

Baptism and Our Oath, Pt. 1

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Last week, we concluded the series entitled, *Our Oath to God*. We've covered the subject by focusing on God's covenant with both Israel of old and also how it applies to the Church, and we have focused on the importance of that oath that God gave to us and especially when it comes to a matter of baptism that we talked about last Sabbath.

We give an oath to God at baptism, and it's a new covenant, and that's when we enter into it with God. So, we're going to be covering some of that information as we go along here. But we also focused how much more important an oath to God is for those in the Church who have been given God's holy spirit. They didn't have God's spirit. Only a few did. And yet, they were judged on a physical plane, if you will, by things they did physically according to the law.

And they couldn't grasp, they couldn't comprehend the spirit of it by any means. It wasn't God's purpose, and it wasn't for them to do that. But it is for the Church. And the seriousness associated with failure to keep that oath in the Old Testament carried with it, when it was carried out, a matter of a death penalty. That's what happened. Although it wasn't carried out as much as it should have been, according to what God said.

There are some analogies there that sometimes apply to situations within the Church as well, in our history and what we've gone through. But God means what He says. So things we say at baptism are very strong because it's an oath that is for good as long as we're in this physical life and all the way to the end until it's over. We see how many in time have gone by the wayside. Far more than who have stayed. The seriousness of all that is far more than what we've really ever comprehended, truly. God is revealing that to us.

So, today's sermon will be part one of a new series that follows in order what we've just covered. This new series is entitled, *Baptism and Our Oath*, this being *Part 1*.

We are going to begin delving more deeply into that oath that we entered into, again, with God at baptism. Because that's what happened, that's what took place. Sometimes people haven't understood that fully, comprehended that fully, but that's what we're doing. That's what we do when we go under the water. There's that which we agreed to of what was said there in that particular ceremony, and we'll be going through that as we go along in this particular series.

But we're going to begin by going back to Hebrews here, Hebrews 11. We're going to begin looking at this having to do with Abraham and Sarah because their calling was about a pattern in God's plan that would lead to what was to become fulfilled in God's Church that would then lead into Elohim.

Traditional Christianity has so messed these things up; things about the law they don't comprehend, they don't understand. They don't understand fully the things about what we're going to be covering here, and so, there's a great deal of confusion in the world. Sometimes it's been confusing within the Church as well.

Hebrews 11:8—By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he would receive as an inheritance. It's really quite an incredible story because you think about ten generations after Noah. Noah was still alive when he was younger. I believe that Noah died when he was around fifty years old, if my memory serves me correctly here. But, incredible to think that here he was in that environment, he knew the stories, he knew what had happened, what had been told to him, and of all that lineage was the primary one that God began to work with to continue on.

And in between that there wasn't a whole lot that was done. But then God has a progressive revelation that He gives, which is an astounding and awesome thing to understand. And yet a slow progression, if you look at it on a physical plane, as far as life is concerned, for 4,000 years before Joshua came. So incredible here, the things that God has done through time. This here is an awesome story.

So, it says "by faith he obeyed." Now, he didn't comprehend a lot of things. It wasn't given to him to understand a lot of things like were given to the Church later on through Joshua. Just that alone, what Joshua came and gave is monumental. How the Church began then and began to build upon those things as things continue to be revealed over time and at different times, especially in the end time through Herbert Armstrong and then on.

We're just blessed to live in the time we live in. That's what I feel. I think what an awesome time to live in, of all time to be alive, this is an incredible time to experience, it really is, in God's plan and God's purpose. And, well, sometimes we don't grasp how blessed we really are.

So, it's a matter of simplicity. He believed God. He believed things Noah had told him and had somewhat of a relationship in that respect, of how he thought in his thinking, again, toward God. Then when he was told to go, it says, basically, he went. He just did what God gave to him. He was willing to leave all family, everything behind, and to move to another part of the world with family, but most of what he had known left behind.

And he went out, not knowing where he was going. Didn't know anything about it. By faith, meaning he believed God. He was going to do what God gave him to do.

By faith, he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob. So, talking about his journeying and what he did then while he was there and their lives. This is what it was like. **...with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.** So, a lineage here of things that would follow.

For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. So what he was told, how much he was told, we don't know, but this was his focus, this was his vision, a desire that God was going to give them something. God was going to build something, and he wanted to be a part of that for whatever was given to him and in the knowledge and understanding that he had.

By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive. So again, she believed God. Not immediately in everything that took place. When you're of a certain age, and you're told something like what she was told, it's quite a startling thing. But again here, it says, **she conceived seed, and she gave birth to a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.** And so, again here, things changed. She accepted it. She received it. Life began in her.

Therefore, from... Now, they've done a horrible job in some of the translations here on what it said. Some of the translations, I'm just going to read what some say. **"Therefore, from one man and him as good as dead, were born as the stars of the sky a multitude."** That's not what it's saying at all. It's really messed up.

There's only one translation that I found of many translations that even gets halfway close. It says, **"Wherefore, also from one were begotten, and that of one who had become dead, as the stars of the heaven of multitude and as sand that is by the seashore, the innumerable."** So that's the closest. It may not make much sense listening to what I just said here, but basically it's saying, **Therefore, from one...** That's what the word is. They put in "man." Man can be used. Different translations, different words here sometimes can be interchangeable, but basically it's the word "one," "from one." Well, who is being talked about in the context? It's about Sarah. Her womb was dead. She was past age. It's talking about her faith, her belief, and what God had said.

Therefore, from one... Not "him." The Greek here, better in context, "this then." **...and from one, this, then dead,** speaking of her, speaking of Sarah. **...and this, then dead, were born as the stars of the sky and multitudes.**

It's even prophetic in that respect because this hasn't happened yet; it's something that would happen in time. And the massiveness of what God was building, this is what this is about. Abraham was looking for the one, toward God, whose builder and maker of this City was God. This is what it's about. That's what's amazing here in the context. It was all about what God is creating, about God's Family. We understand those things. Mount Zion, Jerusalem, on and on it goes. Things that we grasp that God has given.

