

I would like to say, "Welcome," to everyone today on God's Sabbath.

Brethren, we've been looking at what God is creating and how He is creating His family, Elohim. And we've looked in past sermons how God uses the analogy of a farm, of a vineyard, and of a garden, and so we will continue today in the series *God's Garden*, and this will be *Part 4*.

We'll pick up the story in Luke 24, if you want to be turning there, verse 13, and we will refresh some of where we left off in the last sermon. Luke 24:13 is where we will start today. And we saw in the last sermon the account where Mary... It's where Jesus revealed Himself to her and He let her see who He was. And Jesus told Mary not to touch Him, that He was going to ascend to the Father to fulfill the scriptures concerning the wave offering, and then He would return back to this earth, as we know.

We know that He fulfilled this by ascending to His Father, and He fulfilled the scriptures about the wave offering, and now we know that He has returned back to this earth, at that time. And now He is sitting at the right hand of God, as we know.

Luke 24:13 it tells us, **Behold, that same day two of them went to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.** That's about seven miles. **And they talked together about things that had happened.** So this is what they were discussing and this is what the conversation was as they were walking along. And let's notice what took place: **And it came to pass, that, while they were talking and reasoning, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes—let's notice—their minds (better said) were held fast so that they were not able to know Him.** So we can see that they were not able to recognize Jesus for who He was. And it's a prime example for you and me, because we cannot see and understand until God opens this mind, this human mind. And that's what is taking place here. They were not allowed to see who Jesus Christ was at that specific time.

And He said to them, What kind of conversation are you having with one another, as you are walking and are sad? So we can see that Jesus saw that they were sad for some reason. He really knew the reason why they were sad. Jesus is telling them, "I see you are sad, and what are you talking about? What are you discussing among yourself?" **And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered and said to Him, Are You alone a stranger in Jerusalem, in other words, "Where have you been? Don't you know what has took place?" Are you the only one in Jerusalem that does not know what is taking place, what has taken place? Haven't you known the things that have come to pass in these days?**

And Jesus said to them, What things? So He's asking them questions. **And they said to Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and the word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests...** And we know that the chief priests were the government during that time. They were the government that decided all the laws at that time, and also we understand that they were

under the Roman rule. ...and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have impaled Him upon a stake (impaled upon a pole). But we trusted, in other words they thought that it was Jesus that would have redeem Israel. So they thought that it was at that time that this would be done. And it says, **We trusted**, in other words, "We thought that He was who He said He was." That's what they believed. They believed that He was the one, but they came and impaled Him upon that stake (upon that pole), and He died. So that's what the conversation was, and they're saying, **and beside all this, today is the third day**, three days since these things were done. So we can see what's recorded and what had taken place.

And certain women also of our company made us astonished, in other words, "It was hard to believe what they came and told us." **And when they didn't find His body, they came and they said that they had seen a vision of angels**. So this is how they are describing these events to Jesus. "And they said that He was alive." So they're telling Jesus at this time what happened and what they knew at this time had taken place. **And certain women of them who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see**. In other words, Jesus Christ was not there. They still did not recognize who Jesus was at this time. **And He said to them, O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Shouldn't Christ have suffered these things, and then entered into His glory?** So He's asking them these questions.

Jesus said, **Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them all the scriptures of the things concerning Himself**. So He's explaining the scriptures to these at this time. And Jesus Christ told them about all the things that had been fulfilled, and He told them about what He had went through and He gave the accounts of things that were fulfilled about the different prophecies written in this book, God's book.

As they drew near to the village, where they went: He made out as though He would have gone further. But they restrained Him, saying, Stay with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is nearly over. So we can see the timeframe. And if we remember, it was the third day. **And He went in to stay with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meal with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them**. And something took place at that time. **And their eyes were opened**—better said, "Their minds were open at this time," so that they could see even more. And they were now sitting down for a meal with Jesus Christ. And after the prayer that Jesus did, let's notice what happened: Jesus gave a prayer, and it says He blessed it, **and then they knew who He was** at that time. And let's notice what took place next, because Jesus Christ is really going to teach them, as we will see, who He really is and what had actually taken place; **and He vanished out of their sight**. He disappeared. And He let them see who He was, that He was who He said He was, and He just disappeared out of their sight.

So what Jesus Christ is doing, He is *really* letting them know who He really is by what He will be doing for the next forty-days. And this had to give them a lot of strength, beginning at this time. They had to have a lot of strength because of what they would face after Jesus Christ ascended back to the Father. But can you put yourself in this situation and seeing this take place? Can you imagine sitting in that room and just

to see Him disappear? That was the first thing He did, just disappeared. I think it would make an impression even on those of us at this time that have God's spirit.

Verse 32—And they said to each other, Didn't our heart burn within us when He talked to us on the way, and while—let's notice—He opened up to us the scriptures? In other words, He was telling them about the meaning of those scriptures, and He told them about all the prophecies from Moses and all the prophets. So Jesus opened their minds to what was prophesied about Him. **And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them, saying, Jesus has indeed risen, and has appeared to Simon.**

And verse 35—And they told about the things along the way and how He was known of them in breaking bread. In other words, when He opened their mind to understand who He really was. So that's how they knew Him, when He opened their minds. And they told about how their minds had been opened to see who He was, and they just couldn't wait to get back to the others and tell them what had taken place.

And let's notice what took place: **And as they were still speaking**, while they were telling what had happened, let's notice—**Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them.** He just appeared. So Jesus Christ is teaching them something very important, brethren, that He will be teaching them for the next forty-days. Can you imagine the strength that it would give you just to see these things? We see these things on the movies. I remember - Star Trek comes to my mind - where they just, what was it? beamed... "Beam me up, Scottie!" I think that was the phrase that they used. So we can kind of see how this would actually take place, because of the technology that we've had in the movies, and so we can relate to this just a little bit. And most of the children of this day can also, because of those movies that they have seen. **And Jesus said to them, Peace be to you.** Let's notice—**But they were frightened.** So we can understand why they would be frightened and why they would be afraid to see such a thing. Because they'd never been in a situation where a person could just appear and disappear right before their eyes, and it made them afraid. And let's notice the rest—**and thought they had seen a spirit.** We know that Jesus Christ actually was a spirit being at this time, and all of a sudden He could just appear and disappear at will. And it made them all afraid because of this. I think you and me can relate to this, for someone just to pop up beside you while you're carrying on a conversation, and then just disappear at the end of the conversation.

So it says, **He said to them, Why do you look so troubled?** So He could see that they were afraid. I'm sure it disoriented some because of what had taken place. He's asking them, **Why do such thoughts arise in your mind?** So He understood that they were afraid and He knew what they were thinking. They thought that they had seen a spirit. He was a spirit, brethren, at that time. And Jesus told them to look at His hands and look at His feet, **that it is I Myself: touch Me and see, because a spirit—let's notice—does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.** So this is so far above our comprehension, brethren, to understand how He could manifest Himself as flesh and bone and then just disappear and appear at will. But Jesus said, "Touch Me. Feel Me." **And when He had said this He showed them His hands and His feet, and they were in disbelief,** because of what they felt. They could feel that flesh. They could

feel those bones. And yet, He could just appear and disappear. And yet, **filled with wonder**, it says, and **joy**, because Jesus was actually teaching them by doing these things, of who He really was.

