

The Beginning of God's Church, Pt. 3

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We are continuing in the series entitled, *The Beginning of God's Church*, and this will be *Part 3* today.

We've been covering events in Acts that show how God's Church began and how Christ was leading the apostles to accomplish that. This is an incredible story. It's an inspiring story about the things that Christ did, working through the different ones, the different apostles, and the reasons why, in different cases, and the need to begin this message in a very powerful way.

As we continue on through this series, it should become clear I guess I should say, that there was a lot going on throughout the whole regions, areas there, surrounding Jerusalem, and on even farther out, even before Paul started going into some of the regions around about there and doing the travels that he did. But just what the apostles did, it was a powerful thing that was taking place, in that respect, in Judea, and the people who were changing, who were being called into the Church. It wasn't just that 3,000 on that first period of time there, that first day in Jerusalem, but hundreds and hundreds and hundreds that just kept being added on a progressive scale in some cases, entire areas.

So, with that in mind, it's good to remember some of that because this was having a tremendous impact on the so-called religious leaders of the world at that time, Judaism, and also the Roman government at that time, and how they began to respond. So, understanding how some of these things transpired and so forth, it's good to keep that in the back of your mind because this wasn't a small account of something that took place in that part of the world. It was big, very big.

So again, going on here, we ended there, and we're going to pick up where the rulers had them jailed, if you remember that account, and had brought them away from the temple to be presented before them and then the occasion of the angel who came along. So we're going to pick this up then, at that point, in Acts chapter 5, verse 25, **Acts 5:25**. So here, one of the people left the individuals, the leaders there, who had had them put in jail, and they had gone to the prison to bring them, and so now they're coming back to report, and this is that occasion. **Then one came and told them saying, "Behold, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people."** They had wondered what was going on, what this meant when they were gone, well, now they found out. They weren't happy campers at all.

So, it goes on to say, **Then the captain went with the officers, and brought them without violence**, and this means, literally, without being violent toward them or using force to bring them. It was more of a matter of just communication, "Come with us," and the reason why it says, **for they feared the people, that they might have been stoned**. The people, there are a lot of people who were very stirred up at this period of time and were being drawn, were being called, and being worked with, and others as well. So,

people we might call co-workers today if we remember the time period of Herbert Armstrong, not fully drawn into the Church, but supportive. There were a lot of people like that.

Verse 27 - When they had brought them, they set them before the council, and the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not command you that you should not teach in His name?" You think, "What an incredible thing that took place. They're going to command them not to preach in Joshua's name, to use His name?" And, because they saw the results of that, the things that had been happening, and people who were leaving their influence, and that's what it's all about; leaving their influence, their livelihood, their power was being diminished, and human beings will go to a lot of lengths sometimes to fight against that. This is what was taking place.

It says, **"But look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine,"** and basically, they're accusing them, **"and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."** That's what they were saying, "You're telling people all these things and that," the leaders who killed Joshua, and so, "you're trying to put this blood up on us," and "you're stirring things up." So they had to find something of this magnitude in order to condemn them more, or do more to them. **Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said "We ought to obey God rather than men."** This is how we're supposed to live. When it comes down to it, if anything happens, whether it be on the job, in the community or wherever, that's what we do. God comes first.

So now, continuing from where we left off, now in verse 30. He uses this occasion which he was inspired to do by Christ, from Christ. It mentions this over and over again about Christ and what he's doing, because everything God the Father had given to Christ. Now, he's doing the will of God, by the power of God, but he's of the same mind of God in every way, and "all authority," it says, "has been given to Him." Sometimes we need to grasp that as well. We pray to God the Father, but to understand everything that comes to us comes in and through Joshua the Christ. He is our High Priest. We don't pray directly to him; we pray to God the Father, but to understand how God works, how the flow of His Holy Spirit works. This is a good example of that.

Not only there, but then too, whether it be apostles or the ministry in the Church, that's how God works. And sadly, the Church lost that. If they'd only kept track of that, if only they'd remembered that, where scriptures say, "Remember through whom you heard the truth," in essence, that's what it's talking about. And to realize, as so many lost that, and ministers in the Church lost that. It's like, "Well, he was a good teacher." And again, that phrase alone just makes my blood boil because it's like, "You wouldn't have known anything about God, about the truth, about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the plan of God, save that God gave it, Christ gave it, to Herbert Armstrong to give to the to the Church. They're absolute fools to talk like that, truly. It shows their separation and spirit from God Almighty and from their understanding of how God actually works. That's a horrible thing, to not remember how God works.

It's just like the matter of healing when we're sick, whether God intervenes and heals us or not, because there are times when the answer is, "No." When there are things we are to go through and learn from

the experience. And so, whatever God's purpose is in molding and fashioning us, He tells us, nevertheless, to go to the elders of the Church. It's a command, it's not a suggestion! And yet I've been dumbfounded, even up to recent times, some have left, one individual who left especially, and in my whole remembrance in the Church, never asked once for anointing when they were sick. You think, "Where is your mind? How can you think that way?" That you're not looking to God in the way that God says you have to look, "In order to have My intervention?" So, nothing like that ever surprises me then when it comes along and God says, "Enough time, you're gone."

So anyway, so He uses this occasion to teach. So, this occasion wasn't an accident. Their being put in the prison wasn't an accident. It was by design. There were things they were to experience, there were things that were to be communicated, some of it, for the Church later on. Not just for then, but throughout time. Because this is going to be repeated for the next 2,000 years, over and over and over again, how the world receives God's truth. And it isn't happy about it. It fights against it. Because it says, "The carnal mind is enmity," meaning an enemy, against God. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," because it's carnal. It hasn't been drawn by God's Spirit. It can't see the truth. It can't understand those things until God gives that opportunity to someone. And so the natural, carnal reaction then is to respond to something in a very carnal, selfish way. "The pride of life," most of it's about pride.

He says, **verse 30 – "The God of our fathers raised up Joshua..."** Now he didn't have to go and explain more. They knew *exactly* what he was saying because the whole area was buzzing about this occasion of something that had happened, that the one who had been put in the tomb for three days and three nights was no longer there. That's why some of them, to appease their own thinking, thought, believed that somehow, some way, someone had to steal his body away because this didn't happen. They have to do something in the mind to justify their actions. But this was going around because many people believed it. He had been resurrected from the dead because there were so many people there at the beginning, especially the apostles and others, who saw him, who were made aware. **"The God of our fathers raised up Joshua, whom you killed and hung on a pole."**

So, again, what an incredible thing, a pole. The world, you think, "What a crazy thing, people wear crosses." I just, every time I see one on TV or something, I think, "I look forward to the day that you learn that that isn't how he died. He didn't die on a cross with his arms out like this," and they don't understand the reason why, because they don't know that much about what it says, concerning the occasion, so they never question why the two, one on each side of him, the thieves, had their legs broken and then when they came to him, he was already dead so they didn't break His legs. What was the purpose of that? They died fast then. But they don't think about things like that. People don't carry it that far because it's not yet given to them to do so. It's as though it's shaded, covered, darkened.

He reminds them, **"Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."** Nothing ever existed like that before. To be absolutely forgiven of sins, to be actually released from what sin dictates and commands as far as God's Word is

concerned? It requires death. If it can't be forgiven, if there's no remission for sin, no forgiveness of sin, no release from that bondage, because we're bound to that until we're forgiven, we're bound to the death penalty. And so until that's taken care of, that's where we are. Death is required. That's God's judgment.