And here at this point in time, it's just referring back now in Hebrews here to what they had gone through, that they lived by faith. They believed God, and they didn't grasp a whole lot about it, but this is what was going to come out of that beginning, of what started with Abraham and Sarah, both of them.

So again here, talking about **the sand which is by the seashore...** That it's going to be that great in time.

Let's go over to Galatians 3. So, the story here, in essence, begins with Abraham and Sarah.

Galatians 3:6—even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. So, we know the story here. We understand that righteousness is not a matter of something that we're judged by in the sense of how good we are. We're to strive to live God's way of life. We're to ask God for help to be obedient and to grasp and understand the law on a spiritual plane, and to live by it, asking for help to live by it, to think right so that our actions are right. This is a process that began.

It comes through Abraham because this is what Abraham did. It wasn't a matter of how righteous he was. He was certainly living on a plane far better than others. He'd received things from Noah, and he tried to live with what he understood in a right way. And because he believed, God attributed that to him for righteousness – just because he believed, because he believed God. It's a powerful thing.

And then he acted upon it. God gave him certain ability to see or to believe certain things, and he held on to it, the first of it coming through Noah. He just believed. And so again, that was accounted to him for righteousness. No one is righteous. There's only been one, we understand, that was ever righteous, was worthy. The only way that we could have a Passover was because He was righteous. All others have had sin.

So, it wasn't that he didn't sin. It's just that this was his mind. This was his desire to obey God. And because he believed and did the things that God had given to him to the degree of what he knew in his present truth, if you will, God counted that for righteousness. Awesome.

Verse 7—Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Descendants of Abraham, sons of Abraham, if you will, on a spiritual plane.

So, that's what's being given here. Those who are of faith, in other words, have been given the ability to believe things from God and have chosen to live by those things. So, it's a choice to live by what we've been given to believe that determines righteousness. God attributes it to us for righteousness. Because if we really believe, especially in the Church, we're going to strive to live God's way of life, we're going to strive to do the things we're told to do, we're going to strive to conquer and overcome this.

We understand what this is about – lust – “lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” We're selfish. And so, we know we need help. We cry out to God for help. Awesome. It's because of what we believe that we act upon it. Do it perfectly? No. Sin? Yes. Because this nature is always with us, constantly fighting it, becoming more and more refined as time goes along.

You know, you think back to the time when you were first called. Hopefully and prayerfully, this is the way it's worked, that you addressed some of the big things in life that you saw, that you understood as a matter of disobedience and not right with God and tried to live what was right, able to conquer some of the bigger things in your life. But there's so much more since that time that you were baptized that you've been able to learn, you've been able to see that's in the mind, things you needed to fight that you

didn't see when you were baptized. It's a growing process, and it's an overcoming, a conquering process that takes time.

It's like this thing of refining, and as time goes along, we become pure. That's the goal. If you want to look at gold or silver and refining of those things, and the dross comes up, and the longer we're going through that process, of going through a fire, if you will, awesome, we become more refined. There's always growth, though, because it can never be pure, if we understand those analogies in that sense for us.

Therefore, know that those who are of faith are the sons, the children, if you will, of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by faith. So important. It's amazing what we can see, what we grasp and comprehend about this process that the world can't.

And so again here, "foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by faith." Because of what they were given to believe. The gentiles would be able to see and understand the truth and be able to make change in their life and become the descendants of Abraham spiritually, be called the children of Abraham spiritually. Because we have to be saved through the same process, faith, living by the truth. We are blessed to understand and grasp it begins with Passover.

I'll tell you what, writing this book has driven that home. I've been around for a long while and have given many sermons relating to things about our Passover. But because of going through this and seeing the history of what's happened in the world, what happened with Judaism, what happened with traditional Christianity, and seeing more of the seriousness of what God has given to us, the awesomeness of it, it has really driven some things home in a way that, to me, are beautiful and awesome in understanding more deeply things about Joshua and what He did and why He did it and what that should mean to us in our lives.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by faith, preached... This here, the Church had a horrible time with in the beginning. They went through a few decades before this began to level out. They had a very difficult time because in the beginning, those who were called were Jewish and had a Jewish background, and they had a very difficult time with this matter of the gentiles because of all that they had lived their lives when in Judaism, proselytes as well. They had a difficult time of making this transition to accepting gentiles, that God was actually calling and working with gentiles. They had battles, and they felt that there should be certain requirements upon them like they had in their lives, but on a physical plane, because they hadn't grown enough yet to grasp and comprehend what God was doing.

Just like we have to go through that process. Ever since the beginning of Philadelphia, there's been an incredible process going on where God has poured out His spirit in massive ways to reestablish and build upon truth and giving truth that had never been understood in times past. And that's awesome. Truly is.

So, the churches had difficulty making some of those transitions to go from physical to spiritual. It didn't happen overnight, and it wasn't all done during Philadelphia. It takes time, and that's dependent upon what God gives, what Joshua gives to the Church. It's a process. And the farther it goes in time, the more that's poured out, the more that's given.

So again here, **And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by or through faith**, if you will, **preach the gospel to Abraham beforehand**. That's where it started, the gospel, the truth about what God's purpose and God's plan was in a greater way, though not comprehended fully what God was doing with Abraham and Sarah, and what was being promised.

So, it goes on to say ...**saying, In you all the nations shall be blessed**. Awesome. "In you," Abraham and Sarah, an oath that God gave starting at that point in time. **So then, those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham**. Because it's a spiritual matter, and what God promises is on a spiritual plane.

Verse 26—For you are all the sons of God. Now, this is something that really has been driven home in the past year, is that no one is called a son of God on a spiritual plane, if you will, of mankind, except for one. The rest, no one has ever been called the son of God until they receive a calling and the impregnation of God's spirit. They are the sons of God, the children of God.

