

In last Sabbath's sermon it was mentioned in part that in order to have one's vision sharpened then, in essence, there are things in our past that we've experience in the Church, that when these things of our past are better understood and seen for what they are and the importance they actually have, then our vision can be greatly sharpened.

And I hope you can see my scribbling, my writing today in my notes. I'm having a hard time following it. I didn't have the ability, as I'm not back home yet, to type it out. So bear with me today, but I'm going to get this all together.

There are two such important events from our recent past that we'll grow to understand in a far deeper way and a much higher level, that will work to indeed sharpen our vision greatly so that we can come to be far more in awe of *how* God has been working in our lives, and *why*. And this specifically is referring back to what you're going to be reading later on in chapter 6. In the sermons that are going to follow, as we go along here, I believe it's going to be best to have some sermons along the way so that by the time you get there, rather than giving those sermons then after you've already read it, it would be good to have some of those in advance to prepare us, to help us to understand certain aspects of what is already written there, so that when you go through it it'll be much easier to follow, it'll be much easier to see what's being said and why.

So these are awesome events! We're going to focus on those two events in this sermon that's entitled today here, *Tests Upon The Church*. Tests.

This first great test, again, is referred to in chapter 6 of the book, and the other one is mentioned, but not in specifically in the format of a test or in a context of a test. But this one here is. And it's awesomely important. It's an awesome thing that we experienced. And some times we go through things and we don't understand why, we don't understand how God is working with us. And as we grow, even individually in our own lives, sometimes we can look back and at some point then we are shown, we are able to better understand why we've gone through various things, especially when it's a matter of truths that are given to us or a matter of sermons we have heard. And it's this building process we go through. And it's an exciting process! And God reveals to us various aspects of that as we grow. And it truly is an awesome - that's all you can say - an awesome process of how God works with us and why. When we come to understand the how and the why there's just a lot that's answered for us that fits into place. And you can't help but be in greater awe of how God works in our life, of what He does and how He does it. And there's great inspiration in that as there is in this particular instance here.

So, again, we're going to focus on those two events in the sermon today, and they are two great tests. And that first one, again, that we're going to cover, is mentioned in that sixth chapter. And

once we go through this it'll be far easier to follow the flow of what's covered in that particular section that this is contained in.

This great event, this great test that came upon God's Church was the determining factor for whether Christ would return in 2012 or 2019. Now, the more you see this, the more you come to understand this, the more awesome it truly becomes. Now, I'm going to interject something here while we're going along, because sometimes (and I understand) some have wondered, "How do you know this?" "How do you as God's apostle, or God's prophet, how do you know these things that are written?" And the only thing I can say is it's the same way I've ever known anything that has come along as far as truths are concerned, as far as what God reveals. And it's a process. It's a unique way from the very beginning when God started - I could say, perhaps in smaller ways or maybe in ways that were stretched out over a longer period of time, and I jotted a few of those down.

It's like the things God revealed about Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. Now, at that particular time when those things began to come - because the Church has not understood those things - there are ministers, I think of one in particular I had a conversation once with one time and talking about some of this. And his idea of what it said in the book of John, and 1 John especially about Jesus Christ's coming in the flesh was about his physical coming, if you deny that. And it wasn't about his coming physically, because look at the world of traditional Christianity. They believe he came and what does that mean for them? They're not a part of the Body. That's not what it was about. And so God began to reveal some things and they're just there. It's just like when you came to understand certain things, at any point in time when you were being drawn, or when you come to understand any of the truths of God. Something just clicked for you. At some point things just clicked for you and you knew they were true. You just knew it. It was a knowing. And that's how God communicates things to us. That's how He reveals truth to us. That's why we can understand things about the Holy Days, the plan of God, and others can't. You can talk until you're blue in the face to someone, even if they'll stand there and listen to you, or sit there and listen to you. You could talk and talk and talk. You could go to Leviticus 23, go through the Days of Unleavened Bread, Passover, and all the other scriptures in the Bible and it's so clear to you. It's not going to mean much of anything to them. They're just, they're not going to get it. They're not going to see the plan. But you see it. How do you see it? How do you know it? *How do you know it?* By God's spirit. That's how God communicates. We have a spirit essence in us that has been begotten. Now, before you're begotten God will still give so much of that knowledge to young people or to people as they're being drawn. He will work with them. But especially after you're begotten of God's holy spirit, that's how He communicates to you. That's how He works with you. He just gives you the knowing; that when something clicks, it just clicks. Well, how do you know? How do you know it's true? You just know. And no one can talk you out of it. No one can tell you otherwise. How do you know Christmas and Easter are false? How do you know Passover and Unleavened Bread are right? How? Why is that so powerfully clear to you?

Same thing with me as a pastor, or as an apostle, or prophet, or whatever. And so I think of that process where God began to reveal that, when I first went into the ministry and began to see some of

those things. Now, at that point I had no proof. At that point He just gave me a knowing that that was talking about what he was doing in our... he was coming in our flesh, in physical human beings. And the power of his spirit and his life and that of his Father dwelling within us. But later on... it wasn't for several years, *many* years later, frankly, when we were up in the Pennsylvania area and I came across a book that an individual had written in studying into the Greek language and gave all the different tenses and so forth and the things having to do with the Greek language, in this particular case, of the words here. And that's when I first came to understand about this "present progressive" and how we express something in English, that a similar way that's talking about Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. It's present, it's ongoing, and it continues on. And, wow! What an awesome thing when God revealed that and just drove it home even more. And other things began to become clear.

