

Welcome, brethren, to another seventh-day Sabbath. We're now in the year 2015 in the Roman calendar and this will be a very interesting year.

The end of man's self-rule of 6,000 years is drawing to its end. We have looked at one aspect of our role as members of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, during these last days. Our role is based on humility and repentance. If we live humbly before God, we will have the opportunity to be able to be used by God. If we live humility and repentance, we will live. We're talking about something on a spiritual level. If we live unrepentant, and pride-filled, and selfish, we will die. This is also on a spiritual level.

Well, mankind faces the same thing. They're going to have to be humbled, and then they're going to have to be brought to repentance and they will live, physically on into the Millennium, and have that opportunity to live spiritually, and what I'm referring to there is, have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in them. But, if a person is unrepentant, if they remain in their pride and in their selfishness, they will die physically because of this attitude.

The title of today's sermon is *Man's Last Days*, and this will be *Part 3*. The purpose of this sermon series is to review what we know about man's last days under Satan's influence, and then we will look at the end of 7,100 years when there is a time of man's last day. We looked at Amos 5 and we looked at verses 4 and 5 in the last sermon, which was about "seeking good and not evil," and "hating evil and loving the good." And we've looked at the various aspects of this "seeking good," that this requires a change of thinking. This requires humility and repentance.

Those called during the end-times will be humbled and they will have to humble themselves. They will have to seek God by the way of repentance, and they will come to learn to see they have to hate evil.

We're going to pick it up now in Romans 7:14 where we will see that Paul came to understand this on a spiritual level. Now, to be able to "see" this requires a calling and it requires God's holy spirit. It requires God's spirit living and dwelling in a person to be able to "see" and to be able to live, to understand this on a spiritual level.

Romans 7:14. Now, this is something that is going to happen to mankind when they are called and over a period of time, once they live into the Millennium, they will come to understand this in a deeper way, because it's something that is only understood by the power of God's holy spirit. **Romans 7:14—For we know (we "see") that the law is spiritual...** Now, this is something that is seen in the mind. It's something that is actually witnessed in the mind, the evidence is in the mind, because of the way a person lives. And they "see" it and a person can make this statement *if* they have been called to "see" it. Because if you haven't been called to "see" it, you can't "see" it, can't "see" the *intent* of the law, the

spirit of the law. So Paul is saying now, "We know," members of the Body of Christ, those called to "see" it, "we know," we "see" "that the law," God's law, about the 10 Commandments and other aspects of the law, the depth of the law, "that it's spiritual," because it's based on motive and intent, **but**, so it's something that is opposite to this, where the law is beautiful and we've seen in Psalm 119 David explaining about the law, how wonderful the law is and how beautiful the law is. He lived to look at the law and understand the law in its spirit and intent because of its beauty. And we know that David made these statements about the law because he came to "see" that the law revealed God's thinking.

So here we have, now, Paul saying, **But I am carnal (I am selfish), sold under sin**. Now, he's sold to a "type" of slavery to self, where the self dominates our thinking and everything we do is based on our selfishness, the pleasing of self, which is about "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." So that is what it is to be carnal. Well, Paul is saying here that he sees this wonderful law, that it's spiritual, but he also knows that he is carnal.

So this is what's going to happen leading up to the very return of Jesus Christ, that people are going to begin to see that they are selfish. Now, this takes a calling.

Verse 15—For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, so this is the intent, what he wants to do, **that I do not practice; but what I hate**, which is sin, **that I do**. So here he is, he's in this battle and he sees himself, he knows that he's selfish, and he has these desires not to be selfish, not to live that way, but under different tests and trials, what comes out of it? He practices something else by the fact that he yields to his own selfishness, which is sin. So that's what he does, he makes these mistakes, but he continues to repent and he "sees" that his thinking, his natural thinking is not spiritual in nature, that it's actually pride-filled. Because we're either humble or we're proud. There is no in between. We're either humble and we know who we are, that we are of a natural carnal mind, or we lift ourselves up in pride and sin.

Verse 16—If, then, I do what I will not to do, so if he does it, **I agree with the law that *it is* good**. So although he *desires* not to do it, but he does it, he actually, because he *desires* not to do it he agrees that the law is good. He agrees with it because he's fighting against himself. So therefore, he says, by fighting against himself, by battling, he understands and he agrees with God that his nature is selfish.

Verse 17—But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know (I "see") that in me, that is, within a person's thinking, **(that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me...** This is his desire. He *wants* to obey. He *wants* to look at the intent of the law. He *wants* to keep the spirit of the law under all circumstances, **but *how to perform what is good I do not find***. So it's not in human nature to be able to do this. It requires the gift of God's holy spirit, God's thinking that does the works. It's about us yielding and choosing to yield to God's spirit.

Verse 19—For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. So that's what he does, he does selfishness because selfishness is *not* sacrificing the self. That's what selfishness is. Selfishness is doing things to please self, to get something back for self. So it's either

humility or pride. So here it is, Paul's saying that he doesn't want to do these things, but these are the things he actually does. And he repents of it, but he finds that under different situations and under pressure he goes back to using the natural carnal mind to do things.

Verse 20—Now if I do what I will not *to do*, so if he does it, it is no longer I who do it, because he didn't want to do it, but sin, which is the selfishness, that dwells in him. That's what it is; it's the natural carnal mind at work. I find then a law, which is about the natural carnal mind. It is a law where God has made man all the same with selfishness. That's the way mankind is. It's a law that God has put in motion that every human born with the spirit of man is selfish. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. So here he's saying there's a law, and the law is everyone is carnal, our nature. That's the way it is. *But* he has a will within him because of his calling that he now wills to do good.

Verse 22—For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. So now he's starting to say something, that this is what mankind is going to be moved to because of the humbling that is going to take place, where mankind is going to look to, to find an answer, look for a solution to life. There is going to be a percentage that is called to come to see that they have to turn to God for the answer. And then they'll be able to "delight in the law of God according to the inward man," because it's all about the thinking, what goes on in the mind. Now, *this* will trigger a right relationship with God.

So brethren, *if* we are in the battle, if we are now fighting the self, we "delight in the law of God," we're using God's thinking, God's holy spirit in us to now yield to that, and that's our choice. We *desire* it. We "delight in the law of God," but we stumble and fall because of the natural carnal mind. And that's what Paul is outlining here. He desires one thing, he desires to obey God, he desires to keep the 10 Commandments in the spirit and intent of the law, *but* because of his natural carnal mind, the *law* that is in him, which is the natural carnal mind of selfish is in him, because that is the way God has made mankind. Well, if we can continue to fight against self, to fight against it, we're actually agreeing with God that God is good, that the law is good, because we "delight in the law of God."

Now, we can *demonstrate* that we delight in the law of God. How do we demonstrate it? By actually fighting the selfishness in us. So when we fight the selfishness, when we battle sin, when we battle those thoughts, we're agreeing with God. We agree with God that we are carnal and selfish. But when we fight, we're actually delighting in God's law, according to the inward man. That's what we do. So this is a new attitude that is required. This is about having God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us to lead, guide, and direct every thought, word, and action.

