

This will be *Part 3* of the series entitled *Our Oath to God*. Last Sabbath, we ended in Deuteronomy 8, of which there is one verse that needs to be repeated here at the beginning of this sermon today.

Deuteronomy 8:18—Now you shall remember... And as I have mentioned there, you know, don't forget, it's as instructed in this chapter, which is a word that has to do with "to mislay something." That's where the root of this word comes from, as being oblivious to or a lack of attention to.

So, our history is one where this has happened a lot in the Church. And we're warned over and over again, don't let those things happen. And probably the seven Church eras, especially toward the end, reflect some of the greatest of that warning because the last era was one of not going to sleep, not being lukewarm. And that's what we have to address in our lives, to make sure we are focused. Because if we let down, if we don't remember the things we should and keep focused like we should, then that's what takes place.

Now you shall remember the Eternal, your God. Keep focused on God. He is our life. **...for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.** And so, again here, I think of situations where in times past people spoke of the law, things about tithing, and so forth, and the promises God gives of wealth. It's not about a... God does bless us mightily, and He intervenes for us over and over again in so many things. I've seen this in the Church for so long. And we are exceedingly blessed on a physical plane. But what we should be looking to is what God has promised, that is far beyond that, far beyond what's temporary, and far beyond what's in this world. And that's what it's all about. These other things just point to that. That's what they direct us to.

So again here, **You shall remember the Eternal your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant.** So that's what it's about. It's about His covenant. **...which He gave oath to your fathers, as it is to this day.** So, it's not about swearing, as we talked about last Sabbath. It's about an oath. It's about an oath that God gave, and He established it, and it begins with all that has to do with Joshua the Christ, the Messiah. And then everything else is built upon that because He is the beginning, the first of the firstfruits. He is the foundation of it all.

And so, the oath is about what's ahead. It's about the promises that we can receive, that we can inherit and have from God that He has planned for us for so long and wants to give to everyone. We have to make the choices to want it. We have to make the choices to fight for it, because it is a fight.

So, last Sabbath, it was stated that God has given His oath to us that we can inherit all things in everlasting life in His Family—that's what it's all about—in His Family, Elohim. God's oath is promised to us if we keep our oath to Him. Keep our word, that which we committed to from the very beginning. We give our oath to God that we would be faithful in seeking to place Him first in our life.

That's what we did at baptism. When we went under the water, that was the beginning of it, and that's where the oath was initially made. That's what it's all about: our oath to God and then keeping our word from then on.

Let's turn over to Ezekiel 16. It's amazing how there are so many things that are written that are about physical events, in many ways, of things that have happened in times past, but all molded and fashioned in a way to teach things for the future, of what God is doing and how God is doing it.

Ezekiel 16:1—Again, the word of the Eternal came to me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations. Now, if we look back in time, and we look back in the time of many of the prophets, things that have been written, and if you talk about the city of Jerusalem, certain things will come into your mind. And in times past, oftentimes, when we have read scripture and events that have taken place in times past, oftentimes, things don't come to the mind that really should be in the mind on a spiritual plane. Because this Jerusalem is about what God is building. It's about what God is creating. It's not about a physical location, what so many people call "the Holy City," or even "the Holy Land." There's nothing holy about it.

Holy has to do with being set apart for holy use and purpose by the power of Almighty God, and we know that process. It's in His Church. It's about preparing a family. It's about building up Jerusalem, that one day it will be manifest, made manifest. But it has a beginning, and it's one in which it's a matter of the Church being an embryo waiting to be born, that those things become manifest spiritually.

Not a literal city by any measure. It's not what it's about. It's about what it means, what it means to God, what it should mean to us, what God is building.

"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abomination." So, we should know what this is about. It's about those who are called in the beginning, because once we are Jerusalem, once we have fulfilled those things, once we are in Elohim, these things are all past. This is before that. And the only time this happens is while we're in the Church, while we're in the Body of Christ. That's where this process begins. That's where the oath is so important, the oath we gave to God. That's where His oath to us is so meaningful. Because this is when we need it, during that process, in order to arrive in Jerusalem fulfilled, in order to be in Mount Zion, in order to be in God's Kingdom, in order to be in Elohim.

So, awesome, what God has placed before us. But this is where it begins, and that's what this is about. "Warn Jerusalem about her abominations." Ever since I've been in the Church, there have been abominations that have been in the Church of God. There have been ministers that have done abominable things, if you want to use that word. (Think I said it right.)

Anyway, you think, different ones who turned in different directions, went off on tangents, rebelled against Herbert W. Armstrong as God's apostle, rebelled against the Church, rebelled against God, rebelled against Christ when different doctrine came out, as an example.

