

We're going to finish (I think we're going to finish) the current series entitled *The Truth About Mercy*, this being *Part 4*.

It's been about three Sabbaths I think since I've spoken so this is the one we're going to have to go back and take a look at a little bit of *Part 3*. I'd normally do that Sabbath by Sabbath anyway if I'm in a series, kind of bring everyone up to the last portion of what we were covering, but I am going to take a bit of a look at *Part 3* here that we went through. We were looking at some of the translations in the New Testament and how they were very much like what had been done in the Old Testament concerning the word "mercy" and some of what we were looking at there concerning the "mercy seat."

In *Part 3* we began looking at four different Greek words that are related in meaning and basically come from the same root word, if you will, as a whole. So, very close in their meaning, just used in a different way as far as language is concerned. So anyway, going through some of those things to reveal some of those things about what God has shown that have to do with really making His plan and purpose more beautiful. Because when certain things come along that cloud the meaning of what God has given to us it distorts the mind and thinking toward God and what God is really like. That's true in some of the things we're going to cover again here today.

So, we didn't get through all those Greek words, all four Greek words, but we were in the process of it. I'm going to go back and look at the first one we looked at, just a couple of—I think that's all we had anyway—two scriptures there.

1 John 2 just as a reminder here of how some of these are used. This one here, we went through first because it's interesting that they chose the right word here as a whole. There are other words that are interlinked, could be used as well, but they had to use this word because they couldn't change it to some of the others as they did later on. And I think, what an incredible thing, by the context of what's being said you couldn't change it to anything else.

So anyway, let's read it again. **1 John 2:1— My little children, these things I write unto you so that you do not sin. Yet, if anyone sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Joshua the Christ, the righteous.** And I love this because this is the second place that the word "paracletes" is used. The first place it's used, John used it in chapter 14 and talks about the holy spirit and speaks of the holy spirit being our helper. That's how it's translated I believe there, but it's that word "paracletes." That's the same thing here. It's a matter that Christ is our helper, he's our High Priest, he's our Passover and our High Priest, and intercedes with the Father for us.

So, it says here, **Now, he is the propitiation...** So, this is the only word they could translate this as, **He is the propitiation for our sins**, or “the atonement for our sins,” if you will. **He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.** So, very simple, and they didn’t mess with this word.

Then another one, **1 John 4:10—Herein is love.** This is agape, God’s love, speaking of God’s love. **...not that we loved God.** I’ve mentioned, I think, at that time, and I do every time I think of this verse here, I think about how people sometimes when they begin to come into the Church or even after they’ve been in the Church for a while, talked about how much they loved God and that’s why they came and began to be able to see various things. And it’s like, no, you did not.

No one naturally loves God. Not in truth. Not in spirit. Because they don’t have His holy spirit yet. And not in truth because they don’t even have the truth yet. So, their concept of loving God is that which is in the world, what they’ve heard in the world, and what is that? It’s false. It’s a distortion entirely of God and God’s plan and God’s purpose. It’s about Easter and Christmas and other things. So, if you love that god, that’s not God Almighty.

Those are the kinds of things sometimes we have to get cleaned up in our minds. When we come into God’s Church, we have to work to get rid of the protestantism in our thinking because those things hurt people. So, people have been to a certain church and are more zealous about that on a physical plane as some groups are. I think of one particular group, I think they have a bible study every Wednesday night. Some churches, it’s like they don’t care to have bible studies.

Someone who is that active in studying the Bible or coming together in service or worship of God or to learn about God, there’s a protestantism there that is hard to get rid of because it has to do with the thinking in the mind. So, what an awesome thing that we can begin to have those things rooted out of our being totally.

So again, God loved us. Grace is about God’s love where He begins to give us the opportunity to be able to repent of sin, to be forgiven of sin. He begins to pour out His love upon us. He begins to give us favor and help in our lives. All those words that have to do with the word “grace.” And think, this is what God begins to give us when He calls us, when He draws us, and it’s not something natural within us. So, what an awesome thing that God works with us in this manner.

Anyway, next one here, the next word in Romans 3. This next word we looked at has a simple meaning. It simply means “propitiatory” in Greek. I’m going to pick it up here in Romans 3:23, and just like with the last word this one comes from the same base word that we’re going to look at shortly here.

Romans 3:23—For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Everybody has sin in their life. Just the way we are until God calls us, draws us, and then we can begin the process of being forgiven of

it and fighting against it, fighting against the mind. Then that's a lifelong process as long as we're in this physical body.

Verse 24—Being justified freely by His grace... So, it's a matter of when God chooses to begin pouring out His love upon us. Because He's not doing that to the world. Only to those whom He calls and begins to give them the opportunity to have the mind opened up, so they know what to repent of, so they know what the truth is and begin to make those choices and decisions themselves in a relationship with God.

So, this is what grace is about, **Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption...** Interesting Greek word. It has to do with being "released as a result of payment of a ransom." We understand that process, of there's a payment has to be paid because of sin, because it requires death. The only way to have that removed is through Christ as our Passover, the blood of Christ.

So again, **justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Joshua the Christ whom God has set to be a propitiatory.** Again, it can be here, as an example, "an object of propitiation," in this case speaking here of Christ. It can be "a place of propitiation." That's what it's about, "the place of atonement," where we go for atonement. It's before God, in essence before Christ. Christ is our propitiatory, if you will, the one through whom atonement is accomplished.

So, **whom God has set to be** or if you will, **propitiatory through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.**

One more place. Let's read this in Hebrews 9. We ended the sermon in *Part 3* looking at this particular translation where it says in **Hebrews 9:1—Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, of an earthly holy place, for there was a tabernacle made within the first area...** So, we talked about that, the first area of the tabernacle, the first two-thirds where they went in continually morning and evening to do service, the Levites did, and then the last portion where the High Priest could only go once a year on the Day of Atonement.