So it was just there. It's just that no one had told me. Like, maybe, someone tells us when we read something, perhaps we read it in a *Plain Truth* magazine or some other, or heard Mr. Armstrong or some other minister speak, or from here, different things that God has given to you that are true and you know they're true. And it's different because you hear it written by an individual, a man, a minister, or spoken by a minister. But I don't have that same luxury, in that sense, of someone, as I did in the past when Mr. Armstrong wrote things or I heard it from a minister. Especially when you think about how God works with the Church through an apostle. God has to give it in that case. Jesus Christ has to give it in that case. But it's the same thing. It's just a knowing. It's just a knowing of things that are here or things that He gives. That's how it works.

I think about the first four Seals being about the Church. *How* would you know that? But it became clear as we went along that that was so obvious. It became clear. You see it. It's clear to you now. But we didn't know it until God gave it. And on and on we could go.

That Jesus Christ didn't eternally exist. Powerful! But it was just there. When it was time, it was there. I think of that sermon about Melchizedek. I didn't even know what that Last Great Day sermon was going to be in 2005, but I knew, because I'd experienced it so often, because God communicated that to me as well in the same way by the time it's time to give it, it'll be there. I was comfortable. I wasn't stressed out about it at all. I knew it was going to be there because of the same knowing. Just as much as we know any truth we're given. And sure enough things started fitting into place, working on that sermon toward the end of the Feast there then to give on that Last Great Day about Melchizedek and what it was all about. Didn't know what it was before that. Had a few things that God had revealed, but not the entire story.

Now, that's an awesome thing when you live it over and over and over again, and it just becomes the way it is. It is what it is. So I could go on and on with things like that. But I think about this one here that I think is awesomely exciting, that the curse upon women is going to become fully removed. You can't read that in here. Where can you find that? Where can you find it in this book that that's God's purpose and God's plan for the Millennium? You can't! But it's true, just as much as any other truth that God has ever given to us. Incredible and exciting!

So, going back to the first great event or test that came upon God's Church that we're addressing here, that was the determining factor of whether Christ would come in 2012 or 2019. Because, you see, it was about the Church. It was about the Church. And it was about where we would be at a specific point in time. Because there are no guarantees. There are no guarantees, because we have choices and we have a response, and going through trials and going... Look at what happened to the Church by the time we came down to 1994. Look at our condition. Laodicea. God allowed it to happen. There were no.... Could God have brought about something different? Yes. If different trials or tests had come upon us and He worked to prevent that. But He didn't want to prevent that. He didn't work to prevent the Apostasy. Could God have kept it from happening? Absolutely! But you see, the *value* of what it produced and what it's going to produce is far, far greater. And the vast majority of those God will save and God will bring into His Family. Others, regardless of what would have happened, that perhaps - talking about even some of those specifically that will be resurrected during the Hundred-years - they will *not* be resurrected... I mean after, I'm talking about even after the Hundred-years, some of those that will actually be resurrected even afterwards that aren't going to have the opportunity of being resurrected during the Hundred-years. Because there are going to be some who were a part of all that (though possibly few in comparison to the full number of people). Those individuals would have still done the same things, still had the same minds, would have still made certain kinds of choices because it's in their thinking. It's in how they are in their being. So God gives us every opportunity to receive Him, to receive His way of life, to receive His holy spirit, to change and to grow, but we have to make the choices, don't we? And so the choices we made leading up to 2008 individually in our lives and responding to things that had been happening in the Church of God—PKG, God blessed us mightily, inspired us mightily, and gave us the food and the kinds of things we needed to grow and mature and be strengthened. But we had a lot of battles in there because of so many splinters and so many things that were out there. And we were tried during those periods of time. We went through a lot, from the time we began to the time we got up to 2008. But exactly where we would be as a Body, fully, to what level we would be, no guarantees. It wasn't something that God was going to prophecy and say, "This is the way it's going to be." And we'll receive a whole lot more as we go along here about this. It's a powerful thing to understand the mind, the human mind and our response to God and how we work as human beings.

So again, by that particular point in time this test was going to be the determining factor of whether Christ would come in 2012 or 2019. And it was, again, fully about the Church and where it was spiritually by mid-2008. That's when God was going to make the judgment. He wasn't going to make it in 2006 or 2007, because He was already leading us to the fact that the world has been judged and things are going to happen in 2012. That's where God was leading us. That's what God revealed to us as a body. He revealed that to us, very powerfully so. And timelines and things that worked out perfectly so, all for a reason. Because that's where God was headed with the world and the Church that was scattered. But He had another plan, another part of that plan, and it depended upon us, depending on where we would be in mid-2008. Because His greater desire was to do something additional, above and beyond just judging the world. It's a beautiful thing. But we were going to go through, if that happened, a great deal if that became a reality.

And so, what was it? Do you know what happened in mid-2008 that was a strong test upon the Church? A powerful test upon God's Church? Because it was. It was. Incredible!

I think about this here, talking about some of this as it was mentioned last Sabbath, leading up to 2008, as the book *2008 - God's Final Witness* was being published, going clear back to the end of 2006. And as it clearly revealed, there were things that God had already revealed by that time that were already being written in the book, but we hadn't come to 2008 yet. But there were things that God wrote about judgment, about things that were going to happen in this world at a specific moment in time. Because, again, the world had been judged, and regardless of what date Christ would return. I think of that period then, December 17, 2008 to May 27, 2012, would become a period of a final witness. Regardless, it would still become a period of a final witness. And it was. Again, about the scattered Church, or the Church that was scattered and the rest of the world.

