

Elder's Conference—2007

(Session Two)

Fred R. Coulter—May 4, 2007

While we've been here at the conference, we had one exciting event that looked like it a total, absolute wipeout and disaster. However, it shows—as you will hear Wayne Stenhouse and Ken Gee explain what happened to Ken and his wife Dorita—how we need to be cautious and careful wherever we go if we're traveling in the public. Be aware! And how God intervened to let it work out from a total disaster to a triumph beyond description! Here's a direct report:

KEN: Brethren, when a trial like this happens to you, what sort of reaction are you going to have? Are you going to doubt God? *or* Are you going to be more loving and asking God 'just what do You want me to learn from this trial?'

I've learned a few things, and I know that Dorita has, too. Even though the trial is severe, what we've learned and seen in action is the love and concern of our brothers and sisters in Christ. That is so inspiring to not only see that, but to feel it. The other thing you learn is empathy toward people who have gone through and are going through this type of trial. That's something that we can take back to the people that we deal with: empathy for the trials that they are experiencing. Particularly where people have had the house broken into and robbed of possessions.

We learn a few things, plus we learn that God is there and He said, 'I shall never leave you, nor will I forsake you.'

During these past few days we have seen that in action! That is encouraging, inspiring, and we can take that back with us, and tell our brothers and sisters in Australia. We can hopefully encourage them by the trials that God has allowed us to go through.

Another thing I learned is that while I'm thinking about doing something, Wayne has got the job finished. That's true, and I thought the best thing to do was to step back, Wayne knows what he's doing, and that's what he's done:

FRED: *Tell us what happened!*

KEN: I'd like to, if I may, leave that side of it to Wayne.

FRED: Tell us what was stolen!

KEN: Oh, all right. We had a small case in which we carried our passports, driver's license, motor vehicle club membership, about \$1,300 cash (Aus. & U.S.). We had all our bank books, visa card, all in this one satchel. It made it easier to carry it when you went to the airport you weren't rummaging around in a big briefcase, you had the passports ready.

That's what was stolen. Why do I say *stolen*? *Because we've gone back and traced all of our steps.* Where did we go? What did we do? The last thing I remember is that on the very day before this happened, I sat down and wrote out the expenses, the money we started off with and what was left. I counted the money and it all balanced.

So, we knew in our minds, the satchel containing all our cash and passports were with us the night before. In all fairness, we had to go back step by step and say this is where we've been, this is what we've done and this is what we spent. You cannot come to a judgment, where someone has stolen something, after you first of all look at yourself and ask if we've been careless. No, we were very careful and we put the satchel behind blankets to come to the elder's conference and when we returned we actually checked everything and we found that the satchel was missing.

Then we had to go make a report to the hotel here and the young lady said, 'I'll have to make out a form.' She disappeared for about 15 minutes. I'm pacing up and down and wondering where in the world is she. She came back out and I said, 'You got the form filled out?' *Oh no! You have to fill it out now!*

I thought what in the world had she been doing. Just going back a little. When we first arrived here, we checked in at the desk and the same young lady said, 'You're not booked in here. There's nothing here for you.'

What am I going to do now? Here I am 16,000 miles from home. What am I going to do? She went away and came back and said, 'You're definitely not booked in here. We have a room available, but you'll have to pay me tonight. So, I paid on the Visa card and that's how we got started.'

We thought, here's our welcome to the Elder's Conf. and we're not even suppose to be here. Later on, she said, 'You'll need some identification.' You don't even exist; two people 16,000 miles away and we don't exist.

I had bit of joke about it and said if I don't exist that means I don't have to pay taxes. So, we turned it over to Wayne and while I'm thinking about these things, Wayne has the job completed.

WAYNE: I just want to start out with a disclaimer that I receive no praise or glory for this! *It's all to the glory of God!*

When I heard this, the first thing that came in my mind was what would happen to me if I was traveling somewhere else and the exact same thing happened? The first thing I said was that I hope my brothers and sisters in Christ are going to be there for me.

That's the way I looked at it. Not because Ken is an elder and his wife; it's because he's a brother and his wife is a sister in Christ.

They told me about it, we phoned the police and they came in. To be very honest with you, they're not really interested; it's a small petty theft to them, and they're so very, very busy. The radio just kept going and going with more calls that they had to do, so they are over-taxed.

But they were very nice; they didn't know how to spell Australia, but that we got that straightened out with them, too. My only thing was that I didn't like the way the hotel handled it. They won't tell us anything, and they want a report from Ken. We won't give them a report until we get a report from them. They know where we stand on that.

