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Good morning to all of you. Some of you might have been awake at seven o'clock this morning.

In this case, you probably weren't going through the turmoil described in the sermonette.

President Carter was addressing the nation and defining the problems and potential solutions to the social welfare system in the United States. It would certainly pay you to at least be aware of some of the trends in this area, or to put another way, at least for the present time, a recognition that our present welfare system is a tragedy, better stated, a travesty.

It is an attempt to resolve what ought to have been resolved in the simple manner in which the biblical account does give us information, especially in Deuteronomy. Our problem, of course, is that we have grown so great that we have assumed that all these great responsibilities somehow have to be handled by central governments.

And we collect money in this country at the local level, we collect it at the national level, and the real responsibility of the people to be concerned has disappeared in caring for these needs.

And the alternative has happened that people now grudgingly pay tax money to state and federal governments to take care of what ought to be a matter of personal concern.

Once we remove the responsibility from local level, I think we are headed in the direction that the government now admits its welfare program has gone. The new program should take effect within about three years.

The government does move rapidly, as you know, to solve problems.

The difficulty, of course, will be will it work any more effectively since it's also working through human instruments at this high political level. It may sound good, but the execution may be an entirely different matter.

This morning, just before President Carter spoke, I heard very significant news that, as some of you might be aware, a study has been made of the state of the economy of the European nations.

And the great concern is expressed at the three of the nine industrial powers that dominate the common market, West Germany, France, and the Netherlands. It is interesting that neither England, nor Denmark, nor Belgium, Ireland, nor Italy, nor Luxembourg count in this. England, of course, is the great sad tragedy.

But the three primary nations on which the common market depends for its economic survival are slipping back into recession.

And I think you ought to realize it. We have stated, and I have stated, if any of you have been listening carefully, the problem since 1974 is whether the world's economy, which may be compared to a plane taking off at an airfield, is able to gain sufficient momentum and altitude to succeed in overcoming the depression or recession or whatever term we wish to use.

It appears that in the United States we have gained sufficient momentum that the country is moving ahead without serious concern for inflation.

This is not true in Europe. Now, we remember, of course, that the world's collapse in 1929 really began in a series of events before, and it was triggered in Germany, which bore the brunt of the consequences of the sins of all the nations involved in the First World War.

And the destruction of the economy in that country led to the destruction of the economies of all the world.

It starts somewhere. Now, this is a downturn. It didn't say that it's a collapse.

I just want you to be aware that it is a serious break in the hoped-for progress in world economy.

This means that whereas we have men of responsible thinking, men of the calmness of Abraham, who can handle things when things go well, there is the need, and it usually turns out that way in Europe, of men of action when a crisis occurs. In this case, Europe is not going to go through, and the world will not tolerate what occurred between 1929 and 1933.

Then we could afford to have a dole. We could afford to have politicians who could muddle through in all these countries.

But it came to the place where Europe had to make a decision. That was after four years, 1933, four years after the Depression really struck.

I can assure you this time, on the basis of all we know of Revelation 18, that there is no question about what the world's economy is not going to be allowed to go to the bottom.

The world's economy is going to be dealt with before, and it may take a whole new economic approach.

It will not take form in the congenial matter of faceless bureaucrats sitting together and discussing small problems that when they are hurtled, everything moves smoothly.

We're dealing with the potentiality of a serious economic unemployment problem and inflation in Europe, and on the other hand, the more and more obvious stresses in the Middle East, where there is no doubt that the Arabs are going to be forced to utilize oil as a weapon. They have no alternative.

There is none the Arabs have admitted it. It is only a question of whether the United States can act for the Arab nations, even handedly enough to bring sufficient pressure and honor back to the Arab peoples in order that land that the Israelis obtained in 1967 would return to the Arab states, at least enough to save face.

The fact that it is not working seems rather obvious on the present trip of Mr. Vance.

If you combine the state of affairs in the Middle East, which can of course linger on for a long period of time, you combine this with a growing sense of failure economically in Europe and also a recognition that I have brought to your attention and Mr. Hogberg certainly has over the years.

And that is that the European nations are more and more persuaded that democracy in the Anglo-Saxon sense does not resolve problems of the contemporary 20th century after World War II, that there is the need of some stronger authority than the ambivalence of government as we see in England especially.

It will not be the kind of government that is based on the utter nationalism of the 19th century that climaxed with the National Socialist Party and German racism or Aryan racism under Adolf Hitler,

which was the ultimate outgrowth of the thinking of the nations following the fall of Napoleon, when the Empire concept went under and all the little nations became independent and prominent.

Little places such as Belgium could create an empire.

Places such as Holland that don't merit greatness in terms of numbers could create an empire to rule Indonesia.

