

It's great to see such a large group here. I don't think there's been this large a group in Bowling Green for a long, long, long time. I don't know if even ever. Have we had this many fill up in here in the past? I don't think so. Anyway, it's great to see everyone. A lot of people I haven't seen, well, for a few years anyway. It is amazing, all that time. It's like it never was there. I have to consciously stop and think about it, it even happened, and it's just like going right on from where we left off. And that's, to me, awesome!

Anyway, I want to thank everyone for their prayers concerning Feast sermons. We did take off, Laura.... When we took off from Cincinnati to go down to Georgia, we actually drove it so that I could work on sermons - Feast sermons specifically. And for me, I don't know why, but if I can just be away from the house and focus on something without interruption, and she was driving - there wasn't much interruption in that, except when it was raining really bad, but then I couldn't focus as well at that point. We got in this one area, it was just horrible, on the way down to Georgia.

But anyway, she drove much of the trip, has driven most of the trip. We stopped through Nashville on the way back so I could continue to do so, work on the sermons, and I found most years if I can just get away for about a week and focus... Anyway, all the sermons are finished. So, how awesome is that? So, anyway, I'm tickled about that. And I actually have one recorded. I recorded one yesterday afternoon, the welcome sermon for those in Australia, because we have to have all these done ahead of time so they have time to transcribe them and then to translate them into the other languages. We have a few different languages people need the Feast sermons in. But, obviously, I'm still going to be giving the live sermons.

Oh, and that's finished as well. I thought I'd mention, it's settled. We're going to Europe. We already have our airline tickets; we can't change. So we will be observing the entire Feast there in Europe. And that'll be good for the United States and Canada because then you'll get to hear the sermons every day on the same day. We'll put them on the system and you'll be able to hear the live sermons. There's always something unique about the live sermons, for me, at least, there's more power, strength in them, whatever. But hopefully we'll have some of those live sermons able to be put on the system as well for Australia, since they will be one day behind... or actually, one day ahead. But for us... Anyway.

I do have an announcement here I've been asked to make. It concerns the Feast. If you have registered at a specific Feast site and then your plans changed, then you need to re-register for the site that you plan to attend. We really need your help in this. If you no longer have your login information then please contact your senior elder so that they can get the information for you. So, again, please re-register if you plan on being at a different site than when you originally registered in the beginning. So we need those changes made. That'll help out a lot. We know a lot of them anyway,

but still, there are situations we may not know you've changed plans. We need to have that information so we have a better count at the different Feast sites, who will be there.

We're going to go back now today beginning Part 2 of *Own Your Choices*, this part being *Part 2*. There is not a lot I want to really repeat, just a little bit here, perhaps. As I mentioned in that particular sermon at the very beginning, the bottom line for each of us, we have choices that we make every day of our life throughout the day, and the reality is, the truth is they are *your choices* and they belong to no one else. We are all responsible for what we choose in life, from the little things to the big things every day. And the reality is that we can't blame our choices on anyone else. And yet that's a tendency, carnal human tendency that people get locked into and it becomes a habit. You don't even know it's happening as a whole. You really need to ask for help so that you can see these things that are actually taking place sometimes in your life. Because people get into a habit of deflecting things from themselves.

We have an incredible nature that seeks to make itself look good as often as it can. And so what we tend to do is shift blame away from ourselves, try to *justify* the things we do, whatever it might be in life, but it's like we try to do everything we can not to accept the ownership of our own choices. It's someone else's fault, or someone else's influence. And the reality is, just like I've talked about in times past, if you get angry about something you're the one that made yourself angry. It wasn't somebody else's fault that made you angry. If you get upset about something it's not somebody else's fault. Now, someone else might be the trigger and they might have done something toward you, against you, whatever it might be, but you're responsible for your response. No one else is.

Isn't that an amazing thing about human nature? You go down the highway, you start to get irritable, tense because of other drivers and what they're doing, and you're the one getting yourself tense and irritable. They do stupid things. That's just normal out here. The world is sick. But for it to affect you to where you respond in kind? That's exactly what we're to fight against.

So again, what an incredible thing to come to understand, to come to deal with, the reality, is that we have to accept responsibility, ownership of our choices. And that's a big step in a lot of people's lives, to be able to do that. So, again, no blaming, no making excuses that it's because of the influence, the control or persuasion, or fault of someone else whatever we have chosen in our life. We get ourselves into a lot of problems because of that.

So we're going to continue on fairly much where we left off. I do want to back up just a little bit talking about Zerubbabel in Zechariah, specifically the area where it's talking about "the plummet" in Zerubbabel's hand. Because what is actually given in Revelation when it talks about the measuring of the Temple, there is a lot that's there, and we've talked about some of those things. There have been things written in the posts about that. And the period of time that we went through during that sixth period, if you will, of that 1260 day prophetic period for the end-time here. So we're in the seventh now, but in that sixth period we understood very much so the focus was upon the measuring of the Temple. And that's two-pronged. Because it's about a refining and a stirring up of God's people, a

further refining of God's people. Because that's our entire life, is one of being refined and molded and fashioned. The other one is a cleansing of the Temple. They both go together - the measuring of the Temple involves both. And those who are not a part of it aren't going to be measured *in* it. So either they repent and become a part and yield to the process in their life, or they're gotten rid of even in the court and given to the gentiles. And God has made it abundantly clear that that period hasn't stopped, that it is a period that goes on. It began in earnest when that sixth period began, but it's something that leads all the way up to the return of Jesus Christ.

And it boggles my mind to think that there might be *anyone* that God would call, or that God in the future, in other words here yet, or has already called who might at some point farther up the line, once there is incredible evidence in the world of what's taking place, to turn against this way of life? To let up? To let some desire, something that is contrary to God's way of life cut us off from God's spirit? That can happen. And I believe that it will. And I can't comprehend that. To be through everything that we've gone through and to give it up? To turn against God? To begin doing something that's contrary to God, to where He'd cut off the flow of His spirit in our life?

And so we're very much at a time right now, and have been for a period of time, a short period of time now, very much focusing upon the need to get and make sure our lives are right, make sure that we are stirred up in spirit. You can't coast! If you coast, you will fail. If you coast right now, if you try to coast like *many* did before 2012, thinking, "That is going to solve my problems," it won't! And neither will 2019. They don't! A date doesn't *solve* our problems. A day doesn't *change* who we are. A date doesn't change our choices and decisions in life. God's spirit does as we yield to Him, as we cry out to Him for help to fight this battle. And so coasting, taking it easy, letting down - that's Laodicea. That's lukewarmness, a lukewarm spirit. And we know what God did with an entire body of tens of thousands of people who over a period of time had all fallen asleep spiritually, who all became lukewarm to the point that God did exactly what He prophesied He would do. He spewed the entire Church out of His mouth - that's vomiting - because it couldn't be in Him. He uses that description to describe the separation of everyone who was a part of the Church from His presence. Just like smelly, stinking puke! Now, that's why God uses examples like He does, and He does this often in scripture, in the Old Testament, different examples that are given. He doesn't pull any punches with us as human beings. He made us. He knows what we are. And we have to see what we are. We have to acknowledge what we are and understand how repulsive human nature is.

I've got to keep out of my Feast sermons. I'll tell you, this is going to be hard. I'm looking forward to it, to giving all those, I'll tell you. Where we are in time, what God is doing with us. But this matter of understanding and seeing ourselves is something we must see so clearly. Human nature stinks; it is rotten. That's the reason we were made this way, so we can come to acknowledge, the one, the spirit that started it all. Awesome! Awesome to understand what we know! Anyway, in an effort to keep out of my Feast sermons I'll try to go on here.

And so, "the plummet" in Zerubbabel's hands is very much about this same thing that's being spoken of there in Revelation when it talks about the measuring of the Temple. This is continuing on. And

that's something that God is making very clear. There's still a work concerning the Church, but it's intensified. It's intensified. And the language is becoming sharper and clearer in what it is we need in our lives and what we need to do in our lives. And what we have to do is grab a hold of it and cry out God for help to deliver us, to bring us through this. We're getting ready to go through the most difficult time of human history, and it's not going to be easy. It's not going to be pleasant. And we have to be prepared.

