

HHoeh_How_to_Understand_the_Law-18-2-95

Fine Introduction in Date. Sermonette Time, which happens to be the background for what I need to address today. The subject in the Sermonette focused on the great goal that human beings have, that is the kingdom of God. Too often we overlook the importance of what happened in the days of Emperor Tiberius when John the Baptist came with a message that the time had come to reform the nation and to repent for the kingdom of God was at hand.

A message that, in a sense, was inevitable if we understand the Old Testament, because the Old Testament is the story of a people who were not given this opportunity, but whose prophets told them of a time when the kingdom of God should come. But they didn't use that term. In general, they only spoke of days that would be quite different from the experience then.

It was not long after John began to speak to the nation that Jesus was baptized and some two months or so thereafter, after the 40 days in which Jesus was tested by the devil, Jesus came as you read in the Gospel according to Mark, announcing the coming, the being at hand of the kingdom of God, and the people were therefore asked to repent. I will just flip over in this particular version that I have, which I on occasion use. This is the American, the New American translation. I purposely chose a different one to highlight some thoughts whenever I need to quote.

This happens to be the official translation in English of the Catholic Church, one of the better American translations in modern English. This is the time of fulfillment. The reign of God is at hand. Reform your lives and believe in the Gospel. Now, reform, repent, change things that you've been doing, and begin to believe the good news being brought. That good news pertains to what we say when we pray. We do not sometimes focus adequately on it. Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. I'm giving a kind of modern expression, not something from the days of James I of England. Your kingdom come, your will be done. Now, there is coming such a time when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, returns to restore the government of God over the earth as a whole, over the nations to bring salvation to the world, to teach the world a way of life, and to teach the way of salvation. The way of life is how we should be living in this life.

The way of salvation pertains to those things that are revealed in scripture that we might inherit eternally the kingdom of God. But the things that we do in a way of life are not necessarily those which in a sense make one immortal. The way of salvation is the way that leads to the coming into each of us of the Spirit of God so that in fact Christ dwells in us through the Spirit of God.

We become a new person. We are born from above. We receive the Spirit of God and what begins in the mind, in the Spirit, develops into the fullness of the stature of Christ in this life.

So we are described in scripture as moving in this life to the level of the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ, having been born from above, born again, though in the flesh we had a birth from our physical mother and a human father and a new human mother.

Those things pertain to salvation. Then there are things that we learn as we grow to the fullness of the stature of Christ which represent a godly way of life. But salvation is possible as a gift and only as a gift. It is freely given. It is bestowed on those who repent, who believe, who are baptized and of course there are some people who may not physically be able. We have understood that for decades the church as a whole for centuries has understood that.

But the important thing in this life for us today as in the earlier history of the churches of God is that we learn that we have a way of life to live that should be patterned after the example of Jesus Christ. The Christ who came with a message and who set an example for us that we should follow in his steps even to the point of necessary of death.

Jesus is the Messiah. He is God who came to dwell in the flesh, the logos, the word of God.

If you please, the wisdom of God, the voice of God, the divine word that John speaks of in his first chapter. The mind of God was in Jesus Christ. He was in that sense God dwelling among us, fulfilling in himself, in his words, in his deeds, the love. Dying for us and rising from the dead and ascending to the realm in which there is eternal light. Not only symbolically, but spiritually. Hebrews, the first few verses, describes that realm. God in Christ is the coming king of that kingdom.

God in Christ is the Lord of that kingdom, Lord in the sense of spiritual matters.

He is also our master and teacher.

Now we are anticipating eternal life in that kingdom, but even now we have been in a certain sense.

As Paul mentions it, we have been translated into the kingdom of God in our mind with the spirit of God dwells in us so that we are able to communicate with God and to speak to him in prayer and to discern one another as having spiritual minds and being able to communicate with one another and to have the blessings that come with that communication with God and with one another.

The kingdom of God is also the realm or government of God.

But in the church today we have the presence of the kingdom of God because we have the presence of the government of God in his church. And that government means that Christ works with and through this church, with it collectively, through it to the world.

And we learn to submit to that government. Now all government that may be exercised through human beings is innately and necessarily imperfect.

There is no government of God in a human family through father and mother that is always perfect as any child can bear witness for any wife.

Or when he leaves the house, any husband.

