

Today we are continuing in the sermon series entitled *The Death of Sardis* with this being *Part 2*, and should be the conclusion today. Before I go too far I do want to mention that last Sabbath I had commented on a particular era that I wasn't really certain of because I wasn't intending to discuss that, I just did it as an aside and I wasn't real certain. Well, it turned out that I definitely wasn't too certain because I did miss the era. There was one era that I mentioned was the shortest-lived era and it wasn't Smyrna, it was Pergamus. Pergamus was the era that lasted for only 10 years, the longest being Thyatira which was over a thousand years, and of course the next shortest one after Pergamus was Laodicea, a period that we've talked about in times past. Really interesting history of all these things, of how God called Mr. Armstrong, for those of us who go back to a period of time when God began calling some of us in a period called Philadelphia, others being called in a period called Laodicea, and others of you called in a period that has no name except the end-time. Interesting times we live in.

So we're going to pick up in the context where we left off last Sabbath. Sardis was given very specific instruction and warning, as we talked about last Sabbath, in the very beginning of their message that is deeply important. It's a deeply important message to all times. All these messages to the churches, there's information there that's good for all periods of time for God's people, because there are attitudes that reflect each one of these eras that have always been in the Church. But there's always been that which is predominant at a specific period of time for the entirety of the Church. During Philadelphia that was the predominant spirit, obviously, although other attitudes and spirit of these other eras existed in some people and situations at different times – Philadelphia was Philadelphia for that period of time as a whole, for the Church. And then Laodicea came and that type of Laodicean spirit/attitude was already coming in very powerfully before Mr. Armstrong died, the spirit of.

I can hear Mr. Armstrong in those sermons, earlier on in the early eighties talking about, wondering if 50% were Laodicean at that point in time. Later on it got to a point toward the end of his ministry before he died where he said, "I wonder if even 10% of you get it!" 90% Laodicean...and that's about where we were so that when he died we went into an era that had already begun in the sense of a spirit. And the same thing true here concerning Sardis and what took place at the end of Sardis and the beginning of Philadelphia; it took a long time to establish it. But there was a spirit there that continued on for a time, a battle that continued on for a time as God worked through Mr. Armstrong to re-establish and restore truth in the Church.

This warning they were told in **Revelation 3:2 – Be watchful**, again, a message that Jesus Christ gave to the entirety of the Church for *all* time, but it was more needful for them. Each message that has a warning, an admonition, and at times that which was positive that they were doing that they needed to see as well in some eras. But in this particular era here this was a major part of the message: **Be watchful**. A word that means to be spiritually alert, spiritually on guard with what you have, the truth of God, the ways of God. Be alert! Be alert in your spiritual lives! And so God was telling them this at the very beginning here, this message that was given from God Almighty to Jesus Christ (as we talked about) to John to give to the Church, to the seven Churches and then obviously through time here to the Churches prophetically.

Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain; powerful message, because there wasn't much there! By the time they'd gone through Thyatira and they came to the point of Sardis, and because of

what marked the period of Sardis with an increase, if you will, of the production of Bibles, the process there whereby some groups began to splinter off from the Catholic church, that marked a new era that effected people and affected God's Church in a very powerful way, things they lived through. And so they were admonished to **be watchful, to strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.** They were going to live through a period of time here where that would mark things that were taking place during Sardis. Truth died out during Sardis.

We don't know what they had at the beginning but we know what they had at the end because that's when Mr. Armstrong was called; and the truths that remained at that time, three basic foundational truths that are awesome to understand, their existence at that moment in time when God called Mr. Armstrong and what God did through him then and how this ties into the rest of the story. It's a powerful story. Looking back in time, recognizing what God did, seeing these things; God has taught us much about events that have taken place and why.

So, **Be watchful, strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die; for I have not found your works perfect before God.** We just went through a series talking about perfection and that process of growth that *must* take place in us. And again here, works that stem from what you believe, from the belief that God has given to you, because first of all God gives you the ability to believe the truth. When He draws you, when He begins to open up your mind, the first thing you're given is truth, whatever amount it is. It might be something about the Sabbath, it might be something else, some of the things we're talking about here, the name of the Church as an example, and then the Sabbath. But there is some truth that you're given in your mind and your being that God gives to you the ability to see and to understand – then our response to that is what faith is all about. Just being able to believe is not enough.

Being able to see the truth isn't enough. Having your mind opened up to believe what is true isn't enough! You have to live by it! Your life has to begin to reflect it. If God gives you the truth about the Sabbath, the faith will be to live it then, to stop working on the Sabbath. That's where faith is. You have the belief, the understanding you're not to work on one day of the week. The other six days we work, we're to be productive in life, we're to do things in life, we're to be able to be involved deeply in life, but on that one day it's *God's time*; God's time to lead, guide, direct, motivate, mould and fashion us more than any other day, on the Sabbath day. And so if you believe that you begin living by it - that's what faith is - it's living by what you have been given to believe. And the works that come from that, that's what works are. Works are a matter of faith.

That's why I marvel sometimes, the Protestant world gets things so messed up because they read things that Paul said about faith and works and then they don't grasp and they twist and distort things that James said, but they both were discussing it from a different viewpoint to teach different things, but they both complement each other. It's an awesome thing! But people in the Church have struggled with some of those things too, to understand what works and faith are all about. Like I mentioned last Sabbath; the Protestant world, Catholic world, they live by faith, their faith, their works, they have works. And yet the Protestant world says, "You don't have to have works, that's *all done away with!* There are no works, you can't be saved by works." Hmm, they go to church on Sunday, if they do go to church, but they believe in Sunday so some go to church on Sunday; that's their faith, that's their works. They believe in Christmas, they observe Christmas; that's their works. Whatever they do on Easter, they go to sunrise services, that's a portion of what they believe, it's a matter of their faith, it's a matter of a misguided faith.

Matthew 24, let's return there again just as a review. Needs to be stated again quickly where we ended last week talking about some of this, where Jesus Christ gave this message to the entirety of the Church, it's for all time, it's for the Millennial period, it's for the Great White Throne period, it's for anybody who was ever called into God's Church. This is what people have to do. This is what you *must* live by. You must watch, you must be spiritually on guard in your own life; you must fight the fight against carnal human nature, your own selfish human nature. Everyone is brought into that battle. You must make choices; God or self, God or someone else's ideas about how to live this way of life. There's only one way to live.

Matthew 24:36 - But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. When I mentioned May 27, 2012 in the radio interviews, people would say, "Well, no man knows the day or the hour!" And that's not what this is about! And so how do you communicate something on a spiritual plane? Just like Jesus Christ with Nicodemus, He couldn't give him truth and understanding about the spirit. He says you have to be born again, you have to be born in the spirit. And Nicodemus didn't understand that. All he could understand was something physical, "What do I have to do? How do you climb back in the womb of your mother after you're full grown?" How could he be born a second time? ...born again? And so Jesus Christ basically told him He couldn't give it to him, "...that which is spirit is spirit," and Nicodemus didn't have it at that point. He didn't have the holy spirit to grasp and comprehend these things, and so it is with the world.

And so the best thing you can explain to the world is to say, "Yes, but God reveals His truth to His prophets before He does anything of major proportions on this earth. Before prophecies are fulfilled He gives it to His prophets who give it then at that time." And that's all they can grasp and understand.

This verse is not about the timing of Christ's return, it's about the thief in the night. It's about a thief, of how there can be that which happens in your life where everything you have that God has given to you is stripped from you, taken from you where there's no power in it anymore. That's what this is about, a thief in the night. Just reiterating what I talked about last Sabbath and what I've talked about in past sermons. It goes on in talking about some of the things that happen, about Noah, and talking about how they entered into the ark, **and knew not until the flood came.** Things that were fulfilled at that time. They lived by faith up to that point in time.

Verse 42 then is where we started in - **Watch therefore: for you don't know the hour that your Lord does come.** You don't know when He's going to come. This included people during Ephesus, at the beginning of the Church. This was for people who lived through Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea...it's for *all* time. So how could it be for people who lived before us? How could it have been for people who lived during Philadelphia? Well, it was! It *was*! And the admonition that Jesus Christ is giving, it's not about His literal return – obviously all looking forward to the time God's Kingdom comes to this earth – many understanding and coming to a point in time, even Paul, realizing it wasn't going to be at their time.

Watch therefore: for you don't know what hour your Lord does come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch, in other words, in the night, what night-time hour the thief would have come, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. It's a warning here of a thief coming in the night, and Jesus Christ gives that example, that you don't want that to happen to you. You don't want that to happen to you to where what you have is taken from you; and instead He tells us to watch and be alert, be on guard so *this* doesn't happen to you!

He says, **Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour you think not the Son of man comes.** In other words, through time for those who got to a point in their lives where this wasn't a concern to them, where they lost sight of this, where they were not watchful and on guard, they certainly were not thinking that they could lose what they had. On the contrary, Laodicea came to a point in spirit and attitude where they thought that they were rich and increased with goods, they didn't have need of anything more! That was even in the end of Philadelphia!

I still remember that one sermon when Mr. Armstrong speaking was in Pasadena crying out to individuals, because he didn't see evangelists in the audience, he didn't see the ministry in the audience, he didn't see any of the evangelists he taught at Ambassador College back in the 40's and 50's – he didn't see them anywhere in the auditorium. He asked if there was a single minister in the auditorium and some man way in the back held up his hand; and I remember him saying, "And you don't count!" Because that's not who he was talking about! Where were the rest of them? Where *were* the evangelists? They didn't need to be taught by God's apostle anymore, that's where they were. They didn't need to listen to God's apostle because they already were rich and increased with goods. They didn't think there was anything more to learn.... I mean, "He's an old man. He's just going to be talking about those two trees or something else. How many times can we hear that?!"

