Abraham Becomes a Nation, Pt. 2

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Before the fall Holy Days, we began a new series entitled *Abraham Becomes a Nation*, and this will be *Part 2* as a continuation of that.

We ended *Part 1* by covering the story of how Jacob maneuvered to deceive his father Isaac into believing he was Esau—so again, remembering back to that—all in order to receive the blessing that was part of the covenant blessing passed down from Abraham. We read that story then and will probably review just a little bit here today.

It was so bad that afterward, that Esau wanted to kill Jacob. He was so infuriated with him and unhappy that he didn't receive that blessing and that Jacob had supplanted him again, in essence. Remember when he was born and grabbing onto the heel and pulling, and anyway, as they were twins? And quite an incredible story here of what took place. And Esau wanted to kill Jacob once his father Isaac was dead.

Rebecca told Jacob to flee into the region here of Haran where her brother Laban lived. And that was the area that Abraham first went to when they left, and God told him to get up and leave to a different area, and that's where they went to. Then later on Abraham was told to move south then and the rest of them stayed behind in this area called Haran.

Anyway, let's turn over to Hebrews today. We'll begin there. Because it was stated at the end of *Part 1* of that particular sermon that there were great lessons to be learned from all that happened between Esau and Jacob.

God has given a lot of physical things in the Old Testament to help us to better grasp things when we come to striving to understand things on a spiritual plane, and that means with God's spirit, because they can't be understood fully to the depth God wants us to or has revealed in the New Testament without His holy spirit.

There are certain things people can learn by knowledge, but to see, to understand, is something that requires, again, God's spirit, and certainly here in Hebrews very much so.

Hebrews 12:1 says, **Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily surrounds us on all sides**. So again here, showing the battle that once we come into God's Church, we begin a process of coming out of this world. We strive to become different; we want the mind to be transformed to come into unity and agreement with God, and we recognize there's an ongoing battle there. It's not a small thing; it's an ongoing battle the rest of your time of your life.

And whether you live now, or you've lived, people lived in the past, or people who live into the Millennium, or people who are in the Great White Throne, they've got to go through the same thing. They've got to deal with self. They've got to fight it. They've got to conquer and overcome a natural, carnal, selfish human nature.

And it's quite profound when you begin to understand why God created us this way and the only way in which a mind can become transformed and changed and come into unity and oneness with God on a spiritual level, which has to happen because it's a growing process in the womb, as Herbert Armstrong so aptly explained it. That once we're begotten, we're not born into Elohim; we're begotten, and a process begins which is very much like the physical process of a woman being impregnated and a baby beginning to grow in the womb. Until it's born, it doesn't have physical life of itself, independent.

That's what it's like for us once we're called. We begin a process where we're, in that respect, in the womb, on a spiritual plane, and we go through this process of growth and development that we have to go through in order to be born into Elohim. And I've talked about, made comments about how there are going to be those who are miscarriages by choice. Because to refuse God, to turn against God once we receive the impregnation of God's holy spirit, is not a small thing. It's everything that God is offering to us.

And to be able to be given opportunity later on to perhaps come out of some of that, to perhaps be jolted into reality, perhaps brought to repentance, that's between the individual and God. But it's a very dangerous state to be in because there are things about the mind that it can become set in the wrong things in life.

And so again here, there are a lot of things that we don't fully grasp and understand and know, but God's given us to know and to understand about this process.

So again here, this is not easy. It says, "so great a cloud of witnesses." So, all those things that have been written of those who have been called at different times, things that are written in scripture about all those who have lived this way of life, who have fought this fight, and the battles that are involved in it, some who succeeded and some who did not. Some in the New Testament that Paul had to deal with, ministers as well, who were separated from the Church, let alone the battles of life.

And I think back to that period of time when the Church began, the things they went through. We've never had to see anything like that where the government is out, in essence, to get you, to the point of killing you, to the point of putting you in prison permanently until you die and confiscating everything you own. That's what the Roman government was doing. The things that people lived through back then are really kind of hard to grasp.

All the apostles, early apostles, if you will, except for John, were murdered, killed by the government. Incredible, to understand those things and to recognize, in some cases, the history of some of the kinds of death that some experienced. So, we've never had to experience that. We go through other things.

But God's given us a great deal of peace toward the end of this age because of the abundance He promised and gave through Abraham, if you will, on a physical plane that He revealed later on. Just like the greatest work that God has been doing toward the end here through Herbert Armstrong, through the Church being raised up after Sardis, which was again, a promise that God had given in a land that was going to be the greatest nation the world has ever known, the most powerful nation the world has ever known before the end would come, and then it would be here.

So, we live in that country because of those promises that God gave. And just as He gave the promises when they came out of the wilderness and came into the promised land, gave incredible, great blessings there, but He also promised further blessings that were going to happen as far as that which was prophetic up to the time of His Kingdom being established. Awesome.

So, **let us lay aside every weight and every sin which so easily surrounds us on all sides**. This way of life is not easy because it's not normal for a human being. What is normal is to go with the flow. What is normal is to live life in this world the way the world lives, to mix with it in that regard, and to judge things on our own by our own thinking and our own thoughts without thought of God and God's commands, if you will, of how we should live life.

