

Prophecy and the Songs of Ascent

Now, this afternoon, we should like to have a wrap-around of the Festival of Tabernacles and of the last great day, and to have a kind of overview area, good to have one, and to point up some things that may not have come to our attention before.

Mr. Armstrong, typically in the decade past, would address the question from beginning to end at some point, so let me highlight certain things that characterize the understanding of the church.

It is not necessarily the understanding of every individual, and the church may not at all times be able to clarify certain spiritual things revealed in the Bible, but to explain what is there without clarification is inevitable.

I need to explain that, so you understand when the church makes a statement, you understand what the church is able officially to demonstrate and makes no claim to demonstrate, but it is left to your perception and your accomplishments in any respective field.

God is a term, the English language, to define in a sense the role of a creator.

We have Buddhist friends who do not believe in God because Buddhism is the only organized religion of the world that is officially, in Theravada Buddhism, an atheistic religion.

That might sound strange, but it is in fact a reality, for the Buddha did not announce God or Creator.

He announced a way, Jesus came and announced a way even beyond one dependent particularly in the case of the Buddha on meditation and on the ability of the individual to think out and to carefully analyze what he should do or what she should do.

Jesus expounded further than that and explained that he himself was the way and set the example and provides the power of the Spirit.

So let me illustrate a very interesting point.

I think it important for you to understand some things that the ordinary church member has not experienced.

I am not involved in numerous areas of the work.

I am involved through AICF with what is going on in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Syria and Nepal until the death of our dear friend General Rana earlier this year.

I don't know many of you have read that or should have read it in the Worldwide News.

But I'm not involved in Guiana, though I am interested in what's occurring there.

I am not involved in many other areas, certainly not the cultural matters in Pasadena of the foundation.

But I do keep very close contact with the Thai community.

It was there on each important occasion when the Thai community commemorated the death of the Thai monks in West Phoenix weeks ago now.

And by the way, we do have every reason to know who perpetrated the crime.

If you do not know about it, that is not in itself important for the moment.

On one occasion I was asked to speak to the Thai community at the Thai temple, also at the same time the consul for Thailand and Southern California addressed the Thai community.

The subject of his speech in English as I addressed the Thai community in English was the Seven Laws of Success as reflected by Herbert W. Armstrong.

And without notes, he explained to the Thai community what he had learned from Mr. Armstrong's Seven Laws of Success.

I doubt that if most of you were simply to define them, you would remember them in the order in which they were presented.

The last of the laws, he said, having explained the logic of the others, the last of the laws of success, he said, is very difficult to explain.

He said to a Buddhist, we follow a teacher.

To the Church of God and Mr. Armstrong, there is a God.

Now he didn't make the issue that one had to be opposed to the other.

He simply defined it.

Now he said, in defining this Seventh Law, I can best explain that Mr. Armstrong says, and hence the Church says, we should be in contact with God.

He said, perhaps I can explain it best to you, and for those who are not blind, but can see, I will show you what he did.

And for those who cannot see, whoever talks to you afterward can explain.

He lifted up his hand and he said, Mr. Armstrong's Seventh Law is based on the importance of the divine touch.

And he put his finger to the top of his head.

You see, he had never understood or heard before of the concept of a creator who sends his spirit and actually generates a new life in man.

And he had to define that as the divine touch.

I thought that was beautifully expressed and I've always appreciated being able to speak on behalf of the Church, Foundation and College, to the Thai community.

I'm not a person who enjoys public display.

You know, there's some people, we have a son-in-law who likes to be a master of ceremonies, which I don't like to do.

But there's one thing I will say.

I was once asked to speak to the Thai community as a fundraiser to help people who were refugees in Thailand or poor Thais coming to this country.

I was asked to address 750 all the leading monks in Thailand and I've never felt uncomfortable doing that because I think I understand them and they understand where we come from and our approach.

But this illustrates how important it is to see where we start from.

Some years ago, and I had a chance, five times, to be in an audience with his late grace, the 18th Supreme Patriarch, whose death was mentioned in the Plain Truth and whose cremation took place six months after his death.

His body remained in a golden cloth that is a kind of urn that is upright in which the body is seated and it was on display as a container or as a coffin.

And then everything was ultimately burned.

I was there at the cremation rites.

The king and the queen of Thailand presided.

Before his death, the 18th Supreme Patriarch, Aryawang Sagarthayana, which name you do not have to write, will introduce him to you in the second resurrection.

A remarkable man.

He called the Thai community business leaders together in Southern California at his private residence where he was staying, owned by Wat Thai, or Thai temple.

And he said, I advise you to pay attention to what Herbert W. Armstrong is saying on the World Tomorrow program.

For he is bringing to the attention of the Christian world what is as important to the Christian world in the West as Gautama, the Buddha, when he addressed in Northern India on the Nepalese border a message to the Hindus of the 5th century BC.

Actually, it was the 6th century, the 500s, I want to correct that, although he lived into the 5th century or 400s.

It is remarkable because when the funeral occurred in January 1986 of Mr. Tkach's predecessor, many of you saw that there were monks also there in attendance.

And every year since 87, 88, 89, 90, and this year 91, the Thai community leading monks have asked if they may have a commemorative ceremony, either at the graveside or this time because of a shower, we had it in the temple.