And every time Mr. Armstrong went into that he brought along a new point, a new purpose of why he was discussing those things if people could just stay tuned...but they couldn't stay awake long enough. Why? Because they were starting to fall asleep spiritually already! That's an atrocious thing that happened in our history! That's why those evangelists who are still alive to this day, not a one of them is going to enter the promised land, the beginning of the thousand years. They have to wait a thousand years to be resurrected again, to live life again in a physical body, to be awakened spiritually from their spiritual sleep to continue on, because of their sins, because of that spirit and that attitude of not watching, of not being close to God, of not understanding, "I need [to be] fed continually! I need to grow! I need to be alert spiritually! I need to be on-guard!"

So don't any of you ever let that begin to enter into your life or you can lose what you have. What a horrible shame at the end-time here, at the end of this age, that we could be *so close*, a few months away, just a few months away now; to be so close and because of falling asleep spiritually God not giving the opportunity of living into a new age – have to wait a thousand years. I mean, you're not going to know you're waiting a thousand years, but to give this up?

He says, **therefore be you also ready, for in such an hour as you don't think...**in other words, why aren't you thinking that? Because you're asleep, because you allowed yourself to quit watching, you quit being on guard, and that's the next step. If you can't be on guard and be alert in your life spiritually, crying out to God for His help, day in and day out for His holy spirit, asking for help and strength to fight against your weaknesses, asking for help to fight against your sins because you know you have sin and you're alert to those things that God is giving to you...but if you don't have that in your mind that's when Jesus Christ comes as a thief.

God had to do that to the entire Church in Laodicea, came as a thief in the night. Everyone! He uses an expression that's not a complimentary thing at all towards Laodicea, "I will vomit you out of My mouth!" He did it to the entire Church! It's a big stumbling block for some in different groups out there, in part of Worldwide in the past and different organizations, because they still think that they have a Philadelphian spirit, or they were Philadelphian, they could never be a nasty ole' Laodicean. "I could never have been rich and increased with goods! I never could have been filled with pride or haughtiness

in any fashion or form and I *definitely* wouldn't have fallen asleep," ...and all these things that go through the mind. "...and I definitely wasn't cut off from God! I've *never* been cut off from God!" Yes, everyone has. When God spewed everybody out of the Church we were all cut off from God, and He began working in different ways to shake us, to awaken us up. That was a beginning of a wake-up call for me, thankfully, thank God! ...and began to wake up at that point in time, otherwise I would have been in a deeper sleep, if we hadn't been spewed out of His mouth.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, that's the question! **Who's going to be a faithful**, to do what God says, to do what Jesus Christ is saying here, **and wise servant**, well, we want to be wise. If we are then we'll do what God says, we'll strive to do what God says, we'll ask for help to do what He says because we realize we can't do it, we have to have His help to do what He says. To love others as ourselves, we need help to do that because we know we can't do that. To love God, *above all*, with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our being – we know we cannot do that! You're *incapable* of doing that as a human being, and if you think you can do that you're lying to yourself. You have to have God's spirit to help you because *then* what you do when you love God with all of your heart, with all of your being...whenever you hear that which comes from God, you know it's from God, you hold onto it, you're at one with it, you do not think in any other way, you cherish it, you grow in it, it inspires you, it moves and motivates you.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? It's about being fed spiritually so we can continue to grow and being fed what we need to be fed in order to continue to grow. **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when He comes shall find so doing.** And we, in this period of time, should know very powerfully so what this is talking about, what Jesus Christ said on that last night of His physical life on earth when He talked about why He was dying, in essence - they didn't grasp all that yet – so that the Father could come into their life, and so that He could come into their life, so that they would continually, that present progressive word, 'I am coming to you', 'I will be coming to you'. In other words, continuous; and that's what we want.

It's like the umbilical cord to a baby in the womb. If that begins to be cut off, or restricted, the blood doesn't flow, and that's the way it is with God's spirit. Sin restricts the flow of God's spirit and we want to be among those, obviously, who have a continual flow with Jesus Christ and God the Father living and dwelling in us, coming into our life. Woe be to the person when that ceases! That's why repentance is so necessary to be so quick, that we want to repent quickly of sin and continue to fight against it, never giving up the fight. Will we stumble? Yes, we stumble. What do you do when you stumble in sin? *You repent* and you get back up again and you ask God for help to do what you need to do!

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. And when does He come? He died, Jesus Christ died so that He could come all the time into our life. It's when that begins to be cut off that's the problem, and that's when He can come as a thief in the night and everything be taken from us, if we fail to change, repent, and respond, and fail to continue to be on watch and alert spiritually.

So a very powerful lesson here. And again here, a very strong admonition that was given to the Sardis era. Because from the time it began to the time it ended much truth had been lost. And by the time we come to the end there wasn't enough that remained for people to be alive spiritually – that's what it amounts to. And so God called Mr. Armstrong and blessed him to begin to see truth and understand truth and be prepared for a job for the future.

And so again here, **to strengthen what remains**. We talked about some of this. We have to understand what remained and why it was ready to die, to understand some of that history, to understand they only had two other foundational doctrines by the time Mr. Armstrong came along. We already talked about the one being the name Church of God. That to me is an awesome thing in itself. What an incredible thing! I think of some listening out there today. We have different ones that contact us from time to time and because of family members and somebody that shared something with a friend, or whatever, “I listened to it,” or “I’ve listened to it...” or comments that rarely are made, but they are made from time to time – but mostly through relatives and friends somebody will make a comment but they aren’t ready to take the next step. People aren’t ready to act upon what they have. I think, “What are you waiting for? What do you need? Why are you still going to a Protestant church? Why are you still going to a church that bears some other name?” It’s astounding! God’s Church has to bear His name. It has to say ‘*Church of God*’ - the Ecclesia of God, the Called Out Ones of God, as we talked about last Sabbath.

There were two other truths. First, obviously, and we’re going to list these, we’re going to talk about these – it’s a very awesome process we go through and how God works with us. And for those who are still out there that are kind of waiting to see what happens over the next few months... no matter what happens over the next few months people should obey God. These things really aren’t that difficult to prove! The name of the Church really isn’t that hard to prove. Open up the Bible, go through the book of Acts, go through the things that were written by Paul and Peter and James and John and see what they called the Church. It never was called ‘Luther’s Church’, it wasn’t called ‘Calvin’s Church’, it wasn’t called the ‘Catholic Church’; it never carried those names! It was always the Church *of God*. Amazing! That’s where people should begin.

The first is the seventh day Sabbath, which is listed as first when you go through the truths that are given there and so forth. The seventh day Sabbath; the weekly Sabbath has remained one of the most basic signs of God’s true Church. It’s always been that way. It’s one of the most basic signs of where God’s Church is. If you go back to the time of Thyatira when all of these other churches didn’t exist in the world, except for two as a whole, one called the Catholic church and the Church of God, as a whole through a period of time there. The one church kept Sunday and Easter as things they observed, and the other kept the seventh day Sabbath and Passover. Those are the two basic things at that time that certainly separated them in a very powerful way.

Since the time going back to the Israelites God said the Sabbath was going to be a sign of His people. Let’s take some time and look at some of that.

I had an interesting conversation over in Minnesota with someone who was from the region of Mexico, and talking about how that in the book in Spanish even (which we may have to change a little bit of that somehow), but she said in Mexico, all of her growing up, that the calendar has always shown that the first day of the week is Monday, the seventh day is Sunday. So when they grew up and they talk about the Sabbath, the seventh day, to them it’s Sunday. And that kind of threw me for a bit of a turn there. And her parents happened to be visiting and so I asked her to ask her parents about it, and she’d asked some others too that lived in Mexico, another relative remembered a time that she’d seen calendars that showed the seventh day being Saturday.

I remember going back in time here...I don’t know if they adopted something... basically what they were told as well, and what they believed at that time was that because the U.S. had such a predominant spirit over Mexico and parts of South America, that that’s the only reason that the seventh day was

Saturday for so long, and then later they just did their own thing and did what they believed was right. But I don't know if we can even find it anymore anyway.

I remember back in the 70's, about '77-78, worked for a particular company at that time that represented a company out of Germany and they would send us their calendar. Well, one year all of a sudden the calendars that were coming in changed – Saturday was no longer the seventh day of the week. The calendars in Europe, because of what was happening with the Common Market at that time, it wasn't the European Union at that time, it was known as the Common Market. At that time there they began to adopt various changes and one was the week, the work-week. So when they started a new part of the week, it would start with the work-week on Monday, because Sunday was the seventh day for them and they'd literally changed the calendar. You think, well that's just prophetic, as it says they'll seek to change times and seasons and so forth and that certainly has happened at the end-time here. And that was in the 70's when that changed in Europe and they started changing their calendars. Several years back there was a young fellow that had written out of Germany, that had read the books and was interested and wanted answers to some various things and talking to him about the Sabbath, he sent an email back and he said, basically, "What are you talking about?" He said, "The seventh day over here's always been Sunday." For him growing up as a young man, growing up *since* the 70's, growing up that's all he's ever known. And you think what a number the world has done, Satan has done, and the Catholic church has influenced.

And so some have suggested that perhaps something could be said to the effect that the seventh day follows Friday, the Sabbath begins at Friday sunset, but still there has to be something in there to explain that man has changed time. So I don't know if we have time to do all that or not and find all those places where it's listed.... Satan has done a number on this world, He really has, but as a whole, for most people, and especially here in the United States and other areas, to come to understand that the seventh day, Saturday, the day that follows Friday, at sundown on Friday begins the Sabbath day, is something that's been a sign of God's people through time going all the way back to the Old Testament, through the Old Testament.

