

931004 Plan of God HLH Vail CO FOT

that the church should be one in attitude, cooperation, and goals, harmony, and harmonious thoughts, but it also needs to be one as a church, not divided and competitively doing other work. The intent of the Greek is not merely the implicit sense of harmony, but it is the clear sense of unity. The Worldwide Church of God is where the converted minds of God's people are centered. There are few scattered individuals, of course, who haven't necessarily even learned of us, but this is where the body of converted minds are, and this is where the work of God under Christ is being done. We're not here to forbid any more than Jesus for bad others to make known the word of God, either in print or otherwise.

That is not our job, but our job is to be about the work that the church of God was called to do. And I think it is important that we get our minds off our emotions and on the work that Christ himself is choosing to do through the church, whether those whom he uses are perfect or not, as every wife and every husband knows once you're married.

You could have known before, but sometimes we don't see things so clearly. Sometimes perhaps we view the church like we view the individual we anticipate marrying. We see only the good parts. Now, it's right to think upon the creative contributions of another.

I thought that was a very important point that Mr. Glenn Nice cited. In fact, the remarkable quotation that he included that Paul gave us, what things we should think on, they were written up in a valedictorian speech that I was asked to give at graduation of the eighth grade, and I have never forgotten the importance of thinking on positive things. But at the same time, we recognize what is positive by also taking note of the negative and perceiving the difference instead of being unable to make that perception. So whatever the flaws may be in human beings or in judgment, we have a responsibility to go forward in bringing other people to the knowledge of the truth and to bringing other people to conversion as they seek after hearing what the work is all about, what Jesus' message is. We bring them along as Jesus tells us in Matthew 28, and at the same time that we give serious thought to maintaining harmony and unity, because if we can do that in our lives and be an example, we can also be an example to others in areas that are not just in terms of job, relationships, or family, but in terms of the church as a collective body.

Today, I am in a sense being asked to address a topic that should give us a general overview of the festival and of what the world tomorrow is to be like, which we commemorate during these festive occasions. I was privileged to be on hookup when the various speakers were being interviewed out of Colorado, something that was not done in Keystone because there were so many people scattered from different areas that the hookup was not possible. But it was quite clear that a certain area that is essential to understanding this festival should be covered, and many of the other topics that are essential will be given before and after, which my wife and I, of course, are not here, privileged to hear. I would like to begin by pointing up a very important factor. The church, or the congregation of Israel, began in the land of Egypt where we read of the children of Israel, that is, the children of the patriarch Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, and of his twelve sons were in servitude. Jacob's twelve sons came into Egypt at a time when Egypt was under the domination of a foreign people, and Jacob's family rose to significant prominence, and when the Egyptians later under the new kingdom gained independence, they subjected the Israelites to servitude, and out of that servitude, God sent a messenger with a message, Moses, who had fled from Egypt and now was returning when a new generation was on the throne, was about to bring the Israelites out. We read

in Exodus chapter 12 something that is very important. Sometimes we miss the story around the foundation of that congregation that gave us the first books of the Bible, much as we sometimes overlook the importance of why the church also began in connection with the festivals after the resurrection. In Exodus 12, the first new thing the children of Israel were given was a change of the beginning of the year. God had before established the autumn as the beginning of the natural year of agriculture in the northern hemisphere that period of time we think of as September-October, the conclusion of summer the beginning of autumn.

Now the children of Israel were told that in a solar lunar calendar it should be the spring of the year, the period of time we call March-April, when the green years of grain become sufficiently ripened to be harvested. So what we start out with is not the ten commandments, what we start out with is something fundamental that is connected with our being here today.

It starts out with a calendar, a calendar in which the holy days fall in the beginning of spring toward the close of spring and at the turn of the year the end of summer and early autumn.

In other words, what you find is that God first gives a calendar, then the next thing he reveals is a series of annual festivals. The first will not be a holy day, but it is a festival. It is called the Passover when the Passover lamb was slain.

Then and immediately thereafter Moses explained the days of unleavened bread.

Now I think it is important that you realize that at this point in time there was no Bible, there was no holy book, there were messages that were given to the patriarchs, information that most certainly was handed down, tradition, if you please, and written form, but the children of Israel may not have practiced many of the things that they had learned from the patriarchs.