And so now, to have one through whom sins can be forgiven, it's an awesome thing. John wasn't able to give that, John the Baptist. He gave them a baptism of repentance to change, but not for what they were going to be given, and the forgiveness of their sins. They knew that taking animal sacrifices and going through that process, or at least they knew to an extent, that it didn't release them from all sin. It didn't cleanse them completely by any measure. So now he's telling them this, **“for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”** That's powerful. **“Even we are His witnesses.** “All of us standing up here that you've brought before you, we have witnessed these things; what has happened, what has taken place, and seen Him, was with him 40 days, after he was resurrected.” Then it goes on to say, **“witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Spirit,”** “You want to argue against that, the Power of God? God has given us that witness through the power that's His, the Holy Spirit, **“which God has given to those who obey Him.”** In essence, it's like saying, “You don't have it. God has given it to those who obey Him.” And they're making it clear, “This is where we are, this is what we're doing. We ought to obey God rather than men, rather than obeying you. If it comes up, we're going to obey God first of all.”

So again, all these things, they didn't receive well and they're just sitting there, sitting there, squirming, wanting to lash out. Candidly, wanting to see them put to death, that's what it came up to. **When they heard this, they were cut to the heart...** It doesn't mean that they felt bad. Sometimes this is taken in that regard, that somehow they felt bad about what they had done, and they were hurting. No, these were, this cut deep inside. They hated what they heard. **...and took counsel to have them put to death.** Isn't that amazing? It wasn't enough to be put in prison now. They wanted them put to death, just like they did to Joshua. Threatened them, threatened their power, threatened their livelihood. That's what it's really all about. **Then stood up, I should say, one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, who had reputation among the people, and commanded that the apostles be put outside for a little while.**

So he stood up to speak and, again here, this isn't by accident. This is something that God gave, that Christ gave, **Then he said to them, “You men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do concerning these men. For before these days rose up Theudas,** some of these, I'm trying to get down pronunciation because sometimes we've learned even wrong things there, but anyway, give it a stab, **boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of the men, about 400, joined themselves together: who was slain,** who was killed. So using carnal wisdom that mankind has, he's saying here, “Here's the reasoning,” and so, “Look at this account and consider it what happened there.” **...then all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nothing.”**

This has happened a lot, where people have tried to do this to God's Church. It happened when Herbert Armstrong had to move to Arizona, had to stop all funds going into headquarters, and they started sending it to Arizona. We started sending it to Arizona and making out checks, and so forth at that time, to Herbert W. Armstrong, A Corporation Sole, because they put a judge over the Church, in the world, to be over the activities and the spending of money, and their purpose was, one thing as a whole, to deliver it to someone else who would operate it in a way they thought it should be run, more Protestant, candidly, more to their liking. And not to be strong as he was, because he was strong in what he had to say, and people hated it. There were people who hated what he had to say, especially the religions in traditional Christianity.

And so, again, an effort to destroy the Church and so these things continue on. People were tried by these things then because there are people who couldn't make it through all that and quit. He says here again, **“Then all, as many as who obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nothing.”** In a carnal world, that'll happen, but not in God's Church. Because there are always those who look to God, whom God works with, to continue on with; has been that way for 2,000 years.

Verse 37 – “After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, drew away many people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.” They scattered. That's what happens. **“So now I say to you,”** again, human reasoning, **“refrain from these men and leave them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nothing...”** “If you really believe that, the same thing that's going to happen to them.” **...but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest at any time you be found even to fight against God.”**

Now he was inspired to say that by God's Spirit. He wasn't called, but he had a purpose, then and there, to say certain things that were true, that needed to be said. Awesome, they're recorded for us, to go through and read what took place then and if all people could have thought that way through time, but it wasn't meant to be. **Then to him they agreed**, because eventually all the disciples were killed, except the one that we know of, John, incredible that these things happened.

Then to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, not going to let them off, not scot-free, not without something being done, you know, “Maybe they'll fear a little more if we beat them,” you know, “have them beaten, flogged,” whatever, “not killed, just beaten.” **...they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Joshua and let them go.**

I'll tell you what, sometimes if you think your life is pretty tough, it's good to think back about the early Church, because as we continue on through some of this, there was a lot of suffering, a lot of physical suffering. And oftentimes with that goes a lot of mental suffering as well, which can even be greater. But it tries us, it tests us, it determines where our convictions are and to what degree we stand, and are willing to stand, and want to stand, to what degree we'll continue to cry out for God, and the strength of God, to help us to continue to move forward, to fight against those things that fight against us.

..they commanded that they not speak in the name of Joshua, and let them go. But we know how far that went. They still went right out and started teaching again, which is what they were supposed to do. **Verse 41 – So, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer insult for His name.** Incredible. I think it was early on, after the Apostasy, that there were those, when they were trying to determine, speaking of the ministry that was scattered, that was wanting to hold on to that semblance of what the Church had been given, concerning the Holy Days and so forth, and hadn't yet had time to divide, or have division. Because there was a period of time there that God gave us to be able to work through all that, for people to work through that, three and a half years exactly. To work through those things, a protection from a spirit being who had great power, and within that period of time, everybody decided what they were going to do as a whole, especially within the ministry, and this was given.

And so, in the beginning, there were some of that talk and people getting cut off from headquarters, whether it be communication on . . . it was called, seemed like “CC” something, or whatever it was, well I don't remember even, it's been so long ago, but it was antiquated. You know the dial up? You know what a dial is? Anyway, it wasn't all that long ago, you know. A telephone and, anyway, your computer hooked up that way, and the noise and the waiting there, and the waiting... Today, if it's not just “like that,” man, we freak out. Anyway, if we don't have fibre optics, we freak out. I do, anyway. Especially for this system over here. So anyway, we went through these things and actually when some of these kinds of things happened, it was like, considered a badge of honor if you got cut off. So anyway, that's a bit of a joke there, but, of things we experienced, things that people went through and trying to make decisions and choices to what they were going to do. Then it says, “Daily in the temple.” It says, **Daily in the temple, and in every house, they didn't cease to teach and preach Joshua the Christ.** So they did what they were supposed to do. They just kept doing what was right.

Acts 6:1 - Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmur among the Grecians, or Hellenists, which are Greek-speaking Jews, **against the Hebrews,** other Jews, **because their widows were neglected in the daily administration.** The service of the distribution.

So again, there were those who, if you remember the occasion here, they were dividing everything up, and whether it be food and things that were needed for people to continue there in Jerusalem, to stay there. That's why people sold things and had it together and then, because there were several thousand people, and so they had to divide things out for those who needed it, who didn't have the ability to sustain themselves, and so it talks about those who were in need, who were needy, that things were passed out, and some got upset because they weren't receiving what they felt that others should be in the group, so they had to address those kinds of things on a very physical plane, and so that's what's taking place here.

Then, it says, the twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, “It is not reasonable that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables.” So, they had a job to do and they knew they

were to spread out and continue preaching and teaching because this is just the beginning. And in the first few decades, this was the primary push of the Church. It truly was. It's about something they had not known before. It's about Joshua. It's about a fulfillment of what God said in the Old Testament about a Messiah and an understanding that it's not just about a future time when he comes to set up God's government. Yes, that's going to happen, but for now, he came as our Passover. He died as the Lamb of God. This was the message that was to go out.

Now today, in the world today, Herbert Armstrong didn't have to hit it like that because it's already out there, even though it's been twisted and distorted by traditional Christianity, by the Catholic Church and so forth, before that. Anyway, so this here, they've heard the name, so when you start talking about a lot of those things there, people are familiar with the books and so forth, they've studied various ones or read certain things or heard certain things. So when God calls someone, they can make that transition from things that they're ignorant of to be able to see the truth when it's time.

