

**Do We Believe His Prayer? #3;
Thy Will Be Done**

**2016 Feast of Tabernacles, Second Day
October 18, 2016; Townsend, TN**

Jon W. Brisby
Edited Sermon Transcript

In the series that I am providing for you during this Feast of Tabernacles, I am focusing on the sample prayer that Jesus Christ gave to His disciples in Matthew chapter 6. We are taking each element of that prayer, phrase by phrase, and trying to elaborate, to an extent, to show and to explain what the real spiritual significance of each piece is, beyond just a superficial, shallow recitation, which any of us can do—and the people of the world certainly do it. Is there something more significant that Jesus Christ intended for His disciples to learn—to think about, to incorporate—in the way they thought about their personal relationship with God? Yes, absolutely, that is exactly what He intended. And so, in a small way, that is what we are trying to bring out during this particular Feast. So turn with me to Matthew 6, and I am going to read again quickly the whole "Lord's Prayer"—as the world calls it—from verse 9 through verse 13, and then we will tackle the next element in line. Matthew 6 beginning in verse 9:

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come [and that is the element we covered yesterday afternoon], Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [And guess what we are going to talk about today? But, going on, verse 11:] Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Okay, so there is a lot of substance in that, and what I hope to accomplish—although all of you, I suspect, have that memorized and can recite it, probably, without thinking much about it—is to get all of us to think more about the

words, and about the concepts that support the words, within each element of that sample prayer.

So, in verse 10, yesterday, we covered, "Thy Kingdom come." What does it really mean to desire—to pray for—the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ? It is very, very fitting for this seven-day Feast of Tabernacles and its particular symbolism in the overall plan of God.

But let's look at the next phrase of verse 10: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." What does that one mean? Do you know? Because it makes perfect sense that we should be praying for God's will. There are a lot of reasons to pray for God's will, but again, are you sure that you are praying for God's will, and that you have the intent and purpose of mind that God is really looking for when you do? That is what we want to examine.

So, let's say we have the first parts covered: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." We have learned what it means to really sanctify—to treat as holy—the name of God, and it is not just the use of a name. The name pictures something about the character of God. You know, if members of your family honor your family name, it is more than just the name, right? It's about the substance of what is behind the name; it's about the character of the individuals that make up the family. And so it is with God. So, you have already learned what it means to hallow the name of God. Okay, so let's say we have that one down.

You have also learned what it means to pray precisely, seriously, "Thy Kingdom come." Alright, so we really, really want His Kingdom to come—we are in tune with what He is doing. We want the end result that He said He is going to achieve. And I read you those texts yesterday afternoon to show that He *is* going to rule—this is going to happen—whether anybody wants it to, or not. This is going to be the reality not far in the future. So it is going to happen, and let's say that you and I are on that page. We want the results of the Kingdom of God; we want Jesus Christ here ruling as Sovereign; we want His government in place. We agree because we want that paradise, don't we? We want it to come to pass. Great.

But now, "Thy will be done." Is that a different concept? I am going to cover it today. It is a little bit different than just saying, "Thy will be done," or "Thy Kingdom come," because we can very easily agree with Jesus, with the Father, or with a human being about an end result—we can agree that we would all like to accomplish this end result. But do you know where the problem is? It is in the methodology of getting there. And what is the old adage? "The Devil is in the details." Everybody has a different opinion about how to get from point A to point Z. Just try getting people together to achieve some sort of a consensus. You can agree that you all want the same thing at the end, but try to get everybody lined up on how to get to that result and you have a whole different kettle of fish. So, just because we have come to the point that we can pray honestly and confidently, "Thy Kingdom come," does not mean necessarily that we can also pray honestly, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Isaiah 46, verses 9 through 13. One more text to show God's definite purpose in bringing about what He has planned to do. Isaiah 46, beginning in verse 9:

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done . . .

This is one of the things that troubles a number—many—in the Church of God family at large, because a major doctrinal contention arose historically over this doctrine of predestination, and not a lot of people are aware of that. There are many today who still grapple with understanding how God can truly know the end from the beginning, and so, in the Worldwide Church of God, the ministry began in the 1970s to come up with a new doctrine—a new interpretation on this—which was very different than what Mr. Armstrong taught at the beginning. He taught that God *does* know the end from the beginning—that it is one of the attributes of the character of God. The mind of God is not subject to time. He knows all things, past, present, and future, as if they have already been completed. He knows precisely what is going to happen in the future. That was what we were taught. And then the scholars in the church took over, and they had a problem with that, you see, because if God knows what is going to happen—including every decision you and I are going to make before we make it—then that means, they said, that we are not really free moral agents. But God says that we *are* free

moral agents, so they couldn't say that God cannot know the future. So how did they reinterpret it to try and make their pieces fit? They said, "He *could* know, but He chooses not to know." Isn't that clever? God chooses not to know.