He said to them, **Do you have any food here? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and a piece of honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. And he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you.** In other words, Jesus is telling them, "I've already told you these things. I told you this before." **I've already told you these things while I was yet with you**, "when I walked upon the face of this earth." And He did. We went through the sermon series *Road to Crucifixion*, and we saw where Jesus Christ was continuously telling them. But we also saw that it was not their time to understand these scriptures. **...that all things must be fulfilled, which was written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.** So we can see that things are being fulfilled that was written a long, long time ago in God's book. And Jesus is telling them about the plan of God now. And they didn't understand God's plan. They didn't understand that Jesus had to die and then come back to life again, to be resurrected from the dead. We know He's coming back once again as King of kings to set up the Kingdom of God upon this earth.

Verse 45—Let's notice—**Then He opened their understanding**, in other words, He opened their minds. And it's just like when God opened our minds and we could see and understand about the Sabbath, we could see and understand about the Holy Days. And when we're first called we begin to learn about God's plan through those Holy Days. And it's written in God's book and it's so plain to you and me about what will take place. But I think most of us have experienced this learning process about having our minds opened, but we also understand about being blinded, when we couldn't "see." And we know that that the Catholic and Protestant world still believe in a Friday to Sunday resurrection, and there's no way under the sun you can get three days and three nights from a day and a half. But, yet, they twist it and they turn it, and it's only a day and a half, but they still can't see such a simple process. So that lets you and me know how blinded they really are to this book. And it's written in God's book "three days and three nights, just like Jonah was in the belly of the fish." But Jesus opened their understanding here. That's what took place. And He gave them the ability to understand so **that they might understand these scriptures. And He said to them, Even so, it is written, and even so it was necessary for Christ to suffer, to rise from the dead the third day:** to fulfill these scriptures, to fulfill the plan of God, to fulfill the meaning of Passover so that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached**—let's notice why—**so that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.** And we use preaching even to this day, brethren.

And let's notice, something had to take place beginning at Jerusalem. And we see they didn't understand that God had a plan, and they didn't understand it had to start in Jerusalem. And we understand that it did have to start there, and we understand why. And we understand that it was eventually to go into the whole world as much as the Great God of this universe wanted it to go. And we know that it did. And they didn't understand any of this in their lifetime. They didn't understand that it was going to be for the next 2,000 years and it would begin at Jerusalem. And that's where these things would begin to take place. And God was moving His plan forward.

And **verse 48**—let's notice—**And you are witnesses of these things.** And that's exactly what Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are. They are witnesses of what took place at this time that Jesus Christ walked upon the face of this earth and after He was resurrected from the dead. And they are witnesses to these things.

Verse 49—**See, I send forth the promise of My Father unto you.** So Jesus is telling them what's going to happen in the future. They are being told. They're being told about the holy spirit that would be given to them on the day of Pentecost, and He's telling them to wait in the city of Jerusalem until that holy spirit comes upon them. And so they were to remain, to be there for the day of Pentecost. And we understand that's when the holy spirit was going to be given to them, on that day. And He says, **I told you of My Father, what would be given to you.** So Jesus is telling us, and it's recorded in God's book, that He told them about all these things and about the plan of God. And we understand that's when the Church began. In AD 31 on the day of Pentecost is when it took place. And they had to wait and do that count. Just like you and me, brethren, we have to wait and do the count until Jesus Christ comes back to this earth once again on the day of Pentecost. And it's an amazing thing that'll take place.

So let's go over to John 20, John 20 and we'll pick up in verse 19. **John 20:19**—And let's notice—**Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week,** so we can see the timeframe (and that's John 20:19). **Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week**—let's notice—**while the doors were shut and the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews...** They had saw what they did to Jesus Christ, the beating that He had taken and how they had hung Him on that pole, and they knew how Jesus Christ had been beaten until He was unrecognizable for who He was. And now they were huddled up in that room together, just like you and me would have been at that time. We would have been huddled up together, I'm sure, if we had been there. And we would be just like them, because they thought they were next. This was their leader, and now He was dead. They had hung Him on that stake and He had died. And **they were gathered together for fear of those Jews,** and so this was on the first day of the week, later in the day, while the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews. And let's notice what took place: **Jesus came and stood in the midst of them and said to them, Peace be to you. And when He had said this He showed them His hands and His side.** Jesus had already ascended to the Father at this time. And if we remember, He told Mary that this is what He had to do, He had to ascend to God the Father to be accepted. So now He can be touched. He couldn't be touched before He ascended to the Father, but now He's telling them, "Touch Me." And He had to fulfill a prophecy - and we know that it's the prophecy of the Wave Sheaf way back in Leviticus 23, and now Jesus Christ had come back and He was revealing Himself to them. And it was more than just flesh and blood that Jesus was revealing to them. **And then the disciples were glad, when they saw Jesus. And Jesus said to them, Peace be to you: My Father has sent Me**—let's notice what He said, "My Father"—**My Father has sent Me, even so I send you.** So Jesus Christ is moving the plan forward, God's plan forward. And Jesus Christ is telling the disciples about something that they are going to be given, and Jesus is telling them they will have a job to do in the future. And this is what He's telling them, and He's going to explain to them what they are to do in the future.

And we understand some of this is written in awkward English, so we have to refer to other scriptures that we know. **And when He said this, He breathed/blew upon them, and said to them, Receive the holy spirit.** So, brethren, we know that this is not talking about the impregnation of the holy spirit - and you may want to note that in your Bible. But this was the account of when it said He gave them understanding, as we read about earlier. That's what this is talking about, is opening that mind to understand.

So let's go over to John 16:7 and let's look at another scripture. **John 16:7**, quickly. And He says, **Nevertheless, I tell you the truth.** So Jesus is telling us this is the truth of the matter. **It is to your advantage that I go away—let's notice—for if I do not go away the helper (the holy spirit) will not come to you, but if I depart I will send him to you.** And we know that that took place on the day of Pentecost. "I will send it to you." And it's like when we were first drawn, brethren, there are things you can see even though you're not impregnated with God's spirit at the very beginning. But all of a sudden you can understand certain things. You can understand that your mind is being opened and you understand some truth. And this is the same account that John is talking about, and it's written a little different than what Luke, how Luke had it written in his book. Luke stated in his book that it was about a sense of understanding that came to them. So that's what's better said.