And so, it says here these things exist, the weight. Sometimes you feel weighted down; you go through things where you feel weighted down by living this way of life, by fighting this fight. Sometimes the sin, the battles you have with sin and the pulls of the human flesh, the human mind, of things you know you have to conquer and overcome. It's a battle, and it requires a consistency of crying out to God for help for deliverance.

“That so easily surrounds us on all sides.” Look at this world. Sick, sick, sick. And especially with technology today. I feel sorry for a younger generation of people out here, of things they're exposed to that I was never exposed to in the remotest way as a young person. And today it's everywhere because of technology and the garbage that's out there. And what people are being fed is that this is kind of normal and natural; movies and shows are out there today that try to make evil look normal. That's what they're trying to do – evil things, evil lifestyles, as though it's just normal and accepted by everyone. And sadly, it becomes accepted by people because this is the world we live in.

So it says, **And let us run with endurance**, which means “a patient continuance.” In other words, you can't give up. You can't stop. You have to patiently continue in doing what you know you're supposed to be doing.

And I marvel at every Feast, and following it up now, how so many people will not continue the battle. They give in because there are other pulls or other things going on out there, or they're tired of the battling, or whatever it is that begins to happen in the human mind, and other things begin to seem more attractive in the world, and they leave.

And run with endurance (patient continuance) **the race that is set out before us** or **for us**. So, God has set it before us. This is what's expected. He teaches us within the Church. He's given a holy convocation where we can come together, be molded and fashioned Sabbath by Sabbath, to learn, to be molded by Him. And again, calls it a race. I don't know how many of you have been in races before or entered into any kind of a race, but just the fact that it's called that should cause some thinking, what it's like.

I think back to different races I've been in. And you don't just go out there and start running. You have to prepare for it. You have to plan for it. You have to do things to exercise, if you will, to become strengthened. You run a long race, even all the more so to have endurance in that. So again here, there's a lot of work that goes into things in sports and exercise that takes place, getting into shape, if you will.

We have to do the same things on a spiritual plane, and a lot of that has to do with our relationship with God and then striving to apply what we know we need to do and asking God for the strength and help to do it because you can't do it on your own.

So again, **run with endurance** (patient continuance) **the race that is set before** or **for us, looking unto Joshua.** That's what it's about. And there are different ways we look unto Joshua. To teach us. God has given Him all power to guide and direct and lead the Church to teach us, to mold and fashion us, and to understand that the beginning of that is His beginning that was Passover, His life that led up to Passover.

So important because it's about being able to repent of sin and being forgiven and being able to continue on, and that's a fight. And we have to be continually doing that, repenting, trying to get rid of sin, crying out for help to get rid of sin.

…**the author and finisher of our faith, who**… So, in other words, it begins with Him, Passover, and it continues on because it's a process that God gave to us for growth, for change, for development within the womb until we're actually born into God's Family.

…**who for the joy that was set before Him.** So, what does that mean? It means He was excited about His relationship with His Father. He was excited about the task that was in front of Him because of what was beyond. He was able to see what was beyond on a spiritual plane of what He was doing and why He was doing it was for all mankind. Awesome!

And that moved Him. That was exciting to Him, and that gave Him joy to work with the disciples as He did, knowing that they were going to be worked with in a very unique way in a short time. He knew all these things. The Church was going to begin, He was going to be the High Priest between us and God, if you will, interceding for us in different ways, as it is.

So again, He was willing to go through those things “for the joy that was set before Him.” You know, we should be able to have a vision of what's in front of us: Elohim. To comprehend that, to comprehend, to get a little bit of a glimmer of what God has planned for us and the why the universe was created. It's beyond our comprehension, but to appreciate it, to grasp the magnitude of it, to try to is an awesome thing.

And there's a joy in that when we have that ability to see forward to realize you don't want to give up anything, you don't want to stop enduring, you don't want to fool around with physical things in this world and be pulled away from God's Church and pulled away from being able to grow spiritually. I mean, that's insanity. It's absolute insanity. We're in a fight. We're in a race. And to do anything else but that has a lot to do with the way we think.

Because if we start thinking other things out here maybe are more valuable and we get pulled away by it, what does that say about our vision? You know, “Where there's no vision, the people perish.” It's that ability to see what God has called us for. To be in Elohim? How can you compare physical things, pleasure in a temporary life that you might have for a year, 10 years, 20 years, 40 years? That doesn't matter; that's but a blurb, not even a wink in time. And people give up. Astounding.

…the joy that was set before Him endured being nailed to the pole. Doesn't matter what you go through. Think what you go through, what I go through, anybody else. We can't compare ourselves. We don't go through anything compared to what He went through, so we look to that example and realize the fight that's there.

And so to get down, to get depressed, to get whatever that sometimes happens in some people's lives, like you can't make it or you're not doing well enough, well, bull with that. No, we can't. That's why we need help. All we have to do then is go before God and ask for that help, and He's there to help us. It wasn't meant to be easy. You're going to have suffering. You're going to have hard times. But sticking to it, that's what it's all about.

…**despising the shame**. “Thinking little of” is what that word “despising” means. “Thinking little of the shame.” What does that mean? Well, it's because you're doing things differently in how the world looks upon you; they look down upon you, the way they treat you, the way they act toward you, how others saw it as this way of life as being shameful or disgraceful. There are other people who just think this is wacky and crazy, and you're nuts and everything else, and they can't understand it why you do the things you do.

