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Sermon Transcript

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The Seven Spirits of Satan

The book of Acts says that *when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place*. It went on to state these words: *They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication*. And it follows that particular statement with another one. *And they continued with one accord in the temple*.

Brethren, when the law of synergism, when the law of vision and purpose drives people, they simply focus outside themselves to a greater common cause and purpose. As I sit in Ministerial Services in Cincinnati, and as I did in Arcadia when I worked there, I watch the world of the sabbatarian groups. I have watched the numerous people who have come and gone. I have watched individuals who have moved away from each other and who have split, and then split, and then split again.

Since the days of the late 70s, and then the death of Herbert Armstrong unto this present day, the world of the sabbatarian with many beliefs that are similar to ours, has been under attack. Let's state it for what it is. It has been under attack. There is a man whose name is Richard Nickels, and he writes a history of the church from the days of Herbert Armstrong's death until the present day. And of course, since he wrote this book a number of groups have already split off from each other in the sabbatarian world. But he said there are 36 different splits that have occurred since the days of the death of Herbert W. Armstrong. Three since that time, maybe even four.

What are we looking at? What do we have to understand about this? This may simply be the precursor to the great tribulation. We recognize one thing however, that the siftings of the hearts of men before the judgment seat are occurring. There are sortings and testings that are going on all the time. For God wants to find out what is in our hearts. When we had to remove ourselves from the heresies of the past, and we had to move out to continue to obey God's word, his laws, and the precious truth that we have received, we were tested terribly. We had to be willing to decide what we were going to do; be willing to leave some things and friends and situations that we had. And then it seemed as if there had to be more sortings and siftings, because God now is wanting to find out what really is down deep inside of us, in the heart of you and me.

I would like you to turn with me this afternoon to begin this sermon by going to the book of **Revelation, chapter 12**. I want to read what the apostle John tells us was going to

happen at the time of the end. It is a sober warning. It is a sober reality that we must face. And that is the fact that while you live in a physical world, that physical world is bombarded by a spirit who hates you, who hates me, who hates the people of God. He just does. And his venom, his anger, his hatred is continuous, day after day. The apostle John writes beginning in **verse 10** of chapter 12 of the book of Revelation, *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ. For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

So there's going to come a period of time which we will not possibly know about until this great spirit being is thrust down from the third heaven where he has no longer a place at the throne of God to be able to accuse us.

And it said in **verse 11**, *They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.* Here was a group of people who it says still had human nature, they still had problems, they still had to repent always for the things that they needed to get rid of; but they put them under the blood of Christ, and secondly, they continued to obey the word. They had the love of the truth. And the love of the truth drove them to be willing to give up their lives if necessary; because it said, *they loved not their lives unto death.* Meaning they were willing to sacrifice their lives if it was necessary. It doesn't say that it's going to happen; it just simply said that if it's necessary.

Verse 12. *Rejoice, you heavens, and those who dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knows he has but a short time.* And so the prophecy tells us that he would begin to agitate in a society to the point that people would be turned against people. That you would not see him, but you would see the end result of what he would do through men; culminating obviously in what we see occurring by the bloodshed of the great tribulation that would occur on this earth.

And it says in **verse 13**, *When the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth he persecuted the woman which brought forth the manchild.* And in **verse 17** it said, *the dragon was angry with the woman and he went to make war with the last generation of her seed.* The last generation, the remnant, the last group. Who are we? I don't know for sure, but I do know we're a whole lot closer than we were 20 years ago, 30 years ago, 10 years ago. It gets a little scary sometimes wondering just exactly where we are. But it makes you realize that he is angry with the last generation of her seed, *which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

These scriptures tell us the activities of this evil spirit being would increase tremendously before the great tribulation. It is against those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith and testimony of Jesus Christ, according to what it says here in chapter 12 of Revelation.

I'd like you to turn with me, if you would, to II Timothy 2. We sometimes ask ourselves the question: is this good? Is this bad? Is this right? Is this wrong? I think we must recognize that God has prophesied that certain things would have to occur at the time of the end. We recognize that God has intended that, like the children of Israel who were taken out in the wilderness, God said *he led you these forty years in the wilderness*. And the realization was that as he led them those forty years in the wilderness they had food, they had water, they had the shelter of the cloud by day, they had the pillar of fire to warm them by night. They had all of the basic amenities of life that were needed. They had all of them. But the problem was he had to find something out. So God led them in the wilderness those forty years, it says, *to humble you, to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would obey*. And it seems as if that sifting and sorting hasn't ended.

It tells us over here in **II Timothy 2:19**, he said, *Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal. The Lord knows them that are his, and let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from lawlessness. But in a great house - he begins to analogize now about what you find in this great house, and he's referring to the church. If you want to call it the greater church of God, fine. If you want to call it the church of God, fine. But the point is, his analogy is that there is this great house and there are vessels in this house of gold and of silver. But there are also vessels of wood and of earth. Some to honor, and some to dishonor, or as it can be translated, to lesser honor.*

Going on he said, *If a man therefore purge himself from these - what, the vessels unto dishonor, perhaps of wood and of silver? Yes. Is it an analogy of character and the holiness of God that has to be built? It seems like when you put the other scriptures together with it that seems to be the indication. So a man has to purge himself from those things and develop himself through the spirit of God as a vessel unto honor, set apart (sanctified), and fit for the master's use, prepared unto every good work.*

Is it possible that there's a work at the time of the end that needs to be done by the people of God who are ready and who have been sifted and sorted and worked with and humbled and brought to the place where they are ready and refined to do a greater work? It doesn't say here, but the principle is certainly profoundly found in other places in the New Testament.