The very first I remember was around '72 when Herbert Armstrong began to talk about there's a spirit essence in the mind of human beings. It's not physical. That's what makes us different from animals. And he went through and

explained that in the book. And there were those who began to believe and to teach (different ministers), "He's teaching the immortality of the soul." You think, "Duh, he's not, either." He didn't say anything like that.

But that's all they could hear. Revealing something was wrong with those ministers, probably from the beginning, but for a long, long time, they were off the wall. They were not in the Body of Christ. They were not in the Church, though they were allowed to continue on in their course because it wasn't seen or known or it wasn't made manifest what they were doing yet. So, they left, and they took a lot of people with them.

And then Pentecost, next one. And then later in the '70s, when Herbert Armstrong had the sickness, the heart attacks and so forth, and people began to vie for power, leaders in the church. We're not talking about people in the Church out in different outlying areas. We're talking about people right at headquarters. Abominations, one after another. The Church has never not known abominations. Paul starts talking about them very early on. Incredible!

Incredible, what we have to go through to be molded. Because without those things, we wouldn't grow as quickly or with the ability that we are able to have by the experience of what we can see, what we can learn from it. And that's what we're to glean. We learn how to judge in a right way, according to God's way, according to God's spirit, according to the judgments that are of God, not our own will and our own way of seeing things.

All these things, the molding and fashioning that goes on through our mind, these things are valuable for us to learn from. That's why God allows them. He said, "Don't take the tares away. Let them stay with it." Let them stay together with what He's working with. The reason for that is to learn, is to grow, is to be able to be molded and fashioned, to have those experiences, to be able to see things and say, "You know, that's wrong. That shouldn't be done."

Things in Cincinnati that happened here while we were here, things we should be able to see and say, "You know, that just isn't God's way. That isn't how God does things." The way people argued and fought at basketball games and volleyball games and softball games, and all the other things. Between churches, "Who has the best choir? Who has the best-dressed choir?"

You know, that's, that's what was happening when I was here as an associate. "Who has the best-dressed choir?" And both felt they had the best dressed and looked down upon the others. I mean, it was snobbish. It was worldly. Where was God? It was an abomination. Those things should never have been done. Someone, if they'd been close to God, filled with God's spirit, would have addressed those things and said, "This arguing, this bickering back and forth needs to stop." And it should've been taught in the Church, "We shouldn't be like that. We shouldn't treat other people like this." So what if we go there and we have the worst-dressed choir? So what if you don't sing all that well? You put your heart into it, do the best you can. Anyway, make a joyful noise. Rejoice in that.

But to get to a point where we just act like everybody else in the world? Where's God's Church? Where's God's spirit? So, we learn through that.

Most of my training revolved around what not to do. This is wrong. This isn't, this isn't the way God is. This isn't how we're to act.

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations and say, Thus says the Lord Eternal to Jerusalem.

Interesting how it's stated here, the description that's given. **Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan.** Nothing to do with God, nothing to do with God's people in the sense of a physical nation of what He was working with.

Your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite. This wasn't picking on the Hittites and the Amorites. It was showing a difference here between different ones, primarily that God was working with Israel at this particular time. It's who He chose to work through, candidly, in many ways, to show that they couldn't keep His way anyway. That's what their witness is. The ark of the witness (the testimony), the ark of the covenant. It has both names because the law, the Bible, if you will, at that time, Deuteronomy, it was inside there.

And the witness was against Israel. That's why it's called the ark of the witness, the ark, if you will, of the testimony. Because the testimony is, you read through Deuteronomy, and you see they did not keep God's ways. They rebelled over and over and over again, a powerful testimony.

So, **From your birth, your nativity, you were from the land of Canaan. Your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite. In your nativity on the day you were born, your naval cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you.** Now, we can read this as an interesting kind of story physically, but it's a spiritual one. It's about the difference between what we are like before God calls us. We have nothing. We're not being worked with. We're in a world that's not being worked with. And no one was there to take care of us from the moment we were born, on a spiritual plane. We have nothing until God calls us.

We're not the children of God on this earth. Mankind is not referred to spiritually, in that respect, in any fashion or form, as the children of God. They're God's creation, mankind is. The other part happens later. So, we're on our own to do whatever we desire. Choices, choices, choices. And it isn't about God's calling or being called or being worked with. Very few were worked with in the first 4,000 years. Awesome!

So "In your nativity on the day you were born, your naval cord was not cut, and nor were you washed in water to cleanse you." So, what is that about? We ought to know if we see spiritually. Don't we...? We need to be cleansed. We start out carnal, physical human beings as soon as we're born, and it starts growing and growing and growing and growing, and that carnality gets worse and worse, and our attitudes and our spirit turn more and more inward because we're selfish human beings.

"Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" rule us. We don't rule ourselves; mankind doesn't. Not really. They think they do, but they don't when it comes to God and God's purpose for their existence, our existence. And so, no one was there. That's what God is saying.