...wherein was the candlestick, the table, and the showbread, which is called the Holy Place. Then after the second veil was the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest or The Holiest of All, or The Most Holy Place which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid roundabout with gold, wherein the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

So again, a place where it says here, basically, the High Priest could only go once a year. I think of all the sermons that have been leading up to this point in time that we've gone through and how this one here is so tied into the Day of Atonement that's coming up next Sabbath, and some of those things you don't plan for. God does. Christ does. What we need to be fed, what we're to be given, and what we're to be able to grow in in the sense of seeing things in a clearer way and a more beautiful way about God, about God's purpose, about God's plan and what was there all the time, but we couldn't see it all fully as clearly as we do now.

That's why when I came across some of that, we began to talk about that here in services where in the Old Testament where it talks about a "mercy seat" and you realize there wasn't "mercy" in it, and it wasn't a "seat" at all. I mean, there are things that are just hidden, and we can't see until God just gives it to us. And whenever His time is then all of a sudden, it's like, why didn't we see it? Hopefully, we've learned before or well by this time that the reason we couldn't see it is because God didn't give it to us. So, we don't need to be saying, "Why didn't I see that before?" Well, we know.

Verse 5—Then over it the cherubim of glory shadowing... not "the mercy seat," the place of atonement. That's what it is. It's the place of atonement. There is nothing here, again, about "mercy" or "seat." Incredible! **...of which we could not now speak particularly.**

So, it's the exact same one we covered here in Romans 3:25, again, about "propitiatory," "the object of propitiation," if you will. So, that area that we have called in times past "the mercy seat," as a whole, it's "the place of propitiation." So, the one verse talks about how Christ is our propitiation. He is the one through whom reconciliation or atonement comes and in the Old Testament that was the place that that's what it pictured and foreshadowed. That's what this is talking about, that which is foreshadowed and that which was represented in the first part of the tabernacle and then that which is represented in the last part. Beautiful! Awesome!

Now, Hebrews 2. We're going to continue on from where we left off. We're going to look at the word from which these last two were derived from, which is, again, another form of the word that we'll look at even after this one here. So, there's another one following this. And it just means "to make a propitiation for." So, these words are tied together, just different form of the word itself over and over again. Nothing to do with "mercy." Nothing to do with "seat" at all.

Hebrews 2:14—For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part, or the Greek word is "shared in" **the same.** Physical human life. He knows what it's like to live in a physical body, to have the weaknesses of a physical human body.

So, this is God's purpose from the very beginning, and so he was to live this way of life so that he could die in a physical body, so his blood could spill to the earth, so he could live a perfect life without sin as the Lamb of God, perfect, whole, complete because he had the mind of God in ways we can't comprehend. For the word to be made flesh because he also had to be baptized, he had to receive the impregnation of God's spirit which he did and set that example that everyone else has to follow. Because we all have to be baptized and have hands laid upon us in that respect to receive the impregnation of God's spirit.

But already, before that he had a mind that was of God. How do we comprehend that? The word, whatever he saw, whatever he heard, whatever he read, when he was twelve years old, and he spoke at the Feast of Tabernacles and different ones around him were in awe at what he was saying. Twelve years

old! Why? How? Because it was there. He knew what the scriptures were about. He heard them. He knew. Awesome! But he knows what it's like to be in this body. It's not that easy just on a physical plane.

For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part/ share in the same. Because that was God's purpose. **...that through death...** Because that was the purpose, he had to die, **he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.** So, a process began of how that mind of Satan, which is a selfish mind, which is all about self, which has nothing to do with God and the love of God, and how Christ then came along and was able to begin that process of destroying that power, the power of death.

Because it's there because of sin, and Satan has power over that. He influences that; he stirs that up. It's a simple thing for him to do in human beings. It's a very simple thing. He knows how we are. He knows how we think. He knows what our weaknesses are, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." It hasn't been hard for him to pervert, to distort, to cloud things, but to come out of that is a completely different story. What a process that God has made possible.

"That he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." So, it takes us all the way up to the end of the Last Great Day when it's complete. Awesome!

...and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. The world can't help it. That's why I love what Christ said and what Stephen said, in essence, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." They're not in control. They don't know the truth. They don't have God's spirit in them. That's why we are to constantly grow and learn that more clearly in our lives in dealing with the world around us. They don't know.

You go down a highway, like I mention so many times, they don't know. They're in bondage to this. But we are to work to change some of those things in our life. Sometimes we're not real good at it. We have to fight.

So, "all their lifetime subject to bondage." What a horrible thing. What an awesome thing God has a plan for calling people and giving them the opportunity to escape that, to begin the process of escaping that kind of bondage if you will, being enslaved to sin. It's a horrible thing!

Verse 16—For verily, he did not take, speaking of Christ, or receive that of angels. It wasn't a matter because it was his choice. And yet this is how the world, and candidly in times past, the Church took this. It wasn't a matter that there were two God beings and that one of them decided that he was going to empty himself totally and become the Son of God. And how you do that without there being a father? And how is the other one going to be the Father if you're the one who gave up your power to become the Son, and all this gobbledegook that's like the trinity. It's confusing! It doesn't make sense for good reason, because it's babble, confusion.

So, it says, “for verily, he did not receive that of angels.” Why? Because it was God’s purpose that he not be spirit. It was God’s purpose, as it just told us, he had to be able to share in our life, our physical life, to be a physical human being so that he could die, so that he could be stabbed with a spear, if you will, have a spear run into his side and blood could pour out and he could become our Passover.

For verily, he did not receive that of angels, but he took on the seed of Abraham. Do you see how easy that was in times past if you don’t know the truth to take that as being something that he made choice in because of the way it’s written? Because this isn’t quoted very well. It isn’t translated very well. It’s like he’s making these choices. No, he didn’t. He didn’t decide how he was going to be born. He didn’t decide all this. God Almighty did, and He decided it before He created anything!