And He says, **I'm sending you out.** And He's telling them that they will have a job to do. **And whatsoever—let's notice what they were being told—Whatsoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven unto them.** So this has to do with those who would be the apostles at that time and the job that they would be given. We know that God was organising His government upon this earth at this time. That's what's taking place. And this is the very beginning of where Jesus is organising what will take place, the structure. And Jesus is making it clear to them what their job will be and what they can do. They will be given understanding—that's what they will be given—that would be given to all of God's ministry, eventually. And let's notice how it's said, **And whose sins you retain, hold fast.** In other words, they're not forgiven. That's a powerful thing to understand, what they were given, that ability. And that's what Jesus Christ is telling them. And He's showing them about something that would be given to the Church that comes from God the Father. And God is really the only one that can do it, brethren. And we know the order of things. It's God the Father, it's Jesus Christ, and the apostles and the prophets, and then it filters on down through God's Church to the rest, that authority. And we understand the structure, and that's what Jesus is giving them at this time. He's giving them understanding of God's government that would be here at that time upon the earth, and the power that they would be given.

Let's notice **verse 24.** And we know about Thomas, and we know that Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. **Therefore, the other disciples said to him, We have seen Jesus.** And we know his name has followed him down through time, as "doubting Thomas" because of this very thing that he said. **And he said, Except I see the hands and the print of His nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands in His side, I will not believe.** So Thomas is pretty fed up at this time, so to speak, and he's not going to believe anything else anybody else tells him—that's what he's saying—unless he sees it with his own eyes. He's hearing all these things from all these people, but he's saying that he's

going to have to see it with his own eyes. They thought that Jesus Christ was going to restore the Kingdom during that time, and Thomas thought this as well. That's what he thought. But now they had hung Jesus Christ upon that stake, and now He was dead. But now they are telling Thomas that He's alive, but he saw Him die with his own eyes.

Let's notice **verse 26—After eight days**, so eight days had gone past, and **again His disciples were inside**—and let's notice—**Thomas was with them**. It says Jesus came, and it says "the doors being shut." So everything was closed up. No way in. No way out. **Jesus appeared in the midst of them and said, Peace be to you**. So Jesus is teaching them by doing this appearing and disappearing. **And Jesus said to Thomas, Reach your finger in here, and look at My hands; and reach your hands in here and thrust it into My side: and don't be without faith, but believe**. So we know that story about "doubting Thomas." **And Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God**. So once Thomas had seen it with his own eyes, once his mind was opened (so to speak) he said, "My Lord and my God." **And Jesus said to him, Thomas, because you have seen Me and have believed, blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed**. So He's talking about you and me, brethren, the Church of God. That's who we are.

And there are some of you sitting here in this room that just read a book and you experienced your mind being opened, and you understand these scriptures to this day. And you believe what God says in this book. And that's how you were drawn, through a book.

And it says, **Many other signs**—let's notice the rest—**Jesus truly did in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book**. So there's a lot that took place during that forty days while Jesus Christ was upon this earth that you and me don't know about. Can we understand what took place after Jesus was resurrected? He appeared time after time to explain and teach them. And now they were beginning to really understand that He had come back to life from the dead, and now He was a spirit being that could appear as flesh and bone. So Jesus taught them for this forty days by appearing and disappearing right before their eyes. Can you imagine the strength that they would have at the end of those forty days? Can you imagine the understanding that was give to them to be taught by Jesus Christ for those forty days as a spirit being that could manifest Himself as flesh and bone? I think they were beginning to understand who Jesus Christ really was by the end of that forty days, that He was the Son of the Great God of this universe and now He was a spirit being.

And let's notice: **These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God**, the one who came as the Passover and died for our sins, and for the whole world eventually. "And these were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ"; **and that believing**—let's notice—**you might have life through His name**.

Let's go to John 21:1. Jesus Christ is saying why these things are written in God's book, that it's a witness to you and me about things that happened a long, long time ago so that we might believe that Jesus Christ is who He said He was. We will really know who Jesus Christ is on a day of Pentecost when He appears on that Mount of Olives with 144,000 other spirit beings.

John 21:1—And after these things, Jesus again showed Himself—let's pick up the story there—to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius. And on this occasion that He showed Himself, together there were Simon Peter, and we can see that Thomas was there, so Thomas didn't go anywhere, so Thomas was there, "called Didymus," makes it plain who he was, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. And Simon Peter said to them, I'm going fishing. And they say to him, We'll go with you. And so they went fishing. And it says, they went immediately and entered into a ship; and that night they caught nothing. And when the morning had come, Jesus stood upon the shore. And something took place. But the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So He's not letting them know who He was at this time. Then Jesus said to them, Children, do you have any meat? In other words, "Do you have any fish?" And they answered Him, No. And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you will find it. And therefore, they cast it. And they did not know it was Jesus standing upon that shore, and Jesus was telling them to cast the net on the other side. And so they cast it, and they were not able to draw in for the abundance of fish.

Therefore, that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, so we know that it's John saying this, It is Jesus. That's what John said. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was Jesus, he put on his fisher's coat for he was not clothed (he had removed it) and he dove into the sea. And the other disciples were coming in a boat; and they were dragging the net with the fish in it. What they had actually done is jumped in there and was dragging that net to the shore because there were so many in that net. And as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals, and fish thereon, and the bread. And Jesus said to them, Bring of the fish which you have caught. And Simon Peter went and drew the net to land full of great fish, a hundred and fifty-three. Sounds like Paul and Doris when they go fishing. And for those, that was so many, and yet the net was not broken.

Jesus said to them, Come and dine. So they are pulling these fish in, and Jesus is telling them to, "Let's eat." And none of the disciples dared to ask Him, Who are You? In other words, "How are you able to do all these things? But they really don't want to ask Him any questions, knowing that it was Jesus. They knew it was Him but they still couldn't understand how He could do all these things that He was doing. But Jesus was teaching them, brethren, who He was and the kind of power He actually had. He actually had power over the fish to put them in that net. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and also fish. This is the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He had risen from the dead.

Verse 15—So when they had dined, (when they had eaten), Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these? So what Jesus Christ is beginning to do here, it's because of something that had taken place in the past, and we know what it was. They don't realize what Jesus Christ is beginning to talk about at this time but He's beginning to teach them something - and especially Simon Peter. He's focused in on Peter at this time because of what had taken place in the past. And He asked him, "Do you love Me more than these?" That's what Jesus said to him again. And he said to Him—let's notice his answer—Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. And He said to him—let's notice what He

said, because God is moving His plan forward and He's setting things in order and He's telling him, "Feed My lambs (feed My sheep)."