That Britain, which is little more than an island far outnumbered by many, many states, created the largest empire ever seen in human history.

These were illogical except it was the opportune time for nationalism.

And it had its ultimate consequences in the crisis of the Second World War, which is why when it ended even men like Winston Churchill knew that nationalism not only was dead, but must never be allowed to rise again.

But the consequences of creating an empire that is made in a time of peace that would bring peace we don't see.

We find that men are creating only an economic union.

And in creating this economic union they are not really solving the problems that the Soviet Union is growing and growing in ultimate military power.

The Middle East has become a new crisis.

Europe economically now is not being able to provide for its unemployed as it liked to.

It will take apparently a kind of government, and I think this is what the Europeans are thinking of, a government that is dictatorial in its structure on the one hand, not beholden to every little election on the other, and very likely will be more of a permanent nature, whether of royalty or otherwise.

The dictatorship is more permanent, even though it isn't royal, than a democracy.

And it will be one that will be slightly left of center, not far to the right.

Left of center in the sense of social welfare.

Actually, people do not realize how far to the left of center the National Socialist Party in Germany was.

We think of the Nazis in the Second World War as being extreme on the right.

This, in fact, is a misconception.

National socialism was, in fact, a mixture of extremes on the right with significant ideas to the left of center in the terms of social welfare.

Many things that we are now adopting in this country in economics and in other social problems, we are, in fact, acquiring from the thinking of the National Socialist Party.

When we look at the question of mind-bending, when the CIA in this country involves itself in this, when we look at the question of abortions, sterilization, things that we once thought the Germans were guilty of and that should be exterminated from the world, we now entertain in the name of democracy and freedom and freedom of thought and expression.

I think maybe you realize that in this socially oriented country that is certainly to the center or slightly to the left, we are entertaining the very things that were paramount in National Socialist thinking.

Now, a generation and a half ago were nearly two generations.

In any case, I think it bears watching the state of the economy in Europe.

And, of course, then what you might also have heard yesterday, the fact that a study has been made, which would indicate that we will have at least a partial failure of water supply in our Sierra Nevada's sometime somewhere between 70 and 75 percent is predicted of the normal rainfall.

This is an improvement over this year, so it might be a partial break, but no solution.

So how long this will drag out remains to be seen. These are straws in the wind.

Today I would like to cover what indeed we were planning last week, but after the phone call last week I felt I should deal with another topic.

I would like to discuss the question, what do you mean, the forgiveness of sins? We talk about it in the church.

We have people who are of other religious convictions who talk about it very freely.

It is probable that they have little understanding of it, but if they think that we have little understanding, because we don't believe in Christ, which of course is a bold lie, they would assume there is no forgiveness of sins among those who are members of the Church of God who are in chain to Armstrongism.

That's a logical consequence of the thinking of some people who say we don't preach Jesus Christ and don't believe in Him.

This happens to be totally false.

The fact is they have another Jesus and they do not do what he said or the example that he set they do not live.

They are those of whom Paul says they crucify him afresh because they want him to minister to their sins and not lead them out of their sin.

What prompted this were a series of problems that have come to Mr. Tkach's attention, Mr. Ames and mine, certainly Mr. Rice, and it harkens back to a letter which I read among some other letters published by those who left us some three years ago, even more than three.

One person said, I don't know who it was, the initials only were there, that I was once a member of the blank, blank, blank, blank.

That's the Worldwide Church of God, it was obvious, because it had been any other congregation that would have been named.

And I felt when I was among them that I was constantly falling short, that I was not coming up to the standards that blank, blank, blank demanded of us.

That was Herbert W. Armstrong, you understand? And now that I have freed myself from the shackles of blank, that's Armstrongism, that I don't have this sense of guilt anymore.

I feel completely free, that I don't any longer have to keep the law.

I don't have guilt, I don't have sin, because the law is done away.

This was the thinking of this individual.

Now I'm putting it in my own words and it's a summary of more than one letter.

Just freed me, would the letter go on to say, from keeping the law.

I want to get at this because there are a number of problems that must have been extant at that time that we're not dealt with, or people could not have left with such ideas.

What I want to do today is take you through the question of how sins were forgiven and at what level through time, and individual experiences of those who were forgiven and those who were not, and what we mean by repentance.

What it means to have contact with God, and how do you really know the difference between whether you're converted or not, in terms of whether you've repented or not.

Now there will be a verse that Paul wrote that I think you have all overlooked.

I have never heard anybody explain it.

You probably have taken it for granted because if you're converted it made sense, and if you were not, it didn't make sense and you didn't know it.

First of all, we come to the story of human experience.

We're not going back to the story of the angelic responsibility in carrying out the government of God.