And you know what? God desires, concerning the core of the Church, concerning the remnant and those who have been able to become a part with it, to share with it in the end-time. As small as we are, it's going to be a strong Church. It's going to be a cleansed Church. It's going to be one that's stirred up in zeal and desire for God's way of life, for His Kingdom to come, to be here. 6,000 years people have looked forward to God's Kingdom being established on this earth. 6,000 years God has spoken of to mankind about a Messiah, about one who would come and rule and reign on the earth. And we're almost there! And we get to experience it! Not the people who lived a hundred years ago, a thousand years ago, two thousand years ago, six thousand years ago - except for the 144,000 - so those who get to live on into the Millennium as the Church that's now existing, you don't know what you've been given! You can't grasp how awesome a blessing that is, of all people, of all time to be the Church that is alive and living at *that* time?

I think of all tens, and there have to be hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people that have been called through time. "Many," God says, "have been called, and few have been chosen." And I think of our history and what we have witnessed. And to recognize how true that is, how great a battle this really is, to be able to be called into God's Church, to be able to have an opportunity - and then because of the pulls of the world, because of our own human nature, because of the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," the number of people who have gone by the wayside. There are hundreds! There have to be hundreds of thousands for that statement to be as powerful and as true as it is, that have had opportunity and refused it, that are going to be resurrected in the Great White Throne. They have to wait. And you get to live? And you get to have opportunity? So God is going to ensure that within the Body we *are* on fire and we *want* His way of life! You have to *want* this! You have to *fight* for it! Because if you don't fight for it, God judges that! God looks down and judges that. How much do you *want* what He has to offer? *Will* you fight for it? *Will* you fight against your human nature? *Will* you fight against the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"? Will you do it? *How much* will you put into it? Does it *stir you up* to know where we are, to grasp where God has placed us in time? To understand so very soon that which God is *excited* about and looks forward to, for we don't know how long - billions of years(?) - is now coming to pass? We're there!

Do you think this is a small thing for God? Do you think this isn't exceedingly exciting beyond words I can use to describe, God's desire and for where He is and what He sees and what He wants, and what He's going to ensure His Church is like? That's why we're going through this period of time, "the plummet in Zerubbabel's hands." And God's going to see to it that there are things that are

accomplished within this Body in ways that haven't been done to the same degree in the past 2,000 years. Think about that. I said a mouthful right there, truly did. A lot was just said.

And so again, speaking about this plummet, **Zechariah 4:10—For who has despised**, looked down upon, did not esteem, failed to esteem **the day of small things**? That's us. That's all about us. It's about God's Church at the end-time. It's about what He's going to accomplish in a very small Body.

Boy, it's hard - I'm serious - it's exceedingly hard to stay out of Feast sermons right now. Because the excitement, where we're going, what God is showing to us, it is awesome! It truly is!

"Who has *despised* the day of small things?" This is the time to be *excited*. This is the time to be *dumbfounded* because God says, "Not by might, not by power, but **BY MY SPIRIT!**" He's doing these things. And we get to share in it. That's the whole *reason* we're small. God *designed* this to be this way! God's in charge. God's in charge; always has been, of everything that happens in the universe. He allows certain things to take place *because* He's in charge, because there are certain things that must be accomplished and fulfilled, just as He did in Lucifer's life. God knew full well what was going to follow. But you know what? *He* had to own *his* choices. Every angel that followed him had to own *their* choice! They made a choice and their mind changed immediately because of their choice. And we learn to own ours as well. Awesome to understand!

Who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice and shall see the plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel. It's about what God is doing during the day of small things, what God is doing in His Church that's small and how He's refining and molding and fashioning it and making us *stronger*, more refined. I love this word here about... this word "plummet." And it goes on to say, a little awkward in its language because of how, generally, we tend to read things and how it's translated because translators didn't know and understand what was being said. And candidly, in the last 6,000 years, up to this point in time, nobody's really understood this. That's just the way it is. There are things revealed in the end-time that are about things happening in the end-time that God hasn't revealed until it's the end-time. And we're there. So this is the time He reveals them, He gives us understanding of what it's about, as He has with so many other things.

So, **they shall see the plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel... with**, that's fine to use, "those seven," but it's talking about the eyes of God. It's talking about the power of God's spirit that runs to and fro throughout the entirety of the earth. It's a spiritual thing. It's about the power and the might of the Almighty God, that nothing is hidden from Him and He sees it all. He knows everything in our mind! We don't comprehend that. When it says He knows the number of hairs on your head - not a lot of counting on some of us compared to others - but amazing! God knows everything about us! He knows the spirit in your mind. He knows where it's at and it has to be molded and fashioned, those of us who are called and brought to a certain point, to where He can say, as He did to Abraham, "Now I know you." There's a lot said in that. It'd be a great sermon.

...they are the eyes, speaking of those are the eyes of the Eternal which run to and fro upon the whole earth. Do we grasp what this is about in the context of everything spoken of here in Zechariah? It's about the Church, "the day of small things," about the things that are taking place toward the end-time here and the kind of condition and the way we are to be and what God's going to do in His Church? Because He's going to reveal, like He started to do with the ministry and the measuring of the Temple, and those who weren't living right, those who were lying to God's spirit, God does not take that in a small way. Anybody that lies against God's spirit, we're going to be brought to repentance, there's going to be a refining taking place there because He's not going to allow that to live on into a new age. So it's not a small thing, at the end of an age, "in the day of small things," to go through this kind of refining. Because we're being judged this entire process and there are things we're to get a hold of in our life and we are to be true before God. We are to walk in spirit and in truth in our life. And we have work to do in that area in our lives, we truly do. Because, again, we can't blame anyone else for our choices. They are ours to make, indeed.

So, again, "plummet," a unique word from two Hebrew words, as I mentioned last Sabbath. The first comes from the root meaning, "to build." To build. But the word means, "in the sense of stone or stones that are hewn into shape," for construction. That's what we are! That's what God's doing in our life. The stones of the temple. And they were all, they, during the period of Philadelphia and what happened there and on into Laodicea and they all were cast down - every one of them. And then God built back up. You know, each period of time there, there are different things when you talk about a spiritual Temple and how God puts it all together in a single Temple in time - talking about the 144,000 - sometimes that becomes confusing to people. It shouldn't, but sometimes it does, the language which is being used.

We live in a specific time where the Temple is being raised back up again in a remnant group and those that are being brought to be a part of it, to participate in it that's going to be on into the Millennial period. And started from *zilch*, because every stone had been cast down. And so a building process that God has been doing in a remnant body, a time of small things but powerful before God. Awesome what God is doing at the end of an age! Because it's just barely started. Haven't seen much.

So it's talking about "hewn stones," or those things that are to be fitted into place. And the second... And again, if we yield ourselves to the process God will take off those pieces that don't belong, those parts, just like stone. Stone, has an analogy in another area. We are like... our heads, pretty thick, solid rock. Only God can work with it, to chisel away what has to be chiselled away and to have remaining what needs to be able to be used to fit perfectly into His Temple on a spiritual plane.

So the second part of this word, "plummet" comes from a root that means "to separate or divide," and is used to mean, "in the sense of dross or tin." How can such words...? God uses words in a very powerful way. And to understand, then, what the implications, that the purpose of those things that are stated there and how a word was used like this. Awesome! So there's a side, that the stone is being hewn to fit into place and there is a side that there is dross, there is that which really is not able to be used. It's kind of like this lukewarm thing. It can't be used. God couldn't use anyone that's

kind of in the middle! "I would that you were cold or hot," because then the judgment would be so easy, so... Anyway, if you're cold, that's easy. You know, in the ministry, it's always been easier to deal with something that is so abundantly clear - "Look what you have done! Look at your attitude. Look at your sins! You think that's in the Body of Christ? Sayonara! Auf Wiedersehen! Dos Vedanya! Goodbye! You don't belong here." And then the other that's on fire and zealous for God's way of life doesn't have to have any explanation with it. It's just dedicated to God's way of life - sacrifices in the Body, in the Church for God's way of life.