And they commemorate the departure out of this life of Herbert W. Armstrong.

I know of no other group, Christian or otherwise, that has had this kind of affinity for the leadership in this work.

Mr. Tkach appeared to the King, His Majesty Bhumibol Adyadej, the Dhulia Day of Thailand.

The King explained to Mr. Tkach after discussing with him matters and Mr. Tkach's assistance.

He said he believed that Mr. Armstrong had left the work that he had been doing in safe hands and was happy to see that the work should continue.

We start out with a creator because from the point of view of our experience with the knowledge in the sciences, though we cannot prove it positively, we can demonstrate the opposite.

There is clearly no way to account for the universe without a creator.

We do not know the scientific means because it lies beyond the area of the sciences as to how God created the universe.

But I draw your attention to what Paul clearly said.

Paul never said nor has the Church of God ever taught officially that God created the world out of nothing, which is the basic teaching of Christianity, but not that of Paul, who in my judgment is the writer of the book of Hebrews.

The scripture in Hebrews says that God created, and we know this by faith, that which is seen but not from things that are seen.

Paul did not define it as some magician's snap of the hand.

He defined it wisely that God did not create the visible universe out of things that were seen.

But there are many, many aspects of the world and of the world of spirit that are not seen.

It was by God's power that the universe was created, and it does not exist on its own.

The idea of the deus of the early and late 18th century, who founded the United States as a nation and as a constitution, that when God wound up the universe, he wound up his business was all wrong.

When God essentially wound up the universe, that was only the beginning, and he's had to sustain it since.

For Paul tells us that Jesus Christ created the universe as God decided, and the two of them brought it into being, Christ being the active agent who spoke, the Holy Spirit, the power of God that brought it about, and that Jesus Christ sustains the universe, that is his job, among other functions, which responsibility clearly was decided by the Father and managed by the Father when Jesus came to be mortal flesh, God in the flesh.

So the church starts out with a clear perception of who runs things.

I had the chance in one of the audiences to explain to the Supreme Patriarch what we believe, and he had never heard before, and we are all seated, he's on a dais, seated with his legs folded, and we are all in a rug before him, and even in the Thai temple, unless we're special guests of honor, everybody simply sits on the floor.

This would be alright, except this might not be so comfortable.

But there's society they like to be on the floor.

That's a tradition.

I explained to the Supreme Patriarch that we believe in a Creator God who created the laws that govern the universe, and that define, you want to rush over all this, and that define human conduct.

And so the way to understand what those laws are is to see them as the way of giving and concern for others and not getting.

He was simply listening, and when I finished the basic concept, as you know, how the churches explained it, give and get, we might use other words later, but those are very appropriate and simple.

He suddenly lightened up and interrupted me, because that's really all he needed to know that I got the big picture.

The big picture was not whether there was a Creator, and whether the Creator set laws in motion, but whether we had discovered those laws.

And he said, that's right, this was all in translation, mind you, but he became animated.

He was already then around 85.

He died in his 90s, early 90s.

He said, that's right, when a people or a nation has enough for itself, it should concern itself also with the needs of its lesser blessed neighbors and other people.

So he got the big picture, and he was very pleased to know that we did.

I did not choose to go further and discuss the role of salvation, but in Thailand, the general premise, of course, is that when you become 60 years of age, you are wise enough to be listened to.

Mr. Ross Flynn has a few years to go.

In the Church of God, we generally lower the age a little.

Of course, there are monks who always teach, but that means that not until you have really reached the age of 60, he asked me how old I was, then I was 58.

It was not the same audience, it was a bit later, and he said, I still have work to do.

I am now past 60, following on the heels of my wife, who reached that slightly earlier, though she looks very young yet to me, and I think to her children.

But this was a very significant thing to realize that there was a leader in the Church who was old enough to be listened to to kings, and one today who essentially is the same age as His Majesty the King of Thailand.

We have young men in that country, and I speak there because I know more about that than, let's say, Jordan.

I have never been to see our program in Jordan for teaching the handicapped, but I regularly have kept up and essentially am responsible on behalf of the foundation under Mr. Locke's general supervision, that is, it's his job and it's my duty to fill in whatever I can.

But the young men who are responsible in Thailand include among their responsibilities the teaching of English to Her Majesty's personal guard.

And they go from palace to palace, in three or four of the major regions of the country.

The Chitla De Palace in Bangkok, where we also are involved heavily, and of course the Paping Palace in Chiang Mai, the northern capital where the festival is held, and where the brethren have completed the festival now.

Remember in the history of Thailand has anything been done, such as has been accorded, each of the young men far below sixty in their twenties, actually, as was accorded to ours.

Each one has the permission of their majesties to come to the palace without having to apply for permission.

That is a very great honor for a foreigner.

The word farang is the Thai word for a foreigner, it comes from the word farang, which is the word they applied to the Farangs of Europe when the Farangs from Europe first traded with that region of the world.

That's their way of pronouncing the word Frank.

The German and French Franks in the days of Charlemagne were the first Europeans, so it really means that all whites are considered Franks.

The word today, of course, in other words, they pronounce it Frank, or farang as it is today.

I want to explain a little bit of the importance of our role now in setting the stage for the world tomorrow.

At the cremation rites of the Supreme Patriarch, the most beautiful religious rites, but without all sorts of needless religious ceremony, I've never seen anything more beautiful or ever anticipate something more remarkable.