The first situation in which we have a contrast is the story of Cain and Abel, already alluded to.

In the story of Cain and Abel, Cain makes some interesting comments.

Let's turn back to it and just note some of the problems.

We are told that Cain presented his offering.

God didn't have any respect for that, and Cain was very angry and his countenance fell.

He had a sense of guilt and he had a sense of hate because this kind of anger is equivalent to it.

Let's take a note that Abel presented an offering.

The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering.

We've often overlooked the fact that he had respect to Abel as well as the offering.

But to Cain and to his offering, let's emphasize the word and, he had no respect because the offering was incidental.

If God were in need of sacrifice, he wouldn't have to ask us anyway.

The issue was then not really the offering.

The offering only betokened the attitude and so the emphasis is on the end to bring to our attention that God respected Abel and had no respect for the conduct and attitude of Cain.

And Cain's response was that of anger and that of the sense of guilt.

Verse 5, chapter 4 of Genesis.

So, God reasoned with Cain, why are you angry? Why is your countenance fallen? That is, he was meditating something else, how to get even.

If you do well, wouldn't you be accepted? Now we all know what that means, that Cain was not doing what was right.

He was not doing good, so to speak.

Now if you aren't doing well, you have to admit that sin is lying at your door.

It could be figurative, it doesn't have to be taken as literal.

There could be more than one meaning of the Hebrew, but the implication clearly is that there was some kind of sin and also there was obviously the opportunity of a sin offering if he wanted to offer it to acknowledge his guilt.

And the end product of course was murder.

And the end product of the murder was that Cain was caught.

And when he was asked about what happened, Cain's argument of course was end of verse 9, Am I my brother's keeper? Do you think I have to look after Abel? He can take care of himself.

This is the beauty of selfishness, expressed in simple words.

Am I my brother's keeper? The consequence of course was that when he saw what he now was enduring having to live with himself, his answer is my punishment is greater than I can bear.

He was sorry, he was whimpering.

First you drive me out this day from the face of the earth, and now from your face shall I be hidden, and I'll be a fugitive.

Now he would like to have had God's presence, he was bringing an offering.

He wanted God's presence, you know it's just like many spirits.

Fallen spirits or demons would like to be in God's presence.

They would like to have the chance to enjoy his personality.

If only they could change his mind, so that they could do what they want to.

Here we have the beginning of a problem.

Now this problem of course was a very overt one.

The problem of some has been quite covert in the sense that maybe they didn't even realize it themselves.

I'm not sure of course that Cain fully realized his state of mind.

He probably didn't see himself as he should have seen him or as God clearly sees him here.

In the first place there's something wrong with his attitude, so God had no respect of Cain for Cain.

He was a man who was temperamental, he was a man who was angry, and he was a man who didn't acknowledge his sin.

And when he was caught in this state he decided to commit further sins.

One was murder, and then he tried to justify himself.

See all this is just a series of events that reflects a person who has become in a sense the tool of the devil.

And he lets his own human nature run riot without any self-control and another power dominates.

And then he complains that God isn't fair. His punishment is greater than he can bear.

God isn't just, God isn't fair.

He wants to have the opportunity to reap the benefits of the earth.

Josephus comments as an aside that he wants to force the earth selfishness.

And he wants God's presence, but he doesn't want to do what pleases God.

This is the state of mind of someone who is involved in sin and isn't controlling his temper or his emotions, is not repenting of sin.

There is a sense of guilt, a sense of frustration, and there is no doubt that over a period of time, very probably one out of seven of those who were once among us.

And you can figure that number out. It's a lot larger than most people have dared to quote.

But it's time we faced it because it could include more who aren't going yet.

What has happened is that we have had people who acknowledge that the law of God is the way we ought to go.

Who say, well, if God says it, let's do it, but they never submit themselves to Jesus Christ.

They have tried to do what we teach in their own human strength.

Now it's not wrong to say if God says it, let's do it, that's only a part of it, but unfortunately that's where too many stopped.

Because you fall short of the doing, and so the sense of guilt necessarily arises.

That's why we have this, the sense of guilt.

And they did not know how to get rid of it despite the fact that we have literature explaining it in the booklet on baptism.

We have explained it over and over again in the pages of the Plain Truth.

That you repent and you turn around and go the other way, but it is unfortunate that in saying that, most people have either taken for granted what it means and done it, and not analyzed what other people are doing, or some others, and upwards of one seventh, never grasped what it meant, and were doing something short of repentance.

Abel was a repentant person. Cain was not and suffered the consequence of guilt, and of course of all the other ills that go with violating God's law.

We come much later to the person of Moses. Now we're skipping some powerful personalities in the story, but in the case of Abraham, we're not dealing with the same kind of illustrative problem that belongs in this particular subject.