And sometimes it doesn't turn out well how people treat you. Sometimes in one's own family, how a mate treats you, how a child treats you, how a parent treats you, how whatever, let alone how people in a community or friends you used to have or other things, because they so look down upon you. And after a while, the friends you used to have when you first came in, they're not your friends anymore

because they're going a different way, and they don't like what you're doing. They don't agree with what you're doing.

So, it wasn't made easy in that respect, and there's a battle in it. And that's how we're able to grow in godly character through fighting the battle. That choice. It's a beautiful thing.

So again, **despising** or **thinking little of the shame.** In other words, how we might be treated. We don't account that that high. Some people do. Some people have made choices in the past because of it. They know the truth. I've known of so many people since being in the ministry who have been called. Their minds have been fully opened up to the truth. They can rattle off things right and left. It's in them; they've been given the ability to see. And then they can't make that next step to come into God's Church, to be baptized. They can't do it. Why? So often because of someone else. So often because of a job, so often because of tithing, so often because of not being able to work seven days a week anymore, and how can you have all the debt you have and problems you have financially and live this way of life? How could that be possible? You know, so there are a lot of people who haven't made that extra step because of very carnal, physical reasons. Incredible. Not willing to suffer.

So again, **thought little of the shame and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God**. In God's Family. And that's what we desire. We want to be in God's Family.

For consider Him, speaking of Joshua, **who endured such hostility from sinners against himself**. He wasn't deluded at all in any fashion or form in His mind. He understood how people thought of Him, how the Pharisees, Sadducees, and others, hypocrites and people that talked about Him and spoke of Him in the manner that they did, tore Him down, said lies against Him, and so forth because that's just their mindset. Because they had to discredit Him, they had to discredit what He was doing, so they were constantly doing those kinds of things.

So again, **the hostility of sinners against Himself, lest you become wearied and discouraged in your minds. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.** So again here, He did. We don't in any manner close to what He went through**.**

Also, have you forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons. Children, children of God, sons of God. It's not a matter of sex. It's just a term that's used that God has called us to be in a Family. There is nothing like that in God's Family. We're all going to be the same, Elohim. And reproduction, all those kinds of things in human life, it's not there. And yet people put greater emphasis and importance on some of those kinds of things sometimes than they do God's Family because they just don't get it.

“Have you forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons.” And so that exhortation is from Proverbs 3:11-12.

It goes on to say, **My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord/Eternal.** So again here, chastening, correction, we have to have it. Our lives have to be fully corrected, changed, transformed. And so, there's

chastening that's going to go along with that. So, there's going to be some suffering we go through even from God, if you will, because of certain situations we go through if we want to live His way of life that, to see what we're going to do, and how we're going to do it.

Like, I think of the Apostasy. That was a horrible thing to go through. Chastening. Everyone was spewed out of God's mouth. Everyone in the Church. And people had to come to grips with deciding, determining, well, is that true? Was I spewed out of God's mouth? Is that what happened to the Church? If so, what's the problem? Is it with God or with self? And that's what people have to come to. We have to repent. We have to change.

So, **do not despise the chastening of the Eternal, nor be discouraged when you're rebuked by Him**. Again, shown faults. Because we have to see them. It's not an easy thing at times when certain things come to the surface and we're able to see ourselves, see certain things in ourselves that are not pleasant. Seeing selfishness and coming face to face with it in different aspects of our life is not a pleasant thing. But we ought, as we grow, we should recognize it as that; it is a good thing. Because we have to be able to do that so we can change, so we can cry out for help, so we can recognize our battles.

For whom the Lord loves, He chastens. He wants us to succeed. He wants us to be in His Family. That's why He calls us – to be in His Family forever. Nothing richer and greater than such a calling to become God, the God Family. Far greater than the angelic realm. That's hard for the human mind to comprehend.

…**and scourges**, figuratively, "as with strong correction," in that respect, **every son whom He receives**. So everyone who is called and everyone who is baptized and impregnated with God's holy spirit has to go through a process of correction in their life. It's just a part of the process.

If you endure… And this word has to do with "enduring under" or "persevere under" such a thing. Because it's necessary; because it's required. "If you endure", persevere, under chastening, understanding it's a part of the process. We don't take it personally and get upset with God. We can't blame God. We can't blame others. When we have faults and weaknesses and whatever, we can only blame self.

So often the human mind tries to blame other people for their faults and "Well, if you hadn't of done that" or "If you hadn't of said that." It has nothing to do with any of that. That's not the problem. The problem's in self always.

If we take it wrong, if we take something wrong and we become offended, whose fault is that? It's our fault! We should be above that. We should be beyond that because understanding other people, if they do something that's bad toward us or whatever, well, if we can't deal with that and work with that and understand how blessed we are because we have the impregnation of God's spirit and we know what we have to do in order to deal with it, then something's wrong with us and we have to change.

…**God deals with us as with sons**. So, God will deal with us as His children if we yield to the process, which means there's a lot of repentance taking place because we're looking at self, we want to change, we want to become different, so we're crying out to God for help to change.

For what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers… That's what we're talking about here. We've been called into that, to be chastened, to change, to grow, to conquer. …**then you are illegitimate and not sons**. So, either we are going through that process and responding to it properly, or we're not children of God anymore. In other words, we're being cut off from God or have been cut off from God.

