

Return to Our Foundation

(Sermon Notes) By: Warren Zehrung 7/9/16

The phrase, the “Foundation of the World” appears ten times in the Bible, and it refers to the time this present evil world’s systems came into being. The “foundation of the World” is not a good thing because that is when everything went wrong.

1Peter 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

1Peter 11:19 But with the precious **blood of Christ** [we were redeemed], as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1Peter 11:20 Who verily was foreordained before the **foundation of the world**.

Before Adam and Eve sinned it was a foregone conclusion that Jesus would die for the sins of the world. A proper and right foundation – our foundation – existed **before** sin entered the picture. It was sin that came between man and God, and ruined our perfect relationship.

Jesus instructed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. What He taught them was **our** foundation the Foundation unto **which we must Return**. They were given a proper and right foundation.

This is Satan’s world... Adam and Eve sinned – and that was the origin of “The foundation of the World.”

2Corinthians 4:4 In whom the **god of this world** [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

It is a reference to the **less than acceptable** state of the world.

Let’s take a brief snapshot of the world we are in today:

Canada's new child Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** marched in Toronto's homosexual parade this week. Justin Trudeau is the son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Brexit - virtually every day, or so it seems — another British politician steps aside. No man wants to be the British leader in these troubled times. As with Judah, this doesn’t mean the UK will stay leaderless.

The day before yesterday, on Thursday, the 7th of July, Euro News reported Conservative Michael Gove was eliminated as a contender for UK Prime Minister. Now, two females are left to contend for UK’s top job. That means, said Euro News, “the next UK Prime Minister will be a woman for only the second time in history.” Margaret Thatcher was the first woman.

The modern UK, as well as the rest of us, could learn a thing or two from Judah’s past mistakes. Isn’t it interesting that only women are left to be the UK Prime Minister - all the men are fleeing...

Isaiah 3:12 As for my people, **children** are their oppressors, and **women** rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Long ago God told the citizens of ancient Judah that unless they made a 180° turn about, reverse their course, the same thing would occur in their nation. You can read that in Isaiah 3:

Isaiah 3:4 And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

Isaiah 3:5 And the people shall be oppressed, everyone by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable.

Isaiah 3:6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:

Isaiah 3:7 In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer [I will not be the leader the UK Prime Minister]; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

Isaiah 3:8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

Does anyone doubt that God is again very angry with modern-day Israel? The United States of America is making the exact same mistake that Israel of old made.

2Kings 17:19 Also [Just like Israel] Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the [sinful] statutes of Israel which they made.

We have become a lawless nation: The CIA, the FBI, the IRS, the Justice Dept., the White House, the President, the Secretary of State, they all walk in the sinful statutes which they made.

Judah sinned worse than Israel had sinned.

Jeremiah 3:11 And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

God is removing the hedge of protection that once preserved our blessings. Look at the blatant sin leading to increased rioting and terror. How is the Church of God responding to this National crisis?

The Church of God is not **sighing and crying** too much about the demise of our nation because we all believe that we are the privileged ones that will be spared the mayhem and carnage that is descending on our nation. Brethren, it is at our steps. It is all around us.

After repeated warnings by God Israel was carried away — out of their country — into captivity and exile for the sin of Sabbath breaking and idolatry in the year 721 BC. The Assyrians were cruel and heartless captors, and they carried Israel away from the Promised Land.

About 136 years later, in 585 BC Judah and Jerusalem also fell and went into captivity and exile to Nebuchadnezzar – King of Babylon. It was ugly! The Babylonians killed most of the Jews and Levites in Jerusalem, but they took King Zedekiah and some people to Babylon. Do we think that it is not going to happen to us as prophesied?

2Kings 17:18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight [Assyrian captivity]: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

Why did these mighty nations fall – how were they able to be taken into captivity and destroyed?

Jeremiah 32:30 For the children of Israel and the children of Judah [both] have **only done evil** before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only **provoked me to anger** with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.

We are looking at this because that is exactly what America is doing today! I want to demonstrate how precise God's prophecies are – and yet they are not heeded.

When most of us were called by God into His Church it seemed that many were responding and coming to the knowledge of the Truth.