So, he's making clear here, "We have work to do," and, in essence, "This part isn't something we're to be involved in." "We can't divide up our time like this." They evidently had been involved in much of this. And because there were so many, there were some holes in it, evidently. They're trying to deal with this now, in a better way. **"Therefore, brethren, look out among yourselves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit..."** It needed to be apparent to them that these individuals were dedicated, that they were on fire for God's way of life, that they had God's Spirit in them, and that it was clear by their speech and what they were saying that they were of the same mind. **"...full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,"** soundness of mind, reasonable; something that we don't see much of in the world today. **"...whom we may appoint over this business."** So, it's a separate thing. This is basically the area of scripture that gave rise to in Worldwide the ordination of deacons. Some of you are familiar with that, some of you aren't, deacons and deaconesses, who could take care of various physical functions and so forth, so the ministry would be able to work on other things within the Church and Church members and the like.

But there, as the Church grew, and especially as we had various kinds of halls that we were in. I remember going in some kinds of halls. This is nice, even though sometimes I wish it were a little nicer. Finally, we got the high-speed Internet. Anyway, there have been places that people have had to go into; I remember some of the places. A VFW. VFW halls were real popular to rent at one point in time because it was a meeting place, and we need halls because we don't build the buildings because the Church can change, the population can change, things can happen. That was the process that Herbert Armstrong used, and the Church basically has used ever since. And so, within that, a lot of these VFWs, they're noted, especially for Friday, coming in and drinking a lot of beer. And so when you'd go into the place, it smelled like beer.

People would even go in there and sometimes some places were so bad they had to be mopped. And then to clean up, clean off chairs, to make sure there wasn't beer on them, or they were messed up and whatever, and they set up the hall. So, the minister in the area couldn't do all these things, because

especially back then, generally a minister had a service in the morning in one area, would drive whatever distance, the most we ever had to drive was three hours between Lubbock, Texas and Roswell, New Mexico. Thankfully, they were in a different time zone, so that when we got done in one, we were able to make it out there like it was a two-hour trip even though it was three, almost exactly three hours between services. That was very common then, in the Church, that ministers had two churches: one in the morning, and one in the afternoon.

I remember being down here, we'd drive back, even after the Apostasy, we'd have a service down here in the basement, then drive back up to Toledo and have services up there in the afternoon. That was just the way it was. These kinds of things that needed to be done were done by people ordained to the job, in service, deacons and deaconesses. A physical job, it wasn't to a spiritual ordination at all, but something that was to be done in the administration of things needed for the Church, to help the Church.

That's what he's telling them to do here. It says, **“But we will continue steadfastly in prayer...”** In other words, it doesn't mean they're praying all the time. The words that are sometimes used in scriptures, it's like monks or something, you know, “They're out there, all they're doing is praying and studying.” No, that's not what this is about. It's about their way of life. This is a part of something that they were focused on. And why do you pray? To seek God's guidance! So, they were constant in this. This is a continual part of their life, in the sense of how to serve the Church, **“and in the ministry of the Word.”** Which has to do then with the preaching that they did, and they did a lot back then. Besides just the Sabbath, this was something being done day-by-day, that people would come together and want to hear.

So the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, it says, they laid their hands on them. To do a service to the Church, for the Church. **So the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples greatly multiplied in Jerusalem.** This is a constant theme throughout Acts. More and more were added, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people. I mean, this is incredible what took place, in the beginning of the Church.

Sometimes we think just a few maybe called along in Jerusalem, until you read all of a sudden there are 3,000? I mean, I remember being in a Church, well several, but Wichita, when I first came to the Church, about 600 people there. They were almost to the point where they had to split into two, because generally that's where you split, and then had one area 300, and then another area 300. So, they could have some distance in between, and it was easier for people to travel into one over the other. Houston, that area we were in, was right at 600 by the time we left and went out, were hired by the Church to go out to Lubbock area. And so again here, incredible the things that were happening.

But for the Church, it took a long time. As the Church continued to grow and things that happened during Philadelphia, they think somewhere around 90-some thousand were baptized by the time of Herbert Armstrong's death. I think 96 or so by the time the Apostasy occurred, somewhere in there, if I'm not mistaken.

...even a great many of the priests were obedient to the Faith, isn't that amazing? There were people who were a part of the Levitical system. "If that be the case," that's what it's speaking of, which it seems to be, that there were, some of them, who began to see things on a spiritual plane of what some of the things of the Old Testament were all about when it came to that which is spiritual. Again here, incredible things. **...many of the priests were obedient to the Faith**. Now, that means their minds had to be open, to be obedient to the faith, to be able to believe what was true and then to live by some of those things. This was the beginning for some of them as well, being called into the Church.

Now Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. So God chooses whom He will, to do and accomplish various things, and sometimes for a purpose that might be short-lived. His is short-lived. Sometimes there are things that God does that something takes place over a certain period of time, and then it's done, incredible. That's good to think about sometimes. There are things that are sometimes continuing and long-going, as far as human life is concerned. Some things are shorter-lived and then a training is given for a short period of time, for a specific reason, for what God is molding and fashioning, and then that portion is done. We've either learned from it or we haven't, and God works with us in that way, Christ works with us in that way, because we are the Body of Christ.

Now Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain in the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, the Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. Now they were not able to stand against the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.

When the truth is there, and they don't know it, they can't quote things out of the Old Testament in a right way, in a sound way, to counteract what he's saying because he has a comeback. When you know the truth, you know what the scriptures are, or at least can paraphrase certain things about them, "This is what the Truth is," and there's not a whole lot people can say. They can try, they can put up false arguments and battle against you, which they still do, and it happened here as well, but the reality is there's a frustration there because there's something powerful, obviously, about what is true, what is absolute.

Well, anyway, I think of a Jewish rabbi that contacted us for a time, when we first went through the things after the Apostasy, about ben ha'arbayim and ba'ariv, ma'ariv and ariv. And he saw truth in it, but he couldn't make the step. He couldn't break away from being a rabbi. But there were things there, and he saw them. Just by looking at them, "Yeah, that's what it says," incredible.

Now, they were not able to stand against the wisdom and the spirit which he spoke. The truth is the truth. **Then they persuaded men to perjure themselves who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”**

So a little bit of twisting, not to say it exactly the way they did, but to make it sound like it, and it didn't take a whole lot, you know. A little bit here can confuse people because they don't know the scriptures and what is there, and so they can say something that is being said by someone who knows the truth and take it totally out of context, not tell the whole story. That's what they were doing. That's what it came across as to those who repeated it. It sounded like they were blasphemous words against Moses, which to the Jews, obviously at that time, you don't do, and against God.

So they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and took him to the council, so that was their whole purpose to find fault and say he did these sayings by twisting and distorting. It doesn't take a whole lot sometimes. You know, somebody wants to take something that's there and put a little twist here and a little twist there. I've lived through that in a profound way. It doesn't take much to create a different story. They're ready to hang you up.

Verse 13 - And set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say that this Joshua of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” Well, if you start talking about how certain things in the law have changed, that Christ fulfilled the sacrificial system, you know, and then twist it a little bit more, because that's strong enough by itself, but if you twist all that, then you can be found to be, “Yeah, he's speaking against Moses, speaking against God,” and so forth. **Then all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.** Can you imagine? Here someone's there, before this council, and all of a sudden his face is radiating with light, as it were. Awesome! They had never seen anything like that! They'd never witnessed anything like that! But they still hated him.

I think sometimes, what an incredible thing that your heart and mind can be so hard against something that you don't want to believe, that you want to fight against because you don't like it because it doesn't agree with you and what you believe, that you will, and something like this, of this magnitude, to the point where you will say, “Whatever.” You know it has to be of God, and sometimes they admit it here. “Only God can do this!” And to be that hard-hearted, that hard-headed, to have that kind of a mind sometimes is kind of mind-boggling. That the human mind can go that far to fight against, although they know it's of God.