And so he says beginning in **verse 23**, *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife. Verse 24. And the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle unto all men, able to teach, and patient (or forbearing or longsuffering)*. That is, working with people, because human beings need simply to be worked with. But it says here in **verse 25**, *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*.

One of the greatest difficulties that we have is the fact that in human nature people oppose themselves. Why is it that we are continuously the last ones to know about our own personal problems? And certainly this is what it tells us, that the servant of God must

instruct those who oppose themselves. But notice the last part of **verse 25**. *If God perhaps will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.* So therefore we recognize that the development of the human being within the body of Christ is the need to sift and sort and evaluate and work with them, and the humanness that is there, because they oppose themselves.

But notice **verse 26**. *That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him to do his will.* What people don't recognize sometimes, brethren, is the fact that God permits us to be tested and tried to find out what is in our heart. But one of the things that he does recognize is the fact that we have some holes in our armor. That we may have on the helmet of salvation. We may have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. But we may have holes in our breastplate of righteousness. And where does the devil shoot? He doesn't shoot for the helmet. He doesn't shoot for the feet. He shoots for the hole in that armor. And one of the greatest ways to get rid of the problem is to recognize that that's where he's shooting, and recognize that he is using us, and he is using things that we are doing against ourselves.

One of the greatest realizations that you can come to is that human beings hurt themselves because they do things to themselves and then they do it to other people. And in the greater world of the sabbatarian I simply want to show you today that the sabbatarian world that we have lived in, or that we have been a part of, is suffering from some really bad situations where they have allowed themselves to be shot at. Where they have allowed this spirit to bombard them and to hurt them. And the end result is that they go scattering into the four winds and the terrible problems that you face as a result of division, division, dividing, that is occurring.

Now I'm not here to give a sermon on how we can all get together to do a work. I'm not here to give a sermon on how we all need to come together as one particular group or one organization. That's not what Richard is trying to do. As I look out over that particular world, that has to be God's doing if he does it, because it's an impossible task for us as human beings to do that. But I'm here to show you something very important.

Notice **chapter 3**. Because when you look at chapter 3 you recognize that there is no chapter 3 in the original Greek manuscript. It just continues to flow. And so he says that there are these individuals who are caught by the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him to do his will, and he begins to describe the last days and the problems that we would have. And you know what, we look at this particular statement and we say, wow! This is the world that we're going to live into. This is what's happening in the world. No, no, no, no, no. This section of this particular chapter has to do with the problems that are extant, but when you look at it you begin to realize they are some of the problems that we as the people of God have to get rid of. *Notice also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers.* I'm not going to read all of the list. But it sounds like it's the world out there. *Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*

Notice **verse 5**, and it begins to point out who we are talking about. *Having a form of godliness*. Now you use an expression here, we have people who have form. They look like they're doing the right thing, but the substance is missing. This is what happens. There is a lack of character. Or there's a lack of something that causes them to do these things. And so he says, *they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. From such turn away. Of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with different lusts.*

Now I'm not talking about women, and I'm not talking about anything along that particular line. I'm talking about the fact that here are individuals who at the last days would have problems. And these individuals would get caught up in some of the human nature problems that we have to be cognizant of.

And he said, **verse 7**, *ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. What truth? The truth that's found in chapter 2 and verse 25. They oppose themselves. They don't understand what they are doing to themselves. They don't understand the reactions that they have. They don't understand how their human nature is being bashed to and fro, either by every wind of doctrine or by all of the things that are going on. And they become in their own lives unstable. *As Jannes and Jambres (verse 8) withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt mind, reprobate concerning the faith.*

He's talking about individuals that have lost it. They're losing it. They're not paying attention to the wooing of the Holy Spirit of God. These are individuals who are, if they would sit back and listen, they would understand what God wants them to understand about what's going on in here, and what's going on up here.

Verse 9 it says, *They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifested to all as theirs also was. Verse 12, Yea all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* And the prophecies tell us that is going to happen. The prophecies warn us of the times that we are going to live into. Deceiving and being deceived.

Let's go to **Matthew 24**. Let's take one more example here. I simply want to touch on the basis of a set of principles. We used to think, brethren, we used to think that all the trials were going to come from without. We used to believe it was going to be the "world" that would do us in. The sad part about it is, we are the world. We are the world. We live in the real world. The sad part about it is that some of those in the real world that have lived with us simply have allowed themselves to be caught up in the human nature that has allowed them to say and do, and create for us and for themselves, terrible confusion and difficulties.