But then there's always been that part, and that part that grew the largest it ever grew during Laodicea. The Laodicean Church, lukewarm spirit. And you know what? God can't use what's in the middle like that because it's not hot, so it's judged to be with the other. It can't be used. God can't use it so He separates it from Himself, spews it out of His mouth because He can't use it. It can't be made into stone that fits in the specific place in the temple because it won't yield itself to the process. It wants the easy way. It wants to slide and it wants to take it easy. It's lazy. Whatever. And it doesn't want to be stirred up in spirit. It doesn't want to pray. It doesn't want to look to God and put effort into their spiritual growth, sometimes let alone their own physical lives - but especially, then, in their spiritual lives! You have to fight to grow spiritually, and it's not just going to happen just because you show up at Sabbath services and listen to a sermon! You've got to digest it. You've got to want it. You've got to... It's a matter of what we even ask for Sabbath by... Before the Sabbath comes, "Father," you're looking forward to this day. You go through a hard week. You go through difficult battles out there and you need stirred up spiritually again so you can go another six days so that when the seventh day gets here you can receive again what you know you have to have! Isn't that the way it should be? Isn't that the way it is for God's people, those who have their hearts in it? Those who want this with all their being? Those who are *convicted* and *committed*, this is the way! *I don't care if I die! I don't care if someone kills me in this!* So be it. It's not a new thing for God's people. Big deal! Big flippin' deal! This is the way it is.

Sorry, but you know, this is it. This is *my* life! And you know what? I chose that at baptism. Every one of us should have chose that at baptism. We should have been true to God when we chose that at baptism. "I am Yours. I *do not* belong to myself. I am in Your hands to mold and fashion me. And whatever you want to get rid of, hey, I'm all for it. I've got a lot to get rid of and I can't do it on my own. I need Your help." And we cry out to God, "Help me get rid of the dross!" "Help me get rid of that which can't be used in Your family, that can't be used in Your Temple!" "Help me get rid of everything that hurts growth." "Help me get rid of the pride, the pride of life, the pride of life that's hurt so many people," and still does. Pride is a great enemy, brethren, it truly is. For if you raise yourself up, want to be raised up, whatever it is, you will be *put down* by a great power. God will see to it because He can't use that.

So we have to be of a humble spirit. That's why I love the example of being clothed in sackcloth. What a beautiful example of what it's supposed to be like for every one of us in God's Church. We are

nothing! And yet we are everything with God. In God's hands? Awesome power, awesome blessings, opportunities ahead of us that we cannot comprehend.

Just like I mentioned last Sabbath - it seemed to hit a few people - see, I know where I'm going to be in a few years. I hope with all my being, and I *believe* with all my being it's 2019, as much as I did with 2012. But that didn't happen. I'm prepared for whatever. I do not belong to myself. Okay? If I'm the last one (which I know I won't be, and thank God for that), I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing. It's a way of life. It's a conviction you have. And every one that went through the Apostasy had to make that choice, didn't they? "I don't care if everybody else goes. This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to strive for this. I want this. I want the Sabbath. I want the Holy Days." And there is going to be a battle and a fight for it. And cry out to God for help and to be delivered, to know what to do.

Keep wanting to go into the sermons. So much more I want to say, but you're going to have to wait till October...October, if I can hold off that long. I'll have to come up with some new sermons before October. Anyway! Brethren, it's exciting. God's way is becoming more and more exciting and He's giving us opportunity for more and more power in our lives to fight what we need to fight so that we can be there. And God gave us a little bit of taste while I was away, for a purpose, because then the correction couldn't come. Because there's one way that correction comes, as a whole, within the Body. That's the way it has to be. That's the way God's designed it. And the kind that we needed that we didn't have for a period of time. We received spiritual food - God took care of that - but there's a part we need desperately as human beings, and that is something that God does through an apostle, very powerfully so, just like He did Mr. Armstrong.

I didn't even read all the things in that. I may have to go back to that because I'll tell you what, some of the most powerful things that he had to say yet, and he got really vocal in, pretty strong in what he had to say in that Bible Study. Wow! Wow! And the Church needed great correction at that time. I think of the ministry... Anyway, I don't want to get off on a tangent.

So, we have opportunity to get rid of dross. We belong to God Almighty. We are not our own. And what a horrible thing if we go back on that. What a horrible thing if along the road, along the journey we begin to let up on that and *don't stand* for God's way of life. I don't care who it is, you better stand. It doesn't matter what it is or who it is you better stand for the truth always. And if we're weak in that area, we'll be tried in that area. If we're becoming stronger in that area, we'll be made even stronger, because you get to a point where you know it doesn't matter what anybody in the world says, it matters what God says. It matters what God tells us to do. And that's where we're plugged in, or we better be plugged in. And God is going to refine us in that area even more as we go along.

So, again, this thing about the plummet is not a small thing. It's a powerful thing that God is revealing, that He's doing in the Church at the end-time. We got a little bit of it in Revelation when it talks about the measuring of the Temple. We're getting a lot more of it right here in Zechariah when God says even more pointedly how He's doing it. And we have choices in the process, choices we have

to make all along the way. Because we're going to be tried in these things. That's how we grow. We're tried. We're tried. And that's part of the sermon here as we continue on.

But, anyway, we went over to Isaiah. Let's go ahead and go over there and talk about some of this, of what Isaiah has to say. It's very much about Israel toward the end-time and it gets into the area where, in Isaiah, in the beginning of Isaiah, it goes right in talking about things that are the need for the Millennium and why the Millennium must come and what God's going to do concerning the haughty of those nations and haughtiness and to change that spirit and that mind and the ushering in of His Kingdom and so forth, all the way through the book of Isaiah.

But Isaiah 1 sets a stage in a lot of this and starts talking about a physical, carnal nation. But you know what, there are a lot of parallels here about what happened in the Church, because it's spiritually we're talking about some of the same things. Some of the same things that happened spiritually in the Church are the very same things that are happening in the end of an age to a people and what they're going through and why, and why there's going to be big change.

Isaiah 1:2—Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Eternal has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. And so, always, always, always lessons in this. We can read something like this about Israel or about this country and about Western Europe and say, "Yep, that's them. That's who they are. That's the way they're like today. It's getting worse and it's horrible." And it is. But what about us? "Raised up children?" I think of the Church. I can't help but think of the Church because the Church has done *far worse* through the period following Philadelphia on into Laodicea because we were given more than the Church ever had in knowledge and understanding. The things that God had restored through Mr. Armstrong and built upon through Mr. Armstrong, and then that book, as I mentioned, *Mystery of the Ages*, that was written by him. Very powerful! Awesome! And we had so much more than any other period of time in understanding God's plan from the very beginning and the purpose to the end, Elohim. And then the Church and what it did with all that knowledge. Now, that's sick. It's one thing to be carnal. It's one thing to do what the Israelites did. It's one thing to do what this nation has done and other nations of Israel have done through time. And that's to be expected in large part because that's just the way of man. That's just the way of man. Man is in bondage to himself, to his own nature, to selfishness. He can't help it. God has to draw him out of that. God has to call him out of that, out of Egypt, for change to take place.

So I think of the rebellion that was done in the Church. The rebellion that was done in the Apostasy, that's a sick thing. It's so sick that some cannot be redeemed from it. It means they've committed the unpardonable sin. Means they have chosen something and *they don't want God's way of life*. You think that didn't happen to some? There may be a lot in that category. People made choices and decisions. And there are people, just as there were in the spirit world, in the angelic realm, who don't want God's way of life. They want something different. It's a choice. It's theirs.

I want what God's offering. I desire *that*. I desire the *awesomeness* of what's going to take place, of things that we don't even begin to grasp, of why that universe is out there in the first place. It isn't out there just for good looks. Okay? There's a lot going to take place through time we can't even begin to comprehend. Even if God told us right now you can't contain it all. Don't have the minds and the ability. You have to be Elohim. You have to be *Elohim*, in the God Family, spirit, with a spirit mind to *grasp* what God has planned! That's why a lot of things cannot even be revealed or given because we can't contain it. We can't! It's impossible! Our limited minds.

Anyway, **The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib; and Israel does not know, or consider.** Don't even know where they came from. They have no idea. This nation has *no idea* that it's Manasseh. And if you tell anyone, "You are really loony tunes, aren't you?" "You are really wacky as all get out." "Israelite? Western Europe? I don't know what you guys are smoking, but I want some of that." That's what a lot of attitudes would be like, you know? "Where do you buy your stuff?"