But the work of the two witnesses is another matter, because there's a difference there. There's a work about witnessing and about a witness that was going to be there, but there's also a difference here in what's in this book here about a work that they would do. And I think if we're not careful there's still going to be the expectation of some that, "Well, that should have started already." No. We should have learned that before, what we went through and all the sermons we had. That's why I mentioned last Sabbath very clearly that most of what Christ taught, the most powerful things and the things that are written about him that he did in his ministry was done in the last three weeks of his life. And a lot of what happens here - just because it tells what they have the power and the ability to do, doesn't mean that they do it for 1260 days. Not at all. Because so much of it is about the book anyway! So much of it in the beginning is about a third book and why it was being written and what it says. That's the work. That's the work we're doing. That's the work I'm doing. My wife that had input in those things that I've even written about in the book, which you haven't read yet - another carrot. But anyway, it's all there. Very powerful.

So what was that test, again? It was the revelation of God concerning the 50th Truth. Concerning the 50th Truth. If you remember a little bit of the history and God revealing to me that I could not wait until Trumpets to give it because that was the intent when it was revealed. Because, see, during Pentecost of that year, because of the things going from the Days of Unleavened Bread up to the period of time which starts with the wave sheaf, Jesus Christ fulfilling the wave sheaf, coming up to the wave loaves, and what took place at that point in time. Let's just notice those verses. They're powerful! They're exciting when we understand them, and they just jump out at you now in a way that they couldn't in times past because we didn't understand it.

Leviticus 23. I'll just start reading some of this, just a few of these verses that have to do with those specific things. To me it's a beautiful thing, and how God fulfilled it. And if there's time I'm even going to write an article to be put on the website there about this, the timing and the three days and so forth and what Jesus Christ fulfilled. Because people don't understand anything about the wave sheaf in the world. They haven't heard those things taught. They don't realize he was resurrected right at the end of the Sabbath. Not on Sunday! Not on the first day of the week at all! Even if you

want to count sundown, he was still resurrected on the Sabbath! And I don't know if all of us understand that! He wasn't resurrected after sundown! He fulfilled *exactly* what God said he would fulfill - three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And he did that. And he was put in there just before sunset on that Wednesday, and then Thursday, Friday, Sabbath. At the end of the Sabbath day. And then the awesome meaning here of what's revealed.

Let's read this: **Leviticus 23:9**, it says, **And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof....** You know, just that there alone I marvel at how God even wrote this. Because, you see, this instruction helps you to understand how to count, when to count within the Days of Unleavened Bread to Pentecost. It tells you how to deal with Passover and when to count the wave sheaf. That's what it tells you. Because, you see, if you go back and study the history of what happened when they came into the land - and the Jews have that so messed up in their beliefs. They have that timing so fouled up. And oftentimes within the Church, until we grow, until God reveals things to us, we've taken things about some of their history and taken it as being true or accurate, when in reality it's so messed up. It was messed up in the time of Christ. Look what he said to them. How much more two thousand years later. And so they don't understand these most basic things. But even here God revealed, very powerfully, some things to us early on having to do with this counting, having to do with the connection between the wave sheaf and Pentecost and the importance of when you begin counting it, which, He'd already given a great deal of this to Mr. Armstrong before anyway. We just rather lost it as a Church. But we didn't understand the importance of the timing that took place when they came into the promised land. Because that was not understood at all in what took place and how these words are translated even. I don't have time to go into all that. I'd love to. It's exciting to go into here and discuss some of this.

But anyway, it says, **When you come into the land which I give unto you**, so it's speaking of a specific moment of time. When you fulfill this and accomplish this something's going to happen. Now, there was already a plan here in motion of what was going to take place. God saw to it. God allowed certain individuals to be chosen. God allowed two individuals who come back with a true witness of what had happened, and others who didn't. And Israel, the Israelites then who started murmuring and the things they did, and God left them there for a full forty years. You see, that was the plan all along. It wasn't off the cuff, all of a sudden, that God made that. It was a part of a plan because He knew exactly when they would come into the promised land and exactly the timing of events, of what was taking place and the harvest and that time of year, on what day of the week these events were happening. That's what's important.

But going on here. It says, **you shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest.** It's about Jesus Christ, the Wave Sheaf. **And he shall wave the sheaf before the Eternal, to be accepted for you.** Again, about Jesus Christ and the importance of that sheaf as it was being waved, just as Jesus Christ when he first told them, "Don't touch me, because I haven't ascended to our Father - my Father and your Father." He says, "I haven't

ascended to God." And so before they could touch him he was received by God the Father. Then he came back and then he told the... just like Thomas, he told him, "Put your hand in my side." Now they could touch him. But, see, there was a point in time here because he hadn't been received of the Father yet. All these things are spelled out in scripture, this process of him fulfilling the wave sheaf. And it says, **on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.** So, again, this was done, then on Sunday morning, in essence. So, you see, this did take place, the receiving of Christ, but he was resurrected at the end of the Sabbath day. Awesome! Beautiful!

And then going on down here, the wave loaves. Jumping on down here to **verse 15—And you shall count to you unto the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete.** This is beautiful too. Seven. Seven times seven. Seven Sabbaths. A number we have for being complete, and God making it complete, and God being the one making it complete as a part of His plan. Seven times seven, forty-nine days. And then the next day has awesome meaning. The next day will have great fulfillment then, the firstfruits - the firstfruits, the receiving of the firstfruits of God. It's a beautiful verse, beautiful scripture. This is going to mean more to you when you read the book as well, when they're received, when they can finally begin their work, when they can finally begin to fulfill a job that God has looked so long to place them into - the government of the Kingdom of God, ruling under Jesus Christ. So, **Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meat offering unto the Eternal And you shall bring out of your habitation two wave loaves.** And so God does that, from amongst all, He draws some. He works with some. And they're leavened. These have leavening and God works to deleaven them, deleaven their lives. And works with them to be able to present them then to God, to serve Him. **And they shall be of fine flour.** It goes on to talk about it, and that being waved before God.