Verse 9—Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Should we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? In other words, that should be far more important to us, to understand we've got to go through it. And God, everything God does is based on love, outgoing concern to us, and sacrificing for us in order to succeed.

For they indeed for a while chastened us as seemed best to them. But He (speaking of God) **for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness**. That's what God has called us for, to be able to enter into Elohim so He can dwell in us forever.

Now, no chastening seems to be joyful (enjoyable, in other words), **for the present, but painful**. So, when we're suffering, when we're going through something hard, and something is painful, and we're seeing things about self, or having to deal with things that might lead us to being able to see something in ourselves. Because that's a lot of it sometimes. It's going through such a hardship that, as we go through it, with God's help, we'll start seeing something that needs to change. That process can be very painful, and it's very long-lasting if we don't address it. So, it's a lot of pain for a long time because we have to address it eventually. We have to address things in our lives to change.

Nevertheless, afterward, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. What an awesome thing to finally come to peace in certain things because we see something we hadn't seen before, and we're able to deal with it in a right way before God, and we don't carry the weight anymore. Sometimes we carry weight because we put it on ourselves.

Nevertheless, afterwards, it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised by it. So, just like with what we've read before here about the race. There is a process here of chastening, of growing, of conquering and overcoming that is likened to something that's a matter of exercise on a spiritual plane in our life. If we allow it to work in us, we want it to work in us, and we put our minds to it like we would to a physical race or whatever it might be, the same thing is true, far more important than on a spiritual plane.

Verse 12—Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down. know if you've ever felt that way. Hopefully you have. That whatever you're going through is so hard, it's so difficult, it's so excruciatingly painful.

To me, the Apostasy was the most excruciatingly painful thing in that respect that I went through. But I can think of a lot of things before that happened within the Church, that happened with other people, that happened with different ministers at different times, and it was painful. It was hard to go through. Tears you apart inside sometimes. But you grow in those things as you look to God for help. And that's the key – looking to God for help, fasting if necessary, which oftentimes is necessary to be able to keep focused and focused in a proper way, crying out to God for help.

Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down. And it says, **and the feeble knees**. So, don't allow yourself to become weak or weakened because of something you're going through. Because sometimes this is what human nature does. It doesn't address it properly, and it just is in a weakened state and lives that way.

But it says, **and make straight paths for your feet**. Why does it say it that way? Because before that, we're not. If we're down over something and we're not conquering and working through something the way we should be, there's something wrong with us because God will give us help to change and grow. And that's why He says, "Make straight paths for your feet." That means something isn't straight that needs to be straightened out. God shows us what those paths are, what we need to do.

…**so that which is lame may be turned away** (turned aside)**, but rather to be healed**. What an awesome thing. Far better to go through the process of being healed because that's a spiritual thing in us. Spiritual healing of the mind. That's what we're going through – getting rid of carnality, getting rid of selfishness. It's a healing that the mind has to experience to become more at one with God, to be in agreement with God.

So again here, it takes exercise in those things sometimes. I was thinking when I was looking at some of this this morning, thinking that operation I had, or whatever it was, the procedure I had, before I had it they actually went up one artery through the leg and went in, and there next to the aneurysm was an artery that fed my right hip, and they had to plug it because once they put that stent inside of it, it would block it off and no blood would be going through it anymore.

So, to keep blood from coming, building up inside of it, which is dangerous, they just blocked it off. They plugged it. And at first there, I wasn't even able to walk a block; one block and my hip would just freeze up, it hurt so bad – this right hip and all the muscles in it. And the doctor told me, he says, "You've got to work through the pain because other arteries have to start working and being developed, and you can't do it if you're lounging around in your buttocks. You got to get out and exercise it."

And so, the point being is you got to go out and work, work through it. And slowly but surely, it's been getting better, and getting farther, but it's something you have to do.

I think of people who had different surgeries for hips, for knees, and sometimes because they wouldn't do the exercises that they should have been doing, the therapy they should have been doing, it caused some bigger problems that had to be taken care of, and it became far more painful to correct some of that later on. You've got to work through it. You've got to do what, sometimes what hurts to get, in other words, just like it's talking about, "but rather be healed." The exercise you have to do in that as a part of that process and a relationship with God.

So, it says here, as a part of that, for us, **pursue peace with all** (with everyone). God shows us the way of peace. He says we're to be peacemakers. Because it's something the world doesn't grasp fully. The world's idea of peace is not peace at all. It's really screwed up, especially between nations. And it's, "We can have peace if you do it my way." But that's not the way it works. But that's the way we are as human beings, that things have to kind of work out your way in order to have peace. No, there are ways to have peace.

And in God's Church, we learn how to do that in our relationships with one another, and that's expected of us, and even with the world because they don't understand, they don't know what you know. We're the ones that have been given the ability to see and know certain things. So, you know how blessed are we? So, "pursue peace with all." Awesome thing.

…**and holiness**, which is a matter of that which is right with God, God's spirit, with Him being in it because it takes God's spirit for this to be accomplished. …**without which no one will see the Lord**.

Verse 15—looking carefully. And this has to do with "inspect" or "to oversee." So, it doesn't just happen. It's something that work has to go into it. Just like for being healed and exercising various things, you have to put work and effort into it. It doesn't just happen.

It doesn't just happen because we go pray about it and then we go away and everything's okay. You have to keep doing it until it's done.

