that is plucked out of the fire?** What? Jerusalem, what God is building. So, we all go through various things where that’s an expression that’s really used toward all of us, “a brand that’s plucked out of the fire,” “out of the burning.” God preserves us, blesses us.

**Then he responded and spoke to those who stood before him saying, Take away the filthy garments from him.** Now, it’s talking about Joshua. It says, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” Why would it be doing that if you know who he is? Well, you have to read it all and understand it in the context it’s being given.

It’s about Joshua the High Priest and what he begins to see in the beginning here and the adversary that was there at the very beginning, and candidly what was said back in Genesis in the very beginning as well about referring to Satan and referring to Christ and that story that God then has built upon and magnified through time, and this particular time here when Christ came to die. And that’s what it’s getting into here.

“Then he responded and spoke to those who stood by him,” who stood by Joshua. Who stood by him or before him? It’s about those who have been a part of the Church for the past two thousand years and the work of Christ as our High Priest. That’s why it’s talking about him as our High Priest and what he had to fulfill and accomplish in order that these things could have meaning.

So, it’s talking about “these.” It doesn’t say how many. It just says, it’s speaking of, “those who stood before him.” And only those who have been called into God’s Church have ever, in that respect, spiritually stood before Christ as a part of the Church in the Body of Christ.

“Take away the filthy garments from him.” Well, that’s in large part in the hands of those who are called because we’re the ones who bring along the filth. He died to remove the filth from our lives. He paid the penalty of sin for all of us. And that’s the reason those filthy garments are there, is because of our sins. And so, the desire is to take away the filthy garments, get rid of them. So, this is the kind of language that’s being used here.

**Then he responded and spoke to those who stood before him saying, Take away the filthy garments from him.** In other words, when we’re called we have a part in doing that because he had to pay that penalty. We’re the ones that put those things there, in essence. That’s a different way of expressing it.

But we're responsible for that; we're responsible that he had to die to pay the penalty of sin, to take all that upon himself, our sins.

**Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him, He said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you.** That's what God says, "I have caused your iniquity to pass from you." Pass. Passover. It all fits together. It's what it's about. It's what God desires to do, to take care of sin, to get rid of sin, to get rid of the filthy garments.

**...and I will clothe you with a mantle.** Now, it's speaking about Joshua in this respect as High Priest and the role there before Him, before God, and God telling him, "I will clothe you with a mantle," and it's about what he's going to be given as this process of getting rid of sin is in order that people become a part of God's Family and what is being prepared that much more for Joshua as High Priest.

Because he's to fulfill another role beyond that that hasn't yet started, and that's the King of kings. And some of these things then in that respect as a High Priest then at that point in time, but this is what God is doing and creating as far as Jerusalem. It's about Jerusalem. The whole context here is about God having chosen Jerusalem and the High Priest Joshua's part in this.

**I have caused your iniquity to pass from you and I, God is saying, will clothe you with a mantle. Then I said, Let them set a clean turban upon his head. So they set a clean turban upon his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Eternal stood by.**

**Then the angel of the Eternal testified unto Joshua, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My charge, then you shall also judge My House.** Well, that was a given, but it had to be said. This is the life he was going to live. It'd be exemplary of his life, the kind of life he was going to live to fulfill and accomplish everything as a part of God's plan.

"And you shall also judge My House." Well, what house is that? Well, it's the Church. It's about what God is creating. It's about Jerusalem. It's about the temple if you will.

**And you shall judge My House, and shall also keep My courts, and I will give you a way to walk among those who are standing by.** Speaking of those, again, who are standing there. Awesome. It's beautiful. "A way to walk." In God's way of life. Because this is how it's being accomplished. It's about the sin being able to be dealt with, about the dirty garments being able to be dealt with so that they can be a part.

**Hear now, O Joshua the High Priest, you, and your companions sitting before you.** Awesome, when you know what it's talking about, when it's talking about the Family of God, the Church of God, the Body of Christ. And this has been something that's been going on for two thousand years, those who have been a part of the Body of Christ.