Now the point that should be seen from this is that we recognize human weaknesses, but we do not break up family relationships. We do not break up the church. We do not break up a congregation merely because there may be flaws in the way things are said or done.

This is very important and illustrating of course the New Testament as well because the New Testament church was not without its flaws. Ancient Israel was full of flaws and yet they had to learn to work together to inhabit the promised land together to preserve the scriptures together to bring them to us, but tragically they didn't all stay together. Ten out of the twelve tribes fundamentally abandoned their responsibility and we have in a sense the house of Judah with Levi and a fragment of Benjamin and a few who migrated down into Judah from the northern tribes who have given us the New Testament script sorry the scriptures that we call the Old Testament. We have to learn from those examples how important it is that we work together, that we do not become divided, but whether we understand everything clearly. We work together in love and in harmony and learn if there are difficulties we don't fully understand to put certain things on the shelf if we need to till we understand them better.

We do not become each one of us an absolute authority on our own.

So let us now take a look at where we are today in our responsibility. Nine years ago it became quite apparent that the church had a new responsibility to commit committed to it under the present leadership to prepare ourselves as a church through the power of Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God for the kingdom of God. There were things that needed to be done within as well as to continue the work to the world and that work necessarily changes as there are changes in media.

I will focus on this aspect first that I am addressing. What is important is to realize today that as in every generation there are areas that we must examine more carefully and look at perhaps in a different way than we may have perceived before. It is taken of course Pastor General Joseph W. DeKoch sometime to think through that responsibility.

That we have to relook at some things, perhaps re-explain some things and examine whether as individuals we understood it even as the church was saying it before or maybe even misunderstood the past sometimes. So let us take a look at some fundamental things we must now put our minds to.

I have a number of things here I should like to bring to your attention appropriately.

Let me read you something that you have not yet seen in the Worldwide News.

This will be in the Worldwide News sometime next month.

Every member in the congregation, Mr. DeKoch writes in the Pastor General's report of February 15, leads to be equipped and prepared according to one's spiritual gifts to take an active part in the work of the Gospel of Christ. God wants everyone involved and it is the church's job to help members find what those gifts are and to provide ways for members to put those gifts to work in the service of Christ. Now in the announcements just before my message you had the material read by Mr. Ames from the Philippines in which this is being presented and to be developed and implemented.

Now to do so we must do so collectively. Whether or not the one you were working with is flawed and you were not. You have to learn that.

It is the church's job to do this and we do it together working side by side.

Headquarters must instruct and train the ministry to equip our members for active service in God's army. A very good German thought. The ministry must respond to its continuing education and training. Not only do we have children in the church who must be educated, we have to educate ourselves as adults because this is a changing world.

The ministry has a responsibility in teaching also to be continually educating itself and to be trained for new responsibilities. For this is not an age of clear channel radio stations such that it was possible for one man's voice on a station W.O.A.I. San Antonio Textiles to reach northern California and I could hear it. When there was no local church I never heard of the church of God other than in the Bible. Never met anybody who belonged to one but there was a voice from that church out of a congregation in Eugene, Oregon that reached us but today without clear channel stations with such a multiplicity and high cost of television where we can do little more now in that area but spot ads where our marketplaces are not any longer as suitable for magazines there are so many kinds of magazines on specific topics not only one but more than one magazine on the subject of apartment living. We would be lost if that were our primary means of communication yet there was a time we could blanket much of this country with the magazine and Mr. Ducati's supervision of that had to

come to a conclusion because things change and we have to equip ourselves to do different things at different times.

We need preparation and training, education and instruction. We need to learn how to talk with others about the gospel of the kingdom of God I add so we never forget that the good news is a specific mention not just anybody's opinion but to mention that this is the realm of God in which Jesus Christ is Lord and King, Lord of Lords ultimately and King of Kings and we learn what Christ means in such a way that we can communicate it as never before to the world outside who have heard it presented often with no clear indication of why it should mean something to them. Our members need to learn how to effectively support and encourage each other in spiritual fellowship and prayer to know how to talk things over how to learn from one another and to pray concerning the needs of one another. They need well-planned meaningful opportunities to put their training into use. Our pastors need to learn how to promote the gospel message in word and deed in their communities how to effectively equip and mobilize members in that effort. This is an overview Mr. Tkach is giving. The greatest work of course is done by the Holy Spirit in individual members as they go about their daily lives with their feet planted in the gospel in the zeal of Christ in their hearts. Our job at headquarters is to facilitate that work by providing qualified ministers meaningful education and training materials and sound doctrine. Our job as a church not just as individuals is then to minister to our members as individuals and as groups that we call local churches helping them to learn. We all have a new responsibility that was committed to the present stage of the church. We need to provide tools facilities and these opportunities and that of course I am adding does cost money and time and the effort of personnel. Another one of our primary goals is to set up a system by which members can raise funds locally to build and buy property for building of church congregations because that is an ultimate need but that's a further matter but it does mean that we have ongoing long-range perspectives that we must address as we function as those who are now heirs of the kingdom of God and who are now under Jesus Christ as head of the church. In so doing we have had to have a new look at some things that were in part misunderstood even in terms of the teaching of the church.