That’s what’s an awesome thing to understand, everything that God created was based upon Christ being the chief cornerstone, that everything had to happen in and through him in order for mankind, which was going to be (become) part of that plan or be part of that plan as time went on after the angels were there and the angelic realm. He had to be physical and that Christ had to die as our Passover. All part of God’s plan.

Verse 17—Therefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren. The King James says, “He had to.” Again, it’s more a matter of what’s stated in the Greek. It literally means “owed it” to do this. It had to be done this way because it’s God’s plan.

Christ knew. Christ knew very early on he was there for a purpose. He knew that he was to be the Passover. He understood those things. How young? Had to be pretty young. Probably well before that time when he was twelve years old. We can’t comprehend such things. He understood a purpose why he was the Son of God; he knew he was the Son of God and he knew and understood things that no one else did.

Therefore, in all things, it behooved him or owed it to be made like unto his brethren. Because it had to be done that way. It couldn’t be done any other way. This is the way God established it in order to free us from sin, so he had to go through this.

...that he might be a, says merciful and faithful High Priest. Again, some of these things have more to do with the mind of God, of the kind of love, the graciousness, the goodness, the way of treating others, the way of thinking toward others. It’s not always just a matter here about mercy in the sense of how we use the word in today’s language, though from God it certainly fits. Not from mankind, but it does for God.

...to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. God’s plan. It has to fit God’s plan. Has to be a matter of fulfilling God’s plan. We’re called to fulfill God’s plan. There are those among us who have been called to be a part of 144,000 to fulfill God’s plan. That’s why we’ve been called.

So, different ones, and the ones called before us who are dead, who went through the process, who have the seal of God in them, who have gone through the entire process, who are going to be part of the 144,000, they were called for that purpose as Christ was called to be a faithful High Priest. And so, it just continues to grow. And so, the 144,000 are next, and then at the end of the Millennium, we don't know how many. Incredible! God continually adding to His Family powerfully so.

...that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for... So, it's very specific, "to make propitiation for," it's that word, **atonement for the sins of the people**. Very simple. "To make atonement for the sins of the people." That's what the Day of Atonement is about. It has this meaning in it. It's more than that but this is a big part of it, obviously. It's about Christ. It's about the two goats and what they represented. One which represented Christ. One which represented Satan.

Luke 18:9, speaking of Christ it says, **Then he spoke this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised**, or as the Greek word is **treated others with contempt**. Just looked down upon them. That's what people do when they're haughty and proud. They have this estimation of themselves, of what they see, what they know, and it's just a natural thing to look down upon others.

This is done so much in the world today, especially in politics, you see this all the time because it's the carnal human mind. People think they're right. Well, they know they're right. And if you don't think the same way they do, basically there is something wrong with you. And that's just the way we are. And so, the more haughty and respected that someone is the more they're like this. And so, they lift themselves up. They have this estimation of themselves and what's the crazy thing is they have to feed that; they feel compelled to feed that spirit, that mind. And it's so sick, really is. Haughty spirit, proud spirit, relying on self, lifting up self, thinking self is better than others, it's a sick spirit, sick mind. That's what has to be broken in all of us. By choice, we don't want that in us. We want to get away from anything that resembles that.

It's the difference between Herbert Armstrong who said, "Sit down. Don't applaud. Sit down," and one who said, "You can do better than that!" That's what it is. It's the difference between the two mindsets. Night and day. Totally different. It's the one who recognized, "This is not good! It's not healthy for you, and it isn't healthy for me." That's basically what he was saying, Herbert Armstrong did. The other one didn't grasp that because God's spirit wasn't there.

So again here, **Luke 18:9—Then he spoke this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous** – right. The things they do, that's what's right, even to the point of being righteous. **...and despised others or treated others with contempt**.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. And they always had a good reputation throughout history. **The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,**

God, I thank You that I am not as other people. Can you imagine? But that is the essence of that kind of thinking. It's like having the audacity to talk to God Almighty that you are so right. And people do this in the world, and people have done this within the Church because they're so right with God, they think, in their mind. And so, it's like this reasoning in this prayer, "I thank You that I am not as other people." "I'm not like others."

Now, they don't have to necessarily have to say that, but that's what the mind is. That's what the actions reflect to God. Sometimes we don't grasp that because we don't have fully the mind of God. We're growing in it. But to grasp the way God sees it? God sees it for what it is. You might as well just say that, see.

I have a couple of things I'm going to bring up at the Feast that can reflect some of these kinds of things, that sometimes we think, "It's just God and me." That's what our actions are saying. No, there is a Church and there is a government in God's Church, and if we don't grasp that we don't grasp Almighty God, how He functions. But sometimes people think they can bypass that and have this relationship and this righteousness with God regardless of the Church or regardless of the ministry. But it doesn't work that way. Because you might as well be saying something like this.

The Pharisees stood and prayed with themselves, God, I thank You that I am not as others — extortioners, you know, taking by bribery or threats in how they function, how they work, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, and I give tithes of all that I possess. See, we can go through the motions of various things in life and just because we may do some of these things doesn't mean that we're right with God, doesn't mean that we're thinking right.

...and give tithes of all that I possess. But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat upon his chest. He saw himself. He realized he needed help. He didn't have a haughty spirit in condemning others. He knew what he was like. He knew he needed help. That's the right mind to have, to embrace. We. All. Need. Help. Truly. We need a humble spirit. We need help from God Almighty to change day by day. We need His holy spirit within us.

...but beat upon his chest saying, God... It is not the word having anything to with "merciful" whatsoever, period, exclamation mark. It's the word "to make atonement for," "to make a propitiation for." **I need atonement.** That's what he's saying. "I need to be reconciled to You. I need help!" That's what he was saying. He wanted to be right with God. "I want to be at one."