Verse 23—But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, which is God's law. So he sees that he's still in conflict; he's now battling the self. The natural carnal mind has to be fought. This selfishness has to be fought, **and bringing me into captivity**, because we're held by our thinking, our prejudices, our biases, and the habit that we have built up in our life about the way we think. So, **it brings me into captivity, to the law of sin which is in my members**, which is this natural carnal selfishness.

Verse 24—O wretched man that I am! Now, this "O wretched man that I am," this is something that everyone is going to be brought to see in time. Now, it begins at the beginning of the 3½ years when tribulation is then introduced to the world, and it will be a progressive thing, but mankind will be humbled during that time. And then at the end of it, those that are of God, that will be allowed to live into the Millennium based on God's choice, they will come to see as they enter the Millennium, they'll read this and understand verse 24, because this is about conversion. This is about the transformation of the mind, from one way of thinking to another way of thinking.

Verse 24—O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of death? "Who will deliver me from *this* body of death?" And this is the question that is being asked. Well, Paul has come to "see," as we have come to "see," brethren, based on our conversion, "O wretched man/woman that I am," because we "see" our selfishness. We have come to understand by the power of God's holy spirit that we *are selfish*. And then the question is, "Who will deliver me," who will deliver us, "from the body of death?" Who's going to deliver us from this natural carnal mind that *is* going to die?

Well, **verse 25** gives the answer: **I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law;** this is the choice that he has made. He's made the choice within his inner thinking to serve the law of God, which is the spirit of the law, **but with the flesh**, which is this natural carnal mind that we have, **the law of sin**. So there are two clear differences. There's a natural carnal mind of selfishness and pride, or there's a mind that has God's holy spirit, which is about humility and repentance. So they're the choices.

Well, as we go forward, this is the choice of mankind, which is humility and repentance, or pride, which will lead to death.

Proverbs 8:10. We understand that wisdom is based in the Proverbs because it is the thinking of God, and God uses the word when He's talking about wisdom, which is the thinking of God. It's virtually saying that mankind needs to turn to God to have wisdom.

Proverbs 8:10—Receive my instructions, which are all spiritual, **and not silver**, which is physical, **and knowledge**, spiritual knowledge, **rather than choice gold**. So there is a choice here for mankind, which is the choice we have everyday—to receive the spiritual instructions of God and not to seek after the physical, because the physical is temporary and passing. And seek spiritual knowledge and receive spiritual knowledge from God because that's the only place it can come from, "rather than choice gold," rather than the physical things. So this is talking about what we value. What is it that is our highest priority? Is our priority seeking the instructions of God, which is God's word and not the physical, the knowledge of God, the understanding of God's law? Are they the things we're focused on day by day and that we're working on within our minds? Are we turning back to God's word to make decisions, to use *His thinking* as our guide? Same thing applies for mankind. In mankind's last days he has a choice. He's either going to turn to seek the spiritual instructions, which is to turn to the word of God and look for spiritual knowledge and understanding, which is going to come from God, which is going to be available

to some, rather than the physical, "not silver or choice gold." So it's about a priority that man is going to have to make.

Verse 11—For wisdom, which is the thinking of God, is better than rubies; and all the things one may desire cannot be compared to her, which is "wisdom," the thinking of God.

Verse 12—I, wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil. This is something that mankind is going to have to learn. They're going to have to learn to reject sin. They're going to have to learn to be repulsed by sin, which is the sin within the self. As Paul said, "O wretched man that I am," which is what mankind now is going to have to learn, to fear God, to put this respect towards God, to put Him first and learn to shun the selfishness, to see the selfishness (which we understand comes from a calling of God) and then to actually learn to hate it, to be repulsed by selfishness. ...**pride, arrogance, and the evil way, evil way of thinking, and the perverse/insincere mouth, I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding and I have strength.** So we understand, brethren, that mankind is going to be brought to a state of fear. Fear of whether or not a person is going to live or die is coming, which is a *human* fear. Now, through this human fear God will then call a percentage and give them the opportunity to then learn to fear God, and they will learn to fear God by hating evil. They're going to show this respect and awe for God's word, which now we understand nobody in the world fears God. They don't respect God. They don't look to God's word for their guide.

Micah 3:1—And I said: Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: *Is it not for you to know justice?* Which is the question. As the leaders they *should* know God's ways, they *should* know God's word! **You who hate good and love evil.** Now, this is the opposite to what we were reading before, where they're supposed to be hating evil and loving the good. But here it is the heads of Israel, the people of Israel, the leadership in particular, they were actually hating the good by not living it. And they were loving the evil by *living* it. That's how we love evil. If we love evil, we will live it, which is the selfishness.

So they're supposed to be hating the evil, which is the selfishness within them, and loving the good, which is God's word. Well, that's what they should be living, but they're not. So as leaders they should know God's ways and God's word. Well, the same applies for us, brethren. We are God's people. We should be loving the good and hating the evil. Here it is. God's accusing them of the opposite. They are doing the opposite, and they are doing the opposite by *living* it. It not only goes on in the mind, people live it.

So now we'll go back to Amos 5, which you may be holding your place there from last week. God willing, we'll get a little further into Amos 5 today.

Amos 5:15. Continuing on in **Amos 5:15**. It continues... **It may be that the LORD God of hosts (Yahweh Elohim) will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.**

Verse 16—Therefore, the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this. So this is what's soon going to be ahead of us and what is soon to happen to mankind. So continuing on in verse 16. There are some words

that have been added there. It says, ***There shall be***, which has been added, but in the context it's right, **wailing in the streets, and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas!** Now, this "Alas! Alas!" is an expression of grief and woe. This is about distress. **They shall call the farmer to mourning, and the skillful lamenters to wailing. In all vineyards there shall be wailing**, so in these vineyards, which is all about food production or the production of food across Israel is going to be affected. There is going to be wailing. Why? **For I (God) will pass through you**, which is "through Israel," **says the LORD**. Now, this is a difficult time for Israel that is being prophesied here, but it's also something that is going to happen to the modern nations of Israel today. God is actually going to pass through Israel. Mankind will be left to himself. Mankind is going to enter into a time of great distress.

Verse 18—Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Now, this is an interesting statement. "Woe to you who *desire* the day of the LORD." Now, this goes back to about intent. Why do we desire it? Well, we desire the Day of the LORD in one way, for the purpose of the return of Jesus Christ. At the end of the "Day of the LORD" we enter into *the day*, a single "Day of the LORD," which is about the very return of Jesus Christ and a change of government that will take place. And during that day Satan and the demons will be removed for 1,100 years.