In this case, Moses called them out of the land of Egypt and established under God's direction the beginning of certain annual holy days as well as festivals. The distinction is, for example, the Passover is not a holy day, but a festival. The festival of unleavened bread has two holy days, or annual Sabbaths, one at the beginning, one at the end. Now if people think that the festivals of God have no meaning, let them remember that if there had not been a festival called the Passover, there would never have been a congregation of Israel, never have been a Bible, never have been a New Testament church, and salvation would not be available to anyone. Sometimes people get their eyes on the wrong thing. You will notice I haven't even mentioned the weekly Sabbath yet, that was given long before. The children of Israel were going to be addressed on that question later, but to start with there was an authoritative calendar, an authoritative day on which an animal or animals, depending on the size of the household, was to be sacrificed, an emphasis on what ultimately was to be a symbol of the Lamb of God, that is symbolic of the Lamb of God. It was a lamb or a kid of the goats that was slain, and the blood of that animal was placed on the side posts and over the top of the doorway. Any of the children of Israel who were in that house, who were first born, were spared. Those who were first born of Israel or the Egyptians outside of that household died that night. There were seven days of unleavened bread, which followed the slaying of the Passover Lamb. Those days of unleavened bread were built around a peculiar characteristic of those areas of the world in which we have grain and make bread, the subject of leaven. Leaven is something that spreads. You know, you put a little leaven in a part of the dough and it spreads all through.

Leaven can be a type of sin or a type of something else. In this case, it is a type of sin. It is something that you are to put out, sin spreads. If you ever let it get contact, it wants to spread. That's what has happened in society, in our permissive laodicean society, in which we live, just like the brethren in the city of Laodicea lived in a permissive city of that day. The world since the 1960s has become

permissive. Things that we would never have thought of in the earlier part of the century are now accepted as alternative lifestyles, and people living them are being called into the church.

But God gave the annual festivals to be a reminder to the children of Israel of two things, the putting away of sin nationally and, if you please, the departure from Egypt as the land of sin, a society filled with it. Now, what we have here is an important focus that to keep the people who were to become shortly a congregation or a church formally, or God's individual, unique nation, he gave them a focus on the need of someone who would come in the future, whom we call a messiah, that is an anointed one, who turned out to be of the house of David, the house of Judah, who would give his life for the whole of the human family because he was God in the flesh. So it starts out with an emphasis on the messiah, Jesus Christ.

It also starts out with an emphasis on the fact that we do not make Christ the minister of sin, that we recognize that he set a standard of righteousness, which God is represented by, because that righteousness, in a sense, represents the character or the mind, the attitude, the way of thinking of God Almighty. But that's to get ahead of the story. The days of unleavened bread, in a sense, are to tell us the importance that we don't make Christ the minister of sin, that is, we ourselves must repent of sin. We do not continue in sin merely because he is willing to forgive us.

We are to repent of sin so that we don't make Christ a minister of individuals who choose to continue to live in sin. He will never be that. There were two annual holy days associated with unleavened bread, one at the beginning that demarcated the departure out of Egypt and one at the conclusion that in tradition marked the departure out of the ultimate border of the land of Egypt.

You see, Egypt essentially was the area of the people along the Nile and the tributaries going northward into the Mediterranean. When you depart out of Egypt, you merely start moving toward the more wilderness or uninhabited area. And finally, at the close of unleavened bread, they marched across the Red Sea into freedom, and the Egyptians who had pursued them were seen no more.

There came along the way of that experience the need for the knowledge and the clarity as to how to observe for that national people the weekly Sabbath. And so we read, of course, in Exodus, chapter 15 and then chapter 16, the story in which the children of Israel were taught clearly about the weekly Sabbath. But the very next major event is remarkable, for it also came to be a holy day. At the foot of Mount Sinai, I have, of course, been privileged to be at Sinai on one occasion when the Israeli Governor General in 1971, after the 67 war, was there in charge. In fact, we were in the company of the Israeli Governor General who was set over the area, Major Rotem, in the 1956 war in which Egypt was attacked by Britain, France, and Israel over the question of the Suez Canal. So there were two Governor Generals there on that occasion, and the former Governor General, Major Rotem, led us up to the top of the mountain where there is a mosque, by the way, and one can freely pray in that mosque. There are no idols there. It's a very interesting experience. Down from the top of Mount Sinai is an interesting valley, a miniature valley, a miniature keystone, a very, very miniature veil in which there are trees and there is water, and that is where Elijah fled from Jezebel, according to tradition. It's a valley near the top of the mountain that could never be known by anybody who hadn't climbed the mountain.

