

Well, I would like to say, "Afternoon," to everyone and, "Welcome again to God's Sabbath day."

In the last sermon that I gave we looked back in time, and there has been many sermons that have been given on the history of God's Church down through time. We went back and looked at some of the events that took place and how the people of God have been persecuted by the ones that found themselves in charge, those that were a part of the government of their time, their day. And we began to look at the life of Paul and how that he was a part of the system of his day until God called him out of that system, the system of government that was there in his time. God brought him into His government, the Government of God, God's Government.

We took a look at how Paul was persecuted and some of the things that he had to go through, and we saw how God got his attention, how God blinded him and had his mind focus on Jesus Christ. We saw how Jesus Christ worked with him for 3 years and brought him into the Government of God. And after Paul was converted he departed to Arabia, if we remember, where he was personally instructed by Jesus Christ. Paul was being prepared for a work that Jesus Christ would give him over his lifetime.

We saw the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile in the Church, and we saw how the way was opened up to the Gentiles in their day. We saw how it opened up the gospel to eventually be carried to the whole world during their time. We saw how Barnabas and Paul went to Syria and finally to Antioch. We saw how the Church grew. We saw how it was there that the followers of Jesus Christ were first called Christians. We saw that everywhere that Paul went, Paul and Barnabas, we saw how the Churches were established and we saw how ministers were being ordained, just like they are in this end-time Church as we are preparing for the Kingdom of God.

After the foundation of the Church God eventually led the apostle Paul to carry the gospel into Europe for the first time, and prior to this we know that the ministers had been limited to Asia, but Paul did cross the Aegean Sea into Greece, and from there the gospel spread. And after returning to Jerusalem Paul was imprisoned for two years and he made an appeal to Rome for his trial to be granted and he boarded that ship to Rome. Paul had the right to appeal, if we remember, because he was a Roman citizen. And we read about Stephen and how he was stoned and James, how Herod had him killed. We also read how Paul was sometimes let out of town at night because of the persecutions, and we read how he stayed in members homes, unknown to the authorities of their day, of his time. And because of the persecutions that were taking place is the reason he had to do these things.

Let's finish up the story. In about 64 A.D. - most of us know about the fire that took place in Rome and most of us know about Nero and the atrocities that he did, and some of them had to be against God's people - we know that Nero blamed the fire in Rome on the Christians of that day and here it was that Paul was beheaded in about 68 A.D.. They finally got to him and they finally cut his head off. That was a common way of death for Roman citizens, but this did not happen until God had, through Paul, firmly established the message that Jesus Christ had brought to this earth throughout that whole empire. This was the gospel of the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth - the same gospel that you hear about every Sabbath.

The message of the end-time book of Acts is about the Kingdom of God that is about to be established upon this earth - that's what it's about. Paul and Peter and all the apostles taught it and they all taught it just alike. Paul wrote the Church at Corinth and he said, **1 Corinthians 1:10 - Now, I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus that you speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.** And with the death of Paul and with the Roman persecutions on both the Christians and the Jews the temple was destroyed just as Jesus Christ said it would be in 70 A.D.. And everyone, I hope, has read 'The U.S. and Britain in Prophecy', and you can pick up the story flow from that time on.

But the focus of this sermon is not about how the Church spread but about how those of the truth have been persecuted down through time by the authorities that were in charge during this day upon this earth. As we well know, the Christian struggle is an ongoing seemingly endless war against spiritual adversaries that never sleep, they never tire, who never quit, they're relentless. And they never quit in their attempt to make the people of God to stumble, and now is no different. It has been the same down through time.

This battle that we find ourselves in is so overwhelming at times that we can become worn out in the process, and this will be the title today, *The Battle*. There is a danger when we get tired, when we become overwhelmed, and we need to stay close to our God at this time.

Let's turn over to Matthew 24 and let's look at a very familiar scripture. Let's go back to verse 14 and pick up the story flow. **Matthew 24:14 - This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached into all the world as a witness to all the nations; and then the end would come.** And this puts you and I in a timeframe that we've come to understand, that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled, and that he did take the gospel to the world to the extent that God wanted it to be taken at that time.

Verse 15 - When you see the abomination of desolation, and you can find that in truth #22 and truth #23 that refers to this if you want to reference that and go back and refresh it. **And when you see the abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, (whoever reads let him understand).** We have come to understand the meaning of God's words. We understood when this took place, those of us who lived it, and there are some among us that have read a book and understand what took place in the Church of God and understand who this man of sin was that brought this about, and that's truth #25.

Let's pick up the story in **verse 16 - Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains:** we've understood that as the remnant of God's people we had to flee this abomination that took place in the Church of God and that we had to run to the mountains and the hills and wherever we could find at that time for bits and pieces of the truth, and there are some sitting here who lived through these times, through these events, and they fully understand these scriptures. But there is a spiritual application to these scriptures that apply to you and I upon whom the end of the age has come and it's spiritual in nature for us, and we did have to run to the mountains and to the hills and wherever we could find bits and pieces at that time of the truth.

Verse 17 - Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house: And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. And there was a reason for this at that time, because of the abomination that was taking place and the battle for your mind that ensued at that time... and it was massive!

And in **verse 19** God says - **Woe to those who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days!** Spiritually speaking it was dangerous times for those that were being called during that period of time and it was hard for those who were just being called by our God. Let me quote from 'Time Has Run Out' on Page 9 - let's go back in time a little bit - and this is what Ron wrote at that time.

"We have lived through a time when a twofold prophecy was fulfilled which marked a specific time in man's history and announced that Jesus Christ was now going to return to this earth. This was a **sign** to the Church that He is now returning. The fulfillment of this twofold prophecy was to conclude at a time when there would be a "falling away" from the truth that God had delivered to His people coupled with the influence of a leader who was **set** in great authority within the Church. This leader would rebel, betray a great trust given to him, and even oppose God by raising himself above God by taking on a prerogative that is God's alone—determining what is true and false, what is good and evil, what is right and wrong—turning from the truth that was once delivered to him.