Well, this statement here, "Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!" So we can look forward to it in the *right* attitude, which is one on a spiritual nature, to see the return of Jesus Christ. But on a physical level, anyone that desires to have this, is desiring something they *do not understand*, because it's going to be quite distressing. We have to desire the final Day of the LORD for the *right reason!* It's about the return of Christ. It's about the change of government. It's about the removal of Satan and his demons. *That's why* we desire the Day of the LORD.

Now, anybody that desires it for the wrong reason, they're desiring something *they don't understand*, because the distress is going to be *beyond* what any human can even imagine. So we don't desire it for the purpose of destroying people. We desire the day for the right reason, which is the *best outcome* for mankind. Now, if mankind has to be humbled to turn them to repentance, that's the best thing for them, which is we don't desire ill will to them, but we do desire they repent. We desire to see a change of government. That's why we look for the Day of the LORD. We desire to see Satan and his demons removed from influencing mankind, which is a right spiritual desire.

It's good news with bad news. It's good news on a spiritual level, but it has bad news in the fact of physical effects. So it's a good spiritual outcome with bad physical effects. Now, by "bad" it means suffering.

Why should we be careful about our attitude towards what's coming? Continuing on in scripture: **For what good is the day of the LORD to you?** Something personal. If we desire it, we may not understand how bad it's going to be. And God goes on and says, **It will be darkness, and not light**. Now, everyone is going to find it *very difficult*, and there will be great suffering *all around the world*, and in particular Israel. There's going to be great suffering within Israel. We will also be affected, to a degree, by this day of the LORD. Now, we're going to be affected during this 3½ year period on a physical level. So we

understand this "Year of Dedication," we have an opportunity to yield to God so that we enter the 3½ years with *strength, spiritual strength!* We're prepared *spiritually* because of humility, because of humility and repentance. This is why we are doing what we are doing because God has requested it of us, but also the fact that we desire (like Paul), we desire to repent, we desire to love the law, we desire to keep the law in spirit and truth. It's intent, that's what we want. But there will be times when we fail and we yield to our selfishness, just as Paul said. Mankind is going to be brought to the same. It's going to be a time of "darkness, and not light." So this is going to be a time of great distress.

And we, brethren, will be affected also on a physical level. We're not that naive to think that we can live in the world and not be affected by it. Now, many of the affects that are going to happen is about family, friends, and just seeing people suffer. Sometimes there are programs on TV where you see the suffering, and it's overwhelming, that I have to turn it off. And we would actually change the channel because we just simply cannot watch the suffering of mankind. It's so distressing because you realize mankind is doing it to himself because of the way he is, because of that selfishness, because of his nature.

Well, it's going to be a time where, brethren, this is going to be a common thing. Israel is going to suffer, and we will be affected to a degree one way or the other.

Verse 19—It will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him! This is another way of saying, "There's a man and he walks, he sees this lion and he runs from the lion, but guess what, he runs into a bear, which is even worse!" So this is really saying, "It gets worse and worse." This Day of the LORD, this period we're entering into, this last year of the 3½ years and the last day of the return of Jesus Christ, which we understand is going to happen on that Day of the Lord, the very last one in 2019, that things are going to get worse and worse from the beginning of this 1260 days and then the last 50 days. There's going to be a time of great distress.

Verse 19 continuing... so it's just getting worse and worse: **Or as though he went into the house, and he went in there for protection, leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him!** So there's no place to hide! They cannot avoid the suffering that is coming. Now we, brethren, are going to have to live in this. We're going to have to live *with* this environment, and that's why in *Part 1* and *Part 2* we're looking at what example that is that we have to be living. It's the way we live, and what we should be speaking based on what we have been given by God's Church, not adding to or taking away.

For mankind, it's just going to get worse and worse and worse. And we're going to have to live in this suffering. We're going to have to see the distress of others. We're going to see the distress of others and their suffering and they won't want to hear the solution because of pride. They'll take things into their own hands. They'll look for their own solutions. But we know that God has said that there is going to be a percentage that *will* listen, and that they will be able to be helped on a spiritual level. But for all of us, every single one of us, it is a time of distress *because* of what is happening to mankind and what mankind is bringing on himself.

Verse 20—Is not the day of the LORD darkness, it's not a time for rejoicing and happiness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it? So that's the question. Yes, it is. It's a time of great trouble, of great distress.

Verse 21—I (God) hate, I despise, or "reject and loath," your feast days, and I will not savor your sacred assemblies. Now, this is talking about the traditions of men. God *hates* what man has set up to worship Him because it's not the way that God said. So any time anybody worships God other than the way that God has said, through the Sabbath and Holy Days, God takes no heed to those things. God *despises* those things. God *hates* them. He loathes them and rejects them! Why? Because they are coming from within man's own thinking and it's been influenced and inspired by Satan, the adversary of God.

The tradition's of men, which is talking about all the things that *man* does to (so-call) honor or worship God, everything that he does, God rejects, loathes these things. And they can be things like Christmas, which we know has *nothing* to do with God at all, so-called "Good" Friday, Easter, Sunday worship, Halloween, Palm Sunday, all forms of worship that are not exactly as God has commanded. Now, there are many other things that man does. These things that he does to worship God are rejected by God because they're not what God has put down as a way to worship Him. So no one can have a relationship with God unless they start by keeping the Sabbath because the Sabbath was made for man. Well, during this period this is something that mankind will be given opportunity (some of them will be given the opportunity) to start to turn to God. So during this "darkness, where there is no light," and this is talking about on a physical level, well, what about on a spiritual level? It is a day of darkness because Satan and the demons will be running rampant and they'll be causing distress within Israel. But it is a time of light for some. On a spiritual level there is going to be some light, and that light, brethren, comes through the Church of God—PKG. *That* light starts with and through the two witnesses because God's word is light, because that's what it's talking about, something on a spiritual level. Sin is darkness; light is God's word and truth. So the truth is going to be spoken by the two witnesses, and others around supporting the two witnesses, they will also be living it; they'll be living light.

Well, God says, "all the ways of man will be brought low," they *will* be humbled. And only God's ways will be magnified, God's ways will be glorified. So when things go wrong, mankind will turn to god, their gods, they won't turn to Yahweh Elohim. Most of mankind will turn to *their* gods and they will keep *their* feasts and they'll go to their churches and they'll go to their masses and they'll go to Sundays and they'll worship god on Fridays, the god they know. But not the One True God, because the only way to come to know God is through a calling, and *that* will lead them to keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, which is putting God in all, which is fearing God. So to fear God is to love God, and to love God (which is to fear God) begins with keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

Any types of sacrifices that mankind does, which are done in selfishness, God will not accept. Because everything that mankind does, based on his own reasoning, is based on pride and selfishness, and God does not accept them.