You cannot see it from below. It exists there to this day and is known by the native Bedouin.

That's an aside, of course. But Moses at the foot of Sinai was told by God to assemble the people, and on a weekly Sabbath, the 6th of Sivan, the third month of the year, the children of Israel were

given ten commandments. Now as to why there were ten, there are different explanations. The Jews have one, and that is that the Gentiles were offered God's law and they rejected it.

And so God offered it to the Jews, and they asked him, well, how many are there? Before God could answer that they could have his law, if they decided that they would take ten of them. And that's why they have the ten. Anyway, we have a situation in which the Jews have preserved what ultimately came to be the Bible in which the ten commandments were written. But God gave those ten from atop Sinai to the assembled group to the east of the foot of Mount Sinai, where there is a large amphitheater, a natural one. The children of Israel didn't wish to hear the rest of the law stated to them, and they told Moses when he came down, we would wish that you would talk to God about the rest. We prefer frankly not to hear it directly from God. It's a little too disturbing. And so the next day, Sunday, 7, Moses received the rest of the law, and in a book that we call the Book of the Covenant, now recorded in Exodus 21, 22, and 23, we have the original ceremony, if you please, a marriage ceremony that linked the children of Israel to its God, the eternal. This day came to be called thereafter the day of first fruits, or from the Greeks, Pentecost, the third annual festival, and the third holy day of the year.

It marks the completion of the covenant. It was a double Sabbath, so to speak, the weekly Sabbath, and then a holy day on Sunday, the giving of the law and the giving of the covenant.

The Jewish tradition is absolutely clear about the giving of the law on a Sabbath day, the 6th of Sivan, and immediately following, there can be no doubt that what we have is a remarkable weekend in the history of the nation in which the nation is linked to God as uniquely God's people, a covenant that was not made with any other nation on earth. So here we have the establishment of a nation for a purpose. This nation was not promised the Holy Spirit. This nation was given the law as men and women unconverted would be able to understand it. There has been much criticism of the law of God in the church of recent date in the way we express it, and I'm going to be very blunt. There are a few ministers who have left the church who for years left an impression that somehow you had to keep the law to be saved. You had to qualify for salvation by keeping the law.

Then there arose those in the church in responsible positions who were quite correctly offended by such an approach and have in a sense often treated the written law of God as straw, which it is not. David made quite clear how we should define the law in Psalm 119, and no other explanation is valid. You read that Psalm and see what he said.

The law does not make it possible for you to be saved if it did, Christ died in vain.

The law tells you right from wrong. What you do is what determines whether you receive the death penalty for violation or not. The law provided no eternal life. The law was the administration of death in terms of the function of judges and priests. It did not administer eternal life.

There were a few who were being called to salvation. Moses, Joshua, 70 elders, you know patriarchs before, kings and prophets, and others afterward. But it is very important we recognize that not only was the first thing that was emphasized the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, then the need to leave our world of sin in terms of letting it dominate us and in fact separating ourselves from the sins of the world. That's what the symbol of the days of unleavened bread and the departure from Egypt are all about. You might be surprised to what extent sin can lie in bars where people are drunk. Sin can lie in homosexual bathhouses. Sin can lie in front of the television tube.

Sin can lie in the magazine that you open to read, the newspaper. It can be heard over radio.

Wherever sin exists, we are to put it out. Then came the day of Pentecost in which God revealed his laws and chose to make the original people of Israel a religious congregation and a nation.

And that nation was given a law and then laws that amplify statutes and judgments.

But those people were not able to see things as clearly as we should.

They were not asked to go beyond no stealing, no lying, in the basic premises. They were also, however, asked to avoid many more sins based on the Ten Commandments found in the book of the law.

Later, in the book of the Covenant in particular, the book of the law was Deuteronomy.

Of course you have also in Leviticus and Numbers other laws that followed.

So there was a vast array of information that the children of Israel had. Among the laws of God, one was that you have already heard, Leviticus 19.18, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

But the law did not define one's neighbor. The law nevertheless went so far as to give one of the two most fundamental principles. And of course later, Moses restated the principles of the law and gave the first and most important one, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and might. Jesus himself pointed out that these were the two great commandments on which the ten hung. You have to wait much longer to learn if there is one word which summarizes it all. And that word, of course, is love. But the word love by itself is worth very little without a further definition. If you want to understand that, ask people what they think love is and see how confused people's minds are. In the Vietnam War, they said, let us make love not war, by which they said, let us violate the law about adultery.