And He said to him again the second time.... Brethren, we know the story about Peter. Here Jesus has told him again the second time. And I can imagine by this time something is going through Peter's mind at this time about something he did in the past. He thought about when he had denied Jesus three times. And if we know about this event that took place, we know that Peter went out and cried bitterly because of what he did and he repented with a lot of tears because of what he did. I think Peter understood at that time just how weak this human flesh is. And we don't really know what we'll do till we're faced with some horrific decisions. And what Peter saw was pretty horrific as they were beating Jesus Christ. And here Jesus is asking him again these questions. **And he said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I loved You. And He said to him, Feed My sheep.**

And let's notice, **Jesus said to him a third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Do you love Me? And Peter was grieved.** And it's written in God's book what Peter did. Why was it written about this account in God's book? We know why Peter was grieved, because of what he did. And he reflected back on the times that he had denied Jesus Christ those three times. And Jesus is asking him these same questions over and over. And we know that Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love Me?" So Jesus is teaching them and Jesus is moving His plan forward by doing such a thing. And Jesus kept asking him, "Do you love Me?" Because you don't know what you'll have to go through, brethren. **And he said, You know all things; You know that I love You.** That's what Peter told Him. **And Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.**

And He said, Truly, truly, I say to you—let's notice... Because they thought Jesus Christ was coming to restore the Kingdom at that time to this earth. And He's telling that, **When you were young, you girded yourself, and walked wherever you wanted to go:** but Jesus was telling him something else here. Let's notice, He told Peter, actually, that he would become old. That's what he would do. **When you become old, you will stretch forth your hand, and another will clothe you, and carry you where you don't want to go. And thus He spoke, signifying by what death he should glorify God.** Jesus let Peter know how he would die. And he had denied Jesus three times in the past, but that would not ever happen again, brethren. They went through some horrifying things in their life, and most all of them died a horrible, horrible death, brethren. **And thus He spoke—let's notice what's being said—signifying by what death he would glorify God.** We know that Peter was to die for what he believed. **And when Jesus spoke this He said to them—let's notice—Follow Me.** So Jesus Christ was teaching them and giving them instructions, and God was moving His plan forward.

Verse 24—This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things—and let's notice—and we know that his testimony is true. So John is saying this about what he wrote, that it is all true, that they were witnesses of these very things that took place. **And there are also many other things which Jesus Christ did—let's notice—which, if they could be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.** So there was a lot that Jesus Christ taught during this time that He was upon the face of this earth with them for those forty days. And

these were His disciples and Jesus was setting in order His government that would go forth upon the face of this earth.

And let's go over to the book of Acts, Acts 1:1. (Acts 1:1) **Acts 1:1—The former account I have written, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the holy spirit—let's notice what He did—had given commandments, had given instructions, to the apostles whom He had chosen.** So we can see that Jesus Christ taught them until the day He was taken up. **And after that He through the holy spirit had given commandments to the holy apostles whom He had chosen, to whom also He showed Himself alive after His suffering through many infallible proofs.** So there were many, many for those forty days that He was here teaching them. And they're not written about in God's book, but it says, **being seen of them—let's notice—forty days.** So they were able to see Jesus Christ at different times while He was teaching them, and we just read about just a few of what took place. They saw Him at different times for forty days, and let's notice... **and speaking of those things—let's notice what they were doing—of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.** That's what they were being taught. Just like you and me. So Jesus Christ taught them personally during that period of time for forty days after He had come back from the dead, after He was resurrected, after He was brought back to life.

Verse 4—And being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, so Jesus told them that they had to stay there and wait for that Holy Day, the day of Pentecost, the same one that you and me are waiting for now, that day of Pentecost when He will return. And He was with them for forty days. We know how you count. We know the "count fifty" from the Feast of Unleavened Bread and from the wave sheaf that was offered. And Jesus told them to **wait for the promise of the Father, which, you have heard from Me.** He had taught them, brethren, about what was going to take place and what they would receive. And He told them (let's notice), **for John truly baptized with water, but you will be immersed/baptized with the holy spirit not many days from now.** So Jesus Christ was with them for forty days. So we can do the count from there.

Verse 6—Therefore, when they had come together, they asked of Him, saying—let's notice what they asked Him. Let's notice what the question was, just like what we were talking about earlier. This is what they thought: **Will You at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?** After all they had seen. After all that they had been told, brethren, "Will You at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" So they knew that there was a Kingdom coming, and here they're asking again. So we can see that they did not have a clue about the timeframe of what was to take place.

It's the beginning, brethren, that's what it is, and they were asking about the end. And that's what they were talking about, the end. They knew that this would take place, when Jesus Christ would return to this earth to set up the Kingdom of God upon this earth. And here we are, some 2,000 years later, and we are preparing for that Kingdom that is coming to this earth in just a little while. We are at the end that they were asking about; they were at the beginning. And they are still asking Him even after all that they had seen, "Was this that time?" Jesus is telling them that they have work to do. He actually told Peter

that he would die. So they could not comprehend all of it, even after all the teaching that they were given.

And let's notice what Jesus told them: **And He said to them, It is not for you to know the time or the seasons which the Father has kept in His own power.** So it hadn't been given, but it would be in God's time. And that's what Jesus Christ is making clear here. It will be given in God's time. And we know that it has been given to you and me, those at the end of the age that they were talking about. **But, He said, you will receive power and after that the holy spirit has come upon you**—let's notice what He's telling them—**you will be witnesses**, that's what they would be, **of Me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria**—and let's notice—**and into the uttermost parts of the earth.** And we know that Mr. Armstrong flew that jet to many, many different countries throughout this earth, brethren, and this message, this gospel message, the good news went out just as much as God wanted it to do. And now you and me find our self at the end of the age as that remnant that will be here when Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

And when He had spoken these things, while they yet believed Him, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfast towards the heavens... "A cloud received Him." He didn't just disappear this time, He went up in a cloud. And Jesus let them see Him going up in that cloud for a reason. But that's how He disappears, in that cloud. **And He went up**—and let's notice—**all of a sudden two men stood by them**, in other words, two just appeared, **in white garment, and they said, You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into the heavens/into the sky? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into the sky**—let's notice—**will so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into the sky/into the heavens in those clouds.** So we know that Jesus Christ left this earth at that time.

And now we will focus upon what He has been doing and what He is doing at this time, what He is actually doing at this time while He is at the right hand of God. Let's turn over to Revelation 7. Revelation 7. We know that God uses the analogy of a garden, and Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God now working in His garden.

Revelation 7:1. God is explaining to you and me who the firstfruits represent. We know that they represent, down through time, the 144,000 that will be kings and priests in the Kingdom of God. **Revelation 7:1** we'll pick up the story, and we'll find an event that has to take place in God's garden. **After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth**—let's notice—**that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.** So it's picturing something that's taking place, an event that is about to take place.

Verse 2—John saw another angel ascending from the east, so let's pay attention because this has a lot to do with Pentecost, brethren. Let's notice... **having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted**—let's notice—**to harm the earth and the sea, saying, Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed**—let's notice—**till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.** So here we find the number, the same number that represents the firstfruits of God's garden, out of God's garden. **And I heard the number of those who**

were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed. The first to be harvested out of God's garden.