Verse 22—Though you offer Me (God) burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, which is these protestant hymns and songs that they say they're worshipping God and "Alleluia" and all these things. God says, "Take it all away from Me; it's a stench!" **For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.** So the offerings that they put up, God says that He *hates* those things. They put up offerings in the sense of they give up some time to (so-called) "worship" God on Christmas and Easter and things like that. Well, God doesn't regard those things. And things that they do in the way of giving offerings to their churches and making buildings and all these things, God says He has no pleasure in them at all. And their songs? God says He doesn't hear the melody, He doesn't hear what they sing, the words of praise that they give, because it's all done from the natural carnal mind, "the wretched man that they are," (the wretched people that they are, which is what we were like), because they haven't been called at this time to honor God. Well, there's coming a time where some will be called to honor God.

Verse 24—But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Let every decision be based on God's word. Worship God exactly as He states and *not* what comes from our *own human reasoning* or our own thinking. So that's what God is asking. He's saying to Israel, "Turn to Me. Humble yourselves. Repent and turn to Me and worship Me the way that I have said." But mankind has turned and worshipped *their* gods the way that *they* want to. Well, God is saying He's going to humble mankind to have them repent and change.

Isaiah 5:1—Now let me sing to my Well-beloved, a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard, which is Israel. So this is God saying that He is talking about Israel. **My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He,** now it's referring to God, **dug it up and cleaned out its stones,** which is from the ground, **and planted it with the choicest vine.** So here we have God working in Israel. **He,** symbolically talking about God, **He built a tower in the midst, and also made a winepress in it,** so He's prepared everything. **So He expected *it* to bring forth good grapes.** Now, this is saying there's a vinedresser, he's planted vines in an area, and he expected, this is what he thought he was going to get, good grapes. It's what is expected. Well, this is referring to God working in Israel, and because of God working in Israel, providing the laws and providing direction, leadership, He expected an outcome, which was good grapes, which is some fruit that was going to be based on obedience, **but,** so now this is the opposite, **it brought forth wild grapes.** So now this vineyard has brought out these wild grapes. "Israel brought forth wild grapes," not what God expected.

Now, this is like a calling. When a person is called the expectation is that they would follow and yield and continue to yield to God and not lift themselves up and rebel against God's instructions. Well, it's exactly the same with mankind. Coming forward, God expects that mankind (a percentage) will turn, humble themselves, and yield to Him. But the majority will not, which is that "wild grapes." They're not going to yield. Mankind, of and by himself, left to himself will always yield "wild grapes."

Verse 3—And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, which is talking about Israel, **judge,** now, this "judge" is "to pronounce sentence, make a decision for or against," **judge please, between Me and My vineyard.** Make a decision on who did the right thing, God or Israel. So God is saying, "Okay, Israel, make a decision. It's either you're going to be *for* God or *against* God. Make a decision."

God continues here...**verse 4—What more could have been done to My vineyard,** "What more could God have done for Israel," **that I have not done in it?** So God has done everything for Israel, given it the opportunity. What more could God do for His people than to love them, nurture and protect them, and provide for them? **Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?** Which is the question. Why? After all that God has done they still rebelled and sinned. So this brethren, is where we stand. God is going to intervene into man's life to save him because man is going to bring tribulation upon himself because of his own selfishness, because of his wildness (the wild grapes). Well, God expects that there is going to be a percentage that is going to turn to Him and yield "good grapes," because Israel *is* God's vineyard. That's where God is working. God is going to work in Israel.

Now, we understand the Church of God—PKG is spiritual Israel today because they have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in them. Israel, the nations of Israel and those living in those nations of Israel, will be given this opportunity to humble themselves, to repent and change to seek God. And that's what opportunity is going to be given to them in man's last days.

Verse 5—And now, because of this rebellion, **please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard,** which is modern day Israel today. So what is God going to do with this vineyard? So if you look at it on a physical level, you can see now there is a beautiful piece of land. It's been cleaned out. There have been good vines dressed in it. It should be bearing good fruit. It's got a nice tower. It's got a winepress; everything is ready. The expectation was that it was going to produce good grapes, a bumper crop. Well, it didn't. So what is going to happen? What would a person do with it?

Well, God is now using this physical analogy to let us know what is going to happen because of the actions and the thinking of Israel. So what will God do to modern day nations of Israel? ...which is just ahead of us, what God is going to do. Looking at it on a physical level put pointing to something spiritual. God says, **I will take away its hedges;** now, "it's hedges" are "protection which is put around it." Because normally what would happen is they put up a hedge around it so the wind couldn't blow on to the grapevines and burn them. Well, God says He's going to "take away it's hedge," the protection is going to be removed. Israel, because the blessings of Abraham have been removed already, protection is going to be removed by God from Israel. So this removal will cause great distress. Because God's in charge of timing and when things would happen based on God's plan. So what will happen to Israel? ...**it shall be burned,** which is, **to break down its walls,** what it trust in, it's self-protection, it's military might. Because Israel, it's hedge, the protection is going to be taken away and it is going to fall. So

what Israel trusts in, which is its strength and its might, its protection, its *self*-protection, its military might will fall, **and it (Israel) shall be trampled down**. Israel shall be humbled. Israel *will* be humbled.

And that's what we're going to see, brethren, during this next period that we're going to enter, that 3½ years where Israel will be trampled down; its walls will be broken down, its strength, its protection, its *self*-protection will be removed.

Verse 6—I shall lay it waste; and it shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. Israel will be left to its own thinking and God will no longer intervene to protect it. Now, we understand that God will intervene through Jesus Christ on the very last day, which is that day of Pentecost. As we enter the day of Pentecost, God will intervene directly to save mankind from himself. Because if He didn't, mankind would destroy himself utterly.

I will also command the clouds that they rain no more on it. So food will no longer be available due to the weather conditions. Now, we understand, brethren, that God will provide for us. We have nothing to fear. And by providing for us doesn't mean to say we're going to get three meals a day. Because as Israel is going to be humbled, because of their disobedience to the laws of God, and therefore, by their disobedience it brings curses. But during this time, this intensity will increase. The intensity of the Thunders and the intensity of the effects of the Trumpets will take place and there will be no food. And we understand, also, that the two witnesses will be making statements that will lead to effects in various areas on various locations.

Verse 7—For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice... God looked to see if anyone was referring to God's word on any matters so that justice was provided. Because they were using their own logic, their own human reasoning, and they weren't using God's word as their guide. Justice *is* a way of thinking. So if we want to live justice, we have to be looking to God's word as our guide. **...but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry.** So rather than turning to God and using God's word the effects were that they were now oppressing the people and the people were crying out because of the distress, because of the oppression of the judges, because they were making judgments based on human reasoning. So because of this, because of man's rejection of God's word, because of his disobedience, problems, woes, and distress are coming on Israel.

Now, we have evidence of where mankind is now rejecting God's word, and it's everywhere! Every nation of Israel rejects God as their guide. God's word is not used. No one refers to God's word.