That's how it was understood by a whole generation that focused on that.

There are all sorts of definitions. It's important to know what love is. Love is defined by two major premises, then by ten more, and then by the statutes that lie beneath them. And finally, there was something left to be done, a commentary on it all. The Jews much later chose to make a Talmud as the commentary. God chose to send his son as a living commentary on the law.

So that instead of having more words, you had examples. Instead of trying to define all the possible neighbors who could be yours, Jesus posed a simple question in connection with the Samaritan, the Levite, and the priest. And he asked the simple question, which one behaved as a neighbor? Then you go and do likewise.

So what we have is a very important perspective here, that the church would never have been the church if there had not already been three holy days or three festivals in the year.

The church can never be divorced from those days. Any church, any form of Christianity that is divorced from these annual festivals is divorced from God to the degree to which they depart from these days. The Christian world has departed from most with one basic exception, although there are many Christians who pay no attention to that. But we'll come to that just in a moment.

I want you to see that the nation that was called at Sinai, to be God's own people, to behave as a wife is to behave toward her husband, that is to help in the task that he has called them to do. They were to be a living example to other nations. They were to be the kind of example by having the law and the administration of Moses, which had no prison system, by the way. You will never find a prison system, and I find that one of the most repulsive and sinful aspects of our society. Having abandoned the law of God, having abandoned the administration, the nation went back to Egypt in

terms of inventing a prison system. The first place in all the scripture where you read of a prison system is in Egypt, and that's where the nation is today. But you remember that the law and the covenant are associated with that weekend that culminated in the holy day of Pentecost, or the first fruits, because that nation was to be the first fruits of nations called. Others were to come later. It was in the weeks following the resurrection of Jesus Christ and days after his ascension that another great event occurred on the festival of Pentecost, and that was the coming of the Holy Spirit. For the first time now, we can clearly see what David was able to see in Psalm 119, what we have in one of our two of our songs, one in particular, Psalm 51, where he says, Take not your Holy Spirit from me, something that was not promised by the Old Covenant. The Holy Spirit was not promised by the Old Covenant, but now that Jesus died as the Lamb of God, and the nation that had been sacrificing the Passover lambs, strangely never perceived Jesus as that lamb, except for those whom God called.

Even though they had that in front of their eyes, they never perceived it.

Now, on the day of Pentecost, on a Sunday, according to the information there in Acts 2, the Pharisees having already observed it the previous Friday, according to their tradition, the Sadducees were observing it this next Sunday after the Pharisees Friday. Luke, of course, tells us that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, one was the official day of the Pharisees, the other was the official day of the Sadducees and the New Testament Church, as it was about to be, and others who understood the book of Joshua correctly, because there's a story about Passover there that gives a clue to the correct counting of Pentecost, but that's not for today. Anyway, the Holy Spirit came. First came the laws of God, then when it came to a church that was to have the possibility of conversion and eternal life, not merely to have the land of Canaan as a promise. The children of Israel by birth were given the land of Canaan by promise. The Church of God is made up of those who are offered the kingdom of God by promise and eternal life. To make that possible, it was necessary to have the Holy Spirit be made available. Then comes, of course, that significant link between the Holy Spirit and the law of God. The law of God is now to be seen through eyes, shall we call it, the eyes of the mind that receives the Spirit of God, so that you can do what Jesus did as the example. He was the unleavened bread of life. He was the Passover lamb, and He comes into the church individually and collectively through the Holy Spirit. Once we have the Holy Spirit enlightening our lives, we can do what Jesus said to do in Matthew chapter 5.

He said, you have heard it said, but I say to you, and He took the law, and He didn't consider it so much straw. He considered it as the basic written revelation of God, without which the rest of the nations abode in blindness. And we take that law, and instead of looking at the letter, we look at the intent. We see Jesus' example, we see the message of the prophets, and we begin to look at the law in terms of intent and purpose. It's nice to say we should not steal. It's been said that any fool could have figured that out. The answer to that is, then why are we all stealing? Are they all fools? Look at the world. Look at the amount of theft that takes place on a national scale.

We have our bureaucracies. We have nations stealing from one another as often as they can in trade.

We have people working for employers who do the same thing. We have people pillaging our streets.

We have people robbing our homes. We haven't even arrived as a nation where the question of not stealing is fundamental to our life. Look how quickly we can depart, even from the letter of the law.