How do I describe that concept? It is like saying that God has all this power, but what He does is that He puts His hands over His eyes and His ears, and He goes, "Na, na, na, na. I can't know, because if I know, then they are not really free moral agents." And if it sounds like I am mocking the concept, yes, I am mocking the concept. It is absurd. It is heresy, and what it is trying to do is put a limit on God. And I already gave you the text yesterday to show that His ways are higher than our ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth. So don't try to explain things in the Spirit realm by putting a limit on God. I guarantee you that is a dead end. Alright, it is going to come up a little bit later. So that is just to give you a taste. He says:

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

He is asserting again that He has already determined what He is going to do, and that He already knows the end product of His work. Now, that can cause us problems in mind, because if He knows the end of the story, completely, that means that He also knows who is going to make it, and who is not going to make it, and the path that each one of us is going to walk to get to our end—whether it is one of salvation or one of destruction. He already knows those things, and we stumble at that and we say, "No, no, no, that can't be right, because . . ." And do you know why we think it can't be right? Because we are trying to imprint upon God the weaknesses of human beings—including ourselves—because if we knew who was going to make it, and who wasn't going to make it, it would affect how we deal with people, wouldn't it? If I knew that somebody was going to fail, I would be inclined not to spend any time sacrificing for them. Why put my time and energy into someone who is going to flame out? I am going to focus my attention upon the ones I already know are going to make it. That is human rationalization. That is human weakness. God doesn't have such weakness. God is perfectly supporting every single one toward the end of salvation, but He already knows which ones are going to choose salvation versus those who are going to choose a different end. And I would argue, my dear friends, that you

need to come to reconcile yourself to the fact of God's immutable knowledge, past, present and future. Otherwise, you are putting a limit on God.

But He is going to do His will. It is going to come to pass. Verse 11: "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country." Yes, He says that He is going to use any and varied instruments to accomplish that perfect will, and He certainly has a history of doing that, and the Bible is full of examples of His use of foreign powers to persecute His chosen people in order to correct them. So, He is willing and able to use many different tools to accomplish His will along the path. The problem is that you and I have a problem understanding the minutiae, and we very easily come up with the question, "Well, why God this, and why God that? Because that doesn't seem fair. O God, I know that you are good, and that you are honest, and that you are consistent, and that you are upright, and that there is no sin in you, but this [whatever it is] doesn't seem to be good, or fair, or just, or right." Don't we come up with those kinds of conundrums in our minds?

But He says, "[Y]ea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." Verse 12: "Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted . . ." Now, you might think, "Stouthearted. Yeah, I am stouthearted. I am tough. I am strong. I am resilient." But that is not the way God is using it here. He is not using this as a compliment. He is saying, "Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness." Oh, they are strong in mind and in concept, but He is saying that it is in antithesis to righteousness—meaning, we are locked into ideas which are against the will and the purpose of God. It is a warning. And so that is why the whole context here in Isaiah 46 is to say, "Pay attention, I am going to do my will, my way. So, now, those of you who have ideas in opposition to that, you need to pay attention, because unless you will become teachable, and unless you get on board with me and my plan, you are going to have a bad ending."

Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness
[because they disagree with God and His methodology]: I bring near
my righteousness . . .

He is trying to emphasize that His plan *is* perfect—His plan *is* good. It is a reflection—it is a manifestation—of His perfect and glorious character, and He is desiring very much that we all get on board with Him.

"I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory"—which is why I used this text in connection with Matthew 6:10. To what extent are we on board with Him? To what extent can we earnestly and honestly—without being hypocrites—pray, "Thy will be done"? Do you really want God's will to be done? Do you really agree with Him—not just in the desire for the Kingdom and paradise (the end result), but also in the methodology by which He is bringing it to pass?

People seem to think that God should agree with them. That is the way we are, by nature. We are all very impressed with our own ability to reason, and to think out, and to come to conclusions about how things ought to be done. If you don't believe it, just ask. We all have our own ideas, and therefore, we think that God should agree with us. Now, we will phrase it in terms of us being tuned in to God, but you see, it is very easy to lay a concept upon God, because He is not here to correct us publicly. They did that to Jesus Christ, incessantly, after He was dead, and we are still dealing with that today. People seem to think that God should agree with them, and if He does not, they think they are the right ones, and God is the wrong one.

Why do you think people point their finger at God? Why do you think the Israelites murmured in the wilderness? Remember, they said that they were accusing Moses. "Moses, you brought us out here into this desert to kill our little ones." And when Moses went and prayed to God, what did God tell him, paraphrasing? You know the story. He said: "They haven't rejected you, they have rejected me," because Moses was just an instrument fulfilling the will of God. And so, when they were accusing Moses, they were accusing the plan and the methodology of God. So they were taking exception with the very Author of the plan, but they didn't see it that way. They thought they were just criticizing one step in this thing that a man was getting wrong. They thought Moses was messing up, administratively, and that they were just trying to show him a different way. They didn't see the bigger picture.

Now let's go to Romans 9—oh, a very troubling chapter of the Bible. I am going to read as quickly as I can verses 9 through 24. Romans 9 and beginning in verse 9, because the Apostle Paul was inspired to address this topic—which is why I am bringing it up here—of some of the imponderables in the operation of God which are hard to understand, and which become a stumbling block for His people. Romans 9, beginning in verse 9:

For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; [Verse 11:] (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil [tiny little babies—twin boys—in the womb, having done neither evil or good], that the purpose of God according to *election* . . .

What is this talking about? God made a choice. He predetermined, according to the story plan, that certain things were going to happen with these two little babies. "[T]hat the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works"—meaning He didn't wait until after they were born, and had had a chance to grow up, before making choices that would demonstrate who was better and who was worse, and then reward the one who was good with favor. No, He predetermined that it was going to be the younger brother Jacob, didn't He? And not the older, Esau. "But that's not fair. Poor Esau. He had no chance, because God had already predetermined against him." Isn't that what human beings think? That is exactly what the Apostle Paul is addressing here.

. . . that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) [Verse 12:] It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. [That was predetermined. The plan of God said that the elder shall serve the younger. Verse 13:] As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Do you understand that? Can you reconcile that? Or is this a stumbling block to you, as it obviously was for the brethren in the New Testament church that Paul was ministering to? And do you believe, at the same time, that this God that we are worshiping is good, and fair, and just to all? Can you reconcile that, or do you stumble because of how He treated Esau?