Notice Matthew 24. Jesus Christ was asked to tell them in **verse 3**, *When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of your coming and of the end of the world?* The first

thing Jesus said in **verse 4 of Matthew 24** was, *Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name saying I am Christ and shall deceive many.*

You know, you and I, all we have to do so far as the particular group of people who believe in a different day, and who believe in a different set of principles, and who follow a different set of concepts, all we have to do is turn on the television on Sunday morning, and you can begin, point #1, point #2, point #3, point #4, to prove that they are wrong. That's easy. For you and I it's going to be a simple task to just sit and listen to them as we watch it on Sunday morning or we pick up a particular magazine or a particular book or a particular newspaper. And you say, no problem. They believe in going off to heaven. They believe that there's an everburning hell. That's simple to deal with from our point of view because we have come so far down this road of doctrinal understanding about those things. We have no problem when it comes to understanding about Sunday and the days that they particularly keep outside of that. We can understand that. But it says here in **verse 5**, and a lot of times we haven't zeroed in on that, *Many shall come in my name saying I am Christ and shall deceive the many.* We forget that the most difficult thing to do is to try to sort out the differences sometimes between these individuals who say they believe the same thing we do. And then begin to find out where their bend is, where they are coming from, what their approach really is, what is the underbelly of the whole thing.

I could tell you stories. I could relate situations. I could give you incidences in the last five years. But I won't. I just simply want to warn you and show you the concept that we need to be cognizant of as we deal with the world that we live in, the world of the sabbatarian.

Now he talks about there's going to be wars and rumors of war. And he said, *kingdom will rise against kingdom.* And he said in **verse 8**. *These are the beginning of sorrows. Verse 9. Then they shall deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you. And you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.* I remember reading a scripture that says a man's foes shall be they of his own household. Remember that scripture? I never thought it would be someone of my household, in the sense of the word, my spiritual household. I never thought that I would have a problem with that. It's hard to have to deal with the fact that the highest office in the church had someone who would lead you into heresy. It was hard to believe that that was happening. But it did. And so we recognize that these are things that you simply have to be cognizant of.

Verse 10. *Then shall many be offended -- many are going to stumble according to what it says here - and shall betray one another and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and deceive many. Because iniquity (or lawlessness) shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endures unto the end, the same shall be saved.* So the prophecies begin to open up a totally different understanding, don't they? We begin to recognize that there are betrayals and offenses; there are false prophets and teachers that use the vacuum of leadership since that white-haired gentleman died, the vacuum of leadership that we've had to face. And they begin to ply their wares at telling us they are the prophet, or they tell us that they are the individual that should be the one in

charge. And it's hard! It is not easy. And the Bible says that iniquity would continue and stress would bring loss of feelings among people; and hostilities that would incur a great deal of wrath among people.

Daniel 11. Let's go over to Daniel 11, one more prophecy that I think we need to look at. I know sometimes I can get up and give a fun sermon, an easy sermon. I can get up and talk about marriage and some of those things; and I will leave that for your pastor. But every once in awhile you have got to tell it the way it is, ladies and gentlemen. You've got to tell it the way it is. And today I simply want to tell you, this is the way it is. This is what's happening in our world. This is what we have to be cognizant of. We have to put the blame where it belongs. We have to understand what he is doing. And we have to recognize how he is doing it. That's my purpose today. And in a friendly and concerned way for you as my brothers and sisters, I simply want to tell you that.

Daniel 11:32. This is what we describe as the short prophecy of the history of the church. *And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries. But the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.* It simply tells us here that they will hold fast to the faith. It simply means that they will continue steadfast in the temptations and the tribulations that they would go through. *And they that understand among the people shall instruct many. Yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame and by captivity and by spoil many days.*

And this happened in the history of the church. This happened as we go through from the time of 31 A.D. all the way through the Middle Ages; and as we watch the church move through the areas of the valleys of France and into Belgium and into the Netherlands, and finally into England and the struggles they went through - yes there was a tremendous amount of difficulty that occurred.

And it says in **verse 34**, *Now when they shall fall they shall be helped with a little help. But many shall cleave to them with flatteries.* That's kind of a scary thing sometimes, isn't it? It's kind of scary to realize that people would cleave to the true body with flatteries. They would look like, they would appear like, they would act like, they would seem to be like...the real thing. The Bible says that we have to recognize that there would be tares that would be sown among the wheat. Am I trying to set people up one against another? No, I'm just simply trying to explain to you that you have to understand, you have to understand what is going on in the world of the sabbatarians.

Verse 35. *And some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.* And so we recognize very simply the need to realize that this particular spirit being is going to be hard at work trying to destroy the body of Christ before the time of our Savior's return.

Year's ago when we talked about ourselves as the Philadelphian church, the only warning that came to the Philadelphia church - do you remember it? In **Revelation 3** it says, *Behold I come quickly. Hold fast that which you have, that no man take your*

crown. Why is that? Because the relationship with human beings sometimes gets to be so intense, and it can be wonderfully close, that sometimes they're the ones that hurt you the most. And sometimes that is so difficult, because you can be sideswiped by a situation that will allow you to have your legs crumbled, or your body bent out of shape by reason of what someone might do to you. *Behold I come quickly. Hold fast that which you have that no man take your crown.*

Let's understand something this afternoon in the sermon. Let me take a little bit of time to explain something to you. Satan is a very powerful created spirit being who fell from heaven to this earth. He took one third of the angels with him. Believe me, he has purpose and he has plan. First of all, he systematically is striving to destroy the creation. The Bible says, *the heavens God's glory do declare.* The Bible talks about how the earth and all of the things created are to show us the great Creator, that he is a planner, a designer, a builder. And so Satan is going about striving to destroy this planet, striving to destroy this earth in hopes of destroying the knowledge of God.