So again, everything has such great meaning. And the more we grow, the more we learn, the more meaning we see that God has in His word. And people don't see it. The world doesn't see it. What an exciting day when they begin to grasp and understand it and be able to rejoice in the kinds of things we can rejoice.

So, again, I think of this particular time when this was revealed, because I can only think of one other time before that that the Church... Because, you see, when something is changed about a Holy Day it tends to shake people. Because we tend to believe that we have everything, and we don't. That's why I love the expression about "the present truth." Because it makes you realize that there's still things we don't grasp and we don't know and God's going to reveal more to us. And at times some things are going to be, perhaps, even corrected like that one there. And I think of Pentecost. Think how long the Church kept, Mr. Armstrong kept, and Loma kept, Pentecost on a Monday. A long time! God could have revealed it early on, just like He did the rest of the Holy Days, but He didn't do that. He left it for a purpose: to test His Church. Because there's something unique about a test, that when something of this magnitude happens you don't have time to think about it. It's just you're there and all of a sudden, wham! Now, how do you respond to it? You know what that

does? It brings to the surface immediately exactly where you are - *exactly where you are* spiritually in your relationship to your God. Right then! It has a way of manifesting that immediately!

And so it did concerning the matter of Pentecost, except that kind of simmered for a time. And that lasted for nearly a year before he finally came out and gave his judgment on it. Because it was known before that that this was being studied into and so forth - and those of you who knew about that and lived through that understand that; very few of you *that* go that far back!

Anyway, it was a great trial upon the Church, and there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds into the thousands of people (a few, just a few), but hundreds of people who left all over the United States. I remember in the eastern part of the United States, vast numbers of whole churches left over this. Now, they were on two sides of it. Some were upset at Mr. Armstrong that he changed it, that he made the change from Monday to Sunday. Others were upset because he didn't make the change fast enough. And they, some of them even went so far as to going back to Sunday's worship. Hello?! Shows how far off base they were anyway. But it brought it to a head, didn't it? And it helped to clean the Body. It helped in a powerful way to cleanse the body at that time, and what remained was a stronger body, a stronger Body. And Mr. Armstrong became stronger and stronger as time went along. He went through a period of time of bad health, but when he, toward the end, the last six, seven years, wow! Powerful! And God had prepared the Church for that and the support they would give behind God's apostle at that time.

I think of an account up in Toledo, Ohio - I've mentioned this before - when I knew what was coming, because of what Mr. Tkach had done. And I knew I could not.... I couldn't stay around any longer and I was going to give my resignation to the church. And I forewarned two elders, and I brought an individual with me who later became an elder, and those two elders, I told them, I said, "You don't have a choice. I'm sending in my resignation and this is what's going to happen. You're going to have to make a decision. And the reason I'm calling here now and talking to you about this is because you have to make that decision now." They didn't like that. Came out later on they thought I was so hard on them because I was requiring such a thing of them, to make it now. Well, where *are* you? Where *are* you spiritually? Don't you know where you are *now*? Well, it came out where they were "now" and it wasn't with God! They went with the new changes - the law is done away with, the Sabbath is done away with, the Holy Days are done away with, you can go out and eat shrimp and whatever you want to eat now, and it's not unclean, because now it's just somehow magically clean. It's just got cleaned up. Crazy, isn't it? Things that we've gone through in God's Church. But the same thing was true then. They had a choice to make. Well, they couldn't. It showed where they were. That moment revealed where they were. Awesome!

And in mid-2008 when it came time to give that sermon God revealed to me that I wasn't to wait until Trumpets because there would be a lot in the Church that couldn't make it to Trumpets by that time. Too many. And God's desire was not to lose, to have that many go by the wayside. He allowed me to give it within about thirty days towards, I believe it was, towards the end of June when I finally gave that sermon explaining those things about the 50th Truth - the fact that Jesus Christ was

not going to return on a Trumpets, but that he would stand again on the Mount of Olives on the Day of Pentecost. Not on Trumpets. And there were a few that struggled with that, which eventually led them out of the Church and they never recuperated. There were some in the ministry, a few, who didn't recover from that. Because it revealed where they were. This wasn't something that just happened and that was the thing that bothered them. Things don't happen like that. We either have a relationship and we're growing, a relationship with God, and we're growing, or we don't. And that brings out the truth of a matter. Things like that bring it to a head and it forces individuals, then, to address certain things in their life. And if they receive it and make the change in their life, God will bless them and help them to grow even more. But if they don't, other struggles start happening right away. Other struggles, spiritual struggles begin happening until eventually they can't stay, they can't be a part anymore. And that's exactly what God did.

I think of what... Well, anyway, come back to that, maybe, in a moment.

So, again, but the overwhelming majority of the brethren, some maybe had some difficulty and a bit of a struggle for a little while until finally they saw it, but it was minimal. And as a whole the Body grasped it and supported it and got behind it and saw it and understood it. "Yes! Obvious! Pentecost not Trumpets!" And so *that*, though God didn't reveal it to us, was the determining factor that God used, because now - and I'm not going to give everything that's in the book at this point, just some of the basics here— it was because of that and because of our response that God knew, powerfully so, our condition spiritually.