Why would Ken have to give a report, the police have a report and everything is done. What happened, I woke up during the night and it hit me that the only way we're going to get him some identification is get him to an embassy. So, the next morning I phone the Australian Embassy unbeknown to him, because Jim downloaded all that we needed. I called the emergency number, and I didn't know that I was speaking with Australia. I believed I was talking to the people in Washington, D.C.

She said, 'How far are you from Washington?' I said, 'As the crow flies it would take me six days to walk, but it's quite a distance.' She said, 'Can you get him there.' I said, 'We will get him there somehow.'

She said, 'Get some passport photos'—which we did last night. 'Get him there and we will give him some emergency travel documents.' I said, 'That was fine.' That was arranged.

The next thing that happened, laying in bed the next night I awaken and said to myself: he's got no identification. How am I going to get him on a

plane to Washington? It's pretty tough right now with the TSA to get anywhere. So, I talked to the manager down in the lobby, a very nice man, and he sent for one of the girls from behind, and her sister works for Delta. She phoned ahead and told us what we needed to do.

Last night we went to Delta, and I must tell you, there are still very, very good people in this world. They exclusively worked with us for hours; there were four attendants with us. One of them even had tears in her eyes when she heard the story of what happened.

Let's back this up, consider yourself 16,000 miles from home without a dime in your pocket, no identification and you're trapped in a country. What are you going to do?

I went to them and told them our problem. 'How can you help us?' She says, 'I can do it myself.' She got a supervisor, eventually, and she got on and said, 'The best thing we can do is give you tickets from here to Ottawa as long as you come back here,' because there's no flight on Delta from Washington to Ottawa. The only thing we would have to pay for is between here and Washington and return for three of us.

They worked a long time on the computer and the young girl said, 'The best I can do is \$1,200 a piece.' I thought, we didn't want to buy the airplane, we just wanted rent it for a little bit. But she said, 'Don't fret.' The supervisor came over and she worked on it and got it \$400 each there and back.

We know that last night God's hand was in everything we did. Walmart was booked solid until eight o'clock when they closed down the photo, but they took them in. I went in first and talked to them, and they said to bring them in 15 minutes and we'll do them.

There are still good people. We have tickets, we're leaving here tomorrow. We're going to Washington and staying in Washington tomorrow night, back to here Tuesday. Wednesday we're off to Ottawa and my wife will pick us up there. She's leaving today for Syracuse, because our car is in Syracuse. Somebody has to get the car.

I'm so fortunate in my life to have a helpmate that God has given me to help me through all of this, whatever I do. She's so supportive. It was her suggestion that she go and get the car, get home, spend a day and then pick us up in Ottawa. It saved us a lot of headaches.

That's the way it worked. One of the Delta girls left, and she was so moved that she phoned on

her way home back to the desk to see how we were doing.

She said that they could get them through the TSA, but we need something. I said we had a police report. She phoned the police right there and they said that she needed to talk to the officer. She said, 'Have the officer call me and we will get it faxed here. *That's above and beyond duty!*

So, somebody has more power than we have, *as we all know*. The police did phone her. They gave us tickets, and they gave us hugs, shook our hands. It was absolutely beautiful. I will let Delta know that, too.

I guess last night at 10:30 the girl got the report in and on her way home from work she dropped it off here.

We were all tired and we came back and we decided to eat at Rapherty's and a car backed out right at the door just as we arrived and they had table available, which is very rare. Everything worked extremely well, but we know that God's hand was in the whole thing.

We will be with Ken and his wife until the end when they leave next Sunday and they're on their way to New Zealand and Australia. We'll do the very best we can, but it's only because God loves us, we have to love one another and we need to get this out and help all the brethren to truly love one another. You'll be surprised how God is going to work within our lives.

KEN: Brethren we have seen brotherly love in action. We've had that demonstrated to us. My wife and I will take it back to Australia and tell them of the experiences that we've gone through. But more importantly of the love and concern we've had from each and every one of you.

This is going to inspire them, uplift them, and this is what they need. This the brotherly love and the unity of spirit that not only they need, but we need. ***The most important thing is to thank God!*** To give Him the credit, and also to thank Him for His love, His mercy and compassion.

Personally, I feel very, very close to Wayne. Apart from coming here I never met Wayne. I think I spoke with him on the phone about four years ago. But now we are two brothers united, and we're back to back and nothing can separate us.

FRED: Thanks for relating to us what happened. You always have to learn that your valuable things never leave them off your person or someplace else. If you have a passport, you carry it. Never leave anything of value in a motel room.

There are too many immigrants of various sorts, whose job is to look and to steal, to get those out as quickly as possible on the street and charge as much as they can before they're caught, or before the cards are canceled.