Let's go back to Exodus 20 and just remind ourselves of something very basic. Again, things that aren't hard to prove. Some of this is for newer people who are coming along, because you see you have to make a choice, and everyone who comes along here in time is going to have to make *this choice* first and foremost in their life. What are you going to do concerning the most basic command that God gives to mankind about a relationship with Him; if you're going to have a relationship with Him, of what you must do. You have to set aside a specific day that God set aside as an appointed time from the very beginning. Not going to take the time to even go through Leviticus 23. Might mention it here quickly, I guess we'll go through part of it here; but Exodus 20 – very basic, very clear. It's the fourth commandment. The first four commandments are about how to have a right relationship with God. Should be on people's minds if they want to know God, if they want to know Jesus Christ, if they want to know the truth. This should be so basic in people's minds, what God gave here.

Exodus 20:8 - Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Do you know what that means? How do you keep something holy? Keep it sanctified? If you understand the word then you can come to grasp what God is saying. We have no ability to do anything that's holy; that which is holy comes from God. But in the context here of what's being said, God is telling us a method by what we should do in our minds and our hearts toward something He gave. He gave the Sabbath. So what should we do? Our response is to set it apart. To sanctify something is to set it apart for holy use and purpose. That's the full definition of to sanctify something. And so God tells us, in essence, to sanctify the Sabbath day. How do you do

that? You set it apart. You set it apart from the other six days of the week, you don't work that day. You start setting it apart that way. You don't accept a wage for that day for working.

That's just a beginning on a physical term, on a physical basis, let alone the reality you want to go before the Church, to God's Church that bears His name to be taught by God, to learn about God on the Sabbath day, because there's commanded on that day a convocation, a convening together of God's people, of coming together. For what purpose? It might be alone by yourself, today in this modern age, listening on a computer; God has given us the ability to do that in this end-time because of the scattering, that you can hear what's being given on the Sabbath day by God, from God. Incredible! It's a holy convening. So there are different ways to convene; and where we're able to in a group of people, then that's where we should strive to be, because fellowship is a very powerful ingredient, but people are so scattered today some people don't have that choice.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labour, and do all your work: doesn't mean you have to be at a particular job six days a week, but the point in here about labouring and working, it should be in the first and foremost of our mind to live the way God says, to be productive, to do. The Sabbath is different. He said *don't* do it on that day, *don't* do your normal routines on that day, *don't* do your upkeep of your house, washing the windows, working. "Oh we have the day off. Been working six other days during the week, this is a good time to get all the windows in the house done. They're dirty, we've had windstorms and rain." Or "This is a good day to go out and do a little bit of painting around the house because it needs it. Good day to go out and wash the car because during the week I'm just too tired to do it so this is a good..." No, no, no, no, no! You don't do those things. Not a good day to do the laundry! Not a good day to do all the ironing and get caught up!

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Eternal your God: it's God's that is given to man. It's God's time given to man; set apart by God for a very special use. **But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Eternal your God/Yahweh your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your cattle,** in other words, what does this all mean? Well, things involved in work; oxen and going out and planting. You just don't do things on that day like that. **...nor the stranger that is within your gates: For in six days the Eternal made the heaven and the earth,** how basic can that be? We understand things about creation and the remoulding and the refashioning of the earth, things that God did at that time; that's what it's referring to and talking about; of those things that God did in those six days described in Genesis. And the refashioning and so forth, 'the sea, and all that's in them', and all the things that were made, man put upon the earth, and it says 'He rested the seventh day': And you think... "Why would God ever change that which points to Him? ...that shows us, that reminds us constantly He is our Creator. What a beautiful and an incredible thing that the seventh day can help us to think upon those things, to put God first, to recognize everything we have is from God. Every breath of air you breath God blessed you to have! Everything you're able to do in life God has blessed you to have, to have the means, the ability to live.

I met a man on the elevator today going down; he said something to the effect, "How blessed it is today." He said, "I have a wife, been married eight years....have a child..." I think he mentioned the age, and he said, "and I'm here." Think, too bad you're going off to work; you've got your suit on to meet another man down there. But you know, a little bit farther and you can grasp the Sabbath here, if you realize where it all came from and really realize what being blessed means. Anyway, it was unique to have someone in the world make a comment like that, to realize yes, we are blessed on this earth, we truly are.

Why would God ever change that day? ...to flip-flop things? ...to mess things up? ...to make it be the first day of the week? It's just... it's so insane!

For in six days the Eternal made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that's in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Eternal blessed the seventh day/the Sabbath day it says, and hallowed it. Same word. *He* set it apart, sanctified it, set it apart for holy use and purpose. It's a day that we can have for holy use and purpose, to draw closer to God. You can draw closer to God on this day than any other day of the week. You can seek to draw close to God *every day* of the week, we should worship God *every day of the week*, but not like you do on the Sabbath. You set the Sabbath apart to worship Him even more, to draw closer to Him than ever before.

It's like the Feast of Tabernacles...how many times have I said God pours out more of His spirit during the Feast of Tabernacles than *any other time of the year*. You have eight days and you have two great Sabbaths, the first, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Last Great Day, and oftentimes a weekly Sabbath in between. *Every single day* during that time God gives us instruction, guidance and inspiration, and there's never a time like that. You don't do that any other time of the year! By its very definition and the method and the way that God teaches us we're powerfully fed and we have the opportunity to grow more at that time of year! I have more of God's spirit poured out upon me at that time of year than any other time of the year. I love it! It's exciting! And we don't get to experience that the rest of the time.

Leviticus 23 – just for those primarily who are new. God starts out telling about a relationship with Him and what people are to do, something that never changes. God, these laws, never change. You know, people talk about the law being done away with and changed, they're absolute liars! The Protestant world, they're absolute *liars*, and so many of them that go to cemeteries/seminaries, they know it! That's where they bury the truth, they truly do! They learn things that are true! There's only one world renowned, I hate to even use the word, evangelist (he's called an evangelist), who finally came to a point in time where he admitted – *he admitted* – that Jesus Christ didn't die on Friday. He finally acknowledged that He wasn't in the grave for a day and a half, that He *was* in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. He *admitted* the time of the week that He was put there! And he understood something, when He was resurrected wasn't Sunday morning. That was a big thing for someone in the world to do.

The point being is there are so many more who have also learned that, who go to these places and they study Greek and they study the Bible and they learn that there are other Sabbaths being talked about, not just the weekly Sabbath. They come to learn that some of the things spoken of in the New Testament were *Old Testament Holy Days* and that *they* were called Sabbaths. Not a weekly Sabbath but a yearly Sabbath that could fall on different days of the week. They know these things, but do they teach them? No, they're liars! They're liars, and they *know* that they teach things that aren't in the Bible! You think, how can a human being do that? But they do it. By the time you're a third year student, four year student, and this has been taught to you all your life and you really don't see anything else, and it's going to become your *occupation* that's mixed with 'green', or whatever the currency of your nation is. That has an impact on people, truly does. It's amazing what people are willing to sell away! It's disturbing, it's disgusting!

So there are people out here who know the truth, to a degree. They know about the Sabbath day. They *know* what it's talking about in Hebrews when it's not talking about 'nailing the law to the cross', is what they teach. "*The law has been nailed to the cross...*" No, it has not!

What was done away with was the sacrificial system. They know that. There are those who understand it was the Levitical system that ended, not the law of God, not how to live life, that you're to love one another, that you're to love God. Incredible!

Leviticus 23:2 - Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning... and that's not the word for 'Feasts' as we've talked about. That's not the word for Feast at all like when it talks about Unleavened Bread, when it says the Feast of Unleavened Bread down here in verse 6. That is the Hebrew word for Feast, it is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it is a festive time, it is a time of great eating and so forth. *This* word is the word in the Hebrew for 'appointed times'. So He says, **these are the appointed times of the Eternal**, in other words, God established them; they're appointments He made for mankind for 7,100 years that man is to keep with Him.... **which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations**, sanctified, set apart for holy use and purpose: *convocations*, meetings, brought together, *convening* of people! ...**even these are My**, not Feasts; again the same word, **appointed times**.

Six days shall work be done: so the first one He ever talks about is the seventh day Sabbath because if you can't receive that one then you *definitely* will not receive the annual Holy Days either. If you can't start with this one here as a human being and obey God and want a relationship with God and obey His Sabbaths and sanctify it, set it apart like He *commands* to do, then you can't go on. So some of you out there today need to take a deep hard look at your life and understand what it is you need to do. You need to quit sinning before God! You're monkeying around with something! You can't just wait to see, "Is this going to come to pass..." You either obey God or you don't! How long do you think God's going to be patient with you?

"Oh I don't want to give up sports for my children." I hear that one. "I don't want to give up sports for our children who do it on Friday night and Saturday. That's just too big, that's too hard on them."

Do you want God in your life and to be there for protection for your children and for your family through what's coming or not? That's the choice. Amazing, human beings, it's just too hard to give up, just too hard to go in and see the boss and tell him... "...because I might lose my job! The way things are right now look at jobs! It's hard to get jobs out here right now. 10 people in line waiting to get one job! That's tough! If he fires me because of the Sabbath what am I going to do? Surely God doesn't want me to not be able to feed my family?!" Yes, He does, if it's a matter of obeying Him. It's a matter of faith and God will take care of you; that's what God says. Incredible! Think you're the first ones that ever had to make those decisions and choices? It's happened for 6,000 years now that people have had to make such choices! For 2,000 years a lot of God's people have lost jobs through time, have suffered, mightily, for obey the Sabbath, the weekly Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths of God. Many people have lost jobs and I know many people who got much better ones later on because they obeyed God. Amazing!