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Eternal, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel in anger, and they have gone away backward. Just been their history over and over again, except now it's really gotten bad because of technology. Really gotten bad fast! To the point we're back to where God had to address the things during Noah's day. Incredible to understand. Those examples of, "As in the days of Noah," we're going to learn as time goes on, have a lot more meaning than what we can grasp.

Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. Great description. No soundness of mind. No balance anymore. Look at... Look at... I don't even want you to have to look at it, your TV, in the news, and two parties. What a nightmare! I mean, what an absolute nightmare! Everything is upside down. You talk about mass confusion from the top to the bottom, we're living through this right now! **From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it.** Where is the balance? Where is the soundness of mind? ...and the bruises and the putrefying sores, they have not been closed neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. No solutions. No answers. Nothing really being done. It just gets worse and worse and worse.

Your country is desolate, talked about this, talked about the cities, and so forth, things that are taking place and how horrible some areas are. Anyway... this verse here, **verse 9—Except the Eternal of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant...** I wonder who is that talking about, brethren? What is it talking about? ...**we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah.** God would have destroyed it long ago, but God has a purpose. And you know what the main purpose is right now? You. His Church. Still is. Always has been. Always has been. Everything centers around that. It's about God's work. It's about God. It's about what God and Jesus Christ are doing. And so much of that God is going to do in a very small group, a small remnant, a Church, bring it through what's ahead of us.

Verse 10, from where we left off last week now. **Hear the word of the Eternal, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear unto the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah.** Think they're doing that? Think they're going to do that? It's going to be tough. That's why they have to go through what they have to go through, because they *will not listen*, have not listened. That's just their nature. And that's what God's telling them one last time, "You haven't listened. Now things get to the point they're going to get to. Now will you listen? Because if you will," what an awesome thing God has said, "I will listen. And I will deliver you." People's and nations, if they will only listen to their God. And how bad does it have to get before people will start crying out for help and realize no one can solve this, no one can change this. And if God doesn't exist, it's over with. That's what people are going to be brought to.

Verse 11—To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the Eternal. I am full of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. And I do not delight in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs or of he-goats. God, that's what Israel did then and that's what Israel does now in a different way. But talking about God, supposedly honoring God, worshipping God and so forth their own way, not the way God says to do it. So you tell them the way God says to do it, "Do it on the seventh day." "Oh, no, we don't have to do it on the seventh day, we do it every day of the week. That's what God says. The spirit of it is God says..." Well, why do you keep Sunday? "Well, because it works out for us." Amazing what human beings are like isn't it? I mean, really is!

Bring no more vain oblations, incense, prayers and abomination to me. You know, when I read this I think of anyone... and I think it's for me, because of being a minister, I think of the Church. I don't think of the world. I don't think of this nation. I don't think of Israel and all the rest of the nations of the world, in that respect, because they are what they are. They're trapped. They're trapped! "Father forgive them because they *don't know what they do!*" Now, if we can really think like that and deal like that we can deal with a lot of things in the world. It's your job. They don't know - they're trapped! You're not! They may make it hard on you. They may come at you. But it's your choice to respond in kind. Are we supposed to respond in kind? Or to have the attitude of Jesus Christ and the attitude that was reflected in Stephen. "Don't hold this sin against them. They don't know what they're doing." They are in bondage. You were in bondage at one time. You were in captivity at one time. Why do you see anything different? Because of what God did to you in your mind and blessed you, and His blessing you in being forgiven.

So we need to learn how to deal differently with people who don't have ability. They can't help it. And neither could you! If God hadn't called you, you'd be in the same boat. You'd have the same drama, drama, drama - some of my favorite terms right now - in life. And sometimes we get that anyway in the Church.

So for us, for *someone who will not tithe and obey God*, you think God listens to the prayers? That's what I think of. You think God hears their prayers? Just like that one that wrote me, "I haven't seen God's blessings." And I think, well, duh, duh, duh. You have a curse! You think God's not going to bless you when you're disobedient to Him? Where did you get that one? DUH! I can't spell duh big enough, say it big enough. Big, big, big capital letters, *DUH, DUH, DUH*. And then someone who won't give

Holy Day offerings when God says, "*Three seasons in the year!*" And how often did we repeat it? Generally on most Holy Days, at least, sometimes going into Deuteronomy 16 as a reminder. We don't do it, necessarily, every time. Because you know what? We should know! We should know the verses inside out! Deuteronomy 16:16! How many times...? Do you not know those verses? I'll tell you what, you should know those verses! They should be *etched* in your mind. I don't have to think about it. Am I right? I hope I'm right. If I'm not I've etched the wrong thing in my brain. But I know it's in there. "Three seasons in the year you're not to..." "*Do not appear before Me empty-handed!*" God said. Not a command for tithes. And so the custom and the manner for God's Church and what God has revealed to us that we are to do - *every High Day*, which lands in three seasons of the year - we give an offering to God according to the blessings that God has given to us.

It's not about getting money, brethren. It's about obedience! It's about our heart! And when people don't think right - just like that minister I told you about. Didn't I tell you about that last week? Went into a minister's home. I knew there were problems already and I knew that had to be addressed. Went into a minister's home - [cue] violin - "Can't afford it. Needs help every year to go to the Feast. Can't afford everything... [Boo hoo hoo.] We've got to have help for our family to go to the Feast." Get in the house - huge, gigantic, new TV, huge stereo system on the wall, and some paintings that are worth a fortune. And I'm not going to go into that story. Worth *a lot of money* given to them. But they couldn't afford to give any Holy Day offering to God; couldn't afford to give a dollar bill. Blows my mind!

How can you be in God's Church, have opportunity to *serve* in God's Church, have opportunity - because, you see, an ordination, God gives an opportunity above and beyond, He gives an extra portion, or He makes it available, an extra portion of His spirit to carry out a function and a job if people will yield to it, an opportunity to grow more in their own life if they use that opportunity properly. And to do something like that? You talk about a curse. No living on into the Millennium. See, I don't even have to think about that one. No second chance there, period, ever in this age. Okay? God will *see to it* that such an individual *never* be in His millennial period. Okay? They have to wait for the Great White Throne. That's just the way it is. God doesn't forget such things.

When people are able to come through a period of time and be awakened in the Church after they've gone through an Apostasy, have opportunity for something at the end, and then spit on it, defecate on it before God? What do you think God looks at that? Think He's going to have mercy on them and say, "Oh, you poor guy. You poor person. You've really had it hard." I'm sorry, but I have no mercy on that one iota. On the contrary. Great problems at some point of suffering they bring on themselves, will experience the suffering of this world without intervention from God Almighty - to death. Is that fair? Is that from a just God? Are we owed anything? To turn against God, to go against God once you've been given God's holy spirit - shoes you really don't want to be in. Truly. Shoes you don't want to slip into. And yet people do it.

Since I've been out I've had to suspend people and disfellowship people. And I don't have one problem whatsoever to do it when individuals have come to a point of spitting upon what God has offered to

them. I take my job seriously and I know I have a responsibility, and I'll carry the plummet. Okay? I'll use the plummet. That's what God has told me to do. Okay?

So, God's spirit knows where everybody is and God's spirit is revealing those things to the Church. There will be things happen in people's lives to bring every situation to the surface - every situation - as He has already been bringing many situations to the surface. And then they'll be dealt with. Because what remains are stones that are hewn, that want to be cut into shape, that want to be molded and fashioned, that have a *desire* to be in the Temple, that are wanting to *fight* for this way of life, that don't take it for granted, that want to put their entire being into it, who want to obey and glorify and honor God! What else would we want to do but to honor and glorify the Great God who has looked down in our lives and seen to draw us out of this world? To understand how awesomely blessed we are of such a small portion of people! One in fourteen million, something like that, whatever it is? How incredible is that? I'm not talking about winning a lottery, I'm talking about something that goes way, WAY, WAY beyond something like that, because that doesn't solve your problems. You know what? People who win the lottery, they're still the same people. Oh, they're a little bit different - not good, as a whole. Lives don't go well for a lot of people that do that, have that happened to them.