What is it -- when I was living in Canada somewhere around 83% of all the people in the United States and Canada believed that there was a God. Now it's down around 47-43%, somewhere in there now. It dropped almost in half in the last 38 years. Kind of shocking isn't it? But the Bible says very simply that this individual has a purpose and he has a plan to systematically destroy the creation, and in so doing destroy the knowledge of God.

Secondly, he is desirous to destroy or corrupt mankind. Is there any question about that? I don't think there is any question in our minds about how he is corrupting mankind. Because there are potential sons and daughters and judges who will judge angels. The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 6:2** *that we shall judge angels.*

Another thing that he is doing is destroying the concept of family. By destroying the human family he is striving to get rid of any concept that God is a family. That God is reproducing himself. That God is reproducing in separate individuals holy, righteous, and perfect character. Qualities and morale and morals and principles by which we are supposed to be living. He is striving to destroy that. He is crossing the lines between male and female. Look at it. Watch it. It's out there. And he is moving people from being a team of people as we remember it after World War II, to becoming an individual - I, me, myself. Everything revolves around the self. George Barna in his book about the second coming of the church states that one of the greatest single things they have to deal with is the removal of a loyalty to anyone or to anything. Where they walk in the front door and walk out the back door. There is no loyalty, he said, there is no team. There is no looking at working together. He said it becomes a world of individuals developing individualism as their driving force.

Satan, according to the Apostle Paul, has devices. Paul said not to be ignorant of them. The Bible says in the New Testament that Satan has devoured. The Bible says that Satan has hindered, like guerrilla warfare where he hits and runs. The Bible says that he creates confusion, because God is not the author of confusion. And the only one who is is that

spirit being and all those under his influence. He has learned how to divide and conquer. He has learned how to sow discord. We have a world of disinformation, and a world of misinformation. You can have a part of truth and the rest of it is a lie. You can have a portion of truth and then he takes you around the corner and takes it away from you, because all of a sudden you allow yourself to keep accepting it.

I watched one of the greatest evangelists of the 50s and 60s give a sermon on the ten commandments, and it was one of the greatest sermons I have ever heard on the ten commandments. And he got down to the fourth commandment, and I said, okay now, say it Billy, say it. And he said, you all need to be in church on Sunday. And I'm saying - oh, no! The Bible says if you break one commandment you're guilty of them all.

That's the part of what we don't realize. This disinformation and this misinformation that he uses is just so awesome, because it can sound so good. And it can be. It can be 99 and 44/100th percent pure. But the last little part will kill you.

He infiltrates like a fifth column movement. Christ said the enemy had sown tares among the wheat, and God has permitted it. God gives permission as I said to you. Because the only way you're going to find out if you've got holes in your armor, whether you've got holes in your breastplate, or whether you have your loin of truth that has a sash cut in there with a hole that he can get in, or your shoes have a hole in them and he gets at you through that hole in the shoe, is by God allowing the flaws in our character to be seen. And for us to pull up our socks and do the things that we need to do.

You know the Corinthians were called the church of God. But he said, *You are carnal*. Wow! That's quite a statement, isn't it? Here they are called the church of God, but *you are carnal*. And the realization was that just being the church was not enough. They had to remove themselves from that particular set of attitudes and problems.

To understand how he works we must understand human nature and where it came from. Now you've heard this a hundred thousand million times, right? Remember the two trees? You and I have probably heard it so many times you say, I don't want to hear it again. Let's hear it one more time. Just for the sake of going back and remembering human nature and where it came from.

I think we all understand that human nature is vanity; it's lust; it's greed; it's envy; it's jealousy; it's competition; it's strife; it's rebellion against authority, resentment, hatred and anger. It's all of those things. Now when you go back to Genesis 1 - don't go back there but just remember the first chapter - when God had created in those six days all the things that he created, and he created the two human beings, Adam and Eve, he said everything that he created was very good. After he create one of the things he said - it is good. When he finished on the sixth day after he finished creating man he said, it is very good.

Now here we are - if human nature is there at the time of Adam and Eve when they first were created, how could it be very good? But it's not. It's not very good. But at that

particular time there was absolutely no rebellion. Adam's attitude and nature, his wife's attitude and nature prior to the temptation, shows a kind of wild-eyed, child-like, naïveté. A trusting attitude. A totally different spirit. And even when she was confronted by the serpent and she began to talk with the serpent and the serpent asked her the question, has God said that you shouldn't eat the trees of the garden? And she began to explain to him just a nice, simple, naïve explanation about what she could and couldn't do. She wasn't in a frame of mind saying -- yeah God told us we can't have that, and boy that makes me mad! She didn't say that. She just simply explained. Just like - have you had a small child that you asked them to explain something, and they just explained it so beautifully? No guile, no attitude, no resentment, no hatred, no anger, no rebellion.