**Hear now, O Joshua the High Priest, you and your companions sitting before you, for they are wonders.** It's a word that's oftentimes translated as "miracles." **...for they are miracles among mankind.**

What takes place inside of those whom God calls, has worked with over the past six thousand years, and especially once the Church began, there is a power at work there that is expressed in this regard, “wonders,” “the wonders of God.”

Anyone who is able to be begotten of God’s spirit, to grow spiritually, it’s done on a spirit plane. It’s done by things that can’t be done physically. It can’t be done by our own abilities. It’s what God is accomplishing. And because it’s His power words like this, “miracles,” are used, because God has to be in it, God has to perform it as we yield ourself to the process.

“For they are wonders among mankind.” The words “**wondered at**,” is not properly translated at all. It’s just talking about these miracles or these wonders among mankind. So, here is the rest of mankind, lost or in bondage as Christ was talking to the Pharisees there. They don’t know that they’re in bondage but that’s their life. And here then God is creating something out of the midst of all that that’s a matter... it’s miraculous. Because it takes His power and His might to accomplish it, what’s working inside of you.

We “Ooh” and “Aah” sometimes, and they’re inspiring, exciting when you think about when Christ called out for Lazarus and spoke to him like he did, and then Lazarus comes out. That’s an awesome thing! But what’s happening in us is far more awesome! Lazarus didn’t resist him.

There are so many things that God has done, miracles that God has performed, healings that Christ did, all those physical things. Well, they require God’s power and they’re miracles, but what happens in us as human beings because we resist God’s power, it’s a far greater miracle what happens in our being, in our minds than those things, that they are inspiring but sometimes we hold in greater awe than what’s happening in us.

We don’t see to the degree we should or need to the level or the power of something that’s so miraculous inside of us that we’re changing. This mind is actually changing. It’s being transformed. And that’s a far greater miracle than resurrecting someone from the dead. Because when that’s done nothing resists. God just commands it and it’s there, life.

But how we live, how we choose to live life, the process we have to go through to become a part of God’s Family, to become part of Jerusalem, to become a part of the City of Truth, to become part of Zion, is some of the greatest of miracles of all, what God’s doing in us, what we have opportunity to be part of.

And that’s what we should be in awe of, what God is doing in each and every one of us if we yield ourself to the process. That’s why we’re “the apple of His eye.” That’s why that expression is used. What can hurt us? What can touch us if we’re in God’s hands?

**...for they are wonders (miracles) among mankind. For, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch.** So again, scripture I referred to in the beginning here.

I'll just pause there before we go on. I'll just read a couple of scriptures to you. You don't need to turn there.

**Jeremiah 23:5.** This one I'm going to read first. **Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment.** So, that's what he's doing. He's been doing that in the Church for the past two thousand years, executing judgment within the Church. We are being judged.

The world isn't yet. The world is on a physical way concerning God's intervention soon here, and that's a different judgment that's been prophesied throughout the Old Testament, what He's going to allow the earth to come to and what mankind is going to have to come to before His Kingdom comes. But again here, these are things that God is creating.

So, it says, **Behold, the days come, says the Eternal, I will raise unto David a righteous Branch** — a matter of judgment. **...and a King shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice in the earth.** So, that which is going to continue on in time.

Another one, **Jeremiah 33:15.** And so again, we understand who the Branch is. **In those days, and at that time, I will cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David, and he will execute judgment and righteousness in the land.** And we choose to be a part of that and if we want to continue in that, in being a part of that. So often it's a matter of us entering into judgment and learning how to judge ourselves.

That's what a lot of Passover... A lot of Passover is about that subject, "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged." So much of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians that we read there, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10, 11, and in through there, when we read that on Passover night and people coming in to take the Passover has to do with comprehending the Body of Christ, the Church of God and our relationships with one another. How we're living our life, how we're yielding to God's judgment. Judging ourselves, that's where it begins.