We'll look to the story of Moses.

Now in the account of Moses, we're going to read the difference between Moses and the children of Israel. We will turn first to Hebrews 11.

And in looking at the account of Moses, we read, By faith, verse 24, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Moses had faith. He had a trust in the power of God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Let's note now the consequences.

We have many who, it may be said, that instead of beginning, and I'm going to reread it, the way a lot of people have in fact lived it, by their own efforts, not by faith, but by their own efforts, they have come to refuse the world, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God because they enjoyed their personalities and social occasions.

Instead of enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season, but they always kept in mind what pleasure it was.

And so, esteeming the reproaches of Christ of lesser worth than they thought, and appreciating more and more the pleasures of sin and the pleasures of the world that come by not tithing, they have respect, not to the ultimate recompense of a war spiritually, but they begin to have respect for the world around them and want to do their own thing.

And it starts out by the fact that no small number began in their own strength and never did receive the Spirit of God.

Having been of us, they left us because they really were not of us after all.

It only appeared to be as distinct from those who may have made shipwreck forever.

There are many others who came and sat and enjoyed.

And then when the pressures came, they accounted the ease with which it was possible to creep back into the world, so much more rewarding than eternal life because they had never really focused on what it would be like, you know, 10,000 years from now to be there in the government of God.

They never thought of it that way.

Moses made these decisions, and he made it on the basis of faith because he has not yet apprehended or obtained the reward.

But he was able by faith to comprehend this reward.

We are told that all of these received not the promises, but by faith they comprehended them at a distance.

And I think we have had very many who have looked on the present social environment in the church.

It was so much more interesting. There were so many more fine people.

You didn't have the problems of sin in the world.

There were more people than they had ever meant who were nice, friendly, helpful, considerate, converted, and had provided everything they had been looking for in this world.

And I have even heard sermons given where one man who has left us said very plainly that he was persuaded that this was the church of God and he would want to be among us because he liked our personalities.

He saw that God had wrought something in us, and he left.

He is gone.

The reason is he did not comprehend that which was eternal.

He only comprehended that which was temporal.

His time may yet come.

We didn't realize how often people were only looking at the present fruits of the Spirit of God in the lives of those in the church, and they wanted to share it now until the pressures build up.

And then they are willing to abandon it and go back into the world because it seems to cost a little more than they thought.

They are not willing to count the cost.

They were willing only to endure while the light of God's blessings came upon the church.

But when the storms came, they abandoned ship, you see.

We'll look a little further into this.

The children of Israel, by contrast, are described in Acts chapter 7, 39.

These are the people who Moses led.

In speaking of Moses, this is he who was in the church in the wilderness verse 38, chapter 7, with the angel who spoke to him in the mount, who of course provided the lively oracles to us.

To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.

They had a certain desire for the things that were in the world.

These are the people who wanted to do a lot of the things that the world is thought to do.

And sometimes when people in the church, congregation or fellowship begin to turn back to the world, they become more worldly than the world is.

We need to examine now the nature of this state of mind and see whether or not it afflicts you or others in this church and whether we can prevent this kind of departure by bringing people to their senses.

While they have time to hear, because the Bible also says that while God calls, you better answer because the time is coming that when you call for help, he won't answer because you didn't answer when he called.

Let us go back now to a fundamental picture of what repentance produces in chapter 3 of the book of Acts.

Verse 19, we are told, repent and be converted.

That's to be changed.

It's a step-by-step process, but it begins with an event that is momentous, that is the receipt of the Spirit of God, so you're no longer only what you were born of your parents.

You are now begotten of God.

Repent and be converted or changed, both in attitude and in composition, that your sins may be blotted out.

Now, Keynes were not. He did not acknowledge them.

This is repentance that leads to conversion.

It doesn't say repent that your sins may be blotted out.

It says repent and be converted.

There is this interim step.

The kind of repentance that leads to conversion is the only repentance that leads to the blotting out of sins, so you will not be held guilty of them in the judgment.

The consequences of which will be that when the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord, and I won't read the rest of it, but the thing there should be clear, when you are in this state, it leads to the individual experience, such as also will be a national or worldwide experience, a refreshing, it's a nice term, like cold water on a hot day, or hot water on a cold day.

It gives you exactly what you need.

You aren't any longer feeling guilty, condemned, falling short, but you are refreshed and able to contact God.

As our children grow up, some of them realize, of course, that it's one thing to know what the Bible says.

It's another thing to be in contact with God, where you can communicate with Him and know that He hears you.

We call it prayer, that is talking with God, because the old English word, I pray thee, means I ask you.

But prayer today is viewed as some religious ceremony, as distinct from really talking or getting through to somebody.