…**looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God**. Being cut off from God, receiving God's favor.

…**lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble**. Jealousies, envies, things that interfere in people's lives, being offended, whatever it might be. So, we have to work at that because bitterness is not of God. If we become bitter and upset about something towards others, God says that can cause us to actually be cut off from God.

…**and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator**. So, here we're coming to part of the lesson of the Old Testament there. **…lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau**. So, Esau is used as an example of something really bad, a mindset he had.

…**who for one morsel of food**… Just so he could have his appetite soothed, if you will. Because Jacob had food there ready to go and Esau wanted some of it, to share in it. And so, he said, "Well, if you'll sell me your birthright," in essence here, "you can have it." So, you think, well, that doesn't make much sense. And yeah, it does. It shows a different mindset here. Jacob had a different mind and a mindset than what Esau had. And I believe with all my being that was very evident to Rebecca very early on. Two children who were totally different, and Isaac saw something differently than Rebecca did.

Anyway, it says, **For one morsel of food, he sold his birthright**. Meaning, he didn't really value it. He didn't really see it like Jacob did. He didn't see it in the same light. He didn't have the same feelings and thinking toward God, candidly.

Though Jacob was very conniving in what he participated in, he wanted what God had offered. He wanted it. And so he's willing to do this, to offer an exchange, the food. I think it said like a kind of a porridge type thing or stew, if you will, that he'd prepared. And so, Esau said, "Yes," you know, "It's yours." So flippant. He addressed things flippantly, if you will, perhaps thinking, "Well, that's not really going to happen. I'm still going to receive the birthright." These things about being the oldest and whatever it might be that was in the mind. Who knows.

Sadly, this on a spiritual plane happens in God's Church. "For one morsel of food sold his birthright." So, what will people sell or exchange for being in God's Kingdom? It doesn't seem real to them. "Well, maybe it is, maybe it isn't, and maybe if certain things really happen." "Maybe if I see the first four Trumpets come to pass, then I will realize that I really need to repent and I've been wrong, and God will have mercy on me, and I'll be able to come back into the Church" or "Maybe I'll live on into the Millennium and be able to do (whatever) if I'm wrong. But this is what I want right now, to quit the Church."

So, I don't know what kind of reasoning goes on in people's minds. Maybe there's not even any reasoning. Maybe they just see something and are so flippant about it, like he was just for one morsel of food. Whatever it is physical out here that somebody wants, it's generally just obviously something physical that they want. Maybe not to tithe, maybe not to give offerings anymore, whatever.

So, it's a flippant approach to God, toward God, and not really believing what God says or trusting in it or desiring it. Because again, there was this definite difference between Esau and his brother, a big difference. And we have to look at ourselves and see where we are, and do we really desire what God says we can inherit. Because that's about a type of inheritance, if you will, that's going to be given through a birthright.

And so, when God says we can have something, do we really want it? Is that what we really desire? Is that what we really put value in? Because he didn't value it. It's pretty easy to see why he was rejected very early on, even on a physical plane. Even on a physical plane.

For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing… He wanted to inherit. Now, when it comes time, and his father is getting old and about ready to die, now it becomes a little more important: "I want the inheritance." Well, what did you do in the meantime? How did you treat it? How did you think about it? Is it a last-minute thing?

It's like this concept that people in the world have that when you're on the deathbed, somebody can come along and sprinkle some water on you, and you're okay. "Everything's forgiven; you're okay. You'll be at the pearly gates!" It's like that didn't even make sense. What changed?

For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance. Repentance was never a part of his thinking. It wasn't a matter that he repented toward God, toward what God had said, toward what God had given through Abraham and then his father Isaac. It wasn't because of that. It wasn't because of his thoughts and feelings towards those things, that it was something he embraced and believed even on a physical plane.

For he found no place for repentance, though he sought it… He sought the inheritance. He sought the birthright. That's what it's talking about. He didn't seek after repentance. He wasn't trying to repent before God of his choices and his attitude toward God. "Though he sought it." He wanted it. …**sought it diligently with tears**, it says. It's just like too late. Too late. What have you done? And what are you doing now, candidly? It's not with the right spirit toward God. It's not in spirit and in truth before God. Because that's what God wants from us.

Let's go on to Romans 9. We're going to break into a train of thought given by Paul when he just explained some of God's plan, in that God raised up the nation of Israel and gave promises that were along a physical line in which Christ was eventually born. Because that's really what it was about, more than anything else, in a large respect, and would lead to spiritual things on a spiritual plane in a greater way later on. But so much of it was about Joshua.

Romans 9:6—It is not the word of God has fallen down or failed. So, he's explaining something here about this process here and showing that things that happened to Israel and so forth is not because of God's failure in anything. It's because of them.

For they are not Israel who are of Israel. Now, he's going to explain something here that's on a spiritual plane and not a physical one, and it goes beyond the nation of Israel. He's showing here the whole thing is not about a physical people and the fact that God worked with them, gave them promises. They were an example, really in large part, of what not to do. They were an example showing how human nature is and how people can go off on tangents and the like. Their whole history was like that.

So, he's saying here, “For they are not all Israel who are of Israel.” It sounds a little contradictory there, but he's talking about Israel that God is creating. It's not about a physical nation. It never was about a physical nation. It's about a spiritual one. So just because someone is an Israelite or a Jew or whatever tribe they might have been of, that's not what it's all about, because they're not all of Israel, will not be all of Israel, because Israel, the Israel God tells us of, is a spiritual one, His Family.