It's interesting looking at different court cases where I have been called up in times past to give evidence. I have been asked to attend jury duties, and although I filled out forms I've still had to go and attend and sit in a room with 3 or 4 hundred people and then it got whittled down, and I was hoping that I'd get balloted out before I actually had to get down to the final group. Well, I sat there for most of the day and it slowly whittled down and eventually I think I got down to the last thirty people, and then I had to go and sit in front of particular people and they would ask various questions. And the

judge would ask direct questions. In the end, I actually had to go right through the whole process. I learned a lot because of it. But I had to sit in front of the judge and then the judge asked a direct question about why it was that I couldn't be a juror, and I explained to him the reason why. And he said, "That's fine," and let me go.

So I realized at that time that the judge doesn't use God's word as his guide in dishing out the sentencing; they're all manmade rules, manmade principles that they apply. And they don't look for justice, but it's about oppression. They oppress the people. It's not about justice, looking to God's word, "from the mouth of two or three witnesses," not making sure they've got all the facts. Now days, the justice system is evil. It's actually evil, because you see people that rape people, people that murder people, people get up and the defense gives them an excuse, "Well, he was psychotic," or "He was on ice," or "He was on drugs, and that's why he stabbed the person 65 times ...and that's why he strangled the person." "That's why he burned them and put them into a car." "That's why he murdered his children." And they get five years, ten years, maybe twenty. Unbelievable sentencing for absolute violence because people justify sin, people justify violence. "Oh, I did it because I was smacked when I was a child." "Oh, well, you'll only get seven years for murdering your parents." It's just *incredible injustice!*

So this oppression, this oppression that mankind has brought upon himself because of his rejecting God's word as his guide, he's going to pay a price for it because God's word *will be* man's guide in the Millennium. But to get to that point we have to go through this period of the humbling of mankind, *all* for the *benefit* of mankind. Mankind can't see it because of the natural carnal mind, but this is God *loving* mankind. By allowing man to go through what he's going to go through and then God intervening because He loves mankind, to intervene to save mankind from himself on that last day. And there's going to be people that aren't going to *want* the intervention of God, because they're happy the way they are.

It's like now, when you look at today's society, that there are many younger people today that if you were to turn up and say, "Look, God is going to intervene and take away your wild drinking, your marijuana, your drugs, your cigarettes, your party life, your immortality, your fornication, all the different lifestyles that you lead. They're all going to be taken away from you." There's going to be hatred for the fact that that's going to be taken away. "What do you mean I can't go out and plaster myself and get dead drunk three or four o'clock in the morning? What do you mean I can't get into brawls and fight? What do you mean I can't live with a woman," or a woman living with a man, "without marriage?" "What do you mean? What do you mean we can't have premarital sex? What do you mean I can't have marijuana and drugs? What's wrong with you people?"

These are the things that are going to be taken away, but there's going to be a lot of people, a lot of *younger* people that are going to despise this being taken away from them, and they're not going to want it taken away from them. So the *only way* to change the thinking of mankind, *all* of mankind, is to

humble mankind, because it's the *best thing for them*. Because without humility the only thing that exists is selfishness and pride.

Verse 8—Woe to those who join house to house; They add field to field, till *there is* no place where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land! This is about having environments where there can be no peace as a family. If you look at many of the housings in Victoria, Australia, in Melbourne, they buy land in a city area (which can be forty kilometers out of the city but it's still in the city it's so massively spread out), well, when they buy the land, to get the most out of the land, they'll run the gutters within about two feet of each other. So there's a fence through the middle and its house connected to house because of the size of the land is so small, and they build these houses next to each other. You can actually walk across the roofs from one house to the other for whole suburbs. Areas of land where maybe you'd put in eighty houses one time, now they can get 700 houses into those areas. There's only enough parking at the front of the street for one car to go into the garage and then one in the driveway. Well, there is only a narrow street in the front of the house where it's only, basically, one way traffic; it is so jammed house on house.

Well, this is not about necessarily the problem of house on house. This is about relationships. This is about this, "that they may dwell alone in the midst of the land." This is about having family in an environment where family can function—not so that somebody would turn on a TV or play the music, or even have a discussion and the person next door is affected by it. Well, that's not love and concern for the welfare of somebody else. So everyone is just crowded in on each other. This is not the way that God designed family to live, just everyone on top of each other. This is about creating an environment where family could live and dwell in unity and safety and in peace, and that any noise created within a family environment wouldn't affect the neighbor. Therefore, house should not be *on house*.

Houses joined together now is about greed. This is *all* about greed, *nothing* else, just simply greed! It's not what the people want, but it's the way society has been built, and that's what they can afford. So greed drives *everything!*

So they're adding "field to field." One farmer buys out another farmer. Families are no longer living in environments where they could live a happy, fulfilled life on the land, and they could no longer produce. And when they go into the city, because of greed of the landlords, or the greed of those that own the land, it's "house on house." It *is* about where we dwell in peace and family being able to live together.

Now, it is all right to live in a city environment, but there has to be certain conditions that should be met. So today's world is one of greed. They have joined them sideways and they've joined them *upwards*. They go *upwards* as well. There is no place where anyone could have peace of mind. Because this is what it's about. It's about family and peace of mind. People should not have to listen to someone else's music right next door to their house. And this is something that is going to have to change, where everything that is going to be built is going to be built with considering the consideration of others.

Now, there are certain times when multiple story buildings would be all right, depending on how they're built and why they're built, and what their use is. So it all goes back to the intent and the consideration of the welfare of the people *and others*, so that one person does not affect others. So we have to have this opportunity to be able to dwell alone, at sometimes to be able to stop and think, to meditate, to be able to pray, to be able to consider God's word in peace and quiet. But "house on house" does *not* provide that peace and quiet or peace of mind. It doesn't create it. In actual fact, it will cause nothing but distress, and in the end, anxiety. That's what actually comes out of people being crowded in on each other.

Verse 9—In my (Isaiah's) hearing the LORD of hosts *said*, Truly, My houses shall be desolate, great and beautiful ones, without inhabitation. So there's going to be many of houses that are not going to have people living in them because of death and destruction.

Verse 10—For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, so this is talking about a small amount, **and a homer,** which is 10% of a bath, **of seed shall yield one ephah,** which is 10% of a homer. So this is talking about a percentage; 10%, in other words, what it's implying.

Verse 11—Woe to those who rise early in the morning, *that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!* So it's woe to anybody (distress is coming to anybody) who turns to alcohol and is dependent on alcohol to live their life. Which is talking about this reliance, turning to something else.

Now, most people turn to intoxicating drink, generally they believe they're going to solve a problem. They can't live with who they are, who they really are in their own thinking. So most people drink too much for a reason. There is a reason behind, there's a motive or an intent behind why. Now, they may not know it themselves, but they get caught up in this drinking, which is about a dependency. They're depending on this nullifying of the thinking, or they become more self-confident because of the thinking. Well, God says that this is not the way to live life, and it is going to be a problem to those that rely on alcohol or are dependent on it, because things are coming where this will be taken away from them. So this over-drinking, this over-reliance on alcohol is a problem within a person's thinking.