God isn't working with the rest of the world. They'll have their time when they'll become the children of God. But until then, a process has to take place, especially within the Church and what God has given within the Church. In the first 4,000 years, it was a matter of a specific calling and God working with individuals. After that, it was a matter of a process that went through baptism, if you will, of the laying on of hands, of the impregnation of God's holy spirit in the mind. Awesome.

"For you are all the sons of God." So, angels have had that reference in part on an angelic plane, but nothing compared to what is promised in mankind when mankind is blessed to be impregnated with God's holy spirit. We should be so in awe of that, to realize the angels, yes, they were created beings, but they never had God's holy spirit. It wasn't meant for them that God's spirit would dwell in them. But yet in His Family, that's where it begins. And it begins at begettel. Awesome.

For you are all the sons of God through faith (belief) in Joshua the Christ. Because we receive the truth about Him and how sin can be taken care of in the sense of being actually able to be forgiven of it, that it comes through Joshua, to understand the process of what we're going to be covering here. It's incredible.

For as many of you as are or were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. It's a spiritual thing. Lives and dwells within us. We put Him on. We desire that. We want that. We want to be in the Body of Christ. We want to be in the Church of God. We grasp and understand it's a spiritual relationship with God Almighty, and that we're able to have it because of this that's revealed to us – the ability to be forgiven of sin first and foremost. Then the process begins.

That's the only reason God's spirit can dwell in us. That's why we're baptized. We go under the water, and we come back up walking in a new life, if you will. We're blessed to have hands laid upon us. We're able to receive God's holy spirit.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek. So it took the Church quite a long time, a few decades, for some people to get straightened out. Peter had a big battle with this, and he had some battles with Paul. Paul had to talk to him in some pretty strong ways at times and correct him, and that was Peter, an incredible apostle, things that God revealed things to him in a powerful way. Paul, in many ways, a whole lot more.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female. I think of all the things that have happened. I think of what happened simply beginning in Philadelphia, and what happened through Philadelphia and how women were looked upon. It wasn't to the degree that God wanted them to be seen by any measure. That came later.

And before that, it has been, well, because of the world and because of having to live and dwell in the world. The world was established in a certain way, and so was the beginning of the Church. That's why it was established in the way that it was, so that it could function in this world until we got toward the end. And so, some of those things have been able to be addressed only because of that. And so, God is revealing those things in a powerful way. I think what an incredible thing.

Even within the Church, since this process of change began to take place, there are those who have battles, sometimes jealousy, sometimes judgment that is given toward women who are ordained. It still exists to certain degrees. I've seen it. I have watched it. I know it to be true. I don't have to be told some things that are said to certain ones in a catty way, or a demeaning way, or a degrading way or looking down or almost being insulting to someone by what is said. Ugh, some of those things are so sick, but they've been passed along at different times, and so, I've heard what different ones have said at different times that shouldn't have been said. It was just because of their wrong thinking and not accepting truth that God has given to the Church.

So, that's an ever-growing thing that we all have to examine in our lives. Do we accept truth when God gives it to us? Do we hold on to it? You know, truths come along at different times. I'll tell you, the Church's history has been that it's not so easy. All we have to do is go back and look at what was given through Herbert Armstrong, sometimes just decisions that were made from headquarters.

Makeup. You think, "A physical thing!" I marvel at that, of what took place within the Church, just because of one idea. It was like making it a gigantic doctrine or something. No, it's just a physical thing. It's not a doctrine. It's not a giant thing. And yet some people made it that important. It's like you are either in the Church, accepted or not accepted in the Church, because of what you slap on or don't slap on your face.

Even after the Apostasy, had one individual, a minister who visited us. I think he was trying to recruit. He was with another organization, and he was going on about all these churches that he raised up. I knew he was full of you-know-what at that moment. No one raises up a Church but God and Christ. No human being does. So, to take that to oneself, "I raised up this Church, and I raised up that Church, and I did this, and I did that." You think, "You're so full of it!"

Anyway, we were talking there in our living room, in the Toledo area, and the subject of makeup came up. I think something was said, the minister made a comment about, "Laura doesn't wear makeup." And his wife popped up and says, "Yes, she does." It's like, this is an evil thing. And this is after the Apostasy and everything that's gone on for so long now. And there's this one group that wants to hold on to this and make this some kind of a major doctrine of a difference.

You know, it's one thing to have the name Joshua, and that become a difference within the Church and the scattered Church and truth that's received, but makeup, as to whether or not people that come along, that this is the standard that they have to live by to prove whether or not they're going to be in that organization? You know, that remnant group. Anyway, you know what I said, and you know who it is.

Anyway, so you think of different battles that people have had through time. And so, it's just human nature.

So, Peter had a tough time accepting gentiles or treating them the same as he would anyone else who was Jewish who had been impregnated with God's spirit and judging them accordingly. But he had a tough time with that.

They had a tough time with whether they would eat with gentiles. Because Judaism had certain laws. There are certain things you couldn't do with gentiles. You remember the woman at the well? She was shocked that Joshua would speak to her, to even speak to her because she's a gentile. Amazing! He set a standard right then and there of what was fine to do.

But anyway, **neither Jew nor Greek**. So, it took a long time to get that established within the Church.

...there is neither slave nor free. Why would that be brought out? Because there are those who had been slaves or those who were slaves who were called, and human nature is to look down upon someone else, "I'm better than you," or "You shouldn't have all this," or "You shouldn't be receiving all this because, because, because..."

...neither male nor female. For you are all one. One. We're not the same, but we are all one in Joshua the Christ. We might be in different places in the Body, and we're not one in that regard. Sometimes people try to make everything equal, that we're all the same. No, we're not all the same. There is order, and there is to be respect to an order that God establishes within the Church when it comes to government, as an example. There is a way things work. And anyway, we're to learn from those things.

