

## 1987-01-24- Dr Herman Hoeh- God's Government in His Church

Today is the 24th of January, and we are hardly more than one week from the time that would have commemorated the first anniversary of the death of Mr. Armstrong.

It was thought appropriate that I should address on this occasion, since I have the privilege of speaking here, a matter that for him was very important, and that is the nature and structure of God's government and the church.

I would like to start out by saying one is reminded of the importance of this topic, especially when on the morning of the 16th of January, which was a Thursday when Mr.

Armstrong died, and was not quite that Thursday.

It was one day later in the week this year that the Vice President of Wattai, of Los Angeles, which is centered in North Hollywood, right near the Hollywood Freeway in Roscoe, off-ramp, asked if some of us would be able to accompany them to the cemetery to pray at Mr. Armstrong's graveside.

So Mr. Carol Miller, Mr. Hunsberger, were circumstantially in my office, and I asked them to come with me.

Mr. Leon Sexton and we arrived at the cemetery, and also Mr. Sabat Yinyuad, who is our Tai teacher, the Vice President of Wattai and two others who are monks, and a lady who is one of several who serve the Tai community.

And we had the opportunity there of, in a sense, renewing acquaintances with individuals whom you will recognize if you were to review a picture of the original funeral.

That is, there were some very obvious, saffron-robed monks on that occasion more than a year ago.

And we were very grateful that then one of the gentlemen was the Vice President on this occasion and who could be there, because Abba Protepsupon, who visited also the grave hundred days after the death of Mr. Armstrong, is in Bangkok at the present time, and simply could not be here on this occasion.

If any of you have visited the grave side, you will notice in general that there are flowers there.

It may not necessarily always be from the same source, and sometimes there is more than one bouquet, but the Tai community has been responsible fundamentally for flowers at his grave side as their custom is every week since his death.

I thought you should know, because it tells you something very special of how they look at this work and how they saw him.

I will deviate a moment and answer a question that may be in your mind that is, what is this? I happen to have a pin.

Many of the ministers on the refreshing program see it at a distance and inquire.

It is a pin that I not uncommonly wear.

I don't keep changing it with suits.

I have different ones for different ones.

That is for the two that I normally wear on occasions such as this.

I chose not to wear the black one, but on this one I have the pin of Rama V and Rama IX, two kings of Thailand.

The great modernization of Thailand may be said to have occurred under the reign of Rama V. The present king, Bhumiphan, is Rama IX.

It happens to have been a gift to this pin by one of the ladies who was in fact the chairman of the School of Education pertaining to primary education at the University of Tualongkorn in Bangkok.

I had the chance of meeting Professor Prabhan this last time when I was in Bangkok and she was there on the occasion of the Thai funeral, which I also attended that I mentioned on a previous occasion.

But it does remind one without a question of, let's say, an important legacy that Mr. Armstrong has left.

I would draw your attention that many doctrines that we have come to clearly understand are in part understood by others, there are some that no others understand.

But without a question, the fact that we have the understanding that we do and the church has a sense of unity is due to the fact that Mr. Armstrong later in life, not earlier, finally came to see the major significance and the importance of God's rule in the church, as he has established rule in government also in the family.

And we commonly have said that the only place in the world in which the government of God directly is exercised is not over any nation, but over God's church.

And it is good that, in a kind of anniversary occasion, we take a look at this topic.

Now I am reminded, of course, there is the nature of the government as defined in the Bible, and then there is also the application of the nature of the form of the government of God that one may or may not see in the world, and I have had, of course, the privilege of visiting some exotic countries such as Nepal and Bhutan, and I have to be impressed that sometimes the structure of government has never been lost by some people, as unfortunately it has been lost by most people and, as far as I know, all major, if not minor, Christian nations.

See as God established it, God was king, you remember the story in the days of Saul, Saul was a young man, he hadn't yet been king, but the people said, we want a king, and Samuel thought they were rejecting him as God's prophet, and God said, Samuel, they really, they like you, it is me they are rejecting.

They are rejecting me and want a king in my stead.

Now in that government that ancient Israel had, and I will explain how it began, you remember the fact that there was someone whom God used, first of all was Moses, he was assisted by, in this case, a brother, Aaron, and Moses had appointed captains, we can use that term that is, since it was a kind of nation and a state, though it had no land yet, it was only promised a land, it was a church, it was also an army, because that's the nature of the way the children of Israel then were as they were coming out of Egypt, and there were captains of thousands, of course there were the tribal leaders themselves, and captains of thousands, and captains of hundred, and captains of fifties, and captains of ten.

That is, you ultimately got down to what might have been the leader of the extended family, or you're in the modern vernacular, the man who was in charge of this side of the block.

In World War II when we had to have blackouts in California, which some of you remember along the western coast, my father was the captain, let's say, of the block, the long street, in this case it was a countryside, and whenever the sirens went off he was responsible to see that everybody pulled the shades down, and that it was dark, and if someone didn't do it you simply came up to the door and you knocked and you had authority.

I'm reminded, having been in Bhutan, that here is a country in which every village has a village head, and he is understood to be the wisest man in the village, he is the man who in the biblical sense sits at the gate, and to whom people come.

You of course have heard of Mr. Salvat Yinyuad, whose name I've already mentioned, who is our Thai teacher, works on behalf of the foundation, Mr. Tkach most specifically, Mr. Lok, in this part of the world.