So let me explain a few things. I am quite sure and I will say this so that we all understand it in advance. What I have to say will not wholly find satisfaction in the minds of any different major groups within the church. There will always be something that you might not agree with.

That's understandable and I want to preface it that way but if you don't agree with certain points maybe your understanding is more correct than mine. Maybe we both need to understand more or maybe you need to understand more whatever the situation may be but it is now important that we realize that we don't cross the red sea as individuals.

Did you hear me? We don't cross the red sea as individuals. We cross it together each with our own effort. One does not today have the red sea open for him in one place and another in another place. If that is the case we will not be what we ought to be.

So we need to address something very fundamental. Long ago Mr. Armstrong made it clear even though it came to be fuzzy in the thinking of some who have left and some who have remained and thousands have left over the past four years. Some 10,000 have left our fellowship going in different directions. Maybe what I say today would not have made any difference but it's already too late to reach them. What is important is that we recognize that when Jesus said the kingdom of God is at hand he meant it.

It's now available and you can press forward into that realm both individually and as a group we can do so collectively.

That great promise is possible because eternal life is a free gift of God.

There is nothing we do to earn it. There are things we can do to destroy that opportunity for us as individuals but we don't earn it. It is a gift. The church has never taught anything else officially in this generation and in the previous one.

And yet many have lived as though indeed it was not as free a gift. That is they assumed that we qualify for the kingdom of God, we qualify for salvation.

Now let me explain. There is no requirement that qualifies you for salvation.

Salvation is a gift of God. Let me just illustrate one point. You all know that Jesus said, Paul quoted, Moses said, the prophet certainly would have confirmed it, that children should honor their parents, honor your father and mother, that your days may belong on the earth. How many of you can become immortal by honoring your father and mother? Now let's be clear on one simple example.

I could give you all the rest but that's enough. Now any of you know how by honoring your father and mother to make yourself immortal? Well of course you don't. Therefore, honoring your father and your mother has its proper responsibility in a way of life we should live.

Because not to do so is a very, very serious problem. But doing so doesn't earn eternal life.

It cannot make you immortal. It takes the spirit of God.

For those who have left us will read the statement that Jesus Christ qualifies us.

And they read it that we qualify. We don't qualify for eternal life. We don't qualify for the kingdom of God. We qualify for responsibility. We won't have any responsibility if it isn't a free gift if we're not in that kingdom as a result of the mercy of God. There are rewards in the kingdom but the kingdom is not a reward for deeds you do. That has been the teaching of the church for a long time. So let's have that clear and straight. There are no sets of requirements that you do that qualify you for the kingdom of God.

There are things you can do that disqualify you. Oh yes, there are many of them.

Let us now proceed with an understanding that we need to have in this connection.

I want to read, that's all right for having a microphone there. I want to read something that appeared in the February 7th issue, 1995, Volume 23, Number 3 of the Worldwide News.

This is on page 7. How we should look at the matter of doing the will of God.

Sometimes we have forgotten what it was that the church understood many decades ago.

There was characteristic of how we lived. You see if the kingdom of God is free and open, because Christ makes it possible for us to be free of sin, being forgiven, make it possible for us to live a new kind of life.

One that is not in hostility to the kingdom of God.

And then we have the kind of hope that the early members of the church of God in the 1930s did.

There was a time when Herbert W. Armstrong wrote to family members. In this case, this is taken from the Herbert W. Armstrong papers, Number 892, page 12, the Dear Folks Letter of August 30, 1928, and that is quoted here in the article pertaining to his baptism. To his grandparents, who may call dear folks to his uncle Welter and other relatives he wrote, if you do not honestly feel sure in your minds that God wants you to rest and keep holy the time between Friday and Saturday sunsets, it is not disobedience, not to do it.