And you can't even begin to compare that with the truth that God gives to you, to be in God's Family, to be in God's Kingdom, through time, forever – to be compared with a puny year or two years without a job? But we're so carnal, we're so tied into this physical life, it's hard to think beyond that, to move beyond that and to step out on faith. Step out in faith. You know the truth, but you won't do the works. Step out in faith. You've been given the ability to believe, but to live by faith you've got to step out there and do it and obey. And let God take care of the rest.

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy/sanctified/set apart for holy use and purpose convening/convocation/convening of God's people; That's what it's for. You shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Eternal in all your dwellings. Powerful!

Then it goes on and explains, **These are the commanded assemblies/even holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their...** isn't it amazing how man can be? How devious and cunning man can sometimes be? ...those who translated the Bible into English, now they use the word 'seasons' instead of Feasts. Same word – appointed times; **which you shall proclaim in their appointed times.** In other words, in an appointed time. If it's Unleavened Bread, what do you talk about? Unleavened Bread. If it's Pentecost, what do you talk about during Pentecost? You should be talking about Pentecost. So ministers already know in that time period of these Holy Days you better have some information there, you better be focused on and doing things right and responding to God's spirit working with you to talk about those things. If you try to give something different, totally away from that, then you're fighting against God and God's spirit.

Exodus 32:12 – I know a lot of us know these things, but again, it doesn't hurt to review them, to have them more deeply embedded in our minds, because *these are the things* in the coming months, whenever things begin to be unleashed in a powerful way, whenever that is, ever how *long* that is, that you're going to be able to share with others. These most basic things are the things *you* should be able to turn to. You should be able to turn to, every one of you should know, you should be able to be handed a Bible by someone else and should be able to go to Exodus 20, very basic. You should be able to go to Leviticus 23, very basic, and start there at least. And then the rest you can add in and God's spirit will help you. You know what's an amazing thing by God's spirit? It's happen to me so many times in times past; I'll be talking to someone, if I had to think of the scripture I couldn't think of it for the life of me, but because it's needed at that time God just gives it. And I've heard people in God's Church talk about things like that; they're in conversation with someone and things have come into their mind that they normally wouldn't be able to think about, wouldn't be able to remember, especially when you reach a certain age, it becomes even harder.

Exodus 31:12 – And the Eternal spoke unto Moses saying, Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; a sign! This is the most basic of things to show where God's people are, especially when you add to it the sign of the annual Sabbaths. Because the weekly Sabbath, that's a beginning and that's the first part of it, but when you put the rest of it with it then that drives it home even more so; **that you may know that I am the Eternal that does sanctify you.** God says this has to be a part of your life so that you can know, so it can be in your being, in your mind, that I'm the one who sets you apart for holy use and purpose. You're My people, for Me to be able to work with you this has to be a part of your life. For those of you listening out there today who have not yet taken that step, you want God to be a part of your life. This must be done! This must be lived for Him to be a part of your life. He is the one who desires to set you apart. If you have the ability to see and understand then God has given you the ability to believe it. Because you can go and try to talk to your neighbours and relatives into this and they're going to think you're stark raving mad. So how did you all of a sudden begin to be drawn to it to see it? Well, God does that.

You shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: in other words it's to be holy unto you, it's to be something that's sanctified unto you by you. ...**every one that defiles it shall surely be put to death:** no promises then, no life beyond this, no protection, no intervention, no *help* in your life,

especially when it counts. Right now, over the next few months, this counts big time for anyone who begins to see it; big decisions have to be made in people's lives at some point here, truly.

...and whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among His people. Makes it, powerfully so, it's a *dangerous thing* to learn, to know, to see the truth of God *and turn your back on your Creator*. It's a dangerous thing, truly is.

Then He gets very specific starting with the weekly Sabbath: **Six days may work be done; but the seventh is a Sabbath of rest, holy/sanctified/set apart by the Eternal:** Set apart from the very beginning when He put man on the earth! The very next day, as God set everything apart, He made it possible for man, gave Him a day out of every seven to be taught, to be guided and directed by Him, by God, to receive instruction. And God gave instruction Sabbath by Sabbath by Sabbath till the time they were cut off and kicked out of the garden. And then He began to work with different ones on an individual basis from that time forward until the Church came along. For the past 2,000 years God's worked in a very organized fashion through the Body of Christ, the Church of God.

...whosoever does any work in the Sabbath day; he shall surely be put to death. It wasn't a small thing with God. Some people read things like this, "Oh, that's just too hard. God wouldn't do that to people. God wouldn't require such a *hard thing* of people!" How arrogant human beings can be, to turn their back on the One who gave them life, to think it's owed. When we get to that attitude of mind and think certain things are *owed* to us.... I *loathe* that spirit and mind, I truly do! It permeates the world! It permeates society! "Our government *owes* us a job! Our government *owes* us a retirement." We live by this concept that we are *owed* everything in life that we can have. Bull! Bull, bull, bull, bull, bull! Human beings should have a right relationship with God and live right before God and God will bless you, God will take care of you.

Wherefore, it goes on to say, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant/everlasting covenant. Forever, forever, forever, as long as there are human beings. And Protestants and Catholics want to put their brakes on, "Whoa!! What about when Jesus changed it to Sunday, because He was resurrected Sunday morning?" No, He wasn't! It was still the Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week when He was resurrected. It was the end of the Sabbath day when He was resurrected. Everybody in God's Church ought to be able to understand that. Subtract three and see where it ends up. He was put in the heart of the earth before sunset, before the Holy Day came. That means that at the end of three days it was the end of the seventh day Sabbath when He was resurrected. Too late for them to come by and put the spices and so forth that they had prepared on Friday in the tomb with Him that they wanted to do. They went out and bought them, they prepared them on Friday, but they couldn't come on the Sabbath because it's the Sabbath, and they didn't come after sunset because it was dark. They didn't have all the street lights and all the nice facilities we have today to be able to get around and do things at night time, like we do, back then, so they waited until the next morning. They were so eager they wanted to get there before the sun had completely risen. The light was in the sky and they went there. He'd already risen, He was already resurrected.

It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: some say, "Yeah, that's Old Testament Israel, it's between them, it's not about the Church." Well, there was that which was physical, the Israel of God that's physical, and the Israel of God that's spiritual that's the Church, very well spoken of in scripture in the New Testament. **...for in six days the Eternal made the heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.** So basic. So basic to understanding.

Mark 2 – it’s a story about the Sabbath day, but something that Jesus Christ taught in a very powerful way. **Mark 2:23 – And it came to pass, that He went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day;** so Jesus Christ was with His disciples and here they are walking along... it’s not the big corn of the U.S. like we think where we take a big ear off. It had to do with grain that was growing, that they walked in the midst of the grain. It’s not specific about which type it was here, but it’s just like when you take wheat, the head of the wheat stem, you take it off and it has all these little berries on it, barley, rye, especially when it maybe isn’t fully ripe, it’s not totally hard yet and so you can rub it in your hand and you can kind of blow off the chaff, the excess there, and they have little things of wheat or barley or whatever it is in your hand, and you can eat it. And I used to love to do that as a kid, especially when it was still in the stage between green and fully ripe, because when it’s fully ripe it’ll put your teeth to the test, can be some hard stuff. And even though I’ve eaten that, today if I did that I’d be at the dentist pretty soon. The things we go through sometimes. This is what they were doing, they were walking through this, they were taking this; and to a Jewish mind of today, if it’s orthodox Jew, but even back then, so *far* to the right, “Oh, you’re disobeying God! You’re working on the Sabbath! You’re putting this grain in your hand and you’re working! You’re working!”

I remember when they used to have an archaeological dig over in Jerusalem. They’d bring college students over and they’d talk about different things they did on the Sabbath day over there. One of the things that stuck in my mind (because I thought, maybe, this is really whacko), they would spend time on Friday tearing off sheets of toilet paper, little tabs at a time and stacking it up behind the toilet, because if you had a roll there and you were to *tear it on the Sabbath day you’re working too much*, it’s work. You can’t do this on the Sabbath day! When we got there they even had ‘Gentile’ and ‘Jewish’ elevators. The Jewish elevators would be those that you didn’t have to push the button because that’s too much work on the Sabbath day. It literally stopped at every floor. And so when we got in some of those by mistake and were pushing the buttons where we wanted to go, we sometimes... there was an occasion where I remember Johnny Harrell got chewed out by somebody for it because he was pushing the button. But they had another elevator we ‘Gentiles’ could get in and you could push all the buttons you wanted.

But they even try to save electricity during that time. You think, “How hypocritical can you be? So you’re using less but you’re still using it! Somebody’s working somewhere to keep this going! If something happens, somebody is keeping the grid alive.” This is basically what was happening back in the time of Christ and He called them hypocrites and so forth in the things that they were doing; hypocritical in life. The siren that goes off in Jerusalem an hour before sunset and it doesn’t go off until an hour past sunset because that’s somehow holier. If you keep the Sabbath and you’re definitely not going to break it if you’re doing it an hour more before and an hour more beyond. Think, “That’s not what God’s Sabbath is about!” That’s not what *His* time is about. He just says *sunset*, from that moment; don’t add to it, don’t make it more. Then you start making things a burden to mankind that God never intended.