Verse 9—After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, and we understand that this is talking about the same group of people, an innumerable amount. And if they were standing before me and you there's no way that we could just number them just by looking. But there were 144,000 standing there, and they could not just look and tell the number. And they were standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (verse 10), and crying out with a loud voice, saying, Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb! So Jesus Christ is there at the throne of God at His right hand. And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, so those living beings are there. It says "creatures" here; they're actually spirit beings. And they are there and they fell upon their faces before the throne and worshiped, saying: Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,

thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen. Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from? And I said to him, Sir, you know. He said to me, These are the ones who come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white—let's notice—in the blood of the Lamb. That's who they are. Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits upon the throne will dwell among them. And they shall never hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun will not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. So, brethren, these will be with Jesus Christ when He returns to this earth. And your eyes will see some awesome sights when these events start to unfold.

Let's turn over to 1 Peter 1:3. **1 Peter 1:3**—Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:3), Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away—let's notice—reserved in heaven for you, so it's talking about those who are the first, the firstfruits out of God's garden, those that received the holy spirit from God. And it's talking about God's Church through time, those that will be the first to be harvested from God's garden. And we understand that God's garden does not cease to exist. We understand there are others that are to be harvested out of God's garden, but we also understand that God has a plan and in His plan there are those that will be harvested first. And it's talking about "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and one that won't fade away," and it's reserved for you to be harvested in your time from God's garden.

Verse 5—let's notice how it's kept—who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, and we do have an adversary, brethren, and he knows who you are. And he makes sure that this takes place, these trials. But God uses these trials for good to create

character in you so that you can be harvested out of God's garden. We have all been grieved by these trials. We are no stranger to trials, but that is how we grow.

Verse 7—we are grieved by various and different trials that the genuineness—let's notice why—that the genuineness of your faith... Remember Peter and his trial? Jesus kept telling him, "Feed My sheep." He knew what Peter had done. Peter knew what he had done. He knew how weak that flesh was, but Peter never did that again. That was a trial that really taught him, brethren, and Peter died in the faith, and that *never* happened to him again. He *never* turned his back on the Great God of this universe and Jesus Christ again, and he died for what he believed. But this says, "that the genuineness of your faith." So that's why you have trials. Just like Peter, we all have to be like Abraham. God has to know us, brethren, before we will be harvested out of His garden. He has to know what you will do. ...**that the genuineness of your faith—let's notice what God says—*being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire***, and Peter was tested by fire by what he did. "Though it be tested by fire." We will be tested too, brethren, so that we can be harvested from God's garden. ...**though it be tested by fire—let's notice—may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (verse 8), whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing—so that's us, brethren.** We didn't see Him while He was alive upon this earth. We didn't see Him when He was resurrected from the dead and became a spirit being, but we still believe. ...**you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls**, so that we can be harvested out of God's garden, "the salvation of our souls." You and me are blessed to live at this time, the end of an age when that first harvest will take place from God's garden, and there will be those down through time that knew about this day that would come, that would produce the harvest from God's garden, that first harvest.

And the apostle Peter is telling us in verse 10 that there were prophets that have inquired and searched diligently, **who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you**, talking about you and me at the end of this age, **searching what, or what manner of time—let's notice—the spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the suffering of Jesus Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those—let's notice—who have preached the gospel to you through the holy spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire—let's notice—things which angels desire to look into.** So we can see that the angels don't know all. There are some angels that don't know all. And we know about the present truth, and we know why God does things the way He does, so that some angels will not know God's next move.

Verse 13—Peter gives us an admonition and he tells us what to do. We are in a count for Pentecost. Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ—let's notice (verse 14), as obedient children, not conforming yourself to the former lusts, *as in your ignorance.* And this is the very thing we were talking about in this very room before we started the sermon today...this very thing. ...but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy—let's notice—in all *your* conduct**, in other words, the way we live**

our lives, **because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy.** Brethren, it is time that we "gird up the loins of our mind!" That's where we're at. We're in the Year of Dedication. And God says to be sober. And I hope we are sobered by what we see just on the world scene. I read earlier today in the news China will build five nuclear plants in Iran. Russia will build two. So we are at the end, brethren. We are on a count when man would destroy every living thing upon the face of this earth. It's the time to be obedient. It's the time to keep your focus on what's ahead for the Church of God. And I hope you understand and see the seriousness of the times that we live in. I hope you understand, because there's not much time left.

Verse 17—And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work—let's notice—**each one's work.** So Jesus Christ is on the right hand of God guiding His Church to this very day through His ministry that is upon the face of this earth, through His government that is on the face of this earth. And He's judging according to each one's work. And you are being judged, brethren. God says to **conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;** in other words, fear to disobey, fear to rebel against what God says on how to live our lives. And brethren, we better have some fear to disobey God, the Great God of this universe and His Son. We better have fear to live any other way than the way God says to live it.

Verse 18. God tells us that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold. We were redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ, brethren, that precious blood, that when that soldier stuck that spear in His side blood spilled to the ground. We have just celebrated the Passover. We just went through those scriptures about His blood being spilled to the ground, and we saw the horrible sufferings that He went through. And now He's sitting at the right hand of God knowing what our sufferings are. And they are so minute, brethren, to what He went through. And sometimes we are so familiar with these scriptures we just read through and we don't give it the thought that our minds should allow. We read so many scriptures and we are so familiar that we forget about the sacrifices sometimes and how horrific it was when He spilled His blood to that ground. And He was "like a lamb without blemish," is what God says in His book, "without spot," because He was without sin.

Let's notice **verse 22—Since you have purified your souls—**let's notice how. How do you purify?—**in obeying the truth through the spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.** This should not even be an issue, brethren, in the Church of God, but it is. Can you imagine such a thing in the very Body of Christ? God says we are to have sincere love of the brethren and to love one another fervently with a pure heart, without animosity toward another brethren in the Body of Christ. But it exists. But we are in the Year of Dedication. The Church of God *will* be clean when Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

Verse 24—God tells us, All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

1 Peter 2:1—Therefore—let's notice what God says we are to do. Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God teaching you and me how to be harvested out of His garden, and He tells us to, **lay aside all malice, all deceit, all hypocrisy, envy—**and let's notice—**and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure**

milk of the word. So we all know that a baby in its mind is not on anything else but the milk when it's born. That's all it can think about at that time. It desires the milk. And it's telling that that's the way you and me should be. We should "desire the pure milk of the word of God." That's what God says. And if we do that, you know what happens, just as a new born babe grows from that milk, you grow in the Church of God, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious—and let's notice verse 5—you also, as living stones, that's how Peter describes it, as living stones. **We are being built up a spiritual house**, so that we can be harvested out of God's garden. And it tells us who we are, a holy priesthood, the 144,000 that will be there as the first harvest from God's garden, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious,

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame. Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone—let's notice—a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble—let's notice how—being disobedient to the word, to which they were appointed. So this is talking about those that were once in God's garden. "To which they were appointed," that's who it's talking about. But we can see that they have now become disobedient. And God says here (let's notice what He says), "And there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth," and let's pay attention to when, "at the end." "They stumbled, being disobedient to the word." And it's to the people that were once appointed to be in God's garden.