The suggestion was made to always carry with you in a different place your credit card numbers, driver's license numbers, and add an extra number to it that you know is different. So, if you lose that no one can figure out what it is. You can put it at the first, middle or end, but make sure you have an extra number in it so that no one can use them in case they get it.

When the police asked Ken for his credit card number and driver's license number, he didn't know. Just listening to that, and going through this, I think ***this demonstrates why it's imperative that we prepare for the next generation of the Church!*** They're not going to have chance to research all of these things themselves. They've got to have it where it can be given to them.

But we need to emphasize to all the brethren that when they get the books and material, read it, study it. One letter I got from a man who said, 'I read the Passover book every year starting in January until Passover time.' For the past three years he's done that, and has learned something new every time.

The fellowship group in Salt Lake City, when they got the New Testament and they saw how big it was, 'I've got to read this?!' Those who wanted the information were eager and dived right in. What they did they said they sit around a big table and read a chapter every Sabbath. One will read a couple of pages, and another will read a couple pages, etc. and discuss things as they go along. They've made their way through all of the 15 chapters in the front of the book.

Then they're doing the same thing with the appendices. These are tools. It would be easy to send out little pamphlets, but they never give you the understanding in depth that you need. We need the books, and that's why we do them.

The Scripture that came to mind in listening to Ken and Wayne concerning the theft of their valuable possessions. ***God is with us!*** God says that He sends His angels to prosper our way. God says in Psa. 91 that He will watch over us. This Psalm is going to become central to our existence as we go down into the future. There will be many times when we come back to this, and the promises here that we claim.

In developing our relationship with God through prayer and study, we can take these Psalms

when we're on our knees and make that part of our prayer. As you go along reading it, I guarantee you that you're going to have thoughts come into your head that's going to add to it, and you can pray about it. It will be a stepping-stone to a prayer to God. That's what the Psalms are for. We have to ***understand that the most important people to God in the world are those who have His Spirit!*** The most important people to Satan in the world are those who have God's Spirit so he can try to eliminate them! That's why the daily prayer is 'rescue us from the evil one' and the evil circumstances here.

In thinking also about your experience with dealing with these people who were very helpful, I think what you see in circumstances like that the heart of Israel that is kind by nature, and that's why God is not so all fired hot to send them into tribulation until the very thing. He says, 'O Israel, why will you die?'

Psalms 91:1: "He who dwells **in the secret place of the Most High...**"—*that's us with God's Spirit!* No one else in the world knows we have God's Spirit.

"...shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (v 1).

When you're standing and looking down at a shadow, you can see it. But looking out the window here and I see a tree, but I can't see the shadow until it hits the ground. I can look through the air where the shadow comes, but I can't see it.

This is describing the protection that God gives us! It's there, but you don't see it. In times of trouble things happen, like what happened with Ken, Dorita and Wayne working it out. What are these things to do? *Teach us!*

Verse 2: "I will say of the LORD, **He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Whom I will trust.**"

When it gets down to the very last thing, the nitty-gritty, that's where it's at.

Verse 3: "Surely He will deliver you from the fowler's trap... [that's what happened to Ken] ...and from the destroying pestilence... [when things break loose] ...He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge.... [no one is going to see that] ...His Truth shall be your shield and buckler" (vs 3-4).

His Truth is going to give you strength! Trying to handle problems that come along when they're very devastating, you've got to have some strength beyond yourself. That's why some people—when problems are so great and they don't have

God—commit suicide, ***because they don't have God's strength and His shield and buckler!*** And that's a shame!

Verse 5: "You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day."

We have to claim that promise when terrorists are cut loose, because they will be. They're all sitting quietly in 'sleeper cells' in all the nations of Israel. So, if you want to know where Israel is today, all you have to do is read the Scripture 'the stranger will get very high above you,' and analyze where they are.

They are not in Africa, the Middle East, Russia or in China! They are in Europe, Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand. That tells you where Israel is in the end-time. We need to claim this promise because that's going to happen.

Judy Anderson lives in Oakland, one of the murder capitals of the Bay Area, said that just down at the corner of her street there were shootings three nights in a row. She got on her knees and claimed this promise.

What is an angel of God able to do from someone who wants to get you? Remember the two angels in Sodom and Gomorrah? The people wanted to come into the house of Lot and the angels blinded them! They may go though the neighborhood ransacking things and be blinded to come into your house!

We're going to face disaster like we just saw on the news. Here's this little town in Kansas and it was 90% blown away with a terrible tornado. People always ask: Why does it happen to innocent people? You cannot say that they were sinners above other people. I mean, this didn't happen in the homosexual capitals of America. It happened in a good upstanding little community out in the plains of Kansas.