He has an older brother, I believe he is older if I'm not mistaken, whom you've never seen, a remarkable man, though he does not speak English, we have no inability to communicate in a language that is through translation.

He was for many years a village head, he was regarded as the wisest man of the village, and when you see him and talk to him you sense that if you had presented your case he would understand and he would make the right decision that he wouldn't be swayed by money or swayed by prestige.

In the same sense, it is interesting to see a country that does not know God, a Buddhist country like Bhutan, in which the wisest man of the village gets together with the wisest man of the next village, and out of let's say a whole valley or a mountainside as there are there as well, the representative is chosen of these village heads who meets at another we might call a provincial level, and so the wisest of the wise of the local village gets together, and finally out of these groups all the way to the top, without any political parties mind you, are those who are responsible in government and advisors of his majesty King Wangchuk.

Now we don't have that here, and it is very unfortunate, but it is remarkable to stop to think of the fact that there is a country without political parties, a country where there is a religion that has no true understanding that even a God exists who is the creator, Buddhism does not have a God.

You need to understand that there may be lesser beings or spirits that they are aware of, that is levels of being, they don't deny that there is a spirit world, but it does not enter their minds, the nature of the God whom we serve.

One of the greatest problems we have in explaining, and we are thinking about it, how do you explain our understanding of Jesus' most fundamental doctrine that established the church and made a difference from Judaism? Jesus said, not that I am announcing the kingdom of God, people already heard that, John the Baptist did, that was not what was unique about Jesus' teaching, there was only one doctrine that was absolutely unique, it wasn't the Sabbath, it wasn't the holy days, it wasn't the baptism, John baptized, and every Gentile woman had to be in that sense immersed or baptized to enter into Judaism as a man was circumcised.

Jesus said, you must be born again, you must be born again, that was unique, but you see in Buddhism this is a problem, how do you explain it when their philosophy has been in the teaching that you have been born so many times, the one thing you don't want to do is be born again if you

can help it, that is you want to finally exit without having to be born again, because you have reached the level of a Buddha.

So this is a term we are going to have to think about, but I am addressing the question from a point of view that I have been privileged to be in both Nepal and Bhutan where there are no political parties.

Political parties are simply not thought of as sensible in Bhutan, they are in the minds of some people who have been educated in the British concepts of parliamentary government in Nepal, but the king has structured the government on the basis of a panchayat or a local community of villages, and there are no political parties permitted, I will define the distinction.

You see in a certain sense an awareness that what is necessary is to find people who really should be responsible at different levels, so that the government from the top, in this case the creator God, in the church, in that case the king, in both cases the king, because both countries have kings, would be appropriately executed.

But in our society the church of God, for many centuries, was wandering from pillar to post, and in a sense grew up, as we are familiar with it in the United States, in which the Roman Republic became the standard of our government, and so when Mr. Armstrong came among the people of God, they were not really clear at all on the nature and the structure of the government of God, even though they had many other basic doctrines.

So I think it is appropriate that today on such an anniversary, since I've had the chance to address this question in one of the other local congregations on the very anniversary, the Sabbath just before Mr. Armstrong's death was out following the funeral service between the death and the funeral service last occasion, it is important for us now, I think, to reflect on this legacy and the fact that so much has been accomplished, because instead of the church being in turmoil, the church has had a very quiet period, because the government of God has functioned smoothly. As reflected, of course, in the remarkable achievements, in the use of the funding that God has provided as church through tithe and offering, especially in the telecast, where in a sense Mr. Armstrong left the least done. The college was structured, it was ready to move on step by step, the publishing, the editorial area, the local offices around the world in our various nations, but there was no one who was specifically trained to speak on the World Tomorrow program. But because of judicious judgment, and every one of us and I was privileged, and my wife, to hear our three presenters on tape, they did their work before Mr. Armstrong died, as well as others, but there wasn't any question in the minds of any of us who heard it, men or women. Sometimes it's good to hear how a woman's ear listens or hears a man's voice in his appearance, and every one of us agreed that these were the three men, no more, no less. I was asked to try out, I told them very clearly, what do you think would ever happen? If you have a name like D'Cotch, which people still say how do you spell it, how do you pronounce it, what would they do with mine? So I said simply it makes no sense. In the English language we have to have something reasonably simple, and therefore it's nice to know that one can be free in making decisions, that you know when you should, when you shouldn't, I have enough to do anyway. But here we're in a certain sense none of these men that we perceived would necessarily fill Mr. Armstrong's shoes, and none of them have ever tried. They are fulfilling Christ's commission, and if you put it another way, they are fulfilling the role in their own shoes, because each one has something special, and they complement one another. They complement one another, and that's what was necessary in this work. But God led through Christ that the right decision would be made by Mr. D'Cotch, and I'm very glad that all who saw the programs, even those who saw themselves and weren't chosen, agreed why they shouldn't be, because sometimes the face is such that the

shadow will simply give an impression that makes you want to turn the dial. You may be alright with radio, and some voices are marvelous on radio. Mr. Armstrong was good on both. He also had the right appearance. He had a distinguished look. He was not handsome, he was distinguished. I hope we at least know enough about vocabulary to sense the meaning.