Isn't that what we all want? And to have that kind of a mind, "I want to be at one with You," means that we have to change, and we have to fight against self. We have to yield to God's spirit, we want God's spirit to live more fully within us so we can be at one, which means the same mind with God Almighty, in agreement with God. Because if there are things we're not in agreement with we're doing things wrong.

So, **he said, Make atonement for me, a sinner.** That's what he was saying. That's what the word is, "propitiation." Because he knew he was a sinner. Sometimes that's the hardest thing for human beings to do, is to see their own sins. For us to see our own sins and then to acknowledge them, to take responsibility for, if you will, to own up to what we have done, the things we have done that are wrong.

Because we can only blame self. We can't blame others. Sometimes it's an amazing thing how people can blame others for their bad attitude or their bad response or for this or whatever it might be. And the reality is, no, when it comes right down to it, self is all you can really blame because they didn't make you do that. You did it. You chose to have that kind of a response. You chose to say those things that you shouldn't have said. Whatever it is, we choose to do them. That's where the wrong is. It's in us. It's not to try to find fault in others. There is plenty of fault to go around because we all have it. We've got our work cut out just with this, without trying to change others, which, human character, human traits, we sometimes try to do. We want to change others. We want to see others change.

Well, in God's plan, He gives opportunity for people to change, and so that's to be allowed, that's to be given, that space is to be given. We don't have to go in with a ball bat. We don't have to go in and whatever. As a whole, God will work with us over time and as long as we're within the Body. If we haven't gone too far in certain things, we have opportunity to be worked with, to change, to repent. What a blessing!

I tell you; this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who exalts themselves shall be humbled. So, in time, regardless of how haughty, how great, how mighty some think they were in this life or before they're called or before this war comes and before people begin to repent of certain things and see certain things in themselves... Because God's going to flood the world with His spirit.

You know, I can't even begin to comprehend that. Isn't that amazing? To realize God has the power to call each one of us whenever He desires. I think of the Church when it was around 97,000 baptized members at its height, basically, and you think of all those people, if God called every one of them. Some of them didn't come along for the right reasons. But as a whole, let's say there were 80,000 who were truly baptized and begotten of God's spirit, as an example, and we go through this process then of them being able to change and grow and overcome, and it's an awesome thing that God called us to, to be able to do that.

So again, everyone is going to have an opportunity whenever their time comes. So, if it be after this war and they're humbled, or in the Great White Throne when they're humbled because there is going to be a lot of humility poured out on the earth. But to grasp that even as God does and has called us in the past and we grew to those numbers that was still nothing. But to grasp and comprehend...?

That's even something even having to do with prayer. I think of prayer life sometimes, we're all praying at the same time. I can't comprehend the mind that hears every one of those. Can you comprehend that?

You really can't. And so, when we were up to 97,000, how did, if we're all praying at the same time, the Great God could hear everything and it's a sweet incense to Him? Yes.

But to understand what God's getting ready to do next, to flood the earth with His holy spirit, to call as many as will receive Him—because not all are going to—but to flood the earth, the world, mankind, when Satan is no longer around, when that spirit and the spirit of the demons isn't around any longer to even interfere with any of that? That's going to be powerful in ways we're going to experience it, we're going to see it, and I look forward to that. That's going to be such an awesome thing when people's minds begin to be opened up to the truth. Many are going to begin making those decisions very quickly.

And those who have a lot of pride? Well, a lot of them aren't going to make it through because the earth is going to be cleaned up a lot. And those who are the haughtiest in many cases, they are not going to be around because God is preparing a world that will begin to receive Him.

Things that so often we just don't understand the greatness of Almighty God. We are so puny. We are so puny! How awesome it is everything He's given to us to share in, to have, and His desire for us. That kind of love, it's hard to grasp. That kind of patience, hard to really grasp. It's very unique. But that's what we want, and we slowly grow in that. Slowly is the key word there. Slowly grow in that over our lifetime.

...for everyone who exalts themselves shall be humbled, and whoever humbles themselves shall be exalted. So, if it's the kind of humility that leads to receiving God, to making the choices to want God because that's what we're talking about here. Because to have true humility, that's what is required in a relationship with God. It has to do with understanding, "I need God. I am nothing; I have nothing without God." What do we have without God? Who are we without God?

And so to have God and God actually dwelling in us, that's hard for us to really grasp, and sometimes we're probably not just as thankful and grateful and in awe of that as we really should be. Something we have to pray about, asking God to help us to receive that better, which we're going to hear some about at the Feast.

Hebrews 8. Let's move on. We're going to look at the last word. We've just looked at two others that came from this, but this is the word where most of this all begins. It just simply means in the Greek language "propitious," "to be atoning or to atone for." "To be atoning or to atone for."

Hebrews 8:6—But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry, speaking of Christ, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Again, the protestant world so messes these things because they can't help it, they can't see it. But what an incredible thing to understand, the promises that God has given to those who can become a part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, who can be impregnated with God's spirit, of that which was revealed powerfully so through Herbert Armstrong, that we are begotten like in an embryo, not yet born into God's Family, but we begin the process of growing in the womb. Beautiful examples.

So “established upon better promises” because all theirs were physical in the Old Testament. It had to do with physical rituals and the like and the tabernacle and what they did and what they did on Holy Days and what they did on Sabbaths. All a physical routine. Sometimes even within the environment of the Church things have become a physical routine, or I think of especially times past, there were so many situations where they were a physical routine and too often really not done in spirit and in truth.

But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry, speaking of Christ, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless... The protestants love this. Like, “See, you don’t have to obey the law. The law has been done away in Christ.” Isn’t that a nice, sweet thing? It’s like he’s much kinder than that harsher Father. Anyway, sick world.