You were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling clothes. No eye regarded you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. There was no one who could do anything about it to make this different. It's just what everyone is born into in the world and has been for the past 6,000 years.

But you were thrown out into the open field as one loathed from birth to be forgotten. That's powerful. That's humanity. That's just what it is. Because it hasn't, it doesn't, it doesn't have any life, true life, true meaning and purpose in life until God's calling, until there's a relationship with God. That's what He's talking about here.

Now, when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your own blood, Live! Live! When does God do that? When do we really begin to live? Living a physical life isn't the life God has intended for human beings, and yet it may be, when it's all said and done, the majority choose that. They just want this physical life and will not want God. I'm not going to be shocked at all by any measure that the overwhelming vast majority of mankind, when it's all said and done toward the end, will not have chosen God, do not want Him, do not want to be told how to live life. Just live what we have the best we want in our own way and be satisfied. There are those minds, the minds of so many in this world.

Now, when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you and your blood, Live! Yes, I said to you and your blood, Live! I made you thrive like a plant in the field, and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. This only happens once we're begotten, brethren. It's what this is about. It's a story of how God works with mankind.

Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare. And we are. And so, God is using these analogies to teach us something that's on a physical plane that we need to grasp and comprehend the beauty of on a spiritual plane.

When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed, your time was the time of love. So, I spread my wing... We should understand what wings, how wings are used in the scriptures, when you're covered with wings. It's a word that's used for wing, part of a covering, a skirt, but all about protection prophetically, if you will.

So, I spread my wing over you and covered your nakedness. When does God do that? He begins to do it as soon as we're baptized. He begins to draw us to that, to be able to have the ability to make that choice and wants us to make the right choice to live, to choose life. And that's up to us. And if we do it and we go through the process and we want that, what He offers, then there's a relationship that can be developed with God where He can begin to pour out His love upon us even more.

Because it's about God's love being poured out upon us. Because before that, God hasn't poured out His love upon this world yet, upon mankind. He doesn't until He brings us into a personal relationship with Him. Awesome to grasp how blessed we are to be able to have that.

So again, "I put my wing over you and covered your nakedness." It's about not being clothed. It's about things that are spiritual and what God can give to us and help us grow in.

Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you. That only happens one time in our life, and it's when we go under the water, when we say we want to be baptized, and we want the impregnation of God's holy spirit in us. That's when this begins, that oath, that covenant. That's when the covenant takes effect. Before that, God has not... He doesn't have a covenant with anyone in this world except those who are begotten of His holy spirit. And then that promise is there from Him.

Then it's up to us to hold onto that, to grasp what we committed ourselves to, to what we promised God in our word to Him, that we belong to Him, we do not want to seek our own will but His, and we want to be able to be forgiven of sin always. And we accept and desire that from the very beginning, to be cleansed of all of our past sins. And then to have the ability that He continue, and His Son, to dwell in us on a spiritual plane.

I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine. Awesome! That's when we become God's. Before that, the world hasn't committed to any such thing. They don't know, they don't understand, until they're drawn to this moment in time. Then a choice can be made. And in the Great White Throne, it's going to be the same thing. They're going to be given that opportunity and that choice on a massive scale.

And so many aren't going to be faithful to it, aren't going to want it deep down inside. They may compromise... not compromise, but what is the word? Maybe it'll come to me in a moment. When you go along with others. Conform. Yes. But to have it in their heart to really want it. Because then, that's when people live in secret, and they live in lies, and they really want and live something else up here, and they do things they shouldn't do.

Do you think there's going to be sin in the Great White Throne? Going to be a lot of it. Is there sin in the Church now? Yeah. But there's going to be a lot more at that time because there are going to be a lot of liars at that time, who are lying to God, who are lying to others, that by their conformity they seem to be going along with and agreeing with things, but secretly on their own they have secret desires, secret things that they're actually doing.

And they're not being policed. Now, there's going to be a prevention of certain things from happening, but people can make up their own minds of certain things that they're going to do. And in God's time, He makes it all manifest.

I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine, says the Lord Eternal. So again, things written that have, as a whole, always been taken physically, and people try to understand it on a physical plane, what He's saying, and it's about God's people. It's about the Church.

Verse 9—Then I washed you in water. Literally, that's where it starts. You go down under the water, you start the cleansing process, because you said, we all said, "I accept Joshua the Christ." Now, we might have had a different name at that particular time because of our ignorance, and we didn't know, but "...accept Joshua the Christ, as the Messiah, as the Passover." That's what we're saying.

Then I washed you in water. Yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood. "You were full of sin, and blood was all that waited for you." Death. That's what it's about, "When I saw you in your blood." It's because of sin. And God wants to wash that away out of our lives. Joshua the Christ paid for that as our Passover, only His blood.

I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. Spiritually. It's a spiritual thing. We were impregnated with God's holy spirit, and His life, His spirit is able to continue to come into us.