So, what would you think today, if you saw something like that? I'd be a little freaked out. Well, they were a little freaked out because it's not something you would see on a regular basis, nor was it to see someone raised from the dead, nor see someone who was lame get up and walk and jumping around, is it were. You know, they're so excited about being able to move like they do, and people were witnessing

these kinds of things, incredible! ...**saw his face as that had been the face of an angel. Then the high priest asked “Are these things so?”** So they threw these things out, what was being said, what the others were saying, that were twisting and distorting. **Then he replied**, so again, an opportunity, an opportunity to teach because here they're all gathered together, and you have opportunity to defend yourself, and so he did.

I wish that I'd had a little bit of that opportunity. But it wasn't being offered because he, the judge, wouldn't allow it, anyway. **“The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said to him, ‘Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and go into the land which I will show you.’”** So going way back, because they can relate to Abraham. They had this deep-rooted thing about themselves. They're descendants of Abraham and they took glory in that, for themselves, if you're of Abraham.

“Then he went out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: then from there, when his father was dead, He removed him into this land, wherein you now dwell. Yet He gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.”

It's going through this story here, of things that had happened, and here, “How can a promise be given to Abraham and no child to give it to?” Some of the things written prophetically. **“Then God spoke in this way, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them 400 years.”** I love this about God, things that he does that are exact, specific, absolute. And here are 400 years and what he's telling him was to be fulfilled here, to the day, when it was recorded.

Verse 7 – ““Even the nation to whom they shall be in bondage, I will judge,’ said God: ‘and after that they shall come forth and serve me in this place.’” So, going through the history here, they're going to be in bondage or this is going to take place, they're going to be oppressed, I should say, for a certain period of time, 400 years, and then the worst of it, obviously, toward the end there concerning Egypt, and then the process of what took place. Because they were never fully accepted by any measure, obviously, and then it just got worse and worse, as different Pharaohs came along.

He's going through some of this, and they're familiar with it, obviously. Again, here talking about, they were serving this place, knowing it was talking about Jerusalem, **“And he gave them the covenant of circumcision: even so Abraham begot Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day, and Isaac begot Jacob; and Jacob the 12 patriarchs. Now the patriarchs, being zealous, sold Joseph into Egypt.”** Well, jealous, not zealous. They were jealous. Again here, ended up, arguments went back and forth, and finally put him in the pit. Then when the people came by, they sold him and sent him down into Egypt. We know the story.

“Even so, God was with him, and delivered him out of all his affliction, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.” I mean, things that have happened in times past when God had a purpose of what was to be done and, again, showing the glory and the power of God to accomplish various things, to put things in the heart and mind of people, just like Pharaoh here, and he responded, awesome! The kind of favor he had when he was in prison and the like, and then out, and all that he gave to him to be in control of. Quite mind-boggling, those kinds of things just don't happen!

“So then he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a drought over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, even great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.” So he's going through this entire history for a purpose. **“Then the second time, Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was made known to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called for himself his father Jacob, and all his household, the lives of seventy-five. So Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers.”** So up until now, they're all in agreement. Here's the story that he's telling them. They understand it, they know it well. **“Then transported to Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham sought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.”**

Verse 17 - “But when the time of the promise drew near, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, so the promise, the length of time, until another king arose who did not know Joseph, the same dealt fraudulently with our kindred and oppressed our fathers, causing them to cast out their babies, so that they would not live. And that time, Moses was born and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months. So again, this process here, going through this entire story, and it just continues on here. **And himself was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up and nourished him for her son.”** So we're going to go through possibly some of this. I don't know what people are going to speak on, at that point in time, because it's already been given out, you know, what will be covered during Unleavened Bread.

So this is much of that story, of coming out of Egypt, things we learn, that it's a spiritual thing, it's not a physical thing; but we start with the physical, and then build upon the things that God has given that are physical throughout time, even the Levitical System and the like. And the disciples were talking a lot about some of these kinds of things, bringing them up to a point where they could talk to them about what was spiritual, about what God was doing, about what Joshua was doing, and why He was doing it, the fact that He was our Passover because these are the things they taught.

“Even Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in works, even as he fulfilled forty years of age, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. Then seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him who was being oppressed, and killed the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would understand how God, by His hand, would deliver them.” Now this is kind of unique because here he is, he knows that he's not of the Egyptians, he knows that these are his family in the sense of where he descended from. He has to know some of his

story, of the things that were told to him about what had taken place, the history and so forth. He knew, in that respect, who he was and, to whatever degree we're not certain. But anyway, continuing on with the story, here he is out there, and he sees them, he wants to go out there and see what's happening with them, and sees them being oppressed. And two here, that we're being oppressed by an Egyptian, he goes out and stops them and, to the point that there's a point where there's a fight and Moses kills him. He's seen by those Israelites, whichever ones they were, of whom they were. He thought that they would understand that they were being delivered, in essence here it says, "Understood how God, by His hand, would deliver them."

Now he didn't know the whole story yet, but this is inspired. This was something very small; he had no idea he was going to deliver everyone. Isn't that incredible? But this is where it starts, and this is where the phrase starts, and it's built upon in scripture here. It continues on, that he thought they would understand, that he had favor, and that this was being done by God. How much about God he knew we don't know. But some of these stories that Israel had, there are things he had to know and understand, to a point, of whatever they had by this point in time, because it's a long time.

"But they did not understand. Then the next day he appeared before them as they were fighting..." So now he comes upon them, and they're fighting amongst themselves. They don't need an Egyptian out there; they're not getting along. **"...and tried to set them at one again."** You know, a peacemaker. Its like, "What are you doing? Don't you have it hard enough here with what's happening to you by the soldiers out here and the things you have to do every day and here you are fighting amongst yourselves?" **"...he said, 'Sir, you are brethren. Why are you doing wrong to one another?' But he who was doing his neighbor wrong pushed him away saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?'"**

Now, he was inspired to say it; this isn't an accident. This is what he believed, but he was inspired to say it because it's built upon in scripture. **"'Will you kill me like you did the Egyptian yesterday?' So Moses fled at the same."** He knew what it meant if this got out then; death, that's the law. **"And became a stranger in the land of Madian or Midian, where he begot two sons. Then when forty years had passed, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in the flame of fire in a bush. And when Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight: and as he went nearer to look at it, the voice of the Eternal came to him."** It says Lord here, but it's from the Old Testament. We know it's talking about Yahweh, **"Saying, 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'"**

And, of course, at that time, we realize it took a little while before we actually knew He was Yahweh because this is about El Shaddai. That's the only way they knew Him by His name because, I think it's in chapter 3 of Exodus, where it finally reveals "Your forefathers," people before, "haven't known who I am and I am Yahweh, the Self-Existing One. They've only known me by El Shaddai to this point in time." I find that an awesome thing that it wasn't until the time of Moses that God revealed some more about Himself, progressive revelation. Awesome!

“Then Moses trembled, and again, not to look, as it says here at what he saw. And the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your shoes from your feet: for the place where you stand is Holy Ground.’ ‘I have seen the affliction of my people who are on Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and have come down to deliver them. So now come, I will send you into Egypt.’” Why? Because God had a plan, 400 years, and this was a part of it, and what was going to happen at the end of that plan, for that period of time, when he would bring them out of Egypt, the fact that they should go down into Egypt, the method by which they would go down into Egypt. We have to understand that God Almighty designed and planned these things. None of these things happened by accident, by happenstance, by chance. They're all a part of God's planning. That's incredible, when you understand the design of it all. That we have, mankind has at different times, the opportunity to be a part of fulfilling whatever it might be that God is accomplishing, just as the end time here.