So often people judge others and the main thing we're supposed to judge is this because this is what has to change. You can't make anyone else change. You can only make this change by yielding yourself to God's spirit and God's power in your life.

So, that's the Branch being spoken of, and the things being fulfilled there in Zechariah.

Zechariah 6, jumping ahead a little bit. **Zechariah 6:1—Then I turned, and lifted my eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass.** So, a little awkward language here. What in the world? You know, it's an amazing thing to me sometimes how there are different things until God gives it we look at certain things and think, "What is that all about? That doesn't make any sense whatsoever."

It's important here to understand how scriptures are used here concerning brass in the Old Testament in the flow of something like this in a prophecy of Zechariah. But there are various areas that help us to understand the context, and here is a good one because it ties in with things that happened during the Apostasy.

Ezekiel 22. So, to understand some of these things sometimes God gives us other areas of scripture to comprehend what's being said in another. And so, in **Ezekiel 22:17** it says, **Then the word of the Eternal came unto me saying, Son of man, the house of Israel has become as dross.** Now, so many of these things are literally about what happened leading up to the Apostasy and on. So many of the things that had to take place within the Church before Christ would return.

"Then the word of the Eternal came unto me saying, Son of man, the house of Israel has become as dross." That's exactly what happened during Laodicea. The house of Israel is a spiritual matter. It's not talking about ancient Israel. There are analogies of things that can be used along a physical plane and Israel that went to the north, yes, yes, yes, what they did, and there are things that we learn from that. And we're going to go through later on here in some of this in Zechariah, but it's the spiritual part of what those things signify and mean in the first place that are what's really important, I should say.

"The house of Israel." So, when we see that in a prophetic manner of something that's being talked about in the context of things throughout the book here, again, it's spiritual Israel and it's about what God is creating. It's about Zion and it's about the City of Truth. It's about what He's building. It's what the whole book is about.

They're not just a matter of history. Because so many things in prophecy, they're taken as just being a matter of written recorded history. Just like when we went through things about Elijah and Elisha, yes, there are things that have happened in time, but their significance was planned to reflect and picture things on a spiritual plane that were to take place later that would have far greater meaning than what happened there more on a physical plane. It wasn't about saving Israel at that time at all, physical Israel.

**Son of man, the house of Israel has become as dross, for all are as brass, tin, iron, and lead in the midst of the furnace.** Well, we know what that means. When things are melted or smelted in the process there of silver.

It goes on to say, **They are the drosses of silver.** So, plural here in that sense because it's referring to brass, iron, tin, lead, things that when you're going through and purifying silver and heating it up like you do, that's the stuff you don't want. And so, it comes to the top, it's skimmed off, taken off, and thrown away in the sense of comparison to silver because it's the silver that's important here. It's the value of what's being worked for.

**Because these are become the drosses, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.** Just even in that in itself, something that happened within the Church because the Church



became lukewarm, because the Church was falling asleep spiritually. God revealed there was no value in it. He wasn't in it anymore.

It got to a point where He wasn't in it anymore, so much so that He wanted to make sure we understood that by the expression that's used, that He would vomit us out of His mouth. That means being separated from God, being separated from the Body of Christ on a spiritual plane for a time, whatever that was. Even if it was short or long, it doesn't matter, it happened.

God making it very clear He can't use that which is lukewarm, which I have mentioned here recently that we have to be careful that none of us go back into that and just kind of get on this point that was taking place back then of just kind of waiting and not acting like we should or living like we should, kind of coasting.

If you get to a point where you're coasting, something is wrong. You've got to be on fire. That's what God says, "I wish you were," in essence, "hot, cold, or hot," the expression was given, because then that's easier to deal with. If you're lukewarm it's just...? The cold, know what's going to happen to that. The hot? But we have the choice in that as to whether, where we are in the midst of all that. Cold, hot, or just kind of coasting along, straddling the fence.