But with God Almighty, the opportunity to receive a begettal from the Great God of the universe, to be begotten of God's.... Sometimes we just... It's hard to see it even though you've done it, even though it's happened in your life, that the Great God of the universe has given you a portion of His being, His life, a begettal that's growing in your mind so that in time you can be changed into something that will live into age-lasting life? Incredible! No words to describe it.

Except the Eternal of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, and been like unto Gomorrah. Here the word of the Eternal, your rulers of Sodom; And give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices... So He says, "I'm tired of your bullocks and your walking around acting like this is what you're doing." And sometimes for people... Tired of individuals that maybe go back and forth from Sabbath services and aren't changing their lives, aren't yielding to God's spirit, aren't crying out to God, perhaps doing things secret on the side, you know, perhaps doing... perhaps committing fornication on the side, perhaps committing *adultery* on the side. You think God's going to allow those things to continue on? Perhaps *smoking pot*! Perhaps taking drugs and whatever else might be done out here. You think God...? Where is the mind to not want to repent of such things in life and to say, "No more. I want to bring honor to God's throne. I want to change and become something that brings honor to what God has shown me. I want to stand up to and measure up to what God has offered me." Would we want anything else? (Am I blowing the speakers out? Sounds like it, maybe.)

So God says, **Bring no more vain oblation, incense, prayer.** He says, **Your prayer is an abomination to me.** So I think of individuals who have done that. Who don't tithe. Who don't give a Holy Day offering. Who commit fornication. Who commit adultery. Who, whatever, run the internet with... today, being pulled into those things. You better fight against those things because I know they exist

in God's Church! Okay? The pull is too great and I know human nature. You better fight against those things and conquer those things quickly. The garbage that's out there, I feel sorry for young people today. I didn't grow up in that kind of a world. It wasn't there. But the internet today makes it so easy for people to go out there and lust and be stirred up and have their minds polluted and distorted where they *can't think right* towards others because they so screw up their own minds. And people acknowledging at a young age they're hooked. They can't fight it. They can't conquer it. They can't control it. Well, God can. That's why you have to cry out to God, whatever you're doing in your life that's wrong, and you can't...

And if you're not fighting those things, how do you think God looks upon the prayers when you're asking help to hear, to know, to grow, to change, unless you're repenting. Repentance means you're in a battle fighting against your mind and against, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." That's a battle! And you better well fight it. That's what we're called to, a fight, a battle. That's why you can't just take it easy. You can't coast along. You've *got to fight!* I'm *sometimes dumbfounded by the laziness of people who don't want to FIGHT for this way of life!* This is a time to get stirred up, brethren! This is a time to respond to God and to be thankful for what you have!

I don't mean to get upset like that, but I just hate to see people going by the wayside and throwing everything down the toilet. That's how they're treating what God gives them. I think, "How can you do that? How can you do that? How can you think psychology out here is helping you and has helped you more than God's Church? Where is your brain? Something happened!" When did it happen? When did you go off course? I hurt for things like that, brethren, because they keep us from being blessed. They keep us from being able to grow and be made stronger in spirit. We have to love, learn to love God and love His way of life and want to see honor and glory brought before His throne. And a lot of that is just dependent upon our choices. It's dependent upon the choices we make whether we bring honor or shame before God's throne. So what is your battle? Do you have a battle? Do you have battles? If you're a human being and your heart's ticking you have battles. That's just the way it is, isn't it, just the way it is.

So, see, in my mind it's foreign to be able to get on your knees and start to go through a prayer, if we even bother to get on our knees sometimes. You know, it's one thing... Yes, I understand, it's fine to be in a car and you're by yourself and you're able to pray. I do that. Okay? I can be out walking, and that's, frankly, that's some of the best time for my prayers, to be walking on that path that I walk on everyday in that environment and I'm able to pray to God. That's some of my best time. I also get on my knees, put my arms out to God. There's a mixture of types of prayer we take before God. And I can't comprehend praying to God and knowing there is sin not being repented of. That should be up front. That should be in the very beginning. That should be immediate. That's what God wants us to do. When there's sin, acknowledge it, go before Him and cry out for help to change. If you want to change, ask God for the help. And that's where we are right now, receiving our own choices.

(We may have to turn this off if this keeps up, I think. It's not here. We're having trouble with the sound system in the hall. I think I blew a speaker.)

We should so desire to honor God, to love God. And questions sometimes we just have to ask ourselves, "To what extent do I love God? Am I truly in this all the way? Am I truly convicted of this way of life - everything!" Everything is God's. Everything I have is God's. It's a way of thinking. Where are we? I belong to God, and I'm thankful for that. Where else would you want to be? What kinds of hands would you rather be in? Your own? Boy, that's dumb!

Verse 14, skipping over some of this. **Your New Moons, your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them.** Man has come up with everything but what is right everywhere you look. **And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you. Yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.** Doesn't mean somebody has to be a murderer, but it's about the way of life they're living and not living - and especially if this is about anyone in God's Church. It's how we treat each other. It's how we treat each other. I still... I think after all we've been through and after all that's taken place how people can still get so upset with each other sometimes to where they have bitterness toward someone else or get really angry with someone else.

And the one that kills me the most are husbands and wives. If you can't live together and you can't grow spiritually together, figure out what you have to do to change that so you can grow. If it means be separated for a time, so be it. But if you're always going to be stirring up each other's fire and you can't change and you haven't made any change and you don't know how to love each other and you're still that blockheaded to where you don't know how to say, "I'm sorry. I'm going to try to do better. I was wrong in what I had to say." If you just can't do that go someplace where you can get your life together spiritually so you can do that, because that's the minimum thing we should be able to do in God's family, in God's Church, in God's Family, to love one another - especially starting in the home. If you can't do it in the home you definitely can't do it in the Body. You're deceiving yourself if you think you can have right fellowship with people if you can't get along with the one who's closest to you. Amazing how we are as human beings sometimes. I have no patience for any of that kind of stuff anymore. Patience has run out. Basically because time has run out! We either change those things, address those things now or we're out! This is a refining of God's Temple. There is no excuse for that kind of thing in God's Church - a husband and wife that can't get along. I am sorry, it just blows my mind spiritually.

You get angry? You have cross words? Why? Do they make you angry? Who? They make you lose your temper? Hmmm. Are you owning your choices? Are you repenting, acknowledging you're the fool that's at fault, not them? You did it to yourself. It's pretty good.

So God's cleaning up everything. This is the time of incredible cleansing. We've already gone through an entire incredible time already of certain things being brought to the surface, but right now we're going down to a point in time where we need to start doing some polishing on the rock.

Incredible what it says here: **Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes. Cease to do evil.** If any of that exists in the Church this is a time more than any

other time to do that. This is a time to focus on those things in our life and to seek to get our lives washed and cleansed more than any other time. ...**learn to do well**. That's a choice. Do you want to do well? Do you want to do right before God? Ask God for help. Seek the help. Make that a priority in your life and cry out for it. You've got to fight for it. It's not just going to happen. You can't just have a lackadaisical, lazy prayer and say, "Father, I did it again, and stupid for doing it." You better cry out and mean it.

Verse 17—Learn to do well, seek judgment. I think sometimes when we make certain choice and decisions in our life, there is so much to be learned from learning to judge things the way God judges - not from our prejudices, not from the way we see it, but from the way God says that it is, what is right before God. ...**relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.** Don't just be focused on your own life, yourself. That's the message here. Look beyond that. Look where there's really help. Look to serve, to give.

Come now, and let us reason together, says the Eternal, Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. So God's desire is is that... And that's why we've been called, so we can be changed, so we can get rid of the sin, so we can get rid of what holds us in bondage. That's the whole reason God called us, to have opportunity in His way of life at this time and to be able to *be changed*, to be able to have something change in our lives. But you have to work at that. *You* have to respond to that and cry out to God for the help to respond to that, to be cleansed.

Chapter 1:19—If, IF, giant, giant IF, IF you become willing and obedient, has to be because of your will, because you want it. Because if you don't want it, it's not going to happen. If you don't want it and it's not your choice, it won't happen. ...**and obedient you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel...** I've seen so much of that in God's Church through time. I've seen so much rebellion. Thousands, hundreds and thousands of people who rebelled against God. And I'm not just talking about the Apostasy. Even if the Apostasy hadn't happened I've seen hundreds upon hundreds of people who have rebelled and refused God in their life. ...**you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Eternal has spoken it.** It's a spiritual thing. For us it's a spiritual thing. See, there's a sword in scripture that's used, two-edged sword that we can be blessed by and benefited by that we can use, that can be a strength and a power to us. And there's also a sword that can turn on us, that can hurt us. Sword that's misused, a sword that destroys, a sword that misuses the word of God.