Young people are going to have to learn sooner or later in life, that it is not enough merely to know what Christ asks of us, what God says, what we are to do, that we will never live forever until we are composed of spirit, composed of matter now, and to be composed of spirit presumes that somewhere along the line, we have laid aside our past, and we ask God to put a part of Himself in us by a spirit that joins with our minds, a spirit in man, more specifically, and we begin to have within us the power to fulfill the law that is not naturally there.

And this distinguishes those who are ever trying, but never really succeeding, from those who are succeeding, because the Spirit of God is there.

I told you long ago there was a student who, after he left some years from the college, wrote me a letter and he signed it, still trying.

And to my knowledge, now, after these years, he is still trying, and nothing has succeeded.

He is without the Spirit of God. There isn't any evidence that he has it.

Because he is doing it in his own strength.

He has not yet learned that repentance means to submit to the Almighty, to submit yourself and to let him lead you, and you let him make decisions in your life by letting this Bible speak to you.

There was a time, we'll turn now to Hebrews chapter 9, verse 8, when this contact was in a different manner, and for most, was not at all.

In explaining the nature of the First Covenant and the ordinances of the Divine service and the worldly sanctuary established in the Sinai Peninsula under Moses in the 15th century B.C., Paul explains in Hebrews 9 that all these things represented a specific time that then existed, but that they foretold something that was to come, a second covenant in which a high priest, once he has entered, has entered for all time.

The high priest under the mosaic covenant repeated these things every year. He acknowledged sin.

The Holy Spirit, verse 8, signified that the way to the holiest of all, when the high priest only could enter in and had to repeat the entry every year, the way to the holiest of all, that is to have access to God who is in heaven, was not yet made manifest.

It was not possible for David or any of the others to our knowledge, and most certainly the people as a whole, to address freely as we are asked to address freely the Father who is in heaven.

David said, the Lord, referring to the one whom we know as the Father, the Lord said to my Lord, the one whom David communicated with, the word was my Lord, the one who became his son, while as yet the first tabernacle was yet standing.

And this represented that at that time there was no direct access to the Father in heaven.

There was access to Jesus Christ, who was the Lord who manifested himself in the first tabernacle.

Now all of these ceremonies in that day could not make the one who did them perfect as pertaining to the conscience.

So we will note the end of verse 9.

Whenever a sacrifice was offered, the people were forgiven.

This is very clear.

I don't have to go over it.

You can read where the sacrifices are offered in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, that if the people would do so and so, they would be forgiven.

Now they were forgiven in what sense? They were forgiven of the sin that would have led to either the expulsion, excommunication of them from the community.

They were forgiven of the sin so they could be restored to the good graces of other people, or they were forgiven of their sin so they wouldn't have to be executed.

They could continue to live as a part of the Church or congregation of the Old Testament.

They were, however, through the ritual, always having to have the recurrence of the knowledge of their sin, as far as conscience goes, so that when the high priest entered every year, he was acknowledging guilt that had not yet been removed as far as his conscience was concerned, unless God had, in fact, called him and forgiven him far beyond the level at which an animal sacrifice could.

An animal sacrifice only was a means of acknowledging guilt, acknowledging your conscience of guilt.

And when you acknowledged you were guilty, you could be forgiven of having committed that act in the community, and the community accepted you as one who acknowledged your guilt.

Though as far as eternal life is concerned, it was not promised, and their conscience made them aware of sin.

The exceptions were the prophets and certain individuals who were called at that time.

Now, Christ has become a high priest of good things that were yet to come, you see, in that day, and by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, the kind of church he's going to build, made up of people who are changed from within, in which the Spirit of God dwells, instead of a building made up of materials as in the wilderness.

That he makes this all possible, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, which he offered, so that that was presented to God the Father, who was in the Holy Place, and through that he has obtained eternal redemption.

That means that we now can be forgiven sin so that the penalty of eternal death does not come on us.

For if the blood of bulls and goats, the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean under the first tabernacle, set apart that individual or purified his flesh so that he could continue to live in the community while his conscience still acknowledged the guilt, how much more will the blood of Jesus Christ, who is the Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit that was in him, offered himself without spotter, without sin, you see, purge your conscience from dead works.

That is, works that produce no good results.

Your conscience can be free of all the things that you think is sin, and all the things that are sin that you haven't yet figured out.

So that you now may serve the living God with living, lively works and not dead works.

He is therefore the mediator of a new covenant.

Through death that he suffered, he has redeemed, you see, the transgressors.

And we have the promise not of being restored to the physical congregation of Israel till our natural death, but we have the promise through the Spirit of God in us of eternal inheritance.

That should be simple, should be clear, how anyone can fall short of it really would be amazing, but some people are blind, some are deaf, some are deluded by their past, and they have not grasped it.