When I was in the Soviet Union, it was possible there, with one exception in Moscow, where I had my hand up in the bus, and I had a glass case. I would need a pair of glasses to drive officially, though I don't need it for reading. Somebody, unknown to me, slit the inside of the coat, assuming that that glass case was probably just resting in the coat pocket and would drop out, and that's where the

money would be, as it was nothing happened. But in the Soviet Union, it was possible to walk the streets of Central Asia in the dark of night with a light at the far end of the street. And you could be talking with one another as Victor Kubik, my wife, and I did, and somebody in a blackened doorway wouldn't come out to try to hit you on the head.

The first question you heard was, Americansky, are you an American? And we would talk with people without ever seeing them in the darkness of night, safely. That's not the Soviet Union that fell apart. They lost all sense of morality.

And today, it is a tragic country, as you can see on television. But I want to get across the important thing. We are not made up of those who think salvation comes by the law, but we are those who pay respect to the law as having come from the lips of the Almighty, as a revelation without which we could not know for sure many of the things that we do wrongly as a society.

And now we know what is right, because we have not only the law, as it was then given in the letter which Jesus said is quite insufficient for salvation, we now have the example of Jesus Christ.

He is the living commentary. He is, shall we call it, the spiritual Christian Talmud, and his life has been written up in four gospel accounts and commented on by the apostles, foretold by the messages of the prophets.

So we reach a point now where we see a New Testament church exists, which is called to announce the coming of the kingdom of God, and in fact to come under the government of that kingdom here and now, as the church has known for decades. What distinguishes the church of God is that it is subject to the government of God, and each individual who is subject to that government stays here and seeks to make that government work better by letting that government over the church and over himself or herself be exercised properly and correctly.

We do it in terms of the role of husband and wife, father and mother. We do it in terms of the role of pastors and deacons, elders, anybody who is even appointed. We do it in terms of employee and employer. We do it collectively in terms of regional areas in the church and in terms of the administration of the church as a whole. If there are questions or problems that should arise, we address it according to the law of God. We don't start wandering into the wilderness back to Egypt again. Jesus prayed that the church should be one, not only in harmony, but one in reality, not split divided competitive, and I'm speaking plainly, or to put it in terms that maybe some of you will understand better.

I came to Ambassador College in 1947. I did not know of the church of God. I never heard so small was the message, but I had heard the voice of Herbert Armstrong and also heard of the Radio Church of God, which in a sense symbolically meant the work of a group of people through radio and that body of people who were responsive through radio to that message.

I came to college in 1947 before, in fact, a significant number who are here today were born.

The vast majority, if I take a look at faces, because we have a very significant number of children as well as people who were born after that in the 40s and 50s and 60s.

I am here today. There are others who came and went. Dr. David Albert, who has spoken from time to time on the World Tomorrow program, now on the faculty of Ambassador College at Big Sandy, mentioned in a sermon, which you may have heard, that of all the teachers he had, I am the only one who is still in the fellowship of the World Wide Church of God.

Now, we have some very responsive teachers today. We have other teachers who are still living.

A woman who never was a member, then Lucy Martin, since remarried in her 80s, who attends commencement every year. A woman of absolute loyalty, absolute loyalty.

I am here for a reason, and let me explain it by contrasting it with someone else, who I think it was in 1974 in a Bible study, was seated with Herbert W. Armstrong and Pasadena, Mr. Armstrong, and handled part of it, and there were problems in 1974 in the church.

And this man said, addressing us and addressing Mr. Armstrong, you know I wouldn't be here in this study if I didn't agree with the church 100%. I turned to my wife and said he'll be gone in a year. There is no one who can be in the church who has ever, every year, agreed 100% with the church.

If you did, I'll tell you what you've done. You haven't been thinking.

I guess I did touch upon something you've all been thinking about.

Look, Mr. Armstrong didn't always agree with himself either.

That is, when he saw there was something that needed correction, he did, and not everything that he thought needed correction needed the kind of correction he gave it. But that's true of parents. We need to have come here with the intent to be of service, and with the recognition that it is possible to have brotherly love, even when there are differences of points of view. Paul explains it very clearly. He said the church does not have unity, and we must keep it. He said till we all grow to that point of unity. We come from different backgrounds.