…**nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham**. So just because someone's the seed of Abraham doesn't mean they're a part. **But in Isaac, your seed** (Abraham's seed), **shall be called. That is, those who are the children of the flesh, they are not the children of God**. This is a profound statement because I don't think we really understood this very well until a recent time here, maybe even the past year. That for someone to be called the children of God, they have to have God's spirit. Otherwise, we're just human beings.

Physical human life. That's all there is unless you're given more. And if you're offered more and you're offered the impregnation of God's spirit, then you become the begotten children of God. That's where it begins. Before that, we're not the children of God, and we're not yet children when we're begotten. We're the begotten children, but we're not born until we're born.

That's what Israel is about. It's a spiritual Israel. It's the Family of God. It's Elohim. And that's what Paul is beginning to explain in certain parts here in a very physical way to Romans, and spiritual for those who are called and can understand it because not many could understand this.

So again here, “that is those who are the children of the flesh…” In other words, just because they're descendants and of the nation of Israel, “they are not the children of God.” Those who came through, they were not the children of God, except for a few whom God was working with at different points in time, like King David. God worked with individuals along the way, but the nation wasn't being worked with on a spiritual plane at all.

But the children of the promise are counted as the seed. So that starts with Christ and goes on from there. That's what it's all about. **For this is the word of promise: At this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac – for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election** or His selection, what He chose, **might stand, not of works**… So, he's talking here if you look at speaking of Rebecca and you look at, in that respect, Jacob and Esau, it's coming down to they were in the womb. They hadn't done good or evil at that point in time; they weren't born yet into life. But there was that which God was working out, and He chose one, the supplanter.

Incredible how He was doing things. Knew them in the womb. Things we can't comprehend. Well, we can comprehend it better today because of science and medical science and things that are out there. But God, so far above and beyond all that. But one was going to be worked with, and a promise would

be given through Him. It was already decided about Jacob. Jacob was the one who was going to be worked with, not Esau. And so, when they were born, they were different. You think God knew that?

"…Nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to selection." In other words, God chooses what He will do and how He will do it, and who is anyone else to judge? Because we can't even come close to grasping His purpose and how He performs such things. We're learning more. We're growing in that. But we've got a long way to go of things we're going to be learning as time goes on.

"…according to election, His selection might stand, not of works." So it's not a matter of what people can and can't do on their own because nobody can do this way of life on their own. That's the whole point. We have to have God. We have to have God's spirit once begotten in order to grow and conquer and overcome.

And so, here He's showing here it's not a matter of works. …**but of Him who calls**. God calls. Something we don't fully grasp and comprehend. We don't know why each one of us was called. We just have to be thankful and receive what God has given to us and thank Him for it, be in awe of it. Like was mentioned at the Feast, between all the numbers of people who have ever existed and what we are in the mix of all that, it's truly mind-boggling. And we need to see ourselves in that light, of how blessed we are, of what God has placed before us. That in itself should give us a vision that should be very inspiring and motivating to us.

So again, "according to election" or selection, "His selection might stand, not of works but of Him who calls." That's a matter of God's will and what God does and how He does it.

It was said to her (to Rebecca), **the older will serve the younger**. God determined that before they were born, "The older will serve the younger." **As it is written, Jacob I have loved, but Esau**… And it's a bad translation. It says, "**I have hated**." It's not that word. …**I have not loved**.

You remember in Luke 14, it talks about when we're called and so forth, "and he who doesn't hate father or mother…" and so forth, it uses an expression there that's translated so often as hate (it's not hate), but to love less. God has to be first. And everything else does not compare. So sometimes people have to give up in relationships father, mother, sister, brother, different ones in order to continue obeying God and following God.

It's a part of a process here. God has to be number one. God has to be first. And so, he's just explaining here that Jacob is being worked with for a purpose into the future, but Esau is not.

So what does it mean if God didn't love him? Not like Jacob. It's a matter of a calling. When God calls us, He's giving us His love. He isn't giving it to the world yet. Because this is when God begins to give favor, help, His grace, and on and on it goes, to those whom He calls. That's His love. That's when He can begin expressing and giving His love when it's time to share it, Himself, with others. He's not sharing Himself

with the world. He's not giving His love to the world yet. That's for the Great White Throne as a whole or into the Millennium, if you will, for the rest of the world.

But over the past 6,000 years, He hasn't called many to share, to love, to have an ability to enter into a relationship with Him. Awesome. It's like He talked of David, “a man after my own heart,” you know, because God was developing a relationship with him, working with him in a very unique way. Awesome!

As it's written, Jacob I have loved, and Esau I have not loved. That is basically all it's saying. Is it wrong for God not to love others? No. It's God's purpose. His purpose is not to love all of mankind in the past 6,000 years—that's clearly what it's been—until it's time, until it's time for them to be called. He's only worked with a few. Candidly, enough to get to a point where there's going to be 144,000 who come with His son Joshua at His return. Awesome! Those He has loved because He's had a relationship with them, a fellowship, a friendship, a closeness that they were able to grow in with their God, seeing things that others couldn't see.

So, God will love us or others when it's their time, and for most of mankind it's not until the Great White Throne.