With this in mind, let's go back to the days of Moses, and there we discover that God chose a man and would have given him a marvelous voice. He had to be healed. He was slow of speech. He had a problem. But Moses also had another problem called stubbornness. So God chose simply not to argue beyond a certain point. He then said, well, Aaron will be your speaker in cases where there are difficulties. And so God used Moses to raise up a family into a nation and into a church. We are introduced to this church, interestingly, not before the flood and not even after the flood, until the children of Israel were ready to leave Egypt. And we are introduced in Chapter 12 to the story of this people, and we are introduced to this church. They are called a congregation. They are given at that time a knowledge of the holy days. They are given at that time also preceding that the knowledge of the calendar as to how it should be. And they were given shortly thereafter a knowledge of the Sabbath so they would understand how properly to keep it after they'd come out of the world. God's government was being administered. God's government was being administered by telling them that God has made a decision with respect to the measurement of time, with respect to how time should be measured, how annual and how weekly occasions should be observed. And which ones? It's interesting that what characterizes God's church today, the Sabbath and the holy days, in terms of when we meet, is how the church started. You know, there are a lot of people who believe in the Ten Commandments, but there are very few who are willing to do the rest that God said is the beginning thing that the children of Israel must do.

And that was administered by the government of Yahweh, the one who became Jesus Christ, the Word, through Moses and through Aaron and through the elders and through those who had been appointed step by step down to the captives of fifty and captives of ten. That is, where every extended family had a responsible person, subject to someone else. The children of Israel were given the law from the top Sinai. God communicated directly. And I think it important that we realize that just as God spoke directly to Adam and Eve, He also spoke directly to the next generation, Cain and Abel. He talked with Enoch, talked with Noah, walked with him, talked with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Sometimes he appeared in visions and dreams by that time and mostly in dreams to Joseph, but he certainly appeared in face-to-face situation with Moses. In most cases it was like a conversation of voice out of a cloud.

And in one case, he simply appeared directly, but from behind with his glory, and do you remember the story, Moses really wanted to, he was really interested in getting to know even more the person with whom he was speaking, because this being, of course, appeared directly to Abraham and sat at the tent flap, you remember. But with Moses, he did it in a more miraculous way and usually appeared in a cloud, and Moses was never allowed to see the face of God, Yahweh, but saw him from behind and even then put his hand there, so to speak, so that his glory was not fully seen. But what is important to realize is that as everything started out, God would have communicated directly so that no one would have any question or any doubt.

That's how it started. Moses was simply conveying some messages that people had no problem with what he had said, and you'd think now that God spoke directly, they would say, well this is great, we have no doubt now, God speaking. But before the twentieth chapter of Exodus is over, the first thing the children of Israel said is we don't want God talking directly to us. This is shocking, and we simply don't want it. We're willing to listen to Moses.

Moses can talk to God, and so Moses presented the problem, and God said, well if that's the way the children of Israel want it, hereafter in the church, I will speak in one way or another to its leaders, whether verbally directly or in visions or dreams, out of a cloud, whatever it may be, but no longer directly to the congregation as a whole. I think we have to realize how different this world would have been. You know, if our discoveries from the time of the Garden of Eden had never been stopped, we would have had television and radio long, long ago.

And who do you think would have been on television and radio if everybody had obeyed, and there had been no sin? The answer is Yahweh. The word would have been speaking. Others probably communicating were not saying that that wouldn't be true, but God would have said everything directly and would have been able to answer every question, every problem. But a peculiarity of human beings is that they want God visible when he chooses not to be, and when he is, they don't want him visible. The atheist wants him to show himself, and sometime in the future, not too far downstream, he will, when they all fall from the sky. As an atheist nation sends its weaponry to try to take the wealth of the children of Israel who have been gathered back to the Promised Land, and there you will realize that there is a God.

From that time on, God spoke to the leader of the nation. Now it was an unconverted nation.

It was not a nation that had, as its leader, a religious figure only. It was a nation that had in fact a leader who was even in that day above the religious leader, that in this nation was a physical nation and a church. The ceremonies, the religious matters were in the hands of Aaron, but the command was in the hand of Moses. Aaron never questioned that Moses had been chosen first. That was not Aaron's problem, although on one occasion he let it get out of hand a little bit. However, that is very minor. Many people have that problem far greater than Aaron did, and there is probably a reason God chose him, because he was able to recognize the relationship properly. In a church and state, as God established it, what we would call the decisions rest in the level of state. You see, they were both together, but Moses was directly under Yahweh, and Aaron was in the sense his assistant at his right hand. This nation, this church, was not converted. They were given the law in the letter. That is, they were not asked to try to interpret everything in terms of intent and motive, but as to whether something were done or not, or not done. They had an army, because they were a nation of this world. Jesus said, if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, but my kingdom is not of this world, so the church today does not. Somebody asked why at Mr. Armstrong's funeral. I brought this up when two mayors were here and representatives of the government of California. The answer is they ought to know where we stand, and nobody raised a question on it, of those who were there. It is very important to realize that there were distinguishing features of the government of God when dealing with a carnal nation as contrasted to a spiritual church today. So there was a letter of the law. There was administration of the death penalty, administration of other punishments, no promise of the Holy Spirit, no promise of eternal life, and God would protect the nation as they would have faith in Him, and as that faith would decline, they would have to protect it themselves.