We come with different perspectives. I came from a background in which I had no knowledge of many of the things of the church until I heard the World Tomorrow program, but I was also learning from other religions, usually within the scope of Christianity, but not necessarily altogether. But the one thing, by the way, that I had never heard and understood before coming to Ambassador College pertained to God's annual festivals. That was something new. All the other fundamentals I had learned about the Sabbath, not through the World Tomorrow. I had learned about tithing, not through the Church of God. I had learned about the Millennium, not through the literature of the Church. I had learned about the identity of the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not through the World Tomorrow. In fact, I learned that from a man who learned about the Sabbath from Herbert Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong was surprised how I learned about that subject because the man whom he had introduced the Sabbath to had understood that other topic, but he has long since deceased. Some of the people who that man, probably all of them, were deceased by now, too, because this was the early 1940s.

In any case, we must remember that God called the nation Israel to live an example so that other nations would ask the questions. He called the Church of God to announce a coming kingdom and invite other peoples of other nations to be participants in that hope and in that promise.

He gave the annual Sabbaths in addition to the weekly Sabbath, the weekly one so we learn every week and have a break in our work, the annual one so that we come together and give serious thought to our responsibility as a collective group, not to just ourselves as individuals, and that we additionally give serious thought to the importance of our behavior before others and as an example to those communities in which we assemble. I will just take a little break here.

I have not seen the community at large. I've only seen one unique feature which I've not ever, to my knowledge, seen so closely associated with a festival site before. It's called the Public Library. So the first thing I went to see after arriving here following being in the office was to take a look at the library. And let me tell you that that's an area where how you speak or don't is important. And what

you do with the book on the shelf, whether you follow the rules, if there are rules governing that, so that those books go back where they belong or are placed where others will put them back where they belong. That's the kind of test and the little things in which we will be measured. And you will be measured in terms of how you conduct yourself where you live. If we ask you to tell us about, as those who are managing it, to tell us about the things good and bad and ugly, it might be interesting if we were to ask the employees of these places the things they saw about us, the good, the bad, and the ugly. You see what I mean? It is something that we are living here collectively. We are an example.

And each one of us determines the level to which that example rises or falls.

We don't want to have needless cases where bad example of one gives a bad public image to many.

So the festival occasion is a remarkable chance for us to rehearse the story of the plan of God and the role of Jesus Christ in unfolding that plan. An example of what the church should be like inside the new man, the new woman, the inner man, the inner woman, and what the world tomorrow therefore should be like. We are introduced after we have the story of the church and the culmination of course of the church in the first harvest, which was celebrated every Pentecost. We now come to a break in the sequence and a new kind of sequence. It begins with the first day of the seventh month, which is called in Jewish tradition Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year. It is not the head of this religious year or the spiritual or the sacred year. It is the head of the traditional natural year in the northern hemisphere, the beginning of the calendar as it once was, and the head in that sense of the civil year. It is basic to the agricultural year. There are some other kinds of years as well. Rosh Hashanah, however, is also known in the Bible as the festival of trumpets. It is a festival of the blowing of trumpets. The trumpet was a symbol of danger, of war, of crisis, of the need to get together because a major decision had to be made for the safety of any group. The festival of trumpets in a sense heralds the beginning of God's intervention by sending Jesus Christ to be born as he was in the late summer and or more likely the earliest autumn. I would think that's probably how the season fell. You know, sometimes trumpets can be in the summer, sometimes the beginning of autumn. Jesus was introduced to the world toward the beginning of the traditional autumnal year, and he came with a message.

The festival of trumpets also tells us of the message of God that is to culminate around the world in all nations having had a witness and ultimately in the coming again of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It is important, therefore, that we take note that only some two and a half weeks ago we celebrated the beginning of a series of events of God's divine intervention in world affairs, and we take note that one of the most important things that follows such an intervention in world affairs is the day of atonement, the next step in which we learn to fast as a church and in which the world will learn to fast and recognize the folly of its behavior.

The day of atonement follows the festival of trumpets, and it is associated with the function of a high priest who offers the blood of a goat.

And I'm skipping part of the story because there was the physical high priest who had to also do it symbolically. That high priest offered the blood of a goat, the story of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God in the spring, the repetition of that by way of remembering what happens in the spring, and so when the day of atonement comes, or one of the great events after the return of Jesus Christ, we have a recognition that the Lamb of God, the high priest, Jesus Christ, gave his life that the whole world would be free from the penalty of sin. And at the same time there was another goat that did not shed, have its blood shed, and was taken out into the wilderness and separated. That goat was

removed just as Satan is going to be removed, and until Satan and his demons are imprisoned, and that's where the divine imprisonment concept stands in Scripture.