There was so much of that during Laodicea. Looking back is always 20/20 vision. But things we couldn't see at that time, how bad it really was.

So, the last verse there, **19** as well, where it says, **Therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.** So, it's this process of having to get rid of the dross and having to get rid of that which is not purified, becoming stronger in the sense or of greater value because we're yielding to God's way of life.

So, it goes on to say in **verse 20** then, **As they gather silver and brass, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of the furnace to blow the fire upon it.** Now, this is a unique expression that's being used here because this is what God has done. That's exactly what's... That what happens within the Church; has for the past two thousand years. It's all brought in. We still have sin. There are things in our life we have to conquer and overcome; we have to grow. And some of that goes backward instead of forward and it becomes even worse. And the only thing that is able to separate it all is the fire, the trials and the testing of life. That determines the decisions we're making, as to what we're going to become – part of the silver or part of the dross.

So, it says here about being "gathered together" along with all the rest **into the furnace to blow the fire upon it to melt it. So I will gather you.** That's exactly what God says, **I will gather you in My fury and in My wrath and I will leave and melt you.** So, even in a very specific area, this happened to the Church in a massive way.

"And I will melt you." The Apostasy was very trying. One of the hardest things that has ever happened in two thousand years upon such a mass of people within the Body of Christ, the Church of God. And

choices, people had to make choices and decisions based on what was inside of them, where their convictions were in life, what was a part of them, and whether or not they could have an ear to hear or had they gone so far that they would refuse to listen. That's what we lived through in a massive way.

**Yes, I will gather you and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst thereof; as silver is melted in the midst of the furnace so shall you be melted in the midst thereof. And you shall know that I, the Eternal, have poured out My fury upon you.** In other words, God's in charge, and God allowed. God could have prevented those things, but it wasn't God's purpose. The purpose was put it in the furnace, purify it because decisions and choices have to be made to the core of people's being as to what they really want, God or something else.

So again, verses here that this is used in different places in scripture but Zechariah zeros in primarily upon the brass and doesn't have to use the rest because it's about melting. It's about this melting process, again, so it's about dross and it's about that which has to be gotten rid of within the environment of the Church if you will.

So again here, these scriptures in Ezekiel to me are very meaningful because these are some of the first that God began to reveal to us in the Old Testament of what was happening to the Church. When we began to realize what had happened to the third and the third and the third and a small remnant that was going to be drawn out of all that, and on and on it goes, that which we lived through after the Apostasy.

So, dross here is about its very definition, obviously. It's about impurities of silver separated from the process of melting, and they call it a smelting process, and something of low quality by its very definition or value. And when we come to a point where we're lukewarm, where is the value? Well, God made it clear to us it's not there, can't be used. Something has to change. God's spirit has to be stirred up and become alive in ways that it never was before even, to a level that it hadn't been before because of what it was getting ready to go into – some of the most important times in the sense of preparing for Christ's coming that have ever existed. And God made it very clear it'd be a very small group. Amazing!

So, Zechariah 6:1, again, reading it, **Then I turned and lifted up my eyes, and behold, four chariots came out from between the two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass.** So, what does that say? Well, there are problems. There are some deep-rooted problems here when you're talking about... You're talking about God's Church. Mountains, again, government. Two mountains? What's that all about?

**In the first chariot were red horses; and the second chariot black horses; and the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot graying,** it's a term "graying," it's about **graying bay horses**, reddish brown horses. These... I don't know if you've ever seen a really old horse of a certain color and hairs like some happens to us. But so often with a horse when it gets to that stage in life it's getting weaker, older,

and closer to death; doesn't have long to live. Because they're not like our lives where we live such a long period of time. Theirs are, obviously, much shorter.

But it's using a point here what horses are used for when it comes to chariots. What's that all about? It's about war. Chariots go out to war.