Let's notice verse 9—God says, But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that's what God says, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. What's it's saying is "opened your mind," brethren, "to see the truth of the matter." ...who once *were* not a people but now are the people of God, you and me, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. And we have obtained mercy, brethren. So it's talking about you and me at this time, the Church of God.

So let's turn to James 5 (James 5). We can look at this world that we live in and we can tell that we don't have to be patient much longer. We can see that our salvation is nearer than it has ever been in God's plan. We can see that man is about to annihilate every living thing upon the face of this earth. And we don't need God's book to tell us this. All we have to do is turn on the news and we can see it building to a *crescendo* that our minds cannot comprehend.

James 5:7. And he wrote some very encouraging words; and it applies in our time just as much as it did in his time. And James wrote and he told us... And he's using gardening principles, again, in God's book. And James tells us what to do, and this is where you and me find our self, waiting on God. That's where we are. Verse 7, God tells us through James what to do. And He tells us to be patient, brethren, let's notice—until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. And let's notice,

establish your heart, better said "your mind." **Establish your mind, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.** And there are some that will live until the return of Jesus Christ, and those are the ones that will be witness of some awesome events that will take place. The coming of Jesus Christ is at hand and it's a time to prepare, therefore, our name: "Preparing for the Kingdom of God" that is coming to this earth. That's who we are and that's our name.

Verse 9 gives us some valuable information. And this should not take place in the Church of God. And God gives us a warning in **verse 9: Do not grumble against one another—let's notice—lest you be condemned.** So if you do it, brethren, God tells it, you may be condemned yourself. **Behold, the Judge—let's notice—is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.** So when we look back at what God just tells us, when we look back at those prophets, such as the ones that always come to our mind is Ezekiel and Jeremiah (and I especially focus on Jeremiah because of what he went through). Jeremiah went through some awful sufferings. They broke his teeth in the gravel. They threw him in a well because they didn't want to hear what he was saying. They did not like his message. And they threw him down and broke his teeth in the gravel, put him in that well. And it was not easy in the time that he lives. And all of the prophets of God have went through horrific trials, brethren, some in despicable times upon the face of this earth. James tells us that we have to be patient. And I know that there's suffering in the Church of God, but most of you that are suffering have air conditioning in your home and a cell phone in your pocket...and you think you're suffering. But we need to look back at many in our past, of what happened to them, and that's what God is telling us here in James.

Verse 11—Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job, and we've went through this in sermons about Job. Job did some horrific sufferings with those boils upon his skin (if we remember), and scraping it off with a pot shard. So we've read about Job and we've heard about that perseverance that Job had and the end that was intended by the Great God of this universe for Job. So at the end God was very merciful and compassionate to Job. We know that Job finally did "see," "see" God.

Verse 12—Above all, my brethren, do not swear—let's notice, this is an important passage here—either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. Let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," be "No." In other words, we need to be truthful in all our words, let's notice, **lest you fall into judgment.** So we're not to be liars. We're to be truthful in all of our answers. This is why we do not swear, because of what God tells us in this book, and that's why we don't serve on the juries, and that's why we don't take their oaths on this book - because of this very thing. God tells us not to do it, not to swear by heaven or by earth; not to do those things.

It says, **Is any among you suffering?** Let's notice what we are to do if we are suffering. We are to pray. **Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone sick? Let him call for the elders and let them pray over him—let's notice—anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.** So when we're ill that's what we are to do, we are to be obedient to what God had written in His book. And we're not to neglect those things. To neglect it would be disobedient.

Verse 19, give us further instruction: **If anyone—let's notice—If anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back...** and that's why we have suspensions. That's why we have disfellowshipment, brethren, so that someone can realize what they have done and turn back to the Great God of this universe and His Son. And that's why we do it the way God says do it.

Verse 20—let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his ways will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Let's go to Hebrews 2. As James told us, there would be suffering, but with all our sufferings (whatever it may be) we cannot neglect our salvation, brethren. Those that live on and those that will become the firstfruit out of God's garden, we must not neglect what God has revealed to us.

Hebrews 2:1, God tells us, **Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed—let's notice—to the things we have heard.** And if we don't do that, you know what'll happen? We will drift away. That's what'll happen. And we have seen so many drift away because of this very thing; they did not give earnest heed to where and how they learned the truth. **For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience receives a just reward—let's notice—verse 3—how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.** I *hope* you understand what you have been offered, brethren. I hope you realize it. **How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both—let's notice—with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the holy spirit, according to His own will? For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.** God has had a plan from the beginning, and this plan included mankind. And God's plan is approaching the day of Pentecost when 144,000 will be harvested from God's garden, the next step in God's plan. This part of God's plan is about the firstfruits, as God calls it in His book, the firstfruits of mankind to be born into the God family. Those at Pentecost, the firstfruits from God's garden, the two loaves that were waved *way back* in Ancient Israel that pictured this very event that will take place on the day of Pentecost, those two loaves.

Verse 6—One testified in a certain place, saying: What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? It's a question: Why is God doing this? What is man? It's through God's wisdom and His plan that it can be done, and it can't be done any other way. And it will all be done with the firstfruits out of God's garden. God says, **You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands.**

You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels—let's notice—for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, of whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things—let's notice—in bringing many sons to glory. It's part of the plan, brethren, "bringing many sons to glory," many to be harvested from God's garden. Pentecost is that beginning, brethren. God will move His plan forward once again on that day. And God says, **in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation—let's notice**

how it will be done—**perfect through suffering**. That's how; through trials, brethren, through those sacrifices. And those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, (verse 12), saying: I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You. And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again—let's notice—Here I am and the children whom God has given Me. It's an awesome plan, brethren, that God has for you, to be harvested out of His garden whenever you are mature, whenever that might be.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same. And we've just been through the scriptures that told us about this, **that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels—let's notice— He does give aid: but He does give aid—let's notice—to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He has been made to be like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.** We saw through these scriptures how Jesus Christ lived in this human flesh, this human body, just like you and me. And these words tell us that He was tempted in all things. We know that He understood much pain and much suffering because of dying upon that stake and by the beatings that He took while He was upon this earth in this flesh and bone, in this body. And by Him partaking of what we suffer in this flesh He has the understanding He needs to help every one of us...because of what He suffered. That's how He gained that understanding, through that suffering.

Hebrews 3:1—Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, and that's what we're doing here today, we're looking at those things that He suffered, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses was also faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who—let's notice—built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. God is building a spiritual house, and that's what Pentecost is about. It's another way of saying it. And it's about that spiritual house that is being built. And Jesus Christ is the first, and then there are those that follow out of God's garden. And there are some that will remain until the return of Jesus Christ, to remain in God's garden, to continue to grow in that garden and then to be harvested from God's garden. It's a wonderful plan, brethren.