It is a penalty for spirit beings while they are being held or incarcerated until a judgment to come. In any case, we are introduced not only to the resurrection of the church and completion of the first harvest by Pentecost, we're introduced to the coming of Jesus Christ again in the festival of trumpets. We're introduced to the removal of the devil and the recognition on a world scale of the coming of the Messiah. Hindus have a tradition of a great one to come who will bring peace. The Buddhists have a tradition of a great one to come, and many Buddhists who have been in contact with the West have thought seriously that perhaps their tradition is speaking of the same thing mentioned in the Christian Scriptures, the return of Jesus of Nazareth. The Muslims look forward to the return of Jesus of Nazareth. You may not realize that.

They think however he's coming to Damascus rather than Jerusalem, but they recognize he's coming to establish the kingdom of God and to subdue nations. We have now taken note of one of the important things that will happen after Jesus Christ returns. There must be the establishment of God's government. There must be the removal of those who had taken over the government over the earth when Adam sinned, and those, the devil and his angels, who took over the government of the world when Adam essentially surrendered to that government instead of upholding the law of God.

That cohort of evil will have to be removed, and then human beings will be able for the first time to begin to see themselves for what they have been and are. What is necessary then is to recognize that we have a fundamental step of re-educating the world. These steps are of immense proportion. They are pictured as culminating in a final great harvest called the Festival of Tabernacles, which represents all the culminates, let's say, in all the harvests that followed the last feast of Tabernacles. You have sometimes late autumn harvests, winter and spring, and of course the spring grain harvest we've already mentioned, and then the early summer grape harvests.

We have other fruits that are summer fruits. All these essentially culminated in a great celebration during the Festival of Tabernacles in which the nation as a whole gathered together.

Now the churches of this world, who are important historically as distinct from small modern groups, have abandoned all the festivals of God except one. That one is Pentecost because they associate the beginning of the church with Pentecost. They have abandoned Passover. They have abandoned the days of unleavened bread. They have Eucharist instead, or Lord's Supper, whatever terms.

They have what we might call Lent instead of the days of unleavened bread, and certainly in the autumn they have nothing like the festivals that God gave.

Why does the church today understand the plan of God and understand the role of Jesus Christ to the extent to which we do? The answer is fundamental because the church has been observing these days. How do we explain why the church did not as a whole have the same understanding in the early 1930s, the 1920s, and on back? Because the church had not understood these days except for Passover.

There were individuals who observed these days, but the church officially in the United States had abandoned these days from the time that the churches of God or the churches of Christ or Sabaterians were introduced to the new world in the state of Rhode Island in the town of Newport.

The Holy Days were never a part of the Sabaterian Christian practice.

One of the reasons is that the brethren in England in the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, that means from the days of Queen Elizabeth in the late 1500s into the 1600s, was not allowed generally to keep these days. People who did were put in prison, and those who were on the outside were not in prison because they had abandoned them.

And so for centuries they were neglected for some 300 years, but often on different people began to observe these days. We found in our baptizing tours in 1949 and 50-51 and on that we would meet people scattered throughout the United States who individually or as small groups or families were observing these days and didn't know anyone else did until they contacted them the Radio Church of God, which is now called in terms of its business work, the Worldwide Church of God. The actual simple name is the Church of God, but corporately we are the Worldwide Church of God. We understand these days because we were willing to keep them, and having understood these days we can understand the plan of God and much better where we are in the sequence of world events. So we now don't have time. I felt that since this had not been discussed in this level that I would now summarize what you should do for the rest of the festival, and especially afterward, that you should take note of the prophets. You should take note especially of the prophets because they often dealt with the very things that we see the world has to deal with today. When Christ comes back, not everybody is going to believe he's Jesus Christ. The Jews are going to question it and want to see what he looks like. The Christians will think as a whole that he's the Antichrist. The Muslims certainly will find that he didn't come to Damascus.

The Buddhists will not find in his entourage the Buddha. They will have to wait for another thousand years. But we still have to make changes in the world of very great importance. I want you to think about the importance, not only of what has already been said with respect to the future.

I took note of the sermon titles and the emphases in them just briefly this morning.

I want you to think about the role of the law and the Spirit of God in terms of conversion.