Moses died east of Jordan. Before he died, he puzzled who should succeed. He didn't know whom God would choose, or how it would ever be done. In his mind, there wasn't anybody who was quite able to do the task. But Moses was shown that he had, serving him, a captain of the army who, for nearly 40 years, was close to him, but interestingly, interestingly, though this man is mentioned, before the 20th chapter of Exodus, he simply is like an individual whose name on rare occasion occurs. The important people of the nation are named over and over again as rebelling. But when you remember the children of Israel before arriving at Sinai, at Refideim, just north of Mount Sinai as they were proceeding from the west and going south, if you were to look at a map, the Amalekites

had attacked the rear guard of the camp, and Moses told Joshua, now write this in a book. See that you keep this as a record, that God will have war with Amalek from generation to generation until they are extirpated, because the nation that does this is not worthy to serve the people of Israel, and the people of Israel, because the nation that does this is not worthy to survive. That was God's decision to take advantage of a people and to attack the frail, those who were slowest. It's one thing to be courageous and attack those who were bold and upfront, but it's another thing to have done something like this. Joshua was named, and you once in a while see him on the story, but he's never one of the most prominent people. But finally, of course, he is the man who delivers the children of Israel from their media night enemies in the east, and God tells Moses, finally, Joshua is the man. I think Moses must have awakened and realized, well, that's right. There isn't anybody else who's been able to captain as he has, and so Joshua was given this authority. God did not choose Moses' son. Moses did not choose his son. God put in Moses' mind what Moses himself could not see. He put it in his mind by talking directly to him, and he explained to him whom he had chosen, and it was Joshua, not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Joseph or Ephraim in particular.

So the children of Israel inherited the promised land over a period of time, and Joshua died, and the elders who served him all died that generation. Crisis came because it seems when leadership was nearing the end of life, and there are problems that sometimes develop as they certainly did in Israel, they got carnal minded as that generation died away, and a new generation came which didn't know all the things that had happened in the wilderness and couldn't really believe it. Now, an interesting thing is when the nation was doing what was right, it's very interesting, when the nation in the church was doing what was right, God established Joshua after Moses. There was no gap in between, but when the nation was drifting and a whole new generation was growing up that wanted to go its own way, do its own ideas, God did not choose directly a successor after Joshua and the elders died. An enemy came in, Kushan of Mesopotamia. God then raised up when the children of Israel repented.

He raised up a man, Othniel, the son of Kinaz, who was the younger brother of Caleb, and you remember, Caleb and Joshua were the two who did not bring a false testimony about the land 40 years approximately, not quite, before the end of the century, and they were planned 40 years approximately, not quite, before the occupation, at the beginning of the wilderness wandering. So Othniel was at the tribe of Judah. God raised him up. He was called a judge. He was really a military man. He was a commander, and all of these men in a sense were chosen during this period of time in order to deliver the nation that had gotten into trouble, and as long as the people followed the commander, the nation was free of trouble from outside enemies. Othniel dies, and the nation quickly drifts away.

Now, what happened, of course, is the nation was already spiritually drifting, and God chose not to choose another person immediately, and so the nation got into trouble again.

This time it was the Ammonites, Moabites, and Amalek. God raised up a Benjamin, Ehud, the man who had the skill with the sword in the left hand. Most people with the right hand, the sword would be here. You'd pull it out. Ehud was left-handed, and the sword was here, and the Moabites didn't realize where it was. Well, the story you can read in the book of Judges, but what is interesting is to realize that when a church and when a nation pleases God, there is one man who succeeds the next, but in no case do you have during this entire period any instance in which God chose the son of a father. We move from Levi to Ephraim, or Joseph. We go to Judah, and now we are with Ehud and the tribe of Benjamin, and he is dead. Then we come to the story of Deborah, who lived in the tribe of Ephraim, and Barak, who lived in the tribe of Naphtali, and they delivered the children of Israel. Deborah was a remarkable woman, like Golda Meir, to use a person who had the house of Israel in

some capacity. There have been some other remarkable women also, in other, in some cases, Gentile nations. But in any instance, she was remarkable in the sense that she knew that if this is the government of God, there has to be a man who commands.

She was a wise woman. She was a judge, but she did not take upon herself the military command. That was left to Barak. But I would cite, in this case, a very interesting role, because God, in fact, called Loma D. Armstrong before he called Herbert W. Armstrong. And I can tell you very clearly that the church had a certain stability. There was a certain respect that the church had in this period of time when Mrs. Armstrong was here. And I think that her role as a woman had a great effect on other women in the church, and they have a great effect on men. Don't you women fail to realize that? That effect can be for good or evil. But when she was absent, there was a tendency in the late sixties and in the seventies over the women's liberation movement, and with that movement, a whole new approach set in that affected men as well as women out of the church and gradually into church. Till sometimes when I would visit a church family, I didn't call on their home.

I came to their pad, and they lived like it. That's what they call it. This is our pad.

Well, those who had pads are gone, and some who even had houses. So what we have in the case of Golda Meir, when the Israelis responded to Mr. Armstrong and he asked them, well, with all the capable people you have, the capable men in your country, why do you have a woman as a prime minister? And their answer was very clear. She's the best man we've got. And he's mentioned that. Now, when he mentions that, that left an impression on it. But Golda Meir knew as a woman what she should and what she shouldn't do. A remarkable person of this modern generation. But when they died, enemies came in. God had to deliver them now, not by a descendant of either of those two, but by Gideon of the tribe of Manasseh.

There was a moment, however, when a young man who was a kind of illegitimate son in the case of Gideon, thought he should be a ruler. And the interesting thing is the only case where a son attempted to succeed the father was the case of Abimelech, who was a son by a secondary woman of Gideon. God never chose to have the line go that way.