This word "refuse" here, it is part of an important context from what God is about to use in an example about silver and dross here as we go along. But the word used for "dross" actually comes from a word that means, "to turn, to turn back, to turn away." And this word "dross" is described as "coming from the word 'to turn away' in the sense of to refuse." Have to think about that for a while. Maybe go back and read it later in the PDF, what's being said there, or look the words up. Because it's a matter of choices that are made and what happens as a matter of refusing that reveals dross.

Interesting how God uses words to teach something far beyond just reading it as a word that we might normally read across.

Goes on to say in **verse 21—How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Your silver is become dross...** That's what it's about, that refusing what God offers. It's about rebelling against what God has given. And it's not just about a physical, carnal world around us and the different nations of Israel. It's things we need to learn from and be admonished by as well and understand. Because I have seen this over and over again.

"How is the faithful city." This isn't talking about the world. This is talking about God's Church. "How is the faithful city become a harlot?" That's what happened with Laodicea. As a whole, that's what happened. Ministers began to turn to other doctrines, began to teach other things. I think of this 14th/15th Passover thing. That goes *way back*, way back into Ambassador College when Dr. Hoeh started teaching it. And a lot of ministers went through his classes and they went out convicted of a 14th/15th Passover. And so I started preaching about it right away in the very beginning up in Detroit. And people asked, literally asked at times, "What's the big deal about 14/15? They didn't get it. What are you making such a big deal? What are you talking about, 14/15th Passover?" Well, if you don't start there you're not going to take care of the rest. That's where it begins. If you don't grasp that one and don't obey that one the way God says to the rest of it's not going to be there either. Incredible! "How has the faithful city become a harlot?" That's to turn to anything away from what is true with God, to gravitate toward any other ideas, whatever it might be, to imbibe in something else and try to say this is from God, to twist and distort things to bring it into God's Church - like psychology. That didn't even get on first base. That doesn't make it very far down. If you're trying to do something, don't do that. At least use the Bible.

"It was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers." That's what God says. You know why on a spiritual plane? Destroys lives. To destroy a life on a spiritual plane is a lot different than destroying life on a physical plane. And you know what? There are people who have been destroyed because of this, influenced by and have made choices that they're judged by.

Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water. Your princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves gifts. It's about self, what we can get out of it. That's human nature. **...and follows after rewards.** You know, shoulder up to somebody. I think of all the things that began to happen right after... well, from the time Mr. Armstrong's Bible Study there, 1978, even before, and different ones rubbing up shoulders with certain leaders in the Church because they saw them, foresaw them as being the one that would take over Mr. Armstrong's place, so they're going to get close to them because "I might get something out of this." Isn't that sick? That's what people were doing, they were making... choosing sides, buttering up to certain individuals. I'll tell you what, in God's Church... And it happens from time to time even now where some try to butter up to me and to my wife. Don't bother. Leave that margarine at home. Okay? It doesn't work. It's repulsive to me. Do it because your heart is right. Do it because it's out of true friendship, not because you want to get

something out of it. Okay? Not because you want to be seen or to be heard. Make sure things are of spirit and truth. And I hope you understand what I'm saying. Because I see that a hundred miles away. Seen it in God's Church for many, many, many years, see. We're to be one and one with each other because we love each other for the right reasons, because we're another member of the Body, not because there is something we might gain or get out of it. And I know I'm not the easiest person to love. But, let me remind you, we *are* to love each other. (That was supposed to be humorous, okay?)

Your princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves gifts, and follows after rewards. They judge not the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come unto them. In other words, things aren't done in spirit and in truth in how we think. It's for other reasons, to get something out of it or to ignore things that we should otherwise be doing and seeking to serve God. Where is our service? How much do we love each other? Where is our hospitality? Where is it? Are we doing it? Are we living this way of life?

Verse 24—Therefore, says the LORD, The Eternal of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, and avenge Me of My enemies. That's a small thing within the Church, and that's powerful when God does it through the Church. He did it at the Apostasy. He got rid of it all. One big fell swoop - blech - separated from Him because it stunk. It was repulsive. It was not digesting. It wasn't going down. It wouldn't go down. It was just exactly like puke. It stinks. Puke is... you know it's made to smell that way for a reason.

And I will turn My hand upon you, and purely purge away your dross and take away all your tin. And so within a body or individually in our lives. What a beautiful thing if in our lives we can have... we go through trial and we have the dross taken off. That's a good thing. But it's not a good thing when it's a Body and there is that which is not right in the body and it has to have certain things happen. And that's what's happening right now, has been for some time, that God's bringing things out in the open. Can't be hidden. God makes it manifest in time. Something will force it. *Awesome*, the power of Almighty God!

Let's go on over here to 1 Corinthians 3.

So in this period of the measuring of the Church we have entered a time of focused refining, if you will. That's what I'm calling it, a focused refining where our focus is to become a lot sharper in every way as far as God's way of life and what we've been called to and what's ahead of us. Each person will either become stronger - because that's the choice before us a body - and become more molded and chiselled into shape, if you will, or it will be separated as dross in order to better refine the silver and the gold that remains. That's the way it's working. It's always been that way in part through the Church, but God has allowed certain things to exist at times to accomplish certain things in His will. But especially right now we need to understand what God is telling us as a Church and that we have the opportunity to become far more deeply refined. What an exciting thing, to become stronger in spirit, to become more focused, to become more zealous for God's way of life, to ask God for help to become more zealous and excited. To be stirred up when you think about His word and His way

and things of scripture that come to mind, or things in sermons, and to ask God for that kind of power.

So again, those who are owning their choices are being shaped and formed as unique stones, and those few who are not owning their own choices are being divided or separated from the Body. That's what's going on. I know it! I see it! I'm exercising it. I'm living it. And that should sober us, should sober us mightily to *get behind this thing* more zealously than ever before. That means to get behind and supportive of and desirous to be a part of, in every way, what God has called us to do. Because we're there! This is what's in front of us... got a little bit of time here... and I'll explain that at the Feast. I know where we are! It's incredible what God is doing!

I think of the book. Right now everything can be measured by exactly what's happening to it and where it is. And I'm excited to know that the translations, everything has to be ready all at once - all at once! Awesome!

And so again, please understand, God is not allowing things to remain hidden in people's lives. Okay? One way or another, even if God directly deals with it Himself, and I've seen that happen and that's not something you want to have to happen. Now is the time to do exactly what, again, Herbert Armstrong said. And again, I just said it. I had it in my notes and I want to say it again. "*Get behind this thing!*" It's a beautiful saying. It really is! And it should ring in our minds. It's exciting where we are. And we have opportunity. God wants us to! He wants us to fight the fight and to fight against the battles we have, to fight against our sin so we can continue to go forward.

1 Corinthians 3. So the reality is either we're fighting it or we're not. There is no in between. Because if it's in between, you know what? You've already chosen. Do you grasp that? If you're kind of in the middle, lukewarm, Laodicea, you already made a choice. That's a choice. And it's one God's not going to allow.

1 Corinthians 3:6—I have planted, Apollos watered, so Paul is addressing something specific in the Church, but boy, it's powerful what he talks about here. **...but God gave the increase.** See, we can yield ourselves to share in something as a part of whatever it might be, even within the ministry, but in our lives it's God that does it. It's God that's doing this work. It's a small... it's going to be something small, but we're all going to have opportunity to be a part of it, even as we're a part of the Body. **So then neither is he who plants is anything, neither he who waters, but God who gives the increase.** So talking about the growth that takes place within His Church.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and Paul was addressing something unique to the Church and battles that were going on there and things that happen from time to time, "Well, I was baptized by this person," or "I was baptized by that one," and like that makes something better, you know, or whatever, or "I was anointed by this person..." and you think, "Give me a break!" **Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.** It's what you put into it. We don't receive more. We receive what we put into it.