If we can be true to God and faithfully acknowledge what we have witnessed as God's people, we will readily admit that a great falling away has occurred. That falling away was as destructive as it was because of the unfaithful leadership of Joseph W. Tkach, Sr. who set out to destroy what God had built."¹

The abomination of desolation that took place was a desecration of the truth of God, and with that came great deception, and because lawlessness abounded at that time it was just as God told us, that the love of many would grow cold.

Back up in **Matthew 24:12** it's where God stated it, and He said - **Because lawlessness will abound the love of many will grow cold;** and let's notice, **but he who endures to the end shall be saved.** Just because we understand some of these things doesn't mean the battle is over. The battle is for your mind at the end of this age. This battle is going to be very fierce before it's over and most of us are experiencing this at this time. It's going to take a lot for the people of God to stand at this time; and that's what Satan wants to do, he wants to get to your mind.

Turn over to Luke 12:35. Satan and the demons are still here and active but God gives you and I instructions of how to withstand these demons that are so powerful at this time, and God tells us in **Luke 12:35**, He tells us for our **waists be girded and your (our) lamps burning; And you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately.** And He says, **Blessed are those servants, whom the master when he comes will find watching: assuredly I say to you, that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come he would have watched and not have allowed his house to be broken into.** And there are some who have already allowed this thief to break into their house, and it's the reason God says 'to let your waist be girded and your lamps burning', so that you know the thief is there. And he is always there, brethren. God tells us He's like a roaring lion just seeing who he can devour, especially as we get close to the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

¹ [Time Has Run Out](#)

We know that Jesus Christ is coming back, we know it will take place, and God is telling you and I to be ready for this event, and we *are* to keep our lamps burning and to be dressed for action because we know He's coming back.

Verse 40 - Therefore you also be ready.

Verse 42 - ...Who then is that faithful and wise servant/steward, whom the master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

And let's notice **verse 45**; it's the reason God said it this way - **But if that servant says in his 'heart', better said 'mind', let's notice My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and be drunk**, spiritually speaking there are some who were a part of us who think this has happened. They think that Jesus Christ has delayed His coming. Some are family, some are friends, some are past members, and God warns you and I about this and He says, **The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, so they won't see it coming, and at an hour when he is not aware**; it's talking about those that turn away and forget that the battle is for our mind and that's what it's about. And let's notice what God says, **will cut him in two, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.**

Verse 54 - God tells us...Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, A shower is coming, and so it is. And when you see the south wind blow, you say, There will be hot weather, and there is. Hypocrites! God calls it what it is, **You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that you do not discern the times?** In other words, you and I should be able to look and watch and tell what's coming upon this earth. God gives us ears to hear and eyes to see and we look upon the horizon at the events of this world, at what is taking place, the threats from North Korea - and they say they have missiles that can already reach the U.S.. They say they will continue to build nuclear weapons. Iran and their nuclear weapon program...and we don't even know what they have, but we do know what India and Pakistan have and India and Pakistan are threatening each other, as we speak, with nuclear war; *threatening to fire nuclear weapons*, brethren. And God says that you and I should be able to watch and tell what is coming upon this earth. China warning Australia not to get involved with the U.S. or with Japan. The Middle East, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria - and Russia's involvement with Syria and Iran, helping them to develop their weapons, especially Iran. Helping them to enrich for a nuclear bomb. And it's never ending and it's a powder keg everywhere that you look.

We have enough weapons to destroy this earth many times over, brethren, and God says that you and I should have eyes to see and ears to hear about what it taking place...and you don't need this book to see it but you do need God's spirit to understand it and to know that Jesus Christ's return to this earth to set up the Kingdom of God is imminent. When you look at the events upon this world we know it's imminent because of what we know, and therefore our name, 'Church of God - PKG', preparing for that Kingdom that is coming to this earth in just a short while.

Let's go back to **Luke 13:22 - And He went through the cities and the villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one to Him, Lord, are there few who are saved?** And this is a good question because when we look around at this end-time, I've also wondered how many will be there when it's all over, said and done, so it's a good question that was asked. And Jesus Christ also asked,

'Will He find faith when He returns to this earth?' So there are some asking the questions at this time because it was not an easy task for them in the time they lived in with the persecutions that took place.

And He said to them, Strive to enter through the narrow gate: lets notice, **for many, I say to you, will seek to enter will not be able.** And this should bring us to our knees when we understand what is being said. There are many that have walked to God's house and have sought to enter, and they were not able to enter because of whatever reason. I know Ralph Dowd has been around a long time and he's seen many through his life upon this earth, saw many that strove to enter that gate, and because they did not keep their lights burning it's just as this book tells us, that's the reason.

Verse 25 - Once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open for us; and He will answer and say to them, I know you not, where you are from: Then you will begin to say, let's notice who they were, **We ate and drank in Your presence and You taught in our streets. But He will say, I tell you, I do not know you, where you are from; depart from Me,** and here is the key, **all you workers of iniquity. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,** let's notice what's being said, **when you see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and yourselves thrust out. So they will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will sit down in the Kingdom of God. And, indeed, there are last who will be first and first who will be last.** It's a warning to the Church of God. The gate that you and I have to pass through is a narrow gate, but our God has made a way for His people, and when you understand who you are, and when you understand that the biggest battle is between these two ears; that's where it's at. God tells us that we have to strive to enter through this narrow gate. He says many will seek to enter and will not be able, and we've seen this in our past, and sadly there will be some in our future that will not be a part of us to enter that Kingdom.