Gideon said, I don't want any of my sons to reign over you as kings or rulers. No one.

God is the king. He's the one who makes the decision. And so God chose in each generation a person capable in that generation for the task. They're succeeded in the northern part of the country, Tola of the tribe of Issaacar, Jair of the tribe of Manasseh, who succeeded Tola. During this period also, east of Jordan, there were problems. There was an incident in invasion, and God raised up Jephthah of Gilead or the tribe of Manasseh. He was succeeded by Ibsen of the house of Judah, who lived in Bethlehem. He was succeeded by Elan of the tribe of Zebulun and Abdon of the tribe of Ephraim. I think it's important to realize that God made these choices step by step. So there were judges in the north finally not just one judge over the land, but the country was getting so populous, so large that there were judges from Gilead on the east, judges in the north, and judges in the south.

And finally, we are introduced to two men, which Samson was the younger, although he's mentioned earlier, and Samuel was the slightly older contemporary. Samuel, of course, we focus on, he was called a circuit judge, because he had to make the rounds. He was the judge in his day. We are dealing, of course, in the days of Samson with a remarkable young man of the tribe of Dan. And so all of these individuals served their specific purposes. Please, God, sometimes they displease God, because they didn't always do what was right. But it is remarkable to see that not in a single case, in the government of God, as it was administered at this time, were their sons who succeeded the father. That has never been the way, historically, as God established his church. There came a time

when the nation said, we don't want any more trouble like this, we would like to see a mortal ruler with a standing army, instead of having to obey God and keep the enemies out that way, we would rather pay taxes and have a king and have a standing army, and know that the enemies are going to stay out. Well, what wisdom? So God said, all right, if that's the way you feel, you can have Saul. And they were really impressed by him, because he was taller by a head than apparently anybody else. But unfortunately, unlike Samson, who prayed to God, Samson made serious mistakes. He prayed to God at the very last. Remember? When Saul was in trouble, he would say, Samuel, you pray for me. You communicate with God. Samuel communicated with God. Samson communicated with God. Saul was unable to. He never was properly in contact with God. God contacted him all right, but that's where it stopped. So God said, finally, we can't have anything more like this. I will not use Saul's descendants. I'm going to choose, according to my original promise, I'm going to choose someone of the house of Judah. It will be the family, ultimately, of David. Now, a remarkable thing happens.

Once there is a king, you cannot have a kingship that will permanently survive if it isn't also hereditary, and that's basically on the premise of the firstborn son. And when you don't have some kind of stable succession in a kingdom, you have what you had in England for a long time, wars, civil wars. First one branch of the house, then another branch wanted to take over. Even though it was all of the same house, ultimately, these were warring branches. God said that would happen, by the way, tragically in the family of David.

Nevertheless, over Judah you had the establishment of David, and then there were sons that were chosen. But interestingly, God did not choose, when he chose the son of David, he did not choose the firstborn son. Or the second, or the third, even in this one case, he went all the way down to Solomon. God still made a choice in the case of a king like David who obeyed God, and David wanted to know God's will, and God said, my will is that this son be the one. Now, what is important to realize is that in those earliest days, God communicated with the judges. He spoke to Gideon. He raised up these individuals. He also raised up David, but once the line in a sense became hereditary, a new factor enters. God no longer communicates only with God sending prophets to speak to the rulers who were on the throne. In some days he was sending these prophets. He sometimes sent them to kings who obeyed. Sometimes he sent them to kings who did not obey, and in Israel, as distinct from Judah, he sent them to kings, none of whom obeyed. Gee, who only served God in one special area, otherwise he simply did his own thing. It is important, therefore, to realize that once there was a hereditary descent, once you had a kingship established, God could not make the decision in every generation who should rule by talking to a converted mind and saying, this is the person who is going to fulfill my will. And so God had to simply speak to these descendants of David, sometimes directly through the prophet, sometimes through circumstances, but the hereditary descent, excuse me, the hereditary descent went normally by the firstborn after that for the simple reason that the king made a choice. That is just the way it was established.

The king would do evil one generation, the king would do good the next, the next one would do evil. It was one of those remarkable things. Sometimes two or three did evil in a row, sometimes two or three did good. But God had to choose somebody between himself because it was no longer a question. It was a matter of descent. It was no longer a question of making the choice in every generation. God permits things, but there is quite a difference between what God permits. He permits political parties in this world, but that is not His government. He permitted these people to sit on the throne of David. Tragically, some of them shouldn't have. They did evil from the very beginning. They were finally set aside and no king sat, and God raised up what we would call governors of the house of David, but they were no longer kings. The house of David was widely known yet, but then God raised up the scribe of the house of Levi, Ezra. He raised up a man of the

house of Judah, not of the house of David as far as we know, Nehemiah, a very capable person. These men served God in one capacity or another. They established the government of God and determined the written word. Ezra's function primarily was to establish the written word that we call the Bible. In Hebrew, in the script in which it now appears, that is a tradition. There came a time after the Persians were overthrown by the Greeks that we really don't have any further record in the Bible. There were mostly people who raised tax money, and the high priests were the dominant element. The nation gradually drifted spiritually downhill until different branches of the house of Aaron were paying the Greek-Syrians money to get control of the government.