I now realize it has nothing to do with salvation. You see when Mr. Armstrong studied the Sabbath, he kept reading in Protestant literature constantly that anybody who keeps the Sabbath thinks he's doing it to earn salvation.

And that's in a sense what it lodged in his mind.

And then he began to realize that couldn't be true.

Keeping the Sabbath doesn't make you immortal. It gives you rest. It gives you an opportunity to be with others, but keeping the Sabbath will never make you immortal. Is that clear? Now, when the church asks you to assemble on this day and share spiritual fellowship and to encourage one another, and you say, I won't, and you don't attend on the Sabbath, then you're in trouble. You're in trouble with yourself and your attitude.

And you need to examine what your attitude is. Well, that's not the problem here. That's why you're here. But the point is, there are things that you can do that shouldn't be done about biblical examples and biblical matters that highlight bad attitudes or a spirit of rebellion or hostility. But doing the will of God in these things, that does not earn eternal life.

So Mr. Armstrong correctly said, I now realize it has nothing to do with salvation in the sense that it won't earn you salvation. Until you had taken that step of baptism, I have felt you should not be bothered with the Sabbath question. For Mr. Armstrong learned at both in connection with, let's say, smoking, tobacco, pork, and other questions that are laid out chapter after chapter in the autobiography that underlie why there is this work.

This work grew as a result of Mr. Armstrong's recognition that repentance arises as a matter of attitude without having to know a thousand different things that you have done wrong. Now, don't repent of single misdeeds. You may need to also repent of those things when they come to mind. But repentance is a general attitude and state of mind where you look at yourself and put away hostility toward God and His revealed work. And Mr. Armstrong noted what Jesus said to the disciples in the last part. I'll quickly turn to that here. You're all familiar with it. And this is what he cited. And this is where the Church of God, Seventh Day, had some problems. He said here, Jesus addressing His disciples, Full authority has been given to me, Matthew 28, 18, both in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.

Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach.

Now, wait a moment. Baptize before you teach? Ah, yes. Baptize them. Now, that presumes, you see, but you have told them enough so they become like their teachers. Make disciples of all nations.

And the procedure is, you teach people to follow Christ. And one of the first things you do is to baptize them, which means they are symbolizing they're going to die to their past. And now, in dying to their past, they come up with new life, to be imbued with the Spirit of God, so that without the carnal mind as it was, that mind now being transformed is possible to teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And that is where we have a basis for why this church came to be

what it is. And we discuss these other things later. People who are addicted to tobacco, need the power of the Spirit of God. People who may have a job on the Sabbath, need the power of the Spirit of God and faith to learn how to resolve the need of continuing. But we have always understood that you work out that situation with God's help through prayer and through the help of brethren, so that you may regularly attend church as we do. It is significant that Mr. Armstrong understood this, and in a sense, this underlies the area which highlights a problem that arose. For over the years, some new trends got into the minds of individuals in the church that tended to make people think that your deeds and not Christ's forgiveness, the Father's forgiveness, Christ's death, make possible the gift of God and eternal life. Now, our deeds become important.

They are important because they reflect whether or not you follow through on the teaching. Christ said to the disciples, teach them to carry out everything I command you. That is, from generation to generation, help people to understand what they should be doing in order to fulfill the kind of life that is meant for those who are God's children. We should learn to think and do as God thinks and does in terms of how He treats others.

Well, at the present time, the church has felt the need to address the question of the covenant.

That is, the new covenant. When Mr. Tkach gave or asked me to come to his office briefly, at the time when the first material was being prepared, that we would probably say reflects what we have in the Worldwide News of January 10, 1955. That's the first in this theory, is understanding the covenants. I said to him that I frankly found it difficult to imagine that there were people who didn't think this was a new covenant church.

Now, there were things that I had not seen it in its final form. I had suggested some edits.

There had been some areas in which those edits were accepted. So there were things that still needed to be explained. But in principle, this has always been defined as a new covenant church.

Any other definition is erroneous. Now, there are some who drifted in the direction of tending to think in terms of how the old covenant or the covenant made of Sinai should relate to what we think and do. And here we come to some very important issues.