You and I must be alert more than ever now. We must be on alert that we are in a *spiritual war*! We are in a war, brethren, of a *magnitude* that I don't think we begin to comprehend! We hear the words; we hear the words that Satan is like a roaring lion and that he's after us, and we know that he can tear us apart if he gets to us. God likens them to thieves who may break in and steal what God has entrusted to us. That's what they want, they want what God has given to you, and it's how they do it. They do it through the mind. It's when this mind takes a turn that you give them a way to enter - just turn from the truth, from what God has entrusted to you. We have a down payment on eternal life - it's truth #35 if you want to reference it - which Satan wants to steal from us. It's what he wants and it's what he's after at this time and he is on a rampage. You and I don't know for certain what we may be called upon to do in this life, and if you're not alert it may well be a return to judgment for you and I rather than that of a reward.

There is a warning to you and I to remain spiritually alert - **1 Thessalonians 5:4** -and it explains to us, the Church of God, who we are, and God tells us in His word that we **...are not in darkness.** God has called us out of the darkness and opened our minds so that we may understand. It's a good way of explaining it and in **verse 4** God tells us that **we are not in darkness so that this day should overtake us as a thief.** And it explains that there are certain ones, the called out ones that this day will not overtake as a thief. And **You are all sons of light and the sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.** In other words, if you stagger back into that darkness from the light - it's a good way of putting it - you will not be able to see your path. If you've ever been in total darkness you know you can't see anything and you cannot see where you're going. It does not take but a moment in time for this mind to turn - it's what God is telling us - and it's when you

step back into that darkness that you cannot see where you are going. So that is why God tells us that we are to keep our lamps burning - it's a good analogy - to keep them lit so we can see the path that is before us. It's the only way you can see it, and it's through God's spirit.

We can understand where we are in time when our paths are illuminated. God tells us to watch and be sober and not step back into the darkness and lose our way. It's when we step out of this light that we begin to stumble, and that's what God is telling us through these scriptures.

Verse 8 - Let us of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God did not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through Lord Jesus Christ... and this is how you keep your path lit, through Jesus Christ and staying close to His message, the message that He brought to this earth. It is by faith that we live that Jesus Christ is returning to this earth. It's by faith that you and I are preparing for the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth in just a short while.

Verse 11 - see what God tells us - Comfort each other and edify one another, just as you are doing. And that's what I see taking place. I don't ever think I've seen the Church of God as close as they are now.

Verse 14 - We exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all, so that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for both yourselves and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ for you and me. And we are to rejoice and exhort one another. *We are Family!* When we see someone that is faint-hearted we are to comfort them as God says, and guide them back into the truth and to help them with understanding of where we are in time, and to understand that we are in a spiritual war. Sometimes we forget! And sometimes we do get weary, we get tired - I've been tired this week - and therein the danger increases.

Let's notice **verse 19 - Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.** Brethren, the battles is for our mind and God tells us that if we don't step back into this darkness from where we came - and that's where we all came from - and if we stay in the light that He has revealed to us our paths will stay lit and our paths will be illuminated to the end so we can see the way.

1 Peter 5:6 - When we look upon the persecutions that have taken place and the persecutions that are still taking place against God's Church at this time, we have to stay close. And God tells us in **1 Peter 5:6 -** God gives us instructions and He tells us to, **Humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:** It's what it's about. With the heavy trials that so many are under God tells us to **Cast our care upon Him;** because we can't handle it on our own. And there are scriptures that tell us that He will never leave or forsake us if we keep our paths lit, keep our lamps burning. Whatever happens is in His plan. God allows certain things to move His plan forward and you and I are to humble ourselves before the Great God of this universe as He moves His plan forward. That's what we are to do.

He tells us in **verse 8 - Be sober, be vigilant;** and lets notice, **because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.** And it's what he's doing. All you have to do is step back into darkness and he's got you, and once the mind takes a turn - I've seen it over and over and over - once the mind takes a turn and steps back into that darkness most don't ever find their way back.

God tells us in **verse 9 - Resist him steadfast**, let's notice what's being said, **steadfast in the faith**, that's what God tells us, **knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world**. And we've looked at some of the sufferings down through time. The children of Israel, when God brought them out they were in captivity, in harsh conditions, physical sufferings. Most of ours are spiritual. And there are some governments upon this earth that can command physical sufferings upon us, even in this time, but in America, Australia, New Zealand, the Israelitish nations that are scattered, we do have more humane ways of having people in captivity, physically that is, but spiritually you and I are in captivity and therein is where our battle lies at the end of this age. And we do know that these same sufferings were experienced by those in our past that we've just been looking at - like Paul in his day. They were dragging them out of the houses and physically beating them and putting them in prison, so that they had the physical and the mental to deal with, brethren. Our physical may be in our future but right now it's spiritual. God tells us those who are called to His eternal glory through Jesus Christ, after you have suffered a while - and we know that we were called to suffer.

God tells you and me that we are like a fading flower - it's a good way of putting it - and He tells us that we are just like dust on the scales in the scheme of things down through time. When we look at our life in the space of time that we find ourselves in we could put our suffering on the head of a pin, in the space of 6,000 years, so when you think you can't bear anymore, think about that one. It's not much in the space of time. But the suffering is real when it's going on. And those that have been called to this way of life, regardless of the time that they were called in, Joseph... (Was it 14 years, Laura?) I think it was 14 years in prison when he was not guilty. Think about that one. And on and on it goes down through time. They put Jeremiah in a well because they were tired of hearing him, they didn't like the message. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - can't imagine those young men and being put into a furnace of fire. What about facing the lions? And John on the Isle of Patmos, nothing but a bunch of caves there. And even Paul alludes in the scriptures that God had even shut up the mouth of a lion for him; they may have even put him in the arena with a lion, but God shut the mouth of the lion up is what Paul tells us - whether he was talking about himself or someone else.

God understands that our suffering is real and that our persecution is real and He also illuminates you and I through Jesus Christ so that we may understand the sufferings and what it is all about. He tells us to illuminate our path by staying close to our God. That's how we do it. He tells us that after we have suffered just a little while, in the space of time, that He will perfect, establish, and strengthen all of us. And the battle is not over at this time - we are in the middle of the battle - but we can see the stages of the battle that we are in when we look back and see where we are in time, all the battles that have been fought.