Anyway, this is what happened then. **The Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do you on the Sabbath day...** just reeking with self-righteousness, it’s just dripping off of them. **Why do you on the Sabbath day do that which is not lawful? And He said unto them, Have you never read...** boy, did He throw them a zinger... Because I would say there are many in God’s Church who have never understood this one, let alone the Pharisees who didn’t have a chance to understand it.

Have you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry, he, and those who were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the showbread, he ate the showbread, **which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them**

who were with him? David did that, a man after God's own heart. There are things that have happened in time and there are things that are done at times that are a matter of a spirit of God's law – and I could give some other examples. I remember one of Mr. Armstrong one time with a king, but I'm not going to go there right now because it'd take longer to explain.

There is that which is spiritual and the only way to discern what is spiritual is by God's spirit, and so God is basically telling the Pharisees here, and as He did in other places, that there is that which they just don't get, they can't answer, they don't have an answer for it and they didn't understand what they were doing, being self-righteous, and they couldn't even begin to see their pride and haughtiness that was dripping off of them, looking down upon the Messiah, the Christ. And so God allowed different things to happen that they could look at and condemn Christ that were not true; 'the wine-bibber' because He drank wine with others that the Pharisees would have considered to be of the low life, below them, not Pharisees, because unless you're a Pharisee you just aren't there. If you're not a Church of Christ you're just not there in the Protestant world. If you're not a Mormon, if you live in Salt Lake, you're just not there; you just don't quite get it yet. If you're not a Catholic in the catholic world they feel sorry for you, you're just weird, strange, you're in a cult.

Verse 27 - Then He said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, what a beautiful thing, and not man for the Sabbath: The Pharisees had it twisted. People get things twisted up. The Sabbath is here for our benefit. The Sabbath is when we're fed on a spiritual plane. The Sabbath is when we are able to focus on God and God blesses us because He set it apart as a time where He pours out more of His spirit upon us, where He gives us instruction and guidance and direction and correction and love and mercy and all the things we need in life. He pours that out upon us on a Sabbath day, on the Sabbaths. **Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.** Jesus Christ. Amazing! Powerful messages; and things that without God's spirit the world and people just don't understand, but some of you out there need to understand.

And what about Paul's example? **Acts 18:1 - After these things Paul departed from Athens, and went to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had lately/recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded that all Jews to depart, told them to depart out of Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and worked with them, for by their occupation they were tentmakers.** We had the blessing of walking through the old city of Corinth and seeing an area where they believe that this actual occupation was done; made sense by what they had to say, some of the pillars, some of the work, some of the city there, how it was laid out and everything. An awesome thing to see, and just to think that you're in the same place and that's where he was, whether it was the exact spot or not but just in a certain street they had certain market things, they discovered various things, artefacts and so forth, and toward the end of this, and because of the customs and so forth, the things that were there. It was very interesting, very moving to think back about these times and things, different things that Paul taught when he was in different areas like this.

And it goes on to say there, **And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath,** every Sabbath. He didn't go in the first day of the week. And they say, "Well it was because it was a synagogue..." Well, they didn't go to other places, they didn't meet in homes and teach on some other day, whenever it talks about when they're meeting in homes and the like it was always done on the Sabbath day. Why does it talk about the Sabbath day and meeting there? So basic, because the Church has continued doing what the Church had always done, exactly what God had always given His people to do, to observe the Sabbath day.

It says...and they persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. They came together on that day, unlike other things that they were accustomed to doing on Sunday in their temples.

Over and over again throughout the Bible, things about the Sabbath, and it talks about how this was Paul's custom, obviously – should go without saying.

So the Sabbath day, what an awesome thing to realize that this still existed at the end of Sardis; the name of the Church, 'Church of God', the Sabbath day – they go together. It's a very powerful thing to learn from. It's a beginning for people as a whole.

Another truth in Sardis, and we'll tie some of these things together here in a moment to show some things that God has given that's to me an awesome thing. Another truth in Sardis that's actually listed as number 3 on the list there that we have, is 1st tithe to God. Basic, basic things that God gave: the name of the Church, the time that would be a sign, that would *show* where God's Church is. In other words, there's a huge church organization called Church of God, but they meet on Sunday, based out of Tennessee. And there are a whole lot of other churches like that that meet on Sunday and it's not God's Sabbath so it's not God's Church.

So again here, the beginning ability to discern, to be drawn to, to identify God's people in God's Church –and these are the beginning signs, these are the things that begin. Not enough to grow by yet, not enough to fully mature by; it's a beginning process of being called. Isn't that what most people are brought to when you're brought in the Church? It's been that way since I've been in the Church. It's been that way through time. You find out about the Sabbath day. Not many keep it. It didn't take very long then to be drawn to a specific name; God brings us to His Church bearing His name, Church of God. Whether it was 'Radio', whether it was 'Worldwide', whatever it was through time, it always carried God's name – Church/the Called out Ones of God.

And so God also gave the 1st tithe, for without that the Church doesn't exist, for without that the Church doesn't continue on, without that there is no giving of instruction and guidance and direction in the Church. So God gave *three very basic things* that reveal some very powerful truths about how He organized His Church and why and how these things are accomplished and how these things are able to continue on. It's a powerful thing, it truly is.

He gave the tithing system for the purpose of doing His work on earth, the purpose of being able to do what was intended because He sanctified the Sabbath to be able to teach, to give instruction, guidance and direction to His people on the Sabbath. That's what does it, it provides everything that's needed to accomplish what God is doing when He sanctified the Sabbath day.

Turn over to Revelation 3:3 now. I want to continue this with Sardis and finish this today. If we have time we're going to go into a spin-off of this. But again here, the tithe, a very basic thing taught in scripture, understood, easy to grasp and comprehend, that over and over again here that which in scripture just means 10%. A tithe is a tenth, and so that's what God says is *His* and to know what is His, to know how it's worked with gives great understanding.

Revelation 3:3 – again, noticing what it says here – **Therefore remember how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.** Awesome how this is stated; **remember how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.** Going back to the scripture we read at the beginning here. 'Therefore if you will not watch I'll come as a thief and you'll not know the hour I come unto you.' You won't know

the hour. Well, Sardis was around a long time ago, but for most of them He came to them in an hour that they weren't watching. If they'd been watching this wouldn't have happened. And so He did come to many in that time period who will not be in the first resurrection, they have to wait a thousand years. Well, actually, they don't know it but they've been waiting a whole lot longer than that by the time we get to the end.

So again here, **remember how you have received...** Why say it in this manner? Why is this stated in this way, because it's stated for a reason? God gives us things to cause us to help us to think. I remember back when we had what we used to call 'Spokesman's Club' or even 'Graduate Club' later on. But Spokesman's club was focused on this little booklet and it had 12 speeches in there, varying speeches and things that different people in the Church could participate in. You could have a maximum of 30 members in a club and men would get up and discuss topics. We had this period called 'Topics Session'. One would be assigned each week to ask questions that he thought would be pertinent to the club that would inspire input. And you learn by getting up and talking in front of a group of people on your feet like that, because you couldn't just sit there you, had to stand up in front of the rest of the group there and you go through learning through that process, and training, it was valuable back then. And one day we'll have some of those things again.

And later on when you got through that you went on to another level of speeches called Graduate Club. Anyway, I remember at times there when questions would be asked, like in the Topics section, that sometimes a question would be asked about a specific scripture and individuals got up and they'd read what they had in their inspired margin. In other words, you jot down things in your margin here, if you have a wide margin Bible, and it tells you what that means. But I remember one minister that taught me a great deal in this respect, of how to draw things out of people, how to make people think rather than just turning to a scripture. Because it's not enough if you just turn to a scripture and you heard the minister tell you what that means, and you turn to it and you say, "Well this is what it means..." Yeah, but, what is he saying? Why is he saying it? Why is that answer inspired? What does that mean? In other words you dig a little deeper. And I could give you some examples here but God has blessed me in using that as one of the primary tools of teaching – to help us to think why is something asked? Why does God say something in a certain way? Because there are always reasons why everything is stated the way it is. And so just to give an answer to someone...it might be the correct answer, but if you don't understand what He's saying and why He's saying it then indeed the understanding isn't there, it's just an answer. A true answer, but you've got to understand why, what does it mean?

And so we had the opportunity of talking about those things and bringing those things out and it became more inspiring. And the same thing is true here. *Why?* There's a great reason why Sardis was told this very powerfully so...**remember how you have received**, something that everyone in all eras of time should always remember. It'll teach you a lot. So why would God give such a warning? Well, first of all you might hear about the Sabbath through a friend. How you heard it, how you received it, might have been initially from a friend, especially back then, because it sure wasn't a book. They had some manuscripts but it wasn't something you just go down to the corner book store and buy. It was a lifetime of savings to have a manuscript, some of the printings that had to be done by hand, meticulously so, that were passed down and places that might have them, or people that might possess one, have ownership of one – *extremely* expensive through time.

That's why when the printing press came long things began to change in a very powerful way in the world, but still expensive in comparison to what we're able to do today in going down and buying a

Bible. Everybody can have a Bible today. You can have them on your internet, so many versions it'll make your head swim.

So you might learn it through a friend or heard somebody talk about the Sabbath back in those times. Because especially if the Catholic church was the predominant church before this, and maybe a few others at this point in time in Sardis. We had Calvin and Luther and a few others began to pop up in the different parts of the region of Europe. And if you heard someone come along and talk about the Sabbath, you were believing Sunday and they were teaching you about the seventh day is the Sabbath and it's in the scriptures, said so. What happens next? Well if the Church is involved and you're being drawn to God's Church that's where you begin to learn more. That's where you begin to learn more about God's plan. At some point, if someone's going to continue to progress, if someone's going to come to the point of baptism, if someone's going to come to the point of an ability to continue to grow, you have to be brought to God's true Church, you have to be brought to a point in time where you're obeying God in order for you to be baptized, because it's a matter of obedience to God before one can be baptized. You've set apart those things in your life, you're obeying God, otherwise if a person is not they can't just be baptized, unless you've surrendered and you've surrendered your will, your mind to the will of God. You want God's will in your life; you don't want your own.