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" Is there? So you cannot say that you think He is unrighteous, can you? But how convinced are you that it is true? Are you fully convinced? The Apostle Paul continues:

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. [No way. He is saying, "Absolutely not."] For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have

compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

But that is still not helping me to understand why He is treating poor Esau this way. What Paul is saying is that you are going to have to take in faith that He is good, and that He is righteous, and that He is perfect, and that He is not undercutting anyone, or putting anyone at a disadvantage, even Esau.

Now, I think we have been given the blessing of further understanding on this, but I am going to resist getting into that. I am going to make a couple of comments on it momentarily, but I want to get through verse 23 before I do it, so hold the thought and we will come back to it.

Verse 17: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh . . ." Here is another example. We just had Esau and Jacob as a challenge to our belief that God is good and just, and now we have another one. Verse 17: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up." So who put Pharaoh—that particular man—in the office of Pharaoh over all of Egypt in the days that Moses lived so that he would ultimately become, if you want to call him this, the "whipping boy" in God's plan? God set him up.

"Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee." God is saying that He had a purpose in humbling Egypt. He was going to make an example of Pharaoh—He was going to bring him down—because it was a part of His story plan to make a statement to all of the nations in the known world at that time, so that they would tremble at the God of Israel, and at this new nation of Israelites who were going to come out into the wilderness. He was doing a work—He was getting everybody's attention—and the best way to get their attention, He decided, was to humble the greatest power on earth at the time, which was the nation of Egypt, and its leader, its figurehead, Pharaoh. So He had already purposed in His plan to humble, and to bring down Pharaoh. "Poor Pharaoh. Poor Pharaoh. He was just a pawn in God's plan. Wasn't his fault." That's the attitude Paul is addressing here.

I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Oh, this is a confirmation of that which we know from the story in Exodus where God said that He hardened Pharaoh's heart, didn't He? "Poor Pharaoh. Wasn't his fault. God did it to him, and made an example of him, and cursed him, and he didn't have anything to say, and no way to prevent it, because he was predestined to play out this little role on the stage. So, how can he be bad? God did it." But hold the thought. This is what Paul is addressing in verse 19. Here is the natural, carnal reaction in every single one of us:

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? [What did Pharaoh do that was so bad?] For who hath resisted his will? [And here is the argument against that:] Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Mr. Raymond Cole used to cover this text, quite to the consternation of certain ones in the church, who for a long time really struggled with it. Here is the confirmation that God intentionally, from the beginning, has even made certain human beings who are going to make it, and some who are going to fail. "Oh, then they are not free moral agents!" Oh, I can already hear it, and some of you are going, "No, no, no!" Yes, you are free moral agents. Let me confirm this: *You have the right to choose* whether or not you make it into the God Family. It is wholly up to you. You have been called, and you have been given that opportunity. It is in your hands whether or not you make it, but I am here, likewise, to tell you that God already knows what your final choices are going to be, because He knows the end from the beginning. Can you reconcile that? It is your choice, but He knows how you end, and He takes that into consideration in where He puts you, and how He does it.

Now, let me confirm this too, because this is a God of love, and mercy, and compassion, who is perfect in righteous character. He is never going to put any human being behind the eight ball, so to speak. He is going to give every single human being the best opportunity for success, which means that if any of us fail, we have no one to blame but ourselves. He can run the story forward. It's like He can run the movie forward and see all of the possible scenarios. "Well, what if I put this individual in this position, with this childhood, and these early experiences, and what about this mentor in this church," and whatever. "Well, oh,

but he makes bad choices and he fails. Well, what if I put him in this situation? I will change the scenario so that he has these influences to try and help him make right choices. But, oh, he still fails." This is a God who has such knowledge, and such power, and infinite capacity that He can run every possible scenario for you and me, and I guarantee you that He has put you in the very best situation to succeed, and guess what? Even physically, historically, even though these individuals were not called in antiquity, He gave all of them the best opportunity.

Now, Pharaoh is going to come up in a resurrection. He was never called, as the ancient Israelites were never called—I mean called spiritually, with an open mind to understand the real Truth and to be able to be begotten of the Spirit. None of them had that. So they are going to have that opportunity. So don't fret about Pharaoh or Esau. The ones we need to be concerned about are the ones here under the hearing of my voice, because you are a part of the ones who are at risk, right now, for your choices.

Alright, but back to the scenario, because I didn't get through verses 23 or 24. Why did He find fault? Who has resisted His will? Verse 20:

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction . . .

That means there are certain beings that God brought into existence, who by their particular DNA makeup, are hardwired, ultimately, to choose their own rebellious way over the offer of God. And guess who one of them is? Lucifer is not a human being, but an angel.

You know, Mr. Armstrong wrote that booklet many decades ago, "Did God Create a Devil," and the short answer to that question was that He didn't create a Devil. He created a perfect, glorious archangel who made choice, himself, to rebel, and he *made himself* a Devil. But God knew the end from the beginning. So did He know that He was about to create an immortal being who would never die, who would choose to rebel and to be in the state he is today? God absolutely knew that, and He did it anyway. Otherwise, if you say that He didn't, you are

saying that He doesn't know the end from the beginning, or you adopt that absurd concept that came up in the 1970s: that God chooses not to know. I am not going to put a limit on God. I hope you won't either.