But as far as being in the Body of Christ, as far as seeing one another as brothers and sisters and understanding what that means on a spiritual plane is awesome and has much to do with how we think toward one another and how we are not to judge, be judgmental, if you will, and condemning toward others, and looking down upon others. No, our attitude and spirit should be we want to see everyone who has received God's spirit to make it, to come through all this.

We're together in the same battles, fighting against self, fighting against the things of this world. We go through similar trials from time to time, whatever that might be, on the job, in school, on and on you go. We are a Family, and we're to see each other that way.

...for you are all one in Joshua the Christ. We're all in the Body of Christ. We're all God's; we all belong to God. And if we really, really, really grasp that spiritually, we would fear to be judgmental toward others in the Body, truly.

So, if you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. There's more to this story here, of what is contained here, but it's making some very bold statements. "If you are Christ's, then we are a part of Abraham's seed," and we're justified in the same manner that Abraham was. Righteousness is counted to us, is attributed to us, because of not just being able to believe, but living by that, which is a matter of faith. We're given the truth, but it's up to us to make the choice of believing it – I mean living it and holding on to it in that regard, to live by it. That's a whole different matter than having the ability just to believe something is true.

Because many people have been blessed with, given the ability to believe what is true, and have never come on into the Church, never made the choices to act upon it. You could talk to them, and they could talk to you about spiritual things because they were being drawn by God's holy spirit and their minds were opened up to the truth, and they could believe things that they never were able to believe before. And then they couldn't make certain choices and decisions, commitment to enter into an oath with God, and they lost what they had.

So, "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So, that's where it all began. That's where the promise of God began. It began through Abraham and Sarah. And you don't have to be a direct descendant of Abraham and Sarah to be of Abraham, if you will, and the promise given to him and to Sarah.

Let's turn over to 1st Peter 1. Over and over again, God makes this process clear and the importance of it in our life, of what we need to grasp and comprehend, of what this is talking about.

1 Peter 1:13 it says, **Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Joshua the Christ.** That's a sermon in itself. To understand what's being said there, what we're to do, how we're to live, "gird up the loins of your mind." This is a delicate thing. It's the only thing, in one regard, that we take with us or that has the ability to

continue on. Everything else, it just goes back to dust. We're here for a time, and then we're gone. It's just a cycle of life, a reality of life that God gave to everyone. But what's in here? Well, that's a powerful thing, especially when impregnated with God's holy spirit.

So, "gird up the loins of your mind." Something to be guarded, something to be protected, what we've been given, what is in our mind. "Be sober." Soberminded. "And rest in that hope." It should be encouraging. It should be uplifting. It should be something that we're thankful for and think about and thank God for.

...and rest your hope fully upon the grace. The favor, the patience. I marvel at times at God's patience. I really do. I'm talking about with me. We should all be able to think that way and see that way. If we don't think that way and see that way then we don't see ourselves in a way that we really need to, that God has been very patient with every one of us.

That's just the way it has to be. Because we can't change overnight. We have problems. We have weaknesses. We have faults. We stumble. We say things or do things that we shouldn't do. Think something perhaps in the mind that we shouldn't. And again, it's a process that we go through of becoming refined. That should be becoming better and better as time goes on, but still, a lot of patience that God has.

So again, this matter of grace. It's a matter of God's favor, realizing how much favor God has given to us. On and on it goes.

...fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Joshua the Christ. So, it's not just a one-time thing about Joshua. We grow in understanding about Christ and the process, and all in a relationship as He reveals more to us.

...as obedient children. So, that's what we should be. We should strive to be that way. We understand that. We still have things happen sometimes where people aren't living as they really should, and it comes out, especially in this end-time. There is a time that God begins to address things, and when that time comes, things are brought to the surface, and for the last several years, more and more. Many years now, really.

"As obedient children." So, that's what we choose, that's what we want. We want to fight that fight. Because it's a fight. Being obedient doesn't come naturally. You have to fight to be obedient. You have to ask for help to be obedient to God.

...not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance. So, it's going back to before we were called or before the commitment was made and had (what we thought) a greater freedom to choose and do whatever we wanted to. Then we realize that's not really freedom because we're in bondage. Until you are able to be forgiven of sin, you're in bondage to it until you can begin to conquer it. So, we have to work on self, we have to begin to conquer self and get out of that bondage. We go

through this incredible process. And so, we don't have ignorance anymore. When we're baptized, ignorance is not an excuse anymore.

...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy or become holy, because, again, it's a process, **in all conduct**. So, it's not just a matter of conversation. It's all conduct, how we live. We have to work at it.

...because as it is written, Be holy, for I am holy. So, we're to become more like God. We're children of God. We're begotten of God. Self is to be changing so that it can become born, we can become born in Elohim and God's Family. Meaning, we have to become more like God in unity. There is nothing more beautiful than to grow in being at one with God, agreeing with God, which oftentimes means agreeing with the Church, which oftentimes is a matter of agreeing with things, instruction, and guidelines.

Just like the matter of makeup. No, shouldn't wear makeup. So, okay. Yes, you can. So, okay. It's a freedom; you don't have to, but if you want to, that's fine. And then, no, you can't. Or back and forth, whatever it was. I think it finally ended up with yes, you can. But it went back and forth for a while during Herbert Armstrong's days. Okay? And we went through that because it was simply an administrative thing.

It wasn't a doctrinal thing. But there was a struggle with that to come to understand this is not a doctrinal thing. Because Jezebel put on lipstick and put on different colored things on her face doesn't mean that it's all wrong. We learned you do things in moderation. I don't know, I haven't seen her. Didn't see her. There are no pictures of her that I know of. But it sounds like she put a lot on and used it really for the wrong purposes. Because there's a way you can go too far with certain things and do it to allure.