And you know the story in Daniel 11, the story that's normally commemorated in the Jewish community in the end of December. Hanukkah, the time of Antiochus, Epiphanes, and the priests took upon themselves the kingship, and that was overthrown by Herod, and we're introduced to the time of Christ, who came to establish a spiritual church. It's amazing what a spiral downhill the nation had come to, where you had the priests who were essentially subject to Herod, and Herod was subject to Rome, and Rome was subject to the devil. That's how far the nation had descended. That's how far down they had gotten away from the direct contact that they had with God. Just think about that in the days of the prophets and the kings, the judges, and Moses.

Jesus came to establish a spiritual church. He called out a large number of people who were disciples, teachers, and out of them he ordained twelve to be apostles who would be directly charged with the responsibility of the church, and among them he established Peter as their leader. Peter was the first among equals. They were apostles. It was not an apostle with other evangelists. They were all apostles. They all had the same office, but even when you have twelve who worked together, there was one man who was in charge.

I will give to thee, not to ye, thee, singular, the keys of the kingdom, said Jesus to Peter.

And even out of the twelve, Jesus commonly spoke to three, James, John, two brothers, and Peter. And of those, Peter was the dominant one.

There were seventy others also who were ordained to speak. Now the number twelve was important because they had to bear testimony to the resurrection, and like what we would call a court, there were really fourteen. There were two alternates. In fact, one of the twelve made a tragic mistake, and he committed suicide, and one of the alternates replaced him. You know the story of Judas. And so we have the twelve apostles who represent, in a sense, now with one out thirteen, and there was still the fourteenth who now became the thirteenth, who was the alternate. It's interesting, of course, that in the end the twelve tribes of Israel were thirteen tribes because Joseph was divided. The same as there are really thirteen apostles, but we think of them as the twelve tribes, and we think of the twelve apostles. It's important then to realize that in that day there were also other apostles.

When the thirteenth apostle who was left lived, and James was divided, he was divided.

James killed the brother of John. James did not become one of the others. I'm sorry, James did not have a successor. There was simply now eleven out of the twelve left, and there was also this alternate who was always there. And finally ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, until there was only one left, and that was John. It's important for you to realize that God had a work to do in the Greek-speaking world, and he chose two men apostles, Barnabas and Paul. They were never part of the twelve. That is, there could be apostles who were not of the twelve. In the 1930s the church of God got mixed up because the then leader of the church thought that the number twelve was important. Well, it was important in Jesus' day, but there were not twelve apostles sent

to the Greeks. There were two, Barnabas and Paul. It was quite clear from everything in the New Testament that there was also an apostle who was established at Jerusalem, for the twelve went out to the twelve tribes of Israel, including the house of Judah. That man was a brother of Jesus, a half-brother. His name was James. God established an apostle at Jerusalem whose name was James, the half-brother of Jesus, not the James who was the brother of John and not the other James. It's important to realize that this James was never one of the twelve. He's never called one of the twelve. God didn't keep filling in twelve. There were only the original twelve and the thirteenth whose function was to deal with apparently the thirteenth tribe, just as you have the twelve tribes of Israel defined in the book of Revelation and the one tribe that's out as the thirteenth. So that's the way God's pattern has worked.

There were apostles who were never a part of the twelve. Some people have thought that James who preceded Peter, which is not the case. James was always head of the headquarters church. The headquarters church was in Jerusalem. Peter could go to Babylon, Peter could go to Babylonia, he could go to Egypt, he could go to Caesarea. Peter was directly under Christ, but headquarters was at Jerusalem, and James was established at headquarters.

So that, because communication was much slower in that day, the church was always able to communicate with headquarters no matter where James, Peter, John, or the twelve were.

Now how did it work? Well, in one case what was going to happen to an uncircumcised gentile who was being called Cornelius in Italian? Answer, Peter had a dream on the, sorry, he had a vision on the top of a house. Around lunchtime he was getting hungry.

And in this vision he had problems and he didn't understand, and the word of God came down and said, kill and eat, and here were all these unclean creatures.

And so Peter mulled over his mind that that couldn't be, he said, not so, Lord, the Bible doesn't say any such thing. He was going by the word of God, there wasn't any question about that.

And it finally dawned on him when Jesus said, what I have planned is to call now Thou unclean, or common, then the story of Cornelius is introduced and he suddenly realizes what the situation meant. So when the apostles got together and at other times in Acts chapter 15, Peter was the one of the twelve to whom God first communicated that gentiles without circumcision could be accepted in the church fellowship and meet with spiritual Jews.

That was the decision that Peter made. Now when the whole controversy broke in the Greek-speaking world, Paul and Barnabas came up and they discussed what God had done, and it was a great discussion. And when the discussion was all over, Peter stood up and made the decision. The decision was Peter's. But because of the sensitivity to the house of David, Peter was not of the house of David, James, on behalf of the headquarters church and on behalf of those who were what we would call very traditional and Jewish-ness, because there were those who were very zealous of the ceremonial law, Paul. He wrote it out. That was a matter of what we would call protocol.

But it was Peter who made the decision. In fact, Paul was in prison and in 62 A.D. when he was in being released, and his letter to the Hebrews was being sent. It is my judgment that the reason James, the half-brother of Jesus, was killed in A.D. 62, which is a part of the documentary history of the time, is the fact that he circulated Paul's letter. James was therefore dead. Josephus says that he died at this period, and church historians make very clear exactly what year it was and all their calendars. Peter lived another six years. It isn't that Peter was the chief of the apostles, then James, and then James is dead, and then Peter has it again. That's nonsense.