Verse 12—The harp and the strings, the tambourine and the flute, and the wine are in their feasts, so they're just living life; just drunken parties, like New Year's Eve, when it's not really a new year at all. It's a new year as far as the Roman calendar, but it's not God's new year. So these drunken parties, these people that rely on music and wine and lots of drinking and partying, this is all going to stop.

But they do not regard the work of the LORD, nor consider the operation of His hands. They don't think about what God has designed and created. They don't consider God's way of life. This is just party, party, party. And this is going to be taken away from them and people are not all going to be happy about it being taken away.

God is not in their thoughts. They don't consider God's word. They don't *care* about God's word. Well, when they are brought to a point of distress, people will start to think about survival. "How will I survive? How will I even get something to eat tomorrow, yet alone something to drink?" So people will be brought to a level of fear by being humbled. And it's only in this state of mind that people will begin to consider there's another way to live.

Verse 13—Therefore, my people have gone into captivity, and this is talking about Israel, physical captivity, that they "have gone," which is something in the past, "into captivity." We understand, brethren, that physical Israel is in spiritual captivity, under the bondage of selfishness and Satan. So they're in this captivity. Well, we understand they're in this spiritual captivity, **because they have no knowledge.** They have no knowledge of God's way of life. **Their honorable (rich) men are famished,** which is "they're in famine," **and their (Israel's) multitude dried up with thirst.** So this is about this humbling that's going to take place. There is famine coming, brethren. On a physical level there is going to be droughts and famines throughout the lands of Israel. And they're going to be brought to humility. They are in spiritual famine at the moment, because they don't know, and they have a spiritual thirst, only they don't know it. Well, God says that He's going to change this environment.

Verse 14—Therefore, sheol (the grave) has enlarged itself and opened its mouth beyond measure, so this all points to death. "The grave has enlarged its mouth," it's opened it wide, "beyond measure." Because of the famine, because of the thirst, because of these physical things, people will die. So this statement points to death. *Many* are going to die. Death is going to be surrounding us in all levels. **Their glory and their multitude and their pomp, and he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.** So it doesn't matter who they are, it's anyone who thinks they're important, anyone that thinks they are "of importance," and all of those that are rejoicing now without concern for God's way of life, "shall descend into it." They're going to go into the grave. They're going to die.

People shall be brought down, each man shall be humbled; the eyes of the lofty (the proud) shall be humbled. And that's what we face, brethren. What we face is the humbling of mankind. "*Each man shall be humbled.*" "People shall be brought down," and anyone that has pride or thinks they're of any value, who has lifted up self, think they are self-important, "shall be humbled." They will start to "see" themselves once they are humbled because this is the nature of mankind. Mankind thinks he's important. Even the lowly think they're important! But God says he's going to humble all mankind, and it's going to be humbled to the point where death will be a common factor within the thinking of man and they're going to see and witness it. And when you start to see a lot of death and destruction around, you begin to fear for self. That's just *natural*. That's the way that man is.

It's interesting when you look at the Ebola cases through different parts of Africa, and there was one particular story (which I'm sure you've read), where one person had Ebola, was taken into a medical area, and then died over a number of days, and those people that handled the lady actually had Ebola because of the contact. There was one young girl, I remember seeing on the news, where no one would go near her because they were scared that she actually had Ebola because her mother had died and she

was left by herself. And it was very distressing to watch her, because everywhere she went people stayed a certain distance, and therefore, nobody wanted anything to do with her because of the fear that people had of catching a disease from somebody else.

Well, when disease comes into the modern day nations of Israel (which we understand epidemics are coming, which is part of the Thunders that are going to be magnified), that people *are* going to be humbled, people are going to be brought down. And when you see family dying and those around you dying, what do you do? When you look at what happened in times past, that they used to, during the bubonic plague, they would actually just take the body and put it out on the street and they had a horse and cart go along and people would come along and pick up the bodies and just throw them all in a big pile and take them away to burn them or to bury them because people want to get rid of the disease out of their home.

So when a person is faced with death and destruction all around them, there is a fear that enters the mind, and that fear is one of *self*-protection. It's natural. It's the way that man thinks. And people will lock themselves indoors, people will not hand out food, people will guard themselves or guard their family and seek to protect self. Well, this is the beginning process of humbling mankind. And once this all starts, God says He is going to allow it to happen for the point of bringing mankind's thinking to be able to turn to Him.

Why is it that God must humble mankind? The truth is mankind does *not want God!* That's mankind's thinking. Mankind does not want God. Mankind will not listen to God *unless* he is humbled in a state of thinking, or he is in a humble state of mind. He has to be in this state of mind where he's no longer able to protect or rely on himself. He is now *powerless* within his own thinking. He can't save himself! Well, when he gets to that point He then has the opportunity and the potential to listen to God.

Mankind by nature does not desire to listen to God *or* obey God. That's his natural carnal mind of selfishness, which is the one that Paul was talking about, that by nature people don't want to listen to God, because of selfishness.

There is a warning for mankind, that if he chooses to disobey God, he will die. So the warning for mankind is that if he continues to choose to disobey God, he is going to be humbled and he is going to die. God has kept His word and done things to Israel as He has said. There are blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. We are still under the same principle of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience today. And that's something that man is going to be humbled to come to see.

Leviticus 26:14. Now, we've been through the blessings, which is the rewards for obedience, which are laws that are in motion. And they are laws that just take place. God is all mighty and all powerful that He has set up these laws, that they're automatic. It's like if you put your hand on the fire, you'll get burned. And if you don't put your hand on the fire, you won't get burned. It's a law. Put your hand on the fire, you'll suffer pain. Well, that's what disobedience brings, the suffering.

Leviticus 26:14—Now, this is the opposite to the blessings. **But**, which is the opposite, **if you do not obey Me** (Yahweh Elohim), **and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise** (reject) **My statutes, or if your life abhors My judgments...** Now this "your life," in a figurative sense, "bodily or mentally don't live it." So this is a choice, "if your life," which is really about the thinking, it's the way you think, it's pointing to something, "If you choose in your thinking not to obey Me, or if you choose by your actions as well, and you abhor My judgments," which is "to loathe or reject what God is saying," **so that you do not perform**, which is you're not a doer of the word, **and if you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant** (break My agreement), **(verse 16) I also will do this to you**, so now there's the penalty. We understand, brethren, that disobedience brings a penalty, and all of it starts in the mind. It's the effect in the thinking and the consequence of that effect in the thinking brings forth something else. What? An action. If mankind will not listen and obey, there *will be consequences*. Well, this principle still applies right up through to the very end of man's self-rule (6,000 years), but also at the very end of mankind at 7,100 years. The blessings and cursing principles, the laws will apply.