That's why I hate TV and some of the advertisements. Sometimes you don't even know what they're advertising because there is a look that women can give that affects stupidity of the mind of a man. The lust. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh... And men understand that process sometimes, and yield to it. And women understand that, or can come to understand that. Not that necessarily everyone does. I don't know. But anyway, I think you understand what I'm talking about. There's that which is in the mind, and it has to be conquered, has to be made right.

And so, something as simple as makeup, such a piddly thing. We learn balance, we learn moderation in time, we learn the importance of certain terms and what it means, and we grow. Awesome.

Verse 17—Now, if you call on the Father... So, a prayer life, what we pray about. **...who, without partiality, judges according to everyone's work**. So, again, I think what a crazy thing the world talks about traditional Christianity, "You can't be saved by works," and they double-speak and don't even know what they're saying. Because they believe in works. They keep Easter. They keep Christmas. They believe in Sunday. By their definition alone, those are works.

We believe in certain things: the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and that's what we keep. That's what we work because we believe what God says about those. They believe something else, so they react accordingly.

They have a different faith. We have a different faith. And only one can be true when it comes to belief and what people are able to believe.

So, God judges according to how we respond to what He gives us to believe. Because if we live by what we believe, that's what faith is. There's work involved in that in what we do to live by what God has given us.

...conduct yourselves throughout the time of your sojourning in fear. So, as long as we're in this body, in this temporary dwelling, and journeying, as they journeyed physically, as it talks about Abraham and his sons there, if you will, children, descendants, they journeyed in tents and so forth and temporary dwellings. The examples are given a lot of times, then, of Israel coming out of Egypt. They were in temporary dwellings, and there are lessons to be learned. Same sort of lesson.

We live in a temporary dwelling. It doesn't last very long. You get down toward the end, you realize it could go any day. That's life. The heart, you never know when it's going to quit. Or something, you catch something, something happens, an accident can happen, whatever it is, and it comes to an end. It's here, and it's gone. That's just life, or the end of life physically.

So, while we're here on this journey, we should be sobered because of what's been given to us, because of the treasure we have, because of the truth we have, and understanding the responsibility that goes along with the oath we made with God, and to be sobered by understanding, by knowing the vast majority have turned away from that oath. Never even grasped it. Didn't really comprehend how important that really was when they went under the water and what they agreed to. Amazing.

“Conduct yourselves throughout the time of your journeying in fear.” Why? Because this is a real battle. Self is a battle. We are in a war. Sometimes we fail to think about that. We are in a spiritual war. There are beings that want you to fail. There are beings that broadcast to your mind, and you have to decide at times when certain things come into your mind that may not be of your normal self or that wouldn't normally happen, and they come into your mind, what do you do with them? Only if you act upon or dwell upon something does it become sin. You reject it, and you say no.

Whatever wrong is broadcast, wrong thinking, wrong thoughts, whatever it is about somebody else, whatever, we have to seek to live right, and to have a healthy fear to not be praying, if you will. Because we have to have help and strength. If we're not praying on a regular basis and crying out to God for help of His holy spirit to dwell within us? Because that should be a great motivator, to realize if we're not doing that, we're on our own and we're going to fall flat on our face and we're going to lose certain things along the way and we will cave in more to various things that come along, and we'll not be able to fight like we should fight. That's just an absolute reality of our calling. Each one of us has to address that in whatever way.

So again, to conduct ourselves in this journey in fear. Not being, living fearfully. If we're doing the right thing and doing as we're supposed to then we know that we have the help; we can have a confidence and a boldness. That's something that every person has to go through.

So again, this journey we're on. I loved how it was put at the Feast this year—incredible—*Journey Back to the Tree of Life*. What God intended from the very beginning, what mankind wasn't able to achieve on its own, and God going through a long time with mankind to bring us to where we are now, where we grasp these things in a plane, on a level, that we never have to this degree.

Verse 18—knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your vain, or as it is, useless or empty conduct by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot. If we understand what was given to us, what we have part in and how it came about, ought to cause a greater thankfulness and gratitude inside toward Christ, toward our elder brother, toward God for granting us that, for that being a part of His plan.

He indeed was foreordained, predetermined, in other words, **foreordained before the foundation of the world**. I love this verse, and verses like this that talk about this process, as it does in Romans and understanding what God had planned from the very beginning, a process of how He could create a God Family . . . before He even created an angelic family, if you will, of angelic beings.

So again, **He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you**. So, after 4,000 years, we're past the halfway mark. And so, the last times, yeah. The things that we're able to see and grasp that God has given to the Church over the past 2,000 years, an ability to see certain things on a spiritual plane. Awesome.

Verse 21—who through Him believe in God. We're able to believe the truth because of this. Because we first have to be forgiven of sin before we can receive the impregnation of God's spirit, or even as time goes on, to continue receiving God's spirit in the mind to couple with the impregnation of His holy spirit that's here. Because it has to be nourished and fed like the umbilical cord to a baby. It's how we receive life ongoing, strength, help.

...who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. I think about going through some of this. Trying to think where at in the book. Maybe it's out there, I don't know. I'm losing track of chapters there. They just kind of all run together after a while, let me tell you. Anyway. So, where they are exactly? But anyway, I think of this one here and some of the things that I've been writing about.

...but who through Him believe in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory that your faith and hope are in God. So, I'm not going to go through all that or any of that right now because I don't think it's out there yet. Anyway, **verse 22—Since you have purified your lives in obeying the truth through the spirit.** So, again here, to understand the process, we're able to have that life living in us, to

continue in us, to be nourished by it on a regular basis. Because if it's not there, we die. People can go to sleep; they can begin to die spiritually in the mind.

“Since you have purified your lives in obeying the truth through the spirit.” So, it makes it clear how we do it. We’re able to obey the truth, and that’s how our lives are purified and cleansed, through obeying the truth. We have to ask for help in that, in accomplishing that. “Purified your lives in obeying the truth, through the spirit.” Without it, we can’t do this.