That's why I cry out, if you will, to *fight!* Don't be lackadaisical. Don't be complacent. Don't coast! Cry out to God to stir you up, to stir up the spirit within you, to become more zealous, whatever that means for you in your life.

For we are laborers together with God. That's how God works. We work together, laborers together. And each one of us, do you know what the biggest job is? Self. It's self. Yielding to the process, yielding to the change. ...**laborers together with God. You are God's husbandry,** "cultivation," in other words. God's going it. Often this word is translated as "field" but it has to do with cultivation. I think of "dressing and keeping," "to cultivate." That's what God does in our life.

...you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, another builds thereon. And so, talking about what was taking place in the Church and especially when the Church has been larger and the things that took place and how God has worked through time - especially, I think of even Philadelphia. Very powerful. **But let every man take heed how he builds thereon.** So it's not to be taken lightly. We're to think about it. We're to focus upon it. We're to pray about it. We're to follow a plan, set out plans. Things don't just happen in life without your setting out... Prayer doesn't just magically happen in your life. Study, listening, whatever it might be, to sermons, whatever it might be, going back and reading something of the past. It doesn't just happen. You have to do it! You have to put the effort into it and God blesses accordingly. **For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

Verse 12—Now if any man build upon this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble - It's unique how it's stated here. There are certain ways that people build - **every man's work shall be made manifest.** That's what's happening now. We've gone through a period of time. God has blessed us with ability to learn, to grow in many things, and now there are things being made manifest. **...for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.** That's how God, as a whole, works to bring things to the surface, just like gold when it's heated up, silver, the dross comes to the surface. And there's some things with the fire that's just burned up. That's the example being given here - wood, hay, stubble - wrong materials to use. Because when the fire comes it's burned up, doesn't stay, doesn't survive. It's lackadaisical in approach. It's not the way God wants us to build. That's the example, in essence, that's being used here. There are certain ways to build. There are certain ways we need to think, and how we think. So we're building one way or another. Even if it's with being lax, there's a construction taking place there. There is something being done that's either... when the fire comes it's either going to stand or it's going to be destroyed.

If any man's work abide which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward. Been God's message from the very beginning of time for those who He's called and worked with. If you'll respond, grab a hold of what God gives, He'll bless. And the ultimate and the desire of all that is to be in His Family.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; now a unique thing it says here, notice, but he himself shall, it's a word that basically means "may yet" **be saved, yet so as by fire.** In other words, there are things that come along in life that will reveal where someone is and it'll - and in the case of wood, hay, stubble, it burns it up, but God says, "Yet by fire you still may be able to be saved," because of what you go through, when you come to realize you haven't been building what you should be building, you haven't been doing what you should have been doing, but God gives opportunity for repentance in the Body, in the Church, and we can repent no matter where we are, at what stage we are in our life. If we still have the ability to repent, repent! That's what God says. Fight the fight! It's never too late, in that respect, if we just repent. But that's a choice. Sometimes people just won't come to repentance anymore. They won't accept it. They won't think that they're wrong. I think of all the ministers who have gone since 2012, gone by the wayside, too proud to repent because they're right, or they just don't even care. Blows the mind.

So if his work is burned, if it's shown to be... In other words, if it's revealed you haven't done what you were supposed to be doing. Look where you are. Okay? The fire revealed it. There's loss there. There's hurt. There's suffering. There's pain. Use it in a right way - repent. "But he himself may yet be saved," so as by, in essence, "that fire." Use it. If you go through hard times... You know, whatever it is, I don't care when it is, we all go through hard times. We all go through difficult things in life. But it's how you use the trials. And sometimes certain trials come along that are greater upon us, and there are times too when it comes to a matter of judgment that it's through those trials that come upon us....

It's like an example. I'll just give this because I've seen this over and over and over and over and over - and over and over and over again in the Church - people who have a battle with being faithful in tithing. So they'll start to tithe and all of a sudden what happens? Rent. Food. Something else, whatever it might be. And all of a sudden the justification comes along and doesn't realize God's first. Something else becomes first. A choice is made, something else becomes first. And so the funds go there rather than to God. And so they go through a hardship, and at some point can be brought to repentance and they repent and they start doing it again and start tithing again and start getting things back on order. But you know what? They're going to go through it again. They're destined to go through fire again. They're destined. Because they're going to be tried when another trial, another fire comes along, what have you built? Is this permanent now in your life? Is this something you become so convicted of that you will *never* steal from the Great God again, or is it going to be repeated? Incredible.

So that's what it's talking about here. We can use those trials. So whatever it is you're going through in life, whatever it you've had and the battles, some that you're more prone to, in that respect, a weakness in your life, in your mind, in your being, you've got to keep fighting that day in and day out. Whatever it is in your life, week, month, whatever it is when things come around, you fight against it, you keep fighting against it and you keep crying out to God for help to keep fighting. Because whatever it is, I'll come around again and you'll be tried again. And what are you going to

do? And see, the more you throw yourself into this way of life and cry out to God for help and seek help to change in all the other areas of your life, the more refined you become, the stronger you become spiritually, the stronger your character is.

You know what? The more you repent of the wrong that's in your life, do you know that you're growing in character? That's an awesome thing to understand. To understand that every time you repent you're acknowledging something very powerful. "God, you are right and I am wrong." That's character! That's what repentance helps us to learn. But sometimes along the way people get to a point where they don't repent - like an example of a husband and wife that fight with each other and they don't get along about certain things and they're not repenting. See, repentance is not just going, "God, I'm sorry. I did it again." It's going and making it *right* with the other person. That's a part of repentance. A part of repentance is making the change in your response to other people. If you've done something wrong toward someone else, the repentance is you're fighting never to do that again. See? But if you continue to do that and you just go to God and say, "I'm sorry. Please forgive me," you haven't done your job. God's not going to forgive you because you haven't changed one iota. You haven't changed one bit. You didn't go and do what God says to do in the first place, make it right. Go make it right. Love your neighbor. It's pretty close.

Incredible, God's way of life and what we're to learn from it and the desire we all should have to grow in character. When you grow in character you become stronger. You become stronger than what you were before. And the quicker you do it, the repentance part, that's good. Repentance is just a way of life with us. But as you go along you're becoming more refined and you're conquering things and you're becoming more convicted of this way of life to where certain battles... it comes to a point where they're not battles anymore. There comes a time in your life, if you've had a battle with tithing, it's never a battle again. Never! It's so far removed from you you wouldn't dream about doing it not matter what! God is first! And that's the way it is with every other sin in life. Incredible!

And so God's desire is that we come through the fire. His desire, He started a work in us and He wants us to yield to it. He wants us to succeed. He wants us to make it. He there to help us to do that, to accomplish that. That's why He called us.

Verse 16—Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the spirit of God dwells in you? Just toward the beginning of the sermon here I was talking about some of this, that sometimes this is very hard for us to be stirred up by, to be excited by, to think about, to know and have it affect our lives in such a way that we're inspired by it. God Almighty is having patience with each one of us? I marvel at the patience God's had with me. I marvel, too, at the patience my wife has had with me. We observed out 41st last year... last week... Last year... Last week.

You know, awesome, the love that exists in a relationship with God Almighty, His desire, His love toward us, what He wants for us if we just yield to it we grow, we draw closer together, we become more at one. There is nothing more beautiful, brethren. To know that we are part of the Temple of

God and that God Almighty dwells in us? What does that mean for you? How do you receive that? How do you think about that?

If any man defiles the Temple of God, sins, disobeys God, him shall God destroy. So we're going to suffer. It's not talking about one time sin, but even there we either repent or we will be dealt with, powerfully so. **For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.** So God is cleansing the temple and strengthening the temple - not just cleansing it but strengthening it. Because what remains is becoming stronger and stronger and stronger. And what isn't responding the way it should, it's not going to be around anymore.

Let no man deceive himself. If any among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become as a fool that he may be wise. Powerful words. Not to think of ourselves above what we should. **For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness.** Boy, I'll tell you what, sin, if people continue to wallow in it, live in it, it's amazing what it does in life. **And again, The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.** The problem is we just have to learn the same thing. If we think ourselves to be something, think ourselves to be wise, think we're doing pretty good, think we are standing pretty firm. And God says, "Be careful." It's always a matter of growing.