I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin. It might not sound real exciting to anyone. I like my Skechers. So soft, so comfortable. But you think back then, this was looked upon as something that cost money. Not everybody had that. They were not clothed the way that's being expressed here, this well.

I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. The best of the best, beyond what we can comprehend. And that's what God does to us. We're being given the best, the best of all that's within the universe to give a human being. We are so incredibly, richly blessed. To grasp that, it has to be on a spiritual plane. To recognize what we have, it has to be on a spiritual plane in the mind, in a relationship toward God. We're exceedingly blessed. Clothed? The price that was paid so we could be clothed in God's way of life? Incredible.

I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck. And it wasn't plastic. You know, the best of the best. We're given the best of the best in the universe from God Almighty, to give us even more later on.

And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus, you were adorned with gold and silver. Spiritually? Sometimes it's just hard for us to grasp how much God has given to us, how well we're really adorned above all else in this world, what we've been given.

And your clothing was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry or refined flour, honey, and oil. You were exceeding... So, what we're fed, what we're given on a regular basis, the world's not receiving this. Only God's people. Not the scattered church. The church was scattered, not getting any of this. Deep asleep. And we're blessed to be fed.

You were exceedingly beautiful and succeeded to royalty. It means to a royal household. It's why God's called us. That's where we're headed if we hold on, if we're faithful, keep our oath, keep our word before God, fight for this way of life, seek the help to attain it.

Verse 14. Says, "**Your fame.**" But it's not about the fame, it's about the name. **Your name went out among the nations.** Well, what is that? Well, it's the name we bear, carry, Church of God. And this is what's going to happen. This is what's going to take place. It's a term generally used, among the nations, a word for gentiles, non-Hebrew people. So, in time, goes out to all when they're able to grasp and comprehend. Because there comes a time when the firstfruits are resurrected.

Because of your beauty, for it was perfect from My splendor which I had bestowed on you, says the Eternal. And then the warning, why this was said from the beginning, of what was to go out and remind everyone about, "Son of Man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations."

So, the majority of God's people who have been called and had such opportunities they made the wrong choice.

But you trusted in your own beauty. This is what happens. You know, it's the exact same thing, in essence, that's said about Lucifer, because it's the same thing that is being repeated through time, that all who go in that direction, all who choose that, is what is being chosen. Lifted up by your own beauty, by your own importance, by what you feel you know, by how much you think you know about things you reject now that you didn't reject from the beginning, that you did commit to and made an oath to God about from the beginning. But what happened to that? Where did it go?

But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame. Self. Self gets raised up in importance. It's a horrible thing, and it should be seen by us in that regard, how horrible it really is.

And poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. This is the way God wants us to see it on a spiritual plane. Compared to that which is done on a physical plane – harlotry. Because it's against God. Because it's about being faithful to God.

So, this point of our going through this, our oath to God, we need to take a closer look at what God has to say about the covenant that was established with His people, because there's so much here throughout the Old Testament. And the things that were given back then on a physical plane, they were just that on a physical plane, but they all pictured that which was to be grasped and seen by those with whom God would call on a spirit plane, spiritual plane.

Deuteronomy 17:1—You shall not sacrifice to the Eternal your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or any defect. The Hebrew word here means anything bad, evil, or wicked. So, defect, yes. Anything that's bad on the animal in that regard.

Thought it was kind of interesting when we were in Egypt at one time, in the Cairo area, and it was in the time when they were having their holy days, their holy days, their season of rituals. And they were butchering animals. And there were carts going down roads, on the highway, old carts with boards... just timbers. And they're kind of in... and dead carcasses piled, stacked up. And because of so much of this was going on.

And I don't remember where, but somewhere I got into a conversation with someone about what was happening, and they talked about how they did this and how they gave of the sacrifices that, or whatever it was that they were doing, their purpose of killing the animals to feast upon and sacrifice them. But, of that which they were feasting upon, they would give it to people in the community who needed it, different ones who... But they picked out the animals that were lame. They didn't pick out the best. They made it a point to say, "We don't pick out the best animals. It's the ones that have problems and so forth, and so we kill them." Just the opposite of what God says to be done. Human thinking.

Anyway, to me, it's amazing how far mankind can go off-road on some of these kinds of things. And where'd they get all this? Goes all the way back to Abraham. Everybody went off course different ways, different directions.

So, **you shall not sacrifice such to the Eternal**, it says here, **for this is an abomination to the Eternal your God.** So, it's good for us to think about those things on a spiritual plane. What do we sacrifice to God? How do we sacrifice

to God? What is it we're sacrificing to God? It's not animals. It's about this. And to the degree we're doing it? Just certain things?