Verse 5—Moses was indeed faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ—let's notice—as a Son over His own house—let's notice—whose house we are (that's who we are) *if*—let's notice, that word *IF*, that big word that's there—if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Therefore, as the holy spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice—let's notice what it's telling us, it's the holy spirit saying, if you will hear it's voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. And we've just been through a series about rebellion that has taken place down through time. And we went through that series of sermons about the rebellion that has taken place. God says don't harden our hearts

as in that rebellion, because that's what they did, **in the day of trial in the wilderness**. And we've went back and looked at some of those things, **where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My work**—let's notice—for forty years. **Therefore, I was angry with that generation, and said, They always go astray in *their* hearts** (better said, "the mind"), **and they have not known My ways**. They couldn't because of what they did in their minds. They rebelled against the Great God. **So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest**. So it's a warning. And we understand that those in the wilderness are an example to you and me at the end of this age. They were given as an example so you and me could understand and not fall into the same trap that they fell into by rebelling against the Great God and His Son.

And it says, **Beware, brethren, beware, let's notice, lest there be in any of you an evil heart** (better said, "an evil mind"), **of unbelief in departing from the living God**. But we have seen so many do this. God is telling you and me to beware of doing such a terrible thing, by rebelling against Him and His Son. God tells you and me to, **exhort one another daily, while it is called "today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin**. It can reach out and grab you, brethren. It can so blindsides you so fast.

Verse 14—For we have become partakers of Christ if, there's that word "if," **we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end**, just what we've been talking about, that rebellion. Do not harden your hearts. Brethren, we are entering some trying times upon this earth. We can see it coming on the horizon. We can see all the conflicts that are taking place. The Middle East is on fire! Everybody wants a nuclear weapon! Why would you want a nuclear weapon? You don't want to go astray, brethren, at the end of this age.

Verse 19. It's talking about the promised land, but it's the same for you and me at the end of this age. We're almost to the promised land (so to speak)—we are so close—and we don't want to fall into the same unbelief. That's what God is telling to you and me. That's what He's saying.

Hebrews 4:1—Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear if any of you seem to come short of it. So it's not a time to play games with God. We know the examples of Ancient Israel and we've been through those examples. We know what we need to apply in our lives. We know the way God says to live. We know that we are to always come into obedience with our God.

Verse 11 tells us to be diligent. My experience in this world, it's hard to find a diligent person anymore. Seems like it's a trait that is long past from the human race. But God tells you and me that we are to be diligent to enter that rest. But I find in this day and time, human beings are very lax...very lax, to the point that I have fear for some. God tells you and me to "enter that rest, lest anyone fall to the same example of disobedience." Talking about the examples in this book. And I know some of us allow things in our lives with this liberal world that's out here. We allow it into our homes. God says we are to be diligent people in our lives, the way we live, and not to partake of those things in our lives, to put it away. There's a time for them to come in the future; it's not their time now.

God tells us that, "the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow." And let's notice. You can't play games with God. It should bring you to your knees to understand who you are and what you've been offered. God says it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (of the mind), so there's no way to hide, no way to cover it up. No way to hide from God.

Verse 13—God says, **There is no creation/creature hidden from His sight**, nothing, He can see it all, **but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account**. You can't fool God. You can't hide. Adam and Eve tried that in the beginning, and we looked at that, and we saw their punishment. We saw in that sermon how they hid from God in the very garden that God had created for them. Can you *imagine* doing such a thing? A garden that produced their every need, and they tried to cover up what they had done. They tried to hide from God in that garden that God had created. Think about it! You can't hide! You can't play games with God. You can play it with man. God says that "everything is open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Hebrews 10:26—Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God teaching us through His ministry of things that we are to be doing until He returns to this earth. Those in God's Church have been called to live a certain way of life, and God has laid out a plan for His Church. And He tells us in **Hebrews 10:26 that if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**. So let's pay attention to what's being said, "If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins." This is a fearful thing to understand, that our sins would no longer be covered by Jesus Christ. It's a fearful thing, brethren.

And let's notice what's said in the next verse about judgment: **but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled—let's notice—the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was set aside a common thing, and insulted the spirit of grace**, the mercy that was shown to them? I hope you understand what you've been offered by God. I hope you understood the magnitude of what you've been offered. To turn your back on what you've been offered would be a horrible thing. And you and me should understand what God has offered to us by now, to be partakers in the millennial reign of His Son upon this earth; some to live into that Millennium, some to be part of that first harvest out of God's garden, to become (as God says in His book) firstfruits.

For we know Him who said, (verse 30)—let's pay attention to what's said—Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge His people.

Verse 31—It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. **But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated**, in other words, when your mind was opened. And when we think back, when you started understanding the truth of your God, "after you were illuminated," after your mind was opened you began a great struggle at that time, because you had to make a decision. We all did. And we all went through the process. And it is a process. God understands man. He's been dealing

with man a long, long time, and God knows man inside and out. And that's why He has a plan for man, because He knows man. God says to recall the former days in which you were illuminated, in which your mind was opened. **You endured great struggles with suffering, partly—let's notice—while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;** so it's when you became a part of us, brethren, the Church of God—PKG. You thought your friends would be happy. You thought your family would be happy. But there were trials that came. There were persecutions that came because of who you were associated with (that's what this is saying), God's people, the Church of God.

Verse 35—Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. And let's notice what we need... **For you have need—let's notice—of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry.** And this is in our very near future. It's not long now. It's not long till we will see Jesus Christ coming in those clouds, just like we read earlier. Just like He left this earth, He will return, in those clouds. And you live at this time!

Verse 38—Now the just shall live by faith; But if—let's notice—But if anyone draws back, just what we've been talking about, **My soul has no pleasure in him.** And when we look around at where we are in time we know that there are some awesome events that are about to take place at the end of this age just before Jesus Christ comes back to this earth.

Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians 2:9. God has revealed to us the things that will take place. 1 Corinthians 2:9. And even though God tells us that it's like looking through a dark glass, God gives us enough that we can understand what is taking place, even though we may not understand all the details at the moment. But God tells us it's like looking through a dark glass, and we can actually tell events that are taking place. God tells us in **1 Corinthians 2:9—As it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the mind of man (better said), the things which God has prepared for those that love Him.** Talking about you and me and those that God has called. And I know that we can't comprehend the things that we will see. There are some wonderful things on the other side, brethren, when we get through it all. And this world will become a beautiful, beautiful place. And those in the Church of God have to be prepared for what is coming. And God tells us that in verse 10 that He has revealed them to us through His spirit. That's how you know. **For the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.** And some of these things we're discussing here today are deep. They're deep things. **For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God, the spirit that is in man, that holy spirit. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God, that we might know—let's notice—things that have been freely given to us by God.** And that's that understanding that we looked at earlier that was given early on to the Church of God. Those apostles, that's what they were given, understanding. The still suffered but they understood it all. And it is by this that you and me understand what we are faced with as the Church of God.