For if that first covenant had been faultless then he should have no place be sought for the second. For finding fault with them... And that’s the key. It’s the people. It had nothing to do with the covenant. It was just a matter of God revealing something that people could understand when they begin to be called by the power of His holy spirit, when they’re given of His holy spirit. That without God’s spirit they couldn’t keep it; they couldn’t keep God’s law. That’s why they didn’t keep God’s law. They were very carnal.

And so, there was power sometimes if you had a stronger king, like king David who promoted these things about God and about the Levites, the Levitical system and the temple, and the various things that he did. Then people would adhere to those in a better way, which they did. Then when that wasn’t around, what happened? Well, they just went off on their merry way and did their own thing and began to look at other gods. Insanity. So, it’s all physical.

“For if the first had been faultless then should no place have been sought for the second.” It wasn’t what it was all about. Giving of the law is not what it was all about. Right? Giving everything to the Israelites that was written down isn’t what it was all about. The spirit of it was what it was all about, what it foreshadowed in many cases as far as the tabernacle and all the service within the tabernacle and what the high priest did once a year, all those things, that’s what it was all about. It’s what it foreshadowed. It didn’t fulfill any of those things. Beautiful, to understand those things, to understand we’re able to live it.

For finding fault with them, he said, Behold, the day has come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. And for a long time, because we were coming out of such darkness even within God’s Church through Philadelphia, because the Church was coming out of deep, deep darkness in Sardis.

Sardis was at the point of being dead. That’s what God said. It had three things left: the name of the Church, tithing, and the Sabbath, seventh-day Sabbath. That’s all that was there. That’s not enough to grow in! To be able to grow and mature and people be able to thrive spiritually, you can’t, so things had to change, and it was part of God’s plan. But to come out of that where so much damage had been done

through that period of time, so much truth? I mean, it was all lost, as a whole, what they did have before.

Then for God to begin revealing things in a powerful way even beyond what they understood before? Beautiful! But it took a lot of time, and we didn't do it overnight. Philadelphia lasted for a long time. It started in the mid-30s basically, all the way up to the time of his death in '86. So, you take that period of time, fifty years, whatever, and you look at the pattern of growth, it was a slow process. We couldn't absorb everything all at once.

Things about the Holy Days, they weren't given all at once. There was a basic framework there to know, to understand, that was given to Herbert Armstrong these are the days you keep. You're to keep these days just like you do the weekly Sabbath. So, he did that. But the understanding of what it all pictured and so forth, he didn't understand, and they didn't understand right away. They had to wait and grow in it Holy Day to Holy Day. Year by year God would give more.

Just like He's continued to do throughout PKG. He continues to give more and more. That's the process. We don't get it all at once. How long have we been in PKG now? Do you know what we're coming up on here in December? To understand that amount of time, thirty years, that's a long time! I was 44 then. What happened? I look back and I think, man, I was young! Thinking about that, I think I was too young.

Anyway, you think of some of those things and look at the process. We weren't given everything all at once, but we've continually been given more and more. Herbert Armstrong continued, was continually given more and more throughout the process of Philadelphia. And then Laodicea came and it's just like it all slammed shut and things that ministers have been taught and so forth, quit. They weren't taught as much in services and people forgot even what Herbert Armstrong focused upon in 1985 and '84 that the Temple is the Church of God!

If we could have just held on to that one with all of our being, we would have understood more perfectly what happened to us! But we lost it as a whole, as a Church, as a Body. It wasn't being taught. Not by the majority by any measure, and not even by a large majority by any measure.

We've gone through a lot. And so, when it talks about Israel here, **when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel**, it took us a long time. Matter of fact, it wasn't until we got in PKG that we came to understand when it talks about in Revelation the twelve tribes. There was still that feeling that there had to be people called out of all twelve tribes to be a part of that 144,000. Then there was going to be a great multitude, and that's where, I guess, the gentiles and me, different ones came in, I don't know, because I'm a mixed-up mess. Of course, I did find out I had more Scottish and Irish in me than German.

But there was a time in the Church that it was looked upon as being more of a prestigious thing if you were a Jew because you knew you were a Jew. And then if you're Ephraim you have certain lineage you know that your part. Or Manasseh, which I don't know how on earth you're going to know that one

unless the fact that you were here in the United States, and you knew what God said about Manasseh and so you believed it.

And where are the rest of them? What about Zebulan? What is the one that's for the Netherlands? There's Issachar, Dan – which nobody ever knew what happened to Dan, could never agree on that one there, which I don't think was ever right. But anyway. I used to be able to spout through all twelve of those. Simeon. Anyway, you think, people thought they had to be of those tribes. And you think, well if most everybody over here was Manasseh that was in the Church, what does that mean? Because this is Manasseh, so where are all the rest of them?

Anyway, it took us a while to get to a point where we realized Israel is about the name. It's a spiritual thing. It isn't a physical people. Everybody on earth who's called, no matter what their background is, can be a part, and will be a part if they continue on and become a part of Elohim, will be a part of spiritual Israel. We had to go through a lot to learn that and to understand what it said in Revelation that the great multitude was only because it said, "no one can count." Well, over six thousand years who knows the count? We don't even know how many came out of Worldwide! How many? We don't know! Ten thousand? Twenty thousand? Thirty thousand? I don't know! I know it wasn't 97,000. Anyway.

And so, taking that period of two thousand years alone, most were called during that period of time as a part of the Church, who are going to be a part of the 144,000. I don't understand all that. But God's taking care of it; I don't have to worry about it. It's in God's hands. So, we're ever learning a little here and a little there. It doesn't happen overnight.

...when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. What a beautiful thing too that God has shown the Church, revealed to Herbert Armstrong, that to be brought out of Egypt for us is a spiritual thing. The same thing happens to us. To come out of bondage, to begin that journey out, we're not out yet. It's like we're out in the wilderness, you know, that forty years, tried and tested but on a spiritual plane with us as to whether or not we're going to be able to become a part of Elohim. **We** have those analogies of various things, and we have to begin the process of coming out of Egypt, coming out of sin.