God once blessed our efforts greatly – but lately we see the various churches stumbling about and not much fruit being produced. There are not many who are turning their lives around in obedience to God. Was that once great work a onetime deal, or will God once again call great numbers of converts?

Perhaps God is only calling a very few in the last hour. There must come a time when God cuts His work short. What of those who are called at the very end – will their reward be small?

The parable of the laborers tells us that the latecomers will receive the same reward as those who have labored for many years, and that is they will be in the **first** and **better resurrection** in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 20:1 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.

They worked long and hard in the heat of the day. Some laborers were hired very late in the day, **near evening**, and yet got paid in full!

Matthew 20:9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, [5 pm] they received every man a **full** day's wage.

Some men who did not understand the importance of **finishing the harvest**, complained of the unfairness.

Matthew 20:12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. (Matthew 20:1-16)

Brethren, have we forgotten that we have a responsibility to finish the harvest?

You might ask what you could possibly do to make a difference in preaching the Gospel to the world.

The answer to that question is that the Gospel is preached **personally** by the way we live our lives.

Where is the “oneness” that would show the world that we are God’s people? Do we realize that even our personal efforts at generating unity and oneness among the brethren can substantially impact the world. Jesus said:

John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: **that the world may believe** that thou hast sent me.

Jesus said that the Gospel would go to all the world if we would seek the unity of spirit and oneness.

Like yeast, it would spread from person to person – one on one – until the entire lump believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 13:33 Another parable spoke [Jesus] unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the **whole** was leavened.

It is important for us to get back to the basics. As you know, we are compelled to return to the truth of our Christianity.

Jude :3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly **contend** for the **faith which was once delivered** unto the saints.

What is God’s will for us today? There is an old saying: "Right is right even when no one is doing it and wrong is wrong even when everyone is doing it."

There is a lot wrong in the churches of God today – and it is still wrong when a whole lot of people are doing it. Just because nearly all the organizations are doing it – that does not make it right – it is still wrong. From time to time it behooves us to review what we believe and stand for. We need to get back to the beliefs, practices and Faith of the first century Church of God (Jude 3).

History has shown us so many times how easy it is to go off course when following the **majority** who have lost their moorings and direction.

We must turn to the Scriptures and make sure that we are not getting caught up in ungodly trends. We seek a Biblical **foundation** in all we do! Isn't that the one thing that distinguishes us as the Church of God? Jesus said:

Luke 14:26 If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And you cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me.

Our love for and commitment to Jesus Christ and God the Father must be more important to us than any other relationship. Each of us must be willing to bear his “cross,” to faithfully follow Jesus even through life’s most difficult challenges. We are warned to consider carefully that accepting the gift of eternal life comes at the highest cost we can imagine.

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that does not forsake **all that he has**, he cannot be my disciple.

Now, we usually think in physical terms: Would I forsake my car, my money, - things like that.

But, are we willing to stand alone if need be to represent the principles Jesus died for? What about our friends and social contacts.

I was surprised to find these words of Herbert W Armstrong in 1944! In 1944, I was only a year old. He wrote in part:

“How thankful we are that we have this truth—that God has revealed to us His divine purpose—that our congregations are not **social clubs**—our purpose not to get but to give—we do not have congregations just to enjoy ourselves and be ministered to, but to **serve**. And out of our small groups, we are able to make a difference in these last days. As we work together let us not forget the work we are a part of. We have set our hand to the plow.”

Herbert W Armstrong was quoting:

Luke 9:62 Jesus said, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.

Brethren, it is still the same today. We have not been called just to be saved... Just to be the first in the Kingdom of God. We are to be looking forward to the **harvest!**

God has high expectations of us. There are not too many people to whom their Christian faith is as relevant as **life** itself.

Most people do not look at the **practice of their faith** as though it made the difference between eternal life and eternal death. Even among church-goers, Godliness and morality are at an all time low.

It is not surprising with so many church leaders liberalizing and watering down doctrine that our true **first century Christianity** is on the decline. What must be done to stem the tide? It is no wonder that Jesus rhetorically asks us the question:

Luke 18:8 ...When the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?

The advice that Jesus gives to our age is to reverse the slide into secularism, turn around and be on fire for God's way.