We know the abomination of desolation has taken place. We know that; we know it's in our past. We know there was a great 'falling away' from the truth; we know that's in our past. So we understand that Mr. Armstrong took the gospel to the world that it was supposed to be taken. So where does that put us in the space of time? We know who the two witnesses are - so where does that put you in the space of time? God tells us about the future, the future battles that are ahead.

Let's look at **Revelation 13:9**, and God says, **If anyone has an ear, let him hear**. And hopefully you have ears.

Let's back up into **verse 4** and see who it's talking about. It's talking about Satan and it tells us that **...they worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with the beast?** So this writer understood it

was war, it was a real war that would take place. And with the sermons that have been given we understand the governments that have been down through time and we understand that authority that Satan has been given to influence these beast powers, the ones that were in charge, that we've seen how they dealt with the children of Israel, we've seen how the governments dealt with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Joseph, and on and on it goes. We can see how the government and those in authority persecuted God's people - and you and I are not an exception at the end of this age, but most of ours is spiritual, as I said, at this time, and it's about the mind, and it's how Satan can pull you out of God's Church at the flip of a switch. We've seen it.

...and they worshiped the dragon, talking about Satan, and let's notice what is being said **...who gave authority to the beast**, talking about down through time. **And they have worshipped the beast**, whether they know it or not, and **Who is able to make war with the beast?** And it's not possible unless God opens your mind and calls you. It's the only way you can make war with this beast. Unless you understand that you are in a spiritual war you will not be able to make war with this beast, this beast power - the pulls are too great! And if the mind turns from the truth of God - it's why it's said this way - **Who is able to make war with the beast?** That's how powerful it is! What it's telling you and I is its massive, this power, and God inspired this writer to write, to ask this question this way, **Who is able to make war with the beast?** We have to understand it is Satan and the demons that have influenced these governments and the people in power down through time. It's how it was done, it was done through the mind.

Verse 7 - we are in a war, a spiritual war, and the battle is for this mind at this time, and let's notice... **it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them: and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell upon the earth will worship him, let's notice... whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** So we can see, God tells us how massive this power will be, and He says it was granted to him, it was given to him that he could make war with the saints and to overcome them. It was given to him and we can see it down through time that that was true.

There have been many martyred by these powers that be down through time, and God says it was allowed, in His book, and it was allowed for a purpose when we understand. But there is a way, God gives us a way through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to make it through, but you and I have to stay close and not give space to this power.

If you and I are not spiritually alert we *will* fall prey to our adversary who seeks to devour us by the pressures of this life. Sometimes these pressures are mighty and they can overwhelm us, sometimes the trials can be very severe and we can allow this power to get to us and to tear us to pieces. So we need to understand about the war that we are in and how to fight the battle - and God tells us in His book, He tells us how we should fight this battle. In **Romans 13:11** God tells us, **Do this knowing the time**, let's notice what is being said, **knowing the time**, in other words, know where we are in time and know that God has awakened us out of sleep. And where we are in time should be a wake-up call to all of us when we look at the conditions of this world! Our lives will so change in an hour that our minds can't comprehend it. That's how fast it could take place! We are on God's time! And God says, **Do this knowing the time, that it is high time to wake out of sleep**; and we know God has awakened us out of sleep - and it's a good way of explaining it. We know the parable of the 10 Virgins - if you want to refresh, that's truth #29 - and it tells us that all of them slumbered and slept. All of them! And only by the grace of God are we here - that's the only reason - because God woke all of us out of sleep. And it's the way that God likens it, and He says, **Do this knowing the time, that it is high time to awake out of**

sleep: for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: and I believe this to be more true now more than ever when we look back at where we are in time.

Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day; not in revelry and drunkenness, not in rudeness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provisions for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. And this is the way we are to live, brethren. One of the biggest falls down through time was man trying to fulfill his lust, men and women, and all have fallen prey to this. We are not immune either. You and I are not immune at this time and we can still fall prey to this 'lust of the flesh'. God tells us not to make any provisions for the flesh, and what this is telling us is it's telling us to stay where our paths are illuminated, the present truth, Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day by Holy Day, and it's how you keep your paths lit so that you can see the way.

God tells us, don't step back into that darkness, don't even entertain it, because if you do you *will* stumble and you most likely won't make it back. God tells us to redeem the time, because when we look at where we are in time, when we look on the horizon most think that Jesus Christ has delayed His coming, they do not understand where we are in time. Satan thinks he has us! But you and I know who's in charge and it is the Great God of this universe - and nothing can take place without God allowing it - *absolutely nothing!*

And we can see instances where it was tried without God's approval in this book, and we saw in the last sermon that was given on this subject how God intervened and opened the prison and had the shackles fall off of Peter and let him walk out. So, Satan can only go so far. The Exodus - God brought them out to an impossible location, to where they thought they would die, but God delivered them. So this is not beyond God's power in His plan. God tells us to understand where the war is and He tells us not to stumble during this war.

Ephesians 5:1 - Let's look at more of God's instructions about how you and I are to conduct ourselves. With the 'lust of the flesh' that is still here, and if we begin to lose our focus upon God and where we are in time it is a dangerous state to be in so God tells us what to do. We have a pattern through this book that was written for you and I to whom the end of this age has come. It's who it's written for, those of us at the end. Jesus Christ left us a pattern to live by and many, many words through these scriptures, and He says, **Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also has loved and given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.** And it's how you and I are to live our life. We have a pattern of Jesus Christ to pattern it by, to imitate it, a way to live, and it's written in this book, a way to live.

Verse 3 - But fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse gesturing, which are not fitting: but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, or covetous man/woman, who is an idolater - God calls it what it is - has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words: for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. And in the times that we live in we better be careful what we let into this mind, and don't let anyone deceive us with empty words.