And so He says to **remember how you have received...** How did they receive? *IN GOD'S CHURCH Sabbath by Sabbath!* God says never forget how you've received the truth, and basically going along with that, where you received it. You begin to learn very early on that God has a ministry; there is a way that God's spirit works. It is not a private thing between individuals and their own little private bible studies at home. So many who left the Church went in that direction. They began to forget this very warning that was given clear back in Sardis, **remember how you have learned**, how you've received the truth. And so people got to the point where because there were things that were false out there, because of some things that were being twisted and distorted that all of a sudden it was like I have this special relationship with God and God shows me these things privately by myself. It's a dangerous thing to come to that point in time where people think they have some kind of private relationship with God, that somehow all of a sudden this is how God's going to work, and everything that God has ever done in the last 2,000 years is gone... all of a sudden He's changing the way He does things in the Church. No, He hasn't. The Body of Christ is the Body of Christ and it's always been structured in a specific manner – always, always, always, *always*.

And so this is important, why God is saying this during Sardis, so incredibly important why this is pointed out in Sardis and not in other eras. Is it important at other times? Yes. I have lived through it, I've seen it, I've seen the damage it's done when people have taken on this spirit and they've forgotten *how* they have received and they begin to be what I classify as teachers. We've had that come into our own midst. People come along and they are teachers. They don't need a teacher, *they* are the teacher. That's not how it works. That's not how God works. It's not a matter of pride, it's a matter of reality. *It is the way God works.*

All those people, evangelists, who were not there listening to Mr. Armstrong, they forgot something pretty basic, a warning to Sardis. Such ego's, such pride, such ugliness in their spirit; to come to a point in time where they wouldn't take the time any longer to come in and sit down in the auditorium and listen to God's apostle? That really is a heinous thing because they had this spirit. They forgot. When they were called into God's Church the one voice they heard, the one primary voice they heard was Mr. Armstrong's on radio, and 'The Plain Truth'; Mr. Armstrong's. There wasn't an Ambassador College

when some of them came along, and even when Ambassador College was established they were some of the first ones to be put through college...**remember how you have received...**

Isn't it sad they had forgotten how they'd received? They forgot how God worked. They forgot how everything they learned and grew in in the beginning of time to help them to become established, to help bless them in their growth and the process came through one man. That's the way it worked for them in the early 40's. And then some began to be sent out on baptizing tours and they became ministers and through a period of time things began to change. By the time Mr. Armstrong began to be old, Loma had died, and Mr. Armstrong was getting older, into the 80's, well, 70's actually when some of these began to happen; they began to forget how they'd received. They began to think about who was going to take his place. They began to think about who they were going to back that might take his place because *they* probably wouldn't but they know somebody else that probably will. Politics began to set in, people began to take sides; so much so that I'd never understood it at the time when Mr. Armstrong said it. He said, "They're like vultures waiting for me to die." I didn't know who he was talking about fully. I do now. But they were the ones who weren't sitting there in the auditorium listening because they had forgotten. **Remember how you have received...**

That's why I think about people who leave, when they come to understand the truth they do, when they come to understand there's been a scattering. Let's go back a few years before '2008 God's Final Witness', even before 'The Prophesied End-Time' book came out, even before that, and different ones that were part of the congregation in different areas that we'd been in especially back in some areas of the eastern part of the United States. And I think about those periods of time, when they came to see and believe that we had an apostasy, and they believed that, it was very obvious, that there'd been a scattering of the Church, that the Church was scattered because of that, when they began to see that Passover was being taught in different groups and organizations as 14th/15th Passover, and all the different doctrines like that, Pentecost and the things that were not being understood and taught in a wrong way about Pentecost, and things about Mr. Tkach fulfilling 2nd Thessalonians 2, all those verses there at the beginning, and what would happen to the Church. Things in Revelation that began to become clear – what had happened to the Church and that the beginning of the Seals were not about the beginning of physical tribulation but a spiritual one in the Church of God and things we had to go through because of the apostasy and because of the false teachings that began to go out and those things that began to picture that.

Think, where are you going to go now that has that understanding, and you can add more to it that God gives to you? At what point did you come to disagree? Only a very few that came to a point of 2005, where they came to a point where they disagreed because of Jesus Christ not always existing, a teaching of the trinity. Because it's always been taught by the trinity that God the Father and Jesus Christ and the holy spirit, the holy ghost they call it, because a ghost makes it sound like a person. You don't want to call it a spirit because spirit's used too much about the power of God so let's call it '*the holy ghost*'; those three things are one and yet all three have existed for eternity. And Mr. Armstrong came to understand first, right from the get go, the holy spirit is the power of God, the trinity is false. We needed that major distinction to separate God's Church from the world; but God didn't bring him the rest of the way, to understand about Jesus Christ. And then finally He did in 2005.

Where do you go when you understand so many of those things? And yet people have left, and I think, "Can't you remember? Don't you know how you received these? Don't you know where it came from? What are you doing? Where are you going to go? Living? United? Philadelphia? Some other group?"

Some other organization? Who's teaching you the truth that's gone beyond those things that God has given help to? Isn't the evidence clear?"

It's a powerful thing, never to be forgotten God says, always remember how you've been able to continue in your growth. And so that's why the warning is given here. Why? Well, again here, it's all a matter of government that we'll get into later on, and therefore unity, it's a matter of homologueo as we've talked, an awesome word back there in John that means 'of the same Word/Logos', of the *same* Word. God wants us to be of the *same* Word. It's how we grow of the same mind and oneness with Him, and the more He gives us we continue to grow.

The Church of God *never* becomes stagnant. The Church of God *never* lives in the past. God never intended that we ever go back to Ephesus and say, "That's the way it should have been in the Church!" Or... and we don't even know all that was revealed except for the scripture there. What was taught in Thyatira, if they found some documentation, things taught back at that time, "We got to go back to the time of Thyatira, that was the 'perfect' age in God's Church." And some want to go back and just live what was given in Philadelphia and say, "That was it. That's all that God was going to give and no more." Not true. God says by giving His spirit it *demands growth*, change, more that's given.

To me it's an awesome thing to look back at history and see all these things and see why God warned the Church like He did at different times, because God said here, even about holding fast to what you've been given. Not only remember how but **hold fast** to it. If you've been given that God says hold fast to it **and to repent**. That means if you're given something that God has revealed that's stronger in understanding, something you haven't understood in the past...because anything new always reveals some imperfection, something that's not totally correct and you have to repent of it, to change. A way of seeing God!

I repented, even more so afterwards, but even before that, but especially when God solidified it and made it absolute in His Church, of taking away from the glory and honour that belongs to God Almighty, the Eternal Self-Existing *only* One through time, and to honour and glorify His Son who began life at a specific moment in time. There's a difference there. Not to take away from God the Father. That's something you repent of; for not acknowledging God in the way we should have, or could have, because we didn't know, it wasn't the present truth at that time. The present truth, that's what God judges us by.

Abraham was judged by the present truth, whatever God gave to him at that moment in time. There was so much that he didn't understand. He didn't grasp and comprehend all the things that God hadn't given yet which were given through Moses later on. Specific kinds of laws? Yes. Not as much as what God gave to Moses. He didn't understand anything that was written in the New Testament as a whole to the Church and about the Church and about spiritual growth and all those things. He had spiritual growth in his life but it wasn't spelled out to him what he was living through specifically and how he was living through it, so he was judged by what he was able to know, what God gave to him at that time. Awesome! And we're judged by what we have at *this* time.

And so they were to remain watchful, alert to what they'd been given, they were to hold fast to what they were being given even more so at this time, and to repent. So, **remember how you received; hold fast to it and repent.**

Verse 4 - You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; through time, but even by the time that this era began to be understood, when Mr. Armstrong came along and some of the things that were there; before that period of time we don't know all that they had, we don't know all the truths that they had at the very beginning when Thyatira ended and Sardis began. But this attitude set in very quickly so because of what they were living through – new churches, not just the Catholic church. They lived in a period of time when Luther began to receive popularity, when Calvinism began to receive popularity. They lived in a period of time where other groups and organizations began to pop up throughout Europe keeping Sunday, teaching different things, began to permeate, began to be talked about. Before that, the Catholic church had pretty strong control, so much so at some times you could die a pretty excruciating death by not agreeing with them.

Church of England that popped up in time if you lived in England; and different groups and different beliefs that existed then and all the things that began to come on the scene. This had a tremendously powerful, devastating impact on God's Church at that time. It's hard for us to grasp and comprehend because of the time we live in now. But back then, if you can begin to put yourself in those shoes, to recognize a change was taking place in the world and the traumatic effect this would have because of a freedom, a beginning *freedom of thought* in religion, with so many different ideas out here. It began to affect people and began to lead people away from the foundational truths that God had given. They began to water down various things and began to accept various things that they were hearing around them that was different from the Catholic church, enough so that it began to pull at them and pull them away and they began to lose the foundational truths that God had.

So by the time of the end of Sardis, by the time it was spiritually dead...dead, dead, dead...and what few truths they had were dying out, God raised up Mr. Armstrong so the Church would never die out completely. There was a little bit of a remnant there, enough that Mr. Armstrong could come into contact with it, enough that Mr. Armstrong could be *ordained*, a continuation of the ministry to continue on.