Revelation 3:19 ... Be zealous therefore, and repent.

That is easier said than done because everyone has been lulled into a false sense of complacency. Yes, everyone! The Church of God is asleep. Why else would Jesus say about us:

Matthew 25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they **all** slumbered and slept.

Jesus gave us a synopsis of the commandments; they are not discretionary – but mandatory for true Christians:

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

1John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because [Jesus] laid down **His life** for us: and we [too] ought to **lay down our lives** for the brethren.

As Jesus gave His life for us, we must be willing to give our lives to follow Him.

True Christians are those who are circumcised spiritually, with the rebellious spirit of the human mind restrained and brought under control by the Holy Spirit to the Mind of God.

Hebrews 10:16 This is the “New Covenant” that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” (Hebrews 10:16, New Revised Standard Version).

Jesus brought a **New and Improved Covenant** for Transforming the **Heart**:

The New Covenant – of which we baptized members are a part of – makes new people of us. As a result of conversion, we are not the same old person we used to be.

Our reconciliation to Father is not completed – it is something that we should be working toward continuously.

Romans 5:10 - For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

2Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

It sounds like a done deal – we are reconciled to the Father – we are back to where Adam and eve were before they sinned.

Brethren, we should not read these verses like it has all been done for us and we have nothing to live up to.

Our very lives should be spent in becoming more and more reconciled to the Father – praising Him, worshipping Him, drawing closer to Him, doing His will in every thought and action we take.

The final result of God's plan is a divine family of sons and daughters who have developed the same **righteous character** that was evident in Jesus Christ when He was with mankind as a human being.

Jesus never sinned. He would have never done anything for the Father to be ashamed of Him. How can we sin – and have the Father be ashamed of us?

Let's look at all 10 places of the phrase "New Covenant" in the Bible.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a **New Covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

2Corinthians 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the **New Covenant**; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

Jesus gave us the example: Thou shalt not kill – that is the **letter**.

The **spirit** of the law is that we also, in addition, in a **New and Improved Covenant**, we do not hate, we do not hurt, - in fact we forgive and make peace and reconcile.

Matthew 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, **Thou shalt not kill**; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:

Hebrews 8:6 But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and ... He is the mediator of a **Better Covenant**, which has been enacted through **better promises**.

The Old Covenant assure the Promised Land, where as the New Covenant promises Eternal Life – that is **better promises**.

Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

'Faultless,' the fault or weakness was with the people, that there was no Holy Spirit in them to strive to overcome.

Hebrews 8:8 For finding **fault** with **them** [there is the weakness], he saith [back in Jer 31:31], Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a **New Covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A **new covenant**, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayed and waxed old is ready to vanish away.

That is where the Protestants conclude that it's OK to kill and steal... No, they **don't go that far** – but that old Sabbath law has decayed and waxed old.

Brethren, what has decayed and waxed old is that we do not have to die for our past sins! Jesus died in our place – and we get to live. In no way does that imply that we can go back to sinning. No way.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin**, that grace may abound?

Romans 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Hebrews 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the **new covenant**, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Able, the first man to shed innocent blood was not sufficient to cover the sins of all mankind – as Jesus' blood does.

Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the **New Covenant in my blood**, which is shed for you.

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the **remission of sins**.

Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for **many**.

Not everyone will allow Christ's blood to cover them.

1Corinthians 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the **New Covenant** in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

How often do we do that – every Passover.

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause He is the mediator of the **New Covenant**, that by means of [His] death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of **eternal inheritance**.

That is the **better promise** of the **New and Improved Covenant**.

There is a dangerous state of affairs taking place in the western world – and sadly it occasionally appears in God's Church. Some have referred to it as the nanny state. It is where someone would rather have others take care of them – rather than take care of themselves. But, I'm not speaking of the Welfare system today – the Governmental system of buying votes today.

I believe that God wants us to come to the point where we stand on our own two feet when it comes to ownership of what we believe and understand about God's way of life.

Ezekiel 14:20 Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but **deliver their own souls** by their righteousness.

I believe that God desires that we **live** what we say we stand for. We cannot ride into the Kingdom on someone else's coattails.