Lucifer, therefore, I would say, is in the category of a vessel fitted to destruction. He was one that God knew, before He ever brought him into being, would make the choice to become an enemy to the God Family. And yet, God brought him into being. He was, therefore, by God's foreknowledge, already a vessel fitted to destruction, and he himself made it happen—it was still Lucifer's choice. He had just as much opportunity as any of the other angels to choose to be loyal, and he did not. That was no one's fault but his own, and so it is true for you and me. You likewise are free moral agents, and if you choose your way over God's, in the final analysis, you cannot blame God, but you also cannot blame Him because He knows in advance your choice, and that He is going to use the knowledge of what you are going to choose to do, and put certain chess pieces on the board in certain places to fulfill His purposes in order to show that He is the Master Architect. And that is exactly what Pharaoh was. Verse 23:

And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore [that is predestination] prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also the Gentiles?

I know that it is a difficult concept, and I hope that you will get it squared away in your mind. Otherwise, what you and I will be doing is accusing God, or else trying to limit His power: In order not to accuse Him, we are going to say that He must choose not to know. Neither one of those rationales is going to work. The only way to really appreciate the glory, and the power, and the awesome nature of this God we are serving is to see that the way He is doing it is perfect and glorious, even though He knows. You must reconcile that in your mind, otherwise, the enemy is going to get in there and cause that to be a stumbling block—just as it already has been for many. This God's actions are always just and fair.

He did not mistreat Esau, and He did not mistreat Pharaoh. What I believe we understand in the case of both Esau and Pharaoh is that here were individuals that God knew, given the best of circumstances, were going to choose incorrectly. He already knew, and therefore, by creating those twin brothers in the

womb—Esau and Jacob—He was able to choose the one to fulfill a role, and the other to fulfill his proper role, so that the elder would serve the younger, and Jacob would be the one that He would bless. They were free moral agents, too, and by the way, Jacob's inferior character was already manifested in the womb, as I've showed you in past sermons. That is why God gave him the name of "Supplanter"—literally "heel catcher." That was because, even before he ever took a breath, Jacob's brother was born first, and then the first thing that emerged from the womb after that was Jacob's arm grabbing his brother's heel, which God said was a manifestation of his carnal, deceptive character. And Jacob hadn't even taken a breath, yet. So God knew already, and He used that knowledge in putting together this plan—putting all of these people, with these different characteristics, on the chessboard to show forth His purpose and His knowledge.

What about Pharaoh? God knew that at that particular time in history He needed the kind of man on the throne who would not humble himself, even under the worst of circumstances. He didn't want him to repent like the Ninevites did. Remember? He sent Jonah eons—ages—later to Nineveh because they were a horrid society, and he was going to make an example of them in Assyria, but when Jonah came with the warning message of their impending destruction, they repented in sackcloth and ashes, and they fasted, and therefore, God relented because they showed their willingness to honor that God and to submit to His will. Well, according to the plan and the purpose of God, He didn't want the Egyptians to do that. So how did He accomplish it? By taking away their free moral agency? No, He just made sure to advance upon the throne at that given time a man whom He already knew had the kind of character that would not bend. That is how He did it. Pharaoh was a free moral agent, but he was a free moral agent who already had the kind of nefarious character that would not bend its knee to God, no matter what God did to him. That is what God wanted there at the time, and that is why Pharaoh was picked, and not a brother, or someone else. Can you fault God for that? How?

So, how did God harden his heart? Did He force Pharaoh? Did He overwhelm Pharaoh's mind and prevent him from being able to humble himself? No, all He had to do was to present Pharaoh with a set of circumstances which God knew would trigger his pride. God knew how to push his buttons. But they were his buttons to either be pushed or not, Pharaoh's choice—Pharaoh's choice. He was a free moral agent, but God hardened him by presenting him with circumstances that would trigger his pride. But he was in charge of himself. So

the will and the purpose of God was fulfilled, and Pharaoh got his just desserts, physically.

Now, he is going to have an opportunity to repent when he is brought up in a resurrection. He will have a chance to be called and converted, and to overcome that pride. So don't lament for Pharaoh, or for Esau.

Why did I bring that up and spend so much time on it? Remember, our topic is our inability to fully, legitimately pray, "Holy Father, Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done—Thy will, Holy Father, in every element of the plan. I am on board with you to carry it out according to every step that you have predetermined, and in the way that you are going to do it." Are we really on board with Him, or are there certain things that are playing out according to His will that we don't agree with—that we don't think are right, that He needs to do differently, or else we feel He is guilty of sin? Again, it is a lot easier to agree with the final result of a paradise on earth that is ruled by Jesus Christ, a perfect King, ruling with justice and mercy. It is easier to believe in that, and to desire that, than it is to agree with the methodology used in getting there. Many, sadly, become offended when they find out how He plans to do it.

Notice John 1, verses 10 through 13, because this is how the Messiah—Jesus Christ in the flesh—was treated. He was the Son of God; He was perfect in character; He committed no sin, and yet He was never accepted, because human beings had a different standard—yardstick—by which they were measuring Him in what they expected to see, and in how they demanded that He act in order for them to accept Him as the Messiah. And when He did not measure up to their preconceived ideas, they said, "You can't be Him."

He was in the world, and the world was made by him [He was the very Being by which the Creation came into existence], and the world knew him not [they didn't recognize Him]. He came unto his own [even the very children of Israel—the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob], and his own received him not. [Verse 12:] But as many as received him [few as they may be], to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

It all comes down to which ones of us will choose to agree with Him, and get on board with His plan, when we are made the offer, and which ones, then, are

going to judge Him according to our own standards and say to Him: "Uh-uh, we don't like the way you do things. So we won't accept it."

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"—which is so much more than the claim of a name. It is not about reciting, it is about our actions which support our belief.

Verse 13: "Which were born, not of blood [these ones who make the right choices], nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is the will of God that you become part of that Family. But if we choose not to agree with Him and His methodology, He is going to put somebody else in there, instead. He is not going to be held hostage because of His love for any one of us. He can, and He will, replace us if we give up our place.