Now, what does God say He will do for anybody that chooses mentally and then physically not to obey God in spirit and in truth? **I will even appoint terror over you**, so fear in our thinking, no sense of security. War, and death, and ruin is coming. This is on mankind. Now, in the Millennium, if you disobey God, God will "appoint terror over you." There is going to be a fear within the thinking. There's no sense of security. There is no *peace of mind* within a mind, and there is a ruin coming, because anybody that refuses to obey God, God says they're going to pay a penalty. What is that penalty? If we look back at what it says about those that don't go up to worship God after so many years, God says there is a penalty. That penalty is death. They're going to have famine. There's going to be droughts because of this disobedience because it's a *law* that God has put in motion.

So God says here what is coming on mankind, that He is going to "appoint terror over them," **wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart**. So there's great sickness and distress coming, and sickness and disease is coming, and it's going to "cause sorrow in the mind," which is this thinking, this "consuming of the thoughts," because all a person can do is think about self, "How will I survive?" "What will I eat?" "How will my family survive?" And most of it is there. I'm highlighting, "I", "I", "I", because most of it is selfish thinking. Rather than turning and saying, "I should repent! I should seek God! God is all mighty, all powerful, and I am being humbled for a reason. I need to turn to God, to seek God. How do I learn to obey God? How do I learn to hate evil?"

Continuing on, **verse 16...And you shall sow your seed in vain, and your enemies shall eat it**. In other words, whatever they do, it's going to not produce anything that is going to be sustaining them, and that others will consume it.

Verse 17—I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Now, there's many a ways that a nation can fall. It can fall physically through military. It can fall financially. And as we know, the United States of America has already *fallen financially*. It's actually fallen! Just the

outcome, or the effect of the fall hasn't been manifest yet because of all the manipulation and cover-up and of the trillions of dollars of debt. Well, Australia, and all these other nations are exactly the same. They have already fallen. They have already been defeated. Their enemies already own them. They own a large percentage of them because of the debt that is owed.

Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. So this is that fear of mind. This is working up a state of mind, a state of thinking. This is not understanding reality.

Verse 18—And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. Now, this is because God loves mankind and desires them to repent and turn to Him.

Verse 19—I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. So in other words, there is going to be drought. There is not going to be any rain. That as the Thunders increase we're going to see change within mankind's thinking. And it, all these things, we can look at them and think, "Oh, this is difficult! This is hard!" But it's all done out of love and concern. God says that He will magnify the Thunders to bring mankind to humility. "All Seven Thunders will increase in intensity as this great end-time storm approaches, but one type of thunder will be more pronounced than another from one great labor pain to another." Talking about like a woman in labor, that as she becomes closer to giving birth, the pain, the sharpness of the pain increases and gets closer and closer together. "Each type of thunder will continue to rumble, but at certain times one will be much louder than all the others. Each time that one of the Seven Thunders is much louder (far more pronounced) than all the others is a time that fulfills the prophetic type of a woman in labor pain." So we will see various things that are pronounced.

Now, we've seen aspects of this. From 2008 we have seen various times where earthquakes increased and there was a lot of earthquakes. Then another Thunder increased. Then another. We saw different things. Then we saw disease increase, while the earthquakes quietened off a little bit. So the same thing applies going forward. We're going to see a variety and a mixture of the Thunders. And we understand, brethren, that there are two Thunders that will be quite pronounced near the end, and that is, "The revelation of God's two witnesses," and the other one, "The growing revelation of God," the true God, Yahweh Elohim, which will be done mainly through the two witnesses. As God brings things into effect people will turn to come to "see" whom God is, or begin to "see" who God is.

"The Seven Thunders have much to do with **how** God will reveal His two witnesses. These thunders serve as a prelude to the final tribulation and the greater manifestation of the two witnesses. The revelation of the Seven Thunders has everything to do with the revelation of God's end-time witness about man and God's revelation of His two witnesses to man!"

So this is about a time when the Seven Thunders increase in magnitude, one higher than the other. Well, it begins to reveal God's witness to mankind. What is God's witness to mankind? That man is the same. Man is exactly the same. No matter what era, no matter what time or what generation, mankind has the same thinking—selfishness. Mankind by nature *does not want God* in their life. That's mankind. That is the witness *of* mankind that he hasn't changed and he's not going to.

Now, God is going to intervene to reveal who *He* is to mankind, so that then man can learn, once humbled, can return and repent and seek God. "Sadly, most **choose** to ignore what they hear." That is just the way it is. We understand that there's only going to be a small percentage that actually turn and listen to God and God's two witnesses.

"The Church has long understood that God's purpose in the Thunders and Trumpets of Revelation is similar to what Elijah desired to see in his day, that the people would indeed be moved and turn to God."

God's judgment upon His people, Israel, given through Jeremiah was largely about an end-time, or the end-time. The consequences of that judgment are severe and far greater than *most can grasp!* And this is one of the points, brethren, we might think that we're ready in a way for what is ahead. The truth is we're not. We have to now work at getting ready on a spiritual level, and that's why this "Year of Dedication" is to get ready on a spiritual level so that we are strong and we can stand during the tribulation of mankind. But to think that we're strong on a physical level, we should not be thinking we are, because the reality is this is going to be much worse, *far greater*, the distress, the fear, *than any of us* can even begin to imagine. Now, the only advantage we have (which is a *massive* advantage) is that God is with us and that we are *aware* of why and what is happening. We're aware of why. The "why" is mankind has to be humbled. Because the only way a person will seek God is through being humbled, then they can repent and change. So that's "why," because of mankind's sin and his thinking God is going to allow man to affect himself because of the laws that God has set-up so that great distress is going to come on mankind. God will begin to work through increasing the Thunders on mankind so that mankind can repent! So the "why" of the tribulation is about *humility*, for the purpose of *repentance*, so we will understand why this is happening to mankind. Will it make it easier? To a degree it will, as long as we stay closer to God than we ever have in our whole life.

Now, as we see these things happen our boldness and confidence in God, our faith will be increased, so that we will be able to walk in boldness and trust in God and know that God will deliver us on a spiritual level. Whether or not we are delivered on a physical level is, "God's will be done in our life."

It is only through much suffering that the nations of Israel can be humbled and brought to repentance. Though the nations of Israel have suffered through various wars and natural disasters, they have never experienced it to the magnitude of what is now rapidly approaching. So mankind has had world wars, and they've had various wars and there's been death and disease and things like Ebola. Well, that is great distress. That is *nothing* compared to what is coming on Israel because of what is left at the end of it all.

Humility does not long endure *in the thinking of mankind*. All of the posts that have been written and all of the warnings that have been written have been ignored by mankind. The witness is, the *evidence* is that mankind will not listen, will not listen to God. Mankind does not want God in their life. *That* is natural. The only time that mankind wants God in their life is when something is affecting them personally. So what is going to happen is going to be that mankind will then start to look, to desire to save *himself*. He will then look to something *greater* than himself. His self-reliance will go. He won't have the protection. He will become *in fear*. He will become *fearful for self*. Now there is a time coming mankind will now enter a time of choice. This is what is approaching, *a time of choice*.