...because they did not continue in My covenant. And sadly, those who were given the opportunity to come out of spiritual Egypt have not continued in the agreement they made at baptism. "I choose You. I am Yours. Whatever you choose, thank You, thank You, thank You." We make some big promises. We made a big promise at baptism. The majority over the past two thousand years have abandoned that. That's a hard thing to grasp and comprehend sometimes, but it's a reality. "Because they did not continue in My covenant." Which was worse, what they did physically or what happens on a spiritual plane within the Body of Christ? It's night and day. They haven't been called yet.

...and I did not regard them, says the Lord. (Verse 10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord. I will put My laws into their mind. Beautiful! We begin to understand because it's spiritual, the law of God. It's not a bunch of dos and don'ts on a physical plane, it's what we think toward others, how we think toward God.

I will put My laws into their mind, accomplished by the power of God's holy spirit and the impregnation of God's spirit. We can become of that same mind, in agreement with the mind of God, with the word of God, with that wisdom that is of God.

I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts. What a beautiful thing, again here, that it's in here, it's deep. It's showing it's not just in the mind, it's something we have chosen to embrace with all of our being. There is nothing else. This is it and we love it. It's dear to us; it's close to us. That's what it means when it talks about your heart. "A man after God's own heart," speaking of David, because of that mind he had and how he felt toward God and that relationship toward God. We have to have the same thing; we have to grow in the same thing.

...and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them God. It doesn't say "a God." God. He is our God. **...and they shall be to Me,** in essence, **My people.** Not just "a people," it's God's people.

Even they will not teach everyone their neighbor, and everyone their brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. What an incredible thing, a plan of God over 7,100 years. Hard to grasp. But we see it, we know it, and we believe it.

For I will be "merciful." It's not what it says. It's the word "propitious," "to be atoning," "to atone for." See how something can rob you of deeper meaning of something that should be more enduring to us about God and what God is doing, and how something can be so hidden because it's mistranslated and put the wrong thoughts into people's minds, the wrong thinking?

For I will be atoning, or I will atone for their unrighteousness. Beautiful! Because that's what we have to have. Because we're unrighteous. We grow in it, it's accounted to us if we do, believe what God says and choose to live it and ask God for help to do it. God attributes that to us for righteousness. But we're not righteous. We are not going to be righteous until we're in Elohim. Because then you won't sin. Right now, we sin, we have to repent.

...atoning for their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. That's something that someone has to grow in. Someone has to be drawn and begin to shed the thinking of how we think as human beings, the guilt trips we take, the beating on the back with the whips and whatever it might be, and keeping ourselves down. You know, when you repent and it's true before God, you should be able to hold your head high. You are forgiven of your sins. That's what God says.

But it's hard for us to come to that as human beings because we tend to think physically and deal with God on a physical basis of things we can grasp physically. God isn't like that. When sin is repented of and

it's genuine, true, sincere before God in spirit because it's of God's spirit and oneness, it's gone. It's a thinking toward God of what God is really like, of who God really is, and being deeply appreciative and thankful for that, for that kind of graciousness, that kind of love that we don't have within us save that we experience it from God's spirit from time to time. Because we don't have it all the time. You can't have agape in your mind all the time, how you're supposed to treat somebody, because self gets in the way. Self gets in the way, self.

So again, beautiful scriptures.

Let's turn over to Luke 1. So, we're drawing near the end of this particular series, which we are going to complete today, regarding the truth about mercy and understanding that it's a word that has a more modern meaning and not one that was really used in times past in truth. But it's come to mean something in a different sort of way, but it's clouded a lot of truth, too, because of how it's been used by the protestant world, by that one great big church as well. And it's distorted thinking toward God, truly has, and I thought it'd be good to go through to look at an example to show some of that.

Luke 1. So, what was done in the Old Testament and how it was translated, the same thing passed into the New Testament and how it was translated, and it clouded a lot of things, a lot of things that are really beautiful when they're understood.

Luke 1:5—There was in the days of Herod, a king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah, and his wife of the daughters of Aaron. So, they had these different courses. Because there were so many of them, they had to be put on a thing of maybe two weeks in a year of a service that they did. What did they do the rest of the time? I really don't know, but they weren't fulfilling this course. They only did it once every year as a whole because they had to rotate because there were so many of them.

...of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Now, they were both righteous before God. In other words, for that which they comprehended and that which they lived, they lived it right toward God. They believed those things that they had been given about God. To what extent, to how deep that was, we don't know because it doesn't say. Because God worked with different ones at different times in the Old Testament as well, which this would be considered in that period of time because Christ hadn't died yet and the Church hadn't begun yet. So, God was working with people at that particular time, and we don't know to what degree or how necessarily.

It says, **Now, they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord without blame. Now, they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well stricken in years. So, it came to pass that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he**

went into the temple of the Lord. So, had lots cast as to who was to do what at certain times in their course, and this was his at this particular time.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. Then there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. So, when Zacharias saw, he was troubled. When he saw him, it says, he was troubled, **and fear fell upon him.** And this, we would be too. We would be quite shaken if we saw something. We would want to be certain of various things first of all and foremost, but God has chosen to reveal various things to people at different times, and whether it be angelic beings or Himself in a physical manifestation, those things would be unnerving because they just didn't happen as a whole. There were things that didn't take place.

And so, when he saw this it bothered him, obviously. That's basically what it's saying here. **...he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, Do not fear, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you shall have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.** So, quite a story. You read stuff like this, and you think, we can read it as a story, but to have been there, to go through that, what they lived, what he lived, what he had to live through, what his wife lived through at their old age?

For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and will drink neither wine nor strong drink. And he shall be filled with the holy spirit, even from his mother's womb. Powerful! So, from the very beginning that power that was in him that was from God. Again, not the same as what Christ had but knocking on the door.