It was kind of like when God told Abraham to offer up his son. God didn't require human sacrifices. Never wanted human sacrifices. Would never do such a thing. But He allowed Abraham to believe it for a while, right up to the end. Right up to the end! Then He told him, "No." But Abraham was willing to do it by faith because he believed God. He believed in the power of God to resurrect his son because he believed what God had said of a lineage that would come through his son, of nations that would come through his son. He believed that with all of his being. And because he believed that, even if he offered his son, he knew that God would resurrect him. But God just didn't require his death. That's what it came down to.

So God allows us to believe certain things - Pentecost on the wrong day and actually observe it that way. And if anybody had observed it on another day they would have been rebelling against God. And sometimes that's hard for people to grasp. "Yeah, but I saw..." "I understood..." "I grasped that it should be kept on Sunday, so I kept it on Sunday." Well! Wooo... Whoop-tee-doo. You did, huh? I wonder how God honored that one or where you may be on the wrong side. That happened. That happened with an individual. Might as well keep both days just to be on the safe side, huh? The human mind to me is a marvel sometimes, how we reason around things and think things out. And it really is. God has His work cut out with us - let's put it that way - in a very powerful way. Because we resist Him. It's amazing how God works with us. I marvel at that sometimes, how God works with us and can work with me and can work with all of us and so forth.

So, again here, just trying to make sure I catch everything in my notes here. It was a matter of the 50th Truth that was used by God to manifest where each person stood in faith, where they were in their relationship with God and where we were spiritually. And that's an awesome thing, too, to realize that we believe what God gives to us and we live by it. And because we live by it, God allowed us to live by it then. From that point forward He never told us, "No. Now, because of where you are, I'm going to change. I'm going to give mercy to the world. I'm going to allow mercy to be granted to the world so they have an opportunity for more to be saved." And He brought us to that point then by the time we got to January of the following year, 2009, and the fast we had at the beginning, and then the two day fast we had - what was - a couple weeks later, whatever it was, a two-day fast. And God brought us into a greater harmony and unity with His will that had been all along. But I didn't know that. We didn't fully know that then until God began to reveal some of those things. You go back and listen to some of that now and you realize what God was showing us. This is His will, and it was for the Church that was scattered as well. I marvel at that one because of what I mentioned last Sabbath. I won't go through that again, about the 63,000 and the 7,000.

So, again, such tests, again, force a person to address where they are. You think, well, God knows where we are at every moment. God said to Abraham, "Now I know you." He had a choice. And you see, not everything is known until a specific moment in time or at various moments in time as we grow. And then God will work with us to take us to another plateau or another level once we get to a certain point, if you will - I don't want to use "graduate," - but, you know, when we get to a certain point, accomplish something, then He can work with us to go on to another area and reveal other things to us. But if we don't then sometimes we can begin to, if we're stagnating, that's on us.

So, again, these tests force a person. And the book goes into it a little bit more but it talks about some of this and how we are. But again, this matter of making choices. So the fact that we made certain choices as a Body was a very powerful thing that God could use to make a change in something that was His will in the first place. His desire was that we *be* at that level. He brought us to that level. That was what He was working to accomplish and we were there. And he allowed us to have that sermon sooner than later, and so we were there. And because of that God did so much more. He truly did, very powerfully so.

So, I've already mentioned this about "a few" and what happened there, but the vast majority continued on. So how people respond to things revealed by God that directly affect them can often be a determining factor as to how prophecies will be fulfilled. How people respond. Can be in the Church. Can be in the world. Prophecies can be altered. Not the overall outline of a prophecy. Not, as an example... I'll give you an example here. I'll probably talk about this next Sabbath. We'll start going into some of that, maybe next Sabbath, talking about certain prophecies. There are certain matters of prophecy that are absolutely set and can't be changed, can't be altered, but there are aspects and details within certain prophecies that can be. As I mention in the book, there are certain things about the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets, the Seven Thunders, if you will, the Seven Last Plagues; those cannot be changed in the sense of the fact that there are that many and the fact of

what it says about some. Now, some of the things said within those, there are some things that God can work out His own way in His time and fulfill, and then perfectly fulfill what it says there. But we don't necessarily know what that is until it's time. Because God has a design that He works with, an overall purpose and design. But a lot of the refining within it can be done at the time. And it's an awesome thing to understand. So there's a step here we're taking to better understand how God has worked with prophecy through time.

So again, how people respond to things, again, revealed by God that directly affect them can often be a determining factor as to how prophecies will be fulfilled. And such a thing in itself can prove to be a great test to the Church. Because if we're not careful - because we tend to do this, or have tended to do this sometimes - we think once something is said it's set in stone. Pentecost is on a Monday. Oh, it wasn't set in stone because it wasn't correct, see. So it changed. And there are other things, like what we're experiencing now in even a more refined way, if you want to talk about Trumpets and Pentecost and when Christ is returning. Again, a change, but it's just because we had a certain truth, we believed, to a point in time, but hadn't seen everything clearly the way according to what is true. And then in God's time He revealed what that truth was, and very specific about it.

So again, this strong response of the Church to embrace what God revealed opened the way for God to move forward the timing for Christ's coming to 2019, and this would accomplish a revelation to the world of God's great mercy. And that's what it's working to accomplish. God desires to reveal to the world judgment with mercy. That's what He wants us to live by. He didn't have to. He could have had everything happen at once time and be accomplished, because the world is guilty, and the world has been, and how the world has responded to God and how the world responded all those years to *The Plain Truth* magazine and to *The World Tomorrow* telecast, and to all the things that went out. No one embraced it. The world didn't embrace it. No one did. So the world was judged because of that and there was a judgment waiting them. And it wasn't a nice thing.