You want to think about the role of leaders in government, in terms of how God's government will be established. Who is going to come up to Jerusalem? Who is going to bring the children of Israel back? And what nations are going to have to be broken up as a person who strikes with an iron rod, a pot made of pottery? It's interesting that some nations that have kings and queens are going to bring the children of Israel back, and other nations are going to have to be broken up.

We should read Zachariah of what happens to nations, chapter 14, beginning even with chapter 12, that will not be willing to observe the Feaster Tabernacles in the future.

We have lived through in the last half dozen years a remarkable transition from two great superpowers to the breakup of the Soviet Union and the collapse of a certain unity that then was in the Arab world.

We are in an entirely different world today, and those changes that seem so remarkable after 40 years of Cold War are only leading to new problems such as we have and cannot solve in Somalia, that the Europeans are unable to solve in former Yugoslavia, that the nations making up the former USSR cannot resolve. Azerbaijanis, Armenians at war, Georgians and Abkhazians at war, struggles in other areas of the Soviet Union and in the streets of Moscow and in the parliament building itself. And consider all the other problems in Africa, the domestic problems in South America and the fact that when I wanted to look early this morning around 4.30 to see what was happening in Moscow I had another station where a movie was going on and before I could switch to the next station

somebody was shot dead in that movie in my presence. And this is called, I wanted to call it education, I think it started out that way, but this is simply called entertainment.

What a society. We are going to have to change practically everything, government, education, you can read something about the teachers in Isaiah who will no longer be put in a corner and have to be educated in this world's systems and philosophies. There's going to be a greater emphasis on teaching, a greater emphasis on judging, a greater emphasis on explaining the laws of God and the ways of God. And in the laws of God is a very remarkable thing that is one of the biggest problems facing the USSR today and would face any other country. In Leviticus chapter 25, beginning with verse 8 and on, is the story of the redistribution of the land every 50 years back to the original proprietors, those who held title to that land.

You see the Bible had a jubilee, something the church cannot enforce today because it involves property titles and government. And we are not the government of this world.

But we have a right to speak about the problem.

In the Soviet Union, now called Russia and these other republics, private property was essentially taken away. Now how are they going to redistribute it? Who is going to make the decision? No country in the world has ever had the experience of going back from communism or state socialism, because it really wasn't communism as the communist party running a state socialist government, and redistributing it into private hands in which the monetary system is based on capital. It has never happened before.

There has been no guideline in the world and the evidence that nobody really knows how is Russia today. Now can you imagine if all the world had to have the same problem? There are people in India who have been paying on debts, occurring over three centuries ago, and by word of mouth handed in every generation, your father, your grandfather, your great grandfather, as far as you can remember, paid this family interest money on something that was loaned four, three, two centuries ago.

India has no forgiveness of debt. India has the biggest poverty problem in the world as a consequence.

The whole world needs to start over in its educational area, in its government as we have pointed up. It also has to start over in terms of where we live and who will own what, in terms of having your roots on the land. I don't think we realize what a great change is going to have to come just from this set of laws, the sabbatical year in the Jubilee, where we finally solve the problem of the landless and the homeless that is basic to all the revolutions and civil strife in the world today. That must be addressed, and Christ alone is going to be able to, and of course, God will make the decisions, we will not be making those decisions, but we will be implementing them. We have a great responsibility then to be able to do what the children of Israel by way of example in the book of Joshua Judges did. In order to establish that nation, they had to divide the land up. They surveyed the whole country, and the land was divided up in the different tribes and the families of the tribes. That way a family can always have its root in the soil and never become truly landless or homeless. There is always something to fall back on that can never be taken from you. You may sell it for a while if you are using poor judgment.

But we could go on and on through the prophets, the law, and the book of Revelation, and the stories, the parables that Jesus gave, and then look at all the spiritual instruction as well. There is a

remarkable description in the Bible of all the things that people should be and do, and what society should be like. Paul addressed it normally on an individual basis.

Moses addresses it on a national scale. Christ in Revelation addresses it in terms of government and what we must do in the world tomorrow. And we are learning here and now to have those spiritual things that need to be implemented, inculcated in us every Sabbath and every day as we read and study the Bible. My wife and I will be here for most of the rest of the day, not in this building, but be happy to meet as many of you as possible. I hear I have an Armenian contingent, our dear, dear friends, the Carishians, and Mrs. Addition. They're not very many Armenians in the church. They're not very many who leave. Let that be said of all of us.