Jesus came with the message. He was a messenger of the covenant. The book of Malachi calls him a messenger of the covenant. And Jeremiah defines the time when there will be a new covenant.

And that in that new covenant, I won't turn to it now, you're familiar with it, we are to have the laws of God written in our hearts and minds. I will write my laws in your hearts and minds. Now, how that would be possible, we know in part, anyway, from the statement in the New Testament about the Holy Spirit. We could have guessed it from the Old Testament where Moses and Joshua both pointed up that there was no spirit or faith in the nation as a whole to do it.

So ancient Israel lacked that most marvelous gift, the nature of God, in us through the Holy Spirit.

That makes it possible to have God's instruction in us so that we naturally think and live that instruction. We no longer have hostility toward it. We no longer say as some do in the world, well, here's the way I look at that instruction. Well, if there are things you don't know, you would say as someone else told me, well, you know that is something I have not looked into before.

That's the right attitude.

Jesus Christ in Matthew 5, 6, and 7 laid out some perspectives.

He defines there for us what it is we examine. He defines the law of God.

He defines, if you please, further on the teaching of the prophets as that which we should examine.

We're told to live, in fact, by every word of God, but we have to know how to examine every word of God. And I'll explain why in a moment, which is the crux of the matter. And when we learn these things, we will be prepared to speak to others, to influence others as we have not been before.

Jesus faced not only his disciples on one occasion, when he explained to them what his message is, in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, which we call the basic outline of the new covenant and its approach.

But he also addressed on two occasions, one we find in Matthew and one in Luke, in slightly different terms. Matthew 23, 20, 3 Luke 11, 42.

The Pharisees had two kinds of problems. They tried to solve difficulties that they thought were in the law, sometimes by that they had overlooked judgment and the love of God in their behavior. In the other case, he said they have overlooked judgment, mercy, and faith. So let's put these down now as fundamental.

Let's get some words. Matthew 23, 23. Judgment, mercy, and faith. Those are big things.

Luke 11, 42. Judgment and the love of God. So we only have to add the one extra thought, the love of God there. And we have some very fundamental clues. Jesus said we must address judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God. That gives us the perspective.

Now this word judgment perhaps would be better translated just to define it as judging, judging with an I and G. Now the reason for that is, though it's translated judgment, we can confuse that with some event. Let's say the judgment of the last day. And that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about making judgments or judging. So we'll make that distinction for the moment. There's nothing wrong with the word judgment. You're supposed to have good judgment and that's what you're using when you make judgments or are judging.

Mercy I will not dwell on today because that is rather clear. I think we understand what mercy means. The love of God means that you seek not only to have God's love in you, but to have that love of God shed forth to others that he has given us through the Holy Spirit.

Now in the question of judging, we have some very interesting statements that in 1 Corinthians 12, 14, sorry incorrect, 1 Corinthians 2, 14, 15, and 16. Those are the verses. There are statements about Christians should learn to judge all things. We need to focus and examine carefully all the things that pertain to our life, not just haphazardly go through life without thinking of what we're doing. The 2nd Thessalonians 5, 21 very nicely translated here to test everything, to retain what is good. We are to judge all things, to test everything.

And how we go about it must also have the right approach. Matthew 7, 1-5 tells us that in judging, we first should judge our own condition. Now God ultimately judges us. We're not disputing that.

But he said, don't start out in working with other people as distinct with other things.

And you see, I read to you, judge all things, test everything. Now judgment also pertains to helping other people. Judging involves questions when people are overcome with problems. How do you help them? You have to learn to help others with good judgment. And he said, if you see a brother with a splinter in his eye, it is wise in order to see that clearly to get the log out of your own.

Now when you've learned how to get the log out of your own, it'll be much easier to see the splinter and help the other person. So indeed, we do have a responsibility in using judgment in helping other

people as well as dealing with all the things we face in life. So judgment is a very important aspect that I do want to dwell on because not everybody uses good judgment.

Mr. Tkach has been most concerned not about the individual topics that have arisen under this question. The issue was not tithing. The issue was not something else, Sabbath, holy days, unclean meats, circumcision, whatever. The issue that concerned him most, even if it affected these areas, was that we had been involved in the matter in some way that was unnecessary and shouldn't have been. And it is not unique to this church. There is not a single church in the world, not a single business, not a single political party, labor movement, or any other organization, even charities that don't have problems with judgmentalism.