What should we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Is there something wrong with God because He does it this way? No. He has a purpose and a plan to create a Family, Elohim, and it's very specific, it's very broken down, if you will, minute in detail. To think 6,000 years to call 144,000 who will be able to be ready. And only at the end here are there others being added to not the 144,000 but within the Church who are going to live on into the Millennium. Incredible to have such opportunity, to be the base, if you will, the beginning of the Church in the Millennium.

So it says here, **Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!** That's insanity. **For He said to Moses, I will have mercy upon whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion**. So in His plan, He decides who He's going to call, who He's going to work with. How blessed are you? Seriously! To realize that you have this now when so few in 6,000 years have ever been given such an opportunity to know God, to know the truth.

So then, it is not of Him who wills. It's not by people making up their own choice and decision of something they're going to do, especially toward God, because they can't know what's true in the first place unless God draws them and works with them and opens their mind.

…**nor of Him who runs**. Nor of whatever people might do, like, candidly, Judaism has done. A lot of them have run for a long, long time and gotten nowhere. Because they of all tribes were the only ones who have really stuck to a basic framework of something that was given long ago. But they have so messed it up because they don't have God's spirit. It shows what human beings do.

…**nor of Him who runs, but of God who shows mercy**. So, God who gives His compassion, grace to us, a better way of saying it.

For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up that I may show my power in you and that my name may be declared in all the earth. So, he's showing something here about an individual that wasn't being worked with in any measure or form except to glorify God, to show God's great power, to show it to the world. And He showed it to the world at that time when He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. The whole world learned about what happened when they realized, when they came to know the news, that Pharaoh and an entire army was destroyed in the sea. Incredible. That's what it's speaking of here.

"For this purpose I have raised you up that I may show my power to you." So, God raised up this Pharaoh for a specific purpose and a specific time. You know, God had a specific time from the time of Abraham on to the time He was going to draw the nation. Abraham became a nation, and they were going to be drawn out of Egypt. And that was a very specific moment in time, requiring a very specific pharaoh at that time.

Just like the world today has some very specific leaders out there who are the result of something that God is molding and fashioning even in the world today on a physical plane. They are fulfilling things on a physical plane to accomplish and bring about what has to happen here at the end. They are the ones that are going to make certain decisions because of their makeup, because of the way they think.

And so God gives them opportunities and things before them sometimes. And what does human nature do with that? Does it use it for the good or for self? And so we see different leaders in the world and what that does to people, like it did to Pharaoh. Pride and a haughtiness in something on a physical plane that becomes very great. That's the way the world is and always has been.

So here, God worked with Pharaoh in this manner. He raised him up, gave him incredible wealth in that nation, prosperity, and a people that were slaves and being worked with as slaves and doing all the construction for them and all the other things that they had them doing and serving throughout Egypt. Not just as in building, but even within the household of Pharaoh himself. And on and on it goes.

So it says the scripture says, **to Pharaoh, For this purpose I have raised you up that I may show my power in you** (through you) **and that my name may be declared in all the earth. Therefore, He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and on whom He will, He hardens**. And He hardened Pharaoh. We see the different plagues that were brought along. And because of the carnal nature and because of the wealth that he had and the power that he had and these things that were happening to him that were greater than he was, each time it went away, he snapped back into who he was – hardened, selfish, powerful, and wanting to retain all that. He wasn't rattled to the core of his being until his own son.

So, you talk about all the firstborn of Egypt who were killed and all the things that took place at the very end there. It enabled the Israelites to begin that movement out of Egypt. Incredible how God worked.

Verse 19—Then will you say to me, Why yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? Sometimes it's easier for people to find fault with God, “Why did you do it that way?” and “That doesn't seem right,” and “That doesn't seem fair.” And there's nothing more fair than God. Nothing more righteous than God Almighty. And yet human beings judge God.

But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Yeah, who are we? We've been given everything. We've been given physical life. That's an awesome blessing in itself. How does mankind use it? For selfish reasons. Everyone does.

Even in the Church. That's what we have to conquer: our selfish ways. To understand, our responses to things are generally first and foremost based on selfishness because we want a certain outcome, and if it doesn't happen that way, we respond. Not in a good way, but in a wrong way.

Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, why have you made me like this? “Why have you made me selfish?” We don't go that far as a whole as human beings, because if we can see that, then we can begin to grow.

But again, **Does not the potter have power over the clay from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another to dishonor?** To raise up Moses to honor and to bring down Pharaoh to dishonor. And on and on it goes through time of things that God has done when He's intervened with mankind. We are His creation, and He has a time that He's going to offer to be in His Family to everyone, even, obviously, in the Great White Throne. It doesn't mean everyone's going to choose it.

What if God wanting to show His wrath… Has to do with the execution of judgment, just like He did with Pharaoh's army and Pharaoh himself, His power, if you will. As it says here, **and to make His power known**. Because it has to do with His power, that He can judge; He can determine what He wants the way He wants it, and it's always for that which is good.

We learn from the stories of coming out of Egypt. We see things on a physical plane that God reveals to us something on a spiritual plane. The matters of being unleavened and coming out of leavening. Becoming unleavened, I should say and getting rid of the leaven in our lives and all the things that happened because of the manna in the wilderness, and on and on it goes, the physical things that are out there to learn from.