King David was singled out by God as one who had the correct orientation He was looking for, and I think King David is an excellent example, because King David was anything but perfect in the flesh. You know, God chose to chronicle a lot of the horrible mistakes David made personally, including adultery and murder, didn't He? And yet, in the final analysis, He called David "a man after God's own heart."

Notice Acts 13, and the summary that is given here in Acts 13:22. Acts 13:22: "And when he had removed him," meaning King Saul. Saul was another example. Again, God knew what Saul was going to do, so why put Saul on the throne? Why not just put David on the throne to begin with? That could have saved a whole lot of trouble for the whole nation of Israel, and would certainly have saved a lot of trouble for David himself. Why? It was God's purpose for Saul to have his shot at the kingship to prove what happens when a man who starts off good (which he did), then gets too big for his britches, and turns and begins to think that he can modify God's instructions—to "improve" a little bit upon what he is told to do. And what did Samuel tell him? He said, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." It is better to simply do what God said to do, the way He said to do it, rather than trying to put your own spin on it. And that is a challenge for us, too.

And when he had removed him [meaning King Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave their

testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

David didn't just agree with the end result of the plan, he was willing to fulfill God's will in the interim—step by step—and to follow His instructions. Now, sometimes he did it with difficulty, and there are a number of times when God had to chastise him, and kind of put him back on the right path. But for the most part, the chronicle of David is one of willing submission to the plan of God, even when he didn't see how it was going to turn out good. How many years did he have to suffer under the persecution of Saul who was trying to kill him? And here was David, continually defending the authority of God, because he said that Saul was God's anointed—because God had put him into that office. He was not going to justify himself in fighting against Saul, or rebelling, even though God had already revealed through Samuel that it was His intent to put David on the throne. But He was going to make David wait for it, and endure persecution and trial, and still show respect for the office of the king, even though it was being inhabited by a man without character. And, by and large, David submitted himself to that process, but he had to be thinking, "God, why are you putting me through this? Why can't you just get rid of Saul and put me on the throne now? Why do I have to endure all of this misery and this anguish?" There was purpose in it. David didn't understand it. He had to live through it and simply follow what God said, and in the end, that is what God commended him for: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

How about you and me? You see, it is so much more than just agreeing with the end product of the Kingdom which He has promised to bring—the perfect harmony, the peace, the paradise. Do you likewise agree with His will in bringing it about, step by step, not only on the broad scale, but in your own personal life? Are you okay with the plan that He is executing in your own personal life?

"Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." What was the commendation that God gave to King David? He went out of his way to make sure that the Messiah was going to be the son of David, which He was in the flesh. Now that is a commendation.

This issue of agreeing with God's methodology—not just His promised results—is really key to our salvation. It is key to our salvation. Notice John

6:32. I am going to read a long passage here, all the way from verse 32 through 41, and try not to get stuck in the molasses any more than necessary along the way, for time's sake. Here is a New Testament example of a confrontation that took place between Jesus Christ and all of these supposed disciples, and all these people who were "on His side." They were "on His team." They saw the miracles. They heard the bold statements He had made in sermons before. And they are saying, "Oh, we are with you. Oh man, we agree with you one hundred percent. We are on your team. We are on your side"—until He gave this particular sermon in which He revealed some more of the minutiae—the messy sausage-making—of the process of achieving salvation, which they had not heard before. It was brand new to them.

John 6, beginning in verse 32: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven"—referring to manna. They were asking for Him to give them a sign. They said, "Moses had the power to create a miracle by having bread rain down from heaven. What are you going to do to show that you are of the same caliber as Moses?"

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. [Of course, He is talking about Himself, isn't He?] For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

So, He is promising something like manna. You know, during the days of Moses the Israelites received manna, and now here is Jesus saying, "I have something like manna, too—bread from heaven." And they are saying, "Yeah, I want it. Let me have it."

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life." And they said, "What!? What are you talking about? Moses never said he was the bread of life. This is new."

Now, this whole passage I am going to read, I know that you and I think we would not have a problem with it, but understand that in hindsight—I mean looking back on it from our position—we agree with the whole plan, don't we?

Including the necessity for the Messiah to die and to be resurrected, and to partake of the Passover service with the unleavened bread and the wine. We all agree with that, right? So we don't have a hang-up on this, but you need to understand that this was brand new then. Nobody had ever talked about that before. He is introducing something to these Jews that nobody had ever heard. And how did they respond?

Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, *I* am the bread of life: he that cometh to *me* shall never hunger; and he that believeth on *me* shall never thirst.

In other words, He is saying, "Salvation comes through me." And they are saying, "Who do you think you are?" But He knew what was in their hearts. Verse 36: "But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not." They didn't believe it. But they had, just prior to this, professed that they believed it, based upon all of the miracles and the descriptions that He gave. Now, all of a sudden, "Uhh, wait a minute. This is not what we expected." Verse 37:

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And that is another key. Where you find a legitimate spokesman for Jesus Christ, it is going to be a man not bringing his own ideas and interpretations, or lifting himself up, but he is going to be a messenger. Remember the imagery I use very often? I've told you that Moses was not the Revelator, he was the postman. All he did was deliver the mail from Mount Sinai to the Israelites. He relayed the message. It was not the message of Moses. It was the message of God, but it came through a weak vessel. That was Moses. And so, anywhere you find a legitimate minister of Jesus Christ, you are not going to find the Revelator, you are going to find the postman. That is all he is.