It's the human condition. And Mr. Tkach wants us to focus on this human condition.

We have to learn that we must look at things differently, both in terms of outsiders and that is those who are not in our immediate fellowship, and I don't use that pejoratively, and also to look at other people and what they do in a legalistic manner.

We need to learn to accept one another, Romans 15.7, as God or Christ has accepted us. Now, if he accepts you, then you should be willing, let's say, to accept me if Christ also accepts me, and vice versa, you see how it works. Paul is telling the people at Rome there are quite a number of differences among them, but if Christ has accepted them as a disciple, each one of them as a disciple, they should learn to accept one another, and he would come and straighten out some of their difficulties. We have to learn that there were reasons for our judgmentalism.

The reasons were variable, but they often involved examining things in the wrong way, much like the Pharisees had examined Jesus with respect to the Sabbath, or examined Jesus with respect to whether he'd washed his hands and lower arms, before he ate food.

People got into a habit in the church of assuming that all these things in some way were requirements for salvation. That is, earned you salvation because you did it.

So let us now get something most fundamental in mind, and I want to be careful. I will repeat this if need be, so we understand it. I doubt that most of you, and frankly, in the material that is being presented, I have not found a kind of summary that I wish to give now that ought to enable you to bridge the gap between those who think they see everything clearly and those who think they see nothing clearly about it.

In the world in which we live, we speak of natural law. That's operative in nature. It's enforced in nature. It's in fact the result of God upholding the natural universe.

There are laws of chemistry, laws of physics, gravity being an illustration, laws governing biological life. We call these natural law.

Now, if you are studying in a class pertaining to chemistry, physics, biology, zoology, it doesn't matter, you have these laws written down sometimes in words and sometimes in words and mathematical formulae. In other words, the question that Einstein asked about natural law, he came to define $E = mc^2$. That is a formula, but now I want you to think about something very, very important. When Einstein discovered that formula, what power was in that formula that he wrote on the paper to enforce that formula in the natural world? Absolutely none. So much lead from a pencil or ink from a pen on a paper. All he wrote down was a description, a description. Natural law is not the same as what he wrote on that paper.

Is that clear? When you define gravity, how something falls and you have larger or smaller objects and they are essentially the same shape and you find that the large object and the small object falls at the same rate, you discover a natural law. I'm way behind the time because that was long ago discovered, you know, in the Middle Ages when people thought that something that was bigger fell faster and that wasn't the case. Now the point of importance here, natural law also may exist as descriptive law in a book. Am I making that clear? In a book, in a textbook. Now in the same way, a government may decide that certain things must be described and enforced and these are put in a law book. They differ from natural law in a sense that they are legislated and we describe them or I will describe them as prescriptive. They make requirements prescriptive. In a book, they make requirements. That's natural, that's not natural law. When you describe natural law in a book, it is descriptive. Do you hear me clearly? It is descriptive.

When you have human laws legislated or decrees of arbitrary states or kingships, you have a prescription and when you violate that which is prescribed for the citizen, when you violate what is prescribed in a kingdom, then there is a penalty that the state can enforce.

That is prescriptive law to prescribe, to write in advance what you must do.

The covenant made at Sinai was prescriptive. It was not descriptive.

Let's put that down. The covenant made at Sinai was prescriptive. It was written in a book, even that which was spoken and put on tables of stone also was written in a book or we wouldn't know what was on those tables. That was prescriptive. It was administered by human government.

The old covenant therefore was prescriptive administered by man, judges and priests, depending on the responsibilities. We don't go into the details here.

What was it that was written down? This was in fact what was prescriptive in the old covenant and in those documents which followed the old covenant or the covenant made at Sinai and in the repetition of that law as in Deuteronomy. Here was prescriptive material.

It could be enforced. It had people who could enforce it. It allowed for forgiveness and continuance in the community with certain rituals that is payments you made in giving up an animal or a bird or some other offering or it could exact a penalty, a fine but no present penalty, mind you, or the death penalty or simply exclusion or expulsion. But that which was prescribed in the covenant at Sinai, prescriptive law, was meant to convey, listen carefully, spiritual law. The Bible tells us that what God is concerned about secondarily is natural law so that we can continue to live in the world but primarily spiritual matters or the spirit.

Paul tells us the law is spiritual but we are human and by nature physical or carnal.