And then he began to inject in her mind doubts. He began to inject in her mind the ability to begin to look at what she and her husband could choose as right as opposed to what God said. Man is basically physical brain. He is empowered with intellect by a spirit. There is a spirit in man and that spirit in man gives him the ability to have consciousness of what is going on inside.

I can be talking to you at the present time, and while I am talking to you I can be thinking - I'm sweating. It's beginning to roll down my arms right now. It's a little warm. I'm thinking of two things. And I can look out over the audience and I can watch you. I can see who's sleeping, and who is not sleeping. I can see who is writing things down, and I can watch. And when I come to a certain thing you're not sure about I see the furrowed brows, you see. I can be cognizant of the around. And when the spirit of God came to unite with my mind he gave me the ability to have a little understanding of his mind and his purpose. So this spirit in man allows me to be empowered by an intellect, but that intellect is neither positive nor negative to begin with. As it was with Adam and Eve. But when God allowed Satan to confront Adam, Satan got to Adam through his wife Eve. And the key point that we need to realize sometimes is that Satan can use human beings to get into other human beings. And we need to realize that as Satan did bombard the mind of Eve, then he in turn went to work on her husband. And the result was that Satan subtly deceived Eve into disbelieving what God had taught. Adam followed her in choosing rebellion and rejecting God's rule and God's government over them.

They took to themselves the knowledge of what was good. They took to themselves the knowledge of what was evil. Deciding for themselves what was right and what was wrong. And their whole nature and spirit and attitude changed immediately upon partaking of that fruit. And they went and hid themselves because they knew they were naked. And then when God confronted them and dragged them out of the bushes, what happened? They then were asked certain questions, and they began to blame each other and then blame God and the serpent. And we see this wonderful problem of a spirit of rebellion that entered into them and they became as **Jeremiah 17:9** says, *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?* And that's what happens to human beings. They are blinded to the reality of what's going on inside.

Now that evil came from Satan. The Bible says in the book of 2 Corinthians these words: *The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety.* And it can happen to you just like that if you're tuned into the wrong channel. Just like broadcast that is broadcast to your mind, if your mind is on another channel he can't broadcast to you. But if your mind is open enough to his broadcast, then we can have an interesting problem.

Notice **Ephesians 2:1**. The apostle Paul writes these words. *And you has he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins - that is, made alive, forgiven, had your sins washed away.* **Verse 2.** *Wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.*

So we recognize that what happened was the prince of the power of the air was broadcasting. And just like a radio, just like a television set, the spirit in every human being is able to tune in on Satan's wavelength. And Satan broadcasts to the human spirit. He broadcasts in attitudes of self-centeredness, lust, greed, vanity. He broadcasts to us in jealousy, in envy, in resentment, in competition, in strife and bitterness, anger, hatred. That's what it says. Notice what it says in **verse 3**. *Among whom we all had our conduct in times past in the lust of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of anger.* Both God's anger and the anger that has been instilled by this particular nature. And we became by nature the children of anger, the children of hostilities. And so we begin to recognize that it is these attitudes that we see in the world that we live in that are going to bring the world to the brink of total annihilation.

But we as human beings in God's church still have to struggle against them. And sometimes there are holes in our armor and we don't recognize that this is going on. According to the book of Ezra, God did not speak to Cyrus in words, but he stirred up his spirit and caused him to want to do what needed to be done for the children of Judah.

So the point is very simple. Attitudes, feelings, motives, and impulses can be broadcast. Sometimes people feel depressed and they don't know why. Have you ever had that happen to you? Of course it has. We see some of the devices of Satan by using discouragement. He uses self-righteousness. He uses a judgmental spirit. He uses an unforgiving spirit. I'm sure you have seen that. You have felt that. You have been through that over the years that you have been in God's church. These are some of the fiery darts that are thrown by Satan. Satan speaks to our weaknesses as human beings. And we can be the people of God. We can have that armor. But the problem is sometimes it has got holes in it. That's what I'm trying to show you today, that sometimes we find ourselves dealing with problems because Satan speaks to our weaknesses by attitudes and accusations. Sometimes it's a people to people confrontation with Satan as the speaker to the weakness of man.

I want to read you some scriptures. You don't need to turn to them. I want you to just listen to them for a moment. These are the words of Jesus Christ. I'm going to quote to

you from a different translation in a couple of cases, but I hope that won't deter you from understanding what he was saying. When you begin to look at the concept that Satan stirs the spirit and speaks to our weaknesses, and influences sometimes the world around us, and sometimes us as the brethren of God, listen to these particular scriptures. This is coming from Jesus Christ just before he gave up his life. He said, *Simon, Simon, listen. Satan has asked excessively that all of you* (that is, all of those that were chosen to ultimately be apostles and probably the many disciples as well,) *Satan has asked excessively that all of you be given up to him that he may sift you like grain. But I have prayed that your faith may not fail.*

Now how did Jesus know that? Because Jesus Christ had the spirit of discernment. Because he had the ability to understand. He could watch and see what the disciples were going through, some of the problems that they faced.