Matthew 21:28—Now, this is the parable of the two sons, because this is about choices, really, repentance and choices. **But what do you think? ...which is a question. A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go, work today in my vineyard.**

Then, **verse 29**— **He answered and said, I will not, but afterwards he regretted it and went.** So this is somebody who at the beginning there is a resistance, "I'm not doing what I'm told. I'm not doing what I'm asked to do." But later on he thinks about it, then he regrets it. He repents, basically, and changes his mind (because that's what repentance is, *a change of mind*, a change of thinking) and he went. So he's been asked to do something, rebelled against it, arrogant attitude, stubborn attitude, "I'm not doing that!" Later on he thinks about it and says, "Oh, I'll do it." He yields or makes a choice to yield, which is to repent and go and do it.

Verse 30—**Then he came to the second (the second son) and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, but he did not go.** So here it is, somebody that is saying, "Oh, yes." So to the face he turns around and says, "Yes." So he acts out a role, really, he says he'll do it, but he doesn't go. So he's actually lied. And this is all about pride. So the first one shows there *was* pride, then there was humility, repentance. Here it is, somebody that is acting out a role in pride and he doesn't repent, he doesn't change. He actually lies, lives out his pride. So he's saying one thing and doing another. He's a hypocrite.

Verse 31—**Which of the two did the will of his father? ...which is the question. They said to Him, The first. Jesus said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors, which were considered someone that is actually evil or doing wrong, and harlots enter the Kingdom of God before you.** Now, this is about repentance. Somebody that could be a sinner (which we know everyone is a sinner), the world and the various degrees of evil, and we've looked at this before, about not being judges, not being bias toward people, not having a prejudice towards people. Because "tax collectors" and "harlots" are coming to the Church of God—PKG. They are coming because they are repenting. They're like the first one who are stubborn and proud and in sin, but they then repent, they change their mind. They moved from a point of pride to humility. Well, they're coming, and they're coming because they then will be able to enter the Kingdom of God in the future. And they're going to go in before somebody else who is saying one thing, acting out a religious role, thinking they're righteous, *but remains in their pride*.

So that's why we need to be very careful about the decisions we make. We are not to be a respecter of persons, as we've covered in a previous sermon.

For John came to you in the way of righteousness, which is about humility, humble obedience to the commandments, and you did not believe him, so they didn't yield to God's word, **but tax collectors and harlots believed him.** They repented of their ways and changed, **and when you saw it, you did not afterwards relent** (or repent or change) **and believe him.** They didn't change the way they were. They didn't *regret* the way they were. They didn't repent.

So brethren, we can see this. This is the future for mankind. Those in pride are going to be humbled. Many will die *in their pride*. Many will die in their pride. Others are going to repent and they're going to turn to God and they're going to turn to the Church of God—PKG. They're going to listen to the two witnesses because God is calling them to it. They're going to humble themselves and turn to obedience to God.

Verse 33—Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. So this is similar to the parable we looked at before, about God saying that Israel was the vineyard. Well, here it is where they've also dug it around. They've built a tower. So it's all been built. It's all good. It should yield good fruit. It should yield good grapes. **And he leased it to vinedresser and went to a far country.** Now, we understand this is actually pointing to God and Jesus Christ, but we can learn much from this about the way people are, the way people choose to live. Because choices have to be made in life. During this next 3½ years that we're going to face, choices are going to have to be made. Like the first parable, there is going to be people that are going to stay in their pride and die in their pride. Others that are considered "sinners," which we all are, are going to repent and turn to God and *yield* to God. They're going to be called to repentance following humility.

Verse 34—Now when vintage-time drew near, which is talking about the harvesting of the grapes, **he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.** So there was a portion that was due to them, the person who owned the vineyard. **And the vinedressers,** which are the workers, **took his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned another.** So this is about rejecting the authority. So they're having somebody come and saying, "Well, it's time to do the harvest." The vinedressers, the people that have hired the vineyard and are working it, they kill them. They don't want to hear. They want everything for themselves.

Verse 36—Again he sent other servants, which is a "type" of prophets of God, **more than the first, and they did likewise to them.** So God has continually sent witnesses (or prophets) to mankind, but what have they done? Exactly the same as what's been outlined in this parable. God's servants have been beaten, they have been killed, and they have been stoned because mankind does not want to hear God's word. They don't want God in their life.

Well, God, then, of course, sent His own Son. **Verse 37—Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, They will respect my son.** So this is God sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and surely, if mankind was to hear the thinking of God through Jesus Christ then man would repent and change. Surely! The witness is, the evidence is man does not want God and mankind doesn't listen to God.

Verse 38—But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said amongst themselves, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance! So this is about the getting for self, the looking after the self, to make sure the self is looked after, which is to gain for self, to get.

Verse 39—And they caught him (the son) and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*. This is pointing to what happened to Jesus Christ, that He was killed *because* of who He was.

Verse 40—Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers? So what do we expect is going to happen? They said to Him, He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons. This is about yielding fruit.

So there's two parts here. It's about choices. The vinedressers, those that were to *care for* and to look after the vineyard, they had a choice. They could have obeyed. They could have harvested and given a percentage to the owner, but they didn't, they choose to try to take for self. Mankind faces the same thing. They are going to have to make a choice. What will they do? Well, the "owner of the vineyard" is going to intervene into the lives of "the vinedressers."

Jesus said to them, Did you ever read the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruit of it. So this is talking about something that is spiritual. He was going to give it to others on a spiritual level. So whether it was a Jew or a gentile, made no difference, because it was going to be given to a nation (which is spiritual, the Church of God) that would bear fruit (which would bear spiritual fruit).

Verse 44—And whoever falls on this stone, talking about Christ, will be broken; but on ever whom it falls, it will grind him to powder, which is total destruction. So, "whoever falls on this Stone," talking about Christ, it's about having a broken spirit and an attitude which is one of repentance. And through that they could have life and be saved. "But on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder," so somebody that is *not* repentant, that "doesn't fall on the stone," but "the stone falls on them," they'll be destroyed because of their pride, because they don't have this broken spirit. So there's a choice. It's either humility or pride.

Verse 45—Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parable, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet. So what we see, brethren, it's all boiling down to the way we live. During this coming tribulation it's about *how* we live. It's like the vinedressers. It's about *how* they lived, what choices they made. It's how we live towards others, our attitude, our boldness in faith. We are to guard our attitudes towards others called into the Body of Christ. It's so important that we are on guard at all times about every situation.

So during this tribulation that is coming, choices have to be made by mankind. People are either going to yield to God who is the "vineyard owner" or they're not. And they're either going to treat God's

servants (the people that He sends to them), they're going to either yield to them or they're going to not yield. And that's what's going to happen during this period. Mankind has choices to make.

We are now entering this time where mankind is going to suffer and is going to be in great fear. The most important thing that we have to do is walk in boldness and faith on a spiritual level, that we know what is happening and why.

So, brethren, we'll end *Part 3* here and we'll finish off next week with *Part 4*. □