...in sincere love of the brethren. That's a good measurement. It talks about this in many places in scripture, how we think toward one another. What kind of mind do we have toward others? Toward everyone? To a willingness of giving the benefit of the doubt when things don't go well, don't go right. Not knowing, hoping that individuals are able to get through, go through various trials and hardships, and giving them space. I hate to see people go by the wayside. Hate to see people become weak spiritually because it's a horrible thing.

...who through the spirit, in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart. It’s a spiritual matter, “to love one another with a pure heart.” Everyone. **...having been born again.** In other words, the word has to do with being “begotten anew” or “begotten again,” if you will. **...not of corruptible seed.** So, we understand the process. Again, God’s holy spirit when it’s given to us, how it has to be nurtured.

...not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. That’s an awesome thing to understand, the mind of God, the word of God. That’s why I talked about being at one with God. It’s being in agreement with God, with God's word, because it's becoming our mind and the way we think. We are in agreement with God's word. Beautiful thing.

Let’s go back to Romans 6. **Romans 6:3—Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Joshua the Christ were baptized into His death?** So, it's an incredible picture. We go down in this watery grave. That's what we're taught. We understand what we picture on a symbolic scale, if you will, of something that He literally did. We're to remember that always, and what it meant and the commitment that went with it at that time. An oath.

“That were baptized into Joshua the Christ were baptized into his death.” It means more than that, too, because it's a matter of a willingness to enter into His suffering. His word, God's word, the truth, when the world receives it, they're not excited about it. They don't like it. It isn't something that they can like because it takes God's spirit for them to be able to recognize it for what it is, at least have that opportunity or chance to see it for what it is. Then they have to make choices with it. But it's a very hard thing for human nature to accept.

I think of right now, a movement that's going on in this country that I don't like. There's a demonic world in it, too. And at the forefront of it all is that great big church. It's being pushed hard. They know they

have a little time. And so, that which is fake, that which is false, is being stirred up. And if they knew how you thought and how you think... They talk about hatred and how people shouldn't hate others, and you should give tolerance to everyone else and their beliefs. And whenever I hear them talking about that, I think, "Yes, but I know there's one you're not going to like. I know there's one that you're going to hate."

Anyway, the reasons why some of these things are happening and it doesn't mean good times for the Church, either, for those in the Church. We have some hard times we're going to go through. We need to understand that. We're going to have some difficult things, we truly are, because of how we're seen. Thankfully, within the midst of that, God is going to begin changing minds as time goes on, as we go through the process, and more and more we'll begin to be able to see what's coming and why some things are happening.

So, we were baptized, yes, "and into his death." We gave up our life, our, my life. I gave up my life, the way I wanted to live it, the way I was living it, in the selfish manner that I was, when I was baptized. That was my choice. That was everyone's choice. That's what we said. "My life is no longer mine. It's Yours" — Awesome! — to be used, to have that opportunity, to be molded and fashioned, to become something different, something better, something beyond our grasp and comprehension totally.

Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Because we're not our own anymore. We can't just live any way we want to live — our way, my way.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. That's what we look forward to, a resurrection, a change from physical to that which is spiritual. ...**knowing this, that our old self was nailed to the pole with Him.** That's what we chose. We chose to put this to death — our way, my way, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and it's a battle. It's an ongoing battle; never ends until you're not in this physical body anymore.

"...also, shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was nailed to the pole with Him." That's what we chose to do, put it to death, put the old self to death. That's why I love the expression, the analogy of when it wants to put its head up above the water again, just put your foot on it and push it right back down. You know, keep it buried. Keep the old self buried. It's the best place for it. Dead.

...that the body of sin might be done away with. That's what we chose. We want it to be done away with. **...that we should no longer be slaves to sin.** People think they're free, and they have no comprehension.

Verse 7—For he who has died has been freed from sin. It's the process that God gave. Yes, some physical things that are symbolic, but picturing something spiritual that's taking place.

Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. I think I was going to mention a minute ago here about that forty days that Christ was with them. Incredible! Things that they had to get used to. Things that they didn't comprehend. A spirit, the first human to become or have, if you will, spirit, everlasting life, able to manifest themselves as physical human beings, able to have meals, able to have conversations with others, able to enjoy various physical things.

They didn't comprehend what was coming, and we have had no comprehension of those things except by that example. That's why it's there. He spent time with them. Power that's there. Power to appear and disappear. It's going to be fun! Anyway. How is it used? Don't know. But things that we just can't comprehend. So just in that forty days there, there was a purpose for all that. To get them accustomed to certain things and to be able to hold on to certain things, and then we can read about those things and think, "This is incredible." Things that people hadn't understood before, had never experienced before. Amazing.

Verse 10—For that He died, He died to sin once for all; but that He lives, He lives unto God. Same path we're following. Same path we've chosen, what we want. **Likewise, you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed into sin, but alive unto God in Joshua the Christ our Lord.** So, they're beautiful scriptures about what God has given to us.

I'm going to go through now and read the ceremony of baptism. Think about an oath. Think about what we're saying. Think about what was said. Now this has changed; the ceremony has changed a little bit at different times because of learning more, understanding more. And so it's become in that respect, in certain ways, a little more accurate as to what it's what is taking place, what is being said more perfectly, if you will, as God has revealed more truth. Just like the word Joshua the Christ. We understand that. But there are other things there too.

But for all, it's the same agreement that everyone has ever made with the present truth that everyone's ever had. And most has been said exactly this way. So, this is what someone is told when they're there in the water, ready to go under, ready to be put under the water.

You are here because you have chosen to acknowledge and repent of your sins...

Awesome. And it doesn't stop there. We have to continue to acknowledge in life our sins.