There aren't very many, but an opportunity to share in something that leads up to one of the most incredible times of all human history, the end of 6,000 years of mankind ruling himself, the end of man's government, the establishment of God's government. You know, I think of what's taking place right now. And if you look at it in one respect, there's, just candidly on a physical scale, it's encouraging. It's encouraging seeing someone stand up to something and saying, “This is the thing you should be doing. This is the right way to go about this,” and so forth. It's kind of encouraging when you do something that makes sense. When you realize there is no country on earth who allows migration into a country without being checked! You know, “Just open the doors,” I mean, that is absolute insanity! Someone comes along and says, “We're going to build a wall.” Oh, that's a novel thought, “and close off the borders.” That's the way governments have always been, countries have always been, in that respect, in the modern age. Awesome!

Someone comes along and makes some sense. Comes along and makes sense saying, “You've got a lot of water. It's just right north of you, and you're sending it out in the ocean.” Uh, you know, dumb! And you think, “How could things have gotten that bad?” And yet they did. And so we're to go on a little longer. How much longer? I don't know. It could happen in that time, at a time when things are being worked with, and there's hope for people, and then all of a sudden, because along with that will come pride. That's another time period when things can happen. So again, we have to be on our toes because we don't know when. So we can't rest on our laurels, thinking, “Well, now we've got four more years and things are going to get really a whole lot better.” Because we don't know, we don't know how other countries are going to respond.

There are some things happening in Europe right now that are quite mind-boggling, and they're happening very fast, especially in Germany, of their attitudes and a party that's growing stronger and stronger, and the things that they want to do. They want to leave the European Union, and they're strong right now, they're gaining strength. They want to get rid of the Euro. But yet, there's a phrase in some of the things are said, they realize they can't do it in one fell swoop, so a DExit? I guess it would be,

Deutsche Exit, Deutschland Exit. I don't think I'd call it that. I guess it'd be something like that, or a Gexit? No, for us in English it'd be that, I guess. But there are some crazy things going on in the world right now, of governments swinging far, far, far to the right, except for one out there, a little removed from the mainland of Europe. He's so far to the left, so crazy in some of those things being done, trying to push Europe into a greater war, and this doesn't go well with the continent. I hope we see some of these things that are taking place. Things can happen at any time. That's why we, spiritually, have to be on our toes constantly, stirred up in spirit. I hope you're doing that. I hope you're crying out to God and saying, "Stir me up in spirit. I need, I want to be stirred up in spirit to be more zealous toward you." Every one of us should have that prayer, should have it this week and the week after that, and if you're not doing that, you may well miss the mark, because you have to ask God for it. It isn't natural within us. It isn't natural that we're stirred up in spirit without God's help! We have to cry out for it because we know we live in dangerous times! Anyway.

“So now come and I will send you into Egypt.” So he goes on with the story. **“This Moses whom they refused,”** after all the things that were done, as soon as they get across the Red Sea on the other side, they're griping and complaining and finding fault with Moses and the leadership of Moses, “Why did you bring us out here now to die? It'd been better if we stayed back in Egypt.” You think, well, we're like that as human beings. That's our carnal mind. It's not just the Israelites. This can help us come to understand us, ourselves. This is the way we are as human beings, without God's help, without God's Spirit. That's our battle. Then, Moses, **“This Moses whom they refused saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’”** By whom was that said? By the man who was saved the day before, or possibly saved, from the Egyptian, and now they're fighting, two of them fighting against each other, and so he asked Moses, you know, while they're fighting, “Who made you and a ruler and a judge?” He's using that because that was inspired. It could be said here, too.

“The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.” It says, it's a messenger, sometimes what these things mean, it's hard because God spoke to him, whether the message came through an angelic being, how God chooses to work, we don't know all these things. But again, it came from God regardless. If it came through an angel, it came from God Almighty. It was a messenger there that was given from God, so they deliver messages from God and communicate. In some cases, maybe it will be what this is about. Nevertheless, because of where he was, he said, "You're on holy ground," because God had set it apart for special purpose to use at that point in time. And said, "Take your shoes off," whatever, "soles," whatever kind of type of sandals he had on.

So it says, **"He brought them out,"** speaking of God, **after that He had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.”** God Almighty, Yahweh Elohim. **“This is that Moses who said unto the children of Israel, a Prophet will the Lord your God raise up from unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him you shall hear.”** So, the Jews tended to, and knew, that

Moses was a great prophet. He was a great prophet. But he's telling them another story. There is someone else that came along and said, Moses himself said, "You should listen to this Prophet when he comes." He's using this to tell this story, that this is even greater, and they didn't, they don't like that: "Joshua was greater than Moses? Hmm."

"This is he that was in the Church in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but pushed him away from them, and in their hearts turned back again toward Egypt. Then they said to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us...'" So, they didn't accept Moses, they didn't receive him, that prophet that God had given to them. **"...for as for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what's become of him."** We know the short period of time he was gone, and it's like, "Well, we've got to go on because he went up there and disappeared; nobody else is there. We don't know what happened to him, so we better do our own thing." It didn't take very long.

"Then they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands." The history of Israel, the history of mankind. Whatever we do, what we build, what we design, what we construct, the things we have, the things we make, the things we worship, the things that are important to us, the things that we value. Not God, not the truth, and so forth. So this is a part of the example he's giving here, and showing what they were like. And in the message there, "That's what everybody's like." That's what they were like, those listening to what he had to say. And you think about what happened there, and you think, "What an incredible thing." They make this golden calf, and all of a sudden saying, "This is the God who brought us out of Egypt, brought us to the Red Sea." A piece of metal! Talk about dumb. You talk about short-sighted. You talk about, well, they're just totally void of anything, a soundness of mind and God's spirit.

But we can understand that. So, it's just on a physical plane, shows how carnal human beings can be, though they should have known that which came through Moses, just on a physical plane. They heard and saw the things that happened during that forty years, or that period of time and, or even before this now, because this is up to this point at the calf we're talking about. So, just coming across the Red Sea; things like that don't happen every day. When's the last time it separated, when's the last time people went through it? Anyway.

"Then God turned away." It literally means turned his back on, turned away from, **"...and delivered them up to worship the host of heaven."** Meaning that, in essence, when people do not want God, that He will give them up to do whatever they want to do, whatever is in their heart, and their heart was to go out into the other countries. The main reason they were told not to mix themselves with other peoples and so forth in relationships, carnal relationships, or in marriage at that time, which has not been understood really well by the Church, was because of their beliefs! They had these gods that they worshiped and people would tend to, men tended to, in that respect, give in and, in time, began to adopt some of those things. Just like what's mind-boggling that Solomon did; to understand that

Solomon did that at the end? Astounding! After all that God did through him, things that are written in scripture that God inspired and gave through him? They came from God, and then to make a decision like that later on? Oh! You're not there until you're there, and you remain faithful to the end, that's what the story is about.

“And delivered them up to worship the host of heaven.” It's carnality. If that's what they want, they don't want God, and then look what happened. Look what happened to the northern ten tribes. That's exactly what happened. And finally, even Judah began to tarnish and diminish from the things of God. And the only thing, why they didn't lose their identity of who they were, that they were the Jewish people to this day, is because they continued on in the Sabbath, with the Sabbath, things about the Holy Days that they understood on a physical plane. And because they kept that part of their identity, God blessed them that they not lose theirs. But the rest of Israel, they became lost as to who they were. We're not even sure today who they all are. We recognize that much of Europe and, obviously Australia, Canada, the United States and Great Britain, we understand the Ephraim and Manasseh because that was given to Herbert Armstrong, but to have it down 100% as to all the other nations, we're not 100% sure. A lot of that's speculation, because a lot of that's just been lost. Anybody who wants to be dogmatic about that doesn't know what they're talking about because I know there are some mistakes in there. I just don't know what they are yet; God hasn't given it.