Verse 8 - God tells us that **we (you) were once darkness**, and we were, it's where we were when God called us, we had no idea of the plan of God, and we are only one step away from that darkness now - just takes one step and you're back in it...and it may overwhelm you so you may *never* get back. God tells us to ...**walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth;)** that's the fruit, and that's where it's at. It's where the truth is at. The truth is in the light, the present truth; the truth is not in the darkness; it's in the light, the present truth, that you can **prove what is acceptable unto the Lord**. And that's the only way you can do it. And it's not in the darkness, it's only in the light, where it's at.

Verse 11 - **have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them**. And if you see it, brethren, you should expose it and correct it, **For it is a shameful thing to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says, Awake you who sleep, arise from the dead**, and we were dead, all of us - it's a good way of putting it. God woke us up and that's why you're here and that's why you understand, and it's why God says it this way, **arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light**; talking about understanding, to know what His plan is and to keep your lamps lit and your paths illuminated so you can see the plan of God.

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, once you know these things, brethren, walk wise, in a wise way, **redeeming the time because the days are evil**. And if you can't look around at this world and tell that it's a sick, sick world and it's an evil world you need to get closer to the light. Even in this country that we live in with the freedoms that we have it's a sick, sick world. I so look forward to the day when our God will take charge of this world and bring about a new world where a righteous Government will be upon this earth.

Verse 17 - God tells us **do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dispensation**; let's notice how it's being said, **but be filled with the spirit**; That's where our focus should be - be filled with the spirit. Let's notice what God's saying...and it's not on partying, it should be on feeding the mind. That's where it should be, your focus at this time, and understanding what God's plan is all about and be preparing for what our name says, preparing for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth, 'Preparing for the Kingdom of God'.

And we should be **Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns**, as **verse 19** tells us, **singing and making melody in our 'heart'**, better said, 'the mind', **to the Lord; Giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting to one another in the fear of God**. In obedience, brethren, is what it's talking about. It's what we should be doing, we should be obedient. And I know most are doing this and I know most are staying close to our God at this time because they understand what is taking place. But it's the way that we should live amongst one another, giving thanks for what you understand. It's a *wonderful* thing to understand what our God is doing. It's a *wonderful* thing to know, and there is nothing else upon the face of this earth that you and I should want to know more about than to understand more about the plan of our God.

2 Peter 1:1 - **Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us**, let's notice who it's being written to, **by the righteousness of God and Savior Jesus Christ**: and he said, **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge**, let's notice what's being said, **in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, and they have been, **through the knowledge of Him who is called by glory and virtue: by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises**,

that through these, let's notice, **you may be partakers of the divine nature**. That's where your focus should be, that's what you should be striving to become, partakers of *that* nature - and Jesus Christ gave us the example. **...having escaped the corruption that is in the world**, let's notice, **through lust**. The biggest downfall of man. **But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; to virtue knowledge; to knowledge self control; to self control perseverance; to perseverance godliness; to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours, and abound**, let's notice, **you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge**, let's notice what's being said, **in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. So, God does show us the way. He tells us how to fight the battle. He tells us how to fight the war and He tells us what the battle is about. He gives us the knowledge to know where we are in the battle.

And He says, **For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren or unfruitful in the knowledge that you need**. It's just that simple. But He says, **he who lacks these things is short-sighted**, let's notice the way God is saying things, **even to blindness**, they step back into the darkness is what has happened. It's what it's saying. And once they step back into this darkness they are not able to see, **and you begin to forget that you were cleansed from your sins** once you do this. It's what takes place - I've seen it over and over. Those that have walked side by side to God's house on God's Sabbath...I've seen Christmas trees, seen Easter baskets - those that once were among us - and it does not take long once you step back into that darkness that you'll be mowing the lawn on the Sabbath. It's just the way it happens.

Verse 10 - Therefore be even more diligent, in other words, **be alert, stay awake** and look around and understand what is taking place upon this earth. If Jesus Christ does not return to this earth mankind is doomed, there is no hope for man upon this earth. Man will destroy every living thing upon this earth if time is allowed to go on much longer. We will look like the moon. We will look like Mars. That's what'll take place! Because they will annihilate anything that could ever live upon this earth. I don't think we comprehend the weapons that are upon this earth at this time. God says He who lacks these things is short-sighted, even to blindness, and that's how bad it can get - you *can* be blinded. God tells us to be more diligent, to **make our call and election sure**. And He says, **for if you (we) do this you will never stumble**...if we just stay in the light.

Verse 11 - For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What better promise could there be? Think about it. To see Jesus Christ returning to this earth and setting up His Kingdom upon this earth - what better promise? And I cannot think of anything better than to see [that].

Verse 12 let's see what Peter told us, **For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know**. And we do know these things, we understand about Satan and the demons, we understand we are in a spiritual war and that we are in a battle of our life for our life. We understand that. I don't think we know the magnitude of the war that we are up against. We know that the physical trials can get our mind off our God and we know that it can distract us. And that's why we have to be reminded by God what the battle is all about. And it is a tough battle, it's not an easy war that we are fighting but it's not been easy for those down through time either when we reflect back and see what they actually went through.

Verse 13 - Peter told us that he **would not be negligent to remind us always of these things, even though we know it, and even though we are established in the truth** - and that is the way the human mind is, and Peter understood this; we have to be reminded over and over. It's how the human mind is,

that's why we have Passover, Holy Days year by year, because we are physical at this time, because God understands this physical mind and it is just the way we are, it's the way we were made at this time. And that's why we have to fight for this mind to have a correct mind. Paul said after twenty-five years, 'O wretched man that I am, but with the mind...' he did what, he served his God. So he knew about the war and the battle.

Verse 13 - I think it is right as long as I am in this tent to stir you up by reminding you. And that is the job of the ministry, to remind us Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day by Holy Day, to know where we are in time.

Verse 14 - Peter knew he was about to die and he said that I will have to put off this tent, just as Jesus Christ has showed me. So he knew it and he said, **Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.** And he did, we are reading it today; it's still here to remind us.