I wrote to someone here last night. I hope they can come to acknowledge and understand their sin because they're not going to be with us for a little while unless they repent. And some things are hard for people, and it's hard for human nature. If we drift too far away from certain things, sometimes coming back, sometimes getting back to where we should be, it's a battle. But all of us are to learn from it, the seriousness of sin, the seriousness of becoming weak, the seriousness of letting down, the seriousness of giving into things that aren't balanced and sound and in agreement with God's Church.

...and now desire to be baptized and be forgiven through your acceptance of Joshua the Christ...

So again, our choice to be baptized, to be forgiven. We understand what we're committing. This is what we're committing to. This is what we say we want. "I want to be forgiven of my sins." You see the importance of being forgiven of your sins. Because God won't give you His holy spirit, the impregnation of His spirit, unless you are forgiven. That's the only way the impregnation of God's spirit can take place. That's why we have to repent of sin on a regular basis. Because God will not dwell with or in sin. Awesome. Very basic.

...and now desire to be baptized and be forgiven through your acceptance of Joshua the Christ as your Passover and Savior.

A lot said there that we're agreeing to. He's our Passover, and he's our Savior, the means through how we're able to be saved. And it's not just this one-time ceremony, it's a lifelong process

Because you have repented of your sins, which are transgressions of God's holy, righteous laws...

It's what we're agreeing to, what we say we understand.

...you have repented of your sins, which are transgressions of God's holy, righteous laws, and have accepted Joshua the Christ as your Lord and Master...

That's quite an oath being made. Because it means a lot. There's a lot said in scripture about the importance of who He is, our Lord and our Master. Yes, it's all about God and God's plan and God's purpose, but it's done through Him, and it's how we accept and receive that process from God to work within us.

...and have accepted Joshua the Christ as your Lord and Master, your High Priest...

There's a lot to be learned from that yet, frankly, to understand what it means that He's our High Priest, how the high priest worked between God and man. It's been given to Christ. Very powerful.

...and soon-coming King...

So, that's what we've agreed to. That's what we believe.

I now baptize you in water and then in the spirit through the laying on of hands by God's ministry.

So again, the person putting the person under water, they're telling them this is what you're agreeing to, this is what's going to take place, and you're going to have hands laid upon you. And we understand that, for the impregnation of God's holy spirit, that that's when it takes place.

This baptism in water is for the remission of your sins through the power and authority of Almighty God...

Awesome. A beginning.

...and His Son Joshua the Christ. You are burying the old self, and you are to come up out of the water to live a new life.

So, all those things that we just read about, of our past, that says they are to be buried, they are to be gotten rid of. We can't live just ever how we want to as human beings, and we shouldn't want to. But the carnal self sometimes wants carnality. That's the problem. It chooses selfishness too often. And those things have to be repented of because, again, it's "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" that we're not rid of until this is over, till this process is complete.

...and you are to come up out of the water to live a new life. That new life will be made possible through receiving the gift of the impregnation of God's spirit to dwell in you through the laying on of hands. By water and by God's spirit, you are being baptized into...

So we understand the water part, but we're also being baptized into God's spirit at that time. That's what the receiving the impregnation of God's spirit is all about. It's a process of something that mankind, in essence, has never really had, except for a few that God has called in the first 4,000 years, and then the Church after that, of those who remained faithful.

Baptized, immersed into... What an incredible thing to think about. Immersed into God's holy spirit. Incredible! Very few have ever experienced it through time.

By water and by God's spirit, you're being baptized into the very name of the Father...

So, that should have great meaning to us, what it means to be in the Father, into the Father, the name of the Father.

That's why I hate —hate!— traditional Christianity and what it does to the mind. This pious feeling, this feeling that people have to work up inside, and things that aren't real and don't have great meaning to them. They're not fueled by God's spirit. When you're fueled by God's spirit and the truth, there are things you know, there are things you see. But to try to work something up, to think you have to be a certain way that that comes across as it does there. Only with God's spirit are you able to see those things.

And they're not good because they're not what it's all about. That's a counterfeit of something that's not true at all. That does horrible damage by a being that started it all, by a being that created the system, the process that God allowed. Because we're to learn from that to choose between the two, God or that way, a different way. There's no other different way.

By water and by God's spirit, you're being baptized into the very name of the Father...

So, when the comment is made, just say you accept. What's this one thing on TV anymore? Stations almost drive me nuts sometimes. I turn it away, turn it off, turn it down, mute it. I don't even want to

hear it. They get on there and talk about “If you'll just say you accept him, Jesus, into your heart. If you say you'll accept him into your heart today, he'll come into you.” That's all you have to say. “And now, if you'll say this little prayer with me...” and blah, blah, blah, you know. It's like, what does that mean?

That's why some have the teaching “the kingdom of God is in your heart.” Well, what happens when you die? Is it still in there? I'm sorry. Some of the shallow things that are said, they're sad. But they don't understand until God calls them.

By water and by spirit, you're being baptized into the very name of the Father, in and through the Son, through the power of the holy spirit. And this is by and through the power and authority of Joshua the Christ.

That's where it comes from. Joshua the Christ has been made High Priest. All. That's why I love how He expresses it. He says all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. All authority to bring about God's plan, to bring it complete to the end for Elohim. Awesome! Then it says when it's complete, it's handed back to the Father. In other words, it's complete. It's His. It's His anyway, yes, but He's given that power and authority to Joshua. Awesome.

Let's turn over to Matthew 28. So, throughout this series, we're going to go back and look at some of these things that are said in this oath. Because it's about an oath made to God. It's about acceptance of a new covenant, a new covenant relationship with Almighty God that we're to keep and we're to be faithful to by our word, by what we have said, by our promise. Because it's about a promise we're making to God. That's what a covenant promise is.