And so, if you have a postman, what would you do if he showed up at your door and your mail is already open, and he has crossed out some things in the letters? "Well, I tried to make this better, you see, because you know, the one who sent it, He kind of made some grammatical errors, and He left out a few things that were important. So here, I resealed it. Here is your letter." What would you say

to that postman? You wouldn't be very happy, would you? Well, what I am telling you is that there are a whole lot of ministers out there in the Church of God family, at large, who are opening the mail and making corrections. And that is not the job of a postman. You had better find one who is delivering what God inspired, and not trying to make himself a part of the revelatory process. Jesus Christ had the right, because He was the Son of God, and even in this state, He was not doing that. He said, "I am not coming to share my own wisdom, out of my own mind. I am the postman. The Father delivered to me a message, and I am only giving you what He gave to me to give." And that was an example for the ministry to come.

Verse 39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." He is jumping all the way to the end of the Master Plan, which we will talk about more on the Last Great Day. The very purpose of Christ coming as the intermediary through whom salvation would be offered is that He would shepherd through—as the great Shepherd—this Plan for the ultimate salvation of the human family, and then turn it all back over to the Father at the very end. He is summarizing that mission here in very short terms.

Verse 40: "And this is the will of him that sent me"—in other words, His Father's will is the methodology—the step-by-step process—by which He is going to bring this great, joyous salvation product to fruition. Here is how He is going to accomplish it. Jesus is now giving them a window into the messy sausage-making of the salvation Plan, which they never knew before—the details, the minutiae.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. [Verse 41:] The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. [They didn't like it. They stumbled at the plan in its details. Verse 42:] And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

They said, "We know you. You were raised right here. You are no different than we are." They didn't see the whole picture.

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. [Verse 44:]. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

He is again asserting the fact that the plan calls for an intermediary, not direct salvation in dealing with the Father. They were going to have to accept an intermediary in the form of a Son, and that by his shed blood only was it going to be possible for them to have salvation.

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

And this is something, today, that the Jews still don't believe. They believe in what is called "monotheism"—one God, meaning one God Being. So they think that they have always been dealing with, and interacting with, the one we call the Father. They think it was the Father who was on Mount Sinai dealing with Moses, and it wasn't. They still have never accepted this Truth. You have. It is not a stumbling block for you.

Verse 48. He said: "I am that bread of life." They hated that concept. They thought it was heretical. "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." What He is emphasizing here is that, yes, manna was miracle food. It was miracle bread that came down from heaven, but it didn't give them immortality, did it? All it did was sustain their physical bodies for another day. So, in other words, Jesus is saying that it was a very limited blessing that kept their forefathers alive, temporarily, but it did not give them hope of an eternal reward. Verse 50:

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die [He is speaking on a totally different plane]. *I* am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of *this* bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Oh, now He has really lost them. I mean it was bad enough before, but now He has just . . . What I have said before is that if He were a politician, He would be a very poor politician. Now He is talking about cannibalism, you know? Now He is the bread, and they have to eat Him in order to have salvation.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you [now He has lost them]. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

What a wonderful, glorious revelation of the Plan of God. And the people who heard it, by and large, hated it. It didn't fit with the image they had in mind of how God should operate.

Verse 60: "Many therefore of his disciples"—His disciples, not His enemies out there, His confirmed enemies. These were His disciples—the ones who had already made a commitment to follow Him, to believe Him, to accept Him. They had accepted Him as a prophet of God, but they didn't accept Him as the Son of God, let alone the Messiah, or one who was going to be a sacrifice. These were His followers. These were the ones who were saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, we are going to vote for you."

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying [what they really mean is that this is impossible to accept]; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

He already knew that it did. Now, what would a good politician do at this stage? What do they do? If they make a mistake on the campaign trail and they say something ill-advised, what do they do? They try to fix it. What's the term we hear? They "walk it back." Did you ever hear that? They "walk it back": "I didn't mean that, I meant this." They try to clean it up and reconfirm their base of support. You can't lose the base. That is the way the political mind works. So what did Jesus do? He didn't have very good political advisers. He said some things that really were about to dismay the majority of His followers—His disciples—and when He knew it, instead of trying to fix it and make them feel better, He made it worse.

"Does this offend you?" Verse 62: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" So now He is claiming that He is going to go to heaven and that He started in heaven. Yeah, *that* is going to help with the Jews.

Verse 63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth." He is trying to explain: "I am trying to describe to you spiritual principles. I am not talking about cannibalism—eating flesh and drinking blood—I am talking about the Plan of God, and how the Messiah, in the form of Jesus Christ—the Son of God—is going to fulfill all of these things."

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

It is going to take a calling—the miracle of an open mind—in order for a human being to really embrace this Plan, and there are a whole lot of so-called Christians out there who think that they have embraced it. They *have* embraced the idea of a sacrificial Lamb, and the Lamb in the form of Jesus Christ. They accept the concept, and the need for His body and His blood for salvation, and for redemption, and grace, and all of that, but they still don't get it.

"But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." So, wait

a minute. He had foreknowledge, including the knowledge of who was going to betray Him, like Judas Iscariot—the one He picked, knowing that he was going to betray Him. Which begs the question: Was Judas Iscariot a free moral agent, or was he just another pawn who was pre-programmed, without free moral agency, to have to follow through and be a betrayer? Poor Judas. Or is it possible that, like Esau, and like Pharaoh, God picked a man in Judas Iscariot that He knew, by fast-forwarding the movie, would, given the best of circumstances and an opportunity to be taught at the feet of the Messiah, still—because he had a weakness of mind—be subject to the influence of Satan, and that he would be turned? Given the best of circumstances, that was still going to be his choice. Is it possible that Judas is responsible for his own error, and that God just used that foreknowledge to put a man like Judas in that spot to fulfill the prophecy? Why can't it be so? Why can't it be so?