In the first place, it would have real meaning if we really understood the first half of it.

See, most people take for granted that the ceremonies of Moses and the Levitical priesthood gained them eternal life that way, and God wanted a different way now, which is ridiculous.

There was no eternal life, there was no purging of the conscience, no access to God.

That is, God the Father, only an acknowledgement of guilt and an acceptance, via forgiveness by the community and acceptance back into the physical community as long as one's natural life occurred.

Now we are promised forgiveness that purges our conscience, that makes it possible to have the Spirit of God that we can live as Christ lived spotless, and when any spot shows up, we can remove it, because Christ died for our sins.

And we have the promise, therefore, of eternal life, because of the Spirit of God dwelling us, that when Jesus Christ returns, we will be made immortal or raised from the dead as eternal and spirit.

When God first gave the law, it was reflected in a very interesting and important verse, Ecclesiastes.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

I'm turning to the Jewish translation here, which I think is very important.

It's not that much different, but it would be good, at least to read the difference.

The end of the matter, all having been heard.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole man.

For God will bring every work into the judgment concerning every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Now most have never really discerned the difference between that and John's message.

This says to fear God, keep his commandments, this is what makes a whole a complete man.

But remember that all your works are going to be brought up in the judgment, even every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

And if the evil are going to be brought up in the judgment, they haven't yet been covered, have they? Because that which is blotted out will never be brought back again.

Therefore, the message is that fearing God, having a certain terror or fear, if you please, is what it says.

But we have never really understood it.

That for people who don't have the spirit of God, they had to have a certain fear of God that would make them want to keep the commandments and wait for the time of judgment when the evil and the good that they had done would be brought to their attention and the evil could be forgiven.

But people have never seen this in the correct light, because they have never understood what John said.

We have tried to minimize fear until fear doesn't mean it.

This is talking of a state of mind.

It doesn't say here, the end of the matter is, repent, believe, be baptized, and receive the spirit of God that your sins may be blotted out.

This says that you're going to be judged for everything you've done.

It's a message for the man of the world.

You start out with the fear of God.

You start out with the recognition that he's in authority.

And the reason, of course, some have left and some will continue to leave.

And it didn't all happen at once.

These seventh have been just drifting away.

First they blew out and then they've been seeping out, you see.

So nobody would really notice.

Just drift away.

They have no fear of God.

They didn't start out where the Bible says.

You start out with a wholesome fear and respect, the same kind of thing that children ought to have with their parents.

But today we have round robin councils.

And you can, of course, figure out how most families are run on this basis.

Now John points up that we must go beyond the beginning, which is to fear God and keep his commandments in your own strength.

That's what all Solomon is talking about.

Solomon didn't once mention the spirit of God there.

You just have read it in because you thought that was there and it isn't.

And it doesn't say anything about your sins being blotted out.

That if your evil hidden works are going to come up in the judgment, that's talking about the second resurrection.

Let us see what John says now, if you please.

Chapter 4, verses 15 to 18.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, that's the starting point.

God dwells in him and he in God.

Now I'm not here arguing the fact that there's some people who confess what they know not.

We're assuming here that they confess what they know.

But let's go on because the rest of it will tell you whether you understand what you're confessing or not.

And we have known and believed the love that God has toward us.

God, you see, is love.

That's why he gave his son.

He that dwells in this love dwells in God and God in him.

If you have this love through you, you are actually then dwelling in God who is the eternal spirit.

And in the sense the eternal spirit or God dwells in you.

Herein is our love made perfect.

Now remember Abraham, of him it was said, walk before me and be perfect.

God didn't say to Abraham, fear me and I will bring your evil deeds to light in the judgment.

He said, walk before me and be perfect.

Jesus said, be you perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Herein is our love made perfect.

That we may have boldness in the day of judgment at the first resurrection.

Because as he now is, so are we in this world of which we speak, at the judgment.

That we will have boldness then and it won't be an issue of guilt.

You get rid of your sins now by having them blotted out because judgment is now on the church.

And when you pray to have your sins forgiven, they are forgiven and you are at the judgment today.

And every time you recognize your sin, you get rid of it.

But I doubt that most of our brethren are really comprehended.

They think the judgment is coming and very probably that would mean that if they have this consciousness of guilt and are not forgiven and are afraid their sins are going to be discovered, they are really headed for the second resurrection, if not the third.

Your consciousness of sin comes when it comes to your attention and you ask God to forgive it now and you pray because judgment is on the house and you pray before the judgment seat of Christ if you please.

And you ask for forgiveness and you get refreshing from your sin, it's forgiven.

You no longer have to carry this load on you.

See how simple it is.

Your love then is perfected.