“Then God turned away, turned back from them, and delivered them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the Prophets. ‘O you house of Israel, have you offered to me slain animals and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yes, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God, Remphan...” Incredible! Even in the wilderness some of this was done, before they even got into the promised land. This is a part of that stupid calf, and so forth. **“...figures which you made to worship them, and I will remove you beyond Babylon.”** Prophetic, that's exactly what happened to Judah. Judah is the one that was taken up in that region of the area, deep into Persia and so forth, the Medo-Persian Empire. That's what it's talking about. “In time, that's what's going to happen to you because of what you have done.”

So again, that history that followed while they were in the wilderness and the things they did during that period of time, only on certain occasions, like with David and Solomon for a time, and then certain kings that came along as far as Judah was concerned, but it didn't take too long and the ten tribes of the north, they were worshiping everything that was pagan. They were worshiping on Sunday. Sunday didn't come along by the Catholic Church, it came along in what Israel did, and they carried that off into Europe when they were taken captive, Sun God. Incredible, some of the history of things is mind-boggling what took place. It really is, and really quite simple.

“Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the pattern that he had seen.” So here now he's referring to the tabernacle and talking to them about something very physical, and Moses built it exactly according

to the pattern that God showed to him that it should be built because God showed it to him while he was up there. **"Which also our fathers in turn brought in with Joshua to take possession,"** Joshua, the Joshua that followed Moses. I guess there's one place in the New Testament where they mess that up even, **"...which also our fathers in turn brought in with Joshua."** You think, "Why would they, why use a name here in one place and the rest of the place is calling Him Jesus?" You know, amazing what human beings have done to scripture, **"Which also our fathers in turn brought in with Joshua to take possession from the gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who obtained favor before God, and desired to obtain a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house."**

So again, all along the story, they're following it. They understand what he's saying. He's telling them what they know to be true. He's not telling them some twisted story or whatever. He's telling them what's true that they all can all agree with. So they know this, they know the history. **"Howbeit the Most High..."** See, this is new to them. They didn't comprehend any of this. **"Howbeit the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands; as said by the prophet."** So if you don't know this, that's what they said. **"Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: What house will you build me?' Says the Lord, 'And what is the place of my rest?'"**

So, they can get all twitterpated if they want to about the temple and so forth, and what they were doing and what they believe they had there in Jerusalem. But you can't contain God inside of it. **"Has not my hand made all these things? You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears."** Now, he's not winning over friendship from others, friends. Up to this point, everything was okay. But now he starts talking about the temple and he starts talking like this, and it's like, "There may be a sound of truth in this," but they're out to get him. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." I like what it says here because, most generally, it's about being uncircumcised in heart, but in hearing and listening to, about God, takes a change in heart and mind to go in through the ears, to be received in the mind. Incredible.

"You do always resist the Holy Spirit, as your fathers did. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? Even they have killed those who showed before about the coming of the Just One..." So again here, he's hitting on things over and over again here. His message, that which is true, a message from Christ through him. He's telling the story, and they're not going to take any of this. So he's saying, "You've done the same things." They know what he was talking about. They knew he was talking about Joshua. **"Which of the Prophets have your fathers not persecuted? Even they have killed those who showed before about the coming of the Just One; of whom you now have been the betrayers and murderers..."** So, they're going to listen to that one? **"...who have received the Law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."** "You've been given the law, but you didn't keep it." You know, sometimes it's pretty tough because you tell the truth and you say things the way it's given and you get a lot of enemies. The more you say it, the more powerful it gets.

People hated Herbert Armstrong because he was out there in ways that we've never dreamed of. The *Plain Truth* magazine, all the literature, radio at first, so much so that radio was so powerful and new to the world that it was called the *Radio Church of God* because that was the means by which the message went out. And then finally, it was raised up all over the world, they then changed it to the *Worldwide Church of God*. And even though small, in essence, pretty small compared to other religions, small, it had that power that went out, that God gave in order for that message to go out even more powerfully. Eight, nine million *Plain Truth* magazines in many different languages, the telecast, the broadcast, incredible!

And he had a lot of people who hated him, a lot of religions. I think, of being down in Texas, especially when you're in the South. We used to put out those *Plain Truth* stands in stores. We'd go out and put them out and they'd have *Plain Truths* in them. So they looked into different ways of getting the magazine out, not just through the broadcast or the telecast, and so those stands would be put out, and there would be times when people would go there and the stand's gone, when they went to resupply and put more magazines in it. Because some religious group came along, bent it up, threw it out by the trash container, or left it there, and they tried to destroy everything where they could, especially the Church of Christ and the Baptists. They were the primary ones who hated it. They wrote literature against Herbert Armstrong and against what he taught. Incredible. So, the more well-known he became, there were more people that hated him, but God didn't allow him to be killed, but that was in people's hearts.

“So who have received the law by the, dispensation, disposition, I should say, of angels and have not kept it.” When they heard these things, they were cut apart to the heart, again, not a thing that is something of repentance, but they hated it. It's like a knife in their heart because of what they believed and what they thought. ...**and they ground their teeth at him.** In other words, what he was saying. I think it says in some place, “They gnashed their teeth on him,” or something like, you know, you see this picture of him being bitten by all of them, you know, they're getting on his arms and, anyway. No, it's not about that. It's what they were doing because they were so hated what he was saying, they were gritting their teeth together and grinding them back and forth. You have to be pretty mad at something to grind your teeth back and forth to where that takes place, and they were that mad.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Joshua standing on the right hand of God. Awesome! God gave him the encouragement he needed to go through what he was about to go through. **And said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.”** Powerful. I mean, sends chills up down your spine.

God is always there and there are things He lets us see at different times, lets us experience at different times and then it says, **They cried out with a loud voice, and placed their hands over their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.** They got to the point where this was eating them up so badly. I mean, I can't imagine that, that here they're putting their hands over their ears because, to them, this is blasphemous,

what he's saying. They hated it. They have to justify it somehow, and to them it had to be blasphemy because it was against everything they believed, and held on to, and so they wanted to kill him. That's all that was in their minds.

So whenever you think you have it tough, go back and read this, and be thankful we don't have to go through those things at this time. And hopefully, we don't have to at any time. But there may be some of that before it's all over with. **Verse 58 - Even to cast him out of the city and stoned him: now the witnesses laid down their cloaks at a young man's feet, his name was Saul.** What an incredible story. Here's Saul, whom God called, whom Christ called, and began to work with, who became Paul, that he's the one that gave approval to kill him, to kill Stephen. Incredible story, because he had that kind of power and that kind of authority to do this, to the Church at that time. **Then they stoned Stephen and he called Him, to God saying, "Lord, Joshua, receive my spirit." Then he kneeled down,** you know, while he's being stoned, can't imagine, you know. And it says, **He kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge."** That's something we have to keep in our mind all the time. We should, in dealing with the world. They don't see what they can't see. They're not called yet. They can't see what you see. They can't react and respond to things like you think they might, or should, or whatever. They don't have the capacity. **So when he had said this, he fell asleep.** So, followed that example of Christ, and Christ gave him the strength to say it, inspired him to say it. "Don't lay this to their charge."

We're going to stop there today. I'm going to read just a few news things here because I think it's important that we keep up with some of this, for whatever purpose. There's a purpose in it. So again, some of the things I've already mentioned, that we need to keep on our toes in a spiritual way, asking God to stir up His spirit within us, and ourselves to do our part in asking for help.