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. [Verse 66:] From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve [the closest circle around Him], Will ye also go away?

He is asking, "Are the things that I have just revealed to you in this sermon, including more of the details you didn't know before, and the way that this salvation Plan is going to be completed by God, according to a blueprint conceived before the foundation of the world, going to throw you for a loop, too? Or will you get on board and still agree that what the Father and I are doing is perfect and glorious in every dimension?"

Of course, they had to absorb it, and I am sure they were tempted. I am sure they were rattled by it. But, of course, Peter—and I am not going to read the rest of it—asked, "Where else are we going to go? You are the one who has taught us the words of life. There is nowhere else."

I gave you that example to prove that it is easy to say the words, "Thy will be done. Oh, yes, Father, I am right there with you. Your will be done. So, let me ride on your coattails." But it is a whole other thing to understand and to deal constructively with the reality of His will, especially in our own lives, and still

agree with Him, and not doubt Him, and not, deep in our minds, accuse Him of being unfair.

Many in God's church simply wish that God had designed His plan differently than He did, and do you know what is one of the big sticking points for too many in the church? "Why did you have to use a human ministry?" They even accept Jesus Christ. They are saying, "You know, we are willing to be taught by Jesus, the Son, and not the Father, directly. But why did you have to use a human ministry? These guys are terrible. They make a mess of it all the time. Why can't we just deal with you, one-on-one?" And I tell you, there are a bunch of people who are called, who know—who have been given an opportunity to know—who are not at a designated site. And I don't even mean with just this little remnant group. They are sitting at home, and they think they are keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Some of them, because they think they are going to interpret Leviticus 23 literally, concerning making a booth of boughs, are going to set up a little booth in their houses, and they think they are keeping the Feast. And they think that God is with them in their homes. They don't need a ministry. They have their personal prayer; they have their own Bible study; they were begotten of the Spirit, after all. I wonder how they became begotten of the Spirit? I think they got baptized at some point by one of those ministers they now despise.

I did a whole series a few years ago at the Feast on the necessity of a ministry to do a bunch of the stuff God says has to happen—like when you are sick, God said to go to the ministers. Who are you going to pay your tithes to? Who is going to do the physical necessities of the administration of a physical body, like what we are doing right here? Somebody has to organize it. That ministry was never intended by God to meddle in your personal business. And I know a lot of that happened in our parent organization. I am very aware of it. I experienced it myself. I feel your pain, but I am telling you, in spite of the mistakes of many of those called ministers, who I believe were absolutely legitimate, in spite of their errors *in administration*, the fundamental Truth—the doctrine—was of Jesus Christ, and not of a man. But God nevertheless has used a human ministry to deliver it and to sustain it, because it is a part of His will. But it is a stumbling block for many. I understand that. I sympathize with you if you are in that category, I really do. And I tried to re-emphasize to you that I was the rebel of rebels. I understand what it is to squirm under the pressure of an unwise ministry who did not see their jobs the way they should have—who were not

servants to the people, and certainly didn't believe in defending revealed doctrine. I have experienced it. I have lived through it, and I was a rebel.

The year that I was at Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, I was not very constructive with my time. I was a subversive agent at 18 and 19 years old. I was. Because I lived through and saw the hypocrisy and the mistakes, and I didn't have an explanation for it, but I knew it was not right, and so I thought I was justified in being a subversive, and undermining. But I was dead wrong. I didn't behave like King David did in his confrontations with King Saul. I didn't respect the office like I should have, in spite of the mistakes of the men in those offices. I was dead wrong, and I had to repent of that. It was basically Mr. Raymond Cole who helped me to get over that, and it took a while to get out of the habit of being a rebel. It was easy for me to be in that role—always to be on the fringe, always being quick to criticize, to cut down and to ridicule—but a whole lot harder to really change my orientation. I had to learn to do it. I found, by God's help, a ministry, I believe, who was really doing the right thing—preserving and defending the Faith, in spite of the fact that none of those ministers, including Raymond Cole, was perfect, humanly, either. But I believe he perfectly defended the revealed doctrine, which is why I did have a change of mind.

But there are many in God's church who simply don't see it. So the ministers are an evil that they wish were not in the Plan. But, let's read 2 Peter 1, verses 20 and 21: "Knowing this first," the Apostle Peter says, "that no prophecy"—and that word doesn't just mean trying to foretell details of the future. It is a word, generally, in the New Testament that is used to indicate inspired speaking—the inspiration of God through a human agent. No inspired speaking, or understanding, "of the scripture is of any private interpretation." If only we would believe that is true. But, I tell you what, I deal with people still, all the time, who bring to me their private interpretations from their Bible study, because they think they see something that nobody else has ever seen, and they are going to try to teach us how to get it fixed. My dear friends, it is not a disrespect for me to tell you that I don't really care about your private interpretations, because I don't care about my private interpretations, either. We are all in the same boat. My private interpretations of Scripture are not going to help me get into God's Kingdom, and neither are yours. We all have to lay that stuff down and hear the voice of Jesus Christ, wherever He is, and however He is being manifested. You have to decide that, and so do I. Where are you hearing the voice of Christ and not of a man? That is the key.

. . . no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit].

Holy men. Holy men—not holy because they were perfect, but holy because they were set apart for that job, to fulfill it, even as Moses was set apart. And he was not perfect humanly, but he perfectly fulfilled his office, didn't he? "[H]oly men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]." That is how God works. It is part of the minutiae of the Plan that you and I have to become a part of in order to get to our end result—the Kingdom of God. There is no way around that. There is no shortcut. I wish there were. If there were a shortcut, I would have taken it long before you. There is not.