If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the Eternal your God gives you, a man or a woman who has done bad... Same word. Been evil, wicked, whatever, but has **done bad in the sight of the Eternal your God in transgressing His covenant...** So, it's showing here, using a physical plane here to say if someone has done certain things against the covenant. So, again, the ark of the covenant, that which was in there, the law, the way of life. Not just the ten commandments, because everything else is in there as well about the law of how they were to live, and many are things that having to do with the judgments of God that stem from those commandments.

Who has gone and served... So, again, as it says here, **...in transgressing His covenant, who have gone and served other gods and worshiped them...** And oftentimes in the Church of God, it's those who basically are worshiping self. Sometimes it's because of an influence from someone else, or maybe a different group or whatever organization or something that someone tries to align themselves with. Or they think they can just teach themselves, as has happened not too long ago here, and they can do all the learning at home that they need. It's like, oh...

...who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven which I have not commanded. So, it uses things here that should be in our minds, "That's atrocious!" Because on a physical plane, they did this all the time. They went against what God said. They brought in, tried to bring into the camp things of other gods. They tried to bring in their worship at different times throughout the migration of the Israelites.

And so, we look at things like this and, indeed, should be appalled at it, but we should be more appalled when we see it on a spiritual plane of what takes place when these things are done. Because spiritually, if we grasp what is taking place, it's far, far worse than what they did here physically. Because they didn't have a spiritual relationship with God. God knew they couldn't keep His law and His way of life. It's written for a testimony, for a witness. We have to have God's help. We have to have God's life living and dwelling within us to make change, and fight against "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride..." self-will. It's a powerful thing.

...which I have not commanded, and it is told you and you hear of it, you shall inquire diligently. Then, if it's indeed true and certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, then you shall bring out of your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing. Here we go again. Same thing. **...any...** Okay, let me see here. **...any defect, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones.** They were to be put to death. So, to go against God in the Old Testament, to try to bring things within the camp, religious ideas, beliefs and so forth, other gods, God said, put them to death. Take them outside the camp and stone them. That's the way it was.

And we need to see it spiritually, and why. God is cleansing the Church before Joshua returns, and why some of the things are being said that are so important to God in a relationship with God. And to be able to judge according to

those things and realize that's the way it has to be. That's what is best. Because some of these people were friends, relatives, husbands or wives who were taken outside the camp and killed.

But they didn't even do a really good job on that. They didn't follow through and obey those things like they should have. And candidly, that's been a lot of the history of the Church as well.

"Whoever is deserving of death..." Who's deserving of death? We all are, unless sin is paid for. That's why we are so unique in a relationship with God. And continually we can go before God and ask God to forgive us of our sins so that He and His Son will continue to dwell in us, so we can continue to dwell in, in spirit and truth, in the Church, in the Body of Christ, in them.

Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses. They shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

That's a hard thing. That's a hard thing. It determines what we have up here, how we think about such things. Because these are hard things to do. Because it's part of taking a stand, it's part of realizing and knowing God's way is best and God's way is right. And nothing comes into Elohim unless it's been cleansed, unless it perseveres, unless it continues in. This is not owed to anyone. We can't do our own thing. We have to be submitted to, yielded to God's way, God's word, God's government, what God is doing in our lives.

And this is why, in many cases, things have not been addressed the way they should have in Philadelphia, and definitely not in Laodicea. Because it's hard. Because some didn't want to make a stand. Many don't want to make a stand. They don't want to go to their brother alone, because they don't want to lose that friendship. We don't want to lose a friendship and go and address something that we know someone has done that is obviously a matter of sin.

Or we won't go to the ministry. Our minds are, well, the ministry will find out, and the ministry will take care. That's the way it used to be. It's like, the ministry will... And by the time we know anything about it, it's too late to help someone. You know, there are scriptures that talk about there is an ability, if there's hope of an ability to address something, to go to someone, and to help them to come to see what they've done. In the early stages is when it's best and when it's needed the most. But if it goes on and on and our mind becomes hardened to it, then it becomes almost impossible. And my experience is most of the time, because it's gone on for so long, and the mind becomes set in something different.

So, this concept sometimes used to ... I don't want to say it fully, but ticked me off royally when someone would make such a comment, or find out, "Well, you've known this for how many years, and you're just now going to address it now when it's a little too late? Might have been able to help earlier on. Might have been able to help a brother (sister)," spiritually, brethren.

So again here, here it says the witnesses who come forward, they're the first to put their hands up there. That's a hard job to do. It's hard. To mention if you can't, if there's a situation where it's gone beyond what you're able to

deal with, and you have a responsibility. Some don't want to tell the ministry. Don't go to the ministry because it's like "Huh, I'm not a rat. I'm not a..." Whatever. Whatever's in the mind, "I'm not going to go tell on somebody." Well, then you don't really love them at all. You're really lying.