The law is spiritual. Now how would you ever write down for the children of Israel a spiritual law? The answer is you write it as we have it in the covenant.

You write it in descriptive terms but that are prescriptive in terms of force, requirement.

So they are written in descriptive terms but prescriptive in force and administration. They prescribe something. Now remember they were for a people who were not promised the Holy Spirit. They were for a people who lacked faith and they were for a people who didn't have spiritual insight in whom the love of God was not there in most of them except as God called them. So the covenant made at Sinai and the laws that are given under that and the later repetitions are prescriptive in nature. They could be enforced. They had legal authority. They were descriptive of the spiritual law in such a way that the human carnal mind at least could understand how to conduct society. Now Paul

tells us very clearly that the natural mind is not subject to the law of God and can't be. So in defining the spiritual law of God to which the natural mind is not subject by nature it was necessary to write it in such a way that there were certain requirements, specific requirements with penalties.

Now when the covenant has been fulfilled by one person only who ever fulfilled it perfectly and embodied that covenant he was the living representative of that covenant, Jesus the Christ. Now how come he could be? The answer is this was the mind of God. This was the eternal reason and wisdom. This is the word of God. The God who essentially defines for us spiritual law and by that means his own character could fulfill the law perfectly because that was natural. If I may say so with quotes around it that was natural to him. You pardon the use of the word natural it was spiritual to him is the reality but you get the thought. The thought is that his very divine nature reflected this and so when you see Jesus fulfilling the law the remarkable thing is he doesn't do it as others do. How he observed the Sabbath was different.

How he dealt with the woman taking an adultery was different.

You remember the cases? I don't have to go further that's enough.

What are we finding here? Something very very fundamental that the church never fully understood for more than 50 years until about now. The church was much closer to it in the early 1930s.

If you remember what Mr. Armstrong said about these things. All right now if the covenant between God and Israel is brought to a conclusion because a new one is being introduced by a messenger of that covenant who is announcing the kingdom of God who is Messiah the Savior King and Lord and Master teacher whatever words you wish who is the standard by which all things human ultimately must be measured that is God is the standard and God was in Jesus Christ because God came to dwell as Logos the mind of God in the flesh and if you wanted to know what God was like as spirit you could see it in the mind and in the action in the person of Jesus Christ when for Christians for the disciples of Christ now listen carefully here's the point when for the disciples the new covenant came into force I would use the word force that is authority it's like a will see when someone dies the will has force when Jesus died his will came into force that will was also a covenant and it gave all these promises to us provided we are willing to become his disciples to bury our past and to live a new life in build with the spirit of God the question then is how do we know about God's shall we call it spiritual law his spiritual instruction how do we know it well the answer is we can't see it it's spirit it's spirit and there are no gospels yet written there are no epistles written and David faced the same question when the prophets weren't even written much less many of the Psalms and some of the later writings the answer is you looked at God's instruction in the law and the comments of the prophets and later the example and comments of Jesus and of the disciples who were apostles and what do you look at and here is where the problem has resided in the church to this day among ministers and in the church as a whole such that there are people who think they fully understand what is being said and don't and things and people who fully understand that nothing is being said right or almost nothing and those who don't see it makes any difference anyway and then there the rest of you I trust that's all of you who recognize that what is being done today is not absolutely perfect because it's being done through humans but what was in the past was certainly not perfect it was done through humans even if Christ is doing it and we must examine ourselves now let's get to it when the covenant at Sinai came to an end for us for the Jews they still obligate themselves to it I'm not addressing that question for Christians for us the prescriptive law becomes simply descriptive now here is where I think the problem is resolved and until we understand that we cannot resolve the problem of different perspectives in the first place the law is descriptive but it was as written prescriptive because in a covenant it had force and it was administered but now if you want to know