And so, it's using these four different kinds of horses, again, that we should be familiar with, using the exact same colors and for a purpose that we're to learn from it, what it's all about. And I think it'd be apropos to take a look then at Revelation 6 because these should jump out and smack us a little bit.

Revelation 6. They should sound familiar. They are familiar because they're the exact same thing except there it's chariots in Zechariah and it's about two mountains and things going out to war. Later on, it's a little bit different but it's the same thing that takes place on a spiritual plane.

**Revelation 6:1—Now, I saw when the Lamb opened one of the Seals.** So, it's about the first four Seals here in Revelation. It's about the Church. You know, it's amazing. There are things we, even about the Seals, we did not understand nor grasp until after we'd gone through the Apostasy, and then we came to understand more than what the Seals were about. God hadn't revealed everything during Philadelphia, what the Seals of Revelation were about. And then as we began to see what was happening to the Church...

Because it was taken that those things had to do with the world and war in the world when you talk about the first four Seals. The one was thought about being a great false prophet and the power he was going to have and this antiChrist and some of the things we used to think about this one great religious leader in the world, that it was talking about him—and it wasn't about him at all—and the power they were going to have to deceive the world and the Church even.

Anyway, God has given so much to us to be able to see things so much more clearly. And here it is, **Now, I saw when the Lamb opened one of the Seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, Come and see. So, I looked, and behold, a white horse.** The order is different in part of this because it's showing something different later on, but here, again, same sort of thing. Here it's more specific in the sense of what took place first. It had to do with what had to take place within the ministry of the Church and change of doctrine that came along and how that was to go out against the Church.

**He who sat on it had a bow, and a crown was given to him; went out conquering and to conquer.** So again here, something can appear to be a certain way because sometimes I...

I want to back up because I don't even want to get bogged down in some of that.

**So, I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.** So, you want to look at the antiChrist and some of those who were supporting that, this is what began to go out in the sense of the Church.

Because it's about war. These are about war. But it wasn't in the world, it was in the Church. So, that's why the first four Seals are about war that began to take place in a very horrific way in God's Church, and of the kind of destruction that was going to follow.

Those four chariots are about the exact same thing. They're about the Apostasy and what took place. The brass is about the tin on both mountains.

What are both mountains? Well, it was a difference, if you will, between those who wanted to change almost, if you will, every doctrine of significance and meaning, Israel to the north. That's why I love the expressions used a little bit later here in Zechariah "to the north" because it was to turn away from what Israel did on a physical plane, turn away from the Holy Days, turn away from the Sabbath, begin to promote Sunday, begin to promote many other things. But it's about a destruction on one side of a government that was starting to come together and another one that was still a part of, if you will, teachings of the past. They clashed and there was going to be a lot of destruction because of that.

So, both had a lot of brass though, and that's what's brought out in this. They both had a lot of sin in it by this time because if you want to talk about Laodicea, if you want to talk about not doing what we should be doing on a spiritual plane in a close relationship with God, there is a lot of sin in that. It's sin to be lukewarm. Because that's a choice.

God gives us a choice. We can be hot and on fire and zealous for His way of life, but we have to do something if that happens. It's a matter of looking to God day in and day out for His life to live within us, for His Son to dwell within us, for us to continually look to ourselves judging ourselves, striving to get rid of sin, fleeing sin, wanting to get away from it. That's what our lives are about.

And sadly, that became few and far between by the time we got up to the Apostasy. Wasn't happening nearly as much as it should have been to where it would produce that which was zealous and fiery in a person's life spiritually. Groggy, sleepy, falling asleep, and God was about ready to shake up the Church, awaken some of the Church if it could be awakened.

**And when He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come and see. Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that they slay one another, and there was given to him a great sword.** So again, it's about God's word or the misuse of God's word and how people, what people were doing with it. And candidly, a lot of people were...