So it says, **you have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white:** what an incredible thing to know, that only a few, only a few throughout the period of Sardis – there were many called, few chosen during that period of time, few who are going to have the opportunity of being a part of the 144,000. It says, **and they shall walk with Me in white for they are worthy.** What's He talking about? The first resurrection, the purpose of the Church, to prepare people, to prepare those that God is working with, whom God is calling. But during this period of time it was very difficult for the Church and God knowing so and God working only with specific ones through that period of time to be a witness of all this who will be in the first resurrection, because this is what people have to do.

He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white clothing; we have to conquer, that's what overcome means. We have to conquer, we have to overcome, we have to fight, we have to hold on, we have to adhere to the messages given there, and God gave some the ability to do that. He drew them, He gave them the moulding and fashioning He did to go through this period of time. A few in Sardis.

He says, **and I will not blot out your name out of the book of life,** doesn't mean they don't have opportunity for later on; they just couldn't do it in this world. They couldn't do it during the world of that period of time, just like there were some during Philadelphia who just couldn't do it at that period of time, many in Laodicea who just couldn't do it at that period of time; but they're not wiped out for eternity, that they don't have an ability to grow. But they just couldn't do it in this age, in Satan's world!

And so God's bringing a Great White Throne. God's bringing a different age to mankind and those who are not able to do it then will be able to be awakened spiritually at...they're given a physical life to live a second life, but they have the ability to be awakened spiritually as well so that they can now change and grow in an age, in a world where all the evidence is before them and they can see and they can learn and they can grow in an age where everyone keeps the Sabbath, where there are no pressures because of the job that you have. Everybody will be keeping the Sabbath, all education is about the Sabbath and God's plan and God's purpose, and it's going to be a much different world; *easier* for people to receive God. It hasn't been so easy in the last 6,000 years, nor was it intended to be.

So He says, **he who overcomes the same shall be clothed in white clothing**, speaking of the first resurrection and those who are resurrected later on who are given the ability to be awakened spiritually, who haven't committed the unpardonable sin, will also in time be able to be clothed in white clothing. But it's specifically about that first resurrection. **...and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the Churches.** The spirit of God, the spirit of Sardis, the mind, the warning...and that's what God's desire was for every age, that you be able to hear the warning.

You know, I was told about the warning of Laodicea back in the era of Philadelphia. I heard that in sermons back in 1969, back in 1971 and on, things about Laodicea. Warning! Warning, warning, warning, Laodicea's coming. Now, we didn't understand how it was to come at that time; thought at that time they were going to co-exist, two eras at the same time, but that's not how era's work. But we didn't know that then. And sure enough, still came to pass. We all, who lived through that period of time, from Philadelphia into Laodicea, the entire Church took on that spirit, predominantly so. That was our battle. And some have been awakened to see it and others never were.

So it's an admonition God has given throughout time, **he who has an ear**, because only if you are alert spiritually, only if you are on guard are you going to be able to have that kind of an ear. If God's called you and opened up your mind – so expedient to stay close to God, cry out to God everyday to continue to fight against sin, to continue to seek to be at one with God, to be watchful, to be alert spiritually, to be able to have the ability to hear. Something to pray about from time to time, the purpose for God's spirit in your life, "Father help me *to hear* what you give. Help me to have the ear that can continue to hear, the eye to see." Because only God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ can give us that ability through the power of His holy spirit.

He who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the Churches. So a history about Sardis, a little bit of an understanding here again of why they went through what they did, how that by the end of it these were the only three foundational basic truths that were given: the name of God's Church, the seventh day Sabbath, not the Holy Days, that was gone. God had to give that to Mr. Armstrong. Loma and himself had to keep it by themselves for some time until Mr. Armstrong became so convicted, was able to see the plan of God in it, powerfully so, that he began to teach the Church to obey it and keep it at the same time with them. He had to come to that. That's how it works and that's how God worked through him.

And so again here, the awesome things that have taken place through time that we can learn from and learn those lessons from, and to grasp what happened to the Sardis Church, because next Sabbath, when it comes into Philadelphia, these three truths and why they're revealed in the order that they are, why God has given to His Church to recognize them as the first three foundational truths is awesomely important for the next one that God gives. Powerful! They all tie together. I am sometimes

dumbfounded by the things that God gives and the way He gives them. You should be too, in awe of how God moulds and fashions us, of how His spirit works with us and why these three things existed, had to be there, have to be in our lives, and then for us to focus on the next truth. Its powerful, truly is...and how God worked through Mr. Armstrong to reveal His truth. He didn't learn it overnight, he learned it through a lot of struggle, a lot of hardship; then it became more and more powerful that by the time I was called it was a powerful, powerful truth in the Church, and he hit on it.... I don't know if I ever heard a sermon he gave from that time forward where he didn't mention it, it's so important, so powerful. I truly don't know if there was ever a sermon that I ever heard him give where he didn't use the word, of something that was so important to the Church. If you're going to grow, if you're going to be in God's Kingdom then you *must* understand it with all of your being, truly. It's an awesome thing!

So with that, we're at the end in talking about some things of Sardis.

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But I do have a few moments here, I do want to go into one last thing that's tied into the third truth, the one on tithing. Since we're approaching the Feast of Tabernacles and have a lot of new people we're going to touch upon, jumping ahead here just to finish off this sermon today here as an add-on to the end. Its listed number 21, or the 18<sup>th</sup> revealed through Mr. Armstrong. So if you look at all the order of all the truths on the website, its 21, because there are the three, and then the 18 that Mr. Armstrong gives, 3-18-21, or the 18<sup>th</sup> that Mr. Armstrong gave. It's the second and third tithe and I want to read this to you.

21 (18)**Second and third tithe.** The second tithe is for observing God's feast days. Third tithe....

Which we do not receive any more in God's Church, which Mr. Armstrong began to address...and how can I put it... dispense with. It wasn't needed in God's Church any longer because the government was finally doing it to the level, to the degree Mr. Armstrong believed they should be in certain countries. And third tithe was for the needy if...and I'll come back to that in a moment. I'll read this again here...

The second tithe is for observing God's feast days. Third tithe is for the needy, and was established within God's Church during the earlier part of the Philadelphia era. It began to no longer be required of God's people for the Church when more governments [of the world, nations] began to institute social programs to better take care of such needs in their respective nations. This third tithe was originally established to be collected and distributed in the nation of Israel much like what government assistance is today (collected by taxes/by taxation).

And so that's basically the way it was set up in Israel. You don't have to know this inside and out, but anybody that lived during Philadelphia knows this inside and out, they know the 7<sup>th</sup> year of release, they know how to count third tithe because we all did it. Every third year you gave an *additional* tithe called third tithe; every third year. And then the sixth year would come around, from the day of your baptism, the sixth year would come around. The next three years, that third year you gave an additional tithe. So you had first tithe, third tithe, both went to the Church; second tithe you kept for yourself for observing God's Holy Days, the Sabbath's, the holy Sabbaths, the annual Sabbaths, primarily the Feast of Tabernacles when we all came together. The seventh year was called the year of release and so that completed a seven year cycle in your life. The next year you started again, number 1-2-3, by the time

the third year came around another third tithe was given on that year, then the sixth, then another seventh year of release.

Anyway, you don't have to know all that, but I'm just telling you everyone in Philadelphia knows it. We did it, we lived it, part of life, beautiful part of life and it was practiced within the Church, and I was blessed at one particular point in time within the Church, when this was administered, to see thousands of people that were helped, myself being involved with many. I don't know how many, dozens probably in certain areas if you talk about both areas that we had in the Church there at one point in time. There were probably at least a dozen, two dozen who would receive it from time to time. So it wasn't something all the time, but some people had assistance every month throughout the year because the government wasn't taking care of people to the degree that they should be, like Israel had been established to do. In Israel it was collected within their boundaries, within their communities.

The first tithe went to the priests. It was distributed from the high priest on out in Israel, the system was for distribution. And third tithe was another matter. It was given within the government system, generally priests as well, but within a government system that was set up to help people in regions, various regions throughout the country who had need of help, because maybe an injury, a sickness, an accident, whatever it might be, old-age, whatever. And that's how we used it in the Church later on.

Mr. Armstrong came to understand in time that in Europe, as an example - I remember being in Great Britain at the time, in college over there in the early 70's when he came to talk about it there - they were being so heavily taxed throughout Europe and they had so many social programs that it was kind of redundant for the Church to collect it. What was really needed for people to receive help was already in place and was quite sufficient from the government. And so to continually have people who were barely making it by what they had left over in taxes... if you pay 40-45% of your money, Caesar required 40 percent of a family. By the time you gave that you have 60% left, you tithe on that. Back then we didn't tithe on that, we tithed on the whole amount because many ministers taught that, we didn't grasp that. And so Mr. Armstrong came to see the financial burden that was on people and realized this wasn't according to the spiritual principles that God gave for Israel, collecting third tithe.

To make a long story short he ended it for Europe, for the Church. Later it was ended in Canada and I think it was still under his administration when it was ended in Canada. And later on then Mr. Tkach began to deal with some of those. And he might have been the one that dealt with it with Canada, I don't really remember the history right now, I just remember going back because I was in Bricketwood at the time, in England, when it was first addressed.

It's a spiritual principle, and later on I remember that within the first big organization that I was a part of, United, it was determined there that should be applied to the United States as well because the same thing had happened by that time here, long before frankly. And so candidly, today we do not have that system in God's Church. We do not collect third tithe. We don't give out monthly assistance and help to people. It is not a part of God's structure in God's Church today, we don't do it. There have been some situations where there have been emergencies in people's lives, emergencies, and some situations where you just strive to intervene and to help out, but not something that's on a continuing basis, because of the way society is established to receive help to survive, which is what it's about.