It is like leaving the ground – and flying an airplane solo – there is no one there to help you – you are on your own – **you hold your life in your own hands**.

However, some people enjoy the security of allowing someone else to do their thinking for them. Are we responsible for our spiritual eternal life – or do we consign that responsibility to some man or organization we trust?

Protestants believe "Jesus did it all for us" – we do not have to do anything, except cruise into heaven.

The New Covenant describes how we become **responsible** agents of God – not relying on an organization – but having the Godly character to be totally responsible.

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

Jesus fulfilled the law – we don't have to keep the law anymore.

Joe Tkach said, “We don’t have to keep that old testament law – We don’t have to keep the ten commandments.” We did not listen to him because we came to realize that it was contrary to God’s way for one man or a few men to exercise their authority over their fellowman.

Jesus did not organized a Church — He never once gave His disciples any form of top down Church government — He never once gave any man authority over His Church, nor did He give anyone the power to rule over others!

Mark 10:42 Jesus said unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

Mark 10:43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your **servant**:

Mark 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chief, shall be servant of all.

Why do so many churches follow the way of the Gentiles? The ministry exercises undue authority on the faithful members – even putting them out of the Church. Brethren, we stand before God, and not men. We do not answer to any man or organization – only to God.

More and more Israel wanted to live like the other nations — the ways of pleasing self — of pleasure — of greed and getting — of organized competition — their own army — of exalting self, and humans. Thus they departed from God's ways, and drew deeper and deeper into the ways of sin.

Is that what we want to do – be more and more like the those who seem to be all set up with everything going their way?

With Israel, their government was a theocracy where God ruled. There was no human king — no man to usurp authority to rule over his fellows! Are we like those Israelites who wanted King Saul, and not God? God was Israel’s King – but they preferred Saul.

1Samuel 12:12 ... **the Lord your God was your King.**

No man was to issue orders, decrees, directives, regulations, or laws — nor were they to have any law-making body of men. Their laws came **directly from God** — and all were based upon and in harmony with the great basic spiritual law of love — the Ten Commandments — the principle of giving and of humility and dependence upon God.

The civil laws were administered by Judges. The church ceremonies, sacrifices, and rituals, were administered by the Priests — the Levites. The Congregation of Israel was a physical church, not a Spiritual entity like the New Testament Church of God. Every man, woman, and child in the nation was a member of the one church. Membership came by birth. There was no promise of receiving the Holy Spirit, or of salvation or eternal life. Only the prophets and a select few had God's Spirit.

What was the purpose or mission of the Old Testament Church? The purpose or mission of the Old Testament Church was to be a model nation representing God’s way to **all the other nations**.

Deuteronomy 4:5 Behold, I have taught you, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

Deuteronomy 4:6 Keep therefore and do [my statutes and judgments]; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, **Surely this great nation** is a wise and understanding people.

Deuteronomy 4:7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?

Deuteronomy 4:8 And what nation is there **so great**, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

In the same way, each member of the Body of Christ represents God's way to the world.

Could it be that within God's Church we are in danger of making the same mistake where we speak religious sounding words but in fact exhibit very little Christian substance? When we measure that which passes for religious practice in many of our congregations today—it is only a pretense of true Godly faith.

Where can we find True Christianity? The Christianity practiced as Jesus and the apostles taught it? In the Church of God it is like we are doing just enough to fool only the most superficial of adherents.

Within the Church of God:

Where is the seriousness? Where is the faith? Where is the urgency, to warn our nation – and the world? Where is the urgency, to preach the Gospel? Where is the reconciliation, between members and organizations? Where is the mercy, for those who are weak? Where is the humility that God's people should exhibit? Where is the zeal, to get back to the very basics of living our faith? Where is the sacrifice, the living sacrifices that we should be?

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a **living** sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Where is the honest introspection, examining ourselves by God's Word? Where is the giving of ourselves – as Christ gave us His all? Where is the caring? Where is the sincerity? Where is the integrity? Where is the spirituality? Where is the submission? Where is the yieldedness? Where is the forgiveness? And where is the crucial concern for our brother and sister with needs?

Let's let our light shine to all with whom we come into contact. The Gospel will go to all the world.

End: Return to Our Foundation