The British taught the Thais, whatever the Thais didn't know, and the Thais disciplined themselves in a way that I don't think any country outside of Britain can match the pageant tree that occurs on an occasion like this in Thailand.

There were three groups of people.

We have one, two, three sections you see in the audience in front of me.

Now we came rather early.

We later learned that the monks had asked us, that means the leader of our group, Mr.

Leon Sexton, a second person.

I was included in our dear friend General Rana, who by chance was there at the same time.

We could have sat with the monks, but those who knew us asked us to sit, and I will explain it without defining which ones here, asked us to sit at the area furthest removed from the ceremony, which was quite all right, and there's no reason to want to be right in front.

We were asked to be furthest removed, but that is where their majesties came, and then they crossed over and presided on the other side.

Gradually we noted that the younger Thai dignitaries responsible in government sat in front, facing immediately the area of the cremation, and the marvelous, the most exquisite floral displays that you would ever see, quite unlike our bouquets here, because the best way to describe it is that they use flowers in terms of, you know, what a lamp is like with a lampshade.

There was a smaller, the larger, and the larger lampshades, all made of flowers with pendants, and all of this was done in flowers and in leaves with orchids and other tropical plants, and then the area where the cremation occurred.

Well, that was understandable.

We certainly wouldn't want to sit there, but then I noticed something very peculiar.

In the middle row came all the people dressed like ambassadors, foreigners of great dignity and dignitaries of all sorts.

The center row was essentially reserved for the pharaoh, and I thought how strange that we weren't placed there where logically you would have thought we belonged.

We had been placed in this other row, and only then did we know that in that other row where we were placed were the seniors of the Thai community or the government elders, the kunyings.

We were treated as if we were elders in the Thai community along with Thais.

We were not treated as if we were foreigners.

There were Americans who looked and wondered why we were over there, and I suppose British and French and Germans and all the dignitaries, and there were dignitaries of Asia, dignitaries of Africa.

And here was this motley group of four, one young man, one not quite so young and one still not quite so young, and General Rana dressed in his Naples hat, a motley group sitting together among all the Thai elders or those who had been responsible in government.

I thought what a remarkable statement to have made.

That I think tells you of the impact of the work that Mr. Tkach is now the steward of in 1991 and years to come.

This is important in our understanding of why we must do some of the things we do that we cannot directly do through the college, but we have students who are graduates or near graduates from the college, but it is illogical just as a college function alone.

And it is illogical as a church function.

It's a foundation function.

General Rana was introduced to Mr. Armstrong or vice versa, I should say, if I were over there.

And General Rana wanted to know about what was going on in Thailand and this unusual man who was about 90.

Not everybody at 90 is flying around the world or jetting part of the jet set, but not part of the jet set of this world.

And so he sent a Hindu priest who visited Ambassador College.

All of this you can find in terms of parallels that you have already heard in sermons, but these are real experiences.

The Hindu priest visited the college, came to be acquainted with us, and we don't know.

I don't know who he was, but he was sent there.

And we have visitors from these countries, Sri Lankan community visitors, Thai visitors, Nepalese visitors, and of course Jordanian, Syrians.

I usually am responsible when we have Syrian visitors.

Later on, General Rana said what he had done.

He said to our man responsible, he said, you know, I want to tell you something.

I didn't know what you stood for, though I heard what you said.

And we sent a priest, and he communicated to us his evaluation of the Church of God.

His conclusion was that this church is a potential danger to Nepal.

And for one reason, unlike any other Christian group that he had met.

I don't know how many of you can guess what the reason was.

Not the holy days, because, or you may not know, but the holiday, the weekly holiday that people have off in Nepal is Saturday, not Sunday or Friday.

The only country outside of Israel that doesn't know it's observing the Sabbath.

But General Rana thanked the priest for having explained why we were dangerous.

He said, therefore, our conclusion is that they should be invited to our country.

They were dangerous, he said.

We were dangerous, because the priest noted that we did what we said.

And any people that does what it preaches is a potential threat as distinct from those countries, peoples, religions, or whatever, who do not what they say.

I thought, how remarkable.

And we have had a remarkable relationship there, and it illustrates.

We did not go in there to try to, let's say, propagandize.

We came there to let the people see what we stand for.

And the first thing they learn, you see, about us is that we stand for fundamental principles.

So many like them, theologically, we don't argue those points yet.

We simply explain what we practice.

And that's why in the end the nations are going to do what they do.

But our story has been highlighted by modern things, even though I left God as a creator back there trying to get his story in.

God did turn the universe over to the one whom we know as Jesus, the Christ, in terms of management.

And there came a time that spirits or angels under a light-bringing leader was put in charge of the earth and a whole series of life forms, where over a vast period of time, as reflected now in the science of geology, successively created God as a creator.

And he reveals how he creates.

He basically creates things that reproduce after themselves.

That shows that the doctrine of evolution is not the fundamental explanation.

Evolution is absolutely correct in what evolution makes a claim of when they listen to their own words.

Darwin wrote a book, The Origin of Species.

Darwin never wrote a book, The Origin of Something Else.

Darwin never explained to the audience how you can go from species to those areas of life near or far removed that are not of this not of similar species.