1 Peter 2:1. Peter instructs here. God instructs the Church, **Therefore, laying aside all malice,** it's a word for "evil," just anything that isn't in unity with God, anything that isn't in harmony with the truth, **and all deceit, and hypocrisies, and envying, and evil speaking.** That's why I love the scripture about "God seeks those who serve Him," and serve Him in what? Spirit and in truth. Because you can't do it without God's help. You can't obey, you can't love God without His holy spirit. You can't love one another the way you should without God's spirit. You have to have God's spirit and it has to be in what is true, in the truth, not just the truth that God has given to us, but in truth toward the other individual. It can't be something that is done for the wrong reasons. **...as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby;** in other words, have a hunger to hear. It's so easy to get into a routine like the world does of going to services to appease, somehow feel better about ourselves.

That's what the world does. That's what they do on Sunday's. They don't do it as much anymore, but that's basically what a lot of people do when they do go. It's a matter of feeling better about themselves and what they're going through. And yet they go right back out and live the same sort of life. It's not about a change that takes place in their life. And if we're not careful we can get caught in the same trap because we have the same human nature. And if we're not careful we can go through and we feel better about it and we got excited about maybe something we heard and maybe can talk about that, but doesn't make some real change in our life, and the following week and we pray about it and ask for help to make certain changes that we've heard about and we cry out to God for the help and we look forward and we have a hunger to hear the following Sabbath and we're praying to God.

Are we, indeed, praying, just like I mention almost every year when I've the opportunity to speak, (there are a few years I didn't), when we cry out to God before the Feast and asking God for help for the sermons that are given. And I've made comment about the fact that you put more into it because you pray about it, you're a part of it. Because it's a spiritual thing. It's in your mind. And it's in a relationship between you and God, and God wants to know, "Do you hunger? Do you want? Are you praying about those things because *you* want this?" And because you do and as you do God will actually give you more. That's how God works. It's a work! It's a spiritual thing! And the more we put into it, the more God will give. And the less we put into it, the less that's there. So we can't just go and expect to hear and have the same thing everybody else has, because we all hear in differing measuring ways. We really do. It's an awesome thing. Part of it because of growth and where we are and where we are spiritually, a part of it because of the work and effort and the thinking we put into it and the prayer we put into it.

So it is the same way with Sabbath services. During the week as we think about what we've heard and what we're seeking to apply we're also seeking and praying to God for help and inspiration for what's given the following week and you're asking God for those blessings.

Now, God's going to give what God's going to give, but your participation in it is a spiritual relationship with God that He works with. That's profound if we understand it.

...as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby. Have a hunger! To have a hunger for. And if we don't have a hunger, ask God to be more hungrier. Do you feel something? "That I just don't feel stirred up. I don't feel the hunger like..." whatever. **...if indeed you have tasted that the Lord, speaking of Christ, is gracious.** In other words, how much has he blessed us. Do we grasp how God works in our life and what He's offering us?

To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, by men, but chosen by God and precious, speaking of Christ, **you also, as lively stones,** God's power working in you molding and fashioning. That's an awesome thing to understand. It really is! **...are being built up a spiritual house...** And a large part of this message is, yes, there is that which is in the court that's being gotten rid of, and I hope that most of it, and I believe most of its been gotten rid of now.

I also realize that there's a part of it that's still kind of like there are the doorway but not walking through yet and kind of step with a foot out in the court - and better get it in gear and get on the right side of the wall! Because you don't have a whole lot of time left to get inside and be zealous for this way of life. Because there's a cleansing going on.

But for those who are in the Temple, it's beautiful. See, that's where our strength and power is, our life, our energy, our fellowship that has life in it and power in it, that strengthens us every Sabbath that we're able to be blessed in, the communication and that which we have with one another, that which we know and see toward one another. We are becoming a stronger body. And I'll tell you what, it's hard to grasp and see it all, brethren, it really is, what God has done with His Body and that

which is being made stronger. And some have kind of been dragging along in the back here and it needs to catch up. Get behind this thing! Come on, catch up! It's like in a race. Come on, you can do it! You can catch up! You can do it! It's in you to do. Not because it's in you, but because God's in you and you can be there and we can all be together in this! And that's what God is offering.

That's where we are, "being built up a spiritual house." God's desire is to pour more power and strength out upon this Body. You don't know what's around the corner a year or so from now! You really don't! You might have some knowledge of some things that are coming but you don't know it yet. You don't know the impact it's going to have in your life, especially on a spiritual plane. It is awesome! It's truly awesome.

So, you as lively stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by/through Jesus Christ. We've been given so much. And what are spiritual sacrifices? Something to pray about and think about this week. Where is the sacrifice in our life? What are we sacrificing? Where is it? It has to be there. Do we know what it is?

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on him should not be confounded. You know, we live this way of life, we recognize what we've been given, the opportunity - and a lot of that is a matter of repentance. That's what our Passover makes possible, that we can repent and change and become something different and have a boldness and confidence about it. We're God's people! A holy priesthood! No reason to put your head down. No reason to look down to the ground when a relative or a person at work, or something, belittles you and looks down upon you because of what you believe. That's the time to stand stronger than ever before! To know who's there with you - God Almighty! Who cares what they do? Now, hopefully they'll be good and right toward you, but that doesn't always work out. But God's there and His power is there and it's almighty. He'll bring you through it. He'll give you far more because of what you go through, because you put Him first and because you're willing to stand firm and stand strong in what you believe. You know, whatever others do and how they look down upon you, who cares! Who cares about what other people think!

Unto you, therefore, which believe, *he is* precious; but unto them which are disobedient, The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. Your life a little bit like that? You a little bit like that to others around you? Do you realize you are because you're a part of it? You're a part of the Temple? You share in something, in the sufferings of Christ. That's what that means. And because of what you live and because of what you stand for and the way others look upon you and talk about you and treat you? It's understandable. We understand. They can't help it. **...and a rock of offence.** That's how we affect others. You're just kind of offensive to others around you. I hope you understand that. You're a little offensive to your relatives, kind of an embarrassment, actually. Anybody ever feel like their relatives kind of feel like you're kind of an embarrassment to the whole family? "Look what you've done to the family name! You ought to be in *this* family."

...even at those who stumble at the word, being disobedient where unto also they were appointed. It's not what we've been appointed to. It's not what we've been appointed to. Look what we've been appointed to. Incredible! That's why I think I was going to mention earlier here and I started to say it. I don't know why I got distracted.

But last Sabbath talking about this, that seemed to touch different ones, and because we don't grasp fully where we're going and what's ahead of us and what's going to take place. And I think of those who are going to live into a new age and I think of those... And we don't think about necessarily things like this, but I think of the God Family, that we don't grasp sometimes the favor that we're going to be given. Look at the uniqueness of what we have as a family here. In area to area we go to we are a family in God's Church. And there are some in your family that's going to be - it's going to be so unique - they're going to be Elohim! They're going to be a part of 144,000. And do you think they're going to forget you? You think they're not going to have opportunity to come around to see you, to visit with you? I intend to do it a whole lot more than what I can do it now, just to let you know. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to continuing a process of working with, helping to mold and fashion people's lives in God's truth, in God's Church, in God's way of life, to have opportunities and abilities you don't even comprehend that will be ahead.

You think that you don't have favor or that you won't have favor? You already have it now. You think you won't have it a hundredfold, a thousand fold over later on? I, for one, know you will. Okay? Because I know what God's given. That's awesome!

Those of you that have opportunity to live into a new age, isn't this worth fighting for? This age, this world is coming to an end. It's coming to an end. And sometimes we just... it's hard to grasp what God has placed on our platter right in front of us - a royal priesthood. And those aren't just words. They are meaningful to God. Because I know, for what God's given to me, they're meaningful to me, and I know what's going to happen in a very few years from now, being in the God Family. I look forward to coming around and visiting every one of you who is not a part of the 144,000, who lives on into that age. And I intend to carry a big drum and to let them know what we had before all this took place and what you went through. It's going to be a *very big drum!* Awesome, what God has given to us. Sometimes we just don't grasp it.

Anyway, we'll stop there for the day and continue on with Part 3 next Sabbath.