Let me give you another example. Jesus talked of his death there in the **16th chapter of Matthew**. And when he talked of his death Peter said, absolutely not! He rebuked him and told him, *Not so Lord, far be it from you*. Because he wanted the Messiah to come as king and rule now. And Jesus turned away from Peter and he said to him - who? Satan. He said, *Get behind me Satan. You are in my way, for you are minding what partakes not of the nature and quality of God, but of men*. You see, this is this bombardment.

And Peter was unconverted, because the Bible says that Peter was told, *when you are converted strengthen the brethren*.

One more example. The disciples were running through a terrible problem with some people, and they were giving them all kinds of trouble. And they said, *Lord shall we ask that fire come down from heaven* - something like what Elijah did. *And he rebuked them and said, You don't know what manner of spirit you are*. You don't know.

My point is a very simple one, is it not? That we have got to be on guard. So today in the final 20 minutes of my sermon I would like to show you seven major areas where Satan stirs the spirit and he speaks to our weakness and influences the world around us, and sometimes to us as well.

Let's go through them and take just a few minutes to look at them. I describe them as the seven spirits of Satan. Now there may be ten, there may be twelve. Maybe I've not researched it all completely. But the point is, seven is a good number from the point of view of what I found, and I'd like to share them with you.

1. Probably the primary one - A REBELLIOUS, HOSTILE, AND ANGRY SPIRIT. I want you to notice over in the book of **Galatians 5:14** a scripture. This is found just before the works of the flesh. **Verse 15**. He said, *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another* - this is what I describe as party spirit. This is what I describe as the break-up of people. This is what we see as a part of an attitude or frame of mind that people have sometimes

where they bite and devour one another. He said, *Take heed that you be not consumed one of another*. It's kind of like a dog that gets in a room and has a fight with another dog, and one is consumed. Have you watched some of these fights? They're horrible. But this is the kind of analogy he's talking about, biting and devouring one another. Just like a wild dog. He shows that this is what this kind of party spirit creates. It's just simply an attitude and a frame of mind that begins to envelope the mind of a human being. Because they are opposing themselves, they don't recognize what is happening to them.

Let's notice over in **Galatians 5:20**. We read here in **verse 19** some of the works of the flesh. And it says, *The works of the flesh are manifested*. And it begins to describe some of them in verse 19. But I'd like to go to **verse 20**. Because I think this particular section shows you a whole group of things that seem to be kind of in the same block of our understanding. They all seem to emanate from one particular area. And so he goes on to talk about idolatry and witchcraft. And then he says, *hatred*, and another word that's found in verse 20 is *wrath*. Hatred and wrath. Anger and this wrath are both, in that sense of the word, a frame of mind or an attitude that is unjustifiable feelings toward other human beings. They are just unjustifiable feelings that occur, where people get so angry. And I have watched in the world that I live in over the last four or five years, people get so angry. They believe in the Sabbath day, they believe in the holy days. They believe that we're not going to heaven, that we're not burning in an everburning hell fire. But because they have a divergence of opinion about one particular aspect, they are angry and they want to fight. And they want to get into such a frame of mind that you begin to ask the question, what in the world is going on? And it's tragic.

Notice another example here in verse 20. He talks about *variance*. Variance is simply to cut apart. It means to divide in two. But this frame of mind, this spirit that bombards us, can actually divide people. It can just keep breaking people off. Some churches have split twice. Some churches have split three times. Some have split even more than that as people go off. Five or six here, eight or ten there, in some of these little, small groups. And you sit there and you say, wait a minute, what's going on? And the realization is that there is variance that is at work.

Another word that is found in this particular verse is *emulations*. Emulations simply means dissensions; it means jealousies and envies and an attitude that simply divides people from one another.

Another example here is found in the word *strife*. Strife means contentions as an expression of enmity. Just contending all the time in a frame of mind of some kind of competition.

And then dropping down to the next word, you have *seditions and heresies*. Seditions simply refer to an insurrection, of standing apart to stir and to unsettle. Heresies are simply factions and a self-willed opinion that leads to division and the formation of a different group called a sect.

These are going on all over the place now. It's happening all of the time. People go racing off into different positions and frames of mind because they allow themselves to do these things. "No one ever is going to tell me what to do again," said one man. No one is ever going to tell me what to do again. Sad.

I was threatened two years ago because of a particular situation in which they wanted to string up certain individuals. String up an individual. That was an old term that we used to use out in the old west. That was a term used in the United Church of God by somebody. People who call individuals on the telephone and they have these obscene telephone calls of anger and attitude. I remember talking with an individual from another organization. And he talked about how this person who called just berated and said some horribly terrible things that a Christian should never say. But it happens. It's a part of this anger that builds up, and it hurts people. It should not be. We have to ask ourselves the question, where does it come from? If Satan bombards a rebellious and hostile and angry spirit we have to ask the question, have we got holes in our armor? I think so.