The truth is, when leaders who run a nation sin, the population suffers. Whatever comes along. Look what happened when David numbered Israel! He wouldn't take the advice of Joab. In David's old age he made a bad decision. We need to pray every day, ***'O God, in our old age, please don't let us make bad decisions. Please guide us in the right thing! Please do not let our lust get the best of us so that we do things that are plain stupid!'*** If someone gives advice contrary, heed the advice. Pray about it.

If David would have taken the advice of Joab who said to David. 'Why do you need to the number the people of Israel. God will be with regardless of the number that you have. David said, 'Don't number them.'

The prophet came to David and said, 'What do you want, three years of famine, three months chased by your enemies, or three days in the hands of the Lord?' David said, 'I'll take three days in the hands of the Lord,' and 70,000 Israelites died! Just because of the decision of the leaders.

We've got a bunch of leaders that are headless, clueless, eyeless, thoughtless, selfish, self-centered, political, liars and cheats that run Washington, D.C., regardless of who they are or what party they are in. They are so wrapped up in falsehood and deceit. It's the same in Australia and Britain and all of Israel wherever they are.

There are going to be things that are going to happen and that's why it's imperative that we stay close to God and have the right relationship with Him and claim these promises.

Verse 6: "Nor for the plague that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction laying waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; it shall not come near you" (vs 6-7).

See how close it comes to you, though. If it's at your right hand and at your left hand... It's like one man said of the tornado that destroyed 90% of town. He says, 'I can't understand it. This house is standing and nothing happened to it, and all of the rest are wasted away into kindling.' *Amazing!* So, even in these disasters and things, God is still there one way or the other.

Verse 8: "Only with your eyes you shall behold and see the recompense of the wicked."

That promise won't be fulfilled until we're all on the Sea of Glass. After events like this and hearing these things, now I know why we have to be on the Sea of Glass for four months—from Pentecost to Trumpets. We have to all get to know each other, and maybe there are some stories that are going to be told. Christ is going to present us to the Father, and we're all going to hear Jesus sing the acceptance hymn of the first resurrection and declare us to the Father.

That time on the Sea of Glass is going to be absolutely stupendous. It's going to be akin to what it was with Moses on the mountain with God receiving the Law of God and some of Israel down here worshipping the golden calf.

We're going to be on the Sea of Glass preparing to take over the world! There's not one man in the carnal flesh fit to rule anything in the world. Some can do better jobs, but as long as there is human nature, the evil of that and Satan the devil, no man is qualified anywhere!

God is qualifying us, and all the saints down through time from Abel until the last two witnesses. He's going to give the Kingdom to us. And Christ says that 'it is God the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. I'm going to prepare a place for you, and I'm going to give you a new name.' *That's going to be something!*

We will behold the wicked, and while all that is happening to us, what's going to be happening on the earth, under the Sea of Glass? *The seven last plagues!* The angels are going to receive the seven last plagues. It's fitting, because God says that we will see the vengeance of God. That is His vengeance.

All the saints from Abel to the last two witnesses are going to see the vengeance of God! It's going to be something for those resurrected who do not know this modern system. They will all look down there and see all of this going on. It's going to be absolutely amazing to see God's vengeance and to see the development of man's society, and the evil and wretchedness that it reeks everywhere it goes. That it must be destroyed.

As William Tyndale said, 'God is no patcher!' He's not going to patch it; He's going to demolish it and re-build it! I fully expect William Tyndale and other men will be there, too. You cannot do what Tyndale did without the Spirit of God.

We're not the ones to make the decision. We cannot judge the heart. God is the One Who chooses what He's going to do. I fully expect that he will be there. All modern Israel can thank William Tyndale for his courage, determination and Holy passion to translate the whole Bible while being 'chased from pillar to post.' He did it by candlelight, and he did the last 18 months in jail freezing cold. John Rodgers would come and bring the translation of the Hebrew that Tyndale had. That's how we have the *Matthew Henry Bible* that we have today.

I've got a replica of that Bible that was finished and published. God answered the prayer. We don't see all prayers answered necessarily in our lifetime. The last thing that William Tyndale said, before they put the choke on him and then burned him—at least the inquisitor had enough mercy to kill him first. He was to be burned at the stake, so they choked him first.

Tyndale said, 'Open the eyes of the king of England.' So, here's a vain, egotistical swaggering ruler king of England whom God puts in his mind to defy the pope, to defy the Catholics, and inspired him within 18 months of his death to have the Bible printed and distributed to all the churches in England with a command that it be read, and with the

command that those who could not read would have a reader come in and read it for them.

Can you imagine what a fantastic thing that was? We're going to see things like that happen when disasters begin happening here. God will intervene! Here's why:

Verse 9: "Because you have made the LORD, Who is my refuge... [this is a prophecy of all of us] ...even the Most High, your habitation, no evil shall befall you..." (vs 9-10)—that is permanently, because those who are martyred—because you can count that as evil if you want to, but maybe it's not. We don't look at the way that the Muslims do who go and kill others so they can be martyred.

I think St. Peter gave the last word, they better stop because they're running out of virgins. Delores asked, 'What happens to the women martyrs, what is their reward.' (a little humor as we go along here)

"...nor shall any plague come near your dwelling" (v 10).

We'll talk a little bit about some of these things later on, but there are things we need to do.

Verse 11: "For He shall give His angels charge over you..." What does God do? He looks down there and has His seven spirits going to and fro, He's got the Spirit of God in you. He knows you and knows where you are, knows every hair on your head. So, trouble comes along and what does He do? *Angel go handle this!* I think that's what happened in this case and many other cases.

"...to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.... [here's the end result of it] ...You shall tread upon the lion and asp; the young lion and the jackal you shall trample underfoot" (vs 11-13).

That's the final seven last plagues judgment; Christ is going to do it. We're going to come back to the earth on Trumpets and finish the job. What an absolute celebration it is going to be for the saints when we all view the angel coming and taking Satan the devil and the demons and putting them into the abyss and putting a seal on them! That's going to be quite a thing to see! Here's why:

Verse 14—Christ speaking: "Because he has set his love upon Me [Christ] therefore, I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation" (vs 14-16). *That long life is going to be for all eternity!*

In Rom. 8 is a promise in the New Testament that we can claim.

(go to the next track)

When we go through trials and things where there are difficulties, God is with us. Then we come to know, and here's one of the most important things we need to know: ***Just because difficulties come does not mean God has abandon you!*** That's why Jesus went through everything He did, all the difficulties that He went through. The Father was with Him through it all except at the very last to fulfill the prophecy that ***He would bear all the sins of the world Himself, by Himself alone!***

That's why Jesus said, 'My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?' Which He didn't, but He just went back and covered the earth with darkness and then let it come to its end.

God loves us and He loved Christ, and He knew that the weight of the whole world and the future of God's Plan hung right there on the cross. But they had the promise that 'He would not let My soul in the grave, or let My flesh see corruption.' *That was fulfilled!*

We've had several ask us, but go back review the series on Hebrews, specifically #27 *The Covenant Between God the Father and the Son*, because God is a covenant God. All the things that They had planned out for the salvation of the world They had it written down for a future witness. It says, 'It's written of Me in the Scroll of a Book.' That's where the covenant between Them was.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God..."—*that's why love becomes the most important thing!*

That's why the congregation in Pennsylvania, you encourage them and let them know it was all for good. God knows the heart of all men. This happened for a purpose, a reason. God did the separating.

- Are we going to stand for Truth?
- Do we love God?

God did this because He loves us! Too many people in the world are looking to have no trouble. Are looking to have everything smooth as glass from beginning to end. But as Christians we're going to have our trials and difficulties. So, please encourage them in it.

"...to those who are called according to *His* purpose" (v 28). ***He's called us!***

He's got a great purpose, and the more that we understand greatness of God and the greatness of our calling, the more humble we ought to become.

Humble in the universe is God the Father. So, in order to have all power, you have to be humble. Humility is not something you put on; it is not a facet of personality. It is a fruit of God's Spirit. It's something that doesn't come instantly. It's something that comes through a relationship with God:

- through prayer
- through study
- through experience
- through trauma
- through ups and downs
- through births and deaths

You see all the power in God's hand in the things that are taking place. Then you realize how great God is and how marvelous His plan is. How great and fantastic that we have been called to participate in that; ***all those whom God has called to participate in it!***

Then true humility begins to replace vanity step-by-step. So, you come to the place that it was said of Moses that he was the 'meekest man on earth.' You come to the place where Paul said that he was 'the least of the least of all the saints.'

That's something that we can all grow in, and all these events that we go through give us the assurance and trust in God so that there will be the true humility. Isn't that something?

God always holds out hope, even in the very worst disasters that come along, God holds out hope! He executes hope. That's why after the first five seals and the sixth seal is opened and the heavens are opened like a curtain and they see the sign of the Son of man in the universe coming closer to the earth, what is the first thing that God does? ***He exercises mercy!***

He sends an angel to hold back the devastating things that are to come and says, 'Seal the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude.' So, He gives this hope and mercy before He unleashes the trumpet plagues and all those events that come with it. God is interested in mercy and repentance, those wherever they are who repent.

God has plenty enough angels to take care of them. The reason that the angel has to seal them with the Holy Spirit of God is very simple: There just aren't enough ministers around to baptize them and lay hands on them and pray for them. So, God is going to do it *His* way, but *only God alone can do it that way!* We can't do it that way.

Right in the middle of this Paul says, v 29: "Because those whom He did foreknow He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His

own Son, that He might be *the* Firstborn among many brethren."

We're getting into a little bit of Pentecost here, because we're the Church of the Firstborn! All of those who are Christ's are the Church of the Firstborn.

Verse 30: "Now, whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified... [put in right standing with God] ...these He also glorified."

That is fantastic! As we get older, and go through the things that we go through, we come to understand that more. So, these are things that we need to convey to the brethren. These are things that the brethren need to learn and understand.

So you have been burned in whatever Church of God you have been in. ***You need to let Christ help you get over it!*** Don't treat everyone and everything with suspicion and hatred, because you're just acting carnal. That doesn't mean that you just lay yourself open to be taken advantage of by someone who is evil, there is a difference.

1-John 4—here's what needs to be and this is for all the brethren. ***You need to put the past behind you!*** So you have been hurt by a minister, disillusioned by a church, ask God to lift it from you and be healed. Do not treat the elders and the faithful men in the Christian Biblical Church of God who are there to help you with suspicion and lack of love and respect just because you maybe even made a personal vow that it will never happen again. Though it's true you to not let it happen again, but does that mean that you treat everyone as an enemy?

- there needs to be the love of God
- there needs to be the love to each other

John wrote of this when he was writing his first epistle, because the Church was going through exactly the same thing that we're going through today. As we mentioned before, only time and circumstances have changed.

- God hasn't
- Satan hasn't
- false doctrines haven't

There hasn't been one false doctrine that we've been up against that hasn't been recycled 10,000 times through the history of the Church. Satan uses the same devious means.

Here John starts out saying that we have to test all the spirits, and that we have to understand that those who really realized Who Jesus Christ truly was are from God and that there are false ministers out there.

This is what we all need to realize, and that's why our prayer needs to be for all the brethren, wherever they are, regardless of what Church they're in. Pray for the ministers that those who have misunderstanding, misinterpretations and false doctrines that they will repent and come to the knowledge of the Truth. That none of us let vanity get the better of us and do things that we ought not do, so that we can all come to the unity of the faith in Christ the way it needs to be. John says:

1-John 4:4: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world."

Though all the forces of hell be unleashed against the Church of God, God is greater! We can overcome!

Verse 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world..."

I think we can now understand the subtleties of some of the false doctrines, false teachings and self-elevations that come along more than we have been able to in the past that is true. We only understand it because we have Christ in us.

"...and the world listens to them. We... [the apostles] ...are of God; the one who knows God listens to us..." (vs 5-6). *This has to do with the teachings that come from the true ministers of God!*

"...the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6).

Of course, we know that Satan is deceiving the whole world. Many, many helpers, a lot of technological advances to do so, **but God is greater than all of that!**

What do we do? Verse 7: "Beloved, **we should love one another**..." *Love takes effort, work!*

I guarantee you, when you come into the Church of God, because of the disparity of people that God calls—Who calls the weak of the world, the ones who have problems and difficulties, whatever it is, you are surely going to meet some people that you, of your own personal self, do not like!

Why did God do this? *So, that you can learn to love!* And in loving each other, you're going to inspire each other to change.

I got a call from one of the most obnoxious men who comes into some of the Churches of God. He said, 'You know, I've really learned some things about myself.' I said, 'I'm glad you have.' He's learned that he's been a loudmouth, mean, a bully, but through all the experience he's going through

God is humbling him. The reason that he has stayed is because the brethren have shown him love in spite of his obnoxious ways. This shows that we have to have patience, mercy and understanding.

You don't let them devastate the congregation or the fellowship group. You don't let them get up there and let their vanity get away. That's why we do need some direction given by those who are going to host the groups or the elders. You give direction to the people, because they have to guide and direct their own ways. You cannot control them. ***Control is the wrong word and method!*** The truth is, if you cannot control yourself with the Spirit of God and the Word of God, then you cannot be converted. That's how God wants us to be. Then we can develop the love.

Verse 7: "Beloved, **we should love one another** because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love" (vs 7-8).

Remember, you go back through the Epistle of First John and what did they have? *They had people coming in and saying that you don't have to keep the commandments!* They had antichrist filtering through the churches and things like this. They had great troubles and difficulties.

It makes me wonder how many people were really around. We look at our small group and think, 'Oh my, we're little.' God delights in little things. But you have to stop and think. You wonder how big they were? You wonder how many were left after the antichrist came in and swept brethren out of the Church.

What happened to them? *They were disillusioned, robbed and taken advantage of!* So, John is saying here that with love you can get over it. So, my appeal to all the brethren in the Church:

1. ***Get over it!***
2. ***Stop worshipping men!***

This needs to be said: When Herbert Armstrong did good was used of God in a powerful way. But when he did bad was bad, and when he really got carried away in his old age with bad decisions, it was ugly and ungodly.

That's not disparaging him, because I know from first person testimony that he has repented of all of that and will be in the Kingdom of God, without a doubt! You need to understand that, and you need to listen up and you need to get your carnal thinking removed.

God loved Herbert Armstrong, and God used Herbert Armstrong. But he made so many

disastrous mistakes and ended up with so many false doctrines in his old age, whether people want to admit it or not, that God had to destroy the Church.

The brethren were all part of that, because they worshipped the man! They idolized the man! Some people still do so today by saying that 'we're going to follow only the teachings of Herbert Armstrong.' *You're going against the Word of God when you do so!* God says to 'grow in grace and knowledge' and Herbert Armstrong did not write the Word of God. He was used of God to explain it. God raised up many people because of him.

But also, because of the sins of the Church—and also it was Laodicean from day one—God had to scatter it, destroy it, and now the Worldwide Church of God—with the exception of some on the Internet—is going to be nothing more than maybe a footnote in history.

If you still cling to Herbert Armstrong alone, rather than Christ; if you still think that he had the pinnacle of all knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the Bible, ***you are committing idolatry!***

You need to understand that. We're coming up against some severe difficult times. I'll give just one thing to think about, think \$10/gallon for gas! Then think of all the ramifications in the economy, in your life and the life of the brethren, in the condition of the world. It will bring the whole world to its knees! Yet, we will have to survive through it.

The only way that we're going to survive through it is Psalms 91 and the love of God, and to realize that everything is going to work together for good.

Verse 8: "The one who does not love does not know God because God is love. In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him" (vs 8-9).

Everything focuses in on Jesus Christ, not on a man. Not on Herbert Armstrong, not on me or any other minister! If a man says that he's a successor to Herbert Armstrong, ***flee! You're going to be fleeced and beaten up!*** We've seen that over and over again.

- any man that says that he is Elijah
- any man that says that he is *That Prophet*
- any man that says that because your parents or other brethren that are not with 'this church you cannot even talk to them' ***God judge them***

He's commanding people to dishonor their parents!
Even one man in Arizona committed suicide because

the minister said he couldn't talk to his folks. How dare that man! May he repent, or may God's judgment come upon him to the nth degree, that he may learn that he should never put himself above God.

Wherever it may be that men exalt themselves over the brethren and presume the Word of God, to take powers to themselves, ***God's judgment is going to be swift from now on!***

God sent Christ, not because of what we do as human beings, we need to understand that.

Verse 10: "In this *act* is **the love...**"—that comes from God] ...not that we love God... [so we get merit badges and phylacteries] ...**rather, that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**" *This means that we have a real obligation before God!*

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us..."

- Isn't it true that every time you sin that you want to be forgiven?
- What did Jesus say if a brother sins against you?
- Don't you want to forgive them?

Yet, too many brethren go even beyond that! They don't even want to at least give the benefit of doubt and trust but verify. NO! They want to hold every elder and man in suspicion and wait and look for any little fault to say, 'Aha! I was right!' ***That is the spirit of Satan the devil! Not of God!*** There's no man that does not sin.

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us... [yes, we want to receive the love of God; then we all need to respond] ...**we also are duty-bound to love one another.** No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us" (vs 11-12).

That is the whole process of what we are going through, *for the love of God to be perfected!*

- Did not this incident with Ken perfect the love of God among us here during this conference? *Yes, indeed!*
- Can we not take the events that have happened in the Church of God and let those events perfect the love of God in us? *Rather than hatred, skepticism, bitterness and anger!*

Verse 13: "By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and *He is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us."

Isn't that a marvelous thing? Think of that!

We're participating that is so great and fantastic. Satan and a third of the angels rebelled against God because they didn't like His plan, which was...

- God inhabits eternity
- God created the angelic realm

So, He told the angelic realm that He had a plan. 'I'm going to make man in My likeness. They're going to be lower than you, but in the final analysis they are going to be born again into My Family and share My existence, which will be greater than yours.'

Isn't that something? It's absolutely overwhelming! He's given us of His Spirit.

Verse 14: "And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God..." (vs 14-15). *Truly in the right way; the way the world does is the way of Simon Magus:*

Oh yes, I believe in Him, but I want to keep everything else that I have. All my sorcery, witchcraft and holidays. But I believe in Jesus! I was even baptized by a nice young man named Philip.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him." *That's what we need to do, brethren!*

I think that the more we see the disasters on the horizon, the more we better love one another.

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment..."

Trust me, the disasters that are coming are the days of judgment of God on this world, but also the day of judgment when we're resurrected. We want to hear, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

"...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. **There is no fear in the love of God...**" (vs 17-28).

That's the profound thing. Do not be afraid. It says in Psa. 91 of the terror by night or the pestilence by day, or the arrow or missiles that fly around you.

"...rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment..." (v 18).

Let the Spirit of God, the love of God cast out all of these doubts, all of the fear, all of the problems that we have gone through. Let God's love

work in you to perfect you so that you can fulfill your calling with God.

"...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (v 18).

Isn't it profound that when you have a church organization run by fear and hierarchical authority, what happens if you go visit that congregation? I mean if they would allow you in the door? *It's rigid! Cold! Perfunctory!* Not welcoming:

How are you, I haven't seen you in a lot of years, come on in, glad to have you come. We're thankful that you can fellowship with us. We know you attend another congregation, that's just fine with us, but we still love you.

I do believe that God's patience with this kind of thing is getting down to the nubbits! I do believe that we're going to see another round or two of the cycling of God's correction on the Churches of God that do things contrary to the love of God.

Verse 19: "**We love Him because He loved us first.**" *Never forget that!* That's what Peter had to learn when he said, 'Lord, I'll do this for You.' It's what God does to you first.

Verse 20: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar.... [Simple statement, isn't it?] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother" (vs 20-21).

That's what needs to be in the Churches of God!

Now I'm going to have Marlin relate to us some experiences that he has had with the fellowship and other brethren from other groups coming, and what he has done. I think it's very exemplary in helping and serving those brethren.

Marlin Fannin: We're talking about other fellowship groups that come occasionally and visit with us. We try to make them welcome, make them feel welcome. Some of them come and visit during the Holy Days. A few kept the Passover with us this year.

I think it's very important that we don't allow people to come in and get up and express their own views if they're different from ours, or their doctrine.

As a group we try to make people feel welcome when they're there. I think we do. We try to be warm and friendly and talk to them, not to shun them.

As a result of that, we do have people from time to time that just come in and see us. They don't attend all the time, but they may come in once a year or a couple times a year. I think it's good lesson that we've learned, and we should be open.

They can feel loved, and we know that there are people out there that are trying to practice the Christian principles that God and Christ tell us in the Bible. If we do that, actions speaks louder than a thousand words. I'm glad they feel that way and they are welcome where we are, and hope more will come and stop in and visit as they wish.

Along the lines of judging one another and getting along. As Fred has brought out, we all have sins, things we're trying to overcome. But a minister mentioned one time—because we are all judgmental many times—***God uses the strengths of people and not their weaknesses!***

I think that is something that is very good, and I've tried to learn and practice, and that's because we all have weaknesses and we all have strengths. That's what we need to do, use the strengths of each other and not look at our weaknesses. Much more can be accomplished with each other and grow in love if we do that.

FRED: Thanks for bringing that, Marlin. I think this also shows that we have matured and matured in participation, in understanding and love toward each other. We have confidence and trust in that.

Please understand, as I've said before, ***I do not want people to follow me!*** But if I teach you to follow Christ and you follow what I teach because it's the Word of God, then that's the way it needs to be!

One man said, 'Who does Fred Coulter think he is; he must think he's speaking for God.' Well, the truth is this: ***Anyone who preaches the Word of God from the Bible is speaking for God*** (Jer. 23). Those are His words.

I would not presume to speak for God. God has not called me to speak for Him as an individual on His behalf, separate from His Word. So, we need to all get the perspectives right. We all need to get the criticisms and the difficulties resolved. When we do, God is going to give us the growth that He wants. That means that may not be in numbers. That may be in ***spiritual character, spiritual love and understanding of His Word!***

We need to realize that, too! I think this conference has been very, very good in that aspect and the fruit of God's Spirit. I'm very thankful for

all the other men who were able to come. I know that you've taken your time and traveled.

As I mentioned on Sabbath, I hope that all the brethren love and respect you for the work and dedication that you have done through the years in helping and serving the brethren. You've done it for years on your own time, on your own dime. God loves you for it, and we love you for it.

Thank you for it and I hope all the brethren do! Let's get off our carnal high-horses in the Churches of God and focus on God the Father and His plan. Love each other and then maybe God will be pleased to hold back some of these events for a time so that He may save more, because of using all of His people to do so wherever they are.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 91:1-16
- 2) Romans 8:28-30
- 3) 1 John 4:4-21

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Hebrews* {#27 *The Covenant Between God the Father and the Son*}

FRC:bo
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