Now, many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. So again here, this was going to take place on a physical plane and a spiritual plane because there were those that John baptized that some of those were gathered together at the time of Christ's death, at the time of Pentecost 31 AD, and there are those that God had prepared, was calling and drawing to be a part of the Church.

So, of all those that John had baptized, this is still a part of a process of something God was doing. So, much of it was on a very physical plane but some of it was a part of a process. Just like when people are drawn and called out of the world sometimes it doesn't happen immediately. There is a process sometimes that different ones go through, and that God works with them to bring them to that point of being fully called, to where it's in the mind.

Now, many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall also go before Him, before God Almighty, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Beautiful, what it's saying here because this was preparing for his first coming. This is preparing for the Passover. This is preparing for the High Priest that he would become as soon as he was received of God—**incredible—after his death.**

Then Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? Funny how you think of carnal human reactions and your first response and it's like, "Well, time is going to tell." Because he said a lot to you, and it won't take that long, and you might want to know right now. But anyway.

For I am an old man, and my wife is well stricken in years. It's kind of like Sarah when she laughed when God basically told Abraham what was going to take place, and here what was going to take place and it's like they're too old. Here is the same sort of situation. It's like, how can I believe such a thing?

So, the angel answering said to him, I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God and have been sent to speak to you and to show you this good news. Now, look, you will be dumb, and you will not be able to speak until the day that these things are performed. "You want to know? Here you go." Sometimes we have to be a little more careful what we ask for and how we ask for it. That's why I learned a long time ago to ask God for mercy when I wanted to be able to see self. "But be merciful." I did use those words.

...until the day that these things are performed, in other words, when they're accomplished, when they have taken place, **because you did not believe my words which shall be fulfilled in their season.** So, it's going to happen, it's going to take place, and it's not going to be a long time from now. She's going to give birth; that's going to take a while, you know.

Now, the people waited for Zacharias and marveled that he had taken so long in the temple. He's taken a little bit longer in his course than what he should be, what would seem normal to be doing that particular job, that particular function. And so, they were concerned. Because the people around that area who served and the like, they knew what it was, so a lot of times people would begin judging him. Because that's the first thing carnal human beings would do. "Is he going to make a grand entrance now?" Anyway, I'm sorry... But there is some of that in human beings that would naturally come out.

...because he had taken so long. Then when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple. So, whether he was motioning or whatever, who knows what was going on. But anyway, they perceived this from what was taking place, **for,** it says here, **he beckoned to them.** So, ever how he did that, I don't know. **...and remained speechless.** He couldn't speak.

Verse 57—Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should deliver, and she brought forth a son. Now, her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shown great... Again here, why would they plug the word "mercy" in here, because it's not the concept of mercy that's by definition at all. It's about compassion. It's about the kindness that God was showing to her.

Mercy should be more tied into things about repentance and forgiveness of sin and how we're going to be treated as a result of some of that or what's going to happen. This has nothing to do with that. It's about the kindness. To be shown such favor, that's what it was about.

They recognized that God was showing such favor that she was going to bear a son now, that she had never had children, her and her husband, and now they're going to have a son, and they saw that God's hand was in this and they believed the things that were being motioned to them or whatever in part and moved by that.

...her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shown compassion, kindness (if you will), graciousness unto her, favor (if you will), and they rejoiced with her. So it came to pass, on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. But his mother answered and said, No, but his name shall be called John. So, made a believer and going to do what God said.

Then they said to her, There are none of your kindred who are called by his name. Well, maybe I shouldn't bring this up. There are times when people want to get involved in the naming of a child and what the name is going to be. Well, here it was pretty strong because it's like, family lineage and it has to be this way.

So, they made signs to his father—how he would have him called. “How do you want this done? What should his name be?” **And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John.** So, he was a strong believer by this point in time because everything had come to pass like he said at this point.

It's kind of interesting, the name “John” here. It's derived from the Hebrew word meaning “the Lord has been gracious.” Awesome. So, relatives understood this, the Lord had been gracious. That's what it's about. That's what it's about in the Old Testament. It's not the word “mercy.” Puts the wrong thinking too often in people's minds about what the process is and what's being worked out. No, it's about this that comes from God because of the way God is because (as we read those verses in times past here in this series) of agape. Because that's God. That's why we're able to receive this from God, that kind of favor, that kind of graciousness.

Then they all marveled it said. **And his mouth opened immediately and with his tongue he spoke and praised God.** You think this wasn't a moving moment for everybody around there that saw this, that experienced this? All of a sudden, he could speak. And he was the happiest of all. I can't imagine what it'd be like to not be able to speak like that and not be able to communicate well with people. You'd have to write things down. And then all of a sudden you can speak again after it's all fulfilled and you agree that his name is John, and then right away you can start speaking?

Then fear came upon all who dwelt around him. So, an awe. It's not just being afraid. There was an awe there that took place as a result of this. **...as all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.** That's amazing how this moved around then. People talked about this.

Now, all those who heard this laid it up in their hearts. Because they'd been told about Gabriel talking to him and telling him that your son is to be named John and that he's going to do great things. Those

things we just read and what he's going to accomplish, what he's going to do as he comes in the spirit and power of Elijah.

So, it says, **they laid it up in their hearts saying, What manner of child will this be?** They were in awe, and they were wondering, so yeah, they laid it up in their heart waiting to see him grow up and see what was going to take place.

And the hand of the Lord was upon him. Now, his father Zacharias was filled with the holy spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed or ransomed His people. So, this was something that God is giving through inspiration, through the power of the holy spirit, for John to be able to say, to speak, to talk about that's just in his mind and he's speaking it. **...and has raised up a horn of salvation.** Because he couldn't know these things except that God gave this to him in the mind and motivated, moved him to speak it, what was given to him. Powerful. Strong.

...and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David. Things that were given to him to see to be able to preach, if you will, to speak on.