Verse 16 - For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He's saying they saw these events and they were eye-witnesses. **For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** They heard this voice come from heaven! Can you imagine? They heard it and it is written for you and I. Do we believe what is written? Do we believe they heard it? And they said, **we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.** So they were there and they heard these things.

Verse 19 - And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed, let's notice how it's being said, **as a light that shines in a dark place,** just what we've been talking about to illuminate the mind, **until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation.** Let's notice, **For prophecy never came by the will of man:** let's notice how God says it - **but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the holy spirit.** And it is the *same* today and it is how it is done today, by God revealing it at this end-time to those that He has chosen at this end-time, by opening their minds. There have been many that have just read a book and know where we are in time.

2 Peter 3:1 - Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle; in both of which I stir up, let's notice how it's being said, **by your pure minds by way of reminder.** So he's having to remind us and He understands this. And that's what God does, reminds us of where the battle and the war is taking place and He tells us over and over through these scriptures, **That you be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets,** it's how it works, **and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior: Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days,** and they are, they are out there, they're dancing in the streets giving gifts to one another...but they have been there all through time as well, brethren. **...walking according to their own lusts.**

And you and I can look around at those that were once among us and there was a time when we walked side by side to God's house, and there are some of those out there now and they're saying just what we find in **verse 4**, some that walked side by side... **Where is the promise of His coming?** That's what they're saying - and that is basically the bottom line, "Where is the promise of His coming?" They don't believe it. They don't believe that Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth, not at this time. They scoff at anyone that mentions the return of Jesus Christ.

For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. And if you say anything about Jesus Christ returning they say, "Who are you? Who do you think you are?" That's what they say. They say, "Nothing has changed down through time - it's just like it's always been!" They don't see the nuclear weapons out here. They don't see India and Pakistan threatening nuclear war. They don't see North Korea threatening with nuclear bombs. They don't see China threatening Australia, Japan. They don't see the Middle East as a powder keg. They think they can control it. They think they have it under control. They think all things will just continue on as they always have - that's what they think.

Let's notice what **verse 5** says - **For this they willfully forget**, let's notice how it's being said, **they willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: By which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water:** They don't really believe these things! They look at them like stories in a book. They don't see the power of God in these events; they don't see that God has intervened in man's lives when it was needed. They don't see this. The Exodus, the flood, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and the statue that tells us about all the governments down through time, that tells us about the authority that they would have and that they would be able to persecute God's people down through time. They don't see any of this. They don't see the trials and persecutions that have taken place. They don't understand why people have been martyred down through time because of what they believed, about what they believe in their mind, and they lost their life because of what was in this mind. They don't see it. And they don't really believe any of these things. They don't see any rhyme or reason to the plan of God.

And they say, **But the heavens and the earth, which are now preserved**, let's notice (**verse 7**), **by that same word**, the same One that freed the children of Israel, the same One that brought about the flood, the same One that saved Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the same One that broke Peter out of the prison...they don't see it and they *willfully* forget it. **But the heavens and the earth**, let's notice, **by that same word are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.** There *will* be a day of judgment.

Verse 8 - But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that where the Lord is one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day. And the Lord is not slack concerning His promise; they think He is. They think God is slack about this promise. God says He's not. God says He made a promise. He's promised that Jesus Christ will return to this earth. There are many prophecies throughout this book about this promise, the promise of a Messiah that would come and that's who you and I should be preparing our minds for, that return. The return of that Saviour Jesus Christ to set up a just government without persecutions, when no one will ever be persecuted for this way of life again. And I look so forward to that day and I know you do too.

God says **He is not slack concerning this promise, as some count slackness;** they count it that way, brethren, but you and I better not. He says **He is longsuffering toward us**, has a lot of patience with you and me, and I wonder why sometimes. **...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.** And that is my wish too, and I know it is yours too. It tears your heart out when you see brethren that we walked side by side letting down, when they cannot see what we see, when they step back into the darkness.

Verse 10 - let's notice - But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt, and we know that there will be nuclear weapons set off upon this earth, **but the earth and the works in it will be burned up.** But we know that

God will intervene. And we've been through this before and we understand that it's talking about the ways of this world and the governments of this world and that a new world will be set up. The earth doesn't pass away, we understand that it's just a new age that is brought about, so we understand what it's talking about, and if you notice that at the end it's talking about the *works* that are in it that will be burned up. Satan and the demon's works and what they have accomplished, that's what will be burned up. Their governments that they have set up upon this earth will be done away with and the Government of God will be set up upon this earth, a righteous government, and that day will come upon them as a thief. They don't believe it's coming. They don't believe Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth. They talk about it, they say they do, but most of them think they will just float away on a cloud somewhere. They can believe that part.

Therefore, since all these things will all be dissolved, talking about Satan and the demons, what they have built upon this earth. The Millennium will be here and the mind will begin to be cleaned up. I heard Mr. Armstrong say that it would take 3-4 generations for the minds to be cleaned up. That's how long it'll take, it's how corrupt this mind has become. And God tells us **what manner of persons we ought to be in conduct and godliness**. You and I should be able to conduct ourselves now in this manner.

Verse 12 - Looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, and we do, I think, more than ever. That's all I hear now talking to brethren. We can't wait for it to be over. We can't wait just to get to the end, to the end of this age. I think we *are* tired. I think we *are* weary. I think we *are* worn out. But we have to be careful when we find ourselves in this situation.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, let's notice how it's said, **His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth**, just what we were just talking about, **in which righteousness dwells**. A new Government, a new King, a new way of life, to clean up the minds upon this earth for a thousand years, to start to teach mankind the correct way to live at the beginning. And when we do look for that new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells, when it's all over, said and done, when all that will be in the Kingdom of God will be spirit beings. We all understand that all of it will be cleaned up, the *minds* that are there, and they will exist forever and ever with a *clean* mind.

And that's what we look forward to, the Kingdom of God coming to this earth to start this process.