Well, let's go on and notice the next one here. Do you have any idea what the other great event was in God's Church that we experienced, that worked in a very powerful way to strengthen the faith of many, but ultimately led to some leaving? They couldn't take it, couldn't receive it. And eventually it helped to be a factor that helped to cleanse the temple, and even cleanse the court around the temple. And it started in connection with this.

So I want to mention here, show you what it was, if I can find it here in my notes again. I thought I had it up here. There was a sermon given on the Last Great Day, 2011. *That* was a powerful test upon the Church. Truly was. I saw people go blank that day. I saw people go blank. I saw people, as soon as I said certain things, I knew they were gone. *I knew they were gone!* There were some that just a blank look came on. It was like they were in shock. And I believe that in some cases there were individuals who were in shock because of what was said. God could have revealed it to us a long time ago, but He waited. Started revealing a little bit at a time in a very unique way.

I want to go back through that, part of that. *A Time To Be Sobered*. How many of you were there, heard that? Most everyone. Okay. It was pretty, pretty strong. I'm going to go through part of that sermon and read part of it today because some others have sent me some of this in the past here as well because of being inspired by it and going back and talking about some of these things. And some have talked about it at different times in letters and so forth. But I thought it would be good today to go through a part of this. I'm just going to read certain sections.

Toward the very beginning I said, "We are a very unique people." This is 2011, Last Great Day. Here we are, we are waiting on Christ's coming. We are looking to events in the world to begin happening because our focus is completely upon Pentecost of 2012, totally! Totally! Absolutely! "We are a very unique people, anyone and all whom God has worked with through time. When it talks about living by faith it's a lot easier said than done." A lot easier said than done. Going on... "It is a path. It is a way that we walk, and there are those things given to us. God tells us things to do and we do it and we go forward." We go forward. Always. Always, always. Going on... "It's very moving to go back there in Hebrews and read about the people of faith and what God says about them."

Jumping on down a little bit. "So what do you believe concerning this end-time? Sometimes what we believe is put to the test – oftentimes, candidly, but sometimes far greater than others." This was a biggie, and it was a test.

I think of this one here, too. It was quoted that day. **1 Peter 5:8**, where it talks about: **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour.** He's enjoyed things we've gone through, but he's doesn't understand how God works with us. He doesn't understand this matter of faith. He doesn't understand how God can work with (how Satan sees it), weak, puny, highly inferior human beings. Satan hates us. Satan hates mankind. He hates God's creation. Did before we were ever brought into being with Adam and Eve. Hated it so much so he rebelled against God! Hated it! And that hate didn't lessen as time went on once he saw us, once he saw us, physical human beings! "And You're going to work with *those*?" And all he could see was himself and his "greatness" and his power that God had given to him as a being, as a spirit being, an archangel, Lucifer. Amazing what took place through time, what God had given him as far as a government. Three archangels that God created. And from all that it indicates and it shows he was created the greatest in power and strength and might. And he couldn't take this. And especially when he saw us. Now, I can understand that. If you were a spirit being and you looked at something like man, mankind, and you see something physical and something so weak and something that decays and dies and you see all their weaknesses and their problems and... How are you going to think about them if you're that kind of a being? Especially with his attitude and mind? I know where that kind of a mind, how it thinks. Sad. Sick. Because he didn't "see" God. He didn't grasp what God was doing. He didn't see how God could use something like that and God's purpose in the first place because of the mind and making us that way for a purpose and a reason anyway, so our minds can be transformed. Because they can't in a spirit being, but they can in us. Awesome to understand the process!

And so the reason I mention this being is because, again, he was around the periphery of all this. He was on the edges here. And to what extent? I don't yet fully know. And God one day will show. But he was around. He was having one of his heydays. Just like everything else that Satan has done when he thinks he's brought a stunning defeat and blow to the Church. Think about the Apostasy. Satan, his attitude and spirit and mind is jumping up and down for joy. He sees something he's been able to help destroy. He feels like he's done a great thing, by the Apostasy and the scattering of the Church, because he didn't know to the extent God was going to allow it to go either. And so when he saw all this and his direct part in it working with Mr. Tkach and other things that he did, he was pretty high. So much so that it helped for a long period of time; he left certain ones alone. Who are we? We're no threat.

So I brought this up in the sermon. "On Atonement we were fasting in Melbourne," talking about where we were, my wife and I, "and deep into that night of fasting I was awakened with different thoughts, received different thoughts that I'm going to share with you. Thoughts that were somewhat unsettling, but thoughts concerning matters that have led me to understand what God wanted me to address here today so that I could speak to you about them. Remember, going back in history I've mentioned at different times it's been at times like that, deep into the night, that times I've awakened and God has given me a lot of things to do with the Church and where the Church is going and where He is leading it. Incredible!" So that was a manner that God worked with me more toward the beginning, not as much anymore in any fashion. It's just there when He gives it. But in the beginning of a process there were times when it worked this way.

And I went on to say then (if I can find where I left off), "Probably that's when I have my clearest thoughts and calm environment and no stress and can listen a little more carefully in the mind."

"First, the thought that I received: May 27, 2012 is not the day of Jesus Christ's return." Now, that was unsettling for me. And I don't know how to fully explain it to you, but I don't know how God did this fully, whether it was something God did directly and Satan is there, because there were things happening too that I knew weren't right, I didn't feel right about, as far as whether he was there mocking, whether there was a spirit there as well doing some of that. I don't know. Or whether He allowed Satan to give some of that, I don't know. One day God will show it.