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us. So again, not all was given to them, but a beginning process here of something that, again, much of this was received and given even by God to them to understand or to be able to have courage about on a physical plane. Because even through the time of Christ, the people as a whole were looking to be saved from their enemies, which were the Romans and the power that they had over them, and the merciless way in which they were treated by the Romans. And on and on it goes, "the wicked way," the "evil way," if you will.

So, "That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us." Not understanding this on a spiritual plane, that this is about a process that's beginning, given to John that's going to be about Christ and him being our Passover and to grasp and comprehend what it means to be saved from our enemies, from all that is against God. Which has to do with our own carnal nature, which has to do with the spirit world around us, and on and on it goes, from everything and everyone who hates God. God's going to cleanse everything in His time, and it'll finally be done at the end of 7,100 years. That's when it's complete.

To perform the, again, not a matter of "mercy," it's a matter of compassion, it's a matter of **graciousness, of kindness promised to our fathers.** That God gave us favor and told us these things. That's the spirit and attitude which this was taken in. **...and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham.** So again here, they couldn't grasp it all, weren't being given everything at this point in time, but it's a transition, it's a part of time at that particular time because that was a unique period and much of that was to be taken in physically because of a physical world, as it would be when Christ came into Jerusalem and they would lay palms down and so forth and cry out

“Hosanna!” and talk about “This is,” basically, “the descendant of David,” and knowing what that means but on a physical plane.

But after Pentecost 31 AD everything would begin changing in a powerful way when God established the Church.

Thought we’d turn over to Micah. Last verses here we’ll go through. To turn over where this portion of prophecy comes from that was spoken by Zacharias as he was filled with the holy spirit. It comes here from Micah. This is what he was inspired to say.

Micah 7:18—Who is God like unto You, who pardons iniquity? Beautiful. Whereby we can have sins forgiven us. ...**who pardons iniquity and passes by...** In many places, this is translated as “Passover.” ...**and passes by or passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights,** it says, **in “mercy.”** Poor, poor, poor translation in what’s really being said. Really is. Incredible.

First, the word translated as “retain” here, where it says, “He does not retain His anger,” is not the Hebrew word that’s being used here. It doesn’t mean that at all. It’s the word for “grows strong in,” or “to be hardened in,” as the term concerning “Pharaoh’s heart became hardened.” Same word. Pharaoh’s heart became hardened through a period of time there when certain plagues would come along and then he would exhibit a bit of humility because what else could he do, he had no power over what was taking place. But as soon as it was gone, he became worse than he was before. He became hardened. That’s carnal human beings kind of response. A carnal human being’s response, the way we are as human beings.

But it is not God Almighty, and God isn’t like this. That’s what’s bad about a translation like this and people think in these terms. Because what it’s saying is beautiful, awesome, but how it’s been translated is sick and perverted. It really is.

Secondly, when it says, “His anger,” the word “His” isn’t even there. It’s just the word for “anger.” So, they put this upon God. So, it’s actually saying, **He does not become hardened in, or grow strong in anger.** The word “His” isn’t there. What it’s saying is God isn’t like this! God doesn’t become hardened. God doesn’t become strong in anger... **forever,** or “in perpetuity” as the word means. God is never like that. God never does that.

What an awesome thing to understand or to believe, to see. But human beings have this concept that He’s this hard God and that He becomes angry at people. It really doesn’t say that in scripture. Its words have been twisted and distorted. On the contrary, God gives great patience and time and love, truly, to human beings to fulfill their time on earth, even in the contrary things they do.

He intervened when He was working with a particular people, obviously (Israel), and corrected them many a time strongly so because they were to be living a certain way. He left the rest of the world

basically go on its way until He decided at times that they should be destroyed so that this land would belong to Israel, be Israel, "If they will just obey Me and follow Me; and I'll fight their battles for them." So, anyway.

It is saying, **He does not become hardened in, He does not grow strong in anger ever.** That's literally what it's saying in English, "ever." Never happens. Because God isn't like that. It's against agape. It's against the way He is.

Weak human beings, especially that great big church and the ones that followed it, because of all the stupid weird concepts of the gods they had, you look at the different gods and they were, some of them, ferocious and angry. They became angry at human beings, so God is like that. That's how they thought. "God must be angry with us when we don't do what He says."

Well, you're not going to be blessed, and you're going to suffer for it, for stupidity. We bring our own curses upon our self. Even the word "to be cursed," it's like God passes out these curses on people and does these things. And it's like, no, as a whole, it's a matter there's punishment at times, just like it was on the Egyptians, but it's a matter of what we do to ourselves as a whole because of sin. We do it to ourselves.

And what we deserve when it's all said and done is death because of sin. But God isn't that way, to try to bang us down, to try to beat us up. Incredibly patient. I can't grasp the patience of God with me...or with you. (No!) Because we're all human beings, if we understand that. God's very patient with every one of us.

You think, what an awesome thing to be under that kind of favor, to be under a calling. Because what He sees, babes that are growing in a womb, and excited about the time they're going to be born. Far more than a mother ever could be to her own child. Far, far, far beyond that. Awesome! So, when we grasp those things in a deeper way, we draw closer to God, we truly do.

So again, **verse 18—He does not become hardened in, grow strong in anger ever, because He delights in,** again, not the word "mercy." It's a word for goodness and kindness. **...for He delights in kindness and goodness.** Because He is love. He is agape. That's what John wrote, "God is love." "God is agape." Everything that comes from Him is based on that, that mind, that thinking, not human beings distorted ideas about gods.

Verse 19—He will turn again; He will have compassion on us. He will subdue our iniquities. And You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. You will perform the truth of Jacob, the goodness or the kindness to Abraham, which You have sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

So again, a part of this all about what was being shown that was going to begin taking place because first of all, John was to come, focus upon Christ who was coming, and the rest of the story we know. We know all of that anyway.