Verse 14 - Beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, let's notice, **without spot and blameless**. ...spot and blameless. **And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; as also our beloved brother Paul, also according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things are hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do the rest of the scriptures**, and they do. Once a person's mind has been enlightened and steps back into that darkness that's exactly what happens, they become unstable and untaught people and they twist these words, God's words, **to their own destruction**. They don't believe Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth and they begin to twist the sayings of Paul. The protestant world are masters at it. And they begin to twist all the rest of the scriptures.

And it says, **You therefore, beloved, seeing you know this beforehand**, let's notice, **beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness**, let's notice what God is telling us, **being led away with the error of the wicked**. God tells us to beware lest we fall from our own steadfastness and be led away by those that have stepped back into the darkness. I've seen it happen.

Verse 18 - God tells us, and this is what He's doing, He tells us to **grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. And that's exactly what is taking place when I look around. Look around. And it's a wonderful thing to understand more about the plan of our God, and like I said, we all get fatigued, we all get exhausted by the anxieties, by the stress of this world. If there is anybody in here that doesn't have stress I want to talk to you. This age that we live in, we hear the bad news. We get fatigued by the daily struggles of survival in this world that is affecting more and more of us. We get stressed by ill health, sickness, and by the battles that that causes.

Let's turn over to **Psalm 69:1**, and David was a good example of a man after God's own heart, and the reason that we know that is because God told us so. That's the reason we know it. Because David made a lot of mistakes, but God said he was a man after His own heart, and it's written in this book for you and I to read about, read about his sins. Mine and yours are quiet at this time - I wonder how long they'll stay quiet. But his were written about in a book for all to read for all eternity; his life is an open book, so to speak. Let's look at how David felt and what he said...**Save me, O God; for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing: I have come into deep waters, where the waters of the floods overflow me.** And that is how we feel sometimes as God's people, because of the persecutions that take place. It's how we feel and it's a good way of expressing it. David had a way with words and he was inspired by God to write it down in His book so that we could read about it and know how to deal with some of our stresses. And he said, he was **weary from my (his) crying: and my (his) throat was dry**: He says, **my eyes fail while I wait upon my God**, while he waits for His God. So we understand that and we can see that the people of God down through time were no strangers to suffering and David did his share of suffering, and we know that many others did down through time.

So let's go back to **1 Kings 19:1** and let's look at another example that God gave, and let's look at Elijah. It's where **Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, about how he had executed all the prophets with the sword, and Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.** In other words, she was going to kill him. **And when he saw that**, let's notice, **he arose and ran for his life.** So we can see Elijah became overwhelmed **and he went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree**: and let's notice what Elijah did. We can become so overwhelmed by the persecutions of Satan's world and Elijah was no different, **and Elijah prayed that he might die.** It would be easier to just go ahead and die then to face what he had to face.

So sometimes the sufferings can get to us and God had this written for you and I to know how powerful it is. And here we find that Elijah was no exception to the stresses, and Elijah, after he had seen all that God had done, became overwhelmed and sat down and prayed that he might die. And let's notice what he said, **and he said, It is enough**; he thought it was as much as he could bear and he told God just to let him die, **for I am no better than my fathers.**

So brethren, we can see that Satan and the demons are very powerful. They got to David, they got to Elijah, and the pressures were so hard that Elijah said it was enough. So you and I have to be careful and understand all these were given for our examples so that we can understand the war that we are in. They were in the same war and that battle that is ensuing for our minds.

2 Corinthians 4:1 - Let's look at another example that God had written for you and I. God knew that it would get rough at the end and we find, **Therefore since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart**; Even though sometimes we may think just as Elijah did we know we have

received mercy just as he did. **And since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.** We understand about the war and we understand about the battles that we have to fight, and God tells us about it and God tells us how we are to fight this battle and He gives us understanding of how to do it.

Verse 2 - But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. And you and I understand this. We understand that the god of this age has blinded and we understand that it is Satan and we understand that the whole world is deceived. And we do look forward to the day when this veil that they are talking about will be taken away and when all can come to the knowledge of God and all can have their minds cleaned up...and a time when Satan will be done away and not be able to influence this mind anymore for a thousand years. We look forward to it.

And it says, **the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.** That's the way God says it. And I *long* for that day when it *will* shine through their minds. **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and our self your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our 'hearts', better said 'the mind', to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

Verse 7 - We have this treasure in earthen vessels, it's talking about the holy spirit, **that the excellence of the power of God may be of God and not of us.** Let's notice, **we are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed.** God continues to feed us Sabbath by Sabbath. **...we are perplexed but not in despair, persecuted,** and that we are, **but not forsaken.** God says He will *never* leave or forsake us. **...struck down but not destroyed and we move forward.** We know that God is in charge - even though these things afflict us we still move forward.

Always caring about in the Body, let's notice, **the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also might be made manifested in our life, in our body,** by the way we live. **For we who are alive are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.** We should be an example in everything we do. **So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke; we also, therefore believe and therefore speak; Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will also present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore, we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.** That's how we get through the trials, it's how we know about the war that is taking place. All of the servants of God have suffered, no one is immune, not even you. We all suffer. But this writer understood something very important - remember about the space in time, you could put it on the head of a pin - it's just for a moment in time and it'll be over.

Verse 17 - He causes our light affliction, which is but for a moment, and it will come to an end, the suffering will end. God likens it to childbirth and you and I are feeling some of the pains. But after the birth, that's what women tell me, they might remember the pain but they don't dwell on it anymore and they look at the joy of the children that are before them, and it becomes a thing of the past, the pain. But right now we are feeling these birth pains as the Kingdom of God is being prepared to come to this earth. And He tells us our light affliction, and He does call it a light affliction, **which is but for a moment in time,** in the space of 6,000 years, **and is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of**

glory; While we do not look at the things which are seen, let's notice what he's saying and how he's saying it. **We don't look at the things which are seen, the unseen things are our faith**; we are to look past the pain, look past the suffering, and we understand that God will not put upon us more than we can bear. It's what God says. And we look at the things which are not seen - that's what our focus is, is the vision which our God lets us see and it's why you understand, because your mind has been opened. And that's why you're sitting here, it's why you come back Sabbath after Sabbath, to be fed by your God - it's how God does it - and to get more understanding about the plan of our God and what He is doing. **...for the things which are seen are temporary**; let's notice how God says it; He says they are temporary, the things that are seen. It's hard to comprehend. **...but the things which are not seen are eternal**. Try to pass that through your mind a few times.