When there are no sins, you are guiltless and perfect.

And if sin comes, there's something that spots this character.

You get rid of it and you proceed on.

Our love is made perfect in that if we have been forgiven, we have boldness in that day of judgment because we're even going to be like Christ and we won't be mortal.

There won't even be the possibility of being thrown into the lake of fire or rejected.

There is no fear in love.

And if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts and much of the message of the Old Testament starts out with a fear of God, that was the only way to reach a carnal minded people who hadn't been promised the spirit of God.

Is to have that kind of fear so they would keep them from sin while they were obeying the letter as given, the letter of the law obeying in their own strength.

The gospel was preached to them but it was not mixed with faith.

It was in the case of Abraham.

This, I doubt, that most of us truly understand in reading the historic events of the Old Testament.

Solomon didn't say that you could have the spirit of God and that love would cast out fear.

He said that the fear would keep you from sinning as much as you might otherwise so that what you have to face in the judgment is far less the penalty than might otherwise come on.

There is no fear in love.

That means therefore that once one is imbued with the spirit of God and you know that you can be forgiven and you know that you are forgiven, the fear disappears and when you have sinned, the fear brings you back to God and he forgives the fear is gone.

Or do you understand what I am saying? I hope you do.

Perfect love casts out this fear.

That perfect love, of course, first stemmed from God and then is fulfilled in us through his spirit.

Fear has torment.

He who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love him because he first loved us.

John was sort of simple in the way he explained it.

Not one of the greatest intellects, but one of the men who understood the picture the best.

Perfect love casts out fear.

There is no longer a sense of guilt.

Fear has torment.

And when people say when I was in the blank, blank, blank, blank meaning Worldwide Church of God I was constantly being tormented by guilt feelings that I wasn't living up to blank, blank, blank.

Herbert W. Armstrong's ideas.

This is the way some people looked at it.

Now let us then note that many of these people were like those who wanted to go back into Egypt.

They knew they should keep the Sabbath, but there were things they wanted to do on Saturday.

They knew they should tie, but there were things they wanted to do with their money.

Am I coming clear? They knew they should keep the holy days, and that required a second tie.

Then they surely knew there were things they wanted to do with that money.

Some of them knew, of course, about unclean meats, but they surely liked the taste of what was forbidden.

They justified themselves by saying, if so and so can stay in the church and sin, then I don't want to have anything to do with it, and they use somebody else's sins as a cloak for their own.

And it's because they failed to grasp the very great importance of a verse or verses that I now want to read to you in 2 Corinthians 2, 9 to 11.

Now before I do 7, 9 to 11, I read my 7 as a 2.

Please correct your notes.

The most important verses I am covering today at the close, 2 Corinthians 7, 9 to 11.

Now before I explain it, I want to tell you plainly and simply.

This will determine whether you have repented, believed, been baptized, received the Spirit of God, and are converted or not.

If you understand and are practicing it and know it in your mind, you understand it and do it.

If you live with a sense of guilt, if you have love-hate relationships like Cain, who wanted God's presence but didn't want to do what he said, if you're all torn up inside because you allow yourself to sin while you know you shouldn't, you have not fulfilled this scripture.

This is Paul's analysis that reflected the Corinthian church, but it could reflect you.

Now remember the Corinthian church was guilty as also one man was.

This man had been involved in some kind of incest and the church rather smugly tolerated it.

They had to be corrected, so did this man.

Now I rejoice, says Paul in the second letter to the Corinthians, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance.

Now, first of all, most people have confused sorrow with repentance.

That's the key.

Right there, brethren, sorrow is not repentance.

Sorrow is what leads you to repentance, and most people who have come and gone were sorry for their sins and confused their regrets with repentance.

You sorrowed to repentance.

It led you to do something different than you were doing.

For that, sorry, for you were made sorry after a godly manner.

Your sorrow expressed itself in a godly manner, not a natural manner.

There's nothing godly in human beings unless they have the spirit of God.

This sorrow was the kind of sorrow that comes when God influences the human mind through his spirit to repent.

For you were made sorry after a godly manner.

Verse 10, I'm skipping the rest, which is not relevant to our present situation.

For godly sorrow, not worldly sorrow, godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.

It is a state of mind that means that you are sufficiently sorry that you change and the change involves a decision not to go back to sin.

Not only does this kind of sorrow lead to a decision to turn around, but it leads to a decision never to go back the other way.

Now, is that clear? I hope I'm getting at the point which is the ultimate issue.

I'm not finished yet.

The sorrow of the world works death because you're sorry that God brings the penalty on you.

You're sorry for the consequences, but you surely like the temporary pleasures too.

And you have decided you would like to try God's way for a while, but you have never decided you will never go back into sin.