I'm going to go through a few articles here. One goes clear back into December, which I had missed and someone brought it to my attention, a couple of different people have now. **"The Far Right AfD Party Wants Germany To Leave The EU."**¹ So here's the one I was referring to, this article here, in part, was back in mid December and this is that party that's growing, it's on the far-right and it's growing in greater power there in Germany. It says, "The far right Alternative for Germany (AfD)," they call it Alternative for Deutschland, "has doubled down on its pledge to take Germany out of the European Union and the single currency, the euro, if it gained power. In a draft election manifesto sent to its members ahead of a vote in the party conference scheduled for early January, the anti-immigration party repeated a promise from its European election campaign in the summer saying, 'We consider it necessary for Germany to leave the European Union to establish a new European community.'"

So, if you have these different factions in Europe, I love the example that God gave in Daniel, "clay mixed with iron." They're there, they want to get something done, but they don't have the strength, in the

¹ Knight, Ben (2024 December 18), [Far-right AfD party wants Germany to leave the EU – DW – 12/18/2024](#)

sense of holding together, because clay doesn't hold iron together very well, obviously. The steel is there, the power is there, but they can't focus it and use it well. This is their dilemma. So what are they going to do? These kinds of things are popping up more and more. But it's forcing them to a point where they're closer and closer to making a decision when it comes, because it's about Europe not having a nuclear war on its continent. That's what it's going to come down to, that they do not want a nuclear war on the continent of Europe.

And so, in order to get away from that, there are some, there are other things they have to do. We're getting so close to that, truly are. Yet, we know there's one great event that has to happen before that, we don't know where. And just so you understand, it can be in Ephraim, not necessarily in Manasseh, as we've talked about in times past. So, because of what's happening over there, you see where, more and more, it could be about them and what happens there first. So, whatever happens, it's about that, the brother, and then brothers, if you will, their father, I should say, and then the sons, who are brothers. Ephraim and Manasseh and what takes place in the first four.

So again, we have to be able to understand there's great flexibility in some prophecy, prophetic things, and if it happens that way, we'll know it when it takes place. But it wouldn't shock me if that's where it starts; time will tell. But the fifth one, that's what Europe's being pushed more and more to. The Fifth Trumpet is about what happens here because of what Europe does, when ten nations finally get together and decide to use the power they have on their continent.

“In place of the EU, the AfD wants to introduce something it calls ‘Europe of Fatherlands.’” It's just the fact they use those words you think would scare the Germans because we've been down that road before. “The Fatherland,” when you start talking in those terms and you go far right, it's like this is some scary stuff because they have been known throughout their history for war. That's what they're known for, Syria. Incredible.

“...an association of states that would include a common market and an ‘economic and interest community.’ The AfD also wants to take Germany out of Europe's common euro currency which was introduced in 2002, and replace it with what it calls a ‘transfer union.’ The party admits in the manifesto that a ‘hard cut’ would be counterproductive and proposes renegotiating relations with all the member states as well as other European countries.” So a little bit of language like might be used that, “I'm gonna, we're gonna send 100% tariffs against you.” This is kind of like a negotiating ploy, “We're going to pull out, we're going to get rid of the Euro” and “somebody take it serious.” But then they put this out there, “Well, we'd like to renegotiate.” Who are they going to renegotiate with? Well, when it's all said and done, we know there are going to be 10. Awesome!

Now, coming up to last week in the news since then, **“Putin says Trump Will Help Prevent WW3 In Inauguration Day, Congratulations Message.”**² “Russia congratulated Donald Trump as he takes office

² Durden, Tyler (2025 January 12), [Putin Says Trump Will Help Prevent WW3 In Inauguration Day Congratulations Message | ZeroHedge](#)

as US president on Monday, with President Putin making statements expressing hope for speedy resumption of official contacts between the two countries. ‘We're hearing the statements of the newly elected US president and members of his team about the desire to restore and direct contacts with Russia, which were halted by the outgoing administration,’ Putin began. That's when he stressed, ‘We also hear his statement about the need to do everything to prevent world war three.’ A separate translation on the televised national security speech reads as follows: ‘We hear, referring to Trump's statements, of the need to prevent World War III. We undoubtedly welcome such a disposition and congratulate the elected U.S. president.’”

So kind of reading between the lines sometimes on some of these things, its incredible what's taking place in the world. There are those who realize that they're being pushed to a certain point. That's what part of Europe has been doing for quite a while through Ukraine. Russia appears to not really want, I mean who wants to have an all-out nuclear war? You know what it's going to do, and he's said this so many times, even Putin. He knows what the end of that's going to be, and he's tried to shake up other countries to think about it, to give it credibility. Then he reminds everyone, “We have hypersonic missiles, and they can carry nuclear weapons, you don't,” and that kind of thing. And so he throws that out there, but to be the one who does it? It's not something that anybody really wants to have. What way does the wind blow? Right back on him. And if there are enough of them, where does it go? Well, they're going to suffer a lot, and he knows that. So do they really want that?

But the world, because of what's taking place, there's a being out there who's pushing, and God is allowing it, to prepare minds to do what they're going to do and fulfill prophecy. What God said is going to come to pass. That's why Herbert Armstrong could tell the world, “There are going to be ten nations that come together in Europe.” And to know what they're going to do, toward the U.S. Ten years ago, couldn't see this one iota as far as news, or world events was concerned, and now it's right in front of us, it really is. It doesn't take a whole lot.

Another article here: “**The Left Is More Unpopular Than Any Time Since The Cold War, Except**, this is an article from *Tabloid* or newspaper in Britain, **Except In Starmer's Britain.**”³ Meaning, he's not of the same mindset. He's doing things that really are pushing at Russia right now, where the rest of Europe wants to back away from that. They really are trying to back away from pushing Russia, at Russia anymore. They're actually backing away from helping Ukraine more and threatening not to send more to Ukraine. And so this is, this is unique and powerful, it really is. Whether they can say, or bring about a point in time, where they say, “It's resolved and we're gonna have a peace treaty,” or whatever. We don't know what's gonna come. But something keeps stirring up things at some point here, and where it'll end, we don't know. That's why we have to watch.

³ Eijsberg, Meike & Crisp, James (2025 January 16), [The Left is more unpopular than any time since the Cold War – except in Starmer's Britain](#) | The Telegraph

Another article here, **“Russia Re-Arming Faster Than Thought For Possible Attack On NATO.”**⁴ So this is, again, from Great Britain. If Great Britain feels this way, or people in Great Britain feel this way, this reveals, sometimes, the mindset. That's why sometimes I don't mind some articles that come out of RT, Russian News, if you will. I think one's called *Sputnik* or something like that. Anyway, you can tell by the name, generally, if it comes out of Russia. But it shows a mindset of how people are thinking in different parts of the world. If it comes out of Deutschland, Germany, it shows how some of them are thinking over there. And so you put these things together and it gives a picture of how people think. It's not that they're all 100% true, but there's a lot of truth in them, to a point, as to how they view it, and what makes them tick, what makes them think, what makes them make various policy changes and so forth. And right now, Britain is pushing at the bear. More than anybody else in the world, mind-boggling.

Another one here, **“Asylum Seekers Caught With 30,000 High-Caliber Rifle Rounds In Arizona.”**⁵ “President Donald Trump's imminent executive orders addressing the illegal alien invasion, border crisis, and cartel violence could not come soon enough as a new report out of Arizona says a multi-agency investigation led to the arrest of several asylum seekers and a US citizen in position of 30,000 rounds of ammunition. Sheriff Mark Daniels of Cochise County, Arizona revealed Sunday in a Facebook post that, in mid-January, Cochise County Counter Narcotics, Trafficking Alliance assisted Homeland Security Investigations and Bureau of Alcohol and Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives seized 10,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition.”