James was never one of the twelve. He died before Peter did.

But that's the way God established it. There were those who were ordained as deacons.

There were seven of them. There were many other deacons later. In the 1930s, some of the church of God got all mixed up and thought there had to be seventy elders, seven deacons who controlled the purse strings, and twelve apostles who did their bidding. Because whoever controls the purse string determines who is on salary, you see. They were just confused, sadly. That was not the whole church. That was a park that, in a sense, centered in West Virginia.

But now, to quickly pass the time of nineteenth centuries, or better stated, eighteen, the church may be traced from Judea and the Greek world through Asia Minor, as you know in the book of Revelation, to Armenia, to southeastern Europe, to the Alpine region, to Britain, and finally, in the middle of the seventeenth century, to Rhode Island and the United States, and all the way to Oregon, where Mr. Armstrong was introduced. That's one way to explain eighteen centuries of history. Very simple. God called Mr. Armstrong and Mrs. Armstrong and these were the people who understood the Sabbath, were keeping the commandments. The church of God, simple people who shared a certain brotherly love that was characteristic of the rural community that has been lost in our great metropolitan societies. After his conversion in 1927, Mr. Armstrong was ordained in 1931. The ministerial license certificate that has been published is found in the autobiography. He was ordained there as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Not that they fully understood the term, but that is the term that was used. Now, the license was renewed every year, but the ordination was permanent. Once ordained, it was understood that you were a minister. You weren't ordained again each year. Just want to make that clear. They just had a habit of issuing every year because they didn't know how to do it any better, so Mr. Armstrong had published the second one. Now we'll pick up the story quickly here. We are in the year 1933. There were various meetings that were being held. Evangelists, elders, whatever terms you may want to use for these individuals, ministers in the Church of God, Seventh Day, the corporate name, speaking in the Willamette Valley, where it was the liveliest area in the Oregon Conference. That's the way it was organized. There was a California Conference, a Missouri Conference. That is essentially the churches within a state, but not all the brethren in the state were directly functioning within the conference and not every congregation. But it was a loosely organized affair, and the money was actually collected in the local conference. It wasn't sent to some headquarters in Standbury, Missouri. Now, there was a problem that was brewing between the ministry in Oregon and Mr.

Armstrong over a peculiar thing, over unclean meats. Mr. Armstrong and the rest of the brethren all practiced the same thing as far as eating them and what they were teaching as far as God's instruction. But Mr. Armstrong did not say, as some of the others did, that you had to give up smoking, that you had to quit eating unclean meats before you were baptized. Mr. Armstrong said, that Jesus said, you are announcing the kingdom of God and those that are being called and are repentant and believe the message of the gospel, which is the kingdom of God, to them who have been baptized, you shall now teach them whatsoever things I have commanded you. Mr. Armstrong said, we don't disagree on this matter as to what the teaching of the Bible is. We simply recognize that the church, in the case of some of you, have made a decision that the brethren have to do on their own strength, but in some cases they can't. Housewives who are with mates who insist on this and insist on that to eat, men, usually then, now men, more often women today, who smoke, who can't give up the habit, and you should all know that the earlier in the teenage that you start to smoke, the more difficult the habit is to break. The later in life you start to smoke, the easier, on average, the habit is to break. Mr. Armstrong said, these people in many cases need to be instructed afterward, and when I am assured of their repentance, there is no question they are baptized. Then I

pray that they receive the God's spirit and they are converted, and they have the spiritual power to overcome.

There were certain controversies that had arisen. Also, Mr. Armstrong was, unlike another minister, given a \$3 a month salary. Now, most of the ministers in the Oregon Conference had no salary, but they liked Mr. Armstrong well enough that they gave him as the tail end minister \$3 salary, \$3. Now, that went a long way in those days. This was the depression, so also did beans and corn and whatever else they gave him in rice.

I want you to remember that you could be a minister and not be on salary. That's important to know.

Mr. Armstrong happened to be on salary. They had \$3 in the Oregon Conference a month that they could give. They were very poor people in that area, unlike California, apparently, because I grew up in California in the Depression and nothing like this. I mean, we had plenty of money in this state, but Oregon was different. So they had a meeting, and in this meeting, ultimately, this is in the autobiography, they ultimately made an issue of the fact that Mr. Armstrong would baptize people before they were all giving up certain bad habits, and they insisted that this all be done on human strength in advance of conversion, and they felt Mr. Armstrong simply should agree. Now, they agreed not to make an issue on one occasion where he was having to leave the meeting after he explained his position.

He was going to be taken to do the broadcast, which was done by different ministers. You remember the story in K-O-R-E? Mr. Armstrong was speaking, and he was also having a campaign, and he was finishing his campaign, and so he was being taken back to complete a campaign, and while he was outside, half of the brethren were there with him, bidding him goodbye after this day-long wrangle, and the other half stayed inside, and the other half decided that they were going to make a decision anyway, without Mr. Armstrong being there, and without the other brethren from Eugene being there, and they were asked not to be there in this Oregon Conference meeting, that is, the Fisher family and the Ellis family. So it was an attempt to try to have the salary taken from Mr. Armstrong, if he wouldn't do it correctly, as they insisted.