And that leads to death.

Excuse me a moment.

Let us note carefully that there is a godly sorrow that is sorrow after a godly manner is the wording, or godly sorrow in verse 10, and the sorrow of this world, or worldly sorrow.

Did you know that most drunks, after they come to themselves, are really sorry for the penalty they're going through, but they have never made a decision that they want to give up the pleasures that preceded the sorrow? They have not decided to turn around, which is only one step, but that you will also never go back and repent of turning around.

That is, you have made a decision hereafter to go in this other direction, and you have never said, well, I think that maybe I'll turn around like Lot's wife once in a while and take a look.

That's what her problem was. She had worldly sorrow, and she looked back on what seemed so good.

For behold, this self-same thing that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, clearing of yourselves, that is, you got rid of sin.

You are now guiltless, see? And it led to an indignation towards sin and a vehement desire to do what is right.

It led to zeal and to vengeance against evil, and there is one church congregation, of course, mentioned in Revelation chapter 3, that has lost its zeal.

It says, repent and be zealous.

And that's the church that's described as just lukewarm.

Now, any individual is told to listen to what was said to that church as any of them.

I think it is time that you examined yourselves, because we have people in this church, and we're going to have to deal with the problem.

We have people who are overcome in sin.

Now, we're told to overcome sin. We do it by the Spirit of God.

I'm going to turn to one last verse as to how to help those of you who, though you may have wanted to do these things, may have a temptation bigger than your own natural strength, will allow you to overcome, and you need someone's help.

Rather, in verse 1, chapter 6, Galatians, if a man be overtaken in a fault, as is equally true of a woman, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

There you won another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Is your problem alcohol? Is your problem smoking? Is your problem masturbation? Is your problem adultery? Is your problem gossip? Is your problem lying? Is your problem Sabbath-breaking? Is your problem tithes-stealing? You name it.

Now, listen. We are to help such who are torn by temptations.

We are to bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ, but too often those who are in this temptation don't want any help because they don't want to change.

There was a man who came to me who wanted help with smoking, and I set his wife to help him, and he agreed 100 percent, and he has never smoked since.

I told a story. I found where the temptation was the most, and I said, you never put yourself in that position without the presence of your wife.

And when you can't handle it, she speaks for you, and I said, is that agreeable? And he said yes, because he couldn't turn down an offer of tobacco.

The smell was not his problem. It was the offer. He couldn't tell somebody no, and you passed the counter in a grocery store.

There are people who sin in other ways. If I had the problem of alcohol, and it is not my problem, I'm thankful for it. There may be others that are difficult, but alcohol is not my problem.

The way I make alcohol, the children even think it shouldn't be a problem to anybody.

Anyway, it's really homemade and good.

But if I had this problem, and I hadn't decided I wanted to quit, but if I go to a grocery store or any other store, and when I see it, I can't say no.

You know what I would do? If I have repented after a godly manner, as distinct from worldly sorrow, I would ask my friend or the ministry or a deacon or a neighbor.

I say, look, alcohol is not your problem. It is mine.

I have decided never to shop alone without you.

And you are to stop me ever from buying it until this problem is assuredly conquered.

And if it took the fact that I had to give this wallet to somebody else because my character is too weak, I would have to do that. And anybody who falls short of that has nothing but worldly sorrow and compromise and is headed toward the lake of fire, and Mr. Tkach and I are going to have to deal with this problem this week.

That's the time limit I'm setting on him.

Because we have tolerated this kind of thing too long of people who are not really repentant.

They're compromisers.

Now, you check your own life because this has to stop.

That's why we're told before this section is finished.

If a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

And there are some people who think they can conquer it on their own when they're only justifying themselves in their sins.

Let every man prove his own work, and let everyone bear his own burden, verse 5.

You bear each other's, but you also have to bear your own.

And you can't cop out and say, well, I want to be left alone because I want to smoke a little longer.

I'll conquer one habit, but I want to indulge in all the others.

I want to conquer each one at a time because I really want the pleasure of all the others.

That's what you're saying.

The Spirit of God can change it all at once.

And if you try to compromise by wrestling with one in your own strength, while you know you want to indulge in the other, you don't even have the beginning of conversion.

You're headed toward death and the lake of fire.

Now, I'm sorry that so many left without realizing this.

Now, if all of you heard it carefully, none of you need to leave.

But if you don't like it, if this is the wrong principle, you're doing yourself a favor by not tormenting your mind and staying any longer.

Unless you want to get rid of that torment and to be forgiven and to be refreshed and, if any, are drifting and have neglected what it means to have contact with God and forgiven, don't have any serious habits but are just drifting.

You need to get back to that relationship where perfect love casts out fear and where you can communicate with God more than five minutes a week.