What if God, wanting to show His wrath, His execution of judgment, **and make known His power, endured much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction**. That's what we are as human beings, vessels of judgment. Because the end as human beings with selfishness, if we don't nip it in the bud, if we're not able to change that, we have one thing awaiting us, and it's just strictly after a physical life that we just have death. That happens to everyone first anyway, once, but it's going to happen a lot later on in the Great White Throne. So, choices, choices.

Verse 23—and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy. That's what God does to us. So, if He calls us, is merciful to us, begins to show that He has a desire to have a fellowship with us, a relationship with us, He reveals His love to us, He begins to love us, that's what God does when He gives us the opportunity for repentance through His Son Joshua. Because He loves us, He wants us to begin changing and growing so that we can have that impregnation of His spirit and grow and conquer and overcome to be in His Family. Nothing greater.

So again… **in that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He has prepared beforehand for glory**. So, even there God had prepared, planned, purposed at the time He determined there had to be a Passover, that His Son was going to be a Passover, and there would be 144,000 who later would come back with Him to this earth. All these things planned and prepared beforehand.

…**even us whom He called**, for a purpose, **not of the Jews only but also of the gentiles**. It wasn't just about the Jews. But the Church began primarily because that's where it started, and that's where, right there in Jerusalem, because they'd come down and God began with Jews who were converted, who were able to come to repentance, who had already come to repentance, in many cases, because of some of the baptism of the apostles that was given, but also of John that was done in the River Jordan. And then when different ones came together, 3,000 in that one day who were given the impregnation of God's holy spirit—Incredible—a life began to grow in them.

But then later on, showing this wasn't about the Jews. It wasn't about the Israelites. This is about everyone. That God's plan is for all mankind. That's what Paul was called to preach. And Paul wrote more than any others in the New Testament. You think what an awesome thing, what God was revealing. That everyone has opportunity, when called, of all mankind, to be a part of His Family. Awesome!

So I think in times past, mistakes we made within the Church of not understanding and thinking certain things about the Israelites, and some got a big head if they thought they were a Jew or of Jewish origin or Jewish background, or maybe of Ephraim, or maybe of Manasseh. Big flipping deal! That's just a lot of baggage and a lot of pride oftentimes. And people had to conquer and overcome those things when they began to learn that no, it's not about that. It's about everyone. That's what God shows us.

As He says also in Hosea, I will call them my people, His children, candidly. **I will call them my people who were not my people**. They weren't worked with as in talking about different ones that are going to be worked with through time, and those who are not known as the people of God because that's been misconstrued.

Thinking about the physical part, it wasn't about the physical Israel. That's why it starts out the way it does. “It is not that the word of God has fallen down. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel.” Because He's revealing something here on a spiritual plane.

I will call them my people who were not my people, and her beloved who were not beloved. So, showing here very clearly these are the ones whom God poured out His love on. They're the ones that are beloved. When it comes time to be called, time to receive a unique relationship with God, that's when it all begins for each person.

Verse 26—Then it shall come to pass in the place where it was said of them, You are not my people, they shall be called the sons of the living God. Awesome!

Isaiah also cried out concerning Israel. Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant will be saved. So, even there, if you look at even on a physical plane, looking at the world and what happened, and then when it came time for the time of Christ, only a small amount, because gentiles in the world began to receive the truth and begin to be a part of having a relationship with God. So, there's still a remnant in it, even out of that part if you want, of the 144,000.

For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness because the Lord/the Eternal will make a short work upon the earth. This is hard for us to understand, "a short work." 6,000 years isn't a long time with God. Because if you look at the billions and billions, maybe trillions—we don't know—as far as Earth time is concerned, how long the creation of the universe took place. And then to come to this point in time where God then turned His attention back to the earth after it had already been destroyed and started remolding and refashioning for what He was going to accomplish. Not at the universe anymore, but now the earth, because of a greater creation: His Family. Awesome.

For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth. Then, as Isaiah said before, except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been like unto Gomorrah. Meaning destroyed in fire. So, that seed that was promised is all about Joshua, and then the part that His Family, then, God's Family can have with Him.

What should we say then? That gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. So, it's asking that question: "That gentiles who did not pursue righteousness…" It's showing here that they weren't called. Even with Israel, when you talk about what took place with them, it wasn't a matter of what they could be saved by.

It says, **But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness**. So, especially if you look at Judaism, the Jews, even more so, to grasp and comprehend what's being said here, that they had an idea about God's law, but it wasn't from God. It wasn't about God's spirit. It wasn't on a spiritual plane whatsoever. And trying to do it on a physical plane on your own ability, it's counted as nothing because it's just about self. It's not about God, and it's not about what God has called.

So again, **has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because it is not of faith**. So it's a matter of the truth that God has to give to us and what we can grow in in order to become a part of His Family.

But if it were by the works of the law, which the Jews have tried to do. A relationship with God is not possible that way. Only for the Church.

For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. You look at how far they had gone. By the time Joshua came along, they rejected Him. And if it had been a matter of the spirit and they were keeping the spirit of the law, they would have recognized, they would have known who He was and embraced Him. But they didn't because it was all physical.

As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame. So that's where the glory, that's where the strength, that's where the power comes from – it's that process of Joshua being our Passover and what that means for us.

I'm going to stop there today. Didn't get as far as I wanted to, but we'll stop there, and we'll continue with *Part 3* next Sabbath.