Second tithe never ends, never has a different process of administration. First tithe never ends, never has a different process of administration. First tithe always has been used to support God's work, the ministry, the locations, everything about their lives, everything about the work that is done. Buildings;

there aren't buildings, we rent. That's why we rent. It's more expedient to do so. Mr. Armstrong did so because of not knowing when the end-time was. Why build something that's going to last 30-40 years when maybe within 5 or 10 years we're there? Money is better used in other areas, so rent was paid, didn't have to have all the problems of movement and growth and outgrowing something else and then eventually splitting out.... so we didn't do it. So God inspired, led the Church to determine, to deem that it would just be the rental of locations, that that's the best way for His structure for what He was doing in the Church.

And I know that God inspired Mr. Armstrong to make decisions accordingly, to what was best in how some of those things were accomplished. We went through different things to try certain situations and people, but - not going to spend time on any of that, in our past - but some didn't fare very well with decisions that Mr. Armstrong made. Too bad! They didn't grasp, 'remember how you received...' and if you understand that then it takes you to the next understanding which we'll discuss next week.

Let's turn over to Deuteronomy 14. It isn't a suggestion. It isn't a suggestion at all. It is a command from God Almighty.

**Deuteronomy 14:22 - You shall truly tithe all the increase of your seed**, whatever the tithe is of everything that you produce, **that the field brings forth year by year**. Being an agrarian society, an agrarian world, unlike the world is today where there are many kinds of life, jobs that provide life and sustenance. A totally different way society is set up today, and because of the incredible increase of knowledge and what man is able to do – still a tithe is a tithe of your increase, of your productivity. And so it says, **you shall tithe all the increase....**

**Verse 23 –** This is kind of an overview. This is talking about all tithe, whatever the tithes are. He's getting ready to tell about more tithes, not just a single tithe, not just a first tithe. He's getting ready to talk about other tithes now following. This is the context, but He sets the stage by saying **You shall tithe all**, of all tithes, saying it better from Hebrew to English. **You shall tithe all tithes of your increase** is a better way of translating this into English.

And verse 23 then it begins to explain something different from first tithe which is understood through many places throughout the scripture there, a tenth. **And you shall eat before the Eternal your God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there**, and again, without a long bible study or things added on the sermon here; any place God chose to place His name (goes back to Leviticus 23 and talks about the High Days, the Holy Days), making it understood that wherever God is, wherever God places His name, wherever... And for the Church in modern times, through Philadelphia as an example, wherever the Feast sites were as a whole, the Feast of Tabernacles as a whole. If it's Pentecost, wherever the services are going to be held and so forth. Days of Unleavened Bread, same thing. Wherever God is, wherever God has placed His name, wherever **He chooses to place His name**, to bring **the tithe of your corn, the wine...and so forth**. And so it just talks about **the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks; that you may learn to fear the Eternal your God always**. And so it's talking here about a different tithe. Because you see, you never did that with first tithe. You couldn't take first tithe and have anything to do with it in the place God chose to place His name. On the contrary, people knew what to do with first tithe, okay? First tithe was totally different and it couldn't be used in the place where God chose to place His name. On the contrary, it was given to the priests; period, exclamation mark! ...and then the priests had their own system of distribution where the high priest received 10% of it all for his own use.



I think back in Mr. Armstrong's time; he had the right to do that if he wanted to, but he didn't do that. It's not what it's about. The high priest received 10% of all first tithe to use as he deemed necessary, and then the rest was distributed among the rest of the priests. Incredible! On the contrary, it's always used in other areas and places and that never used by those whom God has led and guided and directed to do His work...but just making a point, those who lived back in that particular time of Philadelphia and recognizing how people stumble when they begin to criticise Mr. Armstrong for flying around on a jet, for having his own jet, a man of his age. Think, thankfully he was able to do it... not only that but realize this is what God desires, this is God's will.

And then it goes on to say, **and if the way be too long for you so that you are not able to carry it;** in other words, when do you do this? When do you travel someplace else? Not on the weekly Sabbath. It's talking about the High Days. They used to primarily come together, especially during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Even the early Church did for seven days. That's how Mr. Armstrong started out. Later on God inspired him to say, "No, let's just all come together during the Feast of Tabernacles," and the other High Days were observed separately in local areas.

So here is something it's talking about where you can use a specific tithe, the second tithe, and use it, as it says here...**if it's too long for you to travel**, back then an agrarian society. Thankfully we don't live in an agrarian society today. Those of you going to Coeur d'Alene, if you're going all the way down to Palm Springs, you don't have to load up chickens and goats and sheep. And God says, if it's an agrarian society, back then, that you exchange it for money, funds, other things that you can transport with you easier. Today we have our credit cards and green bills and... different world that we live in today but the same truth, same principle, same obedience.

**And if the way be too long for you and you're not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from you, which the Eternal God shall choose to set His name there, when the Eternal your God has blessed you: Then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand,** whole lot easier to carry than a couple cows and chickens.

**...and you shall go to the place which the Eternal your God shall choose: And you shall bestow that money for whatsoever your soul...** they translate the word here as 'lusts after', but it's in essence having to do with a desire, strong desire, but rightly desire because it's within God's purpose and God's will. And so all the saving that's been done – God says use it! Rejoice before God! You can do more now with this, at this time, depending on the situation of your life at that time. If you've just come in the Church and you're just starting you might not have that much because you just started. You might have to ask for assistance. That's fine. But as time goes on, you're established and God's blessing you and you have more than you can use, you can even help others, pay for their meal at a Feast – something they don't normally get to have during the week. We live in such a world today though that we're so accustomed to eating out, people eat out and it's hard for the Church anymore to get out on a Friday night and a Saturday together. We're so large you just can't all go out to eat and spend time with each other. So we're not hurting too badly, are we, yet.

So it says here you can go out and you can buy those things. God's expectation for people is you eat better. If you're able to stay at a place that's better, stay there; whatever you're able to do. You're not to feel guilty about it, bad about it. On the contrary! And that which you have in abundance you're able to share with others, that's always a good thing. We have what we call excess second tithe. There are people every year that send in extra that they don't use for themselves so that others can benefit from it who otherwise might not be able to go.

**And you shall eat before the Eternal your God, and you shall rejoice, you, and your household.** And so God has provided a means for His people to have a time that they can rejoice... it's not a vacation, but it is a break from our regular routine, from our daily life. It's a time to get away from your normal routine. God commands a certain number of days; 8 days for sure that you're going to be away from... if we're able to be away during that whole period of time in a place that's been organized accordingly, because we haven't always done that in times past. Many will be staying nine nights, some eight nights depending on your ability and distance and so forth.

It's the second tithe you do that with! It's not an option that, "Well, maybe I won't need all that so I won't save it aside." God says save it aside, it's commanded, just like first tithe, except *you* are the one to keep track of this. *You* are the one that's to keep record of this. First tithe, that's sent in, that's recorded, you're sent out receipts every quarter throughout the year. You're sent out receipts about all your tithes you have turned into God's Church, which is what God commands of us and requires of us. But the second tithe is for you to keep, as a whole. We adjusted some of that a couple of years ago for a short time span for a different purpose – that's why a lot of extras are here now, as a part of that fruit, to be in a new age.

I sometimes am a little dumbfounded because it's on our website; it's on the FAQ - sometimes I hear that people don't know about second tithe. Everyone should know about second tithe. If you don't, go study up on it, go back and look in the system on the information we have on the website and look under second tithe. Look it up, look for sermons, look for things that have been said about it. I've said it again today here. It isn't an option! So if you've had a job for a period of time and you haven't been saving aside second tithe you're disobeying God as much as not paying first tithe, as much as not keeping the Sabbath day, as much as not even going to a Holy Day or observing a Holy Day! It's a sin! It's wrong! It's not an option!

It's a commandment by God, and it has to do with our relationship with God and whether or not Jesus Christ is going to come as a thief in the night in your life. Because continued disagreement with God's laws, not being obedient to God's law means that we're sinning, means that God's supply of His spirit is being stopped, meaning that Jesus Christ is not living His life in you. He may have patience with you and may very well give you grace and a time period in which to repent, and He may give you help, obviously, at times with His spirit to see and grasp some things, but to really grow, to really mature spiritually? *You are not* until you obey God and have repented of what you're doing. And it has so much to do with whether you're able to really rejoice then at the Feast. And if you don't have that then don't feel bad about it; if it's not there, it's not there. But if you have a job, and you have first tithe going in, the same amount should exist in second tithe, therefore when assistance is asked for in the church and there's a knowledge of how much first tithe has been sent in why isn't there the same amount of second tithe...and if there isn't, then why should assistance be given?

And so that's a guideline we've always used in God's Church, always, always, always, always and it's right and just to do so. An admonition. If there's need to repent then repent, start doing what you need to do, make it right. As much as lie within you go back and make it right, work to make it right. Just as much as you owe something in a house loan or a car loan or something else – how much more do we owe to what God gives us, even if it's just...not 'just' but for the awesomeness of being able to observe the Feast of Tabernacles.

So I wanted to attach that on to the end of the sermon about the death of Sardis and about the importance of watching and being alert and to hold fast to what we've been given. And this truth of 2<sup>nd</sup>

tithing is just one of many different truths that were given during the era of Philadelphia that God gave to Mr. Armstrong, with this being the *last* one that was given through Mr. Armstrong, as attributed to that era in time to Mr. Armstrong that God gave to him, to the Church: the importance of keeping second tithe.

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