Now, what they decided to do, contrary to a promise not to do it, was to require that if Mr. Armstrong remained in the conference as a minister on salary, that he had to baptize their way. It was not a question of disfellowship or resignation. I want you to get that clearly in mind. They were not asking him to resign. They were not disfellowshipping him. They were merely saying, you cannot remain on salary in the Oregon Conference and baptize as you have done, in essentially focusing on unclean meats and smoking, both of which Mr. Armstrong taught against. Well, as it turned out, he chose not to write a letter of resignation because he wasn't resigning, and they weren't asking him to. What he decided to do was to simply write a letter and terminate his salary. He wrote them that he was terminating it, and he was offering it to Mr.

Sam Oberg, who was the original person who, in a sense, was hoping to get it, who didn't have it earlier when Mr. Armstrong first received it. So the decision was made that Mr. Armstrong would no longer take the salary. He did not resign the ministry. He did not resign from the Church of God. It's important to recognize that. He was, in fact, still using the funds of the Oregon Conference to publish the bulletin, which was to inform the brethren, broadly speaking, of the whole area of the things that were being done by the various ministers in the Church of God's seventh day. Well, finally, of course, Mr. Armstrong saw now what the Church should be doing.

He wasn't beholden to a \$3 salary. I guess it was \$3 a week. Was that it? I thought it was a month, but possibly it was a week. I'll have to go over the notes again, which I don't have down.

Just occurred to me. I want to look at that. In any instance, he said, look, what we need is a monthly magazine. What we need are evangelistic campaigns, and what we need is to get on radio.

And the brethren in the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, and brethren who were not in the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, listen to my words carefully, who represented the area around Harrisburg and Jefferson, Oregon, Eugene, Furbur, you know, all the names that you will read in the autobiography, they approved of the program of what Mr. Armstrong was asking of them.

And they began to finance the broadcast, to finance the magazine and the evangelistic campaigns.

Mr. Armstrong, for years, continued to cooperate with the Oregon Conference and or other branches of the Church of God. In fact, the branch in West Virginia made him one of the 70 elders, and finally they asked him to resign from it. But of course, he chose not to return anything they had sent to him because he had never been asked in the first place to become one of the 70. They had pulled his name out of a hat. But some people who have left the Church of God in the last decade and a half or more, have the idea that Mr. Armstrong resigned from the Church, or that he broke away, or that he was disfellowshipped. There was no such thing. As late as the third and fourth year of the college, we went up there and I spoke to the congregations, where members of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God met with brethren whom Mr. Armstrong had raised up in Jefferson, Oregon. I spoke in Eugene. Mr. McNair has spoken. Mr. Roderick Meredith did. And others did in those days. Still, you see, the fellowship up there had continued, though once the headquarters was moved from Eugene down here, this work grew and grew and grew as the live branch, and the others, like dead branches, it's the only way to describe it, finally.

There was really no life in them. They have ceased to be the instrumentality through which God's work should be done. In any case, it is important to realize that we have had to deal with individuals who had to be disfellowshipped, or people who left the Church on their own. Mr. Armstrong did no such thing. And for many years, even such a member as Mr. Henian, who was on the board of trustees of the Church, met with the Oregon Conference at Scabble Hill in Jefferson, where we did and where I once spoke, and where regularly we met every Sabbath when we weren't in Eugene. I'd go from there up to Portland, Oregon in the early 1950s, earliest, when we worked there in the summer.

Most people don't realize what unusual relationship that was.

Last year, in January, Mr. Armstrong was led by Jesus Christ to make a decision because he realized that his time had come, that the time of death had arrived. And so, in those very important two weeks before Mr. Armstrong died, he made a decision that the office and responsibilities that he had held under Jesus Christ should be executed by Mr. Joseph to college.

The advisory council of elders heard all of the explanation. There were individuals on the council who were with Mr. Armstrong and others who were in the hall of administration because we were careful not to have any more than so many there in order to prevent any transmission of germs in order to give Mr. Armstrong as long a life as possible, we'd talk on the phone, in a phone hookup. And he made that decision in our presence knowing. Christ had, in fact, made the decision and made it so clear to him because, after all, this is the work that the church is doing, and Mr. Tkach was responsible over the ministers then, and it was the most logical decision to be made even if you didn't have spiritual contact with God. It was a natural understanding that even people from the world could have realized was a sensible decision, and God doesn't make nonsensical decisions. So Christ brought it to Mr. Armstrong's attention as to what should be done. And once again, it was not a natural air. It was the spiritual air who was chosen. Mr. Tkach has proven the spiritual qualities of

that relationship by the kind of leadership and the character and the stability that the churches had now in these 52, now 53 weeks that have gone by. We want to thank all of you, of course, for your role in the continuous support because we couldn't do that without your prayers, without your financial support, without your personal role in so many jobs, especially in these congregations meeting in this building here morning and afternoon. So today, now week and a year after Mr. Armstrong's the death that is important for us to reflect and to go over how God's government has properly been carried out and how it is being administered and the kind of peace and harmony that it does bring.

So let's continue in our support. We want to thank all of you who volunteer for the answering of the letters on the Watts line that is a remarkable contribution that we simply couldn't do it any other way in the United States with the telephone now has superseded the post office in many ways in responding to a television program. Let us continue to give our support to Mr. Tkach as Mr. Armstrong's spiritual heir in his leadership as pastor general over the church today carrying out the work of Jesus Christ in reaching the nations before his return.