You see, there are many species of chickens and tomatoes and wrens, or whatever kind of creatures you might have in mind.

They are significantly breeding increments within those larger groups of biological life that you can easily differentiate between which there are gaps, G-A-P-S, that evolutionists simply don't want to face.

Now they laugh at us as being the God of gaps.

That's how they term it.

What they're really doing is hiding from the God of gaps because God created life forms of various sorts beyond the area of species.

Evolution is simply the statement that if God made a male and a female goat as he also made the pigeon and made Adam and Eve, we will have numerous varieties and sometimes species.

Now in the human family we are all varieties because we don't have separate breeding increments, but you will have animals and birds and plants that can even vary as far as a separate species but if you were to look at them, all sparrow species still look like sparrows, but sparrows are separated from other birds clearly and distinctively.

So we have a definition by God sufficient to indicate that evolution can go at the level that science has already found the origin of species, but not the origin of the word kinds as used in Genesis which deal with the various forms of life separated by gaps from other forms.

It's best illustrated by the fact that horse and donkey may interbreed, but you can never go beyond that general family of the zebra, the horse, the donkey.

Evolution is simply separate from the cat family or the dog family.

The sheep and the goat may on rare occasions interbreed, but the sheep and the goat in terms of any separate species represent an extreme just like the donkey and the horse, and beyond that there simply is no connection with any other kind of life.

So God created a whole series of life forms over immense periods of time over which angels were put in charge and were to manage.

You know in general the rest of the story that the management failed because they were governed by a spirit who had in mind an attitude of what we call competition.

Evolution indeed, when it's all said and done, is probably for our modern world the best single word to describe the devil's way of doing things, the one who was the original light bringer, for when all the sons of God or angelic world shouted for joy at the laying of the foundation of the earth, that's not the completion.

This was a remarkable inheritance that was beginning to occur.

The devil thought, sorry, the light bringer thought to himself, well why should I administer this just God's way? How do I know that his claim that his way is right is always right? Now the light bringer knew that it was the right way and he already had been told the consequences of another way and they had an unaccountable period of time before the making of the universe where they learned to live and to practice the things of the Creator to be and the Creator of their own kind and they learned to practice it where the government of God is headquartered in what we call heaven, not the natural visible heavens but the heaven of God's throne, the third heaven.

In a realm of spirit, but then God created the natural realm and an unusual planet to be was given as their initial inheritance.

They ultimately blew it because they decided that there were other ways to do it, that competition was the right way.

You see, I had a demon try to explain this once.

You do meet them from time to time.

They're immortal bodies called humans.

But they tell you, the demon came and explained to me, he said, I really like what Herbert Armstrong is saying on television.

He's absolutely right.

The way things started is what he is telling you.

In fact, he said I was there, I know.

I didn't see any reason to disagree with him.

He assured me he was much older than I was and I again concurred.

He said, but what is not understood by our church is that the proper way is the way of competition because competition determines who can do something best.

But I said that is assuming that when God gives a job or a responsibility to someone that God doesn't know what he's doing.

But he said the competition will determine.

That's the way to determine who is best for the job.

Of course, what he overlooked is that if you already know how to do the job, would God necessarily pick you? He wants somebody to grow into this job and therefore he picks somebody that isn't equal to your skills.

You know, in this work, there are probably jobs that I could do better.

I know I could mow a lawn better than I edit.

And I'm still learning.

There are articles that I edit.

There are articles that I edit more severely.

There are articles that I return and rework.

And then there are others that receive a dignified burial.

Now I'm learning and so are those who write.

But you see, he overlooked the fact that God may have his reasons.

And so that world of evil spirits erred very greatly because they thought to themselves the day knew best.

When in fact they were therefore rejecting the Creator's own prerogative and in fact denying the reality that as the Creator he ought to have no in best for he made all of them.

There came a time approximately 4,000 years ago when the human family began.

Anything essentially found in archaeology and geology prior to that time would be before Adam.

That's some, if I said 4,000, I mean 4,000 BC or about 6,000 years ago.

The church has no official statement with respect to where in BC creation week occurs.

Mr. Armstrong made no pretense of fully understanding, although he outlined in a book, I think you may remember, where he defined the time from Adam to Noah and Noah to Abraham and from there on anybody could have gone on and noted from Abraham to the Exodus from year 99 to the Exodus was 430 years and in 1 Kings 6 1 from the days of the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon was the 480th year.

And then if you want to use the Macmillan Bible Atlas you have the reign of Solomon correctly given and you would know basically where you are but we won't trouble you with that now.

The information is accessible but the church makes no official statement as to when that catastrophic event described elsewhere in the Bible and reflected in Genesis 1 1 and 2 occurred.

We simply generally define it, doesn't mean that everybody has to agree with it or that necessarily everybody does agree with it in the church but that there are 6,000 years allotted to the devil to do his work in influencing the human family because the human family sold itself to the devil instead of obeying God in the Garden of Eden.

And so we are approaching the close of 6,000 years relatively early in the next millennium or the next century.

Does not fall in this millennium or this century which is near a conclusion.

Then there came a time when human beings having multiplied also multiplied crimes, wicked attitudes and violence filled the earth and wars and there came a flood.

Mr. Armstrong never tried to define when the flood occurred, he simply defined it as in the days of Noah.

We can say archaeologically it was in the latter part of the 24th century before the present era, not that everybody in the church would agree or that we could ever get the entirety of the ministry to agree or certainly lay people because the kind of evidence involved in this involves archaeology, linguistics and understanding of astronomy.

But there is enough information that we have so that there need be no doubt that there was a time about 4,000 BC, I say about purposefully because that's not the correct year, and there was a time in the middle of the last quarter of the 24th century BC when there were catastrophic events sufficient to leave evidence in the field of archaeology, one that laid the foundation for human beings, for certainly writing occurred after 4,000 BC and civilization did not begin until around 3500 BC and man is the inventor of civilization.

Civilization is not tens of thousands of years old, cultures may have existed before Adam, but civilization did not in its proper definition.

The ability to write, to utilize animals for transportation as we have the horse, the utilization of the wheel for motivation, all these things suddenly sprang up in the first 500 years after 4,000 BC.

And from then on man has proceeded once through the catastrophe at the flood and then he spread around the world once more and now we are at a very serious place in human experience.

But long before we arrive at our time, God called a human being out of southern Iraq or the Caldees, the city, and proposed that he should become heir not only of a particular land but heir of the world and ultimately heir of all things.

It's given step by step as those who spoke in the Bible realized what God had in mind.

From his family there came a group of people known as Israelites, the children of Israel, the Jacob, the man who wrestled with God, the brother of Arabs.

Though brotherly love is tragically lacking in that part of the world, if you are in the realm of politics, if you're not in the realm of politics there is no problem.

That family was in Egypt in the days of the 18th dynasty.

The church would define the exodus distinctly and already has at an unofficial level at 1443 BC and the crossing of the Jordan in 1403.

We may or may not choose to go any further.

We certainly would not over dramatize those dates because there can be controversy.

But I am prepared to defend them quite clearly.

In 1403 they crossed the Jordan River and in that year the Passover occurred on a Saturday, the seventh day of the week.

We know this because on the morrow after the Passover they ate of the new bread of the land, not as the King James version has, the old stock.

That was an error of translation, words put in that should have been in italics that don't even exist in Hebrew.

Now if you have the children of Israel eating after the day on which the Passover lamb is sacrificed, that would imply that the wave sheaf must have occurred at the end of the Sabbath and so on the first day of the week, the first holy day, they had the responsibility not to begin a major harvest, but to choose enough of the fresh food of the land and celebrate and prepare the meal that day from the new stock after the wave sheaf was offered.

You look at Leviticus 23 and the fourth chapter and so forth in the book of Joshua and you will see the story clearly.

So we know where we are in time and then of course the children of Israel wandered spiritually until we come to the days of Solomon and God raised up a throne of David.

I'm summarizing it hurriedly, but in the meantime the children of Israel, while they were beginning that wandering, celebrated not only the Passover but the days of unleavened bread and the Passover pictured the shedding of blood that someone would have to pay the penalty of sin, that God does not forgive sin unless somebody pays the price.

And here Buddhism fails, Judaism fails and Islam fails and any other religion fails.

They all fail to recognize that all the good you do cannot compensate for one sin.

God never compromises for sin and the wages of sin is death and somebody has to die.

Now that is a doctrine that not everybody even in the church has had clearly in mind.

We say well God is merciful, he can forgive, that's correct.

He forgives no one until there is indeed the knowledge that someone could die instead of those who sin.

And only those are forgiven who come to accept that that person actually paid the penalty to deliver them.

So God didn't begin annual holy days in the days of Enoch or Noah.

He began it not in the days of Abraham but Moses because that's when he began the church.

The church is referred to first in Exodus 12 and the development of the calendar is given before any other thing because on that calendar would be the holy days.

And those days were given to define and be a regular memorial year after year of the plan of God.

The first aspect of the plan is to recognize that there could be no deliverance from Egypt, a type of sin, a country full of it today yet, unless there would be the death which was symbolized by the death of goats and sheep, the death of someone whose death would pay for all the sins of all human beings.

That person therefore had to be a human being but had to be more than a human being, someone who was greater as a person, one who could be the head of the whole human family which would have to be the creator.

And God knowing this could look forward to having a person of the God kingdom.

And so God could forgive Abel, he could forgive Noah, he could forgive Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, their wives, their children because he knew that there would be one of the divine kingdom who would pay the price and be without sin.

So he knew that it would work.

He wasn't in doubt, it wasn't a question that Christ might fail and we'd have to invent another explanation of how God would have to resolve the problem.

God in the flesh had no more reason ever to be tempted by sin and the scripture says you can't tempt God.

God can be tested but he can't be tempted.

The devil may try.

It isn't that Christ wanted the sin and couldn't, it is that he never wanted the sin and wouldn't and he never wanted to because he had never before and he never would allow it in himself.

That should be clear and we should have an absolute understanding.

He had total freedom of the will but he always willed to do what is right and could see through all the blandishments of sin immediately.

Then there was the giving of the law at Pentecost at the foot of Sinai.

It was given from above, the people of Israel were at the foot, a remarkable area.

I have mentioned some few may remember.

There is a rock south of Sinai from which water sprang.

That's the rock that when the children of Israel were at Rephidim Moses left Rephidim came to Sinai, struck the rock, brought water to the children of Israel.

Most tourists never see it because they come up to the south and go down the northeast or vice versa or whatever they do but they don't go up or down on the east or the northeast but they never go down on the south side of the mountain.

I had an opportunity with one of our other members at the time to accompany the first governor general of Sinai who was the governor general in 1956.

There at the foot of Sinai was a rock that clearly in timing memorial had fallen from Mount Sinai and it had 12 areas in which there were holes that clearly showed watermarks from inside, from the top all along one side of the rock and then the stream carried the water north to Rephidim and into the western area, the Gulf of Suez.

It wasn't the question of just rain dropping, this is the only rock in the area.

It was a rock there naturally and it supernaturally produced water.

The evidence is there of the rock that Moses struck, he also struck rocks later.

That one remained there, that was not the one that went with the children of Israel.

The children of Israel of course were told of other festivals, trumpets that reflect the day of the Lord, the time when God intervenes and an example of the blowing of trumpets is given in the Psalms.

It says that just as Joseph gave a command for the blowing of trumpets in the land of Egypt when it was to be announced that there were seven years of prosperity and seven years of famine so the children of Israel on the dark moon, unlike the middle of the month, should blow the trumpet because just as the children of Israel needed warning of a catastrophe and the children of Mitsrium and the land of Egypt needed a warning, so also the world will come face to face with the time when it needs a warning.

As God intervened there to save Egypt and the world from a terrible famine, so also He's going to intervene and save the world from catastrophe.

Now Jesus Christ is pictured as coming after the day of the Lord has begun.

He comes at the seventh trump and the day of the Lord is pictured as the blowing of trumpets.

There are seven trumpets.

We presume and generally it's been commented on by the ministry that the day of the Lord begins with the blowing of the trumpets and the seventh trump essentially reflects the clothes of that remarkable year in prophecy at the end of which Jesus Christ comes.

That's the general picture one has.

The festival of trumpets in a sense marks the beginning of the day of the Lord.

It marks also the coming of Messiah.

Of course we don't know the nature where the earth reeling to and fro just how long each month is going to be at that time, but the church has commented on, and I won't go any further than that, that the coming of Christ as well as the beginning of the day of the Lord is reflected in that festival.

It's a festival one day long and a day is like a year, so it is probable that in the crisis at the close of three and a half years referred to in the book of Daniel, two and a half represent the tribulation and the heavenly signs bringing an end to tribulation of those days in the crisis at the close, and then God intervenes with special warnings just as Joseph intervened in Egypt to announce the catastrophe to come.

The children of Israel were introduced to the day of Atonement, the tenth day of the month, a day that would seem to have been based on the fact that the children of Israel were given on this day a kind of reverse of what originally occurred in the Garden of Eden.

See in the Garden of Eden, God made Adam and Eve, the Jewish tradition, one of them, there are two kinds, one tradition involves the introduction of the calendar on a Friday, another tradition tells us that the first Sabbath was the beginning of the seventh month, but Adam and Eve in other words were given about a week's honeymoon, and on the eighth day of that month, if the Sabbath were the first day of the seventh month as we know it or the original first month, God gave them the second spiritual sermon, and then on the ninth day Lucifer called Satan came and the guys of a serpent on the day that he recognizes is very, very useful called Sunday. Most religions have adopted Sunday, Islam has not and Judaism has not, but most of the religions around the world have, certainly Christianity has, and after that day it was over and that Adam sinned willfully and Eve, sorry willingly, let me please correct that, Adam sinned willingly, he didn't sin willfully, he sinned willingly, he listened to his wife's first fundamental mistake, he should have protected her, and she was deceived, that was her first fundamental mistake, taking for granted being generous with a liar, as many women are who discover only too late what their husbands are like, just so you know I am fair to each. Some people take it more seriously than others. Anyway, we should be very careful always to believe God and not the blandishments of others, and so in the cool of the day after the ninth day was over, on the tenth day of the month, let's say, I'm just giving you a picture of a nice honeymoon for a whole week, God came to the garden and asked, where is Adam? You know he called out for the name of Adam and then he discovered what had happened, of course he knew it before but now Adam had to admit to it, and their attitude was altogether different than it was before, so God made coats of skin and then expelled them from the garden, and that expulsion I can picture as in a sense

after that Sunday, after they had had a whole week that we call a honeymoon, which is advisable for any couple to get acquainted with each other. They were like the Jewish couple that really met each other essentially on their wedding day, they'd never seen each other before. In America we do it differently, we go to bed before and then get married, but in Jewish tradition it is different, and in the Bible tradition it is different, so they had a honeymoon, listened to God the second Sabbath that Sunday, which was then the ninth day, the tragedy occurred, and on the tenth day they were cut off from God, and it also was on the tenth day of the month that ultimately they're going to be restored in a festival that is called atonement.

Now this is an explanation that I present, the church has no official comment on it, on the other hand I don't know of anyone who could require us to have any other explanation, and it's quite clear that God chose the tenth day of the month for reconciliation. Why should it not have been the day in which man was first cut off from God? Formally when God held him responsible for what had happened, and also held Satan responsible. So on the same tenth day of the month and the future at the end of 6,000 years the devil himself is going to be put away.

Now the fact that one is on the tenth day of the month and the other on the first should give us some perspective. You see God is going to intervene on behalf of the children of Israel, he's going to intervene on their behalf with the day of the Lord, he's going to come in connection with the Feast of Trumpets, and if we take a day as a year it's like saying he's going to come essentially a year after the day of the Lord has begun. Now when he comes is up to the Father to decide, the church has made an association that the blowing of the trumpets is in connection with that year that God intervenes in world affairs, just like a day is typified, is a type of a year as explained in Ezekiel.

But that's the first day, the close of the first day. Then there's day two and three and four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Mr. Armstrong used to wonder are these just simply nine days apart, or are we dealing with something that may be like nine years apart? He used to ask the question, the church made no official statement, but he often felt to try to explain day one and ten and fifteen, as if they all happened in approximately two weeks time, made no sense in a world that was catastrophically coming apart. It makes much better sense when you realize, point one, that God takes a whole year in a sense to intervene in world affairs with the blowing of seven trumpets. Then Christ, when he is asked to intervene on behalf of the children of Israel, pleading for them, and ultimately delivering them, completes his ministry in what cannot be less than three and a half natural years. The book of Daniel says that there's going to be a time in which Messiah is cut off in the midst of a week. And three and a half years out of the seven still have to be, excuse me, assigned to the future. It's going to be three and a half years.

Now is the devil put away immediately or is God delivering the children of Israel and working out a covenant and establishing slowly but surely his government among them? And then we learn from Ezekiel 38 and 39 that when the government of God is established, the powers of Eurasia centered in the Soviet Union, what we now call the Soviet Union, but not necessarily every part of the Western Soviet Union, at least the center of power is associated with people in Central Asia, East Asia throughout Siberia and centered in Moscow and the Russian Republic. There's no direct statement at that time of Medes or Elamites who live in the Slavic South and West of Great Russia. So whatever the form and shape, the Russian Republic and Central Asia is going to be the heart and core of some attempt to attack the children of Israel when the leaders of that region discovered that this supernatural or space being has overlooked the importance of armaments. I mean this character who comes on a white horse with all sorts of angels has done nothing to protect the children of Israel from an enemy. He has completely overlooked the importance of having anti-aircraft guns, of multiplying rifles and tanks and airplanes. He has clearly been a fool.

So why not do something about it? They haven't solved the problem with communism and are not really going to solve the rest of the problem. Almost everything that that area of the world does leads to some kind of catastrophe internally. Their political structure leads to a kind of implosion economically and they're going to be cubiting what the children of Israel have brought out of captivity. Now just when in this sequence this occurs, I would only tell you that you all should know that beginning with Psalm 120 through 134 were Psalms that were essentially characteristic of each of the 15 days, the beginning 15 days of what we now call the seventh month or tisry. And the story of Psalm 120 is the story that describes the events of the festival of trumpets. The tenth of these Psalms, 129, is a story focusing on atonement.

The 14th is a story of the people gathering together for the feast at Tabernacles.

The 14th day that's Psalm 133 and Psalm 134 is the story of the beginning of the festival of Tabernacles in an evening service. A remarkable set of Psalms that you should read. And interestingly the fifth of these or Psalm 124 tells us of the fact that God delivers the children of Israel.

He delivers the children of Israel from a power that could have absolutely swallowed them up.

Now it's very possible that if you look at the story that indeed is when God will launch an attack and God will deliver them. Because you note then Psalm 125, 26, the one already referred to this afternoon, 127, 128, shows that God is seen as the strength of his people. More and more return to Zion. Prosperity comes from the Lord, 127. Prosperity physically, blessings of children, 128. Things are working out very well and suddenly with 129 you have the story of the day of atonement.

And so you have a feeling that it is possible. Let's leave it at that. It is possible that it's going to take Jesus Christ, as we know, three and a half years to deal with the children of Israel as he would seem to begin when he intervenes on their behalf in the day of the Lord.

Then Gog and Magog are punished and then Israel begins to prosper and is an example to the nations.

And then comes the putting away formally of Satan. And now deception is no longer occurring even though deceived minds are on earth. Human beings have been deceived as a whole. But there's no one going around to deceive and it's going to take some time. The next days have Psalms, this is Psalm 130 through 133, of waiting for the redemption of the Lord, trusting and hoping in the Lord. God dwelling eternally in Zion, his priests, that is those who are in the church, kings and priests clothed in righteousness or defined. And then the world coming to a state of unity.

And then we are introduced to the 15th of these Psalms, beginning with 134, praising the Lord in his house at night, blessing the Lord, all you servants who stand in the house of the Lord.

That is, that's a reflection of the world now coming to celebrate salvation and it begins with the Feast of Tabernacles. It's very possible that after Satan has put away, it's still going to take some years before the people clearly see through the distinction between being morally upright as a first step, as I earlier mentioned, and coming to understand the plan of salvation. For remarkably, the Jews are going to discover that Jesus is the Messiah, the Islamic people are going to discover that Christ is a Messiah, the Christian world is going to discover that the one whom they thought was Christ was not, and he turns out to be a Jew.

And the Buddhists are going to discover there is a God, there are laws, and there is no such thing as being born again and again and again and again. And it's going to take some time. And so the implication from all of this is significantly clear that God would appear to intervene by Jesus Christ

and to set in motion a series of events including that which brings Christ's ministry to completion where the Jews accept as the government over them and all Israel, the 12 apostles, the Messiah whom they originally objected to, and all the rest of the Israelites accepting as Christ's bride and wife and those who serve in his government, the people who belong to, oh yeah, that cult called the World Wide Church of God.

I mean, how could they ever have known? You know, that is a puzzle. How is it that you know what it takes to get there? And the rest of the world did not. Or how is it that among those who are there, Muhammad is not, and Buddha is not, and all the founders of the great religion are not, and certainly the rabbis in Jesus' day who weren't his disciples are not.

Then at the end of 6,000 years you say the devil having been put away, now the world begins to understand. They say, let us go up in the meantime, but they haven't yet come to the place where you can say the festival of tabernacles is being fulfilled as the beginning of a harvest. It's going to take perhaps up to 14 years from the day of the Lord. That's how long it is, between 1 and 15 is 14, for those of you who do math.

That long before deception gets out of their minds, if it's going to take the children of Israel who have the Bible, the Jews who have the Old Testament, three and a half years to get straightened out, what do you think is going to, it's going to take to get China and India and Southeast Asia and Africa and all of Latin America where the ancient religions abide side by side with the form of Christianity. I think we have to realize indeed that Christ is going to intervene in world affairs significantly before 6,000 years is up as the church generally is understood. And that is still after the devil has been deposed and we reign with Christ a thousand years, it's still going to take a little while. Some few years, let's say five years is the difference between 10 and 15, you can teach these things as mathematical matters to your children and increase our general mathematics understanding in the tests in America. It's remarkable, isn't it, what is not remembered by young people today or never taught. But there is an interesting picture here that the real beginning of the harvest is not just when the devil is put away. You have to uneducate a lot more difficult to unlearn than to learn and finally salvation is going to come to the whole human family and we have the fulfillment of the festival of tabernacles. After a thousand years when the devil has been bound and his angels they are released and at the close of the thousand years when we live and reign with Christ, 8,900 dead are still dead, the devil goes out to deceive young and old at the end of the thousand years. There will be some who will not submit to this deception. They will be like the camp of the saints. You are saints today so that could not exclude mortals who continue to obey God. You see God doesn't stop his government at the end of a thousand years it goes on. It's ruling over the saints but at the end of the thousand years the devil begins to deceive those who have said, huh, that was a thousand years ago. All that you talk about in the world it was, that's a thousand years ago. It's like our trying to explain what it was like in 991 and trying to explain that we had a problem in AD 991. How many of you know what happened in 991? I don't either. I'd have to look at an encyclopedia. I know what happened before and after sometimes but the longer you go away from the beginning of the millennium the serious problems that just before it began seem to vanish and people can easily be caught off guard and they are. The devil is loose for a little season. That little season may well be essentially a five year period. I only suggest it because the difference between the thousand years when the devil is deposed which begins with the tenth day of the month and the festival of tabernacles which begins in the fifteenth and if you assign let's say a thousand years each you have a potential.

That's all we know but a possibility that it will be a few years after the thousand years when the devil deceives those people who can be deceived because they simply did not let the spirit of God grow

and develop in them or were young and caught off guard. You know they could be teenagers there is anybody who's alive from one year old to a hundred or more.

Then fire comes down and devours them and then comes the resurrection the second resurrection.

It actually it's the first part of the resurrection to judgment. There are two kinds of resurrection the resurrection to life and the resurrection to judgment. The resurrection to judgment is in two parts which we call commonly the second and third resurrection. I think it is good to look at that from that point of view. Now we don't know of those who were consumed by fire I would suspect that some of them will come up in the second half of the resurrection to judgment. It's a resurrection to fleshly life. The resurrection to life is a resurrection to spirit life. He who has part in the first resurrection is composed of spirit. He who has part in the resurrection to judgment is composed of flesh and it may include sometimes young people who simply were caught off guard and really didn't pay attention. So I perceive of those who were consumed by fire will be an awful lesson some of which will come up in the second resurrection the resurrection to judgment and some who willfully did what they shouldn't have done and must wait yet for a hundred years before they come up to their part in the judgment the resurrection to judgment called the third resurrection in our terminology. Then there is a period defined in Isaiah 65 it's like the millennium in its characteristics the government of god goes on but they're going to be given two jubilee periods two jubilee periods among them will be those whom you heard about this morning in addition there will be as far as we know Adolf Hitler Joseph Stalin Napoleon and their victims their soldiers and their enemy soldiers there will be the rest of the dead islamic atheists many israelites Buddhists and Hindus you will be introduced to eve Noah will introduce his generation you know you get the feel of what I mean there will be able and he will introduce his brother kane and Darwin will discover where he came from this last great day following the seven days of the feast of tabernacles will continue the government of god and what I think we cannot imagine how many minds are going to have to unlearn things to learn and to learn and to learn and to learn and to learn and to learn we cannot imagine how many minds are going to have to unlearn things but it will be most remarkable because the evidence will be there there will be Heyman and all his family who were hanged and he will explain what he had in mind and it will be introduced by mordecai can you imagine but this is this going to be a remarkable to jubilees a remarkable period in which the written testimony and the spoken testimony is going to be used as a witness and no one in the world will have an excuse because any theologian who starts out saying it seems to me is going to be stopped right there because it's going to be pointed out that it is does not matter what it seems to him to be I could go on but I shouldn't have a lovely journey home and enjoy the first resurrection