Matthew 21, verses 42 through 44. Matthew 21 and beginning in verse 42: "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected . . ." So these master builders—these accomplished guys who could construct things like the pyramids—had all this knowledge and this experience, humanly, and yet by their personalized human interpretation, looked at Jesus Christ, who was the most perfect Stone of all (the best fit to be the Cornerstone of a Great Edifice), and they said, "Uh, this is not fit. Let's get rid of this one and get us a better one."

The stone which the builders rejected [according to their private interpretation], the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing [it is His will; it is His purpose; it is His plan, in every detail], and it is marvellous in our eyes?

A question mark. Is it marvelous in our eyes? Do we agree with it? Have we seen? Are we on board? Really?

"Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you"—these who can't seem to get on board with the way that He is—step-by-step—bringing it to pass, and for whatever reason, they have some kind of a hang-up about one or more of the elements of the Plan that they don't want to be that way, or think shouldn't be that way.

The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken.

I have heard Mr. Raymond Cole interpret that as both falling on the Stone, and the Stone falling on the rebels. A very appropriate interpretation. I will only say that the interpretation I like to apply to myself is that I had to be broken on that Stone. What I am—humanly, carnally—had to be broken. That is self-crucifixion. We have to die in order to put on Jesus Christ. You can't take your carnal mind and your orientation into the Kingdom, because God simply won't allow it.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall [because they disrespect it; they will not bow the knee to Him; they will not bend their stiff necks, and they will be crushed by that Stone], it will grind him to powder.

That is because—like I began this message by showing you from Isaiah—God says, "My will shall be done. I am going to bring about my Plan, with or without any one of these beloved ones [and they are beloved] whom I love. And I want you to be there, but my Plan is not going to stop if you don't buy in." If you and I don't buy in, He is going to fill the seat so that the great Wedding Supper—that Dinner Party—will have no vacancies. He is going to fill it with the ones who *do* show that they agree—not only in the desire for the party, but the way to get into it. That is the best that I can give on this concept.

When you pray to your heavenly Father, can you really say, "Thy will be done," earnestly, sincerely and without being a hypocrite? And again I say, if not—because you know you have some hang-ups in your own mind—that is okay. They exist and He knows it, and He has always known it. So tell Him: "Father, I know that I have these hang-ups. Help me so that I can honestly, with integrity, say, 'Thy will—Thy plan, Thy methodology—be done, and let me get on board with you'."

What about, "in earth as it is in heaven?" I didn't leave much time for that. The best example is in Isaiah 14, verses 12 through 15. Here is one of the succinct stories about the rebellion of Lucifer. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in

heaven." So we have more of an understanding that God's will is being done in heaven because, you see, we think of God as living in heaven—it is His throne, so He can kind of better manage what happens there. We know that His will is happening in heaven, so obviously, we must have a problem with thinking that His will is taking place on the earth, because we think of God as being distant. Why? Because we think of Him as a man, not as God. But one of the characteristics of God is that He is ever-present—omnipresent. That is what it means. He is omnipotent, omniscient *and* omnipresent. He is everywhere. He is just as much here as He is in heaven, but we think of Him as being at a distance. So we believe His will is taking place at the throne of God, but somehow, we think He has gone on vacation and left us down here, and things aren't happening according to His perfect will. That's why Jesus said to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." And you and I have to come to believe that it really is happening that way. Isaiah 14, beginning in verse 12:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

And we read that and say: "Oh terrible, terrible, terrible Lucifer. You were such a rebel. You are so bad. I am glad I am not that way. I would never behave that way," we say, or think. But is that true? What I am here to tell you, my dear friends, is that those who contend with the Plan and the purpose of God, including a rebellion against the revealed doctrine, and especially because they stumble at how God revealed it to the church—through weak human agents, beginning with Mr. Armstrong in our time—it is still the same thing. It is still contending with God and thinking that we have a better way, and can add to what God is doing. We think He has fallen down on part of the job. So we are going to help Him out there.

So Lucifer thought he had just as much right as God did to share some of the power. He thought that he had a right to be there. He didn't acknowledge that he was created for a different purpose: to be a servant.

"I will be like the most High." And any one of us that uses a private interpretation of Scripture is saying that we want to be like God, because we are not willing to accept the way He revealed it. We are going to put ourselves on His level because we have some things to offer that we think are pretty valuable and that need to be taken into consideration.

But God said to him: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." And that, too, is going to be the end result of any of us who, in the final analysis, prove that we don't really agree with His will. The will of God is being done on this earth as it is being done in heaven. If you believe that—if you are confident in that—then you are in a perfect position to be able to go forward and to face any trial that will yet confront you before the end of your course in this life. But you have to recognize the enemy, and you have to come to believe in the perfect and glorious character of this God who is carrying out His will. He is not going to allow us to see all of the details. There are going to be a lot of things that we cannot explain. "Why did He allow this? Why did He allow that? Why didn't He heal this beloved one who appears to us to have done a better job than many others in the church at trying to put God first? Why? That doesn't seem fair—it doesn't seem just. He promised to heal and He didn't heal." Is there something wrong with the methodology of God, or is He still perfectly executing His plan in every detail for every individual?

My dear friends, the ones who die in the Faith are most blessed, and there are many of those circumstances, and more to come, that are going to test us to see to what extent we are really on board with Him. Do you see the operation of God? Are you willing to accept what He allows, and what He perpetrates, for reason, even when we don't understand it at the time? And are we willing to say, "Father, I don't know how this is going to work out. It makes no sense to me. But I know you are perfect. I know you are glorious. I will not doubt you or question you. Help me to fulfill my role, and to wait on you to show it." If you can pray that way, earnestly, sincerely, you can pray to your heavenly Father and say, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."