I mean, that's the way it was. That's the way to understand things in times past. If you don't want to...if you don't want to love the way God says to love, then you don't grasp it spiritually what needs to be done. Because it's for the Body. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

But if helping someone to come through it, to be saved, to repent, by all means, before it's too late. And it may be anyway, because you can't change anyone's mind. It has to be their own choice. But the earlier something is addressed, the better. That's why, in the scattered body out here, the longer time goes on and the more that people live a Protestant life, separated from God, the less hope there is of their being able to repent. That's just a reality of life. It's a horrible thing, but it is a true spirit reality.

So, it says here, "So you shall put away the evil from among you." So, that's our responsibility, and it really reveals a lot about whether we're of the same mind with God, whether we're looking to God on a spiritual plane and seeking to judge things spiritually, or by our own way of thinking. And that puts us to the test. That's why these things are allowed to exist and have been for a long, long time. Because we can learn through it, we can grow through it, as hard as it is.

So, I want to read from *Part 1* here, what it said in **Hebrews 10:28. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.** See, that's what this was all about. That's what we read earlier on in *Part 1*. **Of how much worse punishment do you suppose will be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God under foot?** Because it's about baptism. It's about what starts at that point in time.

"Of how much worse punishment do you suppose will be thought worthy of those who have trampled the Son of God underfoot?" Because it's about Joshua the Christ, it's about baptism, it's about that oath, it's about that promise, it's about understanding what He paid for, giving His life and being thankful for it, being able to have all sins forgiven, and then go back to sin, and that sacrifice then comes to a point where it means little or nothing? So, how much sorer punishment?

So, great prices are paid, and oftentimes in times past, I think of situations, and sometimes people go way, way too far. There are different things of judgment, sometimes, in this as well. And that's another matter. But anyway.

...and counted the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified a common thing. So, we have to understand the seriousness of it, and I marvel at how God, this time, is giving us more and more to understand, to see. Because we need to see it, and because God is training a Body to see and go through different experiences in a way that are going to be used in the future. In ways you can't even begin to grasp, but in ways that will be exceedingly rewarding, meaningful, and profitable for others, to help others in this way of life, and to grasp the seriousness of what it means and what we're going through right here and in judging.

So, it says here, **...which were sanctified a common thing, and insulted, or brought insult to, the spirit of grace.** What God has sacrificed for so long to bring to us, to give to us. Awesome.

So, going back to Deuteronomy 17 now. **Deuteronomy 17:8—If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the Eternal your God chooses.** So, sometimes, this is akin to what I've been talking about, sometimes there are things we can stand up to or for and say to an individual that says something, maybe something, a conspiracy thing or something, say, "Well, we don't really teach that in the Church, and that's not good, it's not healthy, it doesn't agree with what we've been instructed in and been shown how..." Anyway, whatever, and keep it short and sweet, and maybe help someone to say, "Oh, you're right."

Or if they don't and they continue on and they continue talking to others, then this is the step, because you have no ability to deal with it, so you take it to the Church, the ministry. And so that's, in essence, what it's talking about here in some of this, something that can't be dealt with, can't be worked with. And God's government is there for a reason.

And you shall come to the priest, the Levites, and to the judge in those days and inquire. They shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in the place which the Eternal chooses. Now you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you, according to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you; according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do. So, there's always order, and there's always to be order in God's Church, though we haven't always experienced that in times past.

You shall not turn aside...

But you know what? Even if something isn't being done right in an area and there is government there, you have a responsibility. People had a responsibility in times past to still follow that chain in a proper way, because they were being judged according to what they did. And if they did their part right before God, and someone else didn't do their part, then that's upon them. Hope that makes sense.

You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. So again here, things that are really to be taken far more seriously than we have in times past, and not understood as well in times past, the oath we make to God.

Verse 12—Now, the person who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the Eternal your God... Now, to act presumptuously, that's being self-willed, to take things into their own hands, to do things their own way, regardless of what anyone says. That's been a large part of the history of the Church as well.

So, **...the priest who stands to minister there before the Eternal your God or the judge, that person shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. Now all the people shall hear and fear and no longer act presumptuously.**

Very much about God's government and how God works in our lives. And so, we're to grasp these things on a spiritual plane. And with the physical example of something that was made in Hebrews that I just read as well, to realize these things are so much more powerful when we understand them spiritually about our relationship that we have with God and an oath we have made to God.

Let's turn over to Exodus. **Exodus 19:1—In the third month, after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the wilderness of Sinai. For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.** So, we know the timing of this and what was taking place and why it mentions it like it does. Go from one Holy Day season to another.

And Moses went up to God, and the Eternal called to him from the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings. So, this matter of wings again. It's about this protection; it's about this covering that God gives. And He gave to them on a physical plane, protection.