2. We realize that it says that these unclean spirits go out of a man and they walk through dry places seeking rest, and they find none. The Bible talks about them as being wandering stars. As being restless spirit, ing, wanting to seek rest, but not being satisfied. Yearning for what they don't have and wanting to be satisfied. A lack of contentment. So we realize point number two is A DISSATISFIED SPIRIT.

Notice **Ephesians 4:14**. Notice what the apostle Paul says about the church and what the responsibility of the church is to be in the perfecting of the saints and the work and the edifying and the building of the people of God. Notice what verse 14 says. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and the cunning craftiness wherein they lie in wait to deceive.*

Now you can read that scripture, and there are two aspects to that. One, that there are individuals who just simply lie in wait to deceive individuals who are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, people who just zero in and listen to every little thing that comes out. Just about the time we answer one deception, up pops two or three more.

Did you know that in the 40s and into the early 50s Herbert W. Armstrong had to deal with the calendar issues? Did you know he had to deal with the 14th and 15th Passover? Did you know he had to deal with the sacred names? Did you know he had to deal with probably nine out of every ten things that we have run up against in the United Church of God in the last four or five years? And he settled all of those things back in the 40s and the 50s. But when you don't have strong leadership from that point of view, what happens? People begin to allow themselves to be carried about by every wind of doctrine.

But notice the last part of it, *by the sleight of men and the cunning craftiness wherein they lie in wait to deceive*. Sometimes we think people have some really positive motives.

Don't kid yourself. There's a lot of people that want - not you - they want what you've got. That's a fact of life, and you need to realize that.

And so we recognize that people buy into anything, and everything, the next thing that comes along. It just seems like for whatever reason that that situation causes people to do that. And the question you have to ask yourself is, where did that spirit come from? The truth was the truth back in the 40s and the 50s. Why has it somehow changed now? The Bible talks about A PROUD SPIRIT. We recognize when we read about this spirit being in Ezekiel it says his heart was lifted up to his own destruction. One of the things that you see about him is he displays excessive self. He displays arrogance and htiness. He's pushy and he's insistent on his own way. He's self-willed and he's presumptuous. He has scorn for his inferiors, and he assumes superiority. You know that about him. And you recognize that in his anger, and in his self-righteousness, and his judgmental spirit, he has a frame of mind that he bombards people with. And people come to the place where they say, come not thou near me for I am holier than thou. Arrogance, vanity, self-will, ego, people trying to rise above their inferiorities.

The apostle Paul said, *of your own selves men would arise and speak perverse things*. Paul told the Ephesian elders to be careful. He simply told them to be careful because they would listen to some of these individuals. I've watched men tell us that they were prophets of God sent to "you Laodiceans" as he told us. We watch people tell us they were this or they were that; they tell us that they were the heir apparent, that they were the most qualified, that they were a part of the family, that they are next in line, that they worked with this gray-haired patriarch, and somehow they should be the next person in line. And I say simply, such arrogance. They have no proof of that. Yet this is what people do. Jesus Christ was not in that frame of mind. If you stop and look at what Christ said he said, *nevertheless not my will be done*. He was humble. *I always do the things that please the Father*, he said. *My Father gives me the commandment what I should say and what I should speak. I came not to do my own will but the will of the Father*. He said, *My Father is greater than I*. What a frame of mind. What an attitude. I'd like to see some of these people begin to understand that that's the frame of mind by which God will open their minds to be able to be used.

A CRITICAL AND ACCUSING SPIRIT. It's chic today to sit and dissect and point the finger. To uncover, to dethrone. It's easy today to vent disagreement, to have party spirit, to sow discord. I remember in the election when Mr. Clinton came up against Mr. George Bush, Sr. And it was in the last, I believe, ten days to two weeks of the election. And the camp of Mr. Clinton had come up against a particular little thing that they could use. And so, ten days before the election in November they put this out to the press. And by the time George Bush was able to answer it and was able to get an explanation out to the people, his ability to reach up and have the same amount of points so far as the possibility of being elected, he lost points and he dropped down somewhere between seven and ten points, somewhere in that particular area. And then by the time he had explained it he was only able to rise about three of those ten points, and never was able to reach the same level as Mr. Clinton, because he was put down by misinformation. Mr. Bush could not

recover. It's a perfectly devised way of putting out misinformation. It was proven to be false, but they put it out exactly at the right time. It was perfect timing.

The devil is very good at doing that and he's able to do that. We find this happening going back years ago. Back in our former association they built straw men by taking the Sabbath examples that somehow were bad, when you talk about an individual who wouldn't go out and help someone start their car. Or they discredited the leader of the church who had died, making him look foolish in prophecy and in things so far as the actions by certain people concerning healing. And so what you do is build a straw man, you knock it down, and then you say, you see, we've resolved the problem. The man wasn't really what he was supposed to be. And the Sabbath really wasn't what it was supposed to be.

And I happen to have known the man who did what he did on the Sabbath day, and he did not go out to help this individual with his car. That is true. He was a problem. But would the rest of us go out and help the man with the car? Absolutely. Absolutely. But they put up this straw man, knock it down, and that somehow does away with this thing of the Sabbath being a burden. Or the man being completely wrong and not being God's servant.