what God is thinking you look at the law as descriptive it does not therefore now as it is written have the claim of authority over you requiring you to keep it as a part of that code it is simply descriptive what has authority over you is Jesus Christ who is the embodiment of the spiritual law he is the embodiment of the spiritual law that spiritual law is described for a carnal nation that was not subject to the law and they had to have the law in the form of a school master and that school master had to discipline them to teach them habits of obedience now some people assume that when the school master is gone you can throw out everything you learned from him do I have to explain that when you graduate do you conclude you now have nothing that you learned that was of any worth that should be clear but as it was written in the covenant at Sinai it was prescriptive for the people who were under the covenant now we look at it as descriptive simply descriptive but now you look at something that was designed listen carefully it was designed for individuals who did not have the spirit of God as a whole who had no faith and you have to put on shall I say spiritual glasses you have to have a spiritual mind now to see what that description represents in the world of God or the kingdom of God you have to see it through spiritual eyes that's why Jesus said you must see it in terms of judgment or judging wisely in mercy and faith and the love of God or as Micah said to seek to do what is right and not to have the attitude nobody can tell me what to do to love goodness and to walk humbly when you describe things find things they're described now furthermore we're told to live by every word of God that means what was before the covenant at Sinai what is in the covenant and what is afterward every word of God does not exclude what is described in the covenant but what is described no longer for Christians is a prescription it is a description and what you were asking God to do at conversion is to send his spirit so that when you look at the examples of the apostles the disciples of Jesus the prophets of Moses the patriarchs and all the evil people also whose example are there for examples are there for us you begin to see what God wants you to see in his word you begin to see indeed and in word a description of the spiritual laws of God now when you look as Jesus did in Matthew 5 and 6 and 7 and when Paul looks at it you begin to see things in entirely different ways you discover that you you are observing a period of time today with one another which is a time that the church and historically the church has set aside and treats in a way different because it is treated as a day in which we worship God and set aside the need of having to put our minds on the normal things that we do the rest of the time in terms of making a living this is a day that I have said and I will repeat this in conclusion this is a day and many other things all are voluntary now there's some people who say if you say God's way of life is voluntary then you can do as you please I suppose that's possible Moses said I set before you the way of life and the way of death and he tells you to choose and you've made a voluntary decision then that didn't give eternal life although for those who had spiritual insight they could find the way to eternal life and forgiveness as David did and the judges and you know read the book of Hebrews chapter 11 what is significant and it's very important for us to realize Mr. Armstrong realized that Sabbath any other thing you want to name I just picked that out of that sequence the holy days for that matter baptism is voluntary did you ever have a minister force you under the water I mean apart from the fact that you floated a little why no you voluntarily agreed now let me make it clear the spiritual law is not a prescription now it was written as a prescription for the covenant at Sinai it is a description and also the examples of the Bible so that we can ask God for his power to have that law in its intent and purpose and so we now must look at intent and purpose and when we see a widow who has no income you are not having to say she still must give exactly 10 percent you look at her needs you examine the question of covetousness you examine the question of the spirit of theft just like with marriage the question of lust that is you now look at the whole thing in an entirely different way instead of the letter of the law trying to find every little detail you use judgment mercy faith the love of God the love of your neighbor which is an extension and you seek to have the intent and purpose of that description that we call the covenant at Sinai abide in you so that you become fit as a perfect

judge in the kingdom of God you are to become judges kings priests because as kings and priests you judge and that means you're also judges and you have to learn now how to judge justly and judge wisely mercifully and the example that is given is like the difference between tithing as a prescription and abraham's voluntarily presenting a tenth because he volunteered it the lord didn't come there and order him to present to a priest a certain amount he voluntarily did what he did without any question pro or con as to how he knew it that's what he did we aren't told the rest of the story we don't have to presume it but we note that abraham who was called of god volunteered so now let me say when you understand in conclusion and study these things that will appear in february 21 Worldwide News mark seven Worldwide News and in each of the personals in the Worldwide News between now and the spring festive season you should have a much better understanding of the nature of this problem when you consider that we have moved from a code for a carnal mind that was prescriptive and now read it as if it is simply a description for a carnal minded nation church if you please a congregation and you now use the spiritual insights that come from the spirit of god that jesus had that for that matter david had when he describes his life in psalm 51 when he could describe it in psalm 119 verse 105 thy word is a lamp spiritual mindedness enables us to see the law and to distinguish the specific letter of the law statement and to know how to apply that law to the rich and to the poor to everybody in dealing with one another and why Mr. Tkach once is to have us recognize that in doing that we don't all apply it quite the same and we do not judge one another even if that is the case i will stop there because this subject isn't ended but this will give you the basic premise by which you can now look at scripture in a way without feeling conflict the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive law and that both forms were not written for the spiritual minded but for the carnal minded and now you look at it through spiritual insight through the eyes of the prophets the eyes of david the apostles and above all the eyes and the example of god in the flesh jesus christ of nazareth