...that I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. So, as a physical nation, as a physical people. He didn't call them, He didn't bring them there for a spiritual purpose, but for a physical one. And everything that happened then with Israel from that time forward, all to learn from. Except for those that God called out at different times, like David, a good example, different ones that God worked with personally, but on a spiritual plane, totally different manner. But this was only to the degree of a physical relationship.

Different than the other nations. God hadn't called and worked with any other nation to be a people that were to live by a certain way of life, and God would work with them to a certain point and a certain way. Because they still had great carnality. That doesn't change until you're called, and you begin to have, actually work on this to change this. We still have a lot of carnality, but far less than when we were baptized. At least we better have.

Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant... Because these go together. That covenant. The covenant is about how we live life. It's about the way of life that God offers us and gives to us.

So, **if you will obey My voice and keep My covenant...** So, it's to listen to God, what God tells us, a desire in our heart and our mind. **...then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people. For all the earth is Mine.** So, this goes way beyond any physical relationship here now in what it's talking about. And so many places in scripture in the Old Testament do, because it points to something in the future. Incredible. And this is one example of it as well.

The only time that people can really begin to truly obey God's voice and to keep His covenant, if we understand that covenant, is when He works with us individually or as a body in a Church.

Then you shall be a special treasure to Me... So again, it's that looking forward to that time, of what's going to transpire in time. **...then you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests...** It's what God desires to give to us. **...and a holy nation.** Not holy until God's in it. And so, it begins within the Church, but is not finalized until we're actually in

Elohim, and then it's complete. Mount Zion, Israel, true Israel, spiritual Israel, Elohim. **These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.**

Let's go way back here now to Revelation 5. Again here, just seeing some of these things, being reminded of them, what it's talking about indeed on a spiritual plane. To become a kingdom of priests, to become a holy nation, and how that's used in other places in scripture. A good example here in **Revelation 5:8—Now when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.** So, even this uses physical examples of something that is spiritual that we understand – the incense, the prayers.

And they sang a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its Seals, for you were slain, and you have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every nation and tongue and people and nation. So, you think of how God is working with mankind for the past 6,000 years, and working with different people, and the vastness of the earth, of what took place. You think of the time of Noah, and then starting all over again, and then nations finally coming out of that. Incredible.

...and have made us kings and priests to our God. How blessed are we to see such things on a spirit plane in God's Family? It says **...and we will reign on the earth.** So, a kingdom of priests, a kingdom of kings if you will. That's why Christ is called the King of kings. It's not about kings on the earth physically, it's about those kings who come with Christ.

So, to grasp what we've been given sometimes, well, something we need to keep in the forefront of our mind to realize how blessed we really are.

1 Peter 2:5—You also, as living stones... Good analogy, a good thing it's showing here in a way we are as physical, carnal human beings, but also spiritually, the structure, the cornerstone, if we look at Christ and how He's spoken of, and the building here.

...as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house. So again here, God likens that, because it's a matter of construction. It's a matter of something God is doing, and we're blessed to be a part of that. We don't know where we fit. We don't know how we fit, but we have to yield and choose to yield ourselves to the process, because we desire what God knows is best for us, the best place we can be for all time—we can't comprehend that—that which will be the most rewarding to us for all time. It's hard for the carnal mind, the human mind, to grasp that, even with God's spirit.

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Joshua the Christ. So, the process begins while we're a part of the Church, and while we're growing, and the things that take place in us that have to do with the transformation of the mind, and then a work beyond that once we're in God's Family that, again, we have no comprehension of.

Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect and precious. Now he who believes on him... That's why I hate how the world and traditional Christianity talks about just accepting

Jesus, or some of the terminology that's used. "Do you believe?" What does that mean? "All you have to do is just say His name." It's like, come on. It's so shallow. But they can't help what they don't know, what they don't grasp and don't comprehend. But sometimes we can be affected by that if we're not careful. We have to grasp and comprehend what this means.

We believe He was the Passover. We believe He is the Messiah to come. He's not yet here, but He is the Messiah because it's a matter of the King of kings being established when He returns. And that's when that government begins to be established then on the earth. But to grasp and comprehend what it means, that He is our Passover, it's in our everyday life. Because we're supposed to be repenting on a continual basis, so that God's spirit will continue in us on a continual basis, day by day by day.

If we can't see the things we do wrong, the things we say that we shouldn't say, the things that come into our mind that we may have a battle with and have to fight against, and not let it stay there. To fight against... Because that's where the battle is. If it goes into physical things, the physical pulls and so forth that people have, and they yield to those, then there's a lot farther to go. But that's generally where it starts after baptism, and you have to work on that, and work on that, and it becomes more and more refined in your being. It's a constant battle to fight against self. It's a constant matter and battle, if you will, to repent and desire God to help us, to live in us. Because we can't do this on our own.