So I went on to say, "Sobering. *Sobering!* What if that's the case? What if that's true? What does that mean?" Now, here is where people started - I don't know how else to say it but just to say in shock. It was a stare. There was no listening anymore. It was just totally shut off. Not one word was heard after that, I feel. It was that type of thing. Just a few, but enough. "So what does that mean for *you*? How does that affect your life? Because I know it does. Your family, your job, your relationship to the Church, your relationship to God, your relationship to me, etcetera, etcetera. How deeply convicted are you this is God's Church, and there's a way that God works with His Church?" How deeply convicted are we? So we were asked that at that time. And that was strong. That was powerful. And it was good. It was good because that helped us to address something at a point in time that it had its greatest impact in our lives, in your mind. At that point in time you had to answer some of those things in a manner, in a

way, that you couldn't have in another kind of environment to the same degree as this. This forced you, the spirit in your being, to have a resolve or a determination or a mindset or at least a thinking that revealed exactly how you were thinking at that moment in time and revealed much. And helped then, to perhaps then, as it did for many, to get a hold of certain things and to realize there's certain things that I need to address and to go forward. Powerful! Because that helped us to go through what followed later on; the fact is he wasn't coming. *This* set the stage for this. *This* helped that. *This* helped to place those things more deeply in your being as a result of your response to God. That's what it did. But it was a test. It was a powerful test because it brought everything right up here to the surface to be dealt with right then and there. Couldn't be put off. Had to be thought about then and there. That's a powerful tool that God uses. I hope we understand that. Do you see how God uses something like that in a very powerful way to work with us, to mold and fashion us, to bring things to the surface, that if you didn't have it happen....

There are so many things that happened in the environment of the Church, that there are things that bring things to the surface at times so we can address them. I was told that very early on in the ministry, before I actually went into the ministry, after I'd been ordained. I believe it was right in that time period.

There in the Houston area, congregation of about 600, we were working with the youth at that time and it wasn't called Y.O.U. yet, I don't believe yet, at that time.... It was? I didn't think it was yet. Anyway, if it was Y.O.U., then, anyway, we had certain ones we were working with and there was one group we were working with as far as some cheerleaders and them trying out and so forth and different people that were there to work with them. And, anyway, something happened with one of the daughters to where she wasn't where the parent thought she should be, and thought that maybe myself or others weren't being fair. That she deserved something different.

Well, sometimes those things can bring, little things like that can bring, things to the surface. After that the family became.... They were servants in the church in the sense of, I believe, deacon, deacon and deaconess. That's a different, it was a type of ordination that was given. Not in the ministry but as place of service within the body that the ministry would use to serve and help in the church with different physical functions. And, anyway, in this particular instance it got really bad. And my wife and I, we loved the brethren, and we didn't want conflict. We tried to work things out the best way, but we felt that there were certain things that were fair and right and just for everyone and had to act upon that. And if somebody takes it in a different way, you can't control that.

I went to the minister and talked to him, that I just felt this was so bad and the relationship and the feelings we were getting, and the things being said were so strong that I preferred not to work with the group. I said I'd rather not be a part of stirring something, be a part that helped to stir something up that someone became upset like this, because I don't want this (in essence, that was my thinking), not to be in the Body, in the Church. He told me something. He said he knew there was something wrong there all along within the family spiritually. He shared that at that point in time. I'd

been ordained; he was working with me as a minister to mold and fashion me. And he said, "This brought it to the surface. Now, I can go to them and work with it." If this hadn't happened, in essence, he wouldn't have been able to go to them to talk to them about it. Because, see, that wasn't the issue. There were other things going on and the minister knew it. Just like most in the ministry through times past gets to know their congregation very well and knows when somebody is going through a trial and things aren't quite right and various things might be happening between different ones. But nothing that's happened to a level or magnitude that it can be dealt with, because there are times you just, you stand back and you wait for God to reveal or manifest something so it can be worked with. Hope you understand what I'm talking about here. I know many in the ministry for sure do.

And in this particular case here now he had the ability to go to them and talk to them about *this*, but it was about other issues and it was about spiritual things in their life. And so I learned a valuable lesson then, that there are things that happen in life where God uses to bring something different to the surface, different trials, a test - maybe really small like that that can bring out the way people really think and they really feel and where they are spiritually. And then God can work with that. Because before that, until it comes out in the open, it can't be worked with and God can't work with it. Not until it begins to be addressed. Not until a person can come to the point where they can begin to look in a mirror and see something. And it has to be manifest.

And just like this sermon here, now a person can see various things and they're going to have to deal with their response, their thinking. *This* brings it to the surface. So it's a powerful, powerful tool that God uses in our lives.

Oh, I didn't hold my finger where I was again here, but let's see. Going on, I went on to mention: "As with the 50th Truth, if God gives it to me to tell you that there is more to His purpose and His plan that He is going to reveal to us – again, for His great purpose – that His Son is not returning on May 27 – then what do you do? What do you believe?" Now, at this point here I didn't believe in the slightest that that wasn't still the date. I believed it was. But because of that, just like everything else, I knew that I was to give the sermon and to go through this because there were certain things we needed to address in the Church, and ourselves to address in our own lives. Little did I have any recollection or any thought in my mind that indeed God had a greater purpose. Didn't already know it was already in the works.