That's why Ezekiel came alive all of a sudden because it made it clear that there were those who were responsible for the death of God's people on a spiritual plane because of what they were saying and

because of what they were teaching and because of what they were doing. There was a lot of destruction that took place.

I think of the third that totally went with everything. You want to talk about destruction? When you make the choice to go back to Easter, to go back to Christmas, to go back to Sunday, to go back to the world you were called out of on a spiritual plane? Can that be done?

That's why I love the scripture when it says, "Can Christ be sacrificed again?" To become antiChrist? Those were not small things that took place when people turned totally against and went totally for those things that came along. To go back to Sunday? To go to Easter and omit Passover out of your life? That's a spiritual insanity if you will.

Now, the other third that just gave up and quit, that's easier to understand. Because everything... You become so weak in that regard, you know that you're not going to go do the other because you know how wrong that was, Christmas and... You knew that. I mean, that's a given. That's plumb stupid to do anything else, even in a carnal, physical manner. But if this was God's Church, how could something like this happen in God's Church, and that's where people were too weak to see, too weak to hold on, and just went by the wayside then.

And then another third scattered all over the place. Various ideas about holding on to various things of the past, great confusion, Babylon. When it talked about Babylon a minute ago, that's what it's talking about. When you're in the midst of Babylon you've got to get... Well, it's a matter of listening to God and getting back on track.

Not a simple thing when it comes to working with the mind and the spirit that's in there and the damage that's done with something like the Apostasy that took place.

And so, these are the things that are being described here in Revelation, and that's why it uses some of these about two mountains and that which was clashing and that which was going to come to war and how they were going to be killing and destroying one another. Because that's what was taking place.

And so, even in Revelation here when it talks about some of these things we know the story of the Seals and what they represented.

Let's go on here, **verse 5** again, **When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.** We know it's about that which was a matter of famine and how people were dying just because... If you're not being given any kind of spiritual food you're going to die. You get to a point where you become so emaciated, your body, and so this horse here and what it represents, being that which is a matter of that which was...

You know when God spoke in Amos and different places, talking about a famine of His word, this is what it was, when it came about. The famine of God's word because you have a whole group here that's gone back in a different direction and then others were so weak out here by what was being taught, massive famine within the realm of what had been God's Church.

**Then I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius,** approximately a day's wages, as one brought out here, **and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.** Beautiful expression here because in the midst of all this, in the midst of all this drought, if you will, in the midst of all this famine spiritually, there was going to be that which would be a matter of oil would still be there and the product of, if you will here, the vine that's sometimes used when it comes to grapes and so forth and the produce, of something is being produced as a result of what's growing on the vine. So, that's why these expressions are used. Oil about God's spirit.

So again here, there was that which God would protect and take care of and that had to do with people's lives and choices people made, and as they went through various things and God was drawing them out and helping them in these matters. So again, the third horse, the black horse.

**And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come and see. So I looked and behold, a pale horse.** An "ashen horse," as it's given here. It's the same sort of thing if you see that kind of color, ashen, greyish-black/brown. **And the name of him who sat on it was death, and hades followed him. Even power was given to them over a fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and with the beasts of the earth.**

So, the last one is one that went throughout all the earth then. And so, this is important to understand what's being said here in Revelation because very similar language is being used in Zechariah here. And so, it's talking about these that were sent out over all the earth. And basically, we understood that the fourth one was about the first three just continued on. It wasn't in the same exact way, but that stuff just continued on as far as what had happened in the scattering of the Church. And so, those things were continuing on throughout the earth, if you will, where God's Church was scattered, and again, representing the first three horses (the fourth one).

I think I'll stop there on Zechariah because hopefully as you're going through some of this and you take a look at it, you want to go back and look at the horses here and the chariots, if you will, and what it's saying about them, the colored horses there, it ties in totally with what's said here in Revelation 6 on the Seals of Revelation.

So, we'll pick that up next Sabbath. I was going to end here today but we can't get through Zechariah without one more sermon.