Making a covenant with God is about a promise we're making to keep our word. And I think of how many have turned away from that. They didn't keep their word. And if you begin to become weak and spiritually weak, you can't. It's impossible. It requires God's help to remain faithful, to continue, for that life to live within you, to be able to keep the promise.

That's why I marvel sometimes how God has revealed something very clearly. There used to be the feeling, the thinking, because that's the desire, that we'd like to see everyone be able to be saved, everyone be able to have eternal life in God's Family. And so, the concept oftentimes was that even for the Millennium, it's going to be like a utopia. Even the Great White Throne, it's going to be like a utopia. No, it isn't, because there are selfish human beings, and a lot of them. There's going to be a lot of selfish human beings in the Great White Throne. Billions and billions.

And hopefully, we'll be working with them and helping them to come through a process. Awesome. But they have carnal human nature, and not everyone wants it. Not everyone wants what God offers them. It's just that's the choice.

Sometimes that's hard for people to grasp, to understand. “Surely everyone would choose it.” “Surely everyone, by the end of the Millennium, when they see everything that Joshua and 144,000 have done

on the earth, surely everyone by the end of the Millennium will be choosing God's way of life." No, they won't. They won't. A lot more obviously than what we've ever seen in humanity and in the Church even.

The Great White Throne, that's even a tougher thing because there are going to be all the people who are resurrected that lived the way they lived all their life for ever how long it was. And those that have the best opportunity and the best going for them are babies, young children. Because the mind hasn't been marred yet. It hasn't been polluted yet. It hasn't been corrupted to the degree that it has been in others who are so set in their ways. And babies aren't set in their ways yet. Young children haven't been set in their ways yet.

So far from being cursed because of death, in some ways, it's going to end up being a great blessing. We look at death, life and death in different ways. In the last 6,000 years, yes, it's tragedy, it's hard, but when we see what God is doing and what God's plan is going to be, many of them, percentage-wise in that respect, that are going to have the ability in a freer way in the mind to choose God. Because when it gets polluted, it's very hard to get rid of it all, to conquer it, to change it.

Matthew 28:18—Now, Joshua came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them... It's not "in the name". Words can carry different meaning if we're not careful, sometimes in what's being said and what's being stated. This gives the sense that if someone is being baptized in the name of the Father, that it's by, perhaps, a certain authority, by their authority, or whatever. That's not what this is talking about. It's a word that has more to do with "unto" or "into" but not "in," and it's not as a whole used in the Greek language like that.

And you might think, well, that's kind of a small thing, but when it really comes right down to it, it isn't a small thing because it means a lot more than the word "in."

...baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the holy spirit. So, it's not just a matter of authority. There is authority, as it talks about here from Joshua, for this process to take place. But to be baptized into something is far more than just in the name of or by the authority of the name of, if you will

...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. So again here, this word is translated in nearly every Bible translation except for a couple, and one I don't like, but it did do it right. The Living Bible is one that's so protestant, but it got it right, and the American Standard Version. Sometimes I like to just go through and see how some of them have addressed certain translations and how they stated something. Anyway, it's such a hodgepodge out there of things that have been done improperly, and it hasn't been done justice to this process of what the ceremony of baptism is all about.

And it's for adults. You think, this has been so destroyed, if you will, as to what God has offered mankind. You think you take a baby, and you pour water over its head, and somehow this is baptizing them, and some of the ceremonies that people go through that have absolutely no meaning. It's a mockery of what this is about. It's really a mockery of baptism to do something like that.

Satan knows how to make a mockery of God's way of life. That's what he does. He has got a big old fat guy that comes around this time, well, close now in December, later on, and wearing red and jolly, jolly, jolly, jolly, you know, wants to give presents to everybody. And anyway, you know, it makes a mockery of God and of God's purpose and God's plan and what God is doing. And Easter, the same thing.

But baptism? He makes a mockery of the entire process of what it's supposed to be about, what it pictures. Incredible.

So, to be baptized into the name means a lot. If you have that, that's being given to you, into God's name? We carry God's name. We are in the Church of God. We are a part of the Body of Christ. We have been baptized into that, their name.

I think of Sardis. We're going to cover some of that later on in this series, about some of the things of the eras of what God had to say that go along with some of this. And you think of what they had by the end. The only thing they had was the name. It says, "You have a name that you're alive, but you're dead." Well, what was that name? Church of God. That's the only thing that showed that there was life. Because it comes from God. Tithing and Sabbath, weekly Sabbath. Anyway, had to think there, which three did they have?

Acts 2:37—Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart. And so here's a point, chapter 2, Acts. Pretty much know what that's about. Here's where God was pouring out the holy spirit for the first time, that was being given to those in the Church who were a part, starting with the disciples there. Certain things that Peter was teaching and so forth and telling them what they had done. Basically, letting them know they had killed Christ.

Even though they weren't there, even though they had no word in what was done there, they came to understand something that they had never understood. What an incredible thing, they understood that they were guilty because of their sins, that that's what killed Christ. God poured that ability, that knowledge, out upon them as Peter was speaking to them. They saw it. They became convicted of it. Thousands that day became baptized.

Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles... Because they realized, "Yeah, it's our sins that killed him." **Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent.** So, we have to understand when we come to make that choice and an oath and a commitment and a promise to God, and we want to be a part of that covenant with Him, to receive that new covenant with Him, that this goes with it. It's a matter of this is where it starts because

it's all about repentance, because we can't have a relationship with God without it, and we can't be forgiven of the sins without understanding what this means.

...and let every one of you be baptized into the name of Joshua the Christ for the remission of sins. So, we already went through the scriptures. Just like His death, that's what we're pictured in, because of His name and what that means.

...for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. So in essence, we come to understand because of a calling, God does the calling. God the Father does, and it's in His time. The majority, it'll be in the Great White Throne when they receive their calling. Obviously, those during the Millennium are going to have the calling. And incredible what we've been given; out of so very few on the earth who ever receive this.

So I'm going to stop there today.