And verse 13 is very true... **These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches us but which the holy spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the carnal man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.** And we look upon the horizon at what is coming. It is the Church of God that fully understands the *magnitude* of what is about to take place upon this earth. And it is time to prepare – it *is* that time – prepare for the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth and the first harvest when God's garden will be gathered to become part of that Kingdom of God, to set up the Government of God upon this earth, a just government.

Let's go to **chapter 3:9** and let's see what God tells us: **For we are fellow workers; we are God's field.** So here we see God using gardening principles again: **we are God's field, we are God's building.** And this is what God is doing at this time, preparing His garden for the day of Pentecost when God's first harvest will take place, when 144,000 will be harvested from His garden.

Verse 10—According to the grace which God has given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take how he builds on it. For no other foundation, there's no other way, brethren, can anyone lay than that which is laid, there's only one path, and that is Jesus Christ. There is *no* other way. There is only God's plan for mankind. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. And if anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. And we know the order of things. And we know about the lake of fire at the end. But we also know about a Hundred-year period of time that most will be given, and understand the plan of God. But I hope you understand what you have been offered at this time.

Verse 16—A question is being asked: Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple—let's notice what God will do—God will destroy him. That's what God says. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

And **chapter 4:1—Let a man so consider us—let's notice—as servants, that's what we are, servants of God. God is preparing for His harvest, that first harvest, and let's notice—we are stewards of the mysteries of God.** And you can't go into the world, even at this time, in the time that we live in, and tell the world the truth, because it is a mystery. And it will remain a mystery until God opens their mind. Just like we read earlier, they can't see it until it's their time. They can't see it until their minds are opened, and we know when that will be. We know God's plan. God is getting ready to reveal Himself to the whole world in just a little while, and it will begin on that day of Pentecost.

God says, let's notice, **Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. ...Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes—let's notice what He will do—who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, that's what will take place, and reveal the counsels of the hearts (the minds). Then each one's praise will come from God.**

And in Ephesians 1:4, let's turn over there. Ephesians 1:4. God has had a plan from the beginning and He expects a harvest from His garden. He *will* reap a harvest, brethren. Ephesians 1:4 tells us, **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predetermined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, that's how it's done and that's how it is being done, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.** Let's notice: **In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, (verse 9), having made known to us the mystery of His will, the same mystery that we are talking about today.** And it has been known, made to the Church of God today, brethren, and it's not a mystery to the Church of God. "We are not of darkness, we are of the light," and it is *not* a mystery to the Church of God. And we understand where we are in time. **...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times—let's notice—He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, there has been a plan since the beginning of time, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, "the good news of your salvation"; in whom also, having believed—let's notice—you were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, (and verse 14), which is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.** When you are ready to be harvested out of God's garden, you have that guarantee. And it's a wonderful thing to understand.

Verse 17—that the Lord God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom—let's notice what else—and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and you *do* understand. You *do* understand God's plan.

And as verse 18 tells us, **the eyes of your understanding, so this is a way, a unique way of putting it, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** in other words, it's opening your mind so that you can see, "see" the truth. That's what it is. And it's through the power of that holy spirit that God just told us was a guarantee if we continue in this way of life. And it's **the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and we do know about that inheritance. We know about those firstfruits. We know about the fall harvest. We know about those promises. And God says you have been given a guarantee if you continue. ...and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, when He resurrects you to be in His garden, which He worked in Christ—let's notice—when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, where He is today, brethren, to teach us, the Church of God, about God's plan. And He's there on the right hand of God in those heavenly places. ...far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age—let's notice—but also in that which is to come, the future. And He's put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to***

be the head, just what we were talking about, **over all things to the Church of God—PKG**, preparing for that Kingdom that is coming to this earth, **which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

Let's turn over to Matthew 5:10... Matthew 5:10. And it's Jesus Christ speaking, and it's where Jesus is making some statements for you and me so that we can understand. And Jesus said, **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake:** and we can see those blessings that are on the horizon, to be harvested out of God's garden. God tells us through Jesus that, **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you, when they revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely, for My sake.** And that's exactly what they've done to Ron Weinland. And we know that. God tells us to, **Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.** And they are still persecuting them to this day. They all suffered...all of them! And they were persecuted and Jesus said they will persecute you and me. And most of us know that firsthand.

Verse 13—Jesus said, **You are the salt of the earth**, and it's also a warning, brethren, **but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It's then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.**

Jesus said in **verse 14—****You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.** And those of that first harvest from God's garden *will* be the light of this world, the world to come, and it will not be hidden at that time. And it will be for all to see when they join Jesus Christ in those clouds as He is returning to this earth. Can you *imagine* seeing such a sight as that? Coming to this earth? Jesus Christ coming back just as He said He would!

God says, "narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life." In other words, we will have trials and tests, just like we saw Peter go through, a severe test that Peter went through. "And there are few that find it." So there won't be many, not at the end of this age.

Brethren, we are entering the time of Jacob's Trouble, and God says there's never been a time like this. And you want to make sure that your house will stand, so heed these words of what Jesus Christ and God the Father has written for you and me and "make your calling and election sure." And when Jesus Christ returns to this earth, He can say, "Well done, My faithful servant."

Let's turn over to Daniel 7 and let's finish up. Daniel 7:22. We know the story. For those that live on into the Millennium, those of Pentecost, there are some *awesome* sights ahead, brethren, but I would not want to live at any other time. This is the most exciting time that has ever been upon this earth because of what is about to take place, when the Great God of this universe makes His move to deliver His people, to send Jesus Christ back to this earth. We've had an adversary for 6,000 years upon this earth, but he will be put in prison in just a little while and not be able to persecute mankind anymore for that Thousand-years. God revealed to Daniel many, many years ago. And in **Daniel 7:22** we find what God revealed to Daniel. Let's back up to **verse 21**. It says, **I was watching, and the same horn was making war—let's notice—against the saints and prevailing against them.**

And in **verse 22** we find that, **the Ancient of days came**—and let's notice what took place—a **judgment was made in favor of the saints of the most High; and the time came for the saints to possess the Kingdom**. So this is the time when the firstfruits will possess the Kingdom, those that will be resurrected from God's garden to be those 144,000, that first harvest.

And in **verse 27** we find... And let's notice **27—The the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven—let's notice what will take place—will be given to the people, and the people are the saints of the most High**, those from God's garden on the day of Pentecost, brethren. **His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey Him**. There is coming a time when it will be over and the millennial reign of our Savior will be here upon this earth, and Jesus Christ will set up the Kingdom of God upon this earth. And it will be the firstfruits of God's garden at the Day of Pentecost that will set that Kingdom up, brethren.

And that will conclude the sermon today.□