"Second, the thought that I received from awakening that night of Atonement: You have not yet started your job as a witness as you have supposed, but you will begin to do so once fully clothed in sackcloth." Wow! I read that now and I just... almost sends chills up and down my spine. 2011, Last Great Day. Little did I know what I was getting ready to go through! Woo-ee. Now, if I'd known, I, candidly, wouldn't be too excited. I wouldn't have been too excited. I would have done it but I wouldn't have been very excited. I wouldn't have wanted to. Let's just call it what it is, okay. "And Christ not returning on May 27 will be used," going on in what was being said and the thought that was in my mind, "And Christ not returning on May 27 will be used to facilitate that reality, and people are going to hate you far more than they do at this time in the world." And *now* I know, just as I mentioned last Sabbath, I wasn't even thinking about

this, I understand now that the hatred is going to be far, far greater in some parts of this world and some people's minds and some people's lives on a very large scale because of what's going to take place and what is going to be said and what's going to happen to them and to their lives and to many of their loved ones. They're going to hate with a hate you can't imagine. Truly. You can't imagine it until you experience it. But I know it's coming, far greater than what I've ever been able to conceive of before that would come to pass. That's why it says what it does, that God has to give protection, otherwise, wouldn't be around very long.

Then I went on a little bit later: "Revelation 11" and I said, "Let's just read it." So I read, "**Revelation 11:3** —**And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**" Oh, I can tell you, there'd be a lot more sackcloth – a heavy burden of sackcloth, candidly, enough to go around for the entirety of the Church indeed. 3½ more years?" So did we all get some sackcloth? A lot more sackcloth? Better believe it. We all lived this. We all were a part of that. But it's a beautiful thing when it's all said and done. Going on... "That's what that entails. In 2015?" See, because that's what was in the mind of what was being communicated, another 3½ years. Little did I... I wouldn't even have dreamt. Thankfully seven years wasn't put there. Thankfully that wasn't communicated to me. I probably would have had a heart attack then. But that's why I had such strength of conviction to know it can't be another 3½ years because that ends up in November and Christ isn't going to return on a November. So that's why this is not about us.

Anyway, going on. So I went on and asked the question: "What does that mean for you? What if these two things are indeed true? What if May 27, 2012 is not the return of Jesus Christ? Again, what will you do? *Do you know? Would you leave?* You need to answer that. You *need* to answer that: *Will you leave?* Only you can answer it between you and God. Will you leave the Church over such a thing?"

So, anyway, I marvel about this. I could read more of this but I'm not going to at this point. Because that's exactly what happened. That's exactly what happened. But there was this thing in the background and there was, I feel, wherever, whatever part he had, Satan was still around at that point in time because that was still the sense that was there.

So, anyway, it was a powerful test. And frankly, in that one there, we lived it then, didn't we? We lived that whole period of time all the way up to May 27. And even the year after we still didn't know. And the only thing that made any sense, that could possibly be there, perhaps, the Day of the Lord? I don't know! Desperately throwing that out, candidly, as an apostle. Because I didn't know and we didn't know until later on. I didn't know until much later on, what's written in chapter 6. Sorry about the carrot. It just has to be there, brethren. We'll get there. But all these things will help prepare us for what's stated, because it's a beautiful picture when you see the whole thing, when you come to grasp and understand what God is doing, how He's done it, and why. Everything that God has done in our lives is a beautiful thing. That's why I mentioned last Sabbath, what I've gone through I wouldn't exchange for anything in the world because of how God has blessed the Church, of how the Church has grown as a result of that. That you couldn't have grown in the same way. You couldn't

have been worked with in the same way if you hadn't gone through what we have gone through. It's just a reality. Just in the past 3½ years alone, in the measuring of the temple.

So, again, awesome what we have experienced and the test's we've gone through, that people had to address things at that point in time right then and there. And different ones, think they could make it past that and they couldn't answer some of those things. And even afterwards, what did you do? You kept going forward because you did what, basically, the sermon told about anyway. This is the Church. You go forward. There is no truth anywhere. This is where God has given the truth. We went through several truths in that particular sermon. "This is what's being taught." Just like I mentioned last Sabbath about an... I marvel sometimes that no one is out there teaching that we experienced an Apostasy. And I was told afterwards there is one group that has talked about an Apostasy. They think Joe Jr. was the man of sin and so forth. But, again, I'll be honest with you. I've never really counted them because they did all this before the Apostasy anyway. And never recognized him as a minister, period. So when I talk about the scattering I haven't generally even included them. I've talked about the scattering after the Apostasy. That was well before the Apostasy and some of the thoughts they had that... Anyway.

So, two awesome tests upon God's Church. And we've continued to move forward and it's been an awesome thing what we've experienced and what we've learned through it. So God has blessed us with this sermon at a very calculated moment in time in order to prepare and strengthen the Church to be strong. When it comes to the moment that it realized Christ, speaking of that sermon that was just given, that Christ was not yet coming. And if we hadn't had that sermon, what would have happened? If God hadn't been merciful to us on that Last Great Day and given us that sermon, what would have happened? I know what would have happened. Far, far more would never have addressed... Because that moment brought things to the surface in your mind that you could address. And that was the time to address it. Beautiful, how God worked with us. Just like He did in giving us the matter about Pentecost rather than Trumpets several months in advance by the end of June. Because if He'd waited it would have been far more disastrous. Far more individuals would have had a struggle, needlessly so, for those who could continue on and address things they needed to then.

Well, we're down to the wire here so I'm going to stop so that we can have the opportunity of hearing a sermon here from someone locally, giving their first. But, again, in conclusion here - as we come to better grasp such things, as these two great tests upon the Church, then we'll become far greater in awe, brethren, far more in awe of what God is doing to sharpen a vision within us as we continue moving forward.