And we look so forward to when everyone is a spirit being, when it's forever. And you and I understand when this is, it's when the plan is complete, it's at the end when all the minds have been cleaned up and only spirit beings are there with a clean mind. That's what it's about, that's what the plan of God is about.

2 Corinthians 5:1 - For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, and that is so comforting to know. We understand where the battle is and that it is for this mind, but we know that we have a building from God not made with our hands. You can destroy this Body but only we can destroy this mind. The sacrifices have been made, God, once He has given you His spirit, only you can turn and step back into the darkness and destroy this mind. Only *you* have the power to do that. And it's only when you step back into the darkness that it begins to happen.

We look so forward to the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth, and I long to shed this flesh, and I think you do too. God has good news for all of us - we *will* shed this flesh eventually and it is *good news*. **And we do groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven**: which is from our God, our spiritual body.

Verse 4 - For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened: not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed; let's notice what's being said; **that mortality might be swallowed up by life**. And this is our hope, eternal life, eternal spirit beings. **Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God**, it's what you are preparing for, the Kingdom of God, brethren. It's what it's about at this time, preparing your mind for what is coming in just a short while. And God says it is He who has prepared us for this very thing, that's who's doing it, **and He has given us His spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)** It's how we do it. **We are confident, well pleased, rather to be absent from the body and be present with the Lord**. And I look forward to when we can all be there with Him, to shed this flesh. **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing with Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad**. And the protestant world has so distorted these scriptures and this is a prime example. It's very simple, everyone will have to give account for the way he has lived.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men; but we are well known to God; and I also trust are well known in your consciousness. For we did not commend ourselves again to you, but give you an opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for them who boast in appearance and not in heart. For if we are beside ourselves it is for God, or if we are of sound mind it

is for you, for the love of Christ compels us; because we judge thus, that if one died for all, then all died and He died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, let's notice, **but for Him who died for them and rose again.**

Therefore, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, they knew Him, yet now we know Him not in the flesh anymore, is what it's saying, **therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. All things have passed away, behold all things have become new.** And they have, when God opens your mind; it's a new beginning.

And all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, let's notice, we are ambassadors for Christ, even though God was pleading through us, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Let's be turning to 2 Corinthians 1 and let's look at where Paul explained the comfort in sufferings. And he said in **2 Corinthians 1:3 - Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies,** and let's notice, **God of all comfort;** It's where our comfort comes from, and God says He will not put more upon us than we can bear. And God *does* comfort us in this war that we're in as we fight the battles. But it's imperative that you and I understand that though some of these trials be physical it's the spiritual mind; that's what the god of this age is after. It's what he's after, and that's where our battle lies.

Verse 4 Paul tells us, **Who comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble.** And if we remember, it was through Paul that we were told that through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God, but God tells us it is He who comforts us in all our trials that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble. And the persecutions and the trials and the sufferings come in many forms, but it doesn't matter what form it comes in, it ultimately ends up being about your mind between the ears. It's how it gets to you. But it is God who comforts us.

Verse 8 - For we would do not want you to be ignorant brethren of our trouble which came to us in Asia, let's notice, **that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.** They are telling us that they did not want us to be ignorant of what took place and what they had to face. They didn't want us to be ignorant of the trouble that came to them and the burdens that they had to face. And they were burdened beyond measure. So it was pretty graphic brethren, pretty hard, **above strength.** And let's notice the very profound statement, **they even despaired of life,** just like Elijah.

Our adversary, Satan, is out there brethren. We can see that he was after them... and he's also after us. It's not changed down through time, it's not over. So it's imperative that we understand. It's the same for Paul. It was the same for Elijah. It's the same for David and all those that have walked before us that God has called, and it's the same for you and I. And God tells us they despaired even of life itself. So we can see the battles that they fought and the war that they were in, but as we were told a little earlier, it's not much in the space of time, it's just like putting it on the head of a pin in 6,000 years, and there have been many that have gone before us and their battles are over - but ours is still going.

And he said, **we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.** And it's where you and I have to trust also; it's in the One that will raise us from the dead. It's where our trust has to be. **...who delivered us from so great a death and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.** And it is the same for you and me. It's faith that the Great God of this universe will deliver us in His time. Might not be the time we want but it's in His time.

Verse 11 - you also helping together by prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

Verse 12 - For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity, in godly sincerity - not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand; now I trust, let's notice what is being said, now I trust you will understand even to the end. And I hope you do too, brethren. I hope you make it to the end. I hope you don't lose your understanding and step back into that darkness. And this is what the writer was admonishing us, that we should understand even to the end and not have this understanding taken away, because he knew about the war and he knew about the battles that would have to be fought and he understood.

And let's see **1 Corinthians 9:24**; let's see what this writer told us. And he said, **do you not know that those who run in a race all run but one receives the prize?** He says, **run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now, they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus, not with uncertainty; thus I fight, not as one who beats the air,** and let's notice what is being said, **but I discipline my body and bring it into subjection lest when I have preached to others I myself should become disqualified.** So he understood about the mind and he used the mind to bring the physical body into subjection, and he understood how it had to be done.

Romans 12:1 and let's finish up. We know it by heart, and it says, **I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** And I say it again, it's just what God expects of you, and it is a living sacrifice when you fight the war and when you fight the battles. God says, **Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed,** and let's notice how it's saying it's about the mind, it's where the war is, it's where the battles are fought. **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** It's how you know.

So stay close to your God and renew your mind and you *will* understand, you will understand what that good and acceptable and perfect will of God is.

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