So **...elect and precious. Now he who believes on Him...** And so that's what it means to believe on Him – to believe what He taught. And one of the primary things He taught from the very beginning was He was the Passover. He stayed forty days after His death with the disciples to help them adjust to something they had never...they couldn't grasp and comprehend fully. Of what it is to be in God's Family, of what it is, of things that were coming ahead for them that they couldn't comprehend, to know what it was like. To have Him with them, to be able to continue to teach them for a time, and to be told then He's going to be leaving them and not be with them physically anymore, but preparing them for things ahead.

Helping them to adjust to something that no human being had ever experienced. Someone who had been resurrected from the dead, and someone who was able to talk with them. Someone who was able to eat and show them what it's like to be spirit, that you can do those things. We're going to be able to manifest ourselves physically. We're not going to be spirit all the time, flipping around from one place to another. You gotta stop once in a while, smell the roses, enjoy life. There are things we can do. Physical bodies. Eat, drink, visit on a physical plane with people who are still physical. But even in God's Family, later on, think it's just always going to just be spirit? That's why there's a physical universe out there to be worked with.

Now, he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame. If we believe and know who He is and trust Him, understand the oath that's been given, God gives us everything we need to come through the hardest of times, doesn't matter what it is.

Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious. But to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. Nothing's going to stop what God is building, what God is creating.

Though there be many who are going to go by the wayside, who aren't going to hold onto that, who will not desire, who will not obey God, who will not hold onto and do what God has given them to do, who do not grasp that He is precious. Awesome, the opportunities we have.

...and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. Mind-boggling. A rock of offense. To where it becomes something that a person becomes ashamed of in that regard. Not holding up one's head and say, "Yes, that's what I'm going to do on the Sabbath. Yes, that's what I do every year." "Going to be gone for a period of time, that's what I do every year. Comes at different times." "Yes, Sabbath, Friday sundown, Saturday sundown. That's me. That's what I do." And not be embarrassed by it around others. That, to me, is a horrible thing when the world, we begin to be embarrassed by who we are and what we are and what God has given to us, that we are different and we stand out different. But it happens.

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which also they were appointed. But you are a chosen generation. What an awesome thing. **...a royal priesthood.** We know these scriptures, but it's good to review them from time to time and realize who we are, what God has placed before us.

...a holy nation, His own special people, that you may show forth the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. So again, this word having to do with praises, something that is able to live within us, that we change and we begin living a different life, that we can reflect this from God. It's about the virtues. We are actually able to begin to reflect God in our life, the virtues, the character, the mind, the thinking of God in our conversation, in how we deal with others, and so forth. Because it all comes from God. And if we reflect that in our life because that's what we've chosen and God gives us the ability to do that, to be in agreement with Him and do the things He's shown us, then that's what others are able to see. And that's what this is talking about.

"His own special people, that you may show forth." The word has to do with, yes, not just about praises and how we think about it, but the virtues, the character of, the mind of God, the way God is. "The virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

So grateful we're not the way we were before we were baptized. So grateful we could make that long journey. I remember Herbert Armstrong used to talk about how he saw himself and this old, rusted vehicle, been out in the sun and the rain and just nothing there, worthless. And he used that example for himself. And we should be able to see ourselves, what we were like before. We were nothing. And look what God gave to us.

I think of those examples we read back in Ezekiel there. Incredible. What we were like, we didn't have anything until God called us. We just had life. What a sad thing when that's all people see. They have life, and they just want it their way. They don't want God in it. They don't want to share it, in having to live a certain way.

I'll tell you, that's something that is so powerful in this world right now and in this country. And this is the last area, to me, of the world, in many regards, that's reflecting the biggest change that's taking place in time, just before the days of Noah. It's changing so fast. Minds that are so far out there. You know, there are some who want to hold onto some measure of reasonable thought as a human being, some sobriety in life, some standards to be lived by.

And there are others who want to abandon it all. I mean, that's the way they think. You think, "How can you help that kind of a mind?"

And the reality is, in many cases, it may not be able to be helped. Because that's why God had to destroy the earth and just bring one family through. Because that's how far mankind can go to where their minds become set – set in evil, in perversion, in selfishness, in self-will. They don't want God. They just want what life they have while they have it. And then toward the end, maybe a little remorse as they get old or as something happens and they're about to die. Then it's like, "Wish I'd done this and this and this." Anyway. You think, "Well, that's the thing." It's not all about just this for right now. But that's what people choose and will choose in the future. Incredible.

Who once were not a people but now are the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but have now obtained mercy. Because God has given us His love. He's given us grace, which is a better description here of this. And that's a part of the process. And being called and being able to live this way of life.

We're going to stop there today.

But good to think about it this week, how blessed we are, how rich we truly are and what it means. The importance and the severity of it, too, the seriousness of it, that we all made oath to God when we were baptized. We entered into a covenant relationship with God Almighty, and it's not a small thing to break that covenant. It truly isn't.