You know .50 caliber, that's a huge machine gun. That's a biggie. And you think, and then it goes on telling about all this other, 19,000 rounds of some other ammunition that I've never even, don't even know the size of. But there are some things, rumbling around out there right now, that there are so many who have come across the border, that there are things talking about, some of the organizations, terrorist organizations that we've been smacked by in times past, that they have thousands of people here and they're looking to do something far, far, far greater than 9/11. It's kind of in some of the things that are scuttlebutt around that's in supposedly intelligence agencies and stuff. Don't know whether it's true or not, but I'll tell you what, we do some of the stupidest things, but nothing like that should shock us. You think of what they could do if they really are armed and there are hundreds or thousands and go into various cities, go into various malls. If on one day something happens, it shouldn't come as a shock to us. We should be prepared in the mind.

Another interesting article, something out of China: **“Challenges to Xi Jinping Grow From Party, People, And PLA.”**⁶ Talking about this individual named Lam concluded, ““The gradual, though relentless dwindling of Xi's authority, could adversely impact Beijing's plans to reflate the economy or to repair relations with the West.”” This isn't a small thing because, again, this is a very troubled region of

⁴ Kilner, James (2025 January 20), [Russia rearming faster than thought 'for possible attack on Nato'](#) | The Telegraph

⁵ Durden, Tyler (2025 January 20), [WTF: Asylum Seekers Caught With 30,000 High-Caliber Rifle Rounds In Arizona | ZeroHedge](#)

⁶ ANI, via World News, Beijing (2025 January 21), [Xi Jinping: Challenges to Xi Jinping grow from Party, people and PLA - The Economic Times](#)

the world, and he's having trouble now, in his authority, in China. But you're not hearing, we don't. I haven't seen it on all news anywhere over here, frankly. And yet these things exist out there and people will do some crazy things sometimes when it comes down to holding power. It says, "On the economic side," and they're in bad shape, it could be a whole lot worse if a president does something to them, slapping terrorists and slapping things, happening on there, and then that power leaves him and who gets it anyway, "the monetary and fiscal stimulus announced since September is far from sufficient to assuage local government debt."

"Xi has no desire to give up the reins of power, and he will continue to grimly hold onto them through all the current ups and downs.' The Hong Kong professor added, 'Xi seems uninterested in changing course. The continued lack of reports on his succession planning reinforces the sense that he intends to remain in power until 2032.' One wonders whether outright protest against Xi will boil over between now and then. Lam believes a number of top brass in the PLA," of People's Liberation Army, "are unhappy too, amidst mass firings and political turmoil." So again, these things are happening all over the world whether things are swinging to the right, people are trying to gain greater power in their own countries, and these are the things that lead into war, to world wars. So again, it's why I'm going through these things so that we're prepared in the mind.

Here's an article, it says, "**German Parliament To Consider Banning AfD Next Week.**"⁷ Sounds like something would happen over here, you know? But it's happening over there and they can't do it because they have a lot of power. There are a lot of people persuaded on the right there now. So this is from *Die-Zeit*. "The lawmakers insist that the AfD's agenda runs counter to the German Constitution and poses a threat to the country's democratic order. After being officially nominated as the first candidate for chancellor in the AfD's history, earlier this month, Weidel vowed to put the sabotaged Nord Stream gas pipelines back into operation should her party emerged victorious. She also promised to implement harsh immigration policies and scrap green initiatives."

Things are moving to the right, and when Germany moves to the right, that's not always a good thing. It hasn't been throughout history. "Last month, the 45 year old politician also opposed the continued supply of military aid to Ukraine. Around the same time, AfD co-leader..." We have to understand why. Because it's depleting them of finance, of power. It's causing problems with themselves, their industry, with their oil and gas reserve that they can receive into their country from them. So it's an economic thing. It's also another matter that comes down to that they don't want to have a nuclear war. They fear that that can happen, starting with Ukraine. And NATO keep pushing, so they want to back away from it. They want to leave NATO!

"...around the same time, AfD co-leader, Tino Chrupalla argued that Germany needed to consider to what extent, speaking of NATO, is still useful for us. The right-wing party has also suggested holding a

⁷ World News (2025 January 21), [German parliament to consider banning top opposition party – Die Zeit — RT World News](#)

referendum on exiting the European Union and the Eurozone.” I hope we heard what Trump had to say when he talked about the fact that he got on to them before about NATO, that if they're not giving their 3%, he says, “A lot of them are only giving 2%.” He talked about how Poland was always giving their fair share and more. But now he said, “I really think they should be paying 5%.” How do you think that goes over in these countries?

Anyway, I could read about, **“Florida Having Its Heaviest Snow Fall In The State's History.”**⁸ I think we're all aware of that. Crazy world, some of the things going on. Another article here, talking about **“The Last Time we faced THIS Was 2008.”**⁹ Things going on in the economy, things are just holding on by a thread and it all works together. It's all happening at the same time. I don't know which ones to read here.

Another one here, **“Trump Calls On NATO Nations To Increase Defense Spending.”**¹⁰ Yeah, I just mentioned that. **“Remigration Now,”** AfD again, **“Weidel calls for mass deportations after Afghan Migrant Stabs 2-Year-Old to Death.”**¹¹ So things happen, and so people use that to give their message, strength, and backing, and so forth, same as what's happening over here. **“Trains Axed In Schools Forced To Close As UK Braced For 100mph Storm Éowyn Winds.”**¹² It says, “It hit Ireland and Scotland, hurricane force winds, grounded flights...” You know, you think what's happening in California, and the fires were out there and now you have when it's cold like that and the snow and so forth, you have winds like that, I can't even imagine it.

“Bird Flu Forces Long Island, New York Farm To Kill 100,000 Ducks.”¹³ Well, they've been killing tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of chickens for a long time, catching this stuff, and that's why a lot of chicken keeps going up in price and hard to find eggs, and some of the kind of eggs you might want, and instead there are a whole bunch of yellow ones out there you can have if you want them, but hey. **“Egg Prices Catapult Into ‘Blue Sky Breakout’ As Bird Flu Sparks Worsening Shortage.”**¹⁴

⁸ Wulfeck, Andrew (2025 January 21), [Florida sees heaviest snowfall in state's history as winter storm slams South | Fox Weather](#)

⁹ ITM Trading (2025 January 22), [The Last Time We Faced THIS was 2008 | ZeroHedge](#)

¹⁰ Fox News, On Air (2025 January 23), [Trump calls on NATO nations to increase defense spending | Fox Business Video](#)

¹¹ Durden, Tyler (2025 January 24), ["Remigration Now" – AfD's Weidel Calls For Mass Deportations After Afghan Migrant Stabs 2-Year-Old To Death | ZeroHedge](#)

¹² Grandjean, Mathilde (2025 January 23), [Trains axed and schools forced to close as UK braced for 100mph Storm Eowyn winds | MSN Evening Standard, via AP News](#)

¹³ Heuer, Mike (2025 January 23), [Bird flu forces Long Island, N.Y., farm to kill 100,000 ducks - UPI.com](#)

¹⁴ Durden, Tyler (2025 January 23), [Egg Prices Catapult Into 'Blue-Sky Breakout' As Bird Flu Sparks Worsening Shortage | ZeroHedge](#)

“Donald Trump Pulling U.S. Troops From Europe And Blow To NATO Allies.”¹⁵ You think, “If we start pulling them out...” I don't even want to go there. **“U.S. Home Sales In 2024 Fell To The Lowest Level Since 1995.”**¹⁶ Anyway, this world is, things may go to the right, but it's in in absolute shambles. Things are an absolute mess, and it's too late for the world to recover. That's where we are.

¹⁵ van Brugen, Isabel (2025 January 23), [Donald Trump Pulling US Troops From Europe in Blow to NATO Allies: Report - Newsweek](#)

¹⁶ Mena, Brian (2025 January 24), [US home sales in 2024 fell to lowest level since 1995 | CNN Business](#)