It's there. It's a part of it. It continues to occur. This spirit being knows exactly how to work. And he knows exactly how to use human beings. And you and I are simply the victims of what we have seen happen over the years.

AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT. According to what I see from the Bible, the unpardonable sin is a sin that won't be forgiven. It won't be forgiven because the person sees nothing to repent of. Satan cannot see where he has done anything to deserve the punishment that he's going to receive. He's angry with God. When people don't take responsibility for their lives and refuse to forgive and let go, and they want to exact their pound of flesh, they want to drag people through the mud and rattle skeletons in the closet, it only tells me that they are under that spirit. Bitter spirits go deep very quickly, brethren. Bitter spirits go deep very quickly. We'd better realize that he's very capable of bombarding our minds with an unforgiving spirit.

HE ALSO HAS A FEARFUL AND A DOUBTING SPIRIT. The demons, according to what the word of God said, cry out in fear for the punishment that is going to occur. The Bible says fear has torment. Satan preys upon uncertainty, times of wonderment - where is it all going? What's going to happen? One piece of armor is called the shield of faith. *And God has not given us the spirit of fear but of love and of power and a sound mind*, according to **2 Timothy**. And we've got to realize that when we're covered with that particular part of the armor we don't have to fear. We know what's going to happen. We read the end of the book. We win. The problem is we don't know what's going to happen between here and there sometimes, and that's tough. That's tough. But that's what he preys upon. That's what he tries to do, the times of uncertainty, and the wonderments that people go through.

FAILURE OR A DISCOURAGED SPIRIT. He has failed. He broadcasts the same. He is discouraged and angry and depressed, and he's full of self-pity. Self-pity cripples people. Self-pity is depression. Self-pity is feeling sorry for ourselves. Satan can't deceive people in certain open ways, so he attempts to discourage them and dishearten them. Makes them feel that no one cares for them or loves them. Makes them feel unworthy of the kingdom of God or that they can't make it into the kingdom of God.

I remember one year in Alberta during the pre-Passover period. You understand, many of you who have been in God's church for a number of years sometimes know that before the Passover is sometimes the most difficult times. Sometimes before the Feast of Tabernacles it has been that way too. But I baptized a lady in the church in Alberta about three weeks, four weeks before - I can't remember, I think it's about that time. And she became very depressed and she called me on the telephone and she said, I'm so depressed. I just can't do anything. She said, I'm just not even able to function in my life. And she said, I don't want to have anything to do with the church or God. I don't know what to do about this. She said, I just feel like I want to die. And I told her, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. You just got baptized last week. That was about three or four days ago. I said, do you know what's happening to you? She said, no I don't. I said, let me explain to you. You are not yet settled and set in the church. You have not been put in the church over a period of time where you are a settled and established member of the church. I said, don't miss the Passover. I said, if you miss the Passover you'll make a grave mistake. I said, Satan doesn't want you to take that Passover because it will establish you in the church. I said, be here. Do not stay home. Do you understand?

This was back in the days when we told people sometimes a little bit stronger. You know, like if you don't come I'm going to come out there with a rope and tie you up and drag you to church behind my car. You know, that type of thing. You know how it was back in those days. The Johnsons know how I was. I was their pastor. So we must remember that I told her, you be there. You understand - you'll be there. She said, yes sir, I'll be there. And so we went to the Passover, we kept the Passover, and we went through the Days of Unleavened Bread. And one Sabbath I walked up to her and said, how are you doing? She said, what? I said, how are you doing - how's the depression? She said, what depression? I said, when did it go? She said, a couple of days after the Passover. I said, oh, then my advice was right. She said, yeah, I think so. And that's when you begin to realize, he hates us.

I never forgot the example of a little girl who told me how she used to have her seances, and she used to dance with spirits. And she told me one day she was sitting on the edge of her porch, right on the rail, and she slipped off the rail and she started to fall. And they started to laugh out loud. And they said, oh goodie, she's going to get hurt. And she told me that; a young lady that was requesting baptism. That was shocking. She had moved away from those things. But the realization, brethren, is he hates us. They hate us. And you'd better realize that God is permitting us to have our hearts and minds sifted, and he can go after us in the holes in our armor, and we've got to be recognizing that that is going on.

Let's close with **Ephesians 6:10**. He said, *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.*

Don't ever forget that. The moment you forget that he has opportunity. He goes on talking about taking the armor of God. I won't read all of that, but I'll drop you down to **verse 18** to conclude with this. He said, *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplications for the saints.*

Let's put it very bluntly to you. The world of the sabbatarians is in an upheaval. The world of the sabbatarians is being bounced all over the place. This may be the precursor to the great tribulation. The prophecies are all there. It's just a question of whether they are now being fulfilled or not. But I will simply tell you that our world is under attack. Don't let it happen to you. *Be strong*, as it says, *in the Lord and the power of his might*, and don't allow those holes in your armor to be left. Patch them up. Work on them, so that you and I together can be one; so that we can be of one accord and that the law of synergism, the vision and the purpose that we have will drive us forward, and we as a body of people will focus outside of ourselves to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God to this world as a witness, as a warning, as a calling, and an election.