

HLH- 780611- 7 Eras of OT Church

This is the festival of Pentecost and there are some symbolizations in the Old Testament that we have never really examined and could to our profit.

I would like to take a look for the moment at some symbols given in Leviticus 23 as well as matters revealed in Exodus 25 and 37 that may not at the moment seem apparent, though there is a relationship.

First of all, I draw to your attention in Leviticus 23 some material with which we are generally familiar.

In the 23rd chapter, beginning with the 15th verse, we are told of a sheaf or an omer of waving which was cut in the beginning minutes of the first day of the week, that is on the day after the Sabbath and not an annual holy day as the Pharisee custom, representing the resurrection of Christ, its ultimate waving sometime in the morning of that same first day of the week when Christ ascended to heaven, and seven weeks are to follow from this occasion.

Christ returned, of course, that day, and you are familiar with material that shows that when Jesus saw Mary Magdalene initially, he told her not to touch her when he was seen of a number of women later on the road, they embraced him by the feet which clearly indicates that he had both ascended to his father in heaven and been accepted and returned.

But that was only the beginning, and what we have is seven weeks of harvest laid out here.

These are the seven natural weeks that commence on the first day of the week, which follows a Sabbath during the Passover days of unleavened bread season.

The custom, as indicated from the book of Joshua, is that the waving of this sheaf or omer occurred during the days of unleavened bread, which was the Phariseeic understanding and not the Sadduceic understanding.

What happened, of course, is that both Sadducees and Pharisees erred, but each on a different point.

The Sadducees, having misunderstood that the fourteenth would be, on occasion, the Sabbath, and the fifteenth, the first holy day, could fall on a Sunday, and that would be a day in which the wave sheaf would be cut, or the omer, and the omer is a measurement, of course, because the word sheaf is really in the Hebrew, omer, and that indeed in this case we would have the ceremony occurring on the first day of unleavened bread.

The Pharisees understood that the cutting of the omer or the sheaf occurred during the days of unleavened bread.

The Pharisees had that right, but made the mistake of determining the Sabbath as an annual one.

They did this in opposition to the Sadducees, who were mixed up on the question in the Hellenistic period we would presume.

There's no reason to believe it was earlier than that, and as a result, they sometimes had the sheaf cut after the days of unleavened bread when the Passover the fourteenth fell on a Saturday, and then

the Sabbath, which preceded the wave sheaf, they assumed would be the last day of unleavened bread, and hence the sheaf was cut and waved after the days of unleavened bread.

As you know, we evaluated this material in 1974.

Mr. Armstrong came to the doctrinal evaluation that indeed, if the wave sheaf represents Jesus Christ, it could not be outside of the days of unleavened bread.

It must be within those days, for those days do, in a sense, picture the 7,000 years of human experience, and the Messiah must have been accepted before the close of the millennium.

There could be no doubt about that.

It could not be afterward.

On this basis, we do have an understanding that we did not have before, but after the cutting of the sheaf, it was possible for seven, during seven natural weeks, to complete the harvest of barley, or winter wheat, which would have been ripening.

What we have is a picture that should be very clear, and that is that there is a period of time set out during which a preliminary harvest in the northern hemisphere occurs.

In this harvest, we have a symbolization of what we would call those who were asked to participate in the first resurrection.

The beginning of the harvest, that is, though the one who was resurrected first and lives now in the kingdom of God as immortal spirit, is Jesus Christ from Galilee, the one whom his contemporaries called the Galilean Dreamer, and a name they still apply.

He was the first.

There was a ceremony commemorating that particular cutting of a number of sheaves and the waving of an omer's worth, which was the 10th of an ephah.

There was no other ceremony within those seven weeks until the close on the 50th day.

That implies that the stages of the resurrection don't occur from day to day or week to week or year to year.

They occur at the beginning of a sequence, and then they occur at the close.

For we find that on the 50th day, they were to present a special offering, a new meal offering made of what had been harvested.

It was to be brought out of their dwellings in the form of two loaves, wave loaves, because they were to be waved.

Of two tenths parts of an ephah, a tenth of an ephah would have been an omer, and there were two loaves, so these are two of the same essential size as the original offering.

They shall be of fine flour and, in this unusual instance, baked with leaven, for first fruits to the Lord.

Now, the other was most certainly a first fruit in a very special way, and James tells us that Christ is the first of the first fruits.

So this must symbolize, without any question, the first resurrection.

It is made up of offerings, too, specifically, that were baked with leaven, and leaven is a symbol of sin in the ceremony that is laid out here in the twenty-third chapter and in the Exodus twelve.

We draw the conclusion, therefore, that what we are dealing with here are people, unlike that first offering, where sin has been present in the lives of those who become the first fruits.

There was no leaven, Christ was without sin, he asked the Pharisees or the Sadducees, which of you can convict me of sin? And he never offered an offering, they charged him with sin on occasion.

Were you not, you know, a demon possessed and were you not born out of wedlock and do you not blaspheme? But they could never prove their case until they fraudulently tried to do so at the time of his death before Pilate.

So there is a distinction between the one who was first resurrected and without sin and the two wave loaves that are defined here.

What we discover then is that this is certainly a valid picture of the state of those whom God calls to his church.

Now it has been the understanding of the church and validly so that with two wave loaves we must be dealing with something unique or peculiar with respect to those partaking of the first resurrection.

It would appear on the basis of all the evidence that we have that we are dealing with what we would call the congregation of God.

Those who are imbued with the spirit of God, without which it is not possible to be in the first resurrection, and in two parts such a group would fall.

We are not now, of course, symbolically dealing with any material before Moses, but that's not important.

All this symbolization begins with Moses, so it has nothing to do with the patriarchs, because what is being symbolized here is not what had happened before but what was to occur.

And here we have clearly laid out an indication that from Moses' time forward there would be a two-fold division, two wave loaves.

We only have, anywhere in the Bible, a two-fold division with respect to man's relationship to his Creator in terms of the covenant at Sinai and the proposal of the covenant laid out by Jesus on the mount recorded in Matthew chapter 5.

We call the one, the proposal, a new covenant, and since a new is mentioned, Paul says it makes the one at Sinai old.

God did not make an old covenant, he made a covenant at Sinai, but it became old because another one was proposed.

What we therefore conclude from this is that we are dealing with people who were called in the first wave loaf from the days of Moses to the days of the coming of the Messiah.

We are dealing in the second.

Those who were called under the terms and conditions laid out in Matthew 5 is the basic outline of a new covenant arrangement from the time of Jesus Christ or Pentecost till today.

And this, of course, is not to tell us anything about the millennium because this is offered on Pentecost.

This is not offered in the autumn.

This is the first fruits, the first resurrection.

So we are symbolizing here the events from Moses to the return of Jesus Christ or from Moses, if you please, to this first resurrection.

And I believe that we can say there is, in general, a universal consent to a recognition of the meaning of this, but we have never followed through in terms of some of the ceremonies.

We have now clearly laid out before us an indication that there is no resurrection since two spirit into the kingdom of God between the time that the wave sheaf or the sheaf of the waving or the omer was cut and when the day of Pentecost, in a sense, will ultimately be fulfilled with the first resurrection when Jesus Christ returns, that is, when the harvest, the first harvest is complete.

Mr. Schnippert pointed up that we are the first fruits in the sense that we have the spirit of God today and we are passing through the season in the northern hemisphere of this early harvest.

There are many who do not have this spirit who may have been in contact with us.

There were many in the congregation of God or the congregation of Israel from Moses to the Herodian period who were not called and imbued with the spirit of God.

They were indeed listening, but they did not have faith to comprehend and the spirit of God, after all, was not promised then to everyone.

But there were some few whom God did call, sometimes an individual, sometimes certainly hundreds or thousands, as we shall see, who lent themselves to obedience to God, which was possible, of course, only if they had the spirit of God, if they were going to do it according to the intent and purpose for which the law was given at Sinai.

See, David read and meditated on the law.

He wasn't looking for loopholes, he was to understand it.

And those who had the spirit of God in Old Testament times did not look for excuses.

They looked to understand even more than was written.

To comprehend and to write up, if you please, as you will find on occasion in the Psalms and in Proverbs, not to mention the prophets, how the law should be comprehended.

And when Jesus quotes statements from the Bible in Matthew chapter 5, the interesting thing is that he tells us how to live in terms of statements made in the Old Testament, that is the Hebrew part of the Bible, if not in the law itself.

For instance, when he speaks about loving your neighbor as yourself, that is certainly an elaboration and a higher statement than any one of the ten points given in the Ten Commandments.

That is in the law itself, a matter of your attitude toward others, how you serve God, these things are laid out also.

And so people in the Old Testament time searched the law, tried to understand just as we searched the law and tried to understand.

In fact, the interesting thing is that Jesus gives us in chapter 5 of Matthew and also in chapter 6 and 7, but the briefest outline, and of course the apostles help here and there, of how to look at the same law.

It is something generally not understood that when we have many chapters pertaining to law, that we call the Old Covenant or the Old Testament law or Sinai, that the people who lived in the days of the prophets had as much of the law as we do.

Jesus did not change that law.

He did not come to change any of its wording.

It is standing as it did in the form of the Old Covenant.

Jesus did enunciate for us how he wanted it understood, and his spirit did work through kings and prophets to enunciate in Old Testament times how people should look at the law.

They were also obligated to certain ceremonies we are not obligated to, but what I think you have to understand, which most people, I think, fail to grasp, there is no place where Jesus lays out word for word the terms and conditions of the New Covenant.

Jeremiah says that what were his laws and his statutes, his commandments, his judgments are finally to be written in man and not merely on tables of stone or in a book.

We are told by Paul that we are administrators of the New Covenant, not according to the letter but the spirit.

We have no difference in terms of what we can read today than what people in the Old Testament times could read.

They read the law, we read the law.

We do not find the New Covenant laid out in any complete form in opposition to the Old Covenant.

We find the New Covenant as a statement of relationship that will be completed, which reflects the fact that the Spirit of God enables the laws of God to be written in us instead of outside us so that we can achieve the same thing today by looking at the law at Sinai as David could by looking at the law.

The difference is that we have Jesus' own wording giving us some idea of how to approach it.

David had to meditate on it, and unless God appeared to him directly or through a prophet, he had to grasp it with his understanding through the Spirit of God without any written statements as we have in Matthew 5.

But I bring to your attention that in Matthew 5, we have only seven points of all the law addressed, and six are specific, and the seventh one covers all the rest, which is summarized by saying, you shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

So Jesus is asking us to go right back to the same law that was given to take a look at it as he did, and in a sense to take a look at it as David was expected to and the prophets and those who obeyed.

I'm sure there are people who assume that if Christ did not rewrite the law in the form it would have to be of the letter in Greek, that therefore there isn't any.

The fact is that the law is all there.

What difference there is between the old and the new covenant period of time is that we have added help written up in the Bible to enable us to look at the law with greater clarity than ever before so that David would not have been expected to the prophets to see it as clearly or to be held perhaps with as much responsibility as we are when we look at the law because we have the insight of Paul, of Peter, of James, and John, and Jude, and Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and Jesus himself all looking and examining the law and reflecting on it in their thinking, their writing, their conduct.

I doubt that many of us have really contemplated the reality of this thing, that in the Old Testament people could look at that law and those who had the Spirit of God whom God called saw it in a light as David said, it isn't that you want sacrifices, you want a contrite spirit, a broken heart, not the blood of an animal.

David understood the law of Moses just as Paul did.

That Paul understood it with greater clarity because David was living during the time of the Old Covenant.

In any case, we have the special privilege of taking that law today and examining it and living by it, but the interesting thing in the ceremony which we were noticing in Leviticus 23 is that there were two wave loaves, they both had the same weight, they were both made of fine flour and they were both baked with leaven.

There was in this sense no basic distinction.

You do not have people who looked at the law carnally in one loaf and those who looked at it spiritually in another.

Those who looked at it carnally in Old Testament times are not in the first resurrection.

They are not of the first fruits.

There is no basic distinction except that we are asked to see with greater clarity and therefore more as expected, but the attitude must be fundamental in each case.

That man should seek to obey his maker with his mind and his might, his soul, and he should love his neighbor as himself.

Those are basic statements in the law given by Moses.

They are basic statements given by Jesus.

That is the fundamental approach and those who were called while apart of the congregation of Israel constitute one of these loaves.

Those who were called while apart of the congregations of God through time constitute the other loaf.

We can be forgiven of sin, but we live with sin because we were not born imbued with the Spirit of God as Jesus was.

We were born of Adam.

Our minds, without the Spirit of God, or until God called us, was not directional.

That is, the law of God directs the mind in the correct direction we should go.

But the mind of man is non-directional when he is born.

And some people are pulled in one direction, some are pulled in another.

Some are pulled by their own vanity, some by the vanity of others.

Some are pulled by the flesh, some are pulled by the intellect, some are pulled by emotion.

But in any case, there is no direction in terms of the way man ought to go that is natural to man until the Spirit of God is there.

But in the meantime, we have created many habits.

And these habits are, in most cases, not good habits.

They must be corrected.

Therefore, what we find is that conversion is not only an experience in which we have contact with God and can call him Father and know that Jesus Christ is there when we present our petitions to him and that we have the power to resist the world and the devil, but we also are to overcome ourselves.

And what we find in ourselves, hence the leaven that is mentioned here, is that we have many habits and overcoming, in most cases, involves the matter of changing these habits, redirecting them.

It is much harder to correct some habits than others.

Those which have taken no major root, you might overcome in a hurry.

And those which have been here from childhood are much more difficult to master.

And hence we live with leaven, even though we ask to be forgiven, it is a characteristic of human experience.

And that is why these two loaves are described as with leaven the only offerings of their kind.

We now proceed to examine what the full significance of each of these loaves is.

If one represents, in other words, the time from Moses through the time when the covenant at Sinai was the primary arrangement governing a specific people and that people's relationship to God, then the other represents the relationship in which we are called not to serve in the oldness of the letter, but to serve as the patriarchs and prophets and kings who obeyed God did in the newness of spirit.

And this particular period that we call the New Testament time in which God calls peoples from many nations and not just one.

Peoples who are scattered from nation to nation through time and not in a relatively limited area with a specific geographic homeland.

Now we have known for 20 more years that the story of this second wave loaves, so to speak, of the New Testament church is reflected in the Book of Revelation in ways that we can perceive.

There are several ways of examining and looking at the story.

Within the account in the Book of Revelation chapter 1 verse 20, we have the nature, the characteristic of the history of this church, that half, if you please, of the first harvest in our second wave loaves.

As for the mystery of seven stars, which you saw in my right hand, this is the RSV, and the seven golden lamp stands.

The seven stars represent angels of seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches to whom the letter was initially addressed.

In reading chapters 2 and 3, we discover that everyone is asked to read the messages one each to each of seven churches in Asia Minor.

Now we perceive from this that every single human being can experience learning and spiritual insight in terms of himself, he that has ears to hear, let him hear, in terms of himself and profit by the letters to seven churches.

So we have individual perception, meaning that may apply to ourselves, lessons that some of us need in one area, may be another needs in another area.

But there can be no doubt that we do not have here also other than the story through history of the experience of these churches, for they are laid out in such a fashion that as you proceed from one to the other, the characteristic problems occur through history in each of these as we move through time.

Or to put it another way, if you were not to know of Revelation 2 or 3, and you were to examine the history of human experience in the Christian world, you would define the history of the experience of people who sought to do God's will, however dimly perceived, in a fashion that you would divide it up as I did when I wrote the story of the history of the experience of God's people into five separate parts, until you come to the middle of the 1930s.

And I saw the history of a people.

When the Greeks and Jews, I should put it the other way, of course, the Jews and Greeks in terms of the time of calling, together in the first century and into the second, were in a specific relationship, and that problems arose in that second century that ultimately lead to changes in human experience.

And we have these reflected in the controversy called the Quarta de Siumen controversy that took place in Asia Minor.

And we move from a world in which Jew and Greek live together in the New Testament experience to a world in which the Church is clearly concentrated in Asia Minor with its headquarters in Smyrna, and not Ephesus, at which time, clearly, we have such men as Polycarp and Polycrates speaking for the Church.

We move through time after the Council of Nicaea in 325, till we come to people who were scattered throughout Asia Minor, bearing the names of the same congregations that were in Greece, Macedonia.

No one in general in Armenia, or greater Armenia, not present Soviet Armenia, in Eastern, Central Asia Minor, as Paulicians tracing peoples with similar understanding through the Balkans till they settled in the mountains in the Alps of Europe, where they met remnants of brethren who were still there from ancient times in Italy.

And there we have the Pasigini and the Waldenzians.

We have the migration of people who were connected with them to England, where they were known as Sabaterians.

And when they came to Rhode Island in the 17th century, they bore the name Sabaterians, sometimes Churches of God.

And they developed through the centuries till in the 20th century, we have the Churches of God's seventh day.

And there were five basic stages.

We were dealing with Jews and Greeks and Armenians and all the peoples who settled in the areas of Central Europe.

Now, of course, this does not mean that there were not many other peoples called in the original experience, Israelites and Scythians, but I'm talking about the area where the Church was concentrated.

And since that time, since the Middle Ages, it has been concentrated in the English-speaking world until now, of course, it is around the world and people of all nations are being called.

We have, without any question, whether we ever saw Revelation 2 or 3, a knowledge not only that the Church has been here through time, but there have been people who have sought to obey God to keep the Passover, to keep the Sabbath, who were persecuted for obedience, who were known to have observed on occasion the holy days, who did convey a message of the kingdom of God as they perceived it.

Because when God called Mr. Armstrong, for instance, in the 1920s, he did not reveal everything that is now known by him anymore than everything that you now know was revealed to you when you were first called.

And people at different times understand different things more clearly.

We have, in Revelation 2 and 3, a parallel.

If we have the ears to hear of the experiences of the churches of God through time, now what you note is that these are seven candlesticks.

They represent, if you please, that second wave loaf.

It is not a single candlestick because it is made up of many people, persecuted and moving from place to place.

The implications are that the work that God does at one time grows and then declines.

Pressures from the outside and or the inside build up.

You do not have any single people, you have many people.

I have mentioned specifically the people who were prominent in the story.

There is quite a contrast between a church that is persecuted, that is made up at one time of one group of people, made up another time of another group of people, moving from here to there, and the story of the first wave loaf.

So let us note that when Jesus reveals himself to the churches that we associate with the New Testament experience in history, he appears with seven lampstands constituting seven churches.

And now let us see what happens when he appears to Moses in chapter 25 of the book of Exodus.

Verse 31, you shall make a candlestick of pure gold, of beaten work shall the candlestick be made.

Notice carefully that the seven lampstands or candlesticks in Revelation 1.20 are not the same as this one.

This one was revealed to Moses for purposes of Tabernacle and the temple.

What is in Revelation is the story of seven distinct lampstands, not seven competing churches all at one time.

There were initially seven specific church bodies or congregations that were meant to teach us a lesson, but all constituting a part of the total churches of God that acted as a basic unit to carry God's work.

But it is unique that whereas Moses was shown a single candlestick, Jesus showed the New Testament brethren seven separate candlesticks.

The candlestick that Moses made is not the same as the candlestick, seven in number that Jesus held in his hand.

Those seven represent the fact that there is no continuity in terms of people.

There is continuity in terms of people with the first.

Four, this lampstand which Moses was asked to make, which had all its decorations, was to have not only the main candle at the top, but six branches, three on either side.

And they were to make, Moses was to have them make in verse 37, all together seven lamps on a single candlestick to give light to the world.

The seven churches of Revelation were candlesticks or lampstands that gave light to the world and give light to the world through time.

That's why they are lampstands, is something that gives light.

But in this case, they were separate.

That is, the unity was not the same as you find here.

For the simple reason that that first wave loathe which parallels this lampstand, like the second wave loathe which parallels the seven lampstands, this first one represents a single people centered in a single geographic area.

That is, there was a unity that linked those seven lamps in the tabernacle that did not exist in the New Testament sequence.

I think this is something we should take note of.

But as Jesus is not saying that the candlestick with the seven lamps bearing light are the same as the seven separate lamps of the New Testament.

But it is interesting that if you have two wave loaves and the ceremonies pertaining to tabernacle or temple have a lampstand with seven lamps or candles, and that in the case of the other wave loathe you also have seven, it would be good for us then to note that just as we can examine history and look at the experience of people who were persecuted and called those who were Judaizers or Sabotarians, keepers of the law, circumcizers, terms that were used right or wrongly, heretics and given the name of people or geographic areas, if we can find an experience in the New Testament time, we should be able to look at the Old Testament experience, as we now call it, and we should be able to find in it something very similar.

That is, we should be able to look from the days of Moses to the collapse of the temple in 70 A.D., and we should in fact find that God dealt with his church in a manner such that we would expect seven lampstands reflected now as a single lampstand with seven lamps, in other words, where the same experiences that people go through in life will be seen in a seven-fold pattern, but not other than the family of Israel, which is what held those lamps together in one golden stand. It was one people, not many. Now, there is no question, as we look at it through time, that let us take some recent experience, that a work in reaching the world came to be prominent as a result of the work of a congregation and the work of then numerous congregations that began in the 1930s through the work of a particular man and woman and men and women who came to be added to the congregation. This is the story of the Worldwide Church of God. We could go back to the last century and we would find a significant work, albeit with different means, without radio or television, but publication and speaking carried the churches of God's seventh day throughout the middle of the United States to the West Coast and back to the East Coast, where they had begun. It was sufficient, and people who do not understand the history of the church would not know, for instance, that in the Civil War there were only two churches that were absolutely conscientious objectors, the Mennonites and the Churches of God's seventh day, that in the First World War the Mennonites and the Churches of God were objectors, and A. N. Duggar represented the Churches of God to the government of the United States. A federal judge, before whom I once appeared in terms of my conscientious objector status during the Korean War, told me that his reading brought to his attention that the Church of God today, the continuity, if you please, of the Churches of God's seventh day, though the relationship was terminated in that period of time, centering around 1938, that we were a part of a historic group that was known before the government of this country as being willing to submit to whatever penalty rather than to take the life of fellow Christians and fellow men. In other words, it is true that the Churches of God have not done their thing in a corner, but God does not always use the same group continuously because sometimes it goes through an experience where it does not any longer walk with Christ and the light goes out and another lamp stand comes on.

We could go back in time and note in the same way that we can trace the history of the Churches of God, the Sabaterians, before the Court of Star Chamber in the days of Queen Elizabeth, the same group of people who came to the United States that constituted ultimately the body of people that we know of as the Churches of God. If we can see that indeed there are experiences recorded as in Cox's literature of the Sabbath question, which presents the story of many individual Christians in the days of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and succeeding times. I even have some of the published literature of Brethren at that time pertaining to the Sabbath. I know there are people who do not know the history of the Church. That is their problem. It is not mine. But if we can find such a history, we should be able to look to the Bible from Moses to that part of the New Testament, which in a sense would bring us to the parallel of the experience up to 70 A.D., and it is very likely that if we examine it carefully, we will find a significant movement up and down of human experience in the way God dealt with a particular nation and people, and in the way, if you please, the people dealt

with God. You will find that as you read the Bible, there will be units of time in which there is a kind of continuity of experience and behavior linked together by leader or leaders, and then suddenly significant changes occur. So, for example, if we were to look through the story and see what we do find in terms of that first wave loaf and that lampstand, and by the way, that lampstand was about 72 inches high or 6 feet, it was made up of a talent of pure gold that is around 120 pounds, if you would like to buy it, along with the vessels, that is, the snuffers and the tongs that went with it.

This was a rather expensive item, and perhaps it meant to symbolize, if you please, the valuableness, the worth of the people who carried the light, and sometimes the light went dim. There are unique features. I'm going to approach this similarly to what a historian might, if you were to take a political overview of the history of the family of Israel and the state of Israel in Judah. If you were to take a political view, your conclusions would differ only slightly from mine, because we are dealing here with the question of what bears light, and sometimes the light goes out before the political change.

There might be some slight differences to how you might present it if you were telling the story politically only of the interplay of Israel and other nations. Having read the account, there can be little doubt that we can profit by the experience, and I think we can break down the story of the Old Testament, and we will see that there are some unique features to help us understand that experience much better when we perceive that there were indeed, in the Old Testament account, five separate experiences, with two more following, one between the New and the Old Testament record, and the other, the church, that is the background for the New Testament experience, and that is the story of the congregations and synagogues to which Jesus and the disciples first assembled. If you were to pick the story up beginning with the Tabernacle in Moses, you will be in the wilderness, there would be no doubt that if I were to ask you, you would say, well, certainly the first period does seem to center on the experience of Moses and the generation that learned under him. Now, politically, one might terminate this experience with the death of Moses, because politically and geographically, we have a certain change when you cross over Jordan and settle in a land, but it is my conviction when I read to you certain verses that the we can't quite do this, and we should extend the, shall we say, the first lamp to include the time of the experience of Moses and Joshua and the elders that outlived Joshua. Now, this is the time of the giving of the law. This is the time of the confirmation of the Old Covenant, or, properly, the Covenant at Sinai. It is the time of the conquest of Palestine, and it is summarized best by a very simple statement at the end of the book of Joshua, if you please, verse 31, last chapter 24, and Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua and had known all the work of the Lord that he had wrought for Israel. This is, if you please, that generation which was under 20 when the Exodus began. This is the generation that experienced the 40 years, and the reason I connect Moses and Joshua and the elders is that we are dealing here with a group of people who were meant to reflect to the Gentile nations around them what God wanted this people to be. It is a people whose fathers and mothers didn't see it, but a people that grew up having been children and seen these experiences for themselves came to believe what God could do, and they obeyed and served God all the days of Joshua. Well, you know, there were always exceptions like we have the story at Ai, but we are dealing here as a whole with a nation whose experience at this time is unique in the sense that the nation as a whole went through an experience such that the generation in totality with few exceptions served the Lord all this time. There is no question when you were, if you were to look at it, you would say the mosaic period is unique, to which we would add that the light that began in the wilderness continued to burn in the days of Joshua and the few elders that outlived him.

You have the story of the death of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, as you have the story of the death of Joshua in verse 33, and finally that whole generation was dead. That I hold as we look at the story is an example of what God intended the children of Israel to be.

What happens after the death of Joshua is something very interesting and it is picked up in the story of the book of Judges. The story of the book of Judges, one of the most interesting in the Bible in terms of human experience and stupidity, is the story of the nation of a new generation and a whole sequence of generations under Judges whose behavior now was up and down and up and down and up and down over and over again for five major invasions and five major Judges, men and women. God dealt with his people as if he were a king, and from time to time when the nation sinned, he let Gentiles overrun them, and then when they called out to him, he sent a judge or a deliverer, a judge because he was the man who could settle disputes, one who in a sense represented the law. There were no kings at this time, but there is no doubt if you were to read the book of Judges, you would find that the experience of this period of time is quite different from the experience of Moses and Joshua, and you could ask any who are skilled, let's say, in teaching the Old Testament period, and I think that you would recognize that the religious experience differs amazingly. Now, Joshua was a judge, of course, and so was Moses, but I think that you will see without a question that the period of the Judges is significant. Politically, one might start with Joshua, that I would concur with. If Mr. Page were to teach it from me, and he has been in the college, from a political point of view, he would necessarily start from the geographic occupation of the land. I would start the story here from a religious point of view of the reason for the light on that lamp, that that lamp burned brightly in the days of Moses and Joshua, and then it went out, and what you have is a whole new sequence of God dealing with the people in a different manner. Now, one could take the experience of the Judges all the way down politically to the first time when we have new stability in the days of David, when there was no question that the monarchy was now a stable institution. I would break the story spiritually earlier. I would break it at an account in the lifetime of Samuel, which gives rise to the story of the monarchy's first Samuel, chapter eight. It came to pass when Samuel was old, that he made his son's Judges over Israel. He was a Levite in the area of Ephraim. The name of his sons are given here, and his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after money, filthy money. It appeared and took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel, to Ramah. Behold, you're old, and your sons don't walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like the nations. We want a king, not merely judges who rise from time to time. The thing to please Samuel, when they said, give us a king to judge us. Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said to Samuel, hearken to the voice of the people. Samuel, in all that they say to you, there's no reason now to let them do anything but revolt. Because remember, Samuel, they have not actually rejected you, they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them. So what we really see here is that up to this time, in this experience of the Judges, God was their king. He made the decision.

He decided whom he wanted as a judge. If the judge was Barak, if the judge was Othniel, if the judge was Ehud, if he were to choose Agidean, if he were to choose Jephthah, if he were to choose Sampson, that would be his decision, his problem. Now, what they were really doing when they said, we want a human king is that we don't want God to be king.

I think people have not perceived that God places himself here as king over Israel. Now according to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, and that they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also to you, Samuel. That is, you know, they won't obey him any more than they will obey me, God is saying. So hearken, but explain to them what they're going to have for a king. Now, what we have here is no longer a relationship as we

did before, but a whole new governmental relationship that is being established. Not that intimate personal contact that God had with Moses and Joshua, when he dealt most directly with the people, not that incidental contact as king that he had under the judges, but now we come, in other words, to a third phase when monarchy is established. Sometimes the term united monarchy would be used in contrast to a later divided, but it didn't start out very united. So we will merely refer to the period of the monarchy, and Israel now reflects its light, what it ought to be, not as God originally had it, but now with kings. First Saul, then David, then Solomon. And you have a whole experience here that is the most remarkable in any area of the Old Testament in terms of the magnitude and greatness. So what you have is people sometimes obeying God and the light shines, sometimes they are very careless about it and the light grows comparatively dim. It started out at this time in an act of rebellion, but with the spirit of Samuel and with a person like David and a person like Solomon, we have some of the most remarkable areas of the Bible and an impact on the world around them such that the traditions of people who to this day live in the Middle East remember the person of Solomon, the builder of the temple. No Arab is without knowledge of Solomon or David. This is the time of the monarchy. God speaks in an entirely different manner to the Gentiles through them. Certainly the way David and Saul dealt and Samuel, we are in a different phase of the history of Israel. It begins with rebellion. The second phase began with a departure from obedience. The first phase, you know, began, that's a state of affairs with a whole generation that wouldn't obey, but God worked and made the next one produce. And over and over again, he made them produce under the judges. And now, although they started in rebellion, they were ultimately forced to see what kind of a person God really wanted to be king. Now, God allowed this for he had a very clever reason. You see, if he were king, then the solution would be if the nation wanted a king, all he'd have to do is be born into that family, which is of course what Jesus did, and they'd be king again.

So he got back at them. But in any case, we deal here with a monarchy that reached a high point in the manifestation of the light of God in the wisdom of Solomon in the authority and character previously of David and in the implications of a foolish leader such as Saul.

This is the story of the monarchy and without a question and an experience that's important.

One could say that politically, it begins with David because Saul was a poor ruler.

And indeed, politically, I would put the border there. But when you look at the whole story, the life of David makes no sense without his contact with Saul. The relationship of Saul all starts with this unique experience of the nation in rebellion, wanting to have kings, not judges. And so from a spiritual point of view, of how God dealt with the nation so that it would give light to the world, I think we would come to a whole new phase here. As soon as Solomon was dead, they had a problem about taxation, but they didn't have Proposition 13. They had Jeroboam. And what we have is the story of a revolt, as soon as Solomon is dead. We come to the account of the revolt and the story of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. I won't go through the background, but suddenly the church, the congregation of God, the congregation of Israel, the church now splits. And one part en masse, ten out of the twelve tribes in fact, abandoned the throne that God instituted. And the light continues in Judah, and those few in Israel who were willing to obey God. The prophets often appeared in both countries. But once the death of Solomon has been recorded, we have passed through a phase that politically and or spiritually, we would have to say now, we are entering a new period of time in which God is dealing through a specific dynasty over a remnant of people. So the story of Pentecost is to tell us the story and the experience of the church. And I think just as we should have understood some of the experience of the church and the New Testament, that it would have its ups and downs, and some people left because it had some downs, they didn't want to have anything but quiet waters.

They had no root when the winds of trial blew. So they must not have been able to read the Old Testament to see the winds of trial that blew at this time. Beginning with the twelfth chapter of First Kings, we have the story of the revolt and the gradual decline, the high points and the low points throughout this period of the divided monarchy that takes us, as I would draw the conclusion, through the Babylonian captivity. Politically, one could end it with the fall of Jerusalem. But in a sense, the great prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, speaking God's message, both before the fall of Jerusalem and after, continue through the Babylonian captivity. And I would link the story up at this point and convey, let's say, the picture of the divided monarchy from Rehoboam, Jeroboam's time, to the fall of Judah, we've already passed the fall of Israel, you see, and the expulsion of the people, which was the consequence of the behavior of the kings, specifically of Manasseh. This is the story in which God dealt with kings in a manner similar to the way he dealt with judges. In other words, if you were to look at it, you would discover that there are parallels with the ups and downs of the kings as with the ups and downs of the judges. In the same way that there is a remarkable high point in the way God dealt with Moses and Joshua as he later dealt in the days of David and Solomon. Special revelations came, vast portions of the Bible being written, you know, the book of Psalms, most of them, the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, not to mention the parallel history. In this sense, we have, I think, some clear outlines as to how God dealt with the nation, the government of the church, because this was a church, it was a nation that was a church. The government differs from time to time. It is not always the same. When we finish this fourth phase of the experience of Israel, we come to a miniature restoration in the days of Zerubbabel continuing with further movements in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and of course, as always, before and after. This is a period which historians, and I will adopt their term because it is a valid term to use, describe the state of Judah in Palestine or specifically Jerusalem as a stem, pardon me, as a temple state. I do not think that's an invalid expression.

It is the time of the restoration, but restoration conveys something erroneous. It didn't convey a restoring of the house of David. Therefore, it was not a true restoration. I choose to adopt, then, the historian's view. We'll call it a temple state because the bulk of what happened in Jerusalem was what constituted the state, and it involved the priesthood and all who served in it. It was the state whose focus was around the temple. It was not made up of the territory that was vast through conquest and there were no kings.

We have here God's light to the Gentiles during the Persian period and into the Hellenistic, reflected first through governors that were appointed working with high priests, and then after the Persians, basically no governors and only the high priests, but we have a temple state, very limited in its form, centering on religious worship and the support of the temple. There was no great army. It was, in a sense, protected by the great kings.

These were client states, temple states such as this. Judah was not the only one.

It is a time in which the state of the people is very low. There was intermarriage with Gentiles.

People were trading on the Sabbath. The walls were broken down from time to time. I don't have to turn to all these verses, but you get the feeling they didn't even want to build a temple to start with. This is not a high point in the spiritual experience of Israel.

It's one of the lowest, saddest points. It is a very weak attempt to restore. Not only wasn't Israel restored, but not even Judah, basically little more than the environs of the city of Jerusalem, with a few people scattered outside in villages. The Arab or non-Jewish populations were not occupied. This is the story of a temple that had a little state and conveyed the light of God to the world in a small

manner, but with some very significant personalities, as you will have from time to time. There was Nehemiah, a strong-minded individual.

Ezra, a learned scholar, not to mention, of course, a rubber ball earlier. Following this, we have the decay spiritually of the temple state under the Hellenes. Politically, one might always divide this story as the Persian period, the Hellenistic period. I would not, but that's talking about politically. I would do the same thing, but I'm not talking about politics here. We're talking about the spiritual state of a nation, and there isn't any question that the spiritual state was not very good during any of this time. The people from time to time were encouraged, but when a great leader like Nehemiah was gone, the people's hands fell lax, without hagi to tell the people to begin to do something that didn't do anything.

They had little more than the altar built, but no temple and wouldn't have gone ahead with it.

You finally have a very sad state of decay that led to a revolt, and Hellenism was being introduced.

And at this point, we may turn to the book of Daniel, chapter 11, verse 32, where we find a whole new phase now beginning in the church after, in a sense, the light went out. Turn to Daniel 11, 32.

We'll pick up the story here. 11 is the account of a very lengthy history of experience, and such as do wickedly against the covenant. This is a story of Onias and others who were corrupted by blandishments, sold out to the Seleucid Greeks in Syria, brought an end to the general practice of the law. Then we are told immediately in the last half of verse 32, but the people who know their God shall show strength and prevail. And we are now introduced to one of the most remarkable periods in human experience for the history of the remnant of the house of Israel.

And by the house of Israel, I mean that remnant, which is Judah, because Jewish people are a part of the total house or family of Israel or Jacob. This is the period of the Hasmoneans, starting, of course, in the 160s, BC, with the Matathias, the Hasmonean. And we now have a history suddenly of priests of a new family, priests of a new family, a much lesser family, who soon became priest kings. And we have a period that is written up outside of the Bible in the books of Maccabees and Josephus in contemporary literature, and written up in the book of Daniel in the last half of verse 32. A people who know their God, lighting, if you please, the candle again, showing forth strength and prevailing. And we have no longer the old temple state around Jerusalem, we have a significant political state in which God's church, the congregation of Israel, if you please, the congregation of God has as leaders the a family of the tribe of Levi, of the family of Aaron, that we call Hasmoneans from the original founder of the family. And this continued down to the time when we come to Queen Salome. Now, what happened in the days of Queen Salome, shortly before Herod, is that, being a woman, she wanted to attend to external matters of the kingdom but couldn't take care of everything, and she turned great responsibility over to the Pharisees. So in this sense, though the Hasmoneans continued till the Herodian period, and politically we would divide it with Herod, there is little doubt that in fact, in terms of spirituality, we could say that the light of the Hasmonean rulers was now being replaced by the impact of the Pharisees, who have set themselves on Moses' seat, Matthew 23.2. And we have reached the seventh phase of the experience of the history of the remnant of Israel, that part of the tribe of Judah, and the bulk of Jews were not in Palestine, they were still in Babylon, or Persia, Asia Minor, Egypt. Here we have the background of the New Testament period. And you can read accounts of who made up the rulership. This is a period in which we find the religious power in the hands of the Pharisees, the political power in the remnant of the Hasmonean family, and then the Romans occupy the country, and then Herod comes on the scene, and the Herods lose it politically, and Roman procurators or governors were in charge. And all of this during the time of

the ups and downs of the Pharisees, who competed with the priests, many of whom were Sadducees, and then there were professional people called scribes, and there were those who were elders in the community, and that we can turn to a verse to see who was running everything, Mark 14:53.

And they led Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes were assembled. When it came to political issues, there tended to be a priestly domination, a Sadduceic domination. When you were dealing with doctrine, there was a significant domination by and religious practice by the Pharisees. Without any question, the people as a whole gave heed to the Pharisees. We have this stated in many places in the New Testament. We have passed through, if you please, unique experiences in the history of Israel. And if we were to go back to the book of Daniel, chapter 11, verse 33, we find that the next major statement made pertains to the New Testament Church. Those that are wise among the people will cause many to understand, yet they shall stumble by sword and flame, captivity, and spoil many days. That's the story of the New Testament Church. So what we have is an experience that we could recapitulate. The story of the first generation of the family of Israel is a church at the time of the giving of the law and the conquest extending through that generation that learned its lesson in the wilderness and outlived Joshua. The story of the judges with their downs and ups and downs and ups. And finally, a termination of that arrangement with the establishment of a concept of monarchy, which ended in revolt, introducing a fourth phase of ups and downs in the kingly reign till the Babylonian captivity ended the role of kings. Then a temple state restored by the Persians under leadership both of priests and of governors, which continued through without the governors in the Hellenistic period till we come to the decline and fall of the temple state spiritually. And the rise of the Hasmonean priests who later took the title kings. In Salome, a widow was a queen. And in her day, the final seventh sequence where the power of those who sat on Moses' seat to administer the law passed to the Pharisees, though they were combating with the Sadducees for no small part of the time. But there is no doubt that the bulk of the decisions were made by the Pharisees and the scribes and the Sadducees, apart from political matters where they did have some significant power, had to acquiesce to the teaching. And Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees and whatever they command you that do, they were in charge of the synagogue. That was where the light of God was throughout the Roman world in the synagogues.

But don't do after their works. They were very scrupulous about the law, but their private lives were not very good. Now, the experience of the New Testament church doesn't parallel this at all because we're dealing with a nation-state so that we don't have the same repetitions. We have entirely different repetitions. The interpretation, let's say, of the New Testament experiences found in Revelation 2 and 3 through church history, the experience of the Old Testament churches linked by one nation, one people, is the story of the ups and downs of a people, the revolts, the departures, the exile, the miniature returns, the different forms of government in that church that God had to deal with or that he allowed. And I think if you take a look at the events, you will see that Jesus indeed has dealt with people throughout time in remarkably different manners, has allowed many different things, has permitted what you and I might not have thought he should have permitted, both in Old Testament times and new. But again, after all, maybe he's permitting you some liberties. What you do with a liberty is very important. This is a story that I think is important in the sense that we have the two-wave loaves picturing those who were coming in the resurrection, but we have never linked up the fact that we had a candle stick with seven lamps, and we have seven candlesticks. And if the two-wave loaves represent the two periods of time in which God has dealt with the church, and if we have the seven lamp stands for one of them, then the candle stick with the seven lamps must represent the other. There can be no exception.

And when we do look at the Bible, we find indeed, and I would suggest if you'd like to talk to Mr.

Richard Page or any of the others who might be involved in teaching this area, I only mentioned him because I know he has taught in the area. You will find that in general, the description that I have given reflects significantly on the political situation as a historian might write it, but it tells us how God dealt with a nation religiously and spiritually and where the government rested. Mr. Armstrong used to wonder where, how do you explain the government of God in the church of God's seventh day? It was as phenomenal from our point of view as some of the experiences that God allowed in the Old Testament church, scribes and Pharisees to sit on Moses' seat, but he allowed it. And I think we have to recognize that God does permit strange things, but he doesn't ask you to take liberties when he does give permissions.

God doesn't always stop you from sinning. You have to exercise the discipline to do it.