

What is the Government of God? II Oppression of Church Leaders in the Churches of God

*Don't be put to fear because of the arrogance of men,
"I, God, will save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey!"*

Fred R. Coulter—September 26, 2020

Today we're going to talk about oppression of the Church leadership in the Churches of God! We'll cover just a few Scriptures that I covered on Sept. 5^[transcriber's correction] in the message: #1 *What is the Government of God?*

The greatest sin in the Church is not what the brethren are doing; the greatest sin in the Church is *the arrogance, hatred and disobedience of God's instructions toward the brethren, and exalting themselves over the brethren!* Oppression:

Ecclesiastes 8:9: "All this I have seen, and I gave my heart to every work that is done under the sun. *There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.*"

- it hurts the one who is ruling
- it hurts the one who is being ruled

In the Church of God, God does not want that! We will see why, and it's very important, because there are some Churches of God that are actually *evil!*

It cannot stand! And the brethren ought not stand for it, because God does not want it! *Don't be put to fear because of the arrogance of men who think they have authority to rule your life!*

God rules your life with His Spirit in you! He gives you choices! *You choose!*

Verse 10: "And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the Holy place. And they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This *is* also vanity.... [all of that is vanity] ...Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily..." (vs 10-11).

Just because God gives a space of repentance and the evil continues, *does not mean that He approves it!* That means *He giving a space of repentance, not license to continue!*

"...therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (v 11).

Let's just rephrase that a little bit: *the kind of government that some Churches of God have are evil, because they go against God's purpose for the brethren!*

This is what is happening in two prominent Churches of God, and it's happened in the past Church of God. What did God do to it? *You need to*

ask yourself the hard questions! I covered that in the message: *What is the Government of God?*

God took it all away, because God's judgment comes eventually, not speedily!

Proverbs 22:16: "He who oppresses the poor to multiply *riches* for himself, *and* he who gives to the rich, only *comes* to poverty."

I want you to judge! Is this correct? *The Restored Church of God* by David Pack requires everyone coming into the Church to sell all that they have and give to him. I'm sure that he uses Acts 2 for that, but that was just when the Church started.

What Pack needs to do is ask God to provide what he needs as he repents! *You don't rule over the brethren!* Some Churches of God say that when you're baptized and the minister lays hands on you, *you are submitting* to the Government of God! *A lie!*

You are facilitating what God says to receive the Holy Spirit for that person. *God is giving the Holy Spirit; He rules!* *Not the minister!*

Let's see what's taking place in the Churches today, and what God is going to do about it. Matt. 24 is quite something, and this has to do with the Churches in the end-time.

If a minister rules in your life, and he says:

- he has the authority to do it
- he tells you doctrines that are not true
- literally verbally beats up on you
- deprives you of being a normal human being to even visit your own relatives

The Philadelphia Church of God by Gerald Flurry tells everyone coming into the Church that they must forsake all your family, friends and you cannot talk to anyone in any other Church. *That is against God! God doesn't say that!*

Furthermore, if your wife/husband is not in the Church you can divorce and marry someone in the Church, *Flurry says!*

Paul says that if you have an unbelieving wife and she is pleased to live with you, that's fine! God even blesses her. If you have an unbelieving husband, Peter writes that if you have a meek and

quiet spirit and inspiring your husband, who knows that he may become converted!

God did not call you to be cutoff from brethren, family and even people in the world.

- How are you going to be a light to people in the world if you're never out there?
- How are you going to be a light to people in the world and even love your enemies—as Jesus said—if you're just in a little cloister group?

The only difference between that and Jimmy Jones, is that Flurry comes out of Oklahoma, and Jones and 900 died by suicide in South America.

Matthew 24:48: “But if that evil servant... [How does Jesus define the evil here?] ...shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming’... [or whatever other excuse you want to give] ...and shall begin to **beat his fellow servants**...” (vs 48-49).

Think about it! All the brethren are servants of God one way or another! Are we not all here to learn so that we can rule the world? in love? in Truth? and bring the things of God to the world? **Yes!**

“...and to eat and drink with the drunken” (v 49). Who are the most drunken? *The ones who claim to have religious power and rule over people!* You have no right to do that!

They say, ‘We have to help them get salvation.’ *True!* How do you do that? *You teach them love, grace and understanding in a relationship with God!* Remember that ***carnal means can never produce spiritual results!*** Ruling from the top down, as we will see, ***God forbids! And Jesus said so in no uncertain terms!*** We will cover how a elder/minister is suppose to be!

We do have to stand against evil, that is true! But that doesn't mean that we ‘beat up’ the brethren! They are here because they want to grow and overcome. They're here because they want to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Anything that elders do that is against that is ***wickedness!***

Verse 50: “The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect... [Did that happen to Worldwide? *Yes, it did!*] ...and in an hour that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (vs 50-51).

Isn't it hypocritical for the ministers to think that ‘we are above the brethren’? Remember what Peter asked Jesus: ‘Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often shall I forgive him? Seven times in a

day?’ What did Jesus say? ***Seven times seventy! That's mercy, forgiveness and understanding!***

Mark 10:35—the parallel of Matt. 20—where James' and John's mother—Mrs. Zebedee—was convinced to go to Jesus and ask, but it was really James and John asking. This is important, because here's something that Jesus said *what the elders and ministers*—and Jesus is talking to apostles—*should not do!*

Mark 10:35: “Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, ‘Master, we desire that whatever we ask, You would do for us.’... [that's a leading question] ...And He said to them, ‘What do you desire to have Me do for you?’” (vs 35-36). *I'll bet they took a deep breath and said, ‘Ooo Boy!’*

Verse 37: “And they said to Him, ‘Grant to us that we may sit one at Your right hand and one at Your left hand in Your glory.’... [talk about asking for the Kingdom, that is certainly it] ...But Jesus said to them, ‘**You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**’”

Notice the foolishness of arrogance and vanity, because that's what this was:

Verse 39: “And they said to Him, ‘We are able.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘**You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.**’”

That did happens because James was beheaded and John was boiled in oil, but escaped to write the book of Revelation!

Verse 40: “But to sit at My right hand and at My left hand is not Mine to give, but *to those* for whom it has been prepared.”

Notice what happens when you have that kind of attitude; what does it do? Here they were thinking that they were the best, ‘we deserve’ the right hand and left hand. I don't know if they were arguing back and forth between themselves:

Do you want to be on the right hand or the left hand? *I think the right hand is more important!* What if you're left handed?

Who knows the carnal reasoning they may have had. But what does that do to other people around you? It stirs up strife!

Verse 41: “And when the ten heard *this*, they began to show indignation toward James and John. Then Jesus called them to *Him and* said to them, ‘You know that those who are counted worthy

to rule over the Gentiles **exercise lordship** over them... [‘katakurio’ *down*] ...and their great ones **exercise authority** over them” (vs 41-42)—‘kata exousia’ *downward!*

That’s called in Rev. 2 *the Nicolaitans!* What did Jesus say about the Nicolaitans? ***I hate their works!*** So, every minister/elder needs to ask, on your knees before God when you think about it: **Do you have the right before God to rule over them, contrary to the will of Christ? And say that you do this in the name of God?** Yet, you’re one of the Nicolaitans! What does that sow? *False doctrine!*

Gerald Flurry says that he’s *That Prophet!* Peter says that ***Jesus was That Prophet!*** Yet, people are so terrified that they think they have to take it! **NO you don’t!**

I hope and pray that Gerald Flurry will repent, and that David Pack will repent. By the way, David Pack says that ***he’ll be over the two witnesses!***

What are these two ministers doing? *Putting themselves in place of God!* Think about that! Especially with the two witnesses. Why? *Because they are to the two witnesses of God whom He will choose as prophesied in Zechariah 3 & 4* [transcriber’s correction]; *the two olive trees that stand before the God of the earth—not David Pack!*

Verse 43: “But it shall not be this way among you; rather, whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever desires to be first among you shall be *the bond-slave of all*” (vs 43-44)—*the lowest position possible in society*, meaning you can’t buy your way out of being a slave!

- Is that your attitude toward God?
- Are you a ruler?

OR

- Are you as an elder should be?
 - ✓ a facilitator?
 - ✓ a steward?
 - ✓ bringing the Word of God?
- How do you handle the Word of God?
- What do we do with the Word of God?
- Do we do it in Truth?

Apparently Gerald Flurry and David Pack are looking in the Bible ***to place themselves in God’s place!***

Let’s see the prophecy of this in Ezek. 34, because what happens when you have this kind of leadership? Not only the trouble that it already has caused, but what else do you have? *Politics!* The politics just like James and John:

- get close to the minister
- compliment him
- tell him how great he is

The minister is so ‘great’ that he wants to have that! With people around, guess who becomes the deacons? ***The suckeruppers!*** That’s what they are!

I remember sitting in the auditorium in Pasadena and I was listening to a minister speak—Dave Albert—and he gave a sermon trying to uphold the authority of Herbert Armstrong. I sat there and made little tick marks—A one side and G on the other side—for Armstrong and God or Jesus Christ.

Guess how many times in an hour and twenty minute sermon that he mentioned Mr. Armstrong? *111 times!* I counted them. How many times he mentioned God and Jesus Christ: 6 (six)! *I counted them!* **Let’s see how God looks at this:**

Ezekiel 34:1: “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘**Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel....**’” (vs 1-2).

All of us as elders have to ask the question: Is God against us? *or* for us?

“...Prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, ‘**Woe** to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! **Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?**” (v 2).

Remember what we have covered with Peter and feeding the flock and lambs? *That shows your love of God!*

Verse 3: “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, **but you do not feed the flock.**”

Just like it says of oppression, ***that they oppress to enrich themselves!***

What does Gerald Flurry require of everyone in the Church? *They make out a will where he personally is given the inheritance of that family!* **Inheritance belongs to the family!** If your parents die and leave you whatever, *you don’t tithe on it, it doesn’t go to the Church!* If you want to give an offering, which you probably should, ***you choose and decide what to do! That is family property!***

I’ve verified that from several sources, and this is not good! Also, I know personally of three suicides. Someone sent me a listing of 20 people who have been connected with the Churches of God who have committed suicide!

God’s judgment is going to come! ***God has moved me to bring this message, because there must first be warning!*** All of us who are elders/ministers, we better ***pay attention to God!*** We

better get off our high-horses and we better humble ourselves and serve God and the brethren!

Verse 4: “You have not made the weak strong...” *Rom. 15 says ‘you who are strong help the weak, serve the weak!’*

Today we have a lot of weak people because they’ve come up and they’ve been into drugs, sex and different things. When God calls them they want help. It’s going to be hard for them, and some of them are going to sin more than seven times a day. What is an elder going to do, kick them out of the Church because they’re not perfect? You, elder, are you perfect? *Of course not! None of us are!*

“...nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up the broken...” (v 4).

Remember that Christ’s ministry was to come and ‘heal the brokenhearted.’ That takes a lot of *love*, time and God’s Spirit!

“...You have not brought again those that were driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but you have ruled them with force and with cruelty” (v 4).

Herbert Armstrong said, ‘If there’s anything that the Catholic Church has [right], it’s government from the top down.’ Well, if the Roman Catholic Church is Satan’s church, guess who’s government is in that Church? *Satan’s! Not God’s!* It’s an amazing thing!

Verse 5: “And they were scattered for lack of a shepherd. And they became food to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.”

- How many people have left the Church because of what the ministers have done?
- How many have been accused of things?
- How many members?

Many of the members partook in that, and exercised authority!

Verse 6: “My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill. Yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none searched nor sought for them.’ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD, ‘**As I live,**’ says the Lord GOD... [this is not time for patty cake] ...‘**surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food to every beast of the field because there was no shepherd... [remember John 21 and Jesus and Peter] ...nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock.**’ Therefore, O shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘**Behold, I am against the shepherds...**’” (vs 6-10).

To those of us who are elders: Is God with you? For you? *or* Against you? *If you are doing what God says, and Jesus says do not do, God is against you!* ***The day will come! It always does!***

“...and I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Nor shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for **I will deliver My flock from their mouth that they may not be food for them**” (v 10). *From the wrong teaching as well as devouring everything that they have!*

Verse 11: “For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, **I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.** As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his scattered sheep...” (vs 11-12).

There have been many who have been kicked out of the Church. I can tell you from personal experience, when I had to resign from Worldwide because of all of the corruption, I became *enemy #1!* I was demonized like you won’t believe. When that happens, like so many of the sheep that are scattered, ***you are alone!***

My family and I were alone. Thankfully, for seven faithful brethren, we started out again with a Bible study to just learn the Word of God. We were all hurt and devastated. I remember that because of that, and having to be a loan broker for real estate and go out and find real estate things, there was a time I was so discouraged and down that as I was driving around looking for possible leads and so forth, I was out on the countryside north of Hollister.

There was this little hill, I was so depressed the only thing I could do was to climb up to the top of that hill. I got on my knees and the only thing I could say was, ‘God, heal my soul!’

I’m going to tell you one thing: every one of us is going to come to that point, sooner or later. I’m thankful for God’s intervention and He answered that prayer. But you do not really understand what God requires of you, as an elder, and me as an elder:

- How do we feed the flock of God?
 - With arrogance and stupidity?
- OR**
- With love, Truth, grace and humility?
 - What is it?

I want all of you who hear this message to pray for the two men that I have mentioned in particularly, because God wants them to repent, as well.

“...so **I will seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered** in the cloudy and dark day. And I

will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land... [the Kingdom of God] ...and feed them on the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the places of the land where people live. I will feed them in a good pasture..." (vs 12-14).

- As elders, what kind of pasture are we feeding the flock?
- Do we study?
- Do we pray?
- I mean, really pray?
- Do we all understand the most important thing? *We have nothing we didn't receive!*
- What gives us the right to be arrogant over the brethren? *It doesn't!*

We're to preach the Word of God! Isn't that what Paul said? *'Preach the Word! Be instant in season and out of season!'* We're to teach, ***teach, teach:***

- the Truth of God
- the love of God

That's what God wants!

Verse 16: "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again those that were driven away, and will bind up the broken, and will strengthen the sick. But I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. And you, My flock... [this is to the deacons and so-called 'pillars' of the Church] ... Behold, I judge between lamb and lamb, *between rams and he-goats....*" (vs 16-18).

Example: I remember that I went out to visit a church area up in Salt Lake City after we went down to Pasadena. It was on a Feast day, Pentecost. When I was there, all the brethren came to me telling me all the problems and difficulties they were having with the minister, because he was one of the most arrogant that had ever been.

When he was an assistant with me, I recommended that *he never be ordained as an elder!* A leading minister showed him my report, then they assigned him to replace me so they could dig up every dirty thing that they could possibly find.

The only dirty thing that they found was my wife 'was not a good housekeeper because there were rings in the toilet.' Well, when you .45 hardness in the water, guess what you're going to have in your toilet.

When we were there, he had the deacons up on the stage and had other people bringing the best of everything from the potluck to them. He kept telling me to come up there. I said no, and I stood in line with the brethren and talked with

them. I didn't want any part of that!

But the finality of that minister was this: He took one of the finest families in the Church in Salt Lake City and seduced one of the nicest women in the Church, and ***committed adultery with her, and destroyed that family, destroyed the Church, destroyed his life!***

That's personal experience! ***God is going to take care of it!***

"...Is it a small thing for you to have eaten up the good pasture, but must you trample the rest of your pastures with your feet? And to have drunk of the clear waters, **but must you foul the rest of it with your feet?**" (v 18). *Those are all of the sycophants who support the ministers and also stomp on the brethren!*

Verse 19: "And My flock, they eat *what* your feet have trampled, and they drink *what* your feet have fouled.' Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them, 'Behold I Myself will even judge between the fat lamb and the lean lamb. Because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and with your horns have pushed all the weak until you have scattered them abroad, therefore, **I will save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey.** And I will judge between lamb and lamb. And I will set up one Shepherd... [Christ] ...over them, and he shall feed them, My servant David... [that's the parallel with Israel] ...He shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." (vs 19-23).

The Church of God is not a place that you come to, to be verbally abused, to be accused, to be looked down upon. We all sin! All ministers, all people! Why? *Because we're still overcoming the law of sin and death!*

What makes elders/ministers superior to the people? *They're not!* God says, 'You take your position to teach. You take your position to show them the love of God and the grace of God.'

In these churches with authority, as it was in Worldwide, rarely did they ever mention grace, rarely did they ever teach about the love of God. Why? *Because that would mean that they would have to **give up their false authority over the brethren, and let God deal in the lives of the brethren!*** They couldn't have that!

(break)

How could a minister of God come to the point of saying that you can come into this church if you renounce father, mother, brother, sister, all relatives, all other brethren and you can only be loyal in this church, *that's it?* He turns to some Scripture and proves it by a misinterpretation!

Let's look at that, because the Philadelphia Church of God ministers—I know from first person testimony—refused to anoint a man who was on their mailing list and so forth because he wouldn't give up his friends, and those in other Churches of God.

He was very sick with cancer and had sores all over him because of his affliction, and the ministers refused to anoint him. He was old, but that makes no difference. If you anoint someone who is old and you know is nearly ready to die, you still pray for them and put them in God's hands.

- Why?
- What did Jesus say when He was accused of eating with sinners and tax collectors?

The Pharisees were all upset and super-righteous, 'He's with sinners and tax collectors!'

What did Jesus answer? *He quoted God's Word and said, 'God desires mercy and not sacrifice, go learn what that means!'*

Let's read this and understand it. This is just like where Jesus said, 'If you hand offends you, cut it off. If your eye offends you, pluck it out.' What He wants you to do is *repent!*

Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and **does not hate**... [in the Greek this is *hate, detest, abhor*] ...his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (vs 26-27). *The word there is hate!* We compare that with:

Matthew 10:37^[transcriber's correction]: "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me" (vs 37-38).

- What is the difference?
- Why did He use *hate* in Luke compared with *love* in Matthew?
- *Because we're to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being; and our neighbor as ourselves!*

If you cloister off from everybody you can't do that!

- What does Luke 14:26-27 mean?
- Who was one of the most righteous men in the world? *Job!*

Job was so righteous that he thought that his righteousness was even more than God's righteousness! When God finally got done talking to

him in the whirlwind, virtually, that if you cannot do the works of God then you are not righteous.

Job didn't understand that his sin was so great to accuse God, that his righteousness was greater than God's. When Job finally came to repentance, what did he say? *I abhor myself, and repent in sackcloth and ashes!*

That's what this means. You cannot have any person, regardless of relationship, as an idol instead of worshipping God. That's what that means! When that is so, then you begin to understand that human nature really needs to be changed. That's the whole purpose of conversion.

These verse cannot be used to tell people that you give up every relationship that you have. *No! Not so!*

We're going to see what elders have to do all the time. You can't be like one minister that I knew, who when I visited him he had a big stack of notebooks right on his desk. He had just moved from Eugene, Oregon, down to Oklahoma. We went down to visit Dolores' relatives, because she's from Oklahoma.

I used to be this minister's assistant, and we're sitting there talking and he says:

Fred, you see this stack of notebooks, these have all my sermons in them. You know what, I don't need to make new ones, because I have enough to last 3-5 years, so when they move me to another church location, I just go through them again.

That's not what God wants!

Rom. 2:17—Instead of *Jew*, put your name there, all elders/ministers, and here where the arrogance comes from that shouldn't be!

Romans 2:17: "Behold, you are called a Jew and you yourself rest in the Law, and boast in God... [we're God's people] ...and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law... [we know the Word of God] ...and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the Law" (vs 17-20).

Is the form and knowledge of the Truth enough? Let's see what Paul says:

Verse 21: "You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?...."

All ministers/elders are to use the Word of God to teach themselves as well! Much moreso, because you have to teach the brethren! Everyone of

us as elders must be learning, *learning*, **learning** all the time! The Word of God is so constructed that there is so much that we learn when we go over it and over it!

“...You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing?... [I saw a lot of that going on down in Pasadena] ...You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery?...” (vs 21-22).

How about the leading evangelist who had over 200 women confessed; that means hundreds more that he never admitted to?

“...You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law?” (vs 22-23).

Do you give yourselves license to sin that you wouldn't give to the brethren?

Let's see what we are to be teaching and how it is to be: In Galatians we have two comparisons, *the works of the flesh* and *the works of the Spirit*. Sabbath services every week are also to be a learning and spiritual experience to help build up the love and Truth of God in every one of us. That's what it's for. As elders:

- if we're not praying every day
- if we're not studying every day
- if we don't understand what God has given to us to do and to realize that we are stewards to serve and feed the flock

The people of God are not your possession!

I know the research that was done by Dr. Dorothy, because he was personal friend of mine. Carl Franklin and Michael Heiss worked with him, too. Because of the infiltrators taking down the Church, they got rid of the doctrinal analysis that Dr. Dorothy was doing.

This was just before the Church went into receivership. They were closing it down and I went over there and was talking to Carl and Michael and Dr. Dorothy was just absolutely crushed! They treated him so badly that he could never recover from it. He died of cancer in the mid 1990s, just because of the stress. He was one of the nicest men you'd ever want to meet.

They showed me and gave to me the notebooks that they were doing. What minister preached what, wrote what, what they said, what Scriptures they'd use. He showed be the one on the love of God. Out of all the years in Worldwide, there were three major sermons on love, but they all ended up with the unpardonable sin. I looked at that and thought: *This is ghastly!* Same way with the grace of

God.

So, I told Carl and Michael—they were virtually out of work—‘I promise you, I will do something with them.’ And we have; we've got the in-depth studies on:

- Love of God
- Grace of God

This is what we need! We don't need *yes sir* obedience and Mr. This and Mr. Something. We need:

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**...

- loving God
- loving the brethren
- loving our neighbors
- loving our enemies

Just like these men that I've mentioned today. I'm just bringing out what happened *as a matter of fact*, but, brethren, pray that they will repent along with every other elder/minister that is involved in any of this. How can we preach the Gospel to the world if we ourselves are laden with sins that are unrepented of?

“...**joy**...” How many times have you come to Church where it was a dread? Wondering what's going to happen today?

“...**peace, longsuffering**...” *I tell you, most of the elders have had the shortest suffering possible!*

“...**kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control**...” (vs 22-23). *That's the whole thing!*

It says, ‘Let the peace of God rule in your heart’ (Col. 3). It's doesn't say to *submit to the ministry and let the ministers rule your life!* ***NO! You have a direction with God the Father and Jesus Christ!*** All of us who are ministers, we are just stewards!

- we've got to *feed the flock*
- we've got to *give them the Word of God*
 - they have got to be uplifted and inspired
 - they've got to want to come to church
 - they've got to want to have the love and joy that comes from it

That's what God wants!

There it is, self control! That's why we have free choice. We are to teach them what they are to do as led by God's Holy Spirit. When you do that:

- they're growing
- they're overcoming

- they're happy
- they repent of their sins

We have to repent of our sins as elders, every day!

- How is your mind?
- Is it filled with Truth and love? *That's good!*
- But how many other evil thoughts are there?

You have to repent of being *lords over your 'possessions'!* **The brethren are not your possessions!**

1-Cor. 13—here's the measure and Paul is measuring himself here. Think of this! This is what Paul is doing; he's looking at: **'How do I stand before God?'** that's what we need to ourselves in the privacy of when we come before God when we get on our knees and pray. One of the shortest chapters in the Bible, but very powerful, indeed!

1-Corinthians 13:1: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels..."

I think of Kenneth Copeland; he thinks he's so good speaking in tongues. But he doesn't have a clue as to what he's saying.

"...but do not have love..."

- Do we, as elders, love the people of God?
- Do we really?
- Is that the motivation of what we do when we speak and teach?

If you don't have that:

- What are you every Sabbath?

"...I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal" (v 1)—*so much noise!*

Verse 2: "If I have *the gift of prophecy...*" *Oh boy! Gerald Flurry says, 'I am That Prophet!'* **He's standing in the seat of Christ!**

"...and understand all mysteries and all knowledge..." (v 2).

What is this saying? *If I were the smartest man in the world...* This gets close to what Job did! Remember his end, he had to repent!

"...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but do not have love, I am nothing**" (v 2). *Stop and think about it!*

- unless we teach the Word of God, ***the way that God wants it taught***
- unless we as elders have ***a praying close relationship with God***
 - ✓ relying on His Spirit
 - ✓ relying on His Word
 - ✓ holding His Truth

- ✓ teaching the Truth

What are we? **Nothing! Nothing!**

Just like the world has it today, do you know what they're trying to do? *Have artificial intelligence interpret the Bible!* Well, if you don't ***rightly divide the Word of God***, as Paul says, you might as well have artificial intelligence to try and do it, ***because you're not using the intelligence of God!***

Verse 3: "And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned... [oh what a dedication and sacrifice] ...**but do not have love, I have gained nothing.**"

What follows is an instruction book for all of our conduct: *elders, brethren, everybody!* As we have learned, there's no such thing as ranks of ministers, because the ministry is a service to perfect the saints through the Word of God.

Verse 4: "Love is patient *and* is kind; love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things..."

Examine the ministry in the Churches of God! How many are the opposite of what this says. Remember, the day of judgment will always come, ***so choose repentance instead!***

"...is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth" (v 6).

- How patient are you?
- How much can you stand?
- How much can you bear?

Think of it in relationship to:

- what Christ took
- what He bore
- what the apostles took
- what they did

Verse 7: "*Love bears all things...* [think about that] ...believes all things... [based on the Word of God] ...hopes all things... [the hope of salvation, eternal life] ...endures all things."

How many have given up and gone back into the world? Herbert Armstrong said one thing that a lady told me recently, which is true. He was on one of his rants and raves at a Bible study and he said, 'I don't think half the ministry is converted!' **Where are they?** I know one elder I talked to on the phone after Dolores died, to give his condolence. He was telling me that they go to the local Baptist church and 'they have a lot of good things.' I thought to myself: This is unreal!

What has happened to them? Look at all the elders/ministers that were in Worldwide, **where are they? Where are the brethren?**

Verse 8: “**Love never fails...**” *That’s why we have to come to God everyday*, and part of the prayer that we need—every single one of us, not just elders—every single one of us who want to be in the Kingdom of God is:

O Lord, help me to love You with all my heart,
with all my soul, with all my strength, with all
my being!

It takes a lot of prayer to do that! It isn’t going to be ZAP! like a hypodermic injection into you! This has to be something that you plead with God every day, because that’s the only way we’re going to grow.

“...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease... [they will be all fulfilled and cease] ...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease... [we’ll all speak one language in the Kingdom of God] ...whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away” (v 8)—*because the knowledge that we have today is so infinitesimally and incredibly small that it will be counted as nothing!*

Think about it! In the smallest particle in the world, there’s more intelligence and understanding from God than anything we could ever learn. So, why should we get up on our high-horse and say how great we are, because we’re not!

Verse 9: “For we know in part...” *We don’t understand everything*, and what part we know, we have to be faithful with.

“...and we prophesy in part... [notice how Paul goes to what is going to come]: ...but when that which is Perfect has come...”—*at the resurrection on the Sea of Glass! What a glorious thing that’s going to be!*

Think of that! We’ll be on the great Sea of Glass up there and see God the Father and Jesus Christ, Who will present all of us to God the Father, and say, ‘Behold, the children you have given Me!’ We will get our new names, get our assignments to know what we are going to do, and we’ll all be given a white horse! *That’s going to be something!*

Meanwhile, down here all men, demons and Satan are fighting and warring. They’re shooting all of their missiles up toward the Sea of Glass trying to destroy it! BING! BING! BING! *Nothing happens!* Then after we’re all ready, we’re going to come down to this earth and think about how fantastic that’s going to be. But also, what a heap of rubble the whole world will be in because of sin!

“...then that which is in part shall be set

aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child... [we’re to grow up in Christ] ...I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see face-to-face...*” (vs 10-12).

Think about what that’s going to be like to see God *face-to-face!* Jesus Christ and the Father! That’s going to be an awesome thing!

“...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: **faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love**” (vs 12-13). *Let’s see how that works!*

John 14 is so profound and meaningful that’s we have to go over it, and I don’t think we can go over it enough. What this does is tells us that each and every one of us who have the Spirit of God, God Himself—through Christ—has reconciled each one of us to God the Father! ***God the Father is the great Sovereign Who rules the whole universe!***

- think how precious your calling is
- think how great that that is

Not because we’re anything, ***but because God is everything!***

John 14:21: “The one... [put your name there] ...who has My commandments...”—the commandments of God; have you memorized the long version?

“...and is **keeping** them, **that is the one who loves Me...**” (v 21). *That love is in addition to just the obedience! It is*

- ***from the heart***
- ***from within your whole being***

that you love God!

“...and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father...” (v 21).

Every elder who oppresses the brethren is a oppressing the ones whom God loves! If you cause them to stumble you may not find yourself in the Kingdom of God! You may find yourself ***standing before the Lake of Fire!***

“...and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him” (v 21). **How does God manifest Himself to us?**

- through His Spirit
- through His Word
- through how we learn on Sabbath and Holy Days

Now we’ve got the great Holy Days of God coming up. Day after tomorrow is the Day of

Atonement, and then beginning Friday night next week is the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Great and awesome Feasts of God to show what He's doing in His plan. He's the One Who has made known what these things are.

Verse 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... [this expands from commandments to word; everything that Jesus said] ...and My Father will love him, and **We...**'" (vs 22-23).

This is why it's so important in serving and teaching the brethren. You and I and all elders are teaching them to love God, because they have been reconciled to the Father, and through the Spirit of God Christ is dwelling in each one of us. The Father is dwelling in each one of us; it says **WE!** From the Father, **as the begettal to become a son or daughter of God!** That's phenomenal!

And to develop the mind of Christ! That's what the Sabbath is all about, to draw close to God. He puts His presence in the Sabbath and we come to Him. He gives us of His Spirit and His Word and we grow in grace and knowledge. That's what it's all about!

It's not about ruling over brethren! Being important! That has nothing to do with it. **It has to do with what God is doing in our lives!**

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words..."

Think about this, all of us who are elders, if we don't do what Jesus says we're destroying the love that we're supposed to have to God. What are we going to do if He withdraws His Spirit from us—gradually—because we're living in sin? Then sooner or later we go out and do what we shouldn't do.

"...and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (v 24).

John 15:5—how to do it: "I am the Vine, and you are the branches..."

The branch never tells the Vine what to do! You constantly need to be receiving nourishment from the Vine. The Vine has the roots in the ground. Spiritually speaking, there's the analogy.

"...The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him..." (v 5). *The relationship!*

A truth we all, as elders, need to understand: **the brethren are not ours! They don't belong to us! They belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ!** God wants all of us to grow! That's what Sabbath

service is all about, every week! We are to grow, change and overcome. We're living in a wicked and evil world, and that's not an easy thing to do.

"...bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing" (v 5). ***If you go against the Word of God, as an elder—any one of us—sooner or later, if we don't repent and come to God, it's going to end up as nothing!*** I submit, go look at Pasadena, Bricket Wood and Big Sandy and see, **nothing!**

Verse 6: "If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up... [that's what happens when people leave God] ...and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned. **If** you dwell in Me..." (vs 6-7)—*conditional, choice!*

This is what we always need to do. The greatest thing that you can say to yourself every day is—and I do—***we have nothing we didn't receive!*** Everything we have—physically and spiritually—comes from God! So, don't get on your high-horse! ***Follow what God wants you to do!***

"...and My words dwell in you... [study and prayer] ...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples" (vs 7-8).

In each one of our lives, sometimes the overcoming is so hard that you don't think you're bearing much fruit, but you are. If you're struggling against things to overcome you're bearing fruit.

Verse 9: "As the Father has loved Me... [tie in John 14] ...**I also have loved you; live in My love.**" *That's what has to be!*

You can't live in self-righteousness, arrogance and anger of elders or deacons. ***You have to live in Christ's love!***

Verse 10: "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you... [that's what God wants] ...and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you" (vs 10-12).

Not separate out the brethren from other brethren! Who cares what corporate organization they belong to, ***God doesn't!***

- He cares that we are growing and overcoming!
- He cares that we are teaching the brethren!

That's what God wants!

Remember what James said: *Don't many of you desire to become teachers, because we shall receive the greater, sterner judgment!*

Notice what Christ has done for us; v 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 13-14).

There's a awful lot in this. What did Jesus say about how we are to live? *The very first thing that we learned: Man/woman shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!*

Do we know it perfectly? *No!* But it has to be written gradually through prayer and study in our mind!

Verse 15: "...I have made known to you all the things that I have heard from My Father.

Notice that this is true for each one of us, how *the Father Himself draws us, calls us, opens the Book of Life and puts our name in it!* Think of that! *That's how important all the brethren are to God!* Every one of them! God loves all of us! He has such great love that He can give the greatest amount of love to all of us!

Verse 16: "**You yourselves did not choose Me...** [amazing statement] ...but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go forth and bear fruit..."

You can say that that applies to the apostles. That's true, but God has personally called us, and what does He want us to do? *He wants us to grow and overcome and bear fruit!* Isn't that true? *Yes, indeed!* It applies to all of us!

"...and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. **These things I command you, that you love one another**" (vs 16-17).

So, the oppression and abuse by elders and ministers in the various Churches of God, *may there come repentance! May God lead them in repentance so that all the brethren of God can be fed:*

- the *Truth* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *faith* of God

And everything that God wants so that we can be perfected in Christ Jesus!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ecclesiastes 8:9-11

- 2) Proverbs 22:16
- 3) Matthew 24:48-51
- 4) Mark 10:35-44
- 5) Ezekiel 34:1-14, 16-23
- 6) Luke 14:26-27
- 7) Matthew 10:37-38
- 8) Romans 2:17-23
- 9) Galatians 5:22-23
- 10) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- 11) John 14:21-24
- 12) John 15:5-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 2
- Matthew 20
- Revelation 2
- Zechariah 3; 4
- Romans 15
- Colossians 3

Also referenced:

Message: *What is the Government of God?*

In-depth Studies